



A Companion to the Summa

by

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Member of the Thomistic Institute

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The *Companion to the Summa* is the most remarkable and successful attempt to put into modern English for a lay audience the essential arguments and insights of Aquinas' greatest work, the **Summa theologiae**. Fr. Farrell wrote almost sixty years ago, in the late 30's and early 40's, so we cannot fault him for the use of language that was acceptable at that time but might sound inappropriate today. His colorful and imaginative paraphrase deserves to be taken off the shelf and reviewed by all serious seekers of theological truth. In an age which looks upon the theology of the Catholic tradition as irrelevant to contemporary problems we leave it to your judgment to read and see if Aquinas, as mediated by the brilliant imagination of Fr. Walter Farrell, has a contribution to make.

The series is now considered to be in the public domain. We encourage visitors to these pages to download them for personal reflection and for preaching and catechetical use. The task of rendering the text in a format for browsing was a formidable one. 1,863 pages had to be scanned, proofread and formatted into 80 chapter/files. The work is now complete.

As an aid to consulting the text of Aquinas' *Summa*, we have inserted links to the online translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Copyright © 1947 Benzinger Brothers Inc., Hypertext Version Copyright © 1995, 1996 New Advent Inc. at <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>.

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A Companion to the Summa

Walter Farrell O.P.

VOLUME I - THE ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE

(Summa theologiae, Ia Pars, 1941)

Foreword and Table of Contents of Vol. I

Vol. 1 Texts in ENVOY Format.

VOLUME II - THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

(Summa theologiae, Ia IIae, 1938)

Foreword and Table of Contents of Vol. II

VOLUME III - THE FULLNESS OF LIFE

(Summa theologiae, IIa IIae, 1940)

Foreword and Table of Contents of Vol. III

VOLUME IV - THE WAY OF LIFE

(Summa theologiae, IIIa & Supplement, 1949)

Foreword and Table of Contents of Vol. IV



CLICK Q. NUMBERS FOR
ONLINE ENGLISH SUMMA

Volume I: Ia Pars

[FOREWORD](#)

1. [SACRED DOCTRINE](#)
(Ia. q. 1)
2. [EXISTENCE OF GOD](#)
(Ia. q. 2)
3. [GOD'S NATURE](#)
(Ia. q. 3-11)
4. [GOD'S KNOWLEDGE](#)
(Ia. q. 12-18)
5. [GOD'S WILL](#)
(Ia. q. 19-21)
6. [PROVIDENCE](#)
(Ia. q. 22-26)
7. [THE TRINITY](#)
(Ia. q. 27-43)>
8. [GOD AND CREATION](#)
(Ia. q. 44-49)
9. [THE ANGELS](#)
(Ia. q. 50-53; 61)
10. [THE ANGELS' MIND](#)
(Ia. q. 54-58)
11. [THE ANGELS' SIN](#)
(Ia. q. 59-60; 62-64)

A Companion to the Summa

FOREWORD

This first volume of a set of four, unlike most first volumes, does not come as a stranger into a strange world. Through a variety of circumstances, Volumes [II](#) and [III](#) were born before their time. Of course it was necessary in them to explain that this whole set of books took its rise from series of lectures on the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas; that the double purpose of the whole work is an introduction to Thomas and a defense of the truths, natural and divine, by which human life is lived; and that these books are the Summa reduced to popular language, the parallel questions of the Summa being indicated under each chapter heading.

There is no need to go into all that again. Nevertheless, an introductory note to this volume is necessary, for each of the four books has its own immediate and special purpose. Volume II, for example, furnished the key to human life and human action; Volume III concentrated on the manner of the living of human life in its exuberant fullness. This volume is the wise man's search for the ultimate answers that are the bedrock far beneath human life, human action and the living of human life.

This volume attempts to put in popular form St. Thomas' masterly study of God, man, and the world in the *Prima Pars* of his *Summa Theologica*. His study is of extreme pertinence to our times precisely because we are the victims of a constantly increasing intellectual confusion. We have become more and more timid about digging beneath the surface of life, more and more emphatic about a knowledge of facts, less and less concerned with the wisdom of beginnings and ends. To put it baldly, we have concentrated more and more on the physical world and less and less on man and on God. The fact is, however, that exclusive concentration on a study of the world does not unearth the important truths about the world; an exclusive consideration of man and the world results in a blurred,

12. [CREATION](#)

(Ia. q. 65-74; [90-95](#))

13. [MANKIND](#)

(Ia. q. 75-80)

14. [THE HUMAN WILL](#)

(Ia. q. 81-83)

15. [THE HUMAN MIND](#)

(Ia. q. 84-89)

16. [ADAM AND EVE](#)

(Ia. q. 94-103)

17. [GOD'S RULE](#)

(Ia. q. 103-105)

18. [ANGELS' WORLD](#)

(Ia. q. 106-109)

19. [ANGELS' ROLES](#)

(Ia. q. 110-114)

20. [MEN AND FATE](#)

(Ia. q. 115-119)

distorted vision of both. We have tried to know only the world and remained most ignorant of it; to know only man and the world and have become entangled in a mass of meaningless detail. For the world is intelligible only in terms of man and God; man is intelligible only in terms of God; God is intelligible only in terms of Himself.

Thomas does not, of course, attempt to amass all the detailed knowledge that has been gathered by the ages. He does attempt, as deeply as is given to the human mind, strengthened and illumined by divine help, to plumb the uttermost depths of truth. It is not surprising, then, that the reader will more than once or twice discover that such a study is not easy. But man was not made for easy things; he was made for hard things, almost insuperably hard things--a truth that intrudes itself on the mind of man in its every contact with the crucial things of life.

This study involves one of those crucial activities, for it centers around indispensable knowledge. Plainly it is important for every man to know about the world, at least the primely important things like its origin, its meaning its relation to himself; after all, he must live in the world, do something with it and have something done to himself by it. It is of the utmost importance that a man know about himself, at least the important things like his origin, the meaning of his life and his relations to things beneath and above himself; for he has the unique gift of being able to use his life to some purpose, a purpose of immediate concern to the individual man. Unless a man know about God, he cannot know the important things about either the world or himself.

When we go below the surface of a man's life to the spiritual depths beneath, the image of God stands out more clearly; then we begin to appreciate the servile place of the world, the inestimable dignity of man and the eternal promise which, crowning his life, dwarfs everything else in the universe. Thomas' study, in a word, is important for our times because the men of our times have learned all but the important things. His study of God, man, and the world, hard and deep as it may be, is necessary because, forgetting God, our times have not recognized men and have yet to see the world. We are learned but far from wise. This is Thomas' book of wisdom, his searching examination of the profound reasons, his handbook of the important answers.

This is a beginner's book in a much more literal sense than is the *Summa Theologica*, explicit as Thomas was in aiming his book at beginners. To the angels, it must seem like a primer; yet men are not angels but always beginners in the way of wisdom. From those human beginners I ask pardon for all the difficulties I fail to remove from their path to wisdom. To the particularly ruthless critics who insisted on the removal of so many of those impediments, I give my sincere thanks. To Thomas, my acknowledgment of all the good things that are in this book.

W. F.

**Dominican House of Studies
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[Back](#)

[Chapter 1 -->](#)

A Companion to the Summa

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Back	Chapter 1 --»
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A Companion to the Summa: Volume II

FOREWORD

LIKE many modern books, this present volume traces its origin to a series of lectures. However, the lectures from which this work has sprung were of an oddly ambitious character. They were given in New York under the auspices of The Catholic Thought Association and were designed to cover the whole of the *Summa Theologica*, question by question, at the rate of one Part each year.

As the work progressed it seemed evident that there was a much wider field for such an ambition than was offered by the walls of a lecture hall. In fact there seemed to be a double need to be met by just such an attempt. There is first of all the ordinary Catholic's evident need of a rational defence of his faith against the atmosphere in which he is forced to live. Secondly there is the need felt by those who, having heard enough of St. Thomas to whet their appetite, suddenly discover that they cannot go directly to St. Thomas without the guidance of a professor; and for most of them the leisure days of the classroom are over for ever.

This, then, is the double purpose of this book: to furnish a rational defence of his faith for the ordinary Catholic and to open St. Thomas to the layman who has no professional philosophical or theological knowledge. It is not, then, intended only for the very learned, nor for a text-book. If it must be described in a phrase, it might best be called an easy guide-book to St. Thomas's greatest work.

Just as a guide-book to Paris can be best evaluated in the streets of Paris, so this guide-book to the Summa can be best appreciated in the pages of the Summa, by comparing the individual chapters of the book with the corresponding questions of the *Prima Secundae* (First Part of the Second Part) of St. Thomas's Summa, questions that are given at the head of each chapter. Any particularly striking point will be found more fully and more beautifully developed in the Summa itself; further proofs, explanations, and illustrations can all be had directly from St. Thomas. This guide-book is merely a shadow of the beauty of the Summa itself.

But it is important to remember that it is the Summa reduced to popular language and not merely another book about St. Thomas or about the Summa. In fact it is often more than that for, particularly on difficult questions, the parallel passages in other works of St. Thomas have been freely used where the conciseness of the Summa might have caused some obscurity for one not wholly familiar with the thought of Thomas.

The impossibility of adequately realizing such an ambition as prompted this work is self-evident. But St. Thomas himself had such a love of "beginners" that at the height of his powers he wrote his greatest work for just that class. Surely he will be patient with any efforts made on behalf of his beloved beginners. Because he too was a member of an Order whose motto is "Veritas" and whose radical explanation is a burning love of truth, he will be gentle with the shortcomings of a work the end of which is to bring men into direct contact with his own great love of truth and so start them off, as Albert started him off, on the romantic pursuit that will end only with the vision of the First Truth. I wish to express my profound gratitude to my brethren and the members of the Thomistic Institute for the patience and co-operation which has made this work possible.

[Back](#)[Chapter One -->](#)

A Companion to the Summa: Volume III

FOREWORD

A FRIENDLY critic's remark, "your delightfully unpredictable order of publication", indicates one necessary word of apology for this volume; its title demands another. For the apparent disorder in publication might be construed as one more evidence of the contagious character of twentieth century chaos; while the title might be seen as a compromising gesture towards a world terrified of death.

To remove all need for conjecture on the future order of publication, let it be said that the next volume of this work to appear, in somewhat less than a year's time, will be Volume I, corresponding to the **First Part** of the *Summa Theologica*. After a decent interval, the final volume, Volume IV, corresponding to the **Third Part** and the **Supplement** of the *Summa*, will complete what was designed as a layman's *Summa*. That will finish the author's labors; but it will only begin the task of the reader. For this whole work is not a book about the *Summa*, but the *Summa* itself reduced to popular language; and Thomas is not read in a day or a year, nor can we suffer an introduction to him shake hands and then dismiss him from our lives. If we make the happy mistake of so much as smiling at him, he moves bag and baggage into our minds, to become an increasingly more delightful intimate as the years move on.

Chesterton, in his Saint Thomas Aquinas, has explained both my order of publication and the title of this volume. "He (Thomas) did, with a most solid and colossal conviction, believe in Life; and in something like what Stevenson called the great theorem of the livableness of life....The medievals had put many restrictions, and some excessive restrictions, upon the universal human hunger and even fury for Life.... Never until modern thought began, did they really have to fight with men who desired to die. That horror had threatened them in Asiatic Albigensianism, but it never became normal to them -- until now." The whole second part of the *Summa*, covered by these two volumes, deals precisely with the living of human life, the invaluable meaning of that life, and the secrets of the fullest success in the living of it. This part was published first, had to be published first, because of that unholy, perverted eagerness of modern men to throw away their lives and to discard their humanity. This is St. Thomas' superb defense of the humanity of man. The remaining volumes of this work plumb the depths and scale the heights of the unutterable truths, the mysterious beginnings and glorious goals, that interpenetrate that human life with something of divinity, the truths that are the ultimate explanations of its incredible significance.

The contents of this volume, then, needs no apology; for Thomas needs no apology. As for its impossible aim of condensing the immense **Ila-IIae** into a volume of this size, not to speak of supplementing it from the other works of Thomas, -- well, Thomas himself spent a lifetime doing impossible things in an impossibly short space of time. For he understood well that if we completely succeed it is because we have aimed too low.

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[Chapter One](#)

A Companion to the Summa: Volume IV

ST. THOMAS died too soon to finish his book, the Summa Theologica. Not all authors are so fortunate. This book marks the completion of a series, projected long ago perhaps with an eye to Thomas' good fortune. The first was a search for the ultimate answers that form the bedrock of human life, human action, and the living of human life; the second furnished the key to human life and human action; the third concentrated on the living of human life in all its exuberant fullness; this, the fourth, traces the royal road a man's feet must walk and the goals that await him at the end of the journey.

It was the Son of God Who declared "I am the way"; this book takes His words literally, as they were meant to be taken. Its subject matter, then, is the sublime mystery by which the Son of God became man to lead men to God, the mystery of the Incarnation. It does not stop at an examination of the mystery but goes on to trace all the consequences of God's dwelling among men: the life of Christ, detail by detail; His blessed mother; the continuation of His life in the sacraments; and the goal of heaven which is at the end of the royal road, the goal of hell which is the terminal of any other path. From beginning to end, this book deals with the supernatural, and that without apology, excuse, or defense; all this has been taken care of in previous volumes. Its contents are thus not so much an argued thesis as a divinely stated fact. If a modern reader is avid of facts, he will find a sublime diet of divine facts here; if, however, he is fastidious in the matter of facts, particularly supernatural facts, this diet may well prove too much for him.

It was not, however, for the fastidious, but for those who were hungry for God that these books were written. If they do something to stave off starvation from those who have the courage to admit their hunger, Thomas may be pardoned for not having seen to it that they were not finished, and I may be forgiven for the effrontery that began them.

Again, I wish to express my gratitude to Thomas for the good things in these books, and to my critics that the bad things are not worse.

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Back	Next
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A COMPANION TO THE SUMMA
VOLUME I -- ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE
(Corresponding to the *Summa theologiae*, Ia Pars)

Published in 1941

By

Walter Farrell

O.P., S.T.Lr., S.T.D

Member of the Thomistic Institute

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

**CLICK Q. NUMBERS FOR
ONLINE ENGLISH SUMMA**

I. <u>THE WISE MAN'S BOOK</u>	(q. 1)
II. <u>HE WHO IS</u>	(q. 2)
III. <u>THE INEFFABLE</u>	(q. 3-11)
IV. <u>THE VISION OF GOD</u>	(q. 12-18)
V. <u>THE WILL OF GOD</u>	(q. 19-21)
VI. <u>THE FATHER OF ALL</u>	(q. 22-26)
VII. <u>THE INNER LIFE OF GOD</u>	(q. 27-43)
VIII. <u>THE ARCHITECT AT WORK</u>	(q. 44-49)
IX. <u>THE ANGELIC WORLD</u>	(q. 50-53; 61)
X. <u>THE ANGELS' VISION</u>	(q. 54-58)
XI. <u>ANGELIC SAINTS & SINNERS</u>	(q. 59-60; 62-64)
XII. <u>THE KINGDOM OF MAN</u>	(q. 65-74; 90-95)
XIII. <u>LORD OF THE WORLD</u>	(q. 75-80)
XIV. <u>THE WILL OF THE LORD OF THE WORLD</u>	(q. 81-83)
XV. <u>THE MIND OF THE LORD OF THE WORLD</u>	(q. 84-89)
XVI. <u>EVE'S FAMILY AT HOME</u>	(q. 94-103)
XVII. <u>GOVERNMENT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD</u>	(q. 103-105)
XVIII. <u>GOVERNMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD</u>	(q. 106-109)
XIX. <u>THE ROLE OF THE ANGELS</u>	(q. 110-114)
XX. <u>THE ROLE OF MEN AND OF FATE</u>	(q. 115-119)

Aquinas on the Angels in Farrell's Companion

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Binhexed Stuffit file for Mac's: [angels.sit.hqx \(106k\)](#)

[Back](#)

[Foreword -->](#)

Volume I: Ia Pars

FOREWORD

1. [SACRED DOCTRINE](#)
(Ia, q. 1)
2. [EXISTENCE OF GOD](#)
(Ia, q. 2)
3. [GOD'S NATURE](#)
(Ia, q. 3-11)
4. [GOD'S KNOWLEDGE](#)
(Ia, q. 12-18)
5. [GOD'S WILL](#)
(Ia, q. 19-21)
6. [PROVIDENCE](#)
(Ia, q. 22-26)
7. [THE TRINITY](#)
(Ia, q. 27-43)>
8. [GOD AND CREATION](#)
(Ia, q. 44-49)
9. [THE ANGELS](#)
(Ia, q. 50-53; 61)
10. [THE ANGELS' MIND](#)
(Ia, q. 54-58)
11. [THE ANGELS' SIN](#)
(Ia, q. 59-60; 62-64)
12. [CREATION](#)
(Ia, q. 65-74; [90-95](#))
13. [MANKIND](#)
(Ia, q. 75-80)
14. [THE HUMAN WILL](#)
(Ia, q. 81-83)
15. [THE HUMAN MIND](#)
(Ia, q. 84-89)
16. [ADAM AND EVE](#)
(Ia, q. 94-103)
17. [GOD'S RULE](#)
(Ia, q. 103-105)
18. [ANGELS' WORLD](#)
(Ia, q. 106-109)

19. [ANGELS' ROLES](#)

[\(Ia, q. 110-114\)](#)

20. [MEN AND FATE](#)

[\(Ia, q. 115-119\)](#)

CHAPTER I -- THE WISE MAN'S BOOK

(Q. 1)

1. The wise man and his book:
 - (a) The man:
 - (1) Objections to Thomas.
 - (2) A picture of Thomas.
 - (b) His book:
 - (1) Objections to it:
 - a. Seven hundred years old.
 - b. Ponderous.
 - c. In a dead, scientific language.
 - (2) The nature of the book:
 - a. Its wise nature.
 - b. Its personal nature.
 - (3) Aim and division of the book.
2. The place of divine wisdom in human life:
 - (a) Its necessity.
 - (b) Its role in human activity:
 - (1) A divine science--its object.
 - (2) Its place among the sciences.
 - (3) Its character as wisdom.
 - (4) Its subject matter.
 - (5) Its method.

Conclusion:

1. Pertinence of the man and his book to the twentieth century:
 - (a) The man:
 - (1) His interests -- the perfection of God and the perfectibility of man.
 - (2) His battles -- in defense of God and man.
 - (3) His love.
 - a. Its constant basis.
 - b. Its ardor.
 - (b) His book -- an antidote for poisons:
 - (1) Of superficiality.
 - (2) Of provincialism.
2. A philosophy of life:
 - (a) The meaning of life -- ultimate answers.
 - (b) The goal of life a plan of action.
 - (c) The exemplar of living -- a way of life.

CHAPTER I

THE WISE MAN'S BOOK

(Q. 1)

The wise man and his book

It is not hard to admire St. Thomas Aquinas immovably caught in the splendor of a stained-glass window; it is easy to pay tribute to his *Summa Theologica* as long as it remains high on a book-shelf giving tone to a library. Under these circumstances, we of the twentieth century can read about them both, talk about them enthusiastically, but pretty much leave them both alone. To have Thomas walking among us, his book open on our desks for serious study -- that is something else again.

Objections to Thomas

If Thomas were to drop into a twentieth century club, or a twentieth century pub for that matter, he would, of course, be judged by twentieth century standards. By those standards he could expect no rousing

welcome; he might be tolerated in an amused fashion, but certainly no one would get chummy with him. He lived in the wrong place, for his home was a cloister and to us a cloister is much more puzzling than a healthy appendix. He lived in the wrong age, long, long before the modern age of progress, in the very middle of the Middle Ages. His occupation was totally without interest to us. He was a professor and a writer of books: his researches uncovered no new vitamins or explosives, he had nothing to say about earning more pay, he neither attacked God nor debunked man and society, but he had a good deal to say about truth, goodness, love and God; his books had no scarlet pages, no profanity, no biological realism in perfumed words, no substitute for thinking, and no escape from life. Far from rejecting the past, the man actually revered old things!

Personally he was impossible. His family was closely tied by bonds of blood to the royalty of all Europe, bad enough in itself; but Thomas, turning aside from the soldierly preoccupations of his brothers, became (though not without a fight) a begging friar. To get the full force of this last on the modern mind, it must be put cumulatively: he was a friar and a beggar. The man himself was an abstract thinker, a cold, ruthless logician proceeding with machine-like precision and heartlessness from principle to conclusion regardless of consequences. He had no passion in him, for he was a saint; no heart, for he clung stubbornly to truth; no imagination, for he was a metaphysician; no humanity, for he fled from the world.

If a particle of this were true of Thomas, he would certainly have no place in the lives of men of our age; if even less of it were true, he would belong, not in a stained-glass window, but in a museum. There are no people farther apart than saints and freaks; and this picture makes Thomas out a gigantic freak.

A Picture of Thomas

This picture of Thomas is worse than a caricature, it is a calumny of the man. There is no gainsaying the fact that Thomas was a friar; the best defense of that calling was not the one he wrote but the one he lived. It is not at all the same thing to fly from the world and to fly from men: those who fly from men will die from the spiritual anemia induced by the feeble diet and the narrow confines of the cell of self; while those who stand by men, though flying from the world, will be crucified by both--and consider the crucifixion a price well worth the paying. Thomas has had his crucifixion down through the ages; perhaps the most bitter is the modern one of complete misunderstanding of his character.

We come close to the truth when we see Thomas as an eager youngster plunging into the pursuit of truth at the heels of the greatest master of his time. We are digging beneath his inscrutable surface when we see him holding on to that youthful zest in the way peculiar to the saints, supplementing native genius by labors even his great strength could not stand until, before fifty, his life was burned out. Throughout that short life he dreamed great dreams, impossible dreams, and did all a man could do to make those dreams come true; coming to the end of his life he was forced to admit, as we all are, that the accomplishment fell far short of his dreams, that all he had written seemed as so much straw.

Thomas was eminently human. He had a great natural capacity for love. Bonaventure could have testified to this; or the sisters of Thomas who went into his tower room to talk him out of the convent and came out themselves talked into the convent. He had a knowledge of human nature acquired in no little degree in his trudgings up and down, back and forth, in a Europe which knew little delicacy in its revelations of human nature. That knowledge was deepened, enriched by a love of God and a zeal for souls that made his every breath, even his dying one, a wind scattering truth broadcast through a hungry world which eventually would reap the harvest of so prodigal a sowing.

He had indeed fled from the world, but not from men. This man was not without passion, he was on fire; his heart was not empty, it was overflowing; he was a metaphysician in the fullest sense of the word, which means he was a poet and a pioneer with imagination enough and courage enough to step into the dark over the edge of the world. This man doesn't belong in a museum; he doesn't belong in a stained-glass window; his place is with the daring ones, at the head of the crowd, with the ones who have the courage to be men.

Objections: 700 Years Old

Still, his supreme book is seven hundred years old. It might, you say, be of historical interest; a collector, whom the rules do not oblige to read the books he cherishes, might be enthused about it. But the world has come a long way in seven hundred years. Thomas was not a prophet; what could he know of our intellectual advancement. Every age has its own problems; what did Thomas have to do with democracy as against dictatorship, with doles, planned economy, or mechanized war? His book was medieval; our age certainly is not. His was an age of speculation, ours of observation; his of approximation, ours of accuracy; his of faith, ours of reason; his a leisurely age, ours one of speed. So we might go on, fondling the contrasts that are only half-true and omitting the essential consideration, namely, that seven hundred years has not changed the model of human nature.

A list of the problems dealt with in the *Summa* might as easily have been drawn from the schools of Greece, the libraries of modern universities, or, indeed, from the hearts and minds of men of any age. There is, for example, the problem of good and evil; of being and becoming; of change or evolution; of the goal of man; of knowledge; of God; of property; of the state; of pleasure; of duty; of the origin of the world, and so on. If the *Summa* of St. Thomas has anything worth while to say on these subjects, it is of interest to an age tortured as ours is with the lack of answers to the fundamental problems of humanity. As a matter of fact, St. Thomas was much too human to turn out a work useless to humanity, much too close to the hearts of men and women to have dealt with these problems in an abstract way that would be of interest only to the academic mind.

Objections: Ponderous

The book is ponderous, five folio volumes of closely packed print, and more closely packed thought. We are not of that by-gone age that would accept such a formidable work as an intellectual challenge, to prove it was not as inferior as it felt. We are rather of the age of headlines, compendiums, outlines and summaries. We must have reviews of the week, in pictures for the really rushed; summary magazines do our digesting for us, columnists do our peeking for us, commissions do our fact finding. For ourselves, we are always in a hurry.

Yet, a three volume novel is not too much for us, or even a one volume romance of twelve-hundred pages. We do face pages and pages of reports, platforms, speeches, statistics. We are of the age of heroically persevering scientific research. It cannot be that we are afraid of work. It is more likely that we demand some tangible fruits as the goal inspiring us to the expenditure of so much mental or physical labor. And it would be hard to quarrel with this eminently hard-headed attitude towards life or books. St. Thomas meets such a challenge with his usual overwhelming answer. It is not the age of his work, its ponderous size, even its medieval dress that repels the layman; but the unfounded opinion that this work is not worth the labor involved in becoming acquainted with it, the results of that labor are not pertinent to an age startlingly different from the age in which the *Summa Theologica* was written.

Objections: Dead Languages

The dress of the book has been changed; live languages have wrapped their attractive folds about it. Not that such a change was so very necessary; it is difficult to hide the beauty of youth behind the thin disguise of outmoded style. Only a superficial observer could have missed the allure of the *Summa*. It was written with enthusiasm for the enthusiastic, for the beginners who face light-heartedly the agony of the first step. There is about the book much of the eagerness of youth. It attacks the highest problems with a gay heart and sublime confidence; it meets the rebuff of mystery with youth's resiliency; it accepts the sweeping conclusions of truth with youth's idealism, youth's willingness to sacrifice. It aims at high goals with all the vigor of the great heart of youth.

The Nature of the Book

The humanity and perennial modernity of the *Summa* are the skeleton whose flesh and blood is the culture

of all the ages. Within this book is the compressed essence of truth ground from the Oriental and Greek philosophies, from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, from the Fathers and from those long thousand years that went into the making of scholasticism. Yet it is not a mere compendium of past achievement, a mausoleum of masters long since dead; rather it is the descendant of a noble line, worthy of the blood it bears. The hard won truth of man's earliest search for wisdom passed through a filter in Aquinas that barred nothing but the dregs which would poison the drink.

The Book is Wise

Perhaps this last is one of the supreme benefits of contact with the *Summa Theologica* -- the constant communication with one of the greatest minds of all time through the medium of his greatest work. The contents of the *Summa* had been preparing in the retort of a giant intellect through all of a lifetime. We can even see the slow steps of purification by glancing at Thomas' earlier works seeing the hesitating agreement, or carefully conditioned disagreement, with the thought of his masters. Later the bold statement of his own solutions does not balk at disagreement with the older scholastics, with Albert, Bonaventure, Augustine and the Fathers, with Plato and Aristotle. Agreements, wherever found, are even more startling. Here, in the full fruit of great genius, there is an economy of word and concept that is deceiving: a few lines of the *Summa* often equal pages of an earlier work and yet leave us puzzled as to what has been omitted. Frequently the marvel is not what has been so well said but what has been so well left unsaid. A principle is presented to us bowing down with human implications, but presented delicately, with a profound respect for the intellect of the reader, like a poem barely suggesting a sublime picture, or an early English drama without scenery. When a word either way might have upset the delicate balance of truth, might indicate an unjustified emphasis, might mislead the reader, that word is not said.

Its Personal Nature

St. Thomas sat down to write his greatest book as a typist might pull the cover off her typewriter and begin the transcribing of her notes. He, too, was unabashed by the task before him; he approached it with serene simplicity, unimpressed with the importance of his work. But his serenity and simplicity were the eternal expression of the confidence inspired by genius and sanctity. He admits, off-handedly in his extremely brief Prologue, that he intends to expose all that pertains to the Christian religion. In view of what he actually did, that meant that he intended to wander the corridors of eternity; and to neglect no item in the existing universe. His gaze would focus on the crystalline beauty of the angelic world; his step would not falter before the mysterious realms of the human heart; nor would he be confused by the pettiness and magnificence of the mind of man. He would make a thorough investigation of the animal as well as of the angelic side of the human image of God. The origin, end and make-up of the physical world he would treat as profoundly as the birth, life, death and resurrection of God made man. The mystery and misery of sin were to be well within his field; and, of course, the supernatural instrumentality of the sacraments, the riches of the whole life of grace.

The Aim of the Book

Thomas, faced with the abundance of his material, did not hope merely to toss it before the minds of men; he expected to expose all this adequately, lucidly, and as briefly as the matter permitted. Moreover, he was not aiming at an increase in the intellectual jowls of the well cared for specialists in philosophy and theology; he had in mind, rather, the underfed, the starving, the little ones, beginners who had gone hungry too long. He expected to avoid all that would confuse the thinking of these little ones, that would impede their progress, that might contribute to their discouragement. The thing seemed important enough to this first professor of the age of Universities for an explicit statement of the instruments he had forged to bring it about: order above all, simplicity, and the ruthless elimination of useless questions, arguments and repetitions.

The Division of the Book

The laziest man in the world might draw up a plan such as this. In fact, lazy men are usually prolific in

their production of plans, perhaps the better to relish their idleness. The astonishing thing about Thomas' project is that it came very close indeed to complete accomplishment, so close as to leave the onlookers breathless before the massive beauty of this intellectual cathedral, oblivious of its unfinished sacristy. Thomas' project was stopped by the only thing that could stop it. He died while in the midst of his treatment of the sacrament of Penance.

The plan of the *Summa* is as simple as the statement of its aims by Thomas. The first part treats of God, both in Himself and as the principle from which the angelic, the human and the purely physical world take their rise; the second part treats of man's movement back to the source from which he came; the third, of the means or the road which he travels to that goal and the home that waits for him at the end of the road.

It is the first part of the *Summa* which will occupy us throughout this volume. After a preliminary question (the burden of the rest of this chapter) we shall investigate the existence of the one God; then the inner life of the one true God, or the mystery of the Trinity; the rest of this volume will be taken up with a study of the angels, of men and of the world, for thus only can we have the full story of the procession of creatures from God. This latter part of the present volume will not involve argument about angels on the head of a pin; Thomas had no room for stupid questions. But it will involve the study and appreciation of all of the world, not merely the material part of it; of all of man, not merely the animal part of him; of all of the angelic world, not cynically amused caricatures of it. The pictures this study hangs in the minds of men will be strikingly different from those that today too often clutter the mind and shatter the heart. Man will not be found pictured here as a frightened god perched on the barren summit of a world in chaos. Nor will he be seen as no different in kind from the rest of the animals--his oddly human capacities for politics and poetry here are not only accidental differences which set him off from the beasts no more essentially than the fact that he is somewhat more fastidious about his bath. God will not have the hurried, harassed look of a timidly ineffective man; these angels will not be gliding around languidly looking for a holy card on which to alight. All these pictures have no inspiration in the world of reality; and it is only with reality that we are engaged in this volume.

It is extremely important, at the very outset, that we lay hold firmly on these two facts: Thomas, all his life, was a relentless searcher for reality, a ruthless enemy of falsehood; and his supreme work was a book of supernatural theology. In our own time, it has become the fashion to divorce theology from reason and so to destroy any certitude of its relation to reality. As for the supernatural, well that is an insult to our self-sufficiency not to be lightly suffered by an intelligent man. It is not too hard to understand the modern's impatience with the supernatural, for man has always been proud; but only the intellectual suicide of positivism could be so absurd as to limit the horizons of a man's mind to what he can uncover by the methods of science. This last has no need of rational refutation for the positivist contradicts himself in the denials that make up his doctrine; he advocates a way of death, rather than of life, for life cannot be lived on a basis of denials, it must be fled from. Men are intolerant of the cowardice of escape; they are sympathetic towards a spirit of independence, even exaggerated independence, though they, and everyone else, are barred from expressing that sympathy when the independence reaches the stage of voluntary confinement.

It is unquestionably true that man, left to his own devices, can gather a tremendous amount of information; so much, in fact, as to be smothered under the pile of facts he has heaped upon his own head. He can even, through the patient labor of the years, acquire something of wisdom's understanding of the pattern of things, of the distinction between details and essentials, of goals and means to those goals. The point that is overlooked too often is that a man simply cannot wait so long for the advent of wisdom. He has to know these things from the beginning he has a human life to live through all the years that are demanded for the personal achievement of the long view of the wise man; and, for by far the greater number of men, the mind, the heart, the hands are well occupied in winning a livelihood from a grudging mother earth. To be quite frank, there are many men who will never arrive at wisdom under their own power if they live to be a hundred and have absolutely nothing to do but think. To be equally frank, it must be admitted that the wisest of men are going to make mistakes.

This matter of human goals that give the directions for human living is much too important to run such risks. This knowledge cannot wait, it cannot be restricted to a few, it cannot be punctuated by error; if we are content to have it so, it is only because we assume the unimportance of the human individual, the meaninglessness of human life, the certitude of long life, the indifference of truth. All of these assumptions are false. Because they are, man, even in those things that are not strictly above his human powers, must have help. He can assert his absolute independence only at the cost of compromising his knowledge of reality and, ultimately, at the cost of failure in the living of human life. He must accept truth from the source of truth; and be thankful the truth is given him.

Necessity of Wisdom

All this would be true if man's life were to be fulfilled by a goal within the grasp of his natural powers. When we face the fact that the only goal of man is above all nature, the eternal vision of God, we see something of the desperate necessity for a divine revelation that will give him knowledge of that goal and the means by which he can arrive at it.

The illusion of independence can be bought at much too high a price. It could logically demand that we swim oceans rather than depend on a ship-builder and a navigator, that we toddle through blizzards naked until we can make our own clothes, that we fly by flapping our arms. Whatever the price paid, when we examine the thing in an honest light, the wonder is that we bought such a shoddy product at all; the certainty is that we have been badly cheated. There is nothing so completely useless as the illusion that we are self-sufficient, for there is nothing so completely false.

We must have wisdom from the beginning of life. It cannot be our own; nor is it sufficient if it is some other human being's. It must be divine, for only God is wise from the beginning. To begin life with the wisdom lent us by divinity, and end it by possessing that wisdom; to meet the charges at each station of life with divinely minted coin; to see the road that stretches before us through the far seeing eyes of God -- this is not an insult to human nature, it is an ennoblement of it.

A Divine Science -- Its Object

In this atmosphere of nobility theology draws its first breath of life, for the deposit of divinely revealed truth constitutes the life principle of all theological science. If philosophy, as the apex of natural intellectual effort, has deserved the name of human wisdom, then theology is rightly called divine wisdom. All of its varied fabric is given solid substance by the thread of divinity that is woven into it; if we unravel that complex fabric, that single thread will always lead back to God, the source of truth and the goal of it. Without that thread of divinity theology is a name given to a crazy quilt that, paradoxically, is devoid not only of beauty but of variety, monotonous with the grey monotony of despair. It has nothing of wisdom about it, for it has nothing of meaning about it. But drawing its life-blood from the source of all order, theology is vibrant with such significance as man would not have dared to dream, with divine significance for creatures who hardly dare to face human life let alone dream of living divine life.

To speak of theology as a science may sound blasphemous to modern ears. Indeed, it is blasphemous if we restrict science to the treasure buried in the physical world, a treasure to be unearthed only by the pick-axe and spade of the experimental method. But if we take science, as it should be taken, in the larger sense of ripe knowledge plucked from principles that escape the blight of doubt, we can hardly mistake theology as a clever imitation of a live science, to be put under glass as a tribute not to its life but to its artificiality. We can, with an easy mind, expose it to the weather to live its rugged, vibrant life; let the rain fall on it and the wind tug at it, the sun shine on it and its enemies drag their tiny bodies over its broad branches. It will live; its roots are deep enough, its leaves broad enough, its branches high enough; it will live. though many a hybrid die beside it.

Theology's Place Among the Sciences

Theology is no mongrel in the pack of sciences. Like every other science, it has its proper, and utterly

distinctive, field--the field of revealable truths. Its paraphernalia is totally inadequate to furnish it with its principles: so, in common with all other sciences, it gets the principles with which it starts and on which it depends from some other source. The philosopher, with no human science above him, accepts without question the self-evident principles his reason discloses to him or he ceases to be a philosopher. The theologian accepts his principles, not from the science of the physicist, the mathematician or the philosopher, but from the science of God and the saints. No science proves its own principles; nor does theology. But the principles of every other science are susceptible, with the help of another science or directly from nature, of clear vision by the human mind; theology alone accepts principles too clear to be seen by any mind but the mind of God. It believes its principles on the authority of the Truth incapable of error or falsehood.

Let us suppose that all the sciences, in person, were invited to dinner by a great university. Where should theology be seated, among the practical or the speculative sciences? Well, the thing is more practical than domestic economy for it deals with the most practical of things the goal of a man and the roads to the goal; at the same time it is more speculative than metaphysics for it handles truths that are divine. It might take the grapefruit with the speculative sciences, move over to an empty chair for the soup with the practical sciences, back to its original place for the fish, and so on; a little fatiguing, perhaps, but then what can be done? Like many another person with an insoluble problem, the hostess will shelve it and pretend it does not exist, for the moment anyhow. Now about places, who will get the first place and who will slide humbly into the welcome obscurity of the seat far down the table? In the speculative section the question will have to be settled on the certitude of the science and the nobility of its subject matter. Theology jumps down from that mental shelf to worry the hostess: it would be hard to find a more noble subject matter than divinity or to compare the certitude achieved by a human mind to the certitude of the divine word. But the method! Yes, the others may be a little uppish on the question of method, but then how can we make a particular method the norm of precedence; is this a scientific dinner or a meeting of a secret society?

Very well, give theology the first place among the speculative sciences; at least that settles the question of where theology will sit. In the practical section, precedence will be determined by the ultimateness of the end served by the particular science. Obviously medicine will sit above domestic economy, but does it go above or below politics? We can settle that later; what is the very last end served by any science; theology again! The only solution is to sit theology in the very center with the speculative sciences descending on the right and the practical on the left, hoping, of course, that no wit brings up the matter of the sheep and the goats.

But enough of the dinner. Abandoning the figurative language and getting down to hard facts, it is true that the findings of the other sciences seem much more certain to us than the conclusions of theology. Of course; but the flame of an acetylene torch is not less bright because it blinds us, less visible because we must see it through smoked glasses; nor is the divine truth less certain because it is too clear for our eyes, it is not less sure because we have to see it through the obscure glass of faith. It is also true that theology uses philosophy; but that is not because the pillars of divine truth need so much bolstering, it is rather because of the comfort our weakness derives from the clasping hand of philosophy. But we shall come back to this matter of philosophy later on in this chapter.

Theology's Character as Wisdom

It is difficult to conjure up a picture of a rollicking theologian. Perhaps there have been such, but the odds are against it. Not that theology demands that its disciples all have long, white beards; but it does seem to demand that its youngest masters be old and its oldest masters be young. Perhaps all this is because of the bouquet that wisdom throws off as we warm the word in the hollow of our hands. We do associate wisdom with old age, not because the mind of the old is keener, the heart more eager, but because the tired feet have wandered enough to know the highroad from a bypath, the old eyes have seen enough, to know a trifle from the gem for which a man must sell all he has, because the old hands have worked at tasks enough to know the ephemeral from the enduring. Old age should know more of the answers, it should see

more of the pattern, it should escape more of the confusion of the terrific detail of life. Theology is wisdom, old with the agelessness of eternity; but young with the youth of an eternal beginning.

The wise man to be consulted for the answers about the new house that is going up is the architect, not the bricklayer; if he does not know the reasons for things, there aren't any. He may be stupid in many other lines, but in this one, because he is master of the ultimate purposes of the building, he is wise; in any line, this knowledge of ultimate purposes brings wisdom. When the knowledge is of the last of all purposes, it brings that wisdom that needs no qualification; by it a man is simply wise. This will be the man who knows the answers that really matter; these are the answers for, which the theologian exists.

Theology's Subject Matter

For the theologian treats of nothing except in relation to the first beginning and the last end. He is in the intellectual order what the saint is in the practical order: a man wholly engaged with God. A general order covering the activity of the two men need suffer no single change in phrasing: "begin this task at once, work at it ceaselessly, finish it in eternity." For the love of God is not to be encompassed in a lifetime; neither is the knowledge of God. However far afield the mind or the heart may seem to have wandered, both are engaged with God Himself or with the things that pertain to God as Beginning or as End. The saint knows the important answers by the quick intuition that has its deep roots in love; the theologian, by the reasoned argument that has its roots deep in study. When study and love are united to make a saint of a theologian, God has been exceptionally kind to men.

It is into the book of just such a man that we are timidly edging our way. There is a definite reassurance in the fact that Thomas insisted that reason roll up its sleeves and get down to its hardest task; this brings back the first day's study of any science. Moreover he has adopted the fully developed form of that similar method of Socrates; and what is more familiar than a question? The double flattery of a question is hard to resist; the contentedly ignorant and the insufferably omniscient never ask a question, while the fool is asked a question only by mistake. A question, after all, is the movement of a mind in search of truth and there is nothing so pleasant to disseminate as truth. Children and scholars are living question marks and, as Thomas wrote for childish scholars, it was right that every article of his book be a question demanding a straight answer. To clarify the issue, an opponent, fictitious or real, is introduced each time with so forceful a presentation of objections as to cause a little anxiety in the heart of a follower of Thomas.

Method of Theology

The body of the articles throughout concentrates on the work of explaining, illustrating, persuading, refuting and, where possible, proving. Thomas, of course, does not argue about theology's principles; no science does that. The inferior sciences depend on their superiors to take care of the borrowed principles; metaphysics, without a superior, will argue about its principles with an opponent who grants some of them; with an opponent who denies all of them it can do nothing but refute the denial, exposing its falsity. The procedure is the same in theology, with the added assurance that every objection in denial has its answer for these principles rest on the immutable truth of God.

But there is plenty of room for argument in theology beneath the principles; nor has there ever been a slackening of that argumentation that destroys error, preserves truth and uncovers still more of truth. Here philosophy is put to work in earnest; here human reason is employed to its fullest strength; for here is a task worthy of the great potentialities of the mind of a man. As a reward for this back-breaking labor, theology restricts the field of possible philosophical error, releasing this flood of conserved energy into the channels of real philosophical investigation. Philosophy is not substituted for, it is not destroyed, not diluted; for grace does not destroy nature, it perfects it. It is not superseded by a higher wisdom; it is consecrated by that higher wisdom.

Conclusion: Thomas' Interests

This consecration and perfection of nature by grace was a dominant note in the life of Thomas. He could

never close his ears to its challenge. From the beginning his mind and heart were complete captives to the enticement of the perfection of God; he fought his mother, his sisters, his brothers that he might be freer to pursue it and, in the race to embrace it, nobility of family, wealth and power, the world itself were cast off as so much dead weight slowing his steps. He read the book of the world with all the intense concentration and genius of his great mind: he pondered the divinely revealed secrets like a miser fondling his gold. As the years passed and virtue mounted he plunged deeper and deeper into that infinite perfection and was more and more overwhelmed by it.

Knowing God so well, he knew himself the better. Not only himself, but all men; it was not for nothing that the divine plans had him tramping up and down the roads of Europe in an age when a friar was the beloved priest of scullery maid and princess, of peasant and prince. A dull-witted man with no human sympathy could hardly go through such an experience without acquiring a deep knowledge of human nature; and Thomas has not been accused, since the grotesque accusation of his student days, of being dull witted or unsympathetic. He read the secrets of the human heart, his own and the hearts of others: seeing their pettiness, cowardice, smug mediocrity and even viciousness, he saw how far they could get from God; but seeing, too, their high hopes, their dogged courage, their quick remorse and unselfish loyalty, he saw how close they could come to God. On this double theme the symphony of his life developed: the perfection of God and the perfectibility of man.

In Defence of God and Man

From his first appearance in a professor's chair Thomas was embroiled in intellectual battle. That battle continued all of his life; nor is it finished yet. It was, and is, a battle in defense of God and of man. Thomas would not stand by and see God torn down from His divine throne; he could not stand by and see the image of God defaced on earth. God is perfect and man can be perfected; any lessening of the perfection of God is a denial of Him and any lessening of the potentialities of man is a denial of humanity. These two truths must stand whatever the cost of their defense: God is divine and man is capable of a share in divine life. One cannot be attacked without the other going by the board; and at no time in history have both come under so ceaseless a fire as in our own time.

His Love

The genius of Thomas could have put up no such fight as it did without the driving force of a love to match its greatness. A love so great, so utterly selfless, so impervious to the allure of every other love could be nothing short of the divine love whose full flower goes by the name of sanctity. Thomas, from the beginning, was head over heels in love with God; to the end his love's great problem was not to hold a fickle lover but to find the means of spending himself enough to give expression to that love. He came as close to solving that problem as is given to man on earth.

Certainly Thomas placed no conditions on his love. He did not cautiously arrange emergency exits in case love's demands became too inconvenient. There were no limits of time, of strength, of thought, of surrender involved in this divine contract. Rather that love was a searing flame that consumed the man, that hurled him into a whirlwind of labor that knew no lull until death stopped that great heart. Love such as this may seem a strange thing in a world that has adopted security as a watchword. But only by love such as this will a man ever again come so close to other men and be so intimately joined to God; only on this condition will humanity ever again have such a champion and God such an apostle.

Antidote to Poisons

In his book Thomas offers the twentieth century love and truth; but the love cannot be revealed until the truth has been mastered. This truth comes as a rather violent antidote to the two modern poisons of intellectual superficiality and naturalistic provincialism.

Superficiality

Another name for that intellectual superficiality is intellectual laziness. It consists in that easy grasping at the first and partial answer, breeding smug satisfaction and a shallowness that will not float an idea. This book looks to the last and the adequate answer, the answer that awes and humiliates, the answer that will intrigue a man's mind for a lifetime and direct his actions beyond the limits of life. Thomas' effort for beginners was not directed to the cultivation of the ability to quote others; its aim was to develop the capacity to think for oneself. His is not an emphasis of facts to the neglect of wisdom; his book cannot be read as a memory exercise. Laying it aside after some careful reading, we cannot dismiss it with such remarks as: "how interesting, how odd." It will hit us between the eyes, or it will not touch us at all; for the ultimate answers cannot be looked at without deep personal reverberations.

Provincialism of Naturalism

Against the provincialism of naturalism, Thomas discovers the meaning of the natural world by frankly stepping into the supernatural; he discovers the perfect fulfillment of man by refusing to accept man as the perfect fulfillment of the universe; his book rejects the modernist's contempt for the past by offering cultural contact with the wisdom of the ages and with one of the greatest intellects the world has yet seen.

Life's Meaning, Goal and Exemplar

This man is not to be framed in a stained-glass window; his book is not a library decoration. This is a man and a book providentially designed for the needs of the twentieth century. Certainly no age has greater need for ultimate answers, for a plan of action, for an exemplar of human living; for no age has had less conception of the meaning of life, the things that go into successful living, the manner in which human life must be lived to be successful. In his three great divisions of this book, Thomas gives us precisely these things: a study of the divine architect and His completed work; a study of the goal of human life and the human actions by which that goal is attained; a study of the God who became man that men might become like unto God.

<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch.1	Chapter Two -->
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CHAPTER II -- HE WHO IS (Q. 2)

1. **Beginners and the beginning:**
 - (a) The mystery and difficulty of beginnings.
 - (b) Difficulty for beginners.
 - (c) Reasons for a beginning:
 - (1) Their modernity:
 - a. Objections against them.
 - b. Their perennial strength.
 - (2) Their completeness.
2. **Preliminary notions to proof of the beginning:**
 - (a) Potentiality and actuality.
 - (b) Change: potential, process and product.
 - (c) Limitations of proofs of existence.
3. **The five proofs:**
 - (a) From passivity -- motion.
 - (b) From activity -- causality.
 - (c) From defectibility -- contingency.
 - (d) From perfection -- participation.
 - (e) From order -- finality.
4. **Characteristics of the proofs:**
 - (a) A posteriori arguments.
 - (b) Not cumulative but independently sufficient.
 - (c) Strictly limited to the evidence.
 - (d) Foundations of the deductive tract
on the nature of God.

Conclusion:

1. Significance of the proofs.
2. Real mystery of beginnings.
3. Allegedly non-mysterious substitutes.

CHAPTER II

HE WHO IS

(Q. 2)

It is more than the perennial vigor of human hope that makes human life a long process of constant beginnings. A beginning never becomes a prosaic thing, though we see its counterparts on all sides every day; it is in itself glamorous, enticing, irresistible, for it is in itself mysterious. The feeble spark of young life in a mother's womb, the first tentative plan of the architect, the first step of the infant, the first scribbled words of a book fascinate us. They swing open doors and we cannot resist straining our eyes to peer down the long corridors of the future they reveal to us. It is not an explanation of this attraction to say that this moment of beginning is tightly packed with love's rewards, love's labors and love's hopes. It is all of this; but it is much more. It is that inexplicable thing that we call mystery, the thing that calls our minds out on the long road along whose winding way the explanation of the mystery may be found.

The mystery and difficulty of beginnings

The woman who gives birth to a child is not only a cause of a wondrous effect, she herself has become what she was not before, a mother. It is not only the marble under the sculptor's chisel that has become something new; the sculptor has undergone a process of becoming in producing his masterpiece, he has fulfilled a formerly unfulfilled capacity within himself. For in these human beginnings the process of becoming wraps its arms around both cause and effect to pile wonder on wonder and yet leave the mystery intact, the mystery of the beginning of that which becomes both in the cause and the effect, the mystery of the beginning not of becoming but of being itself.

Difficulty for Beginners

Beginnings are not only mysterious, they are also difficult. Perhaps it is because they are mysterious that beginnings are so hard; at least, it is a fact that it is always difficult to begin at the beginning. That is a divine way of doing things, the divine way that made the Son of God start human life as an infant. For divinity itself is the Beginning and is naturally careful of beginnings, even of human beginnings which are but fragments gathered up from the feasts of the past. Surely the Catholic Doctor must be careful, even exhaustively careful, of beginnings: so careful that his works must be aimed, not merely at the learned or saintly, but at those humble beginners who are his particular care as an exponent of the things that pertain to God.

Reasons for a Beginning

Beginnings are hard for us even when we ourselves are capable, the material on which we work is apt, and the work we have to do is no more than to coax to full bloom hidden beauties in the material and in ourselves. To our minds, the uncreated beginning faced the extreme difficulty, not of drawing out hidden powers, but of establishing that which is. Beginners in the way of God, which is to say beginners in the way of human living, face a man-made difficulty that springs from the reluctance of their teachers to begin at the beginning, a difficulty that is only hinted at when we call it a lack of order in the presentation of truth. That reluctance is not difficult to understand: there is an attractive, though completely false, air of excitement in dodging difficulty, shutting one's eyes to mystery and plunging into the middle of things.

Objections

That excitement has so gripped the modern mind that the beginning of things has become irritating to the point of consuming much of modern energy just in the elimination of it. These reasons for a beginning, which are sometimes called the proofs for the existence of God, have been excluded on three grounds that the human intellect cannot be trusted outside the boundaries of direct sense experience. Of course, many other objections have been made to them: scientific objections, such as their pitiful dependence on an Aristotelian science long since defunct; they are not the product of scientific investigation; they are in evident conflict with the history of religion and the theory of evolution, both of which show that the Christian God is a very modern luxury.

If the philosopher's patience is worn thin enough, he may protest that the results of such proofs are meaningless, devoid of qualitative content; which means this philosopher has been much too lazy to think. In desperation, the philosopher may simply toss the proofs out the window regardless of their truth or falsehood; the God they speak of is of no value or service to humanity. And this will be a philosopher who takes all the important things for granted.

Their Perennial Strength

These proofs may be a nuisance to one who tries, philosophically, to keep up with the times at whatever cost; but they cannot be denied modernity if by modern we mean to occupy a place in the minds and words of men of our day. They are strong enough, independent enough to live through this age and all ages. They ask no favors. They ask only what cannot be denied -- and then make the most of it.

Specifically these proofs for the existence of God start with a simplicity worthy of the divinity they demonstrate, demanding just two things: a fact evident to the senses and the first principles of the intellect. Understand, now, this sensible fact is not carefully selected, difficult to see or subject to controversy; but an obvious, tangible reality of experience, such a fact as the wink of an eye, the birth of a child, the withering of a leaf, the beauty of a face or the smooth flight of a bird. The first principles of knowledge demanded are only those fundamentals without which intellectual operation of any kind is impossible, the principles which are the rock bottom of being as well as of thought and without which science itself is invalid, nay unthinkable. In thoroughly modern fashion, these reasons proceed carefully, cautiously,

adhering strictly to the evidence in hand. They are not dependent on a system of science, a weight of tradition or subjective dispositions to make their way in the world. They are genuine.

Their Completeness

The proofs for the existence of God do not belong on the dubious fringe of philosophy but in a place of honor; they have fought a bitter battle in defense of the intellect of man. A complete treatment of the existence of a beginning of things must always be a three-sided fight which must be won on all fronts or the intellect is lost. On one side are the champions of the ineptitude of man who insist that man's one distinctive power of intellect has no intrinsic value; of course it cannot prove the existence of God. At the opposite extreme is the camp of optimists and emotionalists, one group insisting the existence of God needs no proof since it is self-evident, the other tacitly admitting the intellectual incapacity of man but holding for an emotional assurance of the Supreme Being. In the middle, carrying the brunt of the offensive today, are those who champion man by destroying God, claiming there is no God, at least no such God as the Christians worship.

The fight is bitter. Because not all men and women have the appetite for fighting, or the time and ability to carry on the fight to the end, and because so very much hangs on the outcome of the battle, infallible authority has come forth to protect those who by force of circumstance are non-combatants. By that authority, the man who cannot follow the intricacies of proof, either by reason of inability or lack of leisured time, knows beyond question that the reason of man, by its own power, can certainly know the existence of God and that God, the supreme Being, certainly exists.

The gesture of authority is necessary, not because the truth it defends is beyond the range of the guns of reason, but because it is essential that **every** man **know** of God's existence for his individual life, just as it is essential for the world about man that God **exist**. The thinker who has seen and grasped the proof has no need of authority; he holds that truth by a clear insight into a natural truth. This man can prove the existence of God; by that proof he has also shown that the existence of God is not self-evident, it does not rest on an emotional assurance, it does not escape the powers of the mind of man. It is a proved fact.

Preliminary Notions

Of course this man did not arrive at the proof of the existence of God effortlessly, as he might come to the point of raising a beard. The proof demands hard work, the hard work of thinking; certainly this man would have to have some preliminary notions accurately in mind before he could take a step towards the proof itself.

Potentiality and Actuality

There is, for instance, the simple, but decidedly abstract notion of potentiality and actuality, a notion that is perhaps grasped more easily by seeing it in the complex notion of change. Let us look at these notions in a rather clumsy example. Let us take a large, perfectly plain block of marble; then put a sculptor to work on it and have him make a statue of that block of marble. We say, rightly, that in the original marble block there is the potentiality of becoming a statue, the principle or aptitude for receiving this further perfection, the quality of being changed. It may be worth noting that by "perfection" here we mean any respect in which a thing can be completed or become more determinate in its being. When the process is complete, that potentiality has been realized, the marble block has become a statue.

Change: Potential, Process and Product

We call this process of realizing potentialities "becoming," and whole philosophies have been built upon it. More simply, we call it "change;" in its positive form we give it the name of "development." Whatever we call it, it is nothing more or less than the motion from potentiality to actuality, from the mere capability of receiving perfection to the perfection received. This is motion in its widest sense; it takes place in every change, of canvas and tubes of paint into a masterpiece, of a farmhand into a doctor of medicine, of an

acorn into an oak, as well as in a journey from Chicago to New York. Obviously, this process of change involves three things: (1) a potential or starting point which is prior to the change and contains the potentiality, a thing which is already something but with the capacity for becoming something else, for receiving an added perfection; (2) the reality of the process or movement of change which proceeds from the potential to the actual; (3) the product of the change, the actual needed perfection. It is essential that we hold fast to the obvious fact of a distinct difference between the potentiality and its goal of realization. If this difference be denied, we are forced into a denial of both ends of a change, potentialities and actualities, or into an identification of these two. In either case we are in the impossible position of holding to a motion as eerie as a faceless smile, a motion that has come from nowhere and goes nowhere, or of holding to the absurdity that contradictories are identical, that there is no distinction between the undeveloped and the developed, between farmhands and doctors, marble blocks and statues.

The particular value of clarity in this notion of change lies in the fact that it brings out the complete necessity of explaining every realized potentiality, every perfection, by an explanation external to the realized potentiality itself. It makes more obvious the truth that a developed perfection is not its own explanation, it has not developed itself, nor is it explained by the potentiality which it perfected.

Another value, for our purpose of proving the existence of God, is had from the difference this process of becoming, or change, brings out between the action of God and of creatures. It is on the basis of this process of becoming that we argue from effects to causes in created causes and their effects. Where the cause is divine, the fundamental question remains the same, that is, the explanation of a perfection that is not self-explanatory, that has not produced itself. In this latter case, however, it is not a question of a cause drawing a potentiality to perfection, but of a cause producing that which possesses the potentialities. In a word, the question in this case is not of the cause of becoming (or change) but of the cause of being itself; the transition is not from potentiality to actualization of potentiality, but from non-being to being.

Limitations

One other preliminary notion that must be clarified before proceeding to the actual proofs for the existence of God is the limitation of all proofs for existence. As a matter of fact, there are only two possibilities for proof of the existence of anything: the direct proof offered by sense experience, such as a man has of the existence of a door by ramming his nose against it; and the inferential or a posteriori proof, such as a detective might have of the existence of a murderer when he finds an armless paralytic dangling on a four-foot rope from a rafter fifteen feet above the floor. The detective, by his type of proof, may never come to more than an extremely great probability because it may be impossible to rule out all possibilities other than murder. Where it is possible to rule out all other possibilities, this proof by inference, the a posteriori proof, gives complete certitude.

No other proof of existence is possible, no a priori proof is valid, because existence in no way enters into the very nature of created things; we cannot argue from the nature of things to their existence, as we can argue from the nature of man to the spirituality of his soul. As we shall see, when the proof for God's existence is completed, existence does enter into the very nature of God; but we cannot presuppose that when starting off on the task of proving God does exist. In other words, a conclusion about existence cannot be drawn from premises which do not assert the existence of anything; to assert the existence of something in the conclusion of a line of reasoning, you must assert the existence of something somewhere among the premises.

Ontological "Proofs"

The contrary is the sophism inherent in all a priori or ontological proofs for God's existence, the sophism which Kant attributed to all proofs for God's existence. He argued that some concept of God is essential at the start of any proof for the existence of God and such a concept includes the notion of God's existence. Kant is right, of course, in maintaining that some concept of God is necessary from the very beginning of these proofs; after all, the proofs are trying to prove **something**. But it is quite enough, for the purpose of

the proofs, that that concept be no more than a statement of the absence of contradiction between God and existence; in other words, that concept, required to begin the proofs, need be no more than a construct which demands only the possibility of the union of the subject and predicate in the proposition "God exists."

Experience assures us emphatically that we **do** not have a direct sense knowledge of God's existence. When, in the course of this volume, we learn more about the divine nature, we shall see why we **cannot** have a sense knowledge of God. For the present, it is sufficient to accept the dictum of experience and concentrate our efforts along the only line of proof left open to us, the inferential or a posteriori proof, the proof of the cause from the effects.

The Five Proofs: The First Proof from Passivity -- Motion

The first proof proceeds from the fact of motion or, to put the same thing in another way, from the fact of the passivity of things. Its extremely simple formulation can be made in these terms: because nothing that is moved moves or changes itself, the unquestionable fact of movement or change in the world about us, forces us to conclude to the existence of a first mover who is not himself moved. That is all of the proof. Its very brevity is reason enough for a somewhat lengthy explanation of it.

The phrase, "nothing moves or changes itself," means only that a thing cannot be, relative to the same goal, merely movable and already moved, merely changeable and already changed; for the starting point and the goal of the process of becoming are necessarily different. The mere aptitude for receiving motion is not its own completion. The common sense fundamental back of this phrase, then, is simply that what is not possessed cannot be bestowed; and the very notion of potentiality is the absence of perfection that can be possessed but so far is not, for, unless we maintain that contraries are identical, a potentiality is not its actualization.

Actually this argument goes back a step farther, beyond the cause of change to the cause of that which is changed, back of the cause of becoming to the cause of being. For the immediate cause of change alone is itself in the process of becoming by its very causality; the mover of a potentially movable thing is himself moved by the very movement by which he moves this thing, he becomes something other than he was. The peddler does something to himself as well as to his pushcart when he bends his strength to its movement. Unless we come to a cause that produces that which is subject to change, to a cause that does not itself become something other than it was, the process of becoming or change cannot start. Briefly, what is in question here is not the process of motion, but the existence of that perfection which is motion.

It is obvious, then, that the term "mover" is used of the first and of secondary movers not in an identical, but only in a proportional, sense; for the first mover is the cause of being and is himself unchanged, while secondary movers are causes of change and are themselves changed in their action. It is to this unique first mover that the argument concludes.

A not uncommon fallacy today is to suppose that since this particular movement is caused by another, this latter by another, and so on, there is no need for further explanation since it is taken for granted that the world is eternal. From this point of view, since you can never come to the end of the chain of movers, there is no mystery about the present movement. The fallacy lies in the fact that without a beginning the whole thing could not start; no one of these previous movers is sufficient explanation of itself and its effect on others, yet a sufficient explanation must be found if the fact of movement is to be intelligible, if we are not to have something coming from nothing. The haze of distance or the weight of time do not do away with the necessity of explanation any more than they offer a positive explanation. To be satisfied with this is to be satisfied with the removal of the question to more obscure quarters, comforted by its consequent vagueness. The plain fact is that unless we come to a mover that is in no way dependent we have not explained the existence of the movers who are undoubtedly dependent either for their actual movement or for the power to move; where the effects are patently present the cause ultimately explaining them is not to be denied.

Two things are to be particularly noted about this first proof for the existence of God: the narrowness of the conclusion and the independence of the argument from the element of time. The argument adheres rigidly to the limits of its premises; it concludes to a first mover unmoved -- and to nothing more. There is nothing more which can be concluded from the sensible fact of motion with which the argument started. Because there is movement, there is a cause of cosmic movement which is itself unmoved. The argument is not a sputtering flame to be extinguished by the simple expedient of blanketing it with centuries. There is no question here of movement beginning in time. It is not a question of a present reality demanding a cause in the past. It is simply a question of the universe as given, movement or change as experienced, and the conclusion that such a movement or change is unintelligible without a first mover communicating movement to all things. Time makes no difference. If the eternity of the world were to be proved tomorrow beyond all doubt, this proof would be in no way affected; the fact of change is there, the effect is with us, its cause cannot be denied.

The background for the other four proofs is exactly the same as for this first one. Keeping the preliminary notions, explained above, well in mind and holding to the detailed explanation of this first proof, the others can be seen readily. The point at issue is always the same: the existence of perfection that did not previously exist.

The Second Proof: from Activity -- Causality

The second proof proceeds from causality or the activity of things. Here it is a question of the existence of an efficient cause, the external agent by whose operation a thing exists, the question of the existence of the hen that laid an egg, of the thunderbolt which struck a man dead, the storm that has battered a ship into helplessness. The starting point is again the sensible world.

We see in that sensible world an order of efficient causes dependent one on the other for their causality -- the powder which propels the shell, which in turn crashes into a storage tank of gasoline, and this throwing out a sheet of flame in the heart of a city, and so on. We find nothing that is the cause of itself. Precisely because of this impossibility of a cause causing itself, the efficient causes of the sensible world force the conclusion upon us that a first efficient cause exists which is itself uncaused.

Here it is said that it is impossible for a cause to cause itself for the same fundamental reason as was exposed in the first argument, namely, because the starting point and the goal of change, the potentiality and its realization, cannot be identical. Otherwise we are identifying opposites, saying that the potentiality is the actuality. Here again, as in the first proof, the argument is really stronger than it looks; for the only alternative is not merely identifying opposites, it is identifying non-reality with reality, non-being with being, for the transition is not from potentiality to actuality but from the purely privative condition of nothingness to existence. Here again it must be noted that the term "cause" is used, not identically, but proportionally, of the first and secondary causes.

A difficulty may be offered to this argument, the difficulty of living causes where the dependence is not so immediately obvious. And the answer is that no one living cause explains the efficacy of the species to which it belongs and from which it derives its power to cause. Yet that efficacy must have its explanation. Infinite regress get us nowhere: without the first uncaused cause there will be no effects produced by any cause no matter how many eons are placed between the beginning of things and the world of today. It is not a question of time, nor is the question made more difficult by adding on a few million years to the age of the world. Again attention must be called to the strict adherence of the conclusion to the evidence in hand: the argument concludes to the existence of a cause that is itself uncaused, nothing more. Either of these two arguments is sufficient to demonstrate the existence of God; their effectiveness is not a matter of accumulative evidence. They are merely different angles, shafts of light focusing on the same spectacle of divinity but taking their rise from different starting points in the sensible world.

The Third Proof: from Defectibility -- Contingency

The third proof proceeds from our experience of the contingency or defectibility of things. It can be stated briefly like this: if any beings exist whose essence is not one with their existence (that is, which are contingent), then a being exists whose essence is its existence (that is, an absolutely necessary being). The fact is that in the world about us we see things that can have or lose existence, that begin to exist and cease to exist, that are born and that die. If everything were of this nature, that is if existence is not essentially natural to anything, then nothing would ever exist; which is patently false in view of the existing world. The argument proceeds as do the preceding ones: if things are capable of beginning to exist or of ceasing to exist, then, since they do in fact exist and cease to exist, that capability is fulfilled, that potentiality is realized, and a potentiality cannot realize itself. Much less can nothingness produce that which is the subject of realized potentialities.

The objection of physically necessary substances is answered as was the fundamental objection to the preceding arguments. No such physically necessary being explains its own necessity but *receives it* (an actualized potentiality). So the necessity of the species is not explained by the species itself; "a multitude of contingent things do not make a necessary thing any more than a multitude of idiots make one intelligent man." This necessity must be explained by a necessary being that does not *receive* necessity, but that is its necessity. Again the element of time makes no difference. An infinite chain of beings that *receive* their necessity, or of beings which are not necessary, neither complicates nor explains the difficulty; it merely attempts to dodge the problem by hiding under the accumulation of immediate causes or the accumulation of the years.

These first three proofs have argued to the existence of God from the passivity, the activity and the contingency of things. The fourth proof argues from the perfection of things. But the argument still proceeds from the world of reality, not necessarily the world of sense experience, sense impressions, but nonetheless from the world of reality. For the real world also includes the things we understand as well as the things we feel, such things as love, justice, friendship, things that we can never grow in the garden or meet on the street but which are, for all that, decidedly realities.

The perfections in question here are only the absolute perfections that carry the note of perfection in themselves, not the relative which are perfections only because of their order to something else. Examples of such absolute perfections are animality, rationality, life, existence. And these can be roughly classified by stressing the point that they are in themselves either strictly limited or completely limitless.

As examples of the strictly limited, we may mention animality or humanity. A man is no less an animal than a lion; nor has a sickly boy less humanity than a strapping giant. These things imply definitely fixed limits. They either are or are not fully possessed; there is never any question of having a little or a great deal of them. To exceed or to fall away from the fixed limit means the complete loss of that perfection. As examples of the limitless perfections, there are life, goodness, existence, and so on. If there are limits to these perfections in this or that individual or species, the limitation does not come from the perfection itself. We note the source of the limitation in our very manner of speech when we speak of *human* life and *animal* life, though it never occurs to us to speak of *human* rationality or *animal* animality.

Since it is precisely from these unlimited perfections that the proof of the existence of God proceeds, it may be worth while pointing out some of their characteristics. Perhaps the most noticeable is that these perfections are possessed by different kinds of being in an analogous, not an identical, way; thus, for instance, we speak of a good stone, a good fruit, a good horse or a good professor according as each has its due perfection. Obviously the goodness of the professor is not identically the same as the goodness of fruit. There is proportionality there, but not identity. The second particularly noteworthy characteristic is that these perfections are realizable in different degrees; thus, in the course of one lifetime a man may be bad, of mediocre virtue, of more than average virtue, and ultimately a saint.

The Fourth Proof: from Perfection -- Participation

The fourth proof for the existence of God can be stated succinctly. In the world about us we see these

perfections existing in things in greater and lesser degrees: that is, we see things that are more and less good, more and less true, and so on; we see life within human limits, animal limits, plant limits. Now these limited degrees of limitless perfections can be explained only by the existence of something to which these perfections pertain in their fullness, something which does not possess this or that degree of goodness, truth, life, but which is, by its very nature, limitless goodness, limitless truth, limitless life.

Certainly these limited degrees of limitless perfections are not explained by the natures which possess them. For what flows from the essential principles of a nature is had in its fullness; humanity is not something a man achieves after a long struggle. Moreover, perfections which flow from nature do not vary: the spoiled lapdog is not less animal as the days pass, the puppy does not grow into his animality. Yet, as a matter of fact, in the world about us these limitless perfections of goodness, life and the rest are not had in their fullness and they vary with an infinite variety.

The explanation, then, must be sought outside of the natures which possess a limited edition of a limitless virtue, that is, in some extrinsic source which has the perfection perfectly. Otherwise we meet the fundamental obstacle erected by an identification of contraries, of a potentiality bringing about its own realization, indeed, of the absence of perfection bringing about the presence of perfection. In a word, these limited editions of limitless virtues are *received* virtues; in the ultimate analysis, they are explicable only by some being who has not received them but to whom they belong, in their limitlessness, by the very nature of that being. Nor is this a question of a jump from the ideal to the real order. These effects -- human life, the goodness of a man -- are decidedly in the real order. It is not a matter of having an ideal rule by which we may measure these perfections; but of having a real, existing cause by whose action these realities have been brought into being.

This fourth proof proceeded from multiplicity to unity, from the multiplicity of shared or received perfections to the unity of essentially possessed perfection. The fifth proof proceeds from an ordered multiplicity to an ordering unity. The order of the world, which is at the starting point of this proof, furnished one of the most constant evidences of the existence of God to men through the ages. It appealed to Greek poets and philosophers; in un-philosophic form it was preserved in the Sacred Writings of the Jews; primitive peoples appealed to it in their origin myths. It has been not only one of the most ancient of the proofs but one of the most popular. It has been accepted as genuine by the uneducated who were unable to follow its philosophical implications; and, at the same time, was the only proof given a measure of respect by the great Kant.

It was perhaps to be expected that modern philosophy, with its contempt for the past should most strenuously assail this particular proof. Some will say that it was destroyed by the theory of evolution which, telling a tale of the process of development, made unnecessary all explanation of the beginning of that process. Again, the facts of reality are said to be adequately explained by blind chance or by necessity. We shall look at these last two modern (and ancient) objections more closely after we have seen the proof itself.

The Fifth Proof: from Order -- Finality

The fifth proof for the existence of God proceeds just as did the other four, demanding no more, resting on just as solid a foundation. It has the same starting point of facts in the world in which we live; it makes use of the same fundamental principle of reason and of things, namely, that opposites are not identical. Here the point in question is the existence of an order; the search for its explanation leads us to a supreme intelligence.

The argument might be phrased briefly like this. In the world about us we see things devoid of intelligence acting for an end, a fact which is evident from their always, or generally, acting in the same orderly way to attain that which is best for them. Evidently these actions are placed, not by accident, but on purpose. As things devoid of intelligence do not act for an end unless they be directed by some intelligence, we must conclude that a supreme intelligence exists which directs all natural things to their end.

An immediately obvious difficulty against this argument seems to be that it presumes the order of the world; this order is by no means a fact of experience. If there is such an order in the world, we have not discovered it yet. As a matter of fact, this objection has its roots in the lush soil of confusion, the confusion of external and internal finality. To solve the mystery of external finality we would have to know all the answers to such questions as the external reason for the bite of a mosquito, the existence of a snake, the destruction wrought by a hurricane. We simply do not know these things; certainly we do not know all of them and probably we never shall. It is asking a good deal to demand an exhaustive measurement of divine plans by such an instrument as the mind of a man. As a matter of fact, we do not have to plumb the mystery of external finality for the purposes of this argument.

It is quite sufficient that we establish the fact of internal finality. That we can and do know without doubt. We do know that the eye is constructed for purposes of seeing, the ear for hearing; that a mosquito bites for purposes of nourishment, that the snake's fangs are weapons of defense, and so on. Knowledge such as this is sufficient for the starting point of this fifth proof for the existence of God. Indeed, only one such instance of internal finality would give grounds enough for the proof. This fact of internal finality is quite sufficient to absolve this argument from the charge of anthropomorphism which some philosophers have levelled against it. The argument does not demand that we search the soul of a snake or a mosquito to unearth motives, intentions or plans; it asks merely that we recognize the fact of a constant order of cause to effect.

This internal order is not to be explained by chance. Such an explanation is an insult to common sense: my ear might just as well have turned out to be an organ of smell; on such grounds, is it not surprising that so many animals have ears? The ratio of the chances for a simultaneous chance development of the thirteen conditions immediately necessary for sight has been figured out as 9,999,985 to 15; yet the thing happens every day!

Putting aside the appeal of common sense, which is strangely suspect by the modern philosopher, the explanation of the order of the world by chance is philosophically unsound. Certainly chance exists. It is just chance that a bald-headed man is caught in a thunder-shower without his hat; but obviously if there were no reason for his being out, no reason for the shower, the heavy drops would not now be smacking off the smooth surface of his head. In other words, the very existence of chance presupposes the existence of the essential; chance is no more than the clash of two causes attempting to pursue their own purposive ways; it is an accident which happens to the essential, not which explains or does away with the essential. If everything happens by chance, then all nature is reduced to the level of the accidental; things are not essentially what they are, but only accidentally so, the mirage may melt away before the groping fingers of our mind.

Such an explanation is no explanation at all; it is a contradiction. It is the by now familiar absurdity of explaining the perfect by the imperfect, the greater by the less, order by the lack of order. Or, to put it bluntly, it identifies opposites potentiality with its realization or potentiality with the lack of all being. And we are faced with the old dilemma of denying the potentialities of the medical student and the perfections of the doctor or of denying the difference between the two; that is, we are back to the impossible attempt to deny facts.

The modern, intent on dodging the infinite, is not at all dashed by the breakdown of an explanation which he will confidently use again as soon as the thunder of reason's guns has died down. For the moment he solves the problem by denying it: the order of the world is explained by the necessity of nature; God is unnecessary because the world is self-sufficient. In plain language, this means that order is discernible in the world, science can continue with its investigation of this order, because things are what they are; this is their nature, they are determined by necessary physical laws to this way of being and of acting, nature itself supplies the necessary determination.

No real question is solved by pretending it does not exist: and this is a real question. The solution offered on the grounds of necessity merely pushes the question back. Whence comes this determination, this

necessary inclination to determined action? What is the source of the necessity of nature and of physical laws? Obviously it does not explain itself; chance will not do as an explanation; the only possible solution is a cause above nature, an intelligence that is supreme. Not any intelligence will do. For if that intelligence is not supreme, then it is not intelligence but a nature which *has* intelligence, that is, a nature determined, inclined, ordered to know; and we have the same problem all over again -- whence comes this determination, this inclination, this order? This ultimately explanatory intelligence must *be*, not *have*, intelligence; it must not be ordered to knowing but must be its own knowledge.

A Posteriori Arguments

Such are the proofs for the existence of God. They have their foundations deep in the solid earth while their superstructure sweeps up to the heights of divinity. These proofs are not airy abstractions, they are not vague constructs made to substitute, in the dim light of argumentation, for solid reality. They are inferential proofs, a posteriori proofs, inductions based on the facts of the sensible world and the first principles of reason. The facts upon which they are based are in no sense disputed facts; given the movement of an eyelash, the perfection of a stone or the contingency of a sigh, these proofs hold. Surely, in all common sense, the foundation asked from the senses for these proofs cannot be denied.

On the other hand, the principle of reason involved in these proofs is no less indisputable. It cannot be denied without the denial of all intellectual activities, without the denial of the world of reality; indeed, it cannot be denied without being affirmed. For this principle is simply that a thing is what it is, a thing cannot be and not be at the same time, it cannot be itself and something else; in other words, the principle insists that differences are not identities, that potentialities are not their actualizations, that non-being is not identical with being.

Independently Sufficient

The philosopher who, for reasons best known to himself, decides to challenge these proofs has entered a war of cosmic proportions; fortunately for himself, he cannot win. Such a victory would be his own annihilation. These proofs are not aimed at a cumulative effect; they are totally different from the mass of arguments gathered in support of the hypothesis of evolution, they are not the frail threads woven into the strong cloth of a prosecuting attorney's circumstantial argument. From all of them, or from any one of them, the existence of God is established; from any one of them as a starting point, it can be shown that God is existence itself, the perfect being, *ens a se*.

Strictly Limited to Evidence

No fault can be found with their procedure, for they adhere rigidly to the evidence in hand and conclude within the proper limits of this evidence. The knowledge they give is not that of probability, not even of very high probability; rather it is knowledge of metaphysical certitude, excluding every other possibility, leaving only the first mover, the first cause, the necessary being and so on as the ultimate answer to the facts of the world of reality.

Implications

That these proofs have been shrugged off as meaningless to men, devoid of qualitative content, is something the thinking man will always be unable to understand; and for the very good reason that such an attitude is unintelligible. The following chapters will bring out at length the implications of these notions; but without further elaboration these arguments bow down under the weight of the ripe fruit of profound significance. Thus, for instance, the fact of the existence of a first unmoved mover means that there is no movement, from the crushing force of a tidal wave to the rise and fall of a breast in sleep which does not depend every instant on God; there is no change, from the imperceptible coloring of a leaf in autumn to the upheaval of a social revolution in which God does not play a major part. The existence of a first uncaused cause means that in the swaying struggle of men's lives, the triumphs of their greatest thoughts and works, their masterpieces, their literature, their architecture, the soarings of the poet or the

crisp command of the soldier, there is no instant from which God can be excluded. No walls are thick enough, no wastes lonely enough, no army powerful enough, no governmental edict sweeping enough, no hatred bitter enough to exclude the action of the first cause.

Significance of the Proofs

The existence of an absolutely necessary being means there is a divine sustaining hand whose withdrawal means annihilation; it means that we cannot contact anything of reality without confronting divinity; that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves, that every moment of life, every particle of dust, every stitch of a garment is permeated with divinity or it could not continue to be. That there is an all perfect being means that all the beauty, the love, the goodness that lift the heart of a man out of himself are but shadows of the infinite on the pool of life, vague hints of the ineffable that lies at the beginning and end of life. That a supreme intelligence exists makes it plain that the hairs of our head are indeed numbered; that there is no step, no breath, no success or failure that is without its meaning, without its place in a divine plan, a supreme order, that necessarily goes beyond the human mind's power of assimilation.

Real Mystery of Beginnings

These proofs may be attacked as wild abstractions of reason without solid foundation or as cold reasonings that have no meaning, no interest to men. Both accusations are completely false: these are scientific proofs based on the world of reality; they are of an inexhaustible significance and interest to men. If the truth were honestly faced, it would be evident that the real grounds for the modern unease in their presence is the fact that they lead the mind of men to the ultimate mystery. Every beginning is mysterious because every beginning has a drop of the exotic perfume of divinity on its garments. Every beginning is a bridge spanning the chasm between what can be and what is, by its very existence proclaiming the perfection and the mystery of its builder, the ultimate Beginning who laid the foundations upon which every such bridge must be built. The most prosaic beginning intrigues our mind. for the humblest beginning poses a question that only divinity answers and only divinity can fully understand that answer. By a beginning something has come into being that did not exist before; it is a sleight of hand trick, a bit of magic that cannot be true, a mouse giving birth to a mountain unless we come to the Beginning that never began and always is, to the limitlessness that explains the limited, to the utterly independent which is the sole support of the dependent. When we have arrived at that ultimate answer, we are face to face with the incomprehensible precisely because we are in the presence of the limitless.

Non-Mysterious Substitutes

To the man who confusedly identifies human excellence with absolute supremacy, this sort of thing is intolerable; what overflows the measure of the human mind simply cannot exist, for this would be a refutation of the excellence of man. Some other solution must be had, something not mysterious, something that can be weighed, measured and put in its place by the human god of the universe. It may be this man will try to satisfy his mind, and his heart, by the absurdities of order explained by chance, by the blindness of necessity that has no source, or the deceit of substituting a process for an explanation. But such things can satisfy the mind of a man only by destroying it; they do not solve the problem of a beginning, they dodge it, deny it, destroy it, whereas the mind of man can be satisfied only with an answer. If we are to have that answer, we must face the fact of mystery, for mystery can be eliminated only at the cost of eliminating the beginning and so eliminating all that follows from that beginning. Perhaps, some day, the modern man will learn that mystery is not the prison of the mind of man, it is his home.

CHAPTER III -- THE INEFFABLE (Q. 3-11)

1. Limitations of speech:
 - (a) By the violence of passion.
 - (b) By the ignorance of listeners.
 - (c) By the sublimity of the concept.
 2. Philosophy's unspeakables:
 - (a) The unknown God of the Christians:
 - (1) The enemy of modern politics.
 - (2) The feeble governor.
 - (3) The pious hypocrite.
 - (4) The out-dated divinity.
 - (5) The stranger to a changed world:
 - a. A world of new knowledge and interests.
 - b. A world of new philosophy.
 - c. A world in flux.
 - (b) The unknown man:
 - (1) Not a corrupt puppet but a supreme lord.
 - (2) But a vulnerable, ignorant, despairing lord.
 3. The ineffable God:
 - (a) The obvious perfections of God in general.
 - (b) The perfections in detail:
 - (1) The simplicity of God.
 - (2) The perfection of God:
 - a. The difficulty of incompatibility.
 - b. Virtual, formal and eminent perfection.
 - (3) The goodness of God.
 - (4) The infinity and ubiquity of God.
 - (5) The immutability and eternity of God.
 - (6) The unity of God.
 4. Unspeakable modern gods:
 - (a) A subjective god.
 - (b) A finite god.
 - (c) An undeveloped god.
 - (d) A pantheistic god.
- Conclusion:
1. The crisis of the ages.
 2. The modern choice.
 3. Evaluation of the choice.

CHAPTER III -- THE INEFFABLE (Q. 1-11)

Limitations of Speech

Undoubtedly there is some advantage in a blind man's inability to watch with anxious impotence as his words tread their dangerous way to the mind of an other, plodding ineptly, their frail strength weighed down with the heavy burden of thought. But then neither can he detect the garbling of the message, the complete per version of misunderstanding or the meaninglessness of a word that has lost its burden on the way; so of course he misses the incalculable advantage of rushing a host of other messengers immediately in the hope that one will make the crossing safely, of supplementing the gawky word with a swift flash of an eye, the grace of a smile, the sincerity of a gesture that say so much more than will fit into a word.

That words are poor messengers is evidenced by the wholehearted support we give them whenever such support is possible. Where the words must stand alone, in a letter, a telegram, a book, we put them down in fear and trembling; but then, they are the best messengers we have, so we make the most of them. Where they actually break down we are brought up short in the realization of our helpless dependence on them.

Violence of Passion

And they do break down. The man who is so angry he sputters may be so angry he is incapable of forming

words; or it may be he can find no words staunch enough to contain the thunderbolts he would like to hurl. Certainly a man consumed by hate is silenced by a bitterness too great for words; the coward is a victim of nameless fears, fears so deep and so violent that they will never have a name. These passions, and many another, stir up within a man the literally unspeakable things, things that pass beyond the boundaries of speech and so are necessarily imprisoned in the heart of their victim; his fight against them must always be a lonely battle.

Ignorance of Listeners

A tourist, whose rugged independence forces him to abandon the protective offices of his guide, soon discovers a quite different example of the breakdown of words. He may ruin his disposition and hoarsen his voice before it dawns on him, but eventually he will come to recognize the fact that shouted words in his own language do not solve the difficulty. In the same line, but much more befuddling, is the professor's difficulty when his words bounce off his students as though they were wearing thought-proof vests, when example, illustration, contrast, synonymous repetition do nothing at all to the wall of blankness that protects their minds from his incursions. But these difficulties of communication are not insuperable; time, patience and work should clear them up. There is yet another case of the breakdown of words that no amount of effort can overcome.

Sublimity of the Concept

A feeble example of the impossibility of squeezing the ineffable into the confines of words is had in the almost tangible silence that envelopes a moment of crucial parting of those whom love has made one, that moment when we put the whole burden of speech into a tight, lingering handshake, a desperate embrace, or the hopeless silence of tears. Here there are things to be communicated, but things too sacred, too deep, too wide for words. Or, again, there is that mysterious moment of intellectual maturity when reason's intuition sees antinomies merge and still remain distinct, an insight that must always remain utterly personal because it surpasses words. But if human love and human knowledge of created things reach heights too sublime for the plodding steps of words, obviously human love and human knowledge of the limitlessness of the uncreated soar to levels where words are almost a profanation of the concepts they might attempt to express. A light can be so bright that it destroys sight, a sound so loud it deafens the ears; and there can be a truth so great it defies the messengers of truth which are words. That truth is the truth about God.

Philosophy's Unspeakables

There is, then, an infinite chasm between the unspeakable things that are too base, too irrational for words and the ineffable things that are too high, too intelligible for the framework of speech. The chasm, however, does not stop the modern philosopher who has had so much practice identifying contradictories and laughing logic out of court. He has bridged the chasm by making the ineffable divinity an unspeakable thing.

The Christians' Unknown God

The picture he draws of the Christian God is revolting enough to drive any man to atheism; but the paint he uses for the picture is not squeezed from the tubes of facts, rather it is the free-flowing, bodiless stuff of an imagination gone wild. To him the Christian God is the embodiment of tyrannical absolutism. In our modern political ideas there is no room for this sort of thing; men can no longer be looked on as the slaves, the puppets of a Caesar-like God living in epicurean felicity while his underlings drag out their lives in misery. What kind of a god is this, they say, who governs less wisely than a dishonest member of a corrupt political machine? Their god must be constantly striving, however unsuccessfully, against evil, or they will disown him. They have no sympathy for the hypocritical god who covers an essential corruption of man with the bright cloak of trust, leaving the essential rottenness untouched. If god is not battling against evil, even physical evil, but rather is pretending that the evil is not there, then he isn't much of a

god and we shall get along without him.

Outdated

The modern philosopher protests so much against God that he creates the suspicion he is having a hard time convincing himself; the longer and louder he protests, the more unsound are the reasons he offers. He argues, for instance, that God should be, if not as variable as fashions at least as changing as the ages. So in one age an idea of God is completely satisfying while, in the succeeding ages, an entirely new one is necessary to satisfy men. No belief retains its divinity unchanged through different generations; our race has changed, so our God must change. The Christian idea of God is old fashioned, an aloof, rigid idea; it is the notion of a God incapable of participation in human affairs, sublimely above them and, at least as far as concrete evidence is concerned, not so intimately worried about them.

A World in Flux

Our world has changed. The views of the men and women of that world have changed. Our instruments of investigation are vastly improved, our methods of inquiry are better, more accurate; and the particular interests involved are quite different, for the things we seek and discover were not objects of inquiry for our Christian ancestors. We need a new god. Our philosophy today is different; philosophers today are not theo-centric but homo-centric. Their chief interest is not God but man; they have a new conception of the supernatural, the bible and Christ. Of course that conception does not leave much of the supernatural, of the bible or of Christ; but it has the one indispensable quality -- it is new. To match it, we must have a new concept of god. Moreover, we envision the world as dynamic, reality as dynamic; the world and reality are not stable but a mysterious flow sweeping on to yet unsuspected perfections. The absolute God of the Christians simply will not do for this changed point of view.

Not a Puppet but a Lord

The plastic surgeon of philosophy who does not hesitate to do a face-lifting job on God could hardly be content with man as God made him. The finished product would move the mother of men to deny her parenthood indignantly; and no one could blame her. Man is no longer the puppet and slave of God; he is the supreme lord of the world. Apparently there is no medium. But for all his exalted position, he is a bedraggled figure. Physical evil, sickness and death, are his supreme misfortunes; that is to say, he is so highly vulnerable that he must slink through life in terror of ill health, a blow on the head or the crack of a gun which would utterly destroy him and his happiness. He is an ignorant fellow, his knowledge limited to a suspicious acceptance of history, the cluttering details of science and the vague findings of the collective judgment of men, though he may get an irrational lift out of that emotional thing called religious experience. If this ignorant, frightened creature exercises his unhappy privilege of looking beyond the sunset of today his eyes focus on the goal of all his terrified living -- oblivion; and the gates are thrown wide to despair.

A Despairing Lord

The philosophical plastic surgeon may run his caressing eyes fondly over the product of his surgery; certainly no one else can, least of all a philosopher whose chief interest is truth. This is much too high a price to pay that the modern philosopher be happy. This monster he has created is not a Christian man, indeed is not any kind of man. The corruption allegedly fixed on man by Christianity got much too late a start to deserve the name Christian; Christianity began before the sixteenth century. The philosophical plastic surgeon started out to remove a blemish that was non-existent and ended by utterly disfiguring the image of God whose treasures were so deeply buried within the impregnable fortress of his soul as to be secure from all but himself, whose mind could leap the boundaries of sense, of time and space, whose goal was eternal life, a goal worth much more than the struggles, failures, discouragements and dashed hopes that have to be faced in the living of life. This unspeakable thing created by modern philosophy is not man as we know him, as men and God have known him from the beginning.

Still less is the God modern philosophy attacks, the God whose existence Thomas proved in the preceding chapter of this volume. As Thomas knew Him, the God of the Christian was not a being from whom a reasonable man would recoil in horror; rather this God is a being to enthrall the heart of a man, a being for whom man would leave all things and lose his life to have all things and to save his life. This is the God whose ineffable nature and divine messages engaged the minds and hearts of Fathers, doctors and theologians down the centuries; who was the inspiration of the saints, the courage of the martyrs, the purity of the virgins, the charity of all men; this was the God who came from Mary's womb to die on the Cross that men might have more abundant life.

The Ineffable God

Such a God is well worth the knowing. In this chapter we propose to give a rough description of Him, a description adequate enough to allow us to recognize divinity, yet totally inadequate from the point of view of the rich personality of God. Just as we might describe a man by talking of his dark hair, his blue eyes, his long swinging stride yet know full well that only deep acquaintance, solid friendship and even the full consecration of love can make that man really well known, so we describe God as simple, utterly perfect, good, infinite, present everywhere, unchangeable, eternal, one; knowing well that only eternal vision and unending love can dissipate the haze which shrouds divinity's heights from the mind of men.

God's Perfections in General

This list of divine perfections is by no means exhaustive. We shall learn more of God as we progress further and further with the analysis of the divine nature. This is merely the brief, muttered formula of introduction. There is much still to be said of God's knowledge, of His will, His mercy, His providence and His justice: all these will be taken up in the succeeding chapters of this book.

The particular attributes selected for treatment in this chapter were chosen as the most obvious implications in view of the proof for the existence of God in the last chapter, the proof of the existence of a first unmoved mover, the first uncaused cause, the absolutely necessary being, the absolutely perfect being, the supreme intelligence at the root of the order of the world.

It is to be noted that our knowledge of these divine perfections is not arrived at by way of "religious experience", they are not the projections of faith states, of self-hypnotism, they are not the ethereal transports of the poet or the rich imaginings of pious souls; they are not the result of an outlook, an age, a political or scientific theory. They are rigid deductions, implications from an established fact. And implication, here, is to be taken in its full strong sense, the sense of being contained, wrapped up in what has been previously established. There are, it is true, other senses of the word, senses that have about them the unhealthy pallor of a slyness, a cowardice, of an uncleanness that shirk the bright sunlight of direct speech to haunt the alleys of suggestion, hints, indirect or double-meaning speech.

The sense in which we are using the word here is as bright as sunlight on sand, as clean as the smell of the sea; the sense in which, for example, the motherhood of Mary is implied in the statement "Christ was the son of Man." In this same sense it follows that, since I am a man, I am a rational animal; since this person is a woman, she is not a man. These are inescapable implications whose validity rests entirely on the validity of their foundation.

Simplicity

The most obvious implication from the proofs for the existence of God is that God is in no sense a composite or complex being; He is wholly simple. Before going on to establish the obvious character of this divine attribute of simplicity, it might be well to admit frankly that we have done such strange, contradictory things to simplicity that God might consider this particular attribute a dubious compliment. There is a great difference between the simple things we pity or patronize for their simplicity and the simple things to which we pay the tribute of profound respect and admiration. A simple-minded man is one who, through lack of ability or opportunity, does not know any better; whereas a richly simple gown

is the result of supreme ability and unlimited opportunities. The simplicity of the child's essay is altogether different from the simplicity of the literary craftsman's easy grace with words. In the one case we see simplicity as the mark of imperfection, in the other, as the stamp of genius; in both cases we are right, but it must be seen that we are using the word simple in decidedly different senses.

Simplicity is a badge of imperfection and will remain so in the world of created things where perfection must be measured in terms of potentialities and their realization. Man stands at the peak of the physical universe precisely because of his rich potentialities; his life is richer, fuller, as more of those potentialities are realized, as even greater potentialities are acquired, in a word, in proportion to the increased complexity of his life. He may cast an envious glance at a cat sleeping in a sunny window; life is so simple for a cat. But the envy is not real; no man wants to spend his life curled up in sleep, particularly in a window.

Yet this rich potentiality, the very basis of the complexity which makes up the perfection of created things, is itself a statement of imperfection. It implies imperfection; it is a declaration that something can still be had, that there is a void still to be filled up by some one some thing else. The being who has no potentialities, but only pure actuality, who is the source of all potentiality, alone escapes the stigma of imperfection and is free of the basic element of complexity. This being is utterly, completely simple; this is the being who receives nothing but gives all things. The simplicity we so admire and respect in created things, the simplicity that smacks of genius, is not really simplicity at all but the appearance of simplicity; men have succeeded in giving to rich complexity a smooth unity by a perfect coordination to a single end and we salute the faint image of divinity thus produced.

To say that God is simple means, in the concrete, that He is in no sense composite. He is not, has not, a body; He is not a golden calf or a painted idol. He has not divinity as man has humanity; He is divinity. His nature is not a cup filled to overflowing with existence, He is not full of life; He is existence, He is life. There are no family quarrels of the gods; there is nothing in God upon which to base a difference in divine nature. He does not grow fat or thin or red in the face; His thought is not a procession of concepts as is ours, for there is nothing accidental, transient, unessential in God. Because He is simple He cannot enter into composition with others as sugar does with coffee or oxygen with hydrogen; He cannot be immersed in the inert mass of matter like Bergson's *élan vital*, expending His divine life fighting free with all the agony of a boy fighting his way out of sleep. God is simple because He is the *first* the completely *independent* source of all being.

Perfection

One of the greatest concentrations of perfection the world has seen was to be found in that small house of Nazareth when Gabriel saluted the Immaculate Virgin; yet even in this sublime company there was the spectre of imperfection, which is limitation, that haunts all creation. The angel had the potentialities of successive thought that all eternity would not exhaust; the virgin had the undeveloped potentialities of mind and heart that are the task as well as the glory of human nature; both had the imperfection inherent in the limited character of their respective nature, for the angelic no less than the human nature has its boundaries fixed. The most intimate glimpse of the limitless perfection of God given to man on this earth is to be had in the picture of the Madonna with the divine child in her arms; for there is all the perfection of human nature along with its inevitable limitation, but there also is the unfathomable abyss of the boundless source of all perfection.

There is simply no place for imperfection in God. In Him there are no potentialities to be realized, as all potentialities must be realized, by something other than themselves. He is absolutely independent because He is first; all others depend on this first cause Who cannot depend on any other without ceasing to be first. More than that, He has in Himself the perfections of everything else that ever has, ever will, indeed, that ever could exist. Unless He be their cause they cannot be; He cannot be the cause of perfections that are not in some way already His.

Virtually, Formally and Eminently

When we come down to detail, the argument for the utter perfection of God seems to involve insuperable difficulties. If we try to picture God as a combination of the ferocity of a wolf and the pathetic friendliness of a dachshund, the beauty of youth and the serenity of age, the grandeur of a sunset and the peace of night we shall drive ourselves insane. But why should we try this sort of thing in our thought of the divinity when we are so careful to avoid it in our thought of the created universe? We know that a father contains within himself all the perfections of the human nature of his son and in exactly the same way; if we had to put this in a technical phrase, any journeyman philosopher could tell us that these perfections were possessed formally. We are quite sure an acorn contains the perfections of an oak; but we do not try to picture the oak's huge trunk and stubborn leaves as packed into the tiny confines of an acorn. We know these perfections do not exist in the acorn in the same way as in the oak; they are had, not formally, but virtually, radically, in the acorn. We do not hesitate to attribute the perfections of a poem to its author; but we do not make the absurd mistake of expecting the poet's mind to get musty, yellow with age, or covered with dust on a library shelf. It is not the poet that leaps out of the frightened child's mouth in elocution class. In this case the poet possesses the perfections of his poem but in a completely superior manner, eminently.

It is in this last fashion, eminently, that the perfections of all creation are found in God; He is the cause of them all, they exist in Him, not virtually, not identically, but eminently. The conclusion that all reality is godlike is quite true. What we see in the world of existence, of beauty, of goodness, of grace and all the rest is had from God Who is overflowing with perfection. These creatures share, participate in the perfection of God. This was a truth close to the heart of Francis of Assisi and Martin de Porres, a truth that made all irrational creation and the whole world of men a lover's note to be read slowly, tenderly, repeatedly, to be treasured caressingly until the writer in person made plain all the beauties that could not be squeezed between the lines. It is right that the strength of a storm at sea, the innocence of a child, the calm of a country twilight should stir us to the depths of our being for these are shadows of divinity passing by.

It might be well to note here, for accuracy's sake, that we speak of divine attributes in a double sense, often without realizing the distinction. Thus when we state these attributes positively, such as simplicity and perfection, we are speaking only by way of analogy; that is, we do not mean to attribute these things to God in exactly the same way in which they belong to men but in an infinitely superior manner. On the other hand, when we state them negatively, insisting, for example, that God is incomposite and devoid of all imperfection, we are talking literally, univocally, and expect our words to be taken without qualification.

Goodness

Another caution that may not be amiss is that we have an entirely accurate notion of the particular attribute under discussion. Thus, to speak of the goodness of God in the sense of sanctimoniousness is to divorce the discussion from reality, as, well as to flavor it distastefully. The notion of goodness adds nothing to being but the smack of desirability, that is, a thing can be good, desirable, only insofar as it is possible or thought to be possible; it can be pursued and enjoyed only insofar as it has being. We do not desire an automobile that can be folded up and dropped into a purse. We can see the advantage of a servant with five arms, but we do not advertise for such a one. We do, however, have a real desire for real things--for friends, a ham sandwich, new clothes, knowledge. It is this smack of desirability that goodness adds to being which is at the root of all activity.

Activity, then, is striving for the desirable thing, for something good; boredom, on the other hand, is the absence of knowledge of and interest in the good and is the nearest approach to stagnation to be found among living things. As a matter of fact, everything in the world has its desirable something, its goal. Concretely that goal is the completion, the perfection, the complete fulfillment of the particular creature; every creature is good in proportion as it is, it is better in proportion as it has approached its goal. Briefly,

a thing is good insofar as it is real. Bluff, defect, incapacity have nothing desirable about them because there is nothing real about them. But He Who is, the cause of all reality, the perfect Being, is the highest goodness for He is the most real Being. Not that He has goodness; rather He is goodness, as He is reality. On His goodness all other goodness is modeled, from His goodness all other goodness proceeds; all other goodness is a similitude, a participation, a limited miniature of the limitless goodness of God.

Because of the smack of desirability which goodness adds to being, God is most desirable, most lovable. So true is this that everything in the universe hustles eagerly to this goal of goodness, each in its own way: man with alert steps along the dangerous road of knowledge and love, brutes with the unerring aim of instinct, the inanimate world with the blind, plodding step of physical necessity devoid of all knowledge. For each creature in the universe is spurred on to action by the goal of its own perfection, a goal which is nothing but a similitude, an image, a mirroring of the goodness of God.

Infinity

No limits are to be placed on the goodness of God, as no limits are to be assigned to any other divine attribute. How can you have a fence with nothing, absolutely nothing, on the other side of it? What is there of reality, that God will not have, to mark the spot where the fence must begin? Limitation is essentially a declaration of potentialities achieved or potentialities capable of achievement; without potentiality limitation is a contradiction in terms. And there can be no potentiality in God, for potentiality is a declaration of dependence. God has not received existence within the limits of a human, an animal or an angelic nature; He has not received at all, He is. The idea of reception is the idea of change, of potentiality actualized, of perfection within limits--something that our proof for His existence forced us to exclude from God. He is infinite, and He alone; for He alone is first, receiving from no one, giving to all.

Ubiquity

In a very real sense, this utterly limitless God overflows the limits of the universe. He is everywhere within it, yet not contained by it. Everything in the universe comes from God; existence is His proper effect. Where anything exists, there is God. Understand, now, this is not merely a matter of God first giving existence and then abandoning the universe to its fate; He does not give us a pat on the back as we leave the corner of nothingness to jump into the ring of life, leaving us to take the blows while He shouts advice that takes none of the sting out of the blows. Existence belongs to God; as long as existence endures, there is the hand of God sustaining it as a mother supports her infant or the throat of a singer sustains his song. God is everywhere, and only God; for only God is the infinite, the first cause explaining every existent thing.

The ubiquity of God, in common with all the divine perfections, is not a cold, abstract thing meaningless to men. Its significance for human living is inexhaustible. In the concrete, it means, for instance, that God is in the surge of the sea, the quiet peace of hills and valleys, the cool refreshment of rain, the hard drive of wind-driven snow. In the cities He is in the bustling of crowds, the roar of traffic, the struggle for pleasure, for life, for happiness, in the majesty of towering buildings. In homes He is not to be excluded from the tired, drowsy hours of night, the hurried activity of morning, from the love and quarrels, the secret worries and unquestioning devotion, the sacrifice and peace that saturate a home. In every individual one of us God is more intimately present than we are to ourselves. Every existing thing within us demands not only the existence of God but also His constant presence, from every rush of blood from our hearts to every wish, every thought, every act. In other words, everything that is real must have God there as the explanation, the foundation, the cause of every moment of its reality.

Thomas puts this all succinctly and beautifully when he says that God is in the world, in everything and everyone in the world, by His essence, causing all things, by His presence, all things being naked and open to the eye of this intelligent cause, by His power on which everything depends, to which everything is subject.

There is in this conception a majesty that transforms the earth. The mistaken exaggerations of Eastern

philosophy made men walk carefully lest, treading on a living thing, they tread on the soul of a man. We have no fear of treading on the soul of man nor on God; but we do live in a world vibrant with divinity. We can give a real reverence to every being because within it, supporting its very existence, is the living God Himself. There is terror in this conception, the terror of moving in an atmosphere pervaded with divinity, of being ourselves wrapped about with divinity, penetrated with the infinite. But there is also courage and comfort here to be had from no other source. We bar the world in general from everything but the surface of our lives; friends are allowed to enter a few rooms of our palace; love throws open the gates as far as it is given us to open them--as wide as physical signs or clumsy, stumbling, inadequate words can open our souls, as wide as sacrifice and devotion can keep those gates open. Only God can walk freely about the innermost corridors of our being. And He does. Unless He be there, we could not be.

The pessimistic pantheism of the East, to which our modern philosophy edges closer every day, distorted the truth of the intimate presence of God to the point of identifying everything with divinity. On such premises there was good grounds for pessimism. All distortions are false, this one is as absurdly false as the identification of my image in a mirror with myself or the inability to see any difference between the poet and his poem. None of the things created by God are divine; rather they are the mirrors of divinity, the effects of the divine cause that depend every instant on that cause for their reality.

Immutability

Nor is this intimate presence of God in the world to be mistaken for that tortured, twisting, developing god of the moderns that fights its way towards perfection through the struggle of the universe, changing as we change, getting better as we improve. God is altogether unchangeable. For what is change but the realization of a potentiality, the receiving of something new or the loss of something old. In God there can be no potentiality, nothing to be lost, nothing to be gained. He is pure actuality, pure being, possessing all things. He is beyond change and He alone; for He alone is first, dependent on no other, free of all potentiality.

To the modern philosopher this notion makes God completely static; if this be true, then this is a dull, stagnating, deteriorating God. His reason is not dissimilar from the reasons for a New Yorker's distaste for travel, an Englishman's tolerance of the continent or an American tourist's amusement at the strange antics of the rest of the world. In his own little world of creatures, the modern philosopher sees clearly that there must be change for progress, that immutability is closely akin to stagnation and deterioration. The point is that he is provincial enough to judge everything, even God, by the standards of that created world. It is true that change is inseparable from perfection in the world of unrealized potentialities; but it is also true that such a world is inconceivable without a Being of pure actuality, a Being Who is pure activity, Who has no potentiality, no possibility of losing or gaining but is a white flame of perfection. Such a Being is not in a state of static inertia; His is an activity so intense that change of any kind is impossible to it.

Eternity

This God did not begin; He cannot end. For both beginning and end proclaim a change, a reception or a loss, an imperfection, a dependence. He is eternal and He alone; eternal with that absolute, complete eternity of a divinely unchangeable Being.

Unity

Obviously there is only one such God. More than one demands some ground for difference -- something one would have and another lack; this God lacks nothing. Where would infinity stop, which has no limits, that another infinity might begin? How could there be beginning or end, limitation, to the infinite perfection and pure act that is God? He is one, distinct from the world of finite, limited creatures, yet intimately within it. In the beautiful words of the divine Office: "To the King of ages, the immortal, invisible, the only God be honor and glory forever and ever."

Unspeakable Modern Gods

This is the God rejected by modern philosophers. Caught by the glitter of their words, thousands of men and women have turned their backs on the only God and their faces to the gods of modern philosophy. What is offered to them?

A Subjective God

One group of philosophers suggests a subjective god, one of our own manufacture. To some of these, such a god would be no more than a projection of our subconscious states or of our social and racial instincts. The god-makers would be, for the most part, the weak, the oppressed, the downcast; for such a god is offered by way of compensation for inferiority. The superior man, they say, does not need this sop; but for the others, who still remain children, it is necessary that they have some enduring symbol of parental shelter to which they may run when life becomes too much for them. Others of this group suggest a deification of humanity: the spirit of a people, of the world of humanity, or of living beings taken in their associated and ideal experiences. This conception of divinity, says one of these philosophers, is best expressed by such terms as "alma mater" or "Uncle Sam"! Still others advise that we make our divinity of a quality of the world peculiarly akin to ourselves; or perhaps the material best suited is the higher reality on which we lay hold when we comprehend a truth or obey a noble impulse. These are the doctrines American universities are swallowing whole!

A Finite God

A second group of philosophers cast their vote for a finite god, not a subjective god, but one who needs our help, who is sustained by the world, whose interests are at stake in the world. God cannot be infinite, omnipotent, a static absolute if he is to work and make a difference to us. They will have a god who began but will never end; one who is not a creator, not infinite. But one who began with the human race, grows with it, an ideal gathering up to itself the achievements of humanity.

In the last analysis, both of these are stark atheism, the name of god is a cover-all to hide the ugly body of doctrine; both are violently opposed to the solid facts. In both there is a pathetic note: a note of weakness and of fear. The thesis paints a picture of lonely men trying to find comfort in a crowd, bundling themselves together with their fellows in the hope that somehow they will add up, not to a number of men, but to divinity; and it paints a picture of men who are not only weak but who are searching desperately for an escape from the fear of life, the fear of liberty, the fear of action.

An Undeveloped God

The third group takes a further step towards madness in advocating a kind of fluid, undeveloped god. God is the perfect in process, the principle of all struggling towards perfection through matter; yet this principle is fluid for everything real is a process of becoming. Others, within the group, insist that god is the next higher step, the empirical quality just above the highest we know; divinity, in other words, is the mechanical rabbit that lures human greyhounds into running their hearts out in a hopeless race. Maybe this undeveloped god is the finite world with its nissus towards deity; maybe this god is evolution: maybe it is the spirit of rational order. Make it anything you like; but do not dare to make it divine!

A Pantheistic God

The fourth group of modern philosophers come out frankly for a pantheistic god. Some say God is the life force identical with man and the universe. Others, not covering their shame with a blush of words, insist there is no ontological separation of one being from another; and this, if it means anything, means I am my dog and my dog is God just as I am. The connection between God and the universe is an organic one.

These last two groups represent the brutal pessimism of the Orient not yet carried to its logical conclusion; logically, these opinions should lead to utter despair and offer self-destruction as the goal of human life. Both are open violations of the facts; on such a basis, obviously the universe could not exist. It is

important to remember that all four of these modern ideas of God are sponsored by men of learning, honored in their universities, hailed as leaders of thought.

Crisis of the Ages

God has been crucial to the thought and life of all ages, not only the existence of God, but knowledge of Him, love and hatred of Him. Men of all ages have had to think a great deal about God, for men of all ages have had to think a great deal about a goal to which they might direct their lives. To many men in many ages, the crisis has been one of loyalty, of the heart rather than the head; the difficulty has been in resisting the lure of the world's tempting byways, and of holding fast to the path they knew to be the true one. This crisis will never be absent from the lives of men for it is the crisis of sin. Some men have failed to meet that crisis with any courage. Others will meet the same failure, but their difficulty, and the difficulty of all the sorry ones who follow after them, has not been in finding the courage to admit the truth of God and His law, but the courage to live up to the truth they admitted even though it condemned them.

The Modern Choice

In our day, as in all days, the crisis of loyalty, the crisis of sin exists. But today, on an increasingly alarming scale, men are being forced to meet another crisis, the crisis of choice, the crisis of the head more than of the heart. It is being made difficult for them to know the true God, let alone give Him their hearts, for modern leaders have set up false gods and demanded, with all the influence of their position, their learning, their skill in words, that men bow down and adore.

Evaluation

The choice offered to the man of the twentieth century might be summed up by saying that he is offered a human god, an inhuman god and the divine God. The human god is the product of subjective sentiment or of communal huddling together to the destruction of personality, a god that takes the alternative forms of personal sentiment, humanitarianism or of absolutism. The inhuman god may be the intangibility of a process under the name of evolution or the absurdity of pantheism. The divine God is the Christian God some of whose attributes we have looked at in this chapter. There is, of course, no rational choice between these three. The first two have no foundation in reality or reason; they are flagrant violations of fact arrived at only as a result of the denial of reality, of reason, of the supernatural, while the last is an inescapable truth.

The choice, from man's point of view, can be stated in concrete terms. One gives immediate and complete oblivion in the crushing force of an absolutism where the individual is less than a cog, or in the vague future of the race in the name of humanity to the denial of men; the second is a matter of hiding from life in the sweet nothings of subjectivism with its promise of sure oblivion after death; the third insists on the dignity of man's personality, on its eternally vital character, it demands that man, fully responsible and with eyes wide open, carve out a personal destiny that can never end. This last is the only God, simple, perfect, infinite, unchangeable, supporting the universe and present in the depth of all that is.

<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 3	Chapter Four -->
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CHAPTER IV -- THE VISION OF GOD (Q. 12-18)

1. End of the myth of man's omniscience:
 - (a) The fact and its causes.
 - (b) Laymen and this fact.
 - (c) Philosophers and this fact.
 2. Answers to the question of God's omniscience:
 - (a) Negative answers:
 - (1) The lazy answer -- Agnosticism.
 - (2) The timid answer -- Naturalism.
 - (3) The cowardly answer -- Psychological mechanism.
 - (4) The proud answer -- Idealism.
 - (b) Affirmative answer.
 3. The Knowledge of God:
 - (a) He knows Himself:
 - (1) The fact.
 - (2) The manner of this knowledge.
 - (b) He knows everything else:
 - (1) Actual and possible things.
 - (2) Evil.
 - (3) Infinite thoughts of angels and men.
 - (4) Future conditioned things.
 - (c) The unvarying character of this knowledge.
 - (d) Some sources of modern difficulties.
 4. Man's knowledge of God:
 - (a) Triple source of this knowledge:
 - (1) The effects of God.
 - (2) Revelation.
 - (3) Direct vision of God:
 - a. Possibility of this vision.
 - b. Object of this vision:
 1. The divine essence and all formally contained in it.
 2. The perfections of creatures.
 - c. The achievement of this vision.
- Conclusion:
1. Significance of the affirmative and negative answers:
 - (a) Freedom and slavery.
 - (b) Inspiration and despair.
 - (c) Humility and conceit.
 - (d) Courage and fear.
 2. The vision of God and life.

CHAPTER IV -- THE VISION OF GOD (Q. 1-11)

End of the myth of man's omniscience

NOT so many years ago the very learned man got up from his breakfast and turned to his researches as joyously as a child hurrying to play with the toys Christmas showered on him. It seemed that the world and all its secrets had been handed to men as castles, towers, cranes and bridges are handed to a child in the gift of a structural toy; all that was necessary was that men work patiently piecing things together and eventually they would know all things knowable. Surely no one would be mean enough to give them such a toy with some of the pieces missing; it was entirely incredible that not all the mysteries could be reconstructed from this shiny array of unlimited possibilities. So the very learned labored happily in their play-rooms; and, saturated with their own contentment, they were very polite to all the rest of the poor ignorant men who still talked of the inscrutable knowledge of God, the mystery of the supernatural, the intangible, spiritual truths of philosophy.

Since then some one has told these happy creatures that there is no Santa Claus. Their naive world is crumbling about their ears; and it becomes more evident, day by day, that some of the pieces were missing, countless pieces. Today we are not quite so sure of the sweep of our own knowledge, not at all certain that we know it all. The mechanism of the nineteenth century, the happy theory that made the gears

of the world and the metallic clanking of laws almost audible, has definitely broken down; with its collapse came wholesale confusion among the better educated. Today that confusion has not been lessened by the progress of the sciences, it has been immeasurably increased; while physics and biology seem to point more and more in the direction of the purposive and the idealistic, the modern psychologies look more and more to the purposeless, the irrational, the mechanical.

Laymen and this fact

Such conflicting results have given pause to the brash confidence of our fathers; they have humbled us a little, slowed up our process of conclusion considerably. We are proceeding with the caution of the spoiled child after his first week in a public school. The confusion and humiliation have been good for us. A tragic note in the whole affair is that the ordinary man and woman have been completely deprived of a proper share in this confusion and humiliation. Their ordinary sources of information proceed on the old mechanistic basis as if nothing had happened, as if, somehow, they had been water-proofed against the seepage of such scandalous uncertainty from the higher levels; to the layman, the implications of the old mechanism are still established facts, he is polite or pitying to those who are not scientifically up to date, and his life is aimed earnestly at grotesque goals that enjoy a macabre existence now that the mind that sponsored them has retracted.

Philosophers and this fact

The layman need not feel too lonely in his ignorance; hordes of modern philosophers are right at his side patronizing the rest of men for their unscientific neglect of the new truths that are already decrepit. At least this confusion of the mechanistic basis of life has not produced any great clarity of thought among modern philosophers. They still retain that frigid politeness and bored tolerance, characteristic of nineteenth century scholarship, in the face of such problems as the knowledge of God, of the soul, of absolute morality and all the rest of the things outside the reach of science. Perhaps the one outstanding evidence of the crash of mechanism has been a slightly more sympathetic attitude towards other explanations; that and a bewildering variety of answers to all the questions that matter.

Negative answers: The lazy answer -- Agnosticism

Take, for instance, the question of God's knowledge. The modern agnostic evades the problem by shrugging his shoulders and confessing a complete ignorance, a complete inability to know the answer. Such tactics may conserve his intellectual energy, but only at the price of a flat contradiction of the facts; for surely we can know the existence, and something of the nature, of a cause from its effects, we can form some idea of the knowledge of a poet from his poem, the knowledge of an engineer from his bridge. It is not too much of an effort to raise the mind from the poem to the poet, from the bridge to the engineer, from the world to God.

The timid answer -- Naturalism

Certainly the naturalist is not lazy. He hustles along the road of knowledge like a boy hurrying past a cemetery at night, whistling to prove he is not afraid. But he is afraid, afraid to go beyond what his hands cannot touch. He states that science and the experimental method are the only sources of truth. In either form he is contradicting the facts that he himself must live by, every day facts like our knowledge of love, of justice, of friendship, which are slippery things to slide under a microscope.

The cowardly answer -- Psychological mechanism

At least naturalism tries to put up a bold front. Mechanistic psychology has quit the fight altogether; it has given up the task of facing human life with all its possibilities of failure and defeat, with all its burden of responsibilities. It is willing to surrender all man's claims to humanity, to bury his head in sub-human muck. Of course it will have nothing to do with the problem of God's knowledge.

The proud answer -- Idealism

The idealist is not a bluffer, neither is he a coward; he is blind. He cannot see the world, let alone raise the eyes of his mind to the cause of the world. As far as he is concerned, man can know only what is in his own mind; he can know of God only in so far as he is a part of God, or is God. He invites all men and women, not to share his blindness, but to set up havens of darkness of their own where, with no truth intruding to interrupt the game, they can play at being God, or a part of God.

All of these people agree that we can know nothing of the knowledge of God. If their particular explanations are not appealing, a man might try, without stepping outside the boundaries of a negative answer, the despair of the evolutionist's answer -- that men are the only part of the life process enjoying intelligence, our knowledge is all there is. Or he might embrace the narrow provincialism of the pragmatist, the humanitarian and the humanist -- the men who have little time for God because of their consuming interest in men, or who have time enough only to agree that, whatever God knows, He certainly does not know all things.

All of these opinions might be summed up in terms of the last chapter, where we saw that the world today gives us a choice between a human and an inhuman god, whereas the facts demand a divine God. For these men the question of God's knowledge is reduced to this: what can a human or a less than human god know? Obviously such a god cannot have divine knowledge.

Affirmative answer

The affirmative answer to the question of God's omniscience is not, as has been alleged, a dream wish, the urging of the unconscious or the surging of a dumb life force; it is not made up of the sentimentalities of subjectivism; it is not mere poetry, though it surpasses the beauty and nobility of great poetry. It is not vague, hesitant, theoretic. Above all it is not a denial of the facts. It is objectively valid, proceeding from the solidly proved fact of the existence of a first mover, a first cause, a necessary being, a perfect being, a supreme intelligence; it is simply the admission of the implications that necessarily flow from these proved truths. To admit such implications means no more than to refuse to deny the facts themselves.

The Knowledge of God: He knows Himself

Obviously we cannot deny God knowledge of Himself without making Him less than divine. A man who knows nothing about himself needs medical attention and rest; plainly he is sick, a victim of amnesia. A man who gets himself mixed up with someone else, who imagines, for instance, that he is Napoleon or the archangel Gabriel, is evidently insane. If God is not sick or insane, He knows Himself; if, as has been shown, He is completely perfect, then He knows Himself perfectly, for ignorance of self is certainly an imperfection.

The manner of this knowledge

To put this truth more philosophically, we may point out that knowledge is the result of a union between the knower and the thing known. No matter how tempting the intellectual fare served by a teacher, the pupils remain immune to knowledge until such a time as their intellects touch this intellectual food. Knowledge cannot be poured into a student's head; if, as the fathers of modern philosophy maintained, there is an unbridgeable chasm between the world and the intellect, then knowledge is forever impossible. We have already proved that God is supreme intelligence; for knowledge of Himself, then, all that is necessary is that He be present to His own intellect -- a condition which His divine simplicity makes it impossible to avoid. He is supremely real, therefore supremely intelligible; He is supreme intelligence, therefore supremely intelligent; He is utterly simple, so that the union of intelligible and intelligence is absolute, complete.

He knows everything else: Actual and possible things.

An obvious difficulty presents itself from the fact that we do not leave our intellects at home when we go for a walk; we are certainly present to ourselves, yet we pick up the facts about ourselves like spectators. The fact is that our mere physical existence does not make us present to our intellects in the only way things can be in our intellects, that is, not physically but intelligibly, intentionally. We are potentially, not actually, intelligible to ourselves; we must judge of ourselves, as we do of other men, by the activities we see ourselves engaging in. Perhaps we could sum up both the question of knowledge and of intelligibility by pointing out that all determination is a limitation both of the degree of knowledge and of intelligibility. Because the eye is determined to no one color It can see them all; if, through the instrumentality of green glasses, we determine our eyes to one color, then we can see nothing else. If a being is absolutely determined to one form, as is a plant to its own form, then it can have no knowledge whatever; if it is indetermined in the sense of being able to receive the forms of other things through sense images, as is the animal, then it can have sense knowledge; if it is free of determination to such an extent as to be able to receive all forms as intellectual concepts, then the wide horizons of the intellectual knowledge of men and angels are opened up; while if there is no determination, no limitation, whatever, as in God, there we have supreme intelligence and supreme intelligibility. There is much more to be known about an animal than there is about a plant, for the animal is less determined, less limited; there is more to be known about man than about animals, much more to be known about angels than about men. As for God, well, in the unending act of our vision of God we shall never be finished learning what there is to be known about His absolutely unlimited reality.

The frightened penitent, after his first disastrous bout with passion, can say with real honesty, "I don't know what made me do it; I never do such things." Our mask of nonchalant complacency often hides real astonishment as the thought runs through our minds, "I didn't know I had it in me." We can and do surprise ourselves, for better or for worse. But if we picture God as gazing in astonishment at the ludicrous results of His creation we've entirely missed the comprehensive character of the knowledge of God; God cannot surprise Himself, He cannot be ignorant of anything about Himself without being imperfect and He cannot be imperfect without ceasing to be God.

That God should know all about Himself seems fair enough. That He should know all about everything else, particularly about ourselves, is an altogether different and decidedly disconcerting thing. Still, we make no objection to an architect's knowledge of a house he has designed nor to a poet's knowledge of his poem. God is the architect of the universe; He needs no instruction on the product of His creative act. He is the cause of everything of course He knows all that is.

Nor is this knowledge gathered by His peering out a window of Heaven. He needs only to look at Himself. The puzzle in this is, not that it should be so, but that we should be puzzled by its being so. The mystery of a weekend guest finding his way to the kitchen in the dark is cleared up as soon as we discover that he is the architect who designed the house. We are not at all surprised that the poet is able to explain the thought of his poem without a glance at it. Why, then, should God have to grub about the corners of the world or employ an intelligence staff to keep informed of what is going on? He knows Himself perfectly, so He knows how far His powers extend, how far they have been exercised, how far they will be exercised; all that is is His product. Everything that exists was made according to the plan of the divine architect, made to the scale laid down by the mind of God; a sinner's rupture of diplomatic relations with divinity does not deprive God of a source of information. God sees men and women as they walk down the street, not by waiting for them to turn His corner, but as they and their every step exist in the divine mind. Nor is this an indirect or vague knowledge. Every instant of existence, every bit of reality is immediately dependent on the divine cause; moreover, every item of perfection in the universe is an imperfect mirroring of the unblemished perfection of divinity. Knowing the perfect perfectly, God knows immediately all the shades of imperfection, of limited sharing of that perfection; otherwise His very knowledge of Himself is imperfect.

This all embracing divine knowledge is the cause of all existing things, past, present and future, for they exist because of the model in the mind of the divine architect joined to the divine decree which called them from nothingness. As we have seen, in the second chapter of this book, there is no other explanation

of the world about us. God's knowledge of existing things, then, is not had by reasoning closely from a principle to a conclusion. He does not forecast them as an astronomer foretells an eclipse of the moon; God is eternal, the divine model is eternal, the divine decree is eternal and this eternity encompasses time like a cloak thrown about it. In one glance at His divine self, everything is naked and open to the eyes of God.

Evil

To say that God knows all possible things, things that could have been but will not be, is only to insist on God's knowledge of the extent of His power, His comprehensive knowledge of His own perfection; for unless He knows in how many ways His perfections can be shared, imitated, mirrored by creation, He does not fully know Himself. There is absolutely nothing that can escape the mind of God. The thoughts of men and angels run the length of an endless road with a speed beyond measure; but the road is not long enough, nor the speed great enough to outdistance the divine mind upon which every thought, like every other reality, depends intimately, ceaselessly, ultimately. Evil is a gaping hole in reality; unless that hole be known, reality itself is not perfectly known. Obviously we do not know a man's face if we do not know the hole in the middle of it, we do not know a fence unless we are also cognizant of the boards missing from it here and there. Evil is a defect, a privation of good; God's perfect knowledge of good necessarily includes a knowledge of the way in which good can be or is defective.

Future conditioned things

Even the knowledge of those future conditioned things that might happen but do not is at the fingertips of God. The debutante of five years ago has had her mind made up for years to devote herself to marriage, if someone asked her; as the years go on, with the condition still unfulfilled, hope does not die in God's heart. He has not been on tenterhooks all this time; the very condition which hides in the halls of the future depends upon the first cause of all that is or can be, not only upon its own proximate causes.

The unvarying character of this knowledge

If God is completely above all change, as He certainly is, then He does not forget things, His knowledge does not ebb and flow, He does not acquire new knowledge by keeping His eyes open, through long periods of concentration, or by eavesdropping. In a sense there are many ideas in the mind of God, in the sense, that is, that God knows many, indeed, all things; but He knows these things through His own divinely simple essence, not through a multitude of concepts. More accurately, He is His intelligence. His knowledge; and He is the immutable first.

We can sum up all this doctrine on the knowledge of God in the one profound statement: God is truth. For truth is in an intellect when that intellect knows a thing as it really is; truth is in a thing, when it measures up to the intellect which caused it; God's essence not only measures up to His intellect, it *is* His intellect; God's intellect not only knows His essence, it *is* His essence. This is the immutable first truth, the foundation of all other truths. Every other truth participates in this first truth or ceases to be truth: the world of reality as it measures up to the divine exemplar; created minds when, measuring up to the world of reality, they get a glimpse of the divine exemplar. When we touch upon truth we are in the shadow of divinity; when we embrace it, we are ennobled by the contact to a degree easily recognizable by all men. In the world of reason, love of truth produces the philosopher; in the world of affairs it produces the gentleman; in the world of grace it produces the saint. The respect given these men is the spontaneous tribute given to divine messengers. Humanity doffs its cap or makes its curtsy and goes its way with renewed hope; God is truth.

Some sources of modern difficulties

Thus far, in exploring the divine knowledge, we have used only the compasses and guide books of philosophy. All that has been said is an inevitable implication of the proof for the existence of God. The mind of man can go thus far unaided, though there is authority at hand to help those who are prevented by

circumstance from following the philosophical argument. Yet the contrast between the modern philosophical limitation or denial of divine knowledge and the all including sweep of divine knowledge we have portrayed is so great as to be a little ludicrous. Even more striking is the determined, and patent, resistance against the acceptance of a really divine knowledge in God. If reason can come to grasp the fact of this divine knowledge, why does the reason of so many highly trained men make such a desperate fight against this truth of reason?

The thing is puzzling. Certainly we cannot uncover reasons to justify this modern stand, for there are no valid arguments to justify an attack on truth. We may, however, be able to understand it to some extent by seeing something of the very human weaknesses that creep in to color the thoughts of men. There are a great number of these, perhaps for the most part not fully realized. Thus, for example, an understandable conceit or intellectual pride may move a man to blind boasting about the human mind, as when he insists that the mind of man, as the peak of evolution, is the measuring stick of all knowledge, the supreme rule which simply cannot admit a superior; on the other hand, the same pride may be at the root of a pathetic eagerness to deny all intellectuality, all validity of the intellectual efforts of man. In this last case, the evident weakness of our best efforts has so discouraged the modern thinker that he indulges in the petty gesture of despair that strives to chain man down to the world of animals; at least here he can be the biggest frog in the pond. Surely some of this resistance to truth can be traced to a timid snobbery evident in the mob fear of obstructing the wheels of progress, of not paying the full meed of worship to the scientific method, of being old-fashioned. Certainly fear plays its part. We like to have a few dark corners in which to stow away the unpleasant litter of life; human life, without a basement or an attic where things can be hidden away and forgotten, is a fearful thing. To have to stand up, in the clear light of our own knowledge and the much clearer light of another's perfect knowledge, and face the responsibilities of all our actions every minute of every day, admit they clang out in the halls of eternity for all time -- this is a bit too much to demand of human courage.

Perhaps the most seductive element in this resistance is the apparent comfort, the alluring softness of the doctrines of psychological mechanism, evolution and positivism; they assure us that we are as free as a bird, which is to say that we are not free at all. We are offered escape from responsibility at the cost of our humanity. The subjective sentimentalities of the various forms of humanism are the deceptive resemblances of a decadent nobility; their superficial interest in man has the appearance of nobility, but without nobility's mind and heart. For communal groupings of men and their aspirations which leave the individual out of consideration, losing him in a fog or crushing him in a crowd, have no solid claim to the respect of men; the individual must not, cannot, be lost, not even a hair of his head is unimportant enough not to be numbered. To attack the truth of God in the name of man on this basis may be sentimentally attractive in some strange way; but the attraction is a soft, decadent, effeminate thing, repulsive to the touch.

Man's knowledge of God: The effects of God

God knows us inside and out because He made us. What do we know of God? In attacking this question, we can safely put aside the modern aberrations of a man-made, a human or an inhuman god and honestly face the facts; after all, these things have been sufficiently refuted in the second chapter of this book. In the light of the facts and the proofs already offered, it must be clear that we can know God from the world as we know an author from his book, as we know any cause from its effects. This is the sole knowledge we have been using thus far in our discussion on the nature and attributes of God. We have seen that it necessarily involves the removal of the limitation or imperfection of the creature from our concept of the perfections of God; it means the tracing of every perfection in the universe to God, but understanding these perfections to be analogically in God, in an eminent fashion, somewhat as the beauty of a poem is in a poet. This is rock bottom knowledge. It is absolutely dependable; it starts from the most indisputable of facts and goes no farther than those facts allow, or rather than those facts insist upon.

Revelation

From what this solidly certain knowledge has told us of God, it is immediately evident that God can tell us things about Himself. We have seen Him as supremely intelligent, knowing Himself perfectly, the first truth. Obviously then, He cannot deceive Himself. Clearly God cannot be guilty of silly boasting or a downright lie; He is truth itself. He can tell us things about Himself; and those things will always be true. This is the knowledge of God which comes to us by way of revelation.

Direct vision of God

There is yet another possibility. Can man know God, not indirectly through his effects, not darkly through faith in revelation, but clearly, openly, directly, face to face, through the immediate union of his intellect to the divine essence? The very question itself is a refutation of the idea that God is a fictional sop given in kindly pity to the little weak ones unable to munch the solid food of truth; it is not the weak, the defeated, the cowardly who advance boldly to peer at divinity itself, it is the violent who storm the kingdom of heaven for a direct vision of the beauty of God.

Possibility of this vision

Quite frankly, this idea of seeing God face to face is so high and bold that it probably would never have occurred to the mind of a man left to himself. The solid basis of the affirmative answer to the question is not the facts of the sensible world, not the firm steps of intellectual proof, but simply and solely the authority of God, the word of Him Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. [\(1\)](#) The supernatural is not to be reached by the instrumentality of any created thing; it is utterly, wholly above nature, the proper field of God.

From our side, once the possibility has been revealed to us, we can readily see how beautifully the vision harmonizes, perfects, completes our nature. For here is the ultimate quenching of our thirst to get at the cause of things, here the ultimate answer to our perpetual "why," here is the ultimate peace for that intellectual restlessness that refuses to be satisfied with anything the world of nature has to offer. Here is a fulfillment of our potentialities for all truth, a fulfillment so great that its abundance can be accommodated only by the gift of still greater potentialities within us. In this vision is the goal of our searching, the home for our wandering feet, the quiet for our clamoring heart; only God can offer us these things, and only by this vision can we directly, immediately come home to God.

Coming down to particulars and attempting to be objective about the question, we take John Jones as the average man. How is he going to see God? He has a fine, sharp pair of eyes, but they will be of no help to him; God is not a body and so not to be seen with bodily eyes. John Jones has a good enough mind when he can whip up the energy to use it; but again, this is not sufficient. How can God be seen through any image or concept? What finite concept can show us the infinite God as He is in Himself? Before this infinite essence all the natural powers of our intellect are as helpless as the eyes of an owl in the midday sun; this light is too bright to be seen in its undiminished brilliance by the eyes of our minds. What is known is in the mind of the knower in the way that is peculiarly proper to him. So a man can know sand and sugar; in a sense these are in his mind, not scratching or scarring it but ennobled by it, lifted up to its immaterial, universal level. In the same way a man must know all other things; what is beneath him must be lifted up to his level, what is above him must be dragged down to his level and taken apart that it might be carried through the narrow door of a human mind. God, brought down to the level of the human mind, is not God seen as He is in himself. For this, the human mind must be lifted to a higher level as a child is hoisted up to see over a crowd; our mind must be lifted up to the heights of divinity and by the strength of One Who is divine. That supernatural help given to the mind of man in order that it might see God is called by theologians "the light of glory."

Object of this vision: The divine essence and all formally contained in it.

Perched thus on the shoulder of God, head and shoulders over the world, we look at a sight that opens our eyes wide with awe -- and which will keep them so for all of eternity. By this vision we see the unveiled beauty of God; not just a shining part of it, not an unending succession of its splendors, but all of it at

once. It can be no other way, for God is simple; you must see all of Him or see Him not at all. The magnificence of that beauty is eternity's secret; the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has it entered the mind of man to conceive it. Some faint shadow of it is thrown across our lives, however, in the glimpses we get into the gallantry of courage, the splendor of love, the sincerity of sacrifice. In the knowledge of what these faint, distorted images of divinity can do to our heart we have a foretaste of the rapture of the blessed in heaven. There it will not be the image but the original; we shall see all of it, though our finite minds, even with divine help, will never be able to exhaust, to comprehend the infinitude of that divine perfection.

The perfections of creatures

As a matter of fact, we shall see a great deal we missed on earth for in heaven our insight into the perfections of creatures will not be limited to territory of a few squares in a city, of a few miles in a country or of a few years of life. God has in Himself all the perfections of creatures: the full story of the thoughts, hopes, and struggles of those closest to our heart, a detailed account of the complicated laws of the universe. All these we shall see: not exhaustively, for that would be to comprehend the plans of God; not equally, but in proportion to the degree of that supernatural help which is the light of glory; not by images or concepts, but as God sees them, in His very essence. And we shall see them, not bit by bit, day by day, year by year, but all at once. This, however, is the work of heaven and the proper material of the second and fourth volumes of this work.

The achievement of this vision

Earlier in this chapter it was said that the contrast between the affirmative and negative answers to the question of God's knowledge was so great as to be ludicrous. When we turn to the implications of these two answers for the living of human life, the contrast is utterly tragic, so tragic, indeed, that the choice made by the modern thinker numbs the mind with its horror. Only a kind of madness could lead men into even a moment's hesitation between the two answers.

Freedom and slavery

The one answer sets a man free; the other enslaves him. In the divine knowledge, as we have portrayed it, we have an invitation to enjoy the utmost limits of our possibilities. We are not only privileged to wander up and down the highways of the universe finding knowledge where we can, our mind is given wings to soar to heights undreamed of by any mind in nature. The modern philosopher limits our possibilities of knowledge to the sense level of a high grade animal; he not only puts the mind in the limited area of nature's jail, forbidding its flight to the heights of divinity, he builds a partition across the cell, further narrowing the space. There we can pace back and forth until we have driven ourselves insane.

Inspiration and despair

The one answer to the question of divine knowledge is an inspiration; the other is a condemnation to despair. The one throws open the gates of all desire, putting no limits to what we can desire because it puts no limits to what we can know. It offers us the completion of our human nature, its fulfillment; it assigns reasons for individual dignity, for individual self-respect, for a personal goal and so for a life with a distinctive personal meaning. The other offers us the opposite of all these things. We are counselled to lose ourselves in a mass, a process, a group; to strive for an impersonal goal, to live a meaningless life of bitter, hopeless striving to inevitable defeat and oblivion.

Humility and conceit

The one answer confers on us the nobility of humility's truth; the other wraps us about with the pettiness of conceit. The one demands a recognition of our responsibilities, our privileges, our possibilities, our realities; yes, and of our failures, our defeats, our dangers, the battle we must face. But it also sees the possibility of success and of a victory well worth all the danger, the struggle, all the intermediate failures.

The other invites us to eat our meals by candle light in order to create the theatrical air of romance, to destroy the mirrors about the house that we might the better hug the illusion of our peerless beauty, to close our eyes that we might contemplate only the illusion of our beauty and might the better deny perfection to everything else.

Courage and fear

The one is a courageous answer. Only a brave man can face his life knowing how open every detail of it is to the eyes of God. Only a very brave man, with a full knowledge of his own defects, could aim at a direct vision of God. Bravery is not without its compensations, particularly in this matter. For the brave answer does give a meaning to things, does bring the assurance that an intelligence is directing the world and all in it. This brave man knows what it is all about, where he is going, and why and how. The other answer is so timid an answer as to be despairing. The man who has made this answer his own faces the terror of the unknown, a terror increased by the conviction that this unknown is unknowable, or even is devoid of all meaning. The world he faces has all the terror of darkness where light would reveal worse horror, the terror of blind, resistless force, of being hopelessly at the mercy of the unfeeling sweep of the elements or of a god gone mad.

The vision of God and life

There is much truth in the statement that man cannot see God and live. Surely he cannot know God and merely plod through the bare routine of existence; he cannot know God and not have his heart moved to high things by the vision of the horizons of hope, of courage, of golden goals such knowledge opens up to him. He cannot know God and miss the greatness of man. It is even more profoundly true that man cannot live without seeing God, for he cannot see man in the vague twilight of a godless world, he cannot see a goal towards which life can advance, he cannot see an instrument of action that will not crumble in his hands. Perhaps the greatest horror of this murky world is not what cannot be seen, but what can be seen, for it is a world divorced from the first truth and so devoid of all truth.

Notes:

[\(1\)](#) Sacred Scripture gives explicit testimony to this direct vision: I John, ch. 3, v. 2: "We shall see him as he is." Matt. ch. 5, v. 8: "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." Cf. Matt. ch. 18, v. 10; I Cor. ch. 13, v. 12.

The definitions of the Church are no less explicit: thus the Constitution *Benedictus Deus* of Benedict XII (Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, #530): ". . . they (the dead) see the divine essence by an intuitive vision, face to face, without the medium of any other creature; but the divine essence shows itself immediately to them, nakedly, clearly, openly...." Cf. Council of Florence (*Ibid.*, #693).

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 4	Chapter Five --»
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CHAPTER V -- THE WILL OF GOD (Q. 19-21)

1. The mainspring of action:
 - (a) The nature of appetite.
 - (b) The boundaries of desire.
 2. Two views of the appetite of God:
 - (a) A denial.
 - (b) A distortion.
 - (c) Sources of these views:
 - (1) A perversion of knowledge.
 - (2) A double difficulty:
 - a. The difficulty of human freedom.
 - b. The difficulty of evil and suffering.
 3. The existence of the will of God:
 - (a) The proof.
 - (b) Supremacy of this divine will.
 4. The nature of the will of God:
 - (a) Its objects:
 - (1) Necessary object.
 - (2) Free objects.
 - (b) Its characteristics:
 - (1) Cause of all things.
 - (2) Infallible.
 - (3) Invariable.
 5. The difficulty of human freedom:
 - (a) Preliminary notions to the solution of the difficulty:
 - (b) Precision of the question and of Possible results.
 - (c) Solution:
 - (1) Definition of freedom.
 - (2) Proof that the divine will is the cause of freedom:
 - a. Indirect proof.
 - b. Direct proof.
 6. The love of God.
 7. The justice and mercy of God.
- Conclusion:
1. The erroneous views of the will of God:
 - (a) Their significance for men.
 - (b) Their common bond.
 2. Significance of the truth of the will of God:
 - (a) For freedom.
 - (b) For love.
 - (c) For justice.
 - (d) For mercy.

CHAPTER V

THE WILL OF GOD

(Q. 19-21)

The mainspring of action

In a practical world, such as ours, everyone knows that it is not the dreamers who make dreams come true. Activity is necessary for achievement; it is absolutely essential for life. The bird that is too timid to risk the first flight from the nest will die from its very devotion to security, the tree that is too sickly to sink its roots deep enough to find moisture will wither away from its very conservation of energy. We have learned well the lesson that the price of life is activity, so well, in fact, that we are tempted to quit life's school as soon as we have passed this kindergarten test. Many men and women of our age have framed their kindergarten diploma and proudly opened up an office for the living of life; the shingle they

displayed to the world proclaimed them to be doers, apostles of activity, zealots devoted to progress, to more and bigger and busier days.

The nature of appetite

Their restless content might have been undisturbed were it not for the frequency of that pungent modern question: "so what?" A man might twiddle his thumbs just {or the sake of doing something; but he will certainly not go hungry just for the sake of doing something, he will not wear down the hours with his labors, or face a sneering mob from the height of a cross. Life's mysteries are not solved by stifling the dreamer and shattering his dreams. Process, change, progress, activity are not bugle calls rousing men from inertia; they are man's answer to the fundamental challenge of the desirable thing. There is something deeper than activity which is activity's cause; there is something beyond activity which is its goal. There is, deep in the heart of a man, a spring which can be released only by the ethereal touch of a dream; resultant activity, begun by the touch of a dream, rushes to the materialization of that dream and beyond, to its enjoyment, unless the dream was not worth the dreaming.

In other words, activity is not limited to process, change or striving; it goes beyond to the possession of the desirable thing that was at its root. Man does not run for the sake of getting out of breath, he does not live for the sake of consuming life, the days of his search are not filled with a dread of the search being successful. In all this he is at one with the world in which he lives. There is in everything a tendency or inclination towards that desirable thing which is self-perfection and what pertains to that perfection, to its achievement and its enjoyment.

The boundaries of desire

The general term for this inclination is appetite and it responds to the smack of desirability as the intellect responds to truth. In the animals it is sense appetite; in intelligent beings it is will. By a kind of courtesy, easy to those in superior positions but uncommon, we extend the term to the whole of inanimate and plant creation and there call it natural appetite. It is to be well understood that this is merely courtesy, for appetite always follows the lead of knowledge and never outdistances its guide; these things have no knowledge of their own and so, strictly speaking, no appetite. They do, however, have a determination to a single course of activity. A plant, pushing its roots deeper in dry weather, is following the knowledge of God impressed on its very nature; but without knowledge of the thing it seeks and with the invariability of inviolable physical law. A dog sniffing for his buried bone has at least the flashlight of sense knowledge lighting up little patches of the path his appetite runs along; while a man, seeking social position, happiness, love or truth walks in the broad daylight of intellectual knowledge that makes plain the beginning, the end and the space between.

Two views of the appetite of God

A denial -- A distortion

It would seem hard to deny activity in the world in which we live, though it has been done; granted activity, it would seem impossible to deny the desire necessarily behind that activity and the organ of desire which is called appetite. With activity and appetite present in the world, inevitably men's minds turned to the question of activity and appetite in God; in fact, it has been as impossible for men to keep their minds off the question of the will of God as to avoid the question of the existence of God. The answers, affirmative or negative, have repercussions for human life so momentous as to make any attempted detour around them a palpable child's game of pretense. This thing must be settled, for on its solution depends the whole complexion of the life of man.

Sources of these views

The variety of answers offered by the ages of human thought is overpowering. But then, that is not surprising: one absolutely certain result of an open forum on any question put to men is this same dazzling variety. In this matter the various erroneous answers can be roughly reduced to two: the completely

negative answer and the answer which distorts divinity by ascribing to God an appetite other than a divine one. Both these answers are rightly based on the truth that appetite is blind, deaf and dumb, unable to take a step in any direction until knowledge takes it by the hand. If, as the first sort maintain, there was neither intellect nor knowledge until our own human variety mysteriously appeared, or if even now there is no such thing as the spiritual faculty of intellect with its shafts of knowledge piercing the armor of time and sense, then obviously there can be no intellectual appetite, no will in God. Love, desire and love's faculty of will are ruled out of the universe, above all they are ruled out of the Maker of the universe: the world and men are delivered over to a mysterious but plainly blind force which cannot be brought before the bar of reason. If, as the others say, on the other hand, God is a man-made product with an intellect cut down to human measure, obviously the will of God can wear any human cast-offs but looks ridiculous in the flowing robes of divinity.

The moderns, who make the human will and human love the source of the divine, offer men a synthetic product that was meant to be flattering but which, in fact, is as disillusioning as a candid camera shot or an impromptu voice recording. From their synthetic divine will it is obvious that some of these champions of men lose themselves in sentimentalities unworthy of even human love; they shudder at pain and evil, dream of life in terms of sweetness, soft music, gentle sighs and insist upon a god who exudes the milder emotions. Others, with a frank touch of autobiography, grant God only a feeble, struggling, often failing will and love for men; with such a god they can be quite friendly, or they can even feel sorry for him. The very numerous champions of masses of men at the cost of the individuals necessarily limit the object of all will and all love to a crowd; will is a prerogative, not of men, not of individuals, not of persons but of communities. If God is to have a will, then He must, some way or another, be a crowd, a mass, a community.

A perversion of knowledge

Both the denials and the distortions have their explanations if not their excuses. There is, on the intellectual side, the same perversion of scientific findings to support unscientific conclusions, conclusions completely outside the field of science, that is to be found in the modern treatment of God's existence and His knowledge; the same conceit which refuses to bend the intellect of man to any superior also refuses to admit any will higher than the will of man. Behind that conceit is the mistaken notion that such an admission degrades man, reduces him to the level of a slave or a puppet.

Double difficulty: human freedom, evil and suffering

On the moral side, the explanations of these modern errors have a dangerously enticing appeal. The existence of a divine will involves, on our part, a subjection which glories in truth, a loyalty that is achieved only by sacrifice, and a love which is contemptuous of caution; such things are easily shirked by an age whose theme is self and whose password is safety first. Then, too, the existence of a divine will seems to set up an irreconcilable conflict with human freedom. If this divine will is supreme, how can our human will wander where it chooses, how can we resist the divine, how are we masters of ourselves? This is a difficulty of the first order and we shall treat it at some length in this present chapter. Another difficulty, of proportions nearly as serious, is that of evil and suffering. If an infinitely good and powerful God has a supreme will, why do evil and suffering exist at all? A human governor tries his utmost to overcome these things and fails because his will is limited, his power is finite; where there is no limit, no weakness, there should be no evil and no suffering. This difficulty will be met at length in the next chapter of this book. Here let it be frankly admitted that both these difficulties are decidedly real and that they have played, and still do play, a part in man's reluctance to admit a truly divine will in God.

Existence of the will of God

The proof

Yet, in the name of common sense and evident facts, a divine will cannot be denied to God. Will, or intellectual appetite, is the mainspring, the motive or driving force in intelligent beings; in the second

chapter of this book we have proved that God is intelligent, a proof that proceeded from the fact of His divine action. It is true that there can be a driving force without intrinsic knowledge; we do not insist that a hurricane plan the last detail of its destructive sally, though, as we have seen and shall see at greater length, even that last detail is marked down on the blueprints of a supreme intelligence. But it is impossible to have intelligence without will, as impossible as having being without a goal for its existence. If intellect could be conceived of without will, it would be aloof, cold, futile, sterile, barren; where, in fact, great intelligence is found complemented by a puny will we find that personification of futility, the timid soul. Briefly, whatever is has a goal of its being and an appetite which reaches out to attain or enjoy that goal; the facts of the world demand the existence of God.

Supremacy of the divine will

In view of what we have seen demanded by the facts of the nature of God and His attributes -- the absence of all potentiality, all limitation, the infinitude of His perfection -- it is obvious that we cannot treat the divine will as a distant and abjectly poor relation. The very notion of God is destroyed as soon as dependence is introduced into it; to attribute anything but complete supremacy, complete perfection to the divine will is to contradict the evidence of the facts adduced above in the second chapter, it is to make God not the first, not the source of all else, not the absolutely Perfect being that the world of things tells us He is. To put the fact of the divine will with complete accuracy, we must say, not that God has a will, but rather that He is His will as He is His intelligence; for the notion of "having" is inseparable from the notion of potentiality, of a received perfection, of dependence.

The nature of the will of God

Its objects: Necessary object

It is no reflection on the supremacy of the divine will to insist that it is not free in all its willing, just as it is no reflection on the human will to recognize the fact that a man necessarily, not freely, wills his perfection, his happiness. Rather, in man this necessary embrace by his will of its adequate object is the source of all his activity, the explanation of all his striving; that unappeasable hunger which he cannot deny gives all of his actions a nobility borrowed from the goal which the will cannot refuse to desire. In God, too, the divine will cannot refuse the one object adequate to its infinite perfection; God cannot refuse to will His own supreme goodness. Nor is this laying down the law to God; it is merely insisting that in God, the supreme Truth, there is no room for the absurdity of a contradiction. God cannot be guilty of the stupidity of thinking that there is some rival to infinite goodness, something more desirable than the supremely desirable. The supreme Intelligence cannot act against intelligence as He would have to in order to refuse to will His own goodness. Again the human parallel may help to make this clear: even in our grossest desires, we cannot tend to evil as such, though here we do make a serious mistake as to the desirable thing; we always, without exception, act in the name of the good, of the perfect, of happiness.

Free objects

In the human order, the necessary acts of the will, dealing with the goal and its essential means, make up the bare house of our activity; the rugs, furniture, pictures and the multitude of delightfully unnecessary but warmly personal objects that make a home of the house are the free acts that so crowd our every day. There is, thank God, in the very nature of appetite the inclination, not only to possess the desirable, but to give it away; not only to have the goal but to share it. When that inclination is frustrated the activity of man begins to have the bitter taste of the sweat of a slave: when, for instance, purely mechanical instruments make it impossible to put the stamp of his intelligence on his work or to sign it with the flourish of his utterly distinctive personality; or when the perverted outlook of an age makes it vulgar of him to share the splendor of his human life with his children.

Its characteristics

In God the field of these warmly personal free acts is unlimited. God is His perfection. He is His end; there is no divine striving for perfection unattained. All else other than His divine goodness is freely

willed, though, of course, it is willed in reference, not contradiction, to that divine goodness. Our conviction of this divine freedom finds daily expression. It would be silly to pour our prayers over the concrete foundations of a machine; a crisis drives us to our knees, but not because God is helpless to do anything for us; our gasp for help or smile of thanks is not directed to a being who is tied hand and foot. We are convinced that God can help us.

Cause of all things

Of course this help of God is not something that has about it the embarrassed surprise of a yawn or the irritating suddenness of a stumble; in this, as in all His actions, God acts as an intelligent being. For ourselves, we have no trouble distinguishing between a thoughtless word and the malicious dig; the first slipped out on us, the second was a deliberate product of our intellect and our will. The first was stupid, the second, maliciously intelligent. For it is only insofar as our acts do flow from deliberate will, the will guided by intelligence, that we give them the name of intelligent acts. In God, then, the cause of all His effects, which is to say the cause of everything, is His will acting in conjunction with his intellect; for God does not operate by necessary determination or at the urge of a blind force but as the supremely intelligent first agent.

Infallible

The very fact of the necessary priority of divine action, and so of the intellect and will as sources of divine action, makes plain the complete infallibility of the will of God. Where absolutely everything depends on God in its causality, where will be found a cause that can hinder the divine action? What is there that escapes the divine support, the first mover, the first cause? What is there that is outside the order of the divine plan? This divine will must be universally efficacious or it cannot be divine, and its divinity cannot be denied without open contradiction to the facts of the world which proclaim the existence of divinity.

Invariable

The will of God is universally efficacious; it is not only infallible, it is invariable, not hesitating, retreating and plunging ahead, but immutable. For, as we have seen, there can be no change in God. The idea that God paces the floor trying to make up His mind is as absurd as the notion that He has His ear cocked to the latest news flash from the radio or spends eternity tearing open cablegrams on the state of the world. How, then, can we seriously entertain hope in our prayers? God is omniscient; His will is supreme, eternal, unchanging. What is the use of praying?

The difficulty of human freedom: Preliminary notions

The objection has a history almost as old as the life of man; and, no doubt, a future that will stretch to time's last instant. Its full answer will be found in the third volume of this work where the subject of prayer is treated at some length. Here we can do no more than indicate two diverse angles of that answer. The objection argues that God wills all things and His will is supremely efficacious; there is, then, no reason for our praying. We cannot change the will of God; if He wills this or that particular thing, we shall get it whether we pray or not. On the same grounds we might argue for the amputation of all human arms. We have been foolishly spending money for generations to cover those arms with sleeves, whereas the arms are totally unnecessary; why lift a cup of tea to your face if God wills you to have it? No doubt it will jump up and splash all over you. But do not sit there too long waiting for God to pour the tea down your throat. The fundamental reason why we pray is the same as the reason for our taking a personal part in the solution of the transportation problem involved in eating, namely, that God has given us a part in the great dignity of causality. God is the first cause but His causality does not destroy all other causality; rather it produces and guarantees the effectiveness of secondary causes, we are secondary causes, not only in the physical order, but also in the moral order; the bending of our elbow fulfils a condition, of our nourishment in the physical order and prayer fulfils a condition of achievement in the moral order. The

precise causality of prayer is not unlike the causality of a fertilizer scattered over a field, keeping the moral and physical orders distinct; the fertilizer does not produce the grain but it does play its part, prayer does not produce the effect desired but it, too, plays its part, a dispositively efficient part in the government of the world of men.

The other point to be noticed here about prayer is the odd fixity with which we concentrate our attention on only one, and usually a lesser, result of prayer. No doubt it is our predilection for the gaudy attractiveness of the immediate and sensible that explains our lack of appreciation for the merit that is the constant fruit of prayer and that makes us take lightly the peace and strength that come from lifting the mind and heart to communion with the infinite. But all this is gone into at greater length in the third volume. A major point that must be made here is that the infallibility, the supreme efficacy and absolute changelessness of the will of God do not conflict with our freedom; they *cause that freedom*.

Preliminary notions to the solution

Before plunging into the discussion of the difficulty of human freedom in the face of the universal efficacy of the divine will, it is well to understand what is at stake in this discussion; it is above all necessary to understand what is not at stake. The whole discussion takes its rise from the juxtaposition of two truths. The important thing to remember here is that they are both truths; the validity of neither is under question; the effort of the discussion is not aimed at establishing either one or the other of these truths. Beyond and above the present discussion, altogether apart from it in their validity, stand the truths of the freedom of man and the supremacy of the will of God. Both of them can be proved beyond all doubt by human reason; both of them are vouched for by divine authority. Whatever the intricacies of the discussion, these two truths must not be lost sight of; they are the beacons that flash out the guiding light which alone can preserve the discussion from serious errors; they are not the rocks upon which the human mind may be shipwrecked, above all they are not the ships threatened by the tempest of the discussion.

Considerable space has already been consumed in this chapter in showing, from human reason alone, the infallible supremacy of the will of God; there is no need to repeat that argumentation here. The truth of human freedom is clear from the shouted acclaim of common sense which recognizes it in every human action. That itself should be proof enough. If more proof be demanded, that proof is readily supplied. The fact of man's possession of intelligence is quickly seen. From the most casual scrutiny of any man's acts: there you will find a knowledge of such intangible, timeless things as relationships, of means to end, of part to whole and so on; such spiritual things as justice and love; such universal things as being, or even of divinity itself. A knowledge that escapes the limits of matter, time, sense is not the product of a sensible faculty of knowing but of a spiritual faculty of intellect. As knowledge measures and limits appetite, such timeless, immaterial, spiritual knowledge as a man possesses sets free his appetite from the appeal of the material, the particular, the sensible. It holds out to the will of man the universal good and, by that fact, enlightens man's will to the defect of limitation in every other desirable thing.

Precision of the question

The precise question involved in the difficulty we are discussing here is not: "Can man be free if God's will is supremely infallible; can God's will be supreme if men are free?" Rather it is: "*How* are men free since God's will is supreme and infallible; *how* is God's will supreme and infallible since men are free?" The question, you see, is not one of the fact of these truths but of the fact of their harmony and the manner of this fact; whatever the answer, the fact of freedom in the human and supremacy in the divine will remain untouched.

One of the chief difficulties in the solution of this question is not unlike the chief difficulty moderns find in marriage. To the man or woman who expects marriage to produce an unceasing honeymoon, marriage is a complete failure; really the failure is on the part of the human agents, for marriage by its very nature was not meant to produce an unending honeymoon but to produce children who would live forever. To the man who approaches this discussion expecting the supremacy of God's will and man's freedom to be

established or rejected, the whole discussion will be useless; it is not intended to establish or reject these truths but to show they are not in conflict.

In fact, even if the precise point at issue is adhered to and we were to come up with a completely satisfactory answer harmonizing the two truths, we would have every right to be as astonished as a boy who opened his fist to find the whole of the universe rolling about in the palm of his hand. For a completely satisfactory answer in this matter involves a comprehension of the infinite; it demands no less than that we fully understand the divine action. That a human mind can comprehend the limitless divinity is a contradiction much more absurd than that a boy can hold the universe in his hand. What we can expect, and attain, in this discussion is just this: the manifestation of the fact that these truths do not contradict each other, that their mutual truth is not against reason, that the difficulties offered against them can be answered. One last word of caution. The explanation which will be offered here is a theological one, and so a solution offered by human minds. It is reason doing its best with a difficulty; but its results are not to be compared to the validity of the two truths of the freedom of man and the supremacy of the divine will.

Solution: Definition of freedom

To come to the point of this discussion, we may describe the freedom in question as the choice, devoid of necessity, of the means to an end. If there are a hundred theatres in town, I am free to choose to go to any one of them; if there is only one, I am still free in the matter of theatre-going for I can choose either to go or stay at home. This free choice, therefore, is a change, a motion from the capacity to choose to actual choice, from indetermination to determination. Obviously the capacity remains under its determination, that is, I can leave the theatre any time I like; but I cannot be determined to a choice and free to choose at the same time, I cannot leave the theatre and stay there at the same time. *All attempts to explain this fact of human freedom on grounds other than divine action destroy that freedom and establish fatalism.*

Proof that the divine will is the cause of freedom **Indirect Proof**

Take, for instance, the possibility of this determination to a choice coming from the inside, the possibility of the will moving itself to the choice with no other agent having any part in the affair. If the will moves itself from the capacity to choose to the actual choosing, three possibilities, all fatalistic, are left open. 1) The will is at the same time undetermined (as freedom demands) and determined (as choice requires); that is, the will is at the same time potentially choosing and actually choosing. This is the same contradiction as that involved in identifying the marble block with the statue it can become, or the medical student with the doctor he can become. All that this possibility asks of us is that we agree that determination comes from indetermination, that nothing, of itself, produces something. 2) or the will is always determined, man is moved by some necessary instinct; and so all possibility of freedom is ruled out. 3) Or the will is never determined and so all possibility of action is ruled out. Take your choice; you may have any one of the three, but you cannot have freedom too.

If, on the other hand, we decide to try the possibility of the will being moved by some outside agency other than God, what have we? The will is moved or changed from mere capacity to choose to actual choice by some external object or set of circumstances; then, obviously, in the face of this object or of these circumstances, it must necessarily move. It is bound by the merciless chains of the external world, determined to this object or these circumstances; so it cannot be free.

Since the will cannot move entirely of itself or be moved by any thing outside itself short of God and remain free, *yet it does move and is free*, it must be moved to its choice by God. There is nothing else left to explain the facts.

Direct Proof

That proof is, however, indirect; and indirect proofs are as unsatisfying, though adequate, to the human

mind as an indirect compliment is to human pride. The direct proof has nothing unsatisfying about it. God is the first cause; every movement, every reality depends upon Him. Take such an unassuming reality as a cough. We have not told the whole story, by a long shot, when we say that the cough depends on God. The cough might have been coldly deliberate, completely free; a cough, for instance, that substitutes for a sneer, that bridges the gap between thoughts, that throws down a smoke screen for embarrassment or waves a flag of warning. Again it might have been completely outside our control, a necessary thing, like the whoop we have been trying to choke down at least until the dramatic point of the sermon was passed. In each case, there was a cough; but in the one there was freedom, real freedom, in the other there was necessity, real necessity. Not only the cough but its freedom or its necessity must come from the first cause, from God, *for this freedom and this necessity are also realities*. In other words, not only the act but its mode, its freedom or its necessity, depends on God. The real modes of freedom or necessity, like all other realities, do not spring from nothingness. The causality of God, the first Cause, extends not merely to the act we perform, but to the mode of that act, its freedom or its necessity. *Unless that freedom be caused by God, it cannot exist.*

The universal efficacy of the divine will is not an obstacle to nor a destruction of human liberty, it is that liberty's sole explanation; just as it is the sole explanation of the necessity of a sunrise, the contingency of a laugh, so is it the sole explanation of the freedom of a prayer. To put the whole thing briefly, we may say that God is the cause of all existing natures and He is also the cause of all the acts of those natures. He, the First Mover, moves things according to the natures He has given them; it is man's nature, because he is rational, to move freely. How can God move man freely? Well, certainly nothing else can and the fact is there, testified to by our reason and God's own word. This is the solid fact of the harmony of these truths, As for the manner of the fact -- how it can be done -- to know that is to understand the divinity, to comprehend the infinitude of divine action. There precisely lies the mystery of the manner of the reconciliation of these two truths, a mystery that will forever be beyond the powers of the mind of man.

The love of God

Perhaps the best approach to the act of God's will which is love can be made through the love with which we are so intimately familiar, our own human love. Let it be said here, that the present brevity of treatment is by no means to be taken as an underestimation of human love; as a confirmation of this claim, let me point to the exhaustive examination of love in the second and third volumes of this work. For the present, it will suffice to point out the double love which runs through the life of a man: one, a movement of the sensitive appetite, is common to all the animals; the other, the movement of the will, is proper to intelligent beings. Evidence of the first is to be found in the movement of a man's appetite to food. In this sense love is the first of the passions and the foundation of all others; its characteristic note is one of assimilation, of absorption, of taking to one's self. It is properly called love for it is a movement of appetite towards its object, the good.

Rational love, which so sharply distinguishes man from the animals follows intellectual knowledge, whereas sense appetite primarily follows sense knowledge. This rational love extends to all the objects of human appetite, though its proper object is the universal good. Sometimes it approves and embraces the movement of the sense appetite, as when a man deliberately walks into a restaurant and orders a dinner; at other times it glowers at the sense appetite, as in the case of the smoker who so obediently follows the doctor's orders; again it may be quite independent of sense appetite, as when it insists that justice be respected, that love of God be cultivated or that sacrifice be made in love's name.

It too can be assimilative; the astounding thing about it is that it can also be utterly self-sacrificing. In this latter form, the form which commands our immediate and complete respect, it means no more than to wish good to another and to do something about that wish if possible. It really amounts to an identification of wills between the lover and the one loved to the point of considering the loved one as another self. Hence the language of love is sacrifice, generosity; the norm by which its depth can be judged is the extent of its unselfishness, the extent of its willingness to sacrifice. All of this is said succinctly when we say that this kind of love is a consecration to some one other than ourselves.

Since God has no body, there can be no question of passions in Him, none of that animal love whose management takes up so much of our time and energy. But there is indeed question of the first act of the will following knowledge, that is, there is question of rational love in God. The fact of love in God should be immediately evident. We have shown, in this chapter, that God has a will and wills Himself, who is all goodness, and all other things; which is to say that God loves Himself and all other things. Moreover the fact of this love in God follows immediately from the fact of His possession of a will.

Abstract discussions of love usually leave us unmoved and reasonably so; we do not expect love to be lazy, vague or distantly impersonal. It should be endlessly busy, intensely thoughtful, deeply interested. Knowing this so well we ask, if we are of the modern sceptics, where is the evidence of God's love for men; or, if we are not sceptics but spoiled children, we wonder why God so often neglects to give us concrete tokens of His divine love. In both cases we are insisting that if God does not overwhelm us with fur coats, jewelry and tickets to the opera He clearly does not love us; the bread and butter of everyday existence does not count; they, in some mysterious way, are taken for granted as rightfully ours.

The love of God for men, and indeed for all things, passes even such cold-blooded tests as these with high honors even though we are not given a Bethlehem or a Calvary for every birthday. If love means to wish good to another as effectively as possible and God is the cause of all things, then obviously every individual perfection to be found in the world, in every thing in the world, is the kind of concrete proof this calculating lover demands. Perhaps the truth of this will be more evident if we keep in mind the striking difference between human and divine love. In our love we are like lovers of the beautiful, haunting art galleries. We do not cause the goodness we love; we discover it and sometimes, in our blindness, the search is long, even futile. God does not roam the world searching for someone worthy of His love, someone whose goodness He can recognize and honor by His love; for His love is a creative love, He causes all goodness other than His own. In a word, ours can be an extremely generous love, but it is always a love called forth by the goodness of the one we love; it can never, therefore, compare with the generosity of the divine love by which God, from His inscrutable goodness, calls into being from nothingness the very goodness that He loves. By His love He not only gives Himself to us; He gives us to ourselves.

Still using that concrete and extremely hard-headed test of love, it seems clear that God does not love all things equally. If He did, there would be no difference between the perfection of the things of the world, between an angelfish and a humming bird, for the perfection of the world is the precise effect of divine love. It should be equally clear that God loves men with a love altogether different from the love He has for animals. A woman, or anyone else for that matter, cannot have friendship for a Pekinese; no matter how tenderly she cares for the dog, what money she lavishes on his special food, how becoming the ribbons with which she adorns him, the dog is still only a dog and so incapable of returning intellectual love, incapable of becoming another self to this delicate lady. In fact, even the omnipotence of God cannot make a friend out of a dog. That privilege is reserved for men and angels; they can, and do, become the other selves of God.

The justice and mercy of God

While we do not find it at all difficult to focus our minds on the friendliness of God, there is often a real fear of even a momentary consideration of His justice, as though the two were somehow bitterly opposed. Yet a moment's consideration should make it evident to us that justice is not to be eliminated from the divinity; that, indeed, it would be tragic for us if God were not just. For, if justice means anything, it means the refusal to deny to anyone what is his due. The individual justice which is called commutative lies between equals, giving a man what is his own and towards his individual end; the social justice which is called distributive lies between rulers and their subjects, giving a man what is his own as a social being in order to his end as a part of the community. As man has this double end, so every creature, in a larger sense, has a double end: one as an individual, the other as a part of that community which is the universe.

God is certainly just in the first sense of justice, that is, giving every creature what it should have by

nature, the natural equipment to carry that creature to its own end; of course there can be no equality, and of course the benevolence of God is inextricable from even so large a conception of justice as this, for how could we lay claim to rights until we were first brought into being? Carrying the parallel further, we see that God gives every creature what is its due as part of the universe, that is, what this creature needs to play its part in that external order of the universe to God. More simply, God acts according to the divine wisdom and goodness by which the order of the world was laid out. Here again there is a gift behind the very notion of the divine justice; here again justice and love are inextricably mingled. If we keep that intermingling of justice and love well in mind, we can say that justice in God is nothing more or less than the truth; the living up, on God's part, to the divine model, the plan of the divine architect by which the nature and natural rights of everything were determined.

That act of love which lies at the root of divine justice, if we were to single it out from the divine activities and give it a name, would be called divine mercy. Mercy, it must be understood, is not to be confused with sentimentality or that vague insult to man which goes by the name of humanitarianism; it means that, moved by the misery of another, we take steps to alleviate that misery. It does not mean that we encourage a man in his crimes to keep him in good humor, that we pamper his weaknesses for fear he will pout, or that we hide him in a crowd so that his misery will be less disconcerting to our own dreams of a utopia. Perhaps one of the reasons for our confusion about mercy is our confusion about the nature of misery. In its most general sense, it means the privation of a perfection; as far as human misery is concerned, quite obviously we cannot recognize it if we consider man as merely an animal, merely a comma in an interminable sentence, or merely a child who never reaches maturity. Under such circumstances, we cannot know what perfection is lacking to a man because we do not know what perfection is due him.

In a very real sense, then, the most complete misery would be the most complete lack of perfection. The act of creation which brought things into existence is by that simple rule a supreme act of mercy. Divine mercy, then, is not contrary to but fills up and overflows the cup of divine justice. Divine mercy does not detract from or destroy divine justice; it lies beneath and goes beyond it. Wherever divine justice is found, divine mercy is there at the root of it; more than that, it is present tempering divine justice by giving much more perfection than any creature could justly lay claim to.

Conclusion: The erroneous views of the will of God

Our age is not the first in which men tried to do strange things to the divine will. Centuries ago the attempt to rule divine love out of the consideration of men and of the world resulted in the pessimism of India and Persia; quite logically, such an attempt held out to men the supreme goal of personal nothingness and the supreme act of self-destruction. Quite logically, this attempt made human life a term of suffering and indignity to no personal goal. Centuries ago men tried to make gods, and the will of the gods, out of human stuff. The result was the cynicism and brutality of the late Roman decadence, the foul degradations of a pagan idolatry. Centuries ago men tried to make sentiment and softness supreme, tossing out the rigors of reality to make cloying love the highest value; out of this attempt came, not men, but delicate beasts.

Their significance for men

We have the parallels of these attempts present in our own time. We too have thinkers who deny the divine will; we too have thinkers who make divinity out of human stuff. The results of these attempts do not vary from age to age; they can be predicted with complete assurance -- despair, brutality, effeminacy.

Their common bond

From the individual man or woman's point of view, these attacks on divinity are not nearly so disparate as they seem at first glance. At least there is one common bond which ties them into intimate unity as far as the individual man or woman of any age is concerned; for all of them without exception, destroying God, obliterate His image. All of them, without exception, are violent attacks on the individual man as man; they push him aside, over the abyss of oblivion, with the crushing blow of despair, the mailed fist of

brutality, or the subtly enticing gesture of corruption.

Significance of the truth of the will of God

For freedom

This is not what men want. They want their individual freedom, the surrender and incredible labors of love; they cannot exist without justice; they cannot hope without mercy. These things are not to be found by abandoning God but by holding to Him at whatever cost. Here, in America, we are dedicated to the ideal of freedom and freedom is unintelligible without God, the real God Who is the sole cause of freedom. A world looking for freedom is a world looking for God. A world that looks for absorption in a life stream, in a process of change, in an absolute state, a "holistic" organism or the future of a race is not looking for freedom but for slavery; it is searching, not for God, but for oblivion. That, most likely, is precisely what such a world will find.

For love

There is no hope for the love of men if there be no love in God; there can never be the destruction of love's solemn consecration in men as long as there is love of God. To trace love's roots to irrational depths of the subconscious, the biological necessity of an animal or the mistaken sentimentality of a fool is to obliterate human love. This sort of thing does not give birth to sacrifice, generosity, thoughtfulness, undying consecration. The divine love gives rise to all these things in its image in human life. Men can love, and love in precisely this divine way, because by their very manhood they are images of God; without that divine love, man's tireless search for an object of love is doomed from its inception, for there is no goodness which is not the fruit of the creative love of God.

For justice

Where will justice find a home if the divine will be non-existent, if it be made of human stuff, if it be unjust? For justice is truth and like truth it is immutable; like all truth, it is intimately, immediately dependent on the first Truth which is its source. Where there is no truth, justice is a fanatic's wishful dream; where there is a first truth, justice is a reality against which the crimes of men dash themselves and are destroyed. Men can live if there be justice, though they fear it; if there be none, as there must be none without God, their fear becomes a reign of terror and human life an impossibility.

For mercy

There is mercy among men because there is mercy in God, for there is love in men because there is love in God and mercy is love at work in a crisis. Nor is the bountiful mercy of men ever enough for the crises of men's lives, if for no other reason than that men can scratch only the surface of other men's lives. The crises that enter human life are not confined to the surface of life; indeed, the most tragic crises are those that take place in the depth of a man's soul, for there are his richest perfections, there he can sustain the most serious losses. Only a mercy that can plunge its caressing hand into the depths of man's soul can relieve the misery that must be relieved if men are to face the long days of life; that is, only a mercy that extends its help as far as the love of God extends its beneficence. Freedom, love, justice, mercy, these are things indispensable to the men and women of any age these are the fruits of the will of God.

CHAPTER VI -- THE FATHER OF ALL (Q. 22-26)

1. The paternal viewpoint:
 - (a) Its responsibilities
 - (b) Its privileges.
 2. The children's viewpoint.
 3. Viewpoint of the eternal Father:
 - (a) The fact of Providence.
 - (1) Direct proof.
 - (2) Indirect proof.
 - (b) Characteristics of Providence:
 - (1) Universal.
 - (2) Immediate:
 - a. Distinction from government
 - b. Relative immediacy of Providence and government.
 4. The children's criticisms -- objections against Providence:
 - (a) Accident.
 - (b) Necessity.
 - (c) Physical evil.
 - (d) Sin.
 5. Power of the eternal Father:
 - (a) The nature of omnipotence.
 - (b) Its "limitations."
 6. Happiness of the eternal Father:
 - (a) Fact of God's happiness.
 - (b) Its nature.
- Conclusion:
1. Answers to the children.
 2. A fatherless world.
 3. Children at home.

CHAPTER VI FATHER OF ALL (Q. 22-26)

The paternal viewpoint

AT PRESENT, the day set aside in tribute to father is a miniature, and firmly masculine, Christmas. When it escapes its present timid preliminary stage we shall no doubt erect a statue flatteringly expressive of fatherhood. Its sculptor will have to be of the stuff of genius; he will have to catch the fleet grace of motion imprison it in stone, as the Greeks did, without weighing down the swift feet of motion by the stolid strength of the stone. For the hoary jokes that swing about the traditional father pacing the corridors of a maternity hospital, are sparrows twittering on the side of a mountainous truth.

Perhaps the young father does not realize it, but those anxious hours outside a delivery room start him off on a life-long walk. All the rest of his days he will mentally pace corridors; all the rest of his days, the moments of the present, which seem so precious and fleeting to others, will be stupid strollers that block his path to the next hour, the next day, the next year upon which so much depends; year after year he will stand on tiptoe, trying to peer over today's shoulder, craning his neck to see around the next corner, straining his eyes to see just a little beyond the horizon that limits the sure knowledge of a man.

Its responsibilities

This last might, in fact, be a better, because more universal, motif for that statue of father: the figure of a man shading his eyes with his hands, his head tilted a little to increase the range of his sight, looking up and out, far out, scanning the future with the clear, responsible, judicious eyes of a sailor standing his watch. Such a symbol, freed of the note of anxiety but made formidable by the accent of responsibility, would show the intimate bond between the fatherhood of God and the fatherhood of man.

Both are providers, taking that word, not in its limited sense of a faithful wage-earner who furnishes bread and butter, but in its more proper sense of one who sees ahead, who copes not only with the present but also with the future. The eternal Father provides, in this sense, for all of the future; an earthly father, for that little piece of the future that is of such intimate concern to those given to his care. It is that correlative of providence -- the handing over of the lives of others to the hands of a man -- that is behind much of the panicky flight of the twentieth century from parenthood. "Splendor" is too noisy a word to describe the steady light of that quiet courage which makes a man responsible for the care and nourishment of this mite of life during its long progress to the vigor of manhood; for the intellectual cultivation and discipline which alone can guarantee freedom to this latest citizen of earth and heaven: for the mysterious unfolding of moral character that will either be a condemnation to hell now and forever, or the violence behind the storming of heaven. We can appreciate, to some little degree, the agony of remorse that fastens its iron grip on a neglectful father of an undernourished, crippled, sickly child; unless the experience becomes our very own, we shall never plumb the depths of sorrow in the heart of a man whose child has set its feet on a path unworthy of man.

Its privileges

Paternity, in the ordinary course of affairs, richly repays a man for the responsibilities it imposes. There is a literally personal share reserved for the father in the strength, the beauty, the brilliance, the sanctity of his children. But long before these ultimate rewards are ripe for the reaping, there is a treasure too great to be risked outside the strong walls of a home; only the members of the family are privileged to peep into that treasure chest; no one has found the words to list its items. The absolute, unquestioning confidence, the unshakeable faith of a child burrows its way deep enough into the heart of a father to allow him a glimpse of what the unquestioning confidence and unshakeable faith of man does to the heart of God. It is not the appealing trick of a gesture, the impish attraction of a smile, the naiveté of a word that breaks down the barriers a man has built up to protect his heart; the child, asleep or awake, in smiles or in tears, its feet straining with excitement or dragging with fatigue, reduces the father to helpless devotion by its own joyous dependence. Neither would have it otherwise.

The children's viewpoint

There is probably no man so consistently misjudged as a father; and there are few judges more unfair than his own children. To the very young, he has an air of indifference, of preoccupation and impatience; for they are living in the present while he is straining his every faculty in the crucial struggle with the future, a future much more crowded with possible moral catastrophes for his children than with dangers of starvation, meagre comfort or vanishing luxury. A little later on, the children will submit him to constant comparison with all his competitors who enter their field of acquaintance. Too often the rule of thumb is a purely material one. If his success, in terms of clothes, houses and cars, has been a mediocre one, he can thank God for his preoccupation with the future which blinds him to the bitterness of silent condemnation, or the even greater bitterness of pity. Only much later, too late in fact, does he get the solid judgment that comes from an evaluation of his efforts to build men and women; a few solid blows from life quickly determine whether the training, the counsel and the example of home have built enough moral stamina in the children for the facing of life, or whether the soft flabbiness of neglect will make it necessary to hide from life through all of adult years.

Viewpoint of the eternal Father

Of course the Eternal Father, Who is God, has not escaped this general misjudgment of fathers. Those of His children who are extremely young wholly engrossed with the toys of the present, find Him aloof, indifferent, preoccupied. Why does He look ahead, providing for the long future of eternity which is of no present interest to us, instead of drying our tears, repairing our toys, taking us in His lap and comforting us? He's not a father to us at all. The older children have looked around a bit. They have seen life, the outside of it, and are complacent in the naive sophistication which that superficial view has given them. From their superior heights they pass judgment on the eternal Provider, pitying Him the miserable job He

has done, roundly condemning Him as a complete failure, or even going the lengths of denying His paternity. The rough contacts of life may eventually scratch the glittering surface of that sophistication, the humiliation of failure may cut down the height of the judgment seat, memory's journey over the long road of the years may distinguish crumbling landmarks from those that endure; if that happens, the children mature and in their maturity pass a saner judgment on the Provider of men. The comforting thing about this long tale of misjudgments is that correction does not come too late, if it comes at all; this Provider is never beyond the reach of our apologies, never out of range of the whisper of our thanks.

The fact of Providence

The denial of providence's long vision of the future to God is a childish misjudgment. It is only by burying our head in the presents mass of detail that we can blind ourselves to that providence; it shouts for our attention, whether we focus our eyes on the world we live in or on the God who made the world and us. In the second chapter of this book we have proved the existence of the supremely intelligent Cause of the world; to deny God's providence is to suppose that this supreme intelligence acted with less foresight than a half-wit; Look at the thing honestly in its human framework. If our ordinary actions are intelligent, we know what we are going to do, or at least what we are going to try to do, before we start. An editor of a magazine does not cool his heels at a newsstand doggedly waiting to see what his magazine looks like and what it contains; he knew before the magazine went to press. The arrangement of the rooms in the house he has designed does not surprise the architect; if it does, he has been a very stupid architect indeed.

This is what can be expected of intelligences, this is what intelligence means: the ability to act for an end intelligently, selecting the best means, having in mind from the beginning the goal and the best way to attain that goal. In denying this to God we strip ourselves of intelligence: not only because such a position is stupid, but because the divine is the only possible source of our own intelligence. Providence in God means no more than intelligent planning for divine action. It means that God acted intelligently in building the world and governing it. He knows where He is going and how, what this particular stone is for and where it belongs. To challenge this in God is to challenge the intelligence of God; and a challenge of divine intelligence is a challenge of the unquestionable facts of the world.

Direct proof

Approaching the question of God's providence from the other side, the side of the world, we find every detail of the universe cast in the role of a friendly guide effusively anxious that we see the central truth of the fact of providence. In a previous chapter, the internal finality of the world was insisted upon, even though such insistence seemed to be laboring the obvious: the fact that the ear was ordered by its very nature to the one act of hearing, the eye to the one act of seeing and so on. It was made clear then that this internal finality demanded a supreme intelligence, that it was not sufficiently accounted for by chance, by necessity, or by a limited intelligence. Now, as a matter of fact, such undeniable internal finality forces the mind to a recognition of an external finality, that is, to the recognition of an order to an end beyond the individuals, a world order to which each individual creature makes its own contribution.

A tree sinks its roots to search out minerals and moisture; it is not the minerals who climb the tree to pick apples. It is not the grass which clips the sheep off short, but the other way around. When cows start to hit men on the head with a mallet, hang their haunches up to age and complain of the toughness of the human hide, it will be time enough to revise our ideas on the way of the world. As things stand now, it is the plant which uses the mineral, the animal that uses the plant, the man who uses the animal; that is, it is the superior being which orders the inferior to its own superior end. In other words, the external end of the plant is the internal end of the animal; the plant furnishes the appropriate material which makes possible the end for which the animal organism exists.

The obvious interaction of creatures in the world, their subordination one to another, necessarily means a subordination of their proper ends, one to another. Things do not sit glumly in this world like so many patients in a doctor's office, aloof, detached, encased in an impenetrable wrapping of individuality, with no

reference to each other. Rather, their mere juxtaposition strikes up an intimate interrelation with all the totally unselfconscious abandon of a child among interested strangers. No one thing exists merely for itself or by itself; it is bound to things above it and below it, using the one, serving the other. Things, in other words, have an order to each other; there is an order, a finality, over and above the order to the immediate end of any one creature. There is a world order; the plan of that world order in the mind of God is called providence. For, obviously, that order, like all order, is the fruit of intelligence; it does not explain itself, but is explained only by an intelligence that cannot itself be part of that which it is ordering to the end of the world.

It is quite true that we cannot always trace the lines of that world plan. We do not know, for example, why a giant shell should have crashed into the church of St. Genevieve in Paris at the precise moment when it was most crowded; a great deal of speculation on the part of the author did not clear up the mystery of the collapse of the fictional bridge of San Luis Rey with these particular persons on it. It is just as true that unauthorized interpreters of the divine mind have often invoked divine providence for reasons of personal vengeance or childish spite: to them, there is no doubt that the strained tonsils of a loud spoken neighbor or the financial failure of a bitter rival are evidences of God's smooth ordering of the world for their convenience. One great American news magazine mocks at a Chinese earthquake as a divine solution to a problem of overpopulation.

But why must we try to understand every detail? The element of mystery in the world order is not surprising. Our naiveté in demanding a complete copy of the divine plans, a copy adapted to our intelligence, is more than surprising, it is humiliating: with a clear knowledge of the mistakes our reasoning has led us into, of the misjudgments we have made, of the natural truths that leave our minds reeling, we pout because divinity is not made plain in tabloid form!

The mystery is there. The fact that it is a mystery gives us no more right to deny the fact, forced on us from so many different angles, than a wounded man has to deny his wound because he cannot trace the source of the bullet. The order of the world is a fact that has struck the intelligence of the most ignorant of men as well as the most learned, the shepherds watching their flocks under the brilliance of an Eastern night as well as the astronomer watching the stars that shed that brilliance. The providence behind this order, the plan of the order in the mind of God, has not, consequently, been a matter of esoteric knowledge; it has been a common heritage of the human mind. The existence of that providence can be rigidly proved by unaided human reason, as we have seen; but, for the benefit of those who, for one reason or another, have not such a proof at hand and whose mind might be unsettled by the sophistries of agnostics or atheists, the existence of divine providence has been revealed by God Himself. Providence is a truth much too central to human living to be left to the sole support of a mind that stumbles with the grace of long practice and falls into the arms of fatigue as into the embrace of a life-long friend.

Indirect proof

A psychologist may spin out an hypothesis that is, to him, as beautiful as a child is to its mother. But if a consequence of that hypothesis is the denial of a soul, a mind and a free will to man, he must either chuck the hypothesis out the window or admit that he is merely playing with toys. Some psychologists have refused to do either one or the other when faced with this dilemma; but, then, neither did they act the part they had written for other men -- or, perhaps, quite unconsciously, they did that very thing. At any rate, every scientific hypothesis must be checked by comparing it and its consequences with the known facts, when such facts are at all available. Following the same technique with a denial of divine providence, it becomes obvious that such a denial will not stand for an instant even as an hypothesis. Such a denial would mean that a supreme deity did not exist. This would not worry the antagonist of providence; but it would mean that neither he nor the world could exist for a moment. Moreover, it would mean a denial of all intellect, even of the intellect of the psychologist; for obviously, if the first intelligence does not exist, the secondary intelligences have no more chance to exist than the baby's squall without the baby. Imagine an expectant father walking the floor cuddling a squall while he awaits the arrival of the first child of the family! Yet we are behind the times when we protest that we cannot picture a psychologist cuddling his

intellect while he awaits the evolution of the supreme intelligence.

A shallow cup held under a rushing flow of water will hardly catch more than a sip; called up on the carpet, it might argue, in the human way, that there was no more water or obviously it would have been filled to the brim. When we hold the human mind under the swift flow of infinite truth, it misses most of that truth and comes up with the truculent denial of all but what it has grasped. Under the shock of the truth that divine providence is absolutely universal, extending to the smallest detail of everything past, present and future, the mind of man is numbed. Reasoning readily shows that this means no more than that God works intelligently. Everything exists only insofar as He causes it, and, of course, He knows what He is doing. But still the truth leaves us as calm as a subnormal student in a calculus class; much more of it has splashed out of our mind than was held there.

Characteristics of Providence: Universal

There is a little more encouraging light in our eyes when it is pointed out that the knowledge of God has, roughly, the same relation to the universe that the architect's knowledge has to the house he planned; that is, the ordering of the effects of the first Cause to the end He intended is precisely as wide as the effects produced by the first Cause. Of course it is barely possible that a plumber with original ideas might set up a sink in the living room, to the complete surprise of the architect; the plans of God cannot, however, be wrecked, nor can the divine Architect make mistakes.

The truth about providence begins to seep through the rocky outer surface of our minds when we come down to details. We cannot be altogether unmoved by the realization that the sun rises and sets in this way and no other, with this exact, inviolable regularity, that rain always wets us, or fire burns us because they were so planned by God. It is because God made them that way that a sigh lasts only an instant while an angel lives forever, that a man is born and dies in a few years while the planets swing around their courses for millions and millions of years. That a man acts freely while the physical world about him follows inexorable physical laws is because he, and the world, were made that way by God; because the freedom he enjoys is a product of the same divine causality which produced the necessity of the physical world. By this time we are beginning to see that the plan of God, like His causality, extends not merely to things that are, but to the way they are; not merely to what happens, but to how it happens. The very difference of things find their only full explanation in God.

Immediate: Distinction from government

The difference between the extent of God's causality and ours becomes clearer when we advert to some of our own limitations. We can, for instance, make a dog come our way simply by pulling on the leash with sufficient strength; but we do not pretend to be responsible for the dog's acting in dog-like fashion. We can wrap a blanket around him, but we cannot stuff a bark down his throat. Our causality is necessarily limited to acting upon things; God's extends to the innermost principles of the natures of things. He is not merely responsible for the dog, but for the nature of the dog; He is not merely responsible for the nature, but for the way that nature acts -- whether necessarily, contingently or freely. Unless He be its cause, freedom can no more exist than can necessity. This insistence on the universality of the causality of God is very much to the point here for the plan of God, since He is intelligent, extends as far as His causality.

Relative immediacy of Providence and government

The plan of God, going to this great detail, would account for the action of every creature in its rush to its own goal. Actually the universality of divine providence extends much further for the creature is not an isolated being, it lives in a world in which it plays, on however small a scale, its cosmic part. It is true that providence extends to the proper end of each being in the world; the plant and animal have the apparatus and organization calculated to accomplish their own preservation and growth to maturity. Over and above this, every living thing has a purpose to accomplish relative to the species, a duty to be done for which it is prepared with unfailing efficiency and regularity. This preparation, too, is in the plan of God. Moreover, each species is not an isolated affair. It, too, has its purpose, its taste to accomplish in the cosmic scheme

of things; a purpose that may be described in a general way as the service of its superiors. Again it is prepared with complete efficiency and regularity for this cosmic end; this order to the world end in the mind of God is the plan or providence of God. Little wonder that our mind staggers under the impact of this truth. Little wonder that our eyes are dazzled whether we consider its divine attention to the minutest detail or its magnificent reach to the ends of the universe. It is as wide as the world, and wider; as wide, in fact, as the action of God. That is much too wide for the mind of man to embrace and hug to its breast.

The children's criticisms -- objections against Providence

We are children and God is our Father, our Provider. His eyes sweep the far horizons of the future, of eternity; ours are fixed on all-engrossing moments of the present. Some of us, not seeing our Father's far distant goals, decide that He is not much of a Father; even, perhaps, that we are orphans who not only have no father now, but never did have. This order about us and within us needs no further explanation than that which is offered by necessity or by accident, that is, by chance. Still others pity the efforts of our Father, pointing out the fact of physical evil as evidence that He has made a botch of His work as Provider; others positively condemn Him as a complete failure, a condemnation based on the existence of that moral evil which is called sin. These are the childish viewpoints of spoiled children: they do not need the Father; or they do not want the kind of Father Who tolerates suffering and sin.

If they were fairly reticent in their misjudgments, as decency would demand while they are still in their Father's house, they might be passed over in silence and left to life's hard maturing process. Of course they are not reticent; such children never are. They are bitter, critical, hastily unfair, dogmatically indocile and, above all, blatant. They must be dealt with firmly.

Accident

In the second chapter of this book we have seen the fallacy of the explanation of order by chance or necessity. Here it will be enough to recall that argumentation by noting that the explanation of order by chance violates common sense; we are not at all as happily surprised that the constituents of the eye add up to an organ of sight as we are that a roll of the dice should turn up a seven. It is opposed to all scientific thought which refuses to admit it is unveiling a will-o'-the-wisp in discovering nature's laws. It is opposed to philosophic thought; we investigate airplane accidents; we do not make up schedules for them because we cannot conceive of the accidental as the regular course of affairs. Any devotee of horse racing would go bail for the statement that accidental results do not follow with monotonous regularity; any orchestra leader would resent the claim, if he understood what it meant, that chance unites a number of different causes in such a way as to produce, regularly, an effect that is essentially one and perfect; any amateur gardener would scoff at the notion that chance produces multiple and perfectly connected elements from a seed that is essentially one. For, to all these men, it is obvious that mere chance does not constitute the order of things, does not explain the regularity, the harmony, the efficacy of what science calls the natural action and interaction of creatures in the world.

Necessity

Necessity, the force of nature, the emergence of new elements or adaptation to surroundings do not offer an explanation; they merely push the problem back, hoping to bluff it into obscurity. How explain the necessity? What causes the adaptations or the emergence? The problem is exactly the same; it can be solved only in the name of a supreme intelligence or of sheer chance -- and chance is absurd as an explanation.

Physical evil

The problem of physical evil represents a much more serious difficulty against divine providence to us of the twentieth century. Some of the difficulty comes, no doubt, from the fact that it digs its way into our hearts as well as into our heads; and when we start thinking with our hearts we can call the product thinking only smilingly. Only a poet can talk this way without embarrassment. Much more of the difficulty

comes from a faulty outlook which is peculiarly ours. A close-up view can be much too close for comfort, much too close for truth; if we take an ant's eye-view of the world by standing on our heads we can be terrified of the things we ordinarily tread under foot, a blade of grass or a fallen leaf. When we stand on our heads to look at the world, of course the things close to our eyes will look enormous; of course we shall be blinded to everything but what is within range of our eyelashes. We might as well have no eyes at all, depending on our eyelashes as an ant depends on its feelers.

As regards physical evil, we are often standing on our heads when we make our judgments, we have our eyes glued so close to the material world that our values are ludicrously distorted. From this undignified position sickness, ill health, bodily injuries loom as major catastrophes. They are absolutely fatal to one who cannot see beyond the material world he has jammed against his eyes. They seriously interfere with pleasure, with work, with family life. But they do not impede the central activity of human life -- the meriting of heaven; indeed, they often distinctly aid it. Why do you suppose that Christ commanded men to take up a cross if suffering is a major evil? Why did He visit His saints by such diseases and physical agonies? Why did He flood the soul of His mother with sorrow? Why did He himself undergo such a terrible death at so early an age? These questions demand answers before we gamble everything on health and comfort.

To this upside down observer death has all the horror of complete and blank finality. If it means the end and collapse of achievement, the end of joy, the end of life, the end of love, it is a major tragedy. But if it is only the beginning of all these things, of all that will complete our happiness, and the end only of those things that rob us of happiness it ceases to be a dread terror stalking a man through all the byways of life. Loss of fortune, of friends the discovery of a love's falseness, all these are major tragedies only if we have made major ends of the things we lose by them. If we have glued our eyes to earth and neglect to look over the horizon into the infinity of the world of the spirit, we necessarily carry our heart on our sleeve; it will be crushed, battered, wounded, defaced, betrayed and broken. Because, you see, that is no place for a human heart.

Unquestionably God does cause physical evil, at the very least, through the operation of the natural laws of which He is the author. Sometimes, frequently enough to assure us of His providence, we can see the reason for the evil. We can understand that the plant must die to feed the animal; that animals must die to feed men; for we can understand the impossibility of order without subordination of one thing to another. We even see, now and then, how priceless was the suffering which brought a man to his senses, toppling him from the insecure throne of self-sufficiency and setting him humbly about the business of making his way home. Of course we cannot see all the reasons, nor can we see reasons all the time. But what a tragic disappointment it would be if God's plot could be seen by us so long before we had finished the book.

Sin

By far the most serious of the children's criticisms arises from the existence of sin. This difficulty clears up to a great extent when the exact nature of sin is accurately grasped; but, then, so penetrating an insight is a little too much to expect from children who refuse to grow up. Sin is, primarily, a privation, a lack of order to God in some act. Or, more simply, sin is a human act with a hole in it. Just as dough is not necessary to build up the pleasing and practical emptiness of a hole in a doughnut, so nothing positive is necessary to build up the pleasing and apparently practical emptiness of the hole in a human act. The action of the first cause, God, is not demanded for this defect, precisely because it is a defect, a lack of something. The first cause must be responsible for everything that exists; the trouble with this bad human act is just that there is something that does not but should exist in it. In a word, for this defect, the human will needs no help from God.

Secondarily, there is a positive element in sin -- the physical act itself; just as in the doughnut there is the positive element surrounding the hole. For this positive element we must go back, through the human will, to God. Look at it in the concrete. All a pickpocket does is put his hand into a pocket and extract a wallet. We do the same thing several times every day, though with none of the eager excitement enjoyed by the

pickpocket. Physically considered there is nothing wrong with the acts indeed, from this physical point of view, the thief's extraction of a wallet is far superior in its smooth grace to the honest man's grumbling fumble. The difference is that the pickpocket puts his hand in someone else's pocket to take a wallet that is not his own. This is the precise defect of order. God is certainly the ultimate cause of the physical act in sin; He causes it by moving the human will freely to it. The defect, the formal element that makes sin, sin, is not caused by God; it is merely permitted, tolerated.

That brings us sharply against the problem of freedom. Why does God permit this defect? Why does He not make it impossible to sin? The answer to those questions is very, very simple: *because this permission is demanded by the nobility of man.*

God could have made us physically incapable of violating the laws by which we are led to our goal; in such a case we might be beasts, or vegetables, or minerals. We would certainly not be men and women. He could have created us in possession of eternal happiness, but it would not have been so divinely generous of Him. For He would thus have robbed our lives of loyalty and victory, of the stubborn courage that drags us to our feet after a severe beating; of merit, responsibility, personal accomplishment, of faith and hope and the whole life of virtue; of the light of the life of Christ and the exquisite joy of fellowship in His sufferings. It has been well said that it is the possibility of sin that made possible the lives of the saints. Because men can lie, cheat, steal, kill, make beasts of themselves there is great merit in truth, honesty, justice, and chastity. Because we can hate so bitterly and live so selfishly, human love is the precious thing it is. It is only because the gates of hell are wide open for us that we can batter down the walls of heaven with our own fists.

Briefly, the terror of evil in the world springs from the heart of a coward. It is the normal echo of that effeminate attitude towards life that holds out, as life's ideal, uninterrupted coddling, endless days of petting, coaxing, protection. This is the view of life that shrinks from sharing the weariness and discouragement of struggle, the glory of personal victory, because of the possibilities of failure.

Power of the eternal Father

In this investigation of divine providence, we have simply been looking facts in the face. The direct glance of facts now push us one step farther along in our scrutiny of the nature of God, the further step to the acceptance of the rather terrifying truth that yet lies at the roots of our hope, the truth of God's omnipotence. Lest our wavering intellect, in spite of facts and irrefragable proof, should hesitate, trembling before the awfulness of such a concept, we have again the bolstering declaration of infallible authority. Strictly speaking, however, authority is not necessary in this matter; our reason can handle this alone. In fact, once we understand what is meant by omnipotence, the intellect holds out open arms to embrace it.

The nature of omnipotence

Power is not attributed to God in the sense of the power of a canvas to be turned into a masterpiece. Such a principle of passive reception is an open confession of perfection not yet had; a thing inconceivable in God. Nor is divine power to be taken in the sense of the power of a painter to produce a masterpiece. Great as such power may be, it, too, is kept humble by its necessary confession of imperfection; it, too, implies a change, a motion, a passage from potentiality to actuality. It is a clear statement of help received, of dependence on another mover. God is completely independent, altogether unmoved.

Power in God must be understood in a sense that is unique: the sense of a principle of action on others, in itself implying no imperfection whatsoever. No example of it can be given for it exists nowhere outside of divinity. The power of creatures is no more than a shadow recording the presence of divine power.

However, starting from the world we know so well, we can rise up to some knowledge of divine omnipotence. In our world, creatures are principles of action, that is they have power, in exact proportion to their own actuality, their own realized potentialities. Thus, for instance, I cannot teach others the art of

ballet dancing because I have not that knowledge; I can teach others only what I myself know. A man can put the stamp of intelligence upon his work only in the degree in which he possesses intelligence; he cannot generate angels, even if angels could be generated, because he does not himself enjoy angelic life. God, as we have already proved, is pure act, complete perfection. His power, then, is complete, as unlimited as His perfection, almighty.

Its "limitations"

Divine omnipotence, then, means that God can do all things. The jocose objections that are offered against this divine attribute are harmless things as long as we understand that they are meant to be funny and are not objections at all but contradictions in terms. With this clearly in mind we can, with the somewhat weary patience that is our only defense against a punster, sustain such questions as: can God make past things present? Can God make an object so big He cannot move it? And so on. In a way, these objections are an aid to a clear notion of omnipotence. They bring out its real meaning, namely, the power to do all that can be done, to make all that can be made; or, more simply, to do whatever does not involve a contradiction. What does involve a contradiction is not to be classified as impossible to some created cause, not to God's power, but impossible to itself. A circular square cannot be made; a soulless frankenstein can never escape from the pages of fiction; a creature can never be infinite; for in all these there is contained an open contradiction.

Happiness of the eternal Father: Fact of God's happiness

There is one last question to be investigated in this analysis of the nature of God. a question that comes to us naturally as involving the high point of existence: is God happy? The question has seemed in very bad taste to the gloomy religionists of the past few centuries, the men and women who identified godliness with stern frowns or resigned sighs. To speak, or even speculate, on happiness in reference to divinity was as vulgar as gossip about the king's indigestion. On this basis, heaven should be pictured as a dreary front parlor exuding dignity with the angels tip-toeing in terror down the halls in dread expectation of the roaring anger of a God as wrathful as a victim of gout.

Its nature

How such a notion ever came into being is totally inexplicable on rational grounds. A simple analysis of happiness shows that it demands an intellectual nature, the possession of a good, and a consciousness of that possession. Consequently a dog or a cat can never know happiness; it can be satisfied, its appetites quieted, but it cannot know that these appetites have been satisfied. The animal, in other words, is incapable of that reflexive act that enables us to look at ourselves. Obviously, a man may have much good and yet be thoroughly unhappy by the simple trick of concentrating on the things he does not have, or by cultivating a kind of unconsciousness of the goods he does possess. But it is utterly impossible for God to be unhappy: He is supreme intelligence, He is supreme goodness, He knows Himself, His goodness, perfectly with an eternal, uninterrupted act. Our happiness, then, like all our other perfections, is but the faintest rejection of the full, infinite, ineffable happiness of God. Gloom, grouches, bad temper or blues simply cannot have a place in God for sorrow, defect, imperfection are excluded by the very notion of divinity.

Our little share in that overflowing divine happiness makes up the eternal happiness of heaven. In fact, the happiness of God includes all other happiness; whatever desirability there is in any other happiness, whether that happiness be true or false, Preexisted complete and in a much more eminent, a divine, way in the happiness of God.

It seemed so important to St. Thomas that men see God as a happy God that he drew up a table of extremely rough parallels, in the hope that some little glimmer of the smile of God would light up the darkest days of human life. He made the parallel between the clear, penetrating, translucent beauty of human contemplative happiness and God's continuous contemplation of His own infinitely perfect divine nature and of all other natures; between the solid, substantial, creative happiness that belongs to the

activity of men and the happiness of God's creation and government of the world. From what might be called earthly happiness -- pleasure, riches, power, dignity, fame -- he looked to the infinite joy of God in Himself and His creatures, to the infinite sufficiency of divinity, the divine omnipotence, the eternal kingdom of God, the universal admiration of the created world. The parallels are clumsy; but they should rule out of the minds of men the horrible caricature of a gloomy God.

The home over which so happy a Father presides is a grand place to live in. Wherever He is, is home. Now, while we are on the road, it is a makeshift affair, a tent thrown up for the night, but still home; when the journey of life is done with, that happy Father will give us the full happiness He has been planning for us all along the road, His eyes looking far down the future to eternity. It is, however, extremely difficult for the most provident, the happiest of Fathers to give happiness to carping, critical, unfair children. If they insist on misjudging their Father in the light of their childish minds and distorted information no one can do much of anything about it.

A little faith, a more docile acceptance of the long view of the Father, makes all the difference between happiness and misery. To accept that long view of providence does not involve a denial of that weakest of all intelligences, the human mind; it is not a slavish surrender of man's supreme faculty. True enough, the intellect of man has rights, rights which cannot be denied without a denial of our own manhood, of our claim to superiority to the irrational world. It has the right to demand that it be not violated, that these truths about the nature of God be not against reason not in contradiction to it. It also has limits, limits which are definitely those of a finite creature. It is violating itself when it expects or demands the comprehension of the infinite; it is being childish when it demands that the Father see no further than the smallest of His children.

Conclusion

The intellect is forced to the conclusions we have discussed in this chapter, forced by fact, by simple adherence to the fundamental laws of thought and of being. Those conclusions, moreover, are bolstered by infallible authority's crystal-clear pronouncements. The difficulties urged against these conclusions do not show there is any contradiction involved; there is nothing contrary to reason here, merely something above it. For there is mystery here, as there is mystery wherever the divine movement is involved; the comprehension of the mystery is possible only to the mind that can comprehend the infinite. We do make those difficulties seem more forceful, not by further argumentation, but by standing on our head, holding the world so close to our eyes that our whole scale of values is inverted; the difficulties seem enormous only when we blind ourselves to the truth.

Answers to the children

A fatherless world

It is fortunate for these ungrateful children that the violence of their misjudgments cannot destroy the benevolent paternity of God. The make-believe world they construct for themselves is a horrible habitation; but there is always the comforting knowledge that it is only make-believe. Pushing the Father aside as utterly incompetent, they take on their childish minds His work of running the house of the world, and break down before that work, as a man always breaks down before a job that is too big for him; they end up trying to escape from the house of the world to which they have denied all doors and windows. Some of them will deny the very existence of the Father, the very framework of the house of the world, pulling the walls down on their own heads to escape into a chaos without order and without meaning. They are unbalanced children who insist that the toys of life are life's essentials; they are frightened children to whom despair is a playmate; they are children at war with God, with the world and above all with themselves, a war that breeds a hatred that looses its most deadly venom against the children themselves. They are the children of a Fatherless world.

Children at home

It is, thank God, only a world of their own distorted minds. In reality God's children are at home even during this rough passage to heaven. The walls of the house of the world are rough, unfinished, crude things; but within that home there is the serenity, the courage, the peace and self-respect that is the right of children, the product of a provident Father. In place of panic in the face of chaos, there is the calm quiet of children with perfect trust, for here is a Father whose provident eyes search the long horizons of eternity. Here there is no fear, no despair; for here the intelligence and power of the Father are assured. Failure, misfortune, discouragement, sickness, even sin itself have their meaning in the divine scheme of things. Here there is that sane balance that recognizes success, praise, high position, good fortune, health, as only steps in a divine plan, steps which are perhaps no more significant than their opposites. Here is peace for here is order; and the supreme self-respect, the supreme helpfulness to neighbor, that comes from sharing in that divine providence, from partaking in the dignity of causality, from being in command of our own souls with the future what we care to make it.

<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 6	Chapter Seven -->
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CHAPTER VII -- THE INNER LIFE OF GOD (Q. 27-43)

1. Perception of life:
 - (a) The sign of death.
 - (b) The mark of life -- activity:
 - (1) Transient activity -- root of a modern mistake.
 - (2) Imminent activity
 2. The scale of life:
 - (a) The principle of gradation.
 - (b) Concrete gradation of life: plant, animal, human, angelic.
 3. Divine life:
 - (a) As seen by man:
 - (1) The fact of it.
 - (2) The manner of it.
 - (b) As seen by God.
 - (c) As told to man by God:
 - (1) Statement of the mystery of the Trinity.
 - (2) Sole source of this knowledge.
 - (3) Validity of this knowledge.
 4. Reason and the mystery of the Trinity:
 - (a) in generals
 - (b) in particular:
 - (1) Basis of the distinction of persons -- the Processions
 - (2) Reality of the relations set up by the processions.
 - (3) The classical illustration.
 - (4) The divine persons.
- Conclusion:
1. Parodies of the Trinity:
 - (a) Horror of death.
 - (b) Fear of life.
 2. Thirst for life.
 3. Climax of life.

CHAPTER VII THE INNER LIFE OF GOD (Q 27-43)

Perception of life

QUIET is a calm refreshment of the soul if it is not too hushed. There is reason behind a city boy's panicky restlessness in the stillness of his first night in the country; to him, whose days have been so crowded with clamor, no sound is audible. Though he may never admit it, he is frightened by such absolute quiet, as are all those whose ears are not attuned to the workings of their own souls; as frightened as all men are by those occasional moments of mental blankness that seem to dissect life with a stroke as ominously quiet as the blow of death.

The sign of death

Completely motionless waters, waters with no hope of activity in them, leave us uneasy; they are dead, or so close to death that the air above them is tainted, the depths beneath them unclean, their surface already in preparation as a breeding ground of unhealthily lush growth. We have, quite rightly, associated life with activity; we demand activity of anything that lives, we are disturbed at lack of activity or even at the lack of signs of activity. For we know that inactivity is the herald of death, the advance guard of decay. Perhaps it is the depth of our appetite for life that makes the signs of its opposite so repulsive. At any rate the fact remains that a corrupt vegetable pollutes our hands, destroys our appetite and speeds our departure. We cannot pass a dying tree unmoved unless we wear the equivalent of a blindfold; a man who is going to seed mentally or physically misses much of the distress and repulsion he awakens only because heroic virtue is not nearly so rare as the cynic thinks; a man who is corrupting morally is a source of contamination as obnoxious to healthy cleanness as a leaking sewer. Stagnancy, decay, rottenness

anywhere, in any form, is repulsive; it sets up an unmistakable sign of the end of activity, it is the sign of death.

The mark of life -- activity

On the other hand, a brisk wind off a choppy sea injects new life into us. A buoyant step, the sharp, decisive click of a heel, or a laugh that skitters across the room and back like a scampering child, dissipates the fog of our sluggishness and awakens us from lethargy to a lighter, brighter, quicker life. Youth, with its vibrant life, has a beauty of its own, a clamorous, insistent beauty that will not be ignored. Freudian experts, who explain all light by darkness, would have it that thousands gather each fall to watch "a scampering boy with a ball" by way of enjoying vicarious thrills and triumphs; they forget that youth still preens itself before a glass and age enjoys the pleasant sadness of nostalgia. Age, too, has a beauty of its own, a quiet, penetrating, burning beauty that sets roaring fires in the heart of youth. A pair of eyes alive with ceaseless thought's clashing battle are not pushed from memory with a careless gesture; they are glowing coals that give comfort only to those who seek a flame. The lines and depths written on a man's face by the winds, storms and far horizons of long journeys over the seven seas of life offer wisdom's refuge to fellow travelers. The sure judgment, hand carved with weighted words, is the masterpiece of time and patience.

Life and activity are too intimately bound together for either to exist by itself. There may be some solid truth in our suspicion that life is activity, at least some kind of life. It is strange that the suspicion has not driven us to a closer inspection of activity; instead, we have neglected the vista opened by it and seized upon the most obvious activity, the activity involving change, as the synonym of life. As a result we have made change the cardinal virtue and placed becoming, the acquiring of perfection, above being or the having of perfection. We have described life as a process; no wonder so many pass it on the street without a nod of recognition.

Transient activity -- root of a modern mistake

It is not strange that the magic of the craftsman should fascinate us. The child sits spellbound as the pies and cakes take shape under the deftly sure fingers of a cook; years later, the adult stands gaping as a building springs into being at the urging of steel-workers and masons. We have always had a personal pride in the human art of making things, even though our role be no more than that of a spectator. It is something to be proud of; but it is not the sum total of activity, this working to the perfection of something outside the worker himself. It is tangible, vivid, fascinating; but it is only transient activity, the least of the things life does.

Imminent activity

There is another kind of activity that remains within the very agent who produces it, an activity obviously superior to that which passes outside and beyond him. The very purpose of the pies and cakes is precisely to furnish material for one such activity, the nutrition and growth that remain within the child who so eagerly devours them. The structure of steel and stone was made precisely to enclose a world of intricate plans, daring hopes, of knowledge and love and desire; it is no more than the servant of these things that yet remain within the head and heart of a man.

It is this latter activity which is living activity, immanent activity, activity from within and remaining within the agent. In a thousand ways we testify to this truth; but, on the crucial point, we throw out the testimony. The difference between the growth of crystals and the growth of a plant is admittedly the difference between the activity of the non-living and the living. A leaf stretching out to its full development on a tree is not nearly so active as the seared leaf buffeted by November winds; but the one is alive, the other is dead. Our very metaphors are confirmatory witnesses to the depth of this truth: a dead house is not lifeless because something has happened to the outside of it, but because something has gone out from within it; a dead face is a lantern without the inner flame; a dead heart is an empty one. It is immanent activity that is the mark of life.

The scale of life: the principle of gradation.

This is so true that the scale of life can be accurately drawn up only on the basis of immanent activity, only on the principle that the greater the immanency of the activity the greater the life. In the concrete, this principle is immediately obvious. A plant's perfection of life consists precisely in the fact that its growth is from within and its three operations -- of generation, growth and nutrition -- are immanent operations. Its imperfections, which place it on the lowest scale of life, are precisely its defect: the material of its actions comes from the outside, the term of its activities continues apart from the plant; it may be moved from place to place, but will surely not stroll off for itself; and any arranging of means to its end will not be accomplished by concentrated study or agonizing worry on the part of the plant, it will come from the outside.

Concrete gradation of life: plant, animal, human, angelic

An animal has all the perfections of a plant, but, in addition, has locomotion and sensible knowledge, these two being exactly proportioned and marking out the difference, say, between an oyster and an eagle. On the side of the imperfection of life, there is the fact that the term of the animal's activity is never within: it cannot reflect on itself, look to the goal over the head of the present; the term of its generation, its offspring, is always distinct in essence and operation; the determination of ends and means, things worth having and ways of getting these things, is always from the outside.

Going up a step higher, we find human life possessed of all of the immanent activity of plants and animals, with the inherent limitations of this activity; and, in addition, the marvellously immanent activity of human knowledge. The term of this activity, the fruit of a man's thought, is not to be wheeled about the park in a perambulator; it is immanent, taking up permanent residence within a man's own head. It is the man himself, not something outside of him, that determines the things worth having and the means of getting those things. But even this is not perfect life. The material of a man's thought comes from the outside, it is measured by the world of reality outside a man, and, while a man's thought stays within his own head, the term of a man's thought is still not the mind of a man. The emphasis of imperfection, here as all through the scale of life, is on the notion of external as opposed to internal; what comes from the outside or goes to the outside is not so much from life's fullness as from its limitation. A clumsy example of our realization of this fact is to be had in the difference between our attitude towards a frail intellectual genius and a stalwart but moronic athlete; our pity goes, not to the one man's frailty but to the other man's lonely strength.

But obviously, from the very essential perfection of human life, there is room in the universe for yet more perfect life, for there is room for yet more perfect immanency of action. That next step lifts us to the angelic level where there is no question of growth, development, process or change; but where there is indeed question of vital activity. Here change ceases but the intensity of life increases. The world of the angels will be treated exhaustively later on in this volume; for the purposes of this chapter it will be enough to point out that an angel is as nearly an independent world in itself as it is possible for us to conceive within the world of nature, which is to say, within the essentially dependent world of creatures. Its movement from place to place is not to be compared to the effortless glide of a bird; it has about it the agile speed of thought, the closest approach among creatures to an illustration of the omnipresence of God. The angel does not have to endure the long, slow days of schooling, the back-breaking labor of thought, the tenacious effort of memory that so mark the progress of man's mind to its maturity; the angel does not gather ideas, it is created with them. There is no progressive accumulation of knowledge; knowledge is full and immanent from the first instant. The angel knows itself, not through some other medium, even so intimate a medium as its own acts as we do, but directly, immediately, immanently. Like man, the angel has its determination of ends and means from the inside not from the outside.

But this is still not perfect life, there is still the element of the outside marking beyond all doubt a definite limitation of life's perfection. The angel's ideas still come from the outside, not from beneath it but from

above it, for they are infused by God; it still moves from the consideration of one idea to that of another, a kind of passage from potentiality to actuality; its knowledge, while not measured by reality, is measured by something outside the angel, by the mind that measures reality, the mind of God; it is still dependent in its being and its activity on an outside source, the source of all being and all activity, the first Cause. The angel's knowledge, while intensely immanent, is still distinct from the mind of the angel; it is not so immanent as to be identical. There is, in a word, room for perfection far above that of the angels.

The rungs of the ladder of life are clearly marked. The lowest is that of the plants, for this is the least immanent in its activity; up a step is animal life; still higher is human life; nearing the top we come to angelic life. But this is still not the peak of life for this is still not the peak of immanency; the mark of life still has some of the dross of externality in it. It is not absolutely pure. For that supreme degree of life, we must look to the divine.

Divine life

From what we have seen of the existence and nature of God, it is plain that there is a divine life. God is the first cause Who sowed life so prodigally in the world; He must have it to give it. He is the supreme intelligence and intelligence is the highest form of immanent activity, that is, of life's activity. Again, life is one of those limitless perfections that is not had in its fullness by any creature, that can only be shared, participated, received in a definite mold by anyone less than God. It is not to be discovered in an analysis of the essential characteristics of any creature; only God *is* life.

As seen by man: the fact of it

It is to be understood, of course, that divine life is infinitely superior to created life; that life is spoken of in God and in creatures only in an analogical sense, it is in God in an altogether eminent way. With that precaution in mind, a consideration of divine life in the terms in which we have been speaking of life in this chapter brings out sharply the perfection of divine life by focusing attention on the immanent activity of God. Here there is no question of the power from within to move from place to place; by His divine nature God is everywhere. There is no question of growth, nourishment, gradual attainment of perfection; God is eternally perfect. There is no dependence on things below Him, as there is in man; nor on things above Him, as in the angels. His mind is measured by no other mind, no other thing; He does not consider first one idea, then another; there is no distinction between the divine idea and the divine mind, for God is utterly simple. Divine activity, in other words, is absolutely immanent; which is to say, that divine life is absolutely perfect.

The manner of it

This is a far cry from the modern blindness that sees the Christian God as too static, imperfect, stagnant, divorced from life, principally because there is no advance, in divine life, from the stage of short pants to long pants, from hair down to hair up. The argument, in its absurdly simple form, is that there is no life in God because there is no change in God. The real conclusion, of course, from the absence of change in God is that there is no imperfection in the divine life. This is life at its highest, most intense, most perfect degree; intellectual life, activity perfect in its immanency.

Thus far reason can take us, and no farther. This much man can see of God with his own eyes; and no more. By these steps man comes to the edge of the abyss that lies between the finite and the infinite; there he is halted by the very limitations of his nature. This is the threshold of the inner life of God; the inner secrets are God's and God's alone.

As seen by God

To divine eyes, the mysterious inner life of God is completely clear; God can comprehend all its ineffable perfection, for the infinite alone can comprehend the infinite. This is knowledge that has been God's from all eternity and that will never belong to any other though all of an eternity be given to its contemplation

and all the graciously tender thoughtfulness of God be exerted in unfolding the story to lesser minds.

We are humbled before these inscrutable truths, but not humiliated; rather we are exalted as a man of mediocre virtue is exalted by contact with heroic sanctity. What a tragic thing it would be if his paltry virtue were the highest peak to which the heart of man could aspire! What a traffic, desperate thing it would be if our paltry minds could encompass all truth! What an inspiring thing it is for the heart of a man to know that there is inexhaustible beauty beyond the faint shadow that he can perceive; what an incredibly gracious thing it is that man should be given, as far as he can be given, the eyes of God to see beyond the shadow into the infinite reality!

As told to man by God

Statement of the mystery of the Trinity

For God has not spoken of His mysteries in guarded whispers behind the locked gates of heaven; He has shared them, as far as they can be shared, with the least of intellects, the intellect of man. He has told us something of that ineffable inner life of His; and that something is almost too much for our minds to bear, like a joy that crowds the heart to the breaking point. The mystery of the Trinity, as God has told it to us, is the mystery of three divine persons, really distinct, in one and the same divine nature: coequal, coeternal, consubstantial, one God. Of these persons, the Second proceeds from the First by an eternal generation; the Third proceeds from the First and the Second by an eternal spiration.

Sole source of this knowledge

There is absolutely no way in which we could have come to this knowledge of ourselves. It had to be told us by God. It is told vaguely, dimly in the obscure words of the Old Testament, as though to prepare the mind for the terrific impact of so great a truth; then, in the New Testament, there is the clear statement both of the trinity of persons and their identity of nature; finally, in the declarations of the Church, the mystery is stated with a clear-cut brevity that staggers the mind. This is the only source of our knowledge of the Blessed Trinity -- the authority of God -- only God could know of it, only God could tell of it; He has told us and we bend our minds in humbly grateful belief.

Validity of this knowledge

The modern cannot understand why we accept a truth we cannot verify by our own intellects. To us, it does not seem a wisely superior thing to doubt that God, Who gave us the intellects by which we pan out flakes of golden truth, should give us nuggets beyond the capacities of our laborious panning process, indeed, beyond our wildest dreams of rich strikes. From whatever point of view we take, it is the doubt of these mysteries that needs explanation, not their belief. We can prove, and have proved, that God is supreme intelligence, the first truth; that, consequently, He is incapable of deceiving Himself or others, of being deceived by others.. Why then doubt His word? Knowledge of God arrived at by reason from the world of reality is undoubtedly valid, as we have shown; should knowledge of God be less valid when it comes directly from God Himself? Or, to put the same truth in simpler terms, is first hand knowledge necessarily to be classed as inferior to second hand knowledge? Yet surely the knowledge garnered from the effects of God in the world is second hand by comparison with knowledge coming directly from God. No, the fact that this knowledge comes to us as a completely free gift from God is not a reproach to its validity but a guarantee, a divine guarantee, of it.

Reason and the mystery of the Trinity

In general

The Trinity is a mystery; no doubt about it. Unless we had been told of its existence, we would never have suspected such a thing. Moreover, now that we know that there is a Trinity, we cannot understand it. The man who attempts to unravel the mystery is in the position of a near-sighted man straining his eyes from the Eastern Shore of Maryland for a glimpse of Spain. We cannot probe the depths of the ocean of divinity with the foot-rule of the human intellect.

It may feel grand to adopt a righteously indignant attitude against mysteries, snatch up a hatchet and sally forth as a crusader dedicated to smashing the dark windows behind which mystery carries on its revels. But why not start the crusade at home? Long before we have finished in nature, our hatchet will be dulled, our arm fatigued, our soul humbled enough to see that there are undreamed of truths in this world; undreamable truths in the world of divinity. What, for instance, do we know of electricity beyond the fact that it works and something of how it works? There is very much to be explained about radio beyond the mysterious selection of the dogged entertainers who use it as a medium of slipping into our houses. Over and above the realization that a red light gives us a choice between stopping our car and accepting a ticket, we know that it involves some 130,000,000 vibrations a second; but that is not much help. A culture developed from the brain or spinal cord of a mad dog will arrest the development of rabies; but no one knows why. And so on. yet we are surprised, indignantly surprised, that the divinity should propose truths beyond the capacities of our minds!

Ordinary common sense should tell us that this is a natural concomitant of the inevitable limitations of our nature. A small cup can hold only so much water; not the whole ocean. Our eyes can see only so much of the spectrum, not all of it, they can take in only so much light under pain of blindness; there are rays of light invisible to our eyes, sounds inaudible to our ears we take these limitations for granted. As our eyes are only human eyes, our ears only human ears, so our intellects are only human intellects; there are truths we cannot know by those intellects.

When such truths are made known to us by a superior intellect, there is not much we can do with them. Certainly we cannot prove them; we have little result from attempting to probe them; we can show they are not violations of reason, that is that they do not involve contradictions, and we can dig up a few clumsy illustrations. Thus, for instance, we can show that the idea of three persons in one nature is not inconceivable, it is not the contradictory statement that the same thing is at the same time one and three. As a matter of fact, the exclusion of this often alleged contradiction against the truth of the Trinity is absurdly simple; all it involves is the manifestation of the fact that there is a distinction between person and nature. In the construction of a cross-word puzzle, the principle *by which* the puzzle was drawn up is a human nature, but the principle *who* drew up the puzzle was John Jones. The first answers the question *why* such a thing was possible -- - no other nature engages in such activities; the second answers the question *who* did the work involved. The distinction is fairly obvious from a normal man's resentment of the inference that he is any less identically human than any other man as contrasted with his assured knowledge that there is no identity between his person and the person of any other man who has ever existed.

In the mystery of the Trinity, the persons are distinct from each other; but each one is identical with the divine nature, Here the question is not one of conceptual possibility -- - assured by our perception of the distinction of person and nature in the world about us -- but of fact. Is this not a violation of the mathematical principle that two things equal to a third are equal to each other? The Father is not distinct from the divine nature, the Son is not distinct from the divine nature: therefore the Father is not distinct from the Son. The revealed truth is that though Father and Son are not distinct from the divine nature, they are distinct from each other; nor does that truth violate the mathematical principle in question here. Perhaps we can see the root of the confusion if we reflect that the qualities of action and passion are the same as immanent, but not the same as each other; for example, a blow in the face as given and the blow as received are the same as immanent, i.e. at the point of contact, but they are certainly distinct from each other under their own proper and formal conception. The Son, precisely as Son, is distinct from the Father, precisely as Father; though both are identical with the divine nature.

By way of illustration we hit upon such clumsy things as the merging of three flames into a single flame; the light of a candle, which is red, yellow and blue, yet one light; or the trunk of a tree springing from the roots and the fruit coming from both root and trunk, yet all three make up one tree. These are clumsy examples, examples that limp so badly that they are a hindrance, rather than a help, to the tranquillity of our restless intellects. As has been insisted throughout this chapter, human reason cannot get much done

with truths that are entirely proper to the mind of God. Perhaps the best procedure, in dealing with the Trinity, would be to single out the basic theological terms, subject them to analysis and illustration, so that we might be able to achieve an accurate statement of the mystery and maintain our slender intellectual foothold on the flowering truth of three divine persons in one divine nature.

Basis of the distinction of persons -- the processions

These basic terms, which enter into the very revelation of the mystery, can be reduced to three: *processions of origin*, *subsistent relations*, and *person*. Examining each of these in order we shall at least come to a knowledge of what the mystery of the Trinity does not involve and of what, therefore, we are precisely to believe in believing that mystery.

By faith we know that the Son proceeds from the Father, the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son; that is, the Father is the principle of the Son, the Father and Son are one principle of the Holy Ghost. To have distinction we must have difference; and, since there is no difference whatever on the side of nature -- the three Persons having the numerically same divine nature -- the sole possibility of difference lies in the processions of one person from another. To our way of thinking, a principle is the cause of a thing. We cannot comprehend how one Person can proceed from another without depending in some way or another. This is precisely the heart of the mystery; this is precisely what we shall never understand. But we can understand the meaning of the statement: the Father is not the cause of the Son, nor are the Father and Son the cause of the Holy Ghost. This is what we are to believe. There can be no relation of causality between the divine Persons for this would destroy the truth that they are all divine. The word "principle" is used because it signifies an order of origin in an absolute way, without determining a particular mode that would be foreign to the origin of the divine Persons. In a word, this term "principle" is invaluable because of its indefiniteness, because it hides a truth we cannot understand, shading our eyes from its splendor; it does not distort that truth.

Procession, here, is not to be understood in the sense in which a word proceeds from a man's mouth to wander up and down the world, but, analogically, as an idea proceeds from the mind of a man but stays in his head. The divine processions are not processions to the outside but within divinity itself, with all that perfection of immanency that is uniquely God's.

Procession, then, in God is not as it is in the lowest creatures, that is, either by way of local movement or by way of cause proceeding to exterior effects. Rather it is in the order of the most perfect activity in its most perfect form, intellectual activity. In this order, what proceeds is not necessarily distinct from its source; indeed, the more perfectly it proceeds, the more closely it is one with its source, for the more perfect it is, the more immanent it is. The faith teaches us there are two of these processions in God: that of **generation**, by which the Son proceeds from the Father; and that of **spiration**, by which the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a common principle. We shall touch upon these again at a somewhat greater length later on in this chapter.

Reality of the relations set up by the processions

The point to be noted here is that these two processions set up relationships in God: the double relationship of paternity and filiation arising from generation; and the double relationship of active and passive spiration arising from the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. In our human order, a relation arising, say, from the anthropological classification of a man as Alpine, Mediterranean or Nordic, is purely a thing of the mind, a relation of reason; for it does not arise from the principles of the same nature. On the contrary, a man's relations to his end, to his acts, to his Creator are all real relations, arising from the very principles of his nature. A visitor to Washington, however short his stay, will certainly see the massive pillars of the Supreme Court building. By his glance at those pillars, a relation is set up between him and the pillars; on the side of the pillars that relation is a relation of reason, for the nature of pillars does not give rise to the relation brought about by being seen. In the divine order, the relations of paternity, filiation, active and passive spiration are real, not rational, relations, arising from the

numerically same divine nature. As real they are distinct terms: paternity is not the same as filiation, nor is active spiration the same as passive spiration. They are real, they are intimately opposed, and, as entirely distinct from any relation in the created world, they subsist. The opposing relationships constitute the three divine persons: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Only by such opposition of origin is there distinction in divine things; there are then, not four, but three divine persons since there is no opposition between active spiration and the relations set up by generation.

All this is, of course, impossible to understand. The whole purpose of this exposition was not to make the mystery intelligible but rather to make clear wherein the mystery lies that our faith might embrace it. Nevertheless, our intellects are a restless, rowdy, independent lot; they chafe under the restraint of the incomprehensible, even though that restraint in reality be a release from the chains of the natural into the unsuspected freedom of the truths proper to God. The irritation is far from logical; but it is none the less quite universally human. If we can get some little grip on a mystery, even though it is by no more than our finger-nails, we feel very much better. It was perhaps in recognition of this childish stubbornness which is so common a human weakness that God moved men to conceive the most celebrated illustration of the trinity.

The classical illustration

It is to be remembered, however, that this is only an illustration; it is not to be taken literally, univocally. It limps because it compares the divine to the human; but it does give us that finger-nail grip so necessary to pride. It goes like this. Life is activity. In the created world, it is a process of change, a process of attaining perfection or of using perfection attained. But throughout its keynote is immanency. The more perfect the immanency, the more perfect the life. The highest life, and consequently the most immanent activity, we know is intellectual. Coming to the absolutely perfect life of God, we can expect activity, the highest, the most perfect activity; hence activity of the most sublime immanency. Both from the fact of the perfection of the immanency of this activity and from the fact that God is pure intelligence, we can expect that His activity is intellectual activity, of which there are, to talk in our human fashion, only two principles: the intellect and the will.

The entirely immanent activity, then, from the side of the intellect of God, will be the knowledge of God, God knowing Himself. This knowledge depends in no way on anything or anyone outside of divinity, it is not measured; it proceeds to a term -- - God known -- - which is utterly perfect because utterly immanent. God knowing Himself is the principle from which proceeds the eternal Word of God, God known.

On the side of the will, which in us follows on knowledge, there is the eternal and immanent act of God's love. God, eternally knowing Himself perfectly with sublime immanence, generates the eternal Word, the Son, the perfection of the Father; the eternal and immanent breath of love of the Son for the Father and the Father for the Son is the Holy Ghost, the sign of divine love that subsists. The perfect immanency of these acts insists that no one of these three is distinct from the divine essence but entirely identical with it; the opposition of the relationships insists that they are distinct one from another. They are one God and three divine persons: consubstantial, coeternal, coequal.

The divine persons

Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not called persons by a kind of poetic license; this is not figurative speech. They are persons. This is one point we can see clearly by clarifying our own notion of what a person is, shearing away the accidentals that the essential might stand out. A person, to put it as briefly as possible, is an individual intellectual substance, whatever kind of intellectual substance or in whatever way distinguished from other persons of the same nature; thus there are human persons, angelic persons, divine persons. The human person subsists in a human nature and is distinguished from all other human persons in the way proper to human nature, that is by signate matter; an angelic person subsists in an angelic nature and is distinguished from all other angelic persons in the way proper to angelic nature, that is, by a specific distinction; a divine person subsists in a divine nature and is distinguished from other divine

persons in the way proper to divinity, that is, by the opposition of the relations of origin.

Sometimes we give these divine persons names that belong to them by reason of their divine nature; such names, for instance, as almighty, good, merciful. These names belong, not to any one person, but to all three for the numerically identical divine nature is common to all three. At other times, we address the divine persons by names that belong to them, not by reason of the divine nature, but by reason of the opposition of the relations of origin; such names, for instance, as Father, Son, Holy Ghost. These are completely proper names: the name of the Son cannot be given to the Holy Ghost, for title to it is by the relation of filiation which is proper to the Son alone. It is worth noting that when we say the "Our Father" we are addressing the whole Trinity, not merely the first Person; for God is our Father, not by the eternal generation of the Son, but by creation which, like all external operations, is common to the three Persons.

One of the most reassuring things about the mystery of the Trinity is its incomprehensibility. It is grand to have so concrete an assurance that our minds do not tell the whole glorious story of intelligence, that the crumbs of truth we amass so laboriously are only crumbs, not the sum total of truth's banquet, that the feeble glow which hardly lights up a path for our own steps is not the light of the world. The concrete assurance of this incomprehensibility comes to the solitary human mind like the comfort of a lost child's discovery of its parents; with a joy too big for words and too deep for laughter, with rekindled hopes and the utter, unquestioning, eager surrender of faith.

Conclusion

Some children, however, seem to have been born disillusioned. Someone has told them the truth about Santa Claus and now they spend their days in pouting. They are determined to be happy with the introduction to the story of intelligence, to be surfeited with the crumbs of truth, to light up the world with the match they have just blown out. They will get along without God and His incomprehensible mysteries, above all they will have nothing to do with the Trinity. Yet they never quite make their renunciation stick. Though they abolish God and the Trinity, they make a travesty on the divinity and the divine persons.

Parodies of the Trinity

It is palpably true that the man who denies God makes a god of his own with much more piteous results than the amateur wood-carver ever produces; but there is reason behind the unreason, for every man must have a goal towards which he aims his life. It is not at all clear why man should also produce a burlesque of the Trinity in abandoning it; the fact is clear enough. He makes himself and his material world as unbegotten as the Father; his intellectual effort is concentrated on self and the material world, sometimes even to the extent of that intellectual effort producing the world; from this knowledge of self and the world, a knowledge that is necessarily streaked with broad bands of ignorance, arises an abiding love that leaves room for no rival. It is an attempt at the perfection of immanency without the perfection of life that must underlie immanency, a parody of divine self-sufficiency which accomplishes eternity by overlooking the beginning and the end, a caricature, which ends in mere bustling, of the intensity of divine life.

Horror of death

Even for the undemanding purposes of burlesque there are too many characters involved; one or the other must go. So eventually, either the world is pushed aside while a man wraps the folds of his being about himself and retires into the arid oblivion of solipsism; or the individual is pulled into the maw of the world to furnish the material for the nourishment of a mass. Whichever way the choice turns one of two, or perhaps both, characteristic qualities come to the surface. If it is the mass that absorbs the individual, then there is little horror of death for death has already become a living thing; but there is a panicky fear of human life, a haunting terror that paralyzes a man at the very thought of being alone, being responsible, of possessing a life with a meaning. On the other hand, where the individual excludes the world, there is apt to be a combination of the two, a horror of death and a fear of life; his very precautions against death, his watchwords of security and safety first, his revulsion from physical hardship and sacrifice, will make it impossible to drink deeply from the hearty cup of life. He is so afraid of death that he starts his dying in

the prime of life; life is so precious a thing, he dare not handle it.

Fear of life

The thing is logical enough. He has made a little trinity of himself; and no one knows better than he that that trinity is not a principle of undying life, that here there is no eternal grip on the elusive victory over death. He knows he has life only for an instant; why should he not fear death? He knows, as no one else knows, that life is too big for his little trinity, that it escapes his mind, his will, his hands; why should he not be afraid of life?

Thirst for life

Climax of life

Obviously a man cannot be consumed with a thirst for life and cut himself off from the full perfection of divine life. Obviously a man cannot be in love with life and either push it coldly from him or try to enfold its intensity within himself. Thirst for life must mean thirst for that perfection of action which is described by immanency; or in plainer terms, thirst for life must mean thirst for God, thirst for that absolutely immanent activity of the Trinity. This is the eternal and perfect life of God: all other life is a participation of this divine life: all other activity is a participation of this activity. All other life, all other activity, is perfect in proportion as it approaches to that complete immanence of divine life. This is the climax of all life, the top of the scale of life which is beyond all scales, the peak that is also the foundation, the beginning that is also the end.

[«-- Back](#)

A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 7

[Chapter Eight --»](#)

CHAPTER VIII -- THE ARCHITECT AT WORK
(Q. 44-49)

1. The story of the world
 - (a) A story that must be told.
 - (b) A story from which the architect cannot be omitted.
 2. The unfolding of the story.
 3. The cause of the world:
 - (a) The fact of the cause.
 - (b) The manner of the worlds production:
 - (1) Dualistic explanations:
 - a. A principle of perfection and of imperfection.
 - b. A principle of good and of evil.
 - (2) Monistic explanations:
 - a. Pantheism.
 - b. Evolution.
 - c. Creation.
 4. The stuff of the world.
 5. The model of the world:
 - (a) Primary and secondary models.
 - (b) Source of order and law.
 6. The goal of the world:
 - (a) Necessity of the goal.
 - (b) Objections against the goal.
 7. The variety of the world
 8. The age of the world:
 - (a) From reason.
 - (b) From faith.
- Conclusion:
1. Fictions and facts of the world.
 2. Purposes and failures of fiction.
 3. Comfort and significance of the facts.

CHAPTER VIII
THE ARCHITECT AT WORK
(Q 44-49)

The story of the world

HISTORY has been described as a blend of art and philosophy. Too much history has been, in actual practice, a blend of fiction and fact. Whatever its components or mode of procedure, it usually makes for comfortable reading even when its matter is unpleasant; we can be calm, detached, judicious about it. After all, these men are not going to rise from the dead and challenge us to debate or duel; the past is securely dead and we can look on its face as securely as we would on the corpse of an enemy, totalling up its mistakes, jibing at its incompetencies, smiling at its pretensions, stifling its protests as easily and majestically as we silence a radio commentator.

A story that must be told

We can be entirely impersonal about history, that is, about most history. Detailed accounts of men, of nations, of races, even of hundreds of centuries can pass before our eyes, as thousands of cases pass before a judge's bench, leaving our lives untouched, our appetites unimpaired, our satisfaction with ourselves undisturbed. When we dig a little deeper and strike the rock bottom of the story of activity, it is an altogether different question; we cannot shrug off the fundamental history of the world for this is an intensely personal matter.

The mere contact of the world of reality with a human intellect arouses difficulties; and no one, as yet, has succeeded in avoiding that contact. Nor is it a matter of specialized difficulties particularly prepared for the palate of an historian or a philosopher; some of these difficulties plague the steps of every man and woman born into the world. They clamor for an answer with an insistence that is almost uncouth; they will

not be put off, silenced, brushed aside and on their answer depends the whole course of human life in every age. Men have to know how the world came about; of what it was made; what was the model for this stupendous work; why it was made at all and when; whence comes the immense variety in the world and why; what keeps it going.

Clearly the answers to such questions cannot fall into the classification of a soothing bedtime story with which we calm our hearts in preparation for death, as we calm the children before sending them off to undergo the mysterious risk of sleep's oblivion. This cannot be the pleasant fiction with which we dissipate the isolation of a cold winter evening, peopling the house with shadowy guests. This is not a tale of the past buried with the past; it is a story of the past that molds the present. On the basis of it, men live their lives wisely or insanely, hopefully or despairingly, courageously or cringing in cowardice, successfully or in miserable failure.

A story from which the architect cannot be omitted.

It might reasonably be objected that this book, as a companion to the *Summa*, is a theological book. If that means anything, it means a book about God: why not stick to the proper subject matter of such a book and leave the consideration of the world to scientists and philosophers? It is certainly true that this is a theological book and that theology deals with God. Let the objector be assured that the proper subject matter of theology will be closely adhered to in this book, as it is in St. Thomas' masterpiece; here, as there, whatever the immediate matter of discussion, be it heaven or hell, sin or virtue, mud or stars, saint or sinner, the youth of the world or the agelessness of God, everything will be treated precisely in its reference to God.

It is less astonishing that a theological book should treat of the world than that a book about the world should attempt to omit a consideration of God. As a matter of fact, God has something to do with, some part to play in, the unfolding of every act in the drama of the universe. Indeed, nothing in the whole universe is adequately considered, nothing is truly seen, truly located, truly evaluated, until it is considered in relation to God. Like everything we say about God, calling Him the architect of the universe is decidedly inadequate. After all, an architect is responsible only for the form of the house; if he has left his plans handy, the construction of the house can get along very well without him. The house once finished, the architect slips away into the obscure regions of his office; the rest of the story of the house and the human drama that unfolds within it is completely outside the scope of a blueprint. God is the architect of the universe; but He is also its builders its sustainer, its governor, the source of its life, and its activity, its goal.

A philosopher looks at the world in the flickering light of human reason, tirelessly carrying on his endless search for the last answers as they are open to the human mind. Theology too looks for last answers. But it is much more than human wisdom. It is the supreme wisdom which, gazing down from the far horizons of eternity, with the background of infinite experience and under the floodlight of the first Truth gives that mellowed, rounded judgment that is the last, the adequate, the satisfying answer to the world and its smallest detail.

Theology has indeed something to say of the world. As a matter of fact, we started off our theological considerations with the world. That primary consideration, however, took the world merely as a starting point, a jumping-off-place for an expedition into divinity. We have not, as yet, attempted to consider the created world in itself; rather, talking a small, obvious fact of the world -- such as the movement of an eyelash, the perfection of a stone, the order revealed in a human eye -- we mounted to the heights of the life of God

The unfolding of the story

In this chapter we start a detailed examination of the world. A plunge into the mass of detail in that world might easily cost us proper perspective, trapping us into mistaking an ant-hill for a mountain. It will be much better to stand off a little, trying for a general view of the country we are about to invade, tracing its

main outlines, fitting its salient features well in our minds, familiarizing ourselves with the topography of the country, at least in a rough fashion, before we set out on our journey. That general view is the goal of this present chapter.

Beginning with the next chapter, and continuing through all the rest of the book, we shall examine the world in detail. We shall look thoroughly into the spiritual world, the material world and into that doubly mysterious world that is part spirit and part material, the world of man. Throughout this chapter and all the others, we shall be considering God: not God as He is in Himself, His nature, the Trinity of divine person -- that has all been done; but God as creatures proceeded from Him. God the Creator and Governor of the world.

The cause of the world

The story of the world is not a detective thriller. Consequently the purpose of such a story is not to confuse the mind, hide the answers, or appeal to impossible explanations. It is a story that must be told quickly, clearly and completely; for all men must have all of it accurately before they can begin the absorbing task of human living. Yet it is by no means a simple story; the created world it explains furnishes the philosopher with such fundamental problems as the many proceeding from the one without injury to that unity, and the action of the first cause, and purpose in a world too big for the philosopher's mind to grasp its plan. The difficulties of the man who is no philosopher and the mysteries that besiege the mind of the man who is trying hard to be a philosopher are not, as a matter of fact, wholly different things. They coalesce in the central problem of the cause of the created universe: what is its efficient cause and how does this cause work; what was its material cause; its formal or exemplary cause; its final cause or end? Along the lines of this fourfold question the story of the world must unfold.

The fact of the cause

In the second chapter of this book, we have seen that the efficient cause of the world can only be God. There we saw that the only possible explanation of the existence of the created world was a completely independent first cause upon which every creature, every activity, even motion, every mark of intelligence, every bit of order depends. The question here, then, is not one of God's existence and His first causality; rather it is a question of penetrating into the manner of operation of God. How did He work? How was the created world actually produced?

The manner of the worlds production:

Dualistic explanations: A principle of perfection and of imperfection

Many philosophers jumped at the obvious answer of dualism. There was much perfection in the world; and there was much imperfection. They proceeded to their solution as a man might conclude there was a masculine and a feminine influence at work in an apartment where one room was a model of neatness, everything folded and packed away so that nothing could be found, while another room showed a cluttered desk, heaped chairs and littered floors with everything in instant reach of one's hand. These philosophers decided that there were two first principles one of complete perfection, the other of complete imperfection; from the principle of imperfection, the principle of perfection worked out the creatures of the world. The solution was quick, obvious and worthless.

As a matter of fact, there simply cannot be two first principles, as we have seen in treating of the existence of God. Moreover, this principle of imperfection, while dependent on another for every development, is yet independent in existence; which is like saying that a man has everything but humanity, or a dog lacks nothing but canine qualities. A dependent first principle of being comes as close to reality as a hollow shell without an external surface.

A principle of good and of evil

This, however, does not discourage the dualists. They come forth with another variety of solution that

seems more plausible but, actually, is just as hopelessly contradictory. Because there was good in the world and also very much evil, and because evil is so unalterably opposed to good, the universe was explained by two principles, each supreme in its own field: one of good, the other of evil. These two do not work together, nor one upon the other, but against one another; good is the triumph of the principle of good, evil is a memorial of a battle where the principle of good was defeated by the principle of evil. It sometimes happens that the Christian truths of God and the devil are given this interpretation; perhaps Satan relishes this sort of thing, but it is empty of truth. But, then, truth must be a bitter dose to one in the devil's position.

Again the explanation is quick, obvious and worthless. A principle of evil supreme in its own field would be essentially evil, that is, it would have no good in it. That statement sounds rather solid, if a man stops thinking immediately. The trouble is that evil is not something positive, something one can put a finger on; the very essence of evil demands that it elude your finger, it is something missing, a defect. To have an evil at all, there must be a good capable of having holes in it for evil is precisely the hole in good. Immediately we concentrate on evil in any one order, the absurdity of a supreme evil becomes manifest. Evil, for instance, in the moral order, is a violation of reason, an unreasonable act; if, then, moral evil be absolutely complete, reason itself is destroyed to the destruction of the very possibility of moral evil. In a word, evil, if it be complete, destroys itself. Of course there is always something good to say about a bad thing; a filthy book will always have something good about it -- it will be beautifully written, have a strong binding, or at least be cheap. There has to be something good in it or there could be nothing bad; the outstanding characteristic, then, of a first principle of evil would have to be, from the very nature of evil, its non-existence.

Evil cannot be a first principle for evil supposes good, in which alone it can exist; it cannot be independent, existing of itself, for that is its destruction. Moreover, evil does not appear suddenly, for no reason and from nowhere, like the words that pop out of a giddy, empty head. Evil must be brought about, it must have a cause. Of course it has no formal cause, it is the defect or privation of form to some degree. Neither has it a final cause, for it is essentially a privation of order to an end. To look for a material cause of evil does not mean looking for something from which to make evil, like hunting for the material for paper dolls; it means searching for some apt location for evil, a location that can be nothing else than a good. As for efficient cause, well, evil is always a by-product; it is never produced directly. It cannot be an efficient cause itself, for it is a defect; it cannot have an efficient cause, except indirectly, as the death of a carrot has its cause in the rabbit's direct action to nourish itself. In other words, evil's outstanding quality is one of complete dependence; whereas a first principle is outstandingly independent.

If we place evil in the human order as a first principle, we are establishing as a first cause either sin or punishment; for evil affecting man is either a defect of integrity or a defect in act, the first a punishment, at least of original sin, the second, sin itself. Strange qualities, indeed, to propose as ultimate explanations of anything. But, as far as that goes, all dualism is strange, as strange as a myopic man stubbornly insisting that there is nothing beyond what he can see. That is, in fact, the fundamental error of dualism: it is near-sighted. It focuses on particular causes, blinds itself to universal causality; it cannot see over the hill, so there is nothing beyond the hill. It sees only particular effects and makes its sweeping judgment from them, or it sees the contrariety of particular causes and concludes to contrariety in the very fundamentals of causality. These are the blind who insist on leading others; the marvel is that they can find so many ditches to fall into.

Monistic explanations

Dualism attempts to explain the diversity of the world by a diversity of principles; at the other extreme is monism, explaining that diversity on the basis of a single principle. Of its multiple forms, three which are fundamental are worth detailed consideration.

Pantheism

Pantheism solves the problem by denying it. It is the original sin of Eastern philosophy and the proud child of ultra-modern American philosophical parents. To its mind there is no question of the world coming from God, or from anything else; the world is God, a manifestation of the absolute that is identical with it. The world is an internal evolution of the divine substance.

The ancient philosophers advanced this denial of the problem to avoid what seemed to them a rupture of the unity of being; it was an escape from the apparently unbridgeable chasm between the finite and the infinite, it side-stepped the apparent contradiction of the addition of Created beings to the sum of the infinite to the impossible total of more than infinite being. The moderns advance it as a necessity for the philosopher who would keep pace with science, as a means of the preservation of the unity and hierarchy of being, and as the essential condition for keeping knowledge where it belongs -- in the realm of science. The older cause of this explanation of the universe was intellectual cowardice: in face of the difficulty of a solution, the problem was denied; this led, as most cowardice does, to still more awesome difficulties. The modern adoption of the same explanation is rather an intellectual betrayal, an assassination by strangulation of the one faculty that could recognize the problem and find an answer for it.

Both lead to the same absurdities: the identification of the perfect and the imperfect, the contingent and the necessary, the free and the forced, matter and spirit, ani mal and angel. Both have so perverted the intellect as to have it swallow calmly the identification of opposites which normally nauseates it. In doing away with the difficulty they do away with God; in explaining away the necessity of the first cause, they destroy the cause itself. They do not meet the problem courageously; faced with it, they collapse and blow out their brains.

Evolution

The second monistic explanation is a widespread favorite today, the explanation of evolution. Let it be well understood that evolution, as an explanation of the universe, is not a working scientific hypothesis but a philosophic thesis; and it is precisely under its philosophical aspect that we are dealing with it here. Logically it is pantheism; it is admitted as such by many of its modern adherents. To others, that logical connection is not evident; they insist it is not pantheism, either because there is no God or because the god they admit has none of the attributes of the first cause, that is, their god has everything but divinity. We shall go into this philosophical evolution later on in this book, in treating of the origin of man.

For the present it will suffice to point out that evolution like pantheism, is not an explanation but a denial of all explanation. Some primary stuff, eternal or mysteriously giving birth to itself, slowly and inexorably developed, by chance and an equally mysterious environment, into the complicated world we know as the universe. Or, in another form, a mysterious life-force, utterly imperfect, has blindly, necessarily surged its way up through matter (which is unexplained) into the perfections we know to day. In this second form, there is no universe, no material world; only the process of perfection without a perfected substance, a process that does not stop long enough for us to know it. It is a river of undetermined origin ceaselessly flowing to undetermined seas; or, rather, the flowing without the river into seas without water.

Both these philosophical forms of evolution are very, very old; both have undergone face-lifting operations, both now travel by plane and dress in adolescent clothes to prove they are modern. The immediate, and modern, cause of this evolutionary explanation has undoubtedly been the mistaken effort to make a philosophy out of a scientific method. More profound reasons were the intellectual suicide of philosophy, following the devastating assumptions of a chasm between the mental and physical world, and the religious rationalism of Reformation times whose logical conclusion was the exaltation of human nature to the pinnacle of the universe by debasing it to the level of the material universe.

Whatever the explanation of its origin, evolution, as an answer to the questions evoked by the created world, fails. In its scientific form, it offers a highly plausible explanation of *how* the universe unfolded; in none of its forms does it offer an explanation of *why* the universe unfolded at all, or why and how there was a universe. A process is not an explanation but a demand for an explanation. Piling millions of years

on a question does not smother the insistent query; it merely betrays fear of the question and despair of the answer. Slowing up the process to a hobbling pace does not change the problem nor its demand for a solution.

Creation

Creation, the third monistic explanation, is offered us by our faith and forced on us by our reason. It is commonly defined as "making something out of nothing"; a description that, while not inaccurate, is subject to misunderstanding. More properly, creation is defined as the production of an effect independently of any pre-existing subject; it is, in a word, the production of the whole being of a thing. The world was produced by the first cause in the way proper to that first cause, that is, with complete independence; if we maintain that there was anything upon which to depend, we have simply pushed the problem back and denied that this particular cause was first. Complete independence in action means production independently of any pre-existing subject.

The proofs for this explanation of the universe are those already given for the existence of God. Either this was the way things were produced or there are no things; there is no other way to account for the universe. Nor is this merely a question of accounting for the big things, mountains, continents, planets and stars; the question extends to the smallest of things, a speck of dust, the wink of an eye. One cries out the existence of the first cause and His mode of action -- creation -- as loudly as the other, or as all together. Either there is a first cause or there are no effects; either that first cause created (if He acted at all) or He is not first.

Though creation is the only reasonable explanation of the universe, men have consistently fought it throughout the ages. Such resistance to reason obviously needs clarification. One cause undoubtedly has been stiff-necked intellectual pride which refuses to bow before a mystery; and creation, from the side of God, precisely as His divine action, is a mystery. It is the infinite operation of God, the same as His divine essence; the comprehension of this action of creation would be comprehension of divinity itself. We can prove the world cannot have come into existence any other way and we know it has come into existence; nor are we at all reasonable in rejecting creation on the grounds that all truths must fit into the mould of our finite minds. In fact, we confess to the unreasonableness of this demand in our easy acceptance of such mysteries as life, solar action on the planets and many others in the purely natural sphere.

Some men have seen creation as a glorified bit of magic, with God pulling worlds out of nothingness as a magician pulls rabbits out of a hat. The real difficulty here is not that something is produced from nothing; that, in fact, is a fundamental dogma of the evolutionary thesis on emergent perfections. The learned among the moderns do not shrink from this sort of thing; they rush to embrace it, especially if something is produced from nothing without adequate cause. Real intellectual repugnance lies rather in the admission of the production of something without a cause; in the mystery of creation, there are absolutely no grounds for this repugnance, for here the supreme cause is operating.

Other men have rebelled at the effortless ease of God's action in creation, refusing to accept such a notion as the motionless action by which the universe sprang into being, the omnipotence of the whispered command of God. They would, no doubt, feel better if the work of creation had cost God effort. Yet these same men are fairly reasonable when the same philosophical principle is at stake in other matters. They do not chase flies with a spray of machine gun bullets nor close their fist to punch their way through a fog; in these cases, they see clearly that the dominance of the agent proportions the movement and effort necessary to his action. They expect an ant to stagger under the weight of a bit of grass; if a stalwart athlete staggers into a stadium under the same weight, they can be sure they are witnessing comedy or insanity. But they rebel at the notion that absolute omnipotence should produce effects by mere command.

The creation of finite beings in no sense destroys the unity of being, as the pantheists feared. That unity is to I be found in God Who has all perfection eminently. Created beings do not add something to the sum total of being; they participate being. They do not limit the infinite, marking off the spot where the Creator

ends and the creature begins; for limitation is not so much by points of distinction as it is by subsistence or independence. My being, for example, is not limited by the being of my hand or my arm, but rather limits their being. If the thousands who listen to an orator were dependent on him for their very being, then they would not limit his being, rather he would limit theirs for they are dependent on him, not he on them; precisely because these listeners are not dependent but independent of the orator, they do limit his being. If a search of the universe were to uncover one being independent of God, then there would be a limitation of God; until such a time, no multiplicity of created things adds to or limits the being of God.

There is one last point to be noted about creation. It is not only the only way in which the world could have come into existence, not only the only way in which the first cause could act to produce the world; it is an act uniquely proper to the first cause. Only God can produce something independently of any preexisting subject. This might be made clear by insisting that only a whole cause can produce the whole of being, that we can expect no more than partial effects from partial causes; and only God is a whole cause in the sense of possessing the full perfection of causality. The same truth comes out from a consideration of the effect of creation, namely, being. Thus a damp rag cannot produce all the soddening effects of a summer shower, for the rag only participates the sopping wetness which belongs essentially to rain; in the same way, no total effect such as creation demands can be expected from a cause that only participates being.

We can push this truth still further to point out that not only can no secondary cause of itself create, absolutely nothing in the universe, from the highest angel to the least of things, can be used by God as the instrument of creation. The closest anyone or anything comes to taking part in creation is the human mother who cooperates with God in the production of His masterpiece of humanity; she prepares the material destined for union with a spiritual soul that can come into being only by the direct action of God. It is not divine snobbishness that excludes all created causes from creative activity; there simply is nothing in the act of creation for a created cause to do. Given a choice between a sponge and a hammer for the work of driving a nail, we would, of course, select the hammer as the proper instrument, knowing well that an instrument must have its proper effect or there is no sense in using it. It would be too much to expect the sponge to stiffen up sufficiently to drive the nail; that simply is not the effect of a sponge. It is much too much to expect a Created cause to produce its proper effect when there is nothing, absolutely nothing, on which it might produce that effect.

The stuff of the world

With the efficient cause of the world determined and something of its nature and manner of operation understood, the rest of the story of the world tumbles over itself in its eagerness to get down on the pages before we write finis to the book. IF we appear to start off on another avenue in search of the stuff of the world or its model, we know very well that we are simply taking a circular stroll that will bring us back to the same delightful spot that is divinity.

The thought of our time almost makes it necessary to talk of the stuff of the world, the very phraseology implying, erroneously, that there was some pre-existent subject upon which divinity worked. In this erroneous sense, it is said that God Himself is the material cause, the stuff, of the world. But this is to slip back into the unhealthy, primeval slime of pantheism or evolution where both God and the intellect must die to keep a monster alive. It is true that only God is the sufficient explanation of the existence of the material of the universe. Even though we take this material in the sense of extreme imperfection which the philosophers designate by "prime matter", it must still be traced to the first cause, the more so because of its utter dependence. It is positively childish to picture the material of the universe as the stuff from which God fashioned the universe much as a child fashions muddies from a handful of mud. That material is itself a part of the universe and can actually exist only as a part of the concrete things that make up that universe. It is not a prerequisite of creation but an effect of it; it is not something with which God must have started off, but something that must have started off from God's act of creation.

The model of the world

The search for the model of the universe leads us even more directly to God. As intelligent effects do not pop out of nowhere without rhyme or reason, it is obvious that there must be a model for the universe. Now and then, when we drag our tired eyes above the dust and confusion of the moment to let the fresh winds of the future and the dry breezes of the past wash and refresh them, we catch some insight into the truth that only God could be the model of the universe. Some detail of the masterpiece -- the minuteness of love's thoughtfulness, the magnitude of a mountain, the power of a smashing wind -- brings out the genius of the craftsman and we are almost ready to fall down in adoration. If the model were anything other than God, then He would not be first, He would be dependent; that is, He would not be God.

Primary and secondary models

In spite of the suffering, the vice, the ugliness, the evil in the universe, the scale to which it is drawn, the plan upon which it is built, its blueprint is the eternal knowledge of God. It is not these defects that are difficult to explain; but the beauty, the joy, the perfection, the virtue, the happiness, the very existence of the universe can be conceived in no other way than as participations of that divine perfection. Who but God could know the possible participations of that divinity, the myriad mirrors that could reflect the divine excellence. We have seen this in some detail in an earlier chapter on the knowledge of God. Here it is only necessary to point out that the divine character of the model of the universe is not a denial of all other models. Of course an architect can have, in his mind, a model of the house he is building; of course a boy can choose a model upon which he builds his character. These are not excluded but rather made possible by the fact that the supreme architect is in possession of the first and absolutely universal model to which everything in the universe responds.

Without such a model, the divine action would not be the intelligent operation of divine wisdom but the stupidly haphazard wanderings of a drunkard or an idiot; determined forms of things can come only from the determined plan of their maker. Even the so called "accidental" discoveries of scientific research are the inviolable results of a determined divine plan giving determined qualities to the elements that enter into that research. The scientist can repeat the "accident" again and again, precisely because the only accidental thing involved was his discovery that there was no accident at all.

Source of order and law

These divine ideas, the model of the universe, are, then, the source of all order, an order that extends not merely to the physical outlines of the universe but to the essential principles of all natures, to the details of all acts. This order, which brings the benediction of peace and precludes the chaos of madness, embraces not only the physical and spiritual world of being but also the moral world of men's acts. To all these worlds it gives standards as stable as the divine mind. It is as impossible for the morality of men's acts to fluctuate from age to age as it is for the nature of angels, of men or of water to change. The moral laws are not the result of a caprice, not even of a divine caprice; they cannot be changed even at the pleasure of God. That divine model of the universe is immutable; so also is His law which is the ultimate root of the order which governs the universe, for the model is one of the roots of the law.

The goal of the world

Why were these things of the universe created at all? Why did God extend His activity beyond divinity itself? What was His purpose; what is the end of it all? Surely there must have been some goal; God, above all cannot act for no reason at all for that would be a disorderly act, a violation of His divine intelligence. Rather, the absence of an end, the complete indetermination thus involved, would result in no act at all. An act does not saunter aimlessly about the universe, or about the walks of eternity; it is going some place or it does not start at all.

Necessity of the goal

From what we know of the nature of God, it should be clear that there is only one goal, one end, possible

to Him: if He acts at all, He must act for Himself. God created the universe for Himself; His goal was God; the end of the universe is the same as its beginning, God. Anything else is simply unthinkable. If God were working to a goal other than Himself, divine independence would be a myth as would the primacy of the first cause; God would, through the long life of the universe, be creeping up on something He lacked, mapping out a campaign for the capture of something outside Himself. There simply cannot be anything outside of God that does not come from Him, He cannot lack anything and still be God. Aside from the divine nature, the divine action cannot tolerate any other end than God: God, the absolutely perfect agent, must act in a perfect manner, not in the imperfect manner of an imperfect agent striving to perfect himself. The perfect agent, having all perfection, can act only for him self.

Objections against the goal

This truth has caused many a sniff at God by high-minded pagans. The idea! This is the God Who demands complete unselfishness and self-denial from us, yet, having all things, He cannot in the least of His works act for anything but Himself. This is a mean, petty, grasping God that a man can enjoy cheating. Like many another sniff, these protests of outraged nobility are entirely due to a misunderstanding; indignation stamps out, slamming the door, before it can be explained that the phrase "for himself" is equivocally used of man and God. A man, because he is an imperfect agent, reaches out to get something when he acts for himself; God, because He is a perfect agent, reaches out to give something away when He acts for Himself. We act to obtain or insure our perfection; God acts, in the only way He can act having all perfection, only to communicate His goodness. This is the perfect act -- communication of goodness; this is the exact meaning of God acting for Himself.

Let us suppose these noble pagans had their way with God and He decided not to act for Himself, what would happen? Obviously, nothing would exist, for God cannot act any other way. But on the impossible hypothesis that God created the world and then washed His hands of it, as an ultra-modern mother gives birth to a child then turns it over to household and institutional servants, what would happen? Such a world would not be directed to Him, men and creatures would push God entirely out of their lives, out of their actions. The result? A howling chaos; a world full of creatures with no possible end in view; heartless brutality; men remorselessly driven by a desire for love and knowledge of God, a desire doomed to hopeless frustration. The whole thing would be a humorless practical joke on a cosmic scale, a mass of whirling worlds going nowhere, like a man driving himself insane by marching about the living room in a perpetual circle.

For the perfection, the end, of anything is the same as its beginning; the effect comes from the cause faith something of the excellence of the cause -- certainly no more, usually very much less -- and it approaches its perfection as it approaches the excellence of its cause. All things coming from God reach their perfection as they approach the divine likeness which is the peak of that infinitesimal participation of divine perfection which makes them what they are.

The variety of the world

The end or purpose of creation was to communicate the divine goodness so on every side of us we see something of the family likeness of God. The staggering variety of the universe is the result of divine ingenuity's struggle to paint, in the stiff medium of creatures, a likeness of the gracious beauty of God. Of course even the divine artist failed. No finite creature is capable of receiving all of divine goodness, no one creature is capable of perfectly mirroring that divine perfection. It is more perfectly mirrored through the multiplication of different species of creatures; but even indefinite multiplication through all of an eternity fails to give back an adequate likeness of the face of God. The divine likeness, perceptible to the keen eyes of a saint in the lowest creatures of the world, is like the image given back to a woman by the one faulty mirror in her room; the bewildering beauty and inconceivable variety of the angelic world gives the effect of many mirrors each giving back a particular view, but no one of them nor all of them together, do more than catch a mood, a passing gesture, the light of a smile. Worlds could have been multiplied, as mirrors can be multiplied, but the results would be no more adequate. Nor, for that matter, would they be

any more disparate; whatever the number of worlds created, the whole of creation would still be bound tightly together by an order to the only possible end, God Himself. Whatever God does must be orderly and there can be only one principle of that order, one end, God.

The age of the world: From reason

The story of the world, as the story of the likeness of God on earth, is a beautiful story. It is also a long, long story; how long we do not know. Our faith assures us that it is not as long a story as eternity, that it is not coeternal with God. Many modern scientific discoveries are taken by their discoverers as proofs from reason of the beginnings of the world at some definite time, such discoveries, for example, as the breakdown of radio active substances, the laws of thermodynamics tending toward equilibrium of energy, the account of the years graphically written in geological strata, and so on. These may indeed be indications of a *fact* and a decided embarrassment to those devotees of a scientific method as a philosophy who have found their place among the evolutionists. But these discoveries are not proofs of the *necessity of the fact*. Neither the eternity of the world nor its beginning in time can be proved by human reason.

From faith

There is no place for such a proof to start. If we begin the argument from the side of God, there is the obvious fact that since this creative action was free and He existed from all eternity, He could have created from all eternity or He could have created in time. If we decide to build up the argument from the side of the created world itself, we are blocked by the fact that the essential natures within the world do not, in themselves, include any reference to or against time; they contain merely a reference to a cause, an insistence that they did not produce themselves.

It is to be noticed, however, that even if the world were eternal, the problem of its cause would remain unchanged; the world's dependence would not be destroyed by its eternity, nor would its ageless existence make of it a first cause. In other words, the problem of the cause of the world is not to be dismissed by hiding it in the vast spaces of eternity any more than it can be destroyed by heaping the centuries upon it. We can know without faith that the world has its causal beginning and what is its end; faith alone can assure us that it had its temporal beginning.

Even so, the story of the world is a long, long story; a story that is never finished and never untold. It has been told from the beginning of the lives of men. In the telling, it has passed through the minds, the hearts and the hands of all the countless millions of men who have looked out upon the world up to this time. Some were simple, others sophisticated; there were wise men and very foolish men; cowards and men of courage; the far-seeing and the blind; the humble and the proud. The story has done something to all these men; and many of them have done something to the story. The centuries still to unfold will not vary the variety of men who listen to the story and tell it to their children; it will do things to them and many of them will do things to the story.

Conclusion:

Fictions and facts of the world

The story, however, will not be changed; there will merely be some spurious versions of it circulated with great popularity for a moment, then the old, old story will go on. There are bound to be spurious versions, as there have been in the past, because the story itself will not be to the liking of everyone. For one reason or another, men make their own changes in the old tale, as if their telling of it could mold the world. To some, the beginning of the story will be absurd because they did not witness it; they will do away with the beginning and start in the middle. To others, the end will be too hard and strong a thing to face; they will do away with the end, keeping something of the end's gift of order, as a murderer will do away with a man but hold fast to his fortune. Others will be displeased with the way the world started and call on their own distorted imaginations for versions that are not so much mysterious as grotesque and absurd. Still others will be quite content with the world and the way it runs along, but insulted by the idea of an architect of it all; they will make the most of the house and laugh the architect into oblivion.

Purposes and failures of fiction

These, of course, are fictions, playthings of the mind of children whose greatest value is that they make no change in the facts. It is still true that the world had a beginning and has an end; that it sprang from nothing at the command of an omnipotent Creator. The madness and chaos that should flow From a causeless world whirling to no purpose clever crimes about; the despair that should saturate the lives of men in a meaningless world never displaces the hope established by the facts of the World. The fictions might have been concocted that the sophisticated might revel in their superiority, that the foolish might clown with impunity, that cowards might run away from life, the blind enjoy their darkness and the proud lord it over their little world. But it never is kindness to cater to and encourage the weakness of men; it is merely hurrying the half-reluctant suicide over the abyss he has been flitting with. The fictions fail as substitutes for the truth of the story of the world, for truth has no substitutes; the more heartily they are hugged to the breasts of men, the more completely do they betray men. In his heart, the superficial, cynical sophisticate has a deeper knowledge of his own pettiness than ever another man will have; the coward knows well his lack of courage; the blind, his lack of light; and the proud, the lowliness of the throne he occupies.

Comfort and significance of the facts

The story of the world is a hard story only to weak men who are very proud. To all others, it is the solid bedrock on which a man can build the towering spires of his human life. The omnipotent Creator is an assurance upon which a man can begin his life with the unwavering confidence of strong youth; the source of the world's material is a dash of common sense that protects man from the absurdities of puritanism and hedonism, from irrational gloom and senseless ecstasy; the divine model is his explanation of the beauty, the order, the peace that links all of creation to the family of God. The goal of the world explains his present restlessness, his incredible hopes and courageous efforts, the values that make life a cheap coin to be spent extravagantly in the attainment of this last thing that gives meaning to the world, to life, to struggle and even to failure.

<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 8	Chapter Nine -->
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CHAPTER IX -- THE ANGELIC WORLD (Q. 50-53; 61)

1. Banishment of the angels:
 - (a) By the ancestors of modern philosophy.
 - (b) by the moderns:
 - (1) Its reasons
 - (2) Its effects.
 2. The angels and the ages:
 - (a) Universality of belief in angels:
 - (1) Testimony of men.
 - (2) Testimony of philosophy.
 - (3) Testimony of history.
 - (b) Explanation of this universality:
 - (1) Primitive revelation.
 - (2) Angelic effects.
 - (3) Reason.
 3. Existence of the angels:
 - (a) From faith
 - (b) From reason:
 - (1) From the perfection of the universe.
 - (2) From the imperfection of the human intellect.
 4. Nature of the angels:
 - (a) Their simplicity.
 - (b) Their incorruptibility.
 - (c) Their variety and number.
 5. Consequences of the angelic nature:
 - (a) in relation to bodies.
 - (b) in relation to place.
 - (c) in relation to movement.
- Conclusion:
1. Companionship of the angels:
 - (a) An inspiration.
 - (b) An acceptance of the limits of man.
 - (c) An insistence on the excellencies of man
 2. The appeal of the angels.
 3. Room for the angels.

CHAPTER IX THE ANGELIC WORLD (Q. 50-53; 61)

Banishment of the angels

AS THE moderns edit it, the first dreadful chapter in human history has been recast, the roles changed so that the victim is now victimizer. Originally the angels stood at the gates of Paradise, inexorable, their swords flaming, as the first man and woman trudged out of the Garden disconsolate to begin their long, lonely exile. Today it is the angel who is banished and man who stands, inexorable, his words a flaming sword, guarding the barriers of the world. Of course, an angel is a difficult person to get at, even with a flaming sword; but the moderns have done the best they could. If it were possible to imagine a bedraggled angel, the victim of the modern decree would be a sorry sight; for here there is no promise of a redemption or a Redeemer. Indeed, if the angels had to take this stern exile seriously, their lot would be much more serious than was that of Adam and Eve: the first man and woman were forbidden a corner of the earth and made to climb the hill to heaven; the angels, if the moderns had their way, would have no corner of the earth left to them, nor any place in heaven or in hell. They would be ruled out of existence.

By the ancestors of modern philosophy

In the modern picture there is little room for an angel, however economic an angel might be with space. Certainly the immediate ancestors of our modern philosophers left little ground for angels to walk on, none to call their own. The materialism of the nineteenth century made a closed shop of the world, its

machines purring along smoothly in a mechanical pride at their monopoly of the past, present and definitely predictable future. Machines and angels have little in common; and this was a completely mechanical world. No account could be taken by it of the angels for, by its own confession, it could handle only the material; the rest was ruled out of existence.

By the moderns

The naturalism, which supported this machine-like world, identified the known with the seen, the observed; only that which could be weighed, measured, dissected was real. An angel was much too slippery to be real. Rationalism, at least in its earliest beginnings, admitted human reason and its immaterial character into the world of reality; but then it slammed shut the gates. There were no seats left, certainly none for a being that claimed superiority over that human spirit, Rationalism expected to destroy the angels by snubbing them; instead, it has come perilously close to destroying the human reason it professed to champion.

Its reasons

The modern attitude is a jumble of all three of these views of reality. Some men, pushing naturalism to its logical extreme, deify science and so, of course, brush the angels aside impatiently. What can a scalpel, an atom smasher or a list of cleverly arranged words do with an angel? There cannot be angels. A logical consequence of this is the denial of reason itself; reason, you see, has not as yet been strapped to an operating table. Their flag proclaimed them to be mechanistic and psycho-analytical psychologists but they were, none the less, pirates preying on humanity who made even that feeble offspring of spirituality which rationalism spared walk the plank. The step was not far from the insistence on the absolute supremacy of reason to its complete extinction.

Today, many legions of men insist on the complete independence and supremacy of man, refusing to have anything to do with a creature, or even a God, superior to man. Modernity again bites off its nose to spite its face; the trick is so ingenious that we have not yet tired of it. To spite reason and extol the scientific method, reason is ruled out and so science is killed; to spite authority and rule mystery out of the universe, reason is elevated to the highest rung of the ladder and nothing is left for the ladder to stand on. The moderns have made the defense of man by putting him at the crown of existence, a kind of three ring circus with no publicity barred; but when the noise dies down and the crowds file out, the hero of the whole performance is crawling about on all fours. Obviously angels have no place in such thinking as this; neither, for that matter, have men.

Its effects

This modern contempt for things angelic has, as a matter of fact, had its effect on those who have no slightest doubt about the angelic world. Not that it has shaken their belief in any way; it has rather made them self-conscious about angels. They would hesitate to drag an angel out in public. Belief in angels is made to seem just a little childish, like believing in hobgoblins or Santa Claus; it is as though angels belonged in the world of make-believe that may be dissolved at any moment by the call to dinner. There is just the faintest odor of suspicion that by such belief we are not being entirely true to our reason, we are a little too credulous for manhood, a little too hopeful for an adult.

The angels and the ages: Universality of belief in angels Testimony of men

If a Christian must have his angels, then he must stand off to one side of the modern world, in a sense sharing the banishment of the angels, isolated. Yet, strangely enough, it is only in these last few centuries that an angel was made to feel like an outsider or the believer in angels to feel naively credulous. The anthropological findings on primitive man certainly indicate that an angel would have been taken for granted in the days of pre-history, at the very beginnings of human life. The belief in beings, superior to man and matter but inferior to God, was then almost universal. Sometimes these spirits were good,

sometimes they were bad: at different times they were identified as belonging to a river, a tree, a rock, an animal. But their essential characteristics of immateriality, their superiority to man and inferiority to God, crop up as constant factors.

Testimony of philosophy

As history grew up and began to scribble its account in the copy book that will never be filled, it found the world positively crowded with beings exhibiting these same angelic characteristics, beings who bore the names of spirits or demi-gods. The richness of Greek and Roman mythologies, to give just one instance, is evidence of this among the people themselves and in the literary expression of this popular attitude. Lest this be discounted on the grounds of popular ignorance, it might be well to notice that the philosophers did not escape this universal belief. Thales and Pythagoras placed them in the vestibule of the divine world; Socrates talked familiarly with one of them; Plato and his disciples filled the world with separated intelligences or secondary gods; to Aristotle they were the movers of the heavenly bodies. Indeed the angels are not newcomers to the world of men.

Testimony of history

Putting the popular accounts, mythology and philosophy to one side and coming to strict history, we find the most thoroughly authenticated and extrinsically corroborated of historical books -- the Bible -- parading the angels across almost every page. It was an angel that stayed the hand of Abraham, that slew the first-born of Egypt, that led the way to the Maccabean victories; the angel's message was a little too much for the aging Zachary but not for the maid of Galilee or her trusting husband; God Himself stooped to angelic comfort after the long days of desert fast and the long hours of Gethsemane's agony. Down through the centuries, the lives of the saints, not to be sniffed at even by the most historical of noses, have not found room enough for all the angelic details; nor were their writers seriously disturbed, knowing full well there would be all of heaven's eternity to listen to the full account.

Explanation of this universality: Primitive revelation

It is not the angels who are lonely in the world of men; rather it is the age that banishes the angels that finds itself a stranger among its fellows who have harbored human life. Such universal belief deserves better than to be treated contemptuously; surely it is too huge a thing to be cast off like a shawl by a shrug of the shoulders. At the very least, it deserves some examination, and considerable explanation. From the Catholic's point of view, the view of faith, a quite obvious explanation is primitive revelation; an explanation, by the way, that has many a likely looking corroboration in the folklore of primitive peoples with its accounts of a virgin birth, a creation, a flood and so on. This is one way of knowing about the angels, indeed one of the very best ways of knowing about anything -- being told by the first truth Who can neither deceive nor be deceived and Who is the first cause of everything.

Angelic effects

Putting aside the question of a primitive revelation, there are many facts pointing plainly to the existence of the angels. To the medieval mind, with its solid Catholic outlook on all of life, even angelic life, there was no particular difficulty connected with such things as Peter's release from prison or the collapse of the chains that had bound him: nor with the case of Peter of Verona whose lonely cell was flooded by brilliant light long before the days of electricity and voices were heard talking to him as he prayed alone in his cell. Quite obviously the angels were responsible for these things. When one of the brethren was obsessed by the devil, it was not necessarily an epileptic fit nor congenital insanity; for after all there were devils and the fact remained that the afflicted one was returned to perfect normalcy through an ecclesiastical exorcism.

Reason

There is at least a suspicion creeping into the cynical modern mind that there is more to the world than bodies, more to thought than measurement, more to activity than the bouncing of electrons. A modern philosopher, for instance, admits in print that there are many psychical phenomena that have not been satisfactorily explained, giving as examples such things as authenticated activities of a seance room, the mischievous, cheap little tricks of poltergeist origin and so on. A long established psychical research laboratory in London, and a like institute in Boston, frankly admit numerous examples of things that defy explanation on the grounds of a materialistic philosophy. Indeed some modern scientists have been so overwhelmed by these phenomena as to go to ridiculous lengths of childish credulity in originating a cult that has often been a rich harvest field for knaves and tricksters.

Existence of the angels

All this may or may not appeal to the mind of a man of today as a rational jumping-off-place of an argument in favor of the angels. There might, as a matter of fact, be serious difficulty from this angle in arguing to the activity of the good angels; such suprahuman activity might be a direct divine effect. No such difficulty, however, presents itself in arguing to the activity and existence of the bad angels, the devils. For such satanic activity, while obviously suprahuman, is just as obviously not divine; surely the divinity does not play the poltergeist's cheap tricks of breaking dishes, cuffing surprised victims or slipping in a sly pinch just for the devilment of it.

There is still another way of getting at the existence of the angels by reason alone, a solid enough way and old enough to have proved its solidity. Indeed, this was the method adopted by many a scientist with remarkably fruitful results; thus it was, for instance, that Descartes, arguing to the way other things had to be by the way things are, uncovered so many of the mysteries of the spectrum long before there was tangible evidence to support his theories; thus, too, the table of atomic weights was drawn up in neat completion long before many of the tardy elements had found their way into the narrow opening of a man's mind; it was in this way that Einstein proceeded in evolving his mathematical theories.

This way of arguing can bring out the possibility of angels, or even the sublime fittingness of angels in the ordered scheme of things; it cannot demonstrably show that they do exist. There simply is no way in which we can set about proving the existence of angels a priori neither from the side of their cause, God, Who creates with complete freedom; nor from the side of the angels, His effect, who, like all other creatures, do not include existence in their very nature. Before setting out, then, on the arguments reason offers, it is to be noted emphatically that, for the Catholic, the solid grounds for the existence of the angels is the word of that first Intelligence, the source of all truth, i.e., the infallible revelation of God Himself assuring us of the existence of these supreme creatures of the created world.

From Faith

The importance of angels to human life may be estimated from the overwhelming character of the evidence of the revelation of their existence we have already spoken of the familiar frequency with which the angels stride through the pages of Scripture. These examples could be multiplied indefinitely, from the wandering visitors of Abram, through the unemployed Raphael's ready acceptance of a position as guide, to the business-like brusqueness of Gabriel. Even more impressing is the part the angels played in the human life of God Himself: they heralded His birth, ministered to His weakness in the desert, comforted Him in His agony, announced His resurrection and on the mount of the Ascension drew the curtain after the short drama of His life. That there be no mistake about its importance, the existence of the angels is reasserted in the earliest statements of belief, the creeds or symbols. The same truth is proclaimed again and again in the Councils in solemnly impressive language: "We firmly believe that there is one God, creator of all visible and invisible things, spiritual and corporal; Who by His omnipotent power from the beginning of time made both the spiritual and corporal creature, the angelic namely and the earthly, and then the human creature from both spirit and body." (Fourth Council of Lateran.)

In both Scripture and the Councils it is insisted that these angelic creatures are intellectual substances

superior to men. These essential characteristics of the angelic nature have been stressed with complete universality by the Fathers, both Greek and Latin. This is the more remarkable in that there was no particular dispute about the angels and there were enough fundamental doctrines under heavy attack to occupy the hands and heads of all the Fathers all the time. It was as though each one considered his life and writings incomplete until he had paid his intellectual tribute to these big brothers of humanity.

From Reason

Down through the centuries, the angels were a subject to be cherished by every Catholic author. They played such an intimate part in the lives of Mary, her Son and the apostles, they took the beginnings of Christianity so much to heart that Christian authors, now that Christianity had grown up, frankly hailed the angels as the friends, the champions, the defenders they really were. It is not surprising, then, that the Doctors of the Church labored lovingly on their treatises on the angels. Thomas put such exquisite touches to the delicately firm lines of his tract as to merit the name "Angelic Doctor" and to have the tract draw the eye of every intellectual connoisseur by the sheer boldness, Penetration and beauty of its conception; its execution has left it unparalleled as the supreme treatment of the angels. That supremacy, however, has not discouraged theologians since his time from doing their bit towards establishing the angels solidly in the heart of Christians of every age.

From the perfection of the universe

To get back to the elusively inconclusive but subtly persuasive argument from reason, it might be well to point out that the angels do properly fall within the scope of a natural investigation. The angels are decidedly an integral part of the natural order because they are suprahuman, some men have jumped to the conclusion that they are supernatural; it is a naive conceit that forgets that to a plant a worm might as reasonably seem supernatural, to a worm a dog, to a dog a man. When, in a rare moment, we emerge from pride's fog, it is not difficult for us to admit that we are not so utterly perfect as to make unthinkable a natural perfection superior to our own; especially in the morning before breakfast. It is from this obvious limitation of man and the clear perfection of the Author of man that the arguments of reason for the existence of angels proceed.

The first, and very beautiful, argument might be summed up in the dry words of the principle that the effect is perfect in proportion as it resembles or images its cause. The principle comes to life as soon as it is brought from the abstract to the concrete: we agree without demur to the contention that reflected light is more perfect as it can itself illumine others; knowledge is more perfect when it can enlighten others; love of God is more perfect in our hearts when we can set the hearts of others on fire. We cannot picture the perfect architect of the universe bungling the job; the universe, for God's purpose, is perfect. His purpose was the communication of His perfection, the manifestation of His goodness. Thus, things existing mirror the existence of God, things living give us a faint picture of the life of God; but of the operation of God, of His own most inner life, of the intellectual activity proper to Him we have no adequate image unless there be angels intellectual substances, independent of the world of matter, whose entirely immanent activity is one of intellect and will.

From the imperfection of the human intellect

It is true that man does mirror God in some little way; compared to the creatures beneath him, man is far and away king. He seems infinitely above them by his power of thought and of love. But even to our feeble eyes, there is a jagged gap between the operation of God and the operation of man. Man's spirit is incomplete without a body; he needs matter for the very stuff of his thought; in every action, every thought, he must use his material body; it is through the material that he attains his intellectual and moral perfection. What a contrast to the complete independence of spirit that is God's! If man stands at the peak of the created universe, the table of perfections is incomplete: there is existence, life, sense knowledge and love, intellectual knowledge and love dependent on matter; the missing grade is obvious -- intellectual life, knowledge and love completely independent of matter. A scientific mind meeting a similar situation in the

scientific world has no hesitation in proclaiming the existence of the missing grade and setting out in search of it; the mind of man, scientific or otherwise, meeting the same situation in the wider world of the universe, has had even less hesitation in proclaiming the existence of angels. Nor has the search for them been far or long.

Whether a man preen himself, looking over the world with a proud eye, or debase himself, insisting on identification with the world beneath him by ingeniously devised camouflage, the fact remains that he is neither at the top nor the bottom of creation. He stands on the lowest rung of intellectuality. In him the native independence of intellectuality is walled about by the world of matter. And this feeble flicker of intelligence in man itself proclaims the existence of a more perfect intelligence. In treating of the life of God, we have seen that intelligence does not of itself need the material of the physical world; to intelligence as such the material is accidental, something peculiar to intelligence as it exists in the composite we call man. This fact tells quite a story. It is accidental to animal life to flaunt wings; so we find some animals without wings. It is accidental to legs to be bowed; so we find some legs that are not bow-legs. It is accidental to living things to have legs, so we find some living things without legs. If, then, it is not essential, but rather accidental, to intelligence to be bound up in matter, there will be some intelligence, even created intelligence, independent of matter.

In fact we can push this farther, making it a more general argument, by insisting on the point that human intelligence is an imperfect grade of intelligence. In every class of beings, the imperfect presupposes the perfect, perfection is something posterior to perfection, something that happens to perfection, like the twisting of a word through a crooked mouth. The appearance of an imperfect grade assures us of the existence of the perfect grade of that perfection.

At any rate, our study of the different grades of life in which we traced the intrinsic activity of creatures up to the intrinsic activity of God that is the Trinity gives us more than room enough for an angel or two in the scheme of things. Certainly the story of creation would have been halted in the middle of a chapter if angels had not been produced by God. For all their high perfection, angels are not to be confused with God Himself. They are not uncaused, nor did they make themselves; they are not utterly self-sufficient. Rather, in common with all creatures, they are utterly dependent on the sustaining hand of God which brought them into being and alone keeps them there. Their stupendous perfection is only a wavering silhouette of the infinite perfection of God. Theirs too, like our own, is a borrowed, a participated perfection, a loan made from the essential perfection that is divine.

Nature of the angels

They were created in time, not from eternity; though any attempt to prove this statement is foredoomed to failure. This is one of those truths that are not material for proof but for belief; obviously, if the temporal beginning of the universe cannot be proved, the existence of any one thing in it cannot be dated with the stamp of eternity or time. Proceeding on faith's solid assurance of the temporal beginning of angelic life, theologians have no hesitation about plunging into the question of the relative time of the production of the angels: were they produced before, after, or simultaneously with the physical world? Again, reason cannot get very far. From the language of the definitions of the Church, and because they are such an integral part of the natural universe, St. Thomas concludes that the angels were created together with the physical world. Here reason is left entirely to itself; walking alone in this territory, it rapidly loses its swagger, its voice sinks to the whisper of an opinion and, while the darkness endures, humility is no effort. Thomas' opinion is reasonable where decision is impossible; though he stands opposed to the Greek Fathers, he is not alone, for his opinion is the quite natural universal opinion of the Latin Fathers.

Their simplicity

Those superior intellectual substances which we call angels do exist. What are they like? The picture that reason draws of them is necessarily negative. At least it is clear that they are not bulky giants whose great strength makes men look anemic. There can be no question of bulk in an angel for there is nothing

material in an angel. Moreover the possibility of ever dissecting an angel is precluded by the fact that they are without matter: there is no inside and outside, top and bottom, fore and aft, arms and legs to an angel. This spiritual being, precisely because it is spiritual, is completely simple, utterly devoid of parts. In fact, an angel has not even that essential composition of matter and form so universal in all of nature beneath the angelic order; and this is no more than to insist again that these beings are spiritual, completely spiritual, altogether independent of the material. True, this conception comes hard to us because our minds are necessarily entangled in the material; as much as we agree that the angels are spiritual substances, subsisting forms, the flavor of matter haunts our consideration of the angels like a disembodied memory of a vague perfume. It is somewhat of a help to remember that the angel's normal existence is like that of the soul of a man after death and before the resurrection of the body; though, of course, the human soul has a lonely incompleteness about it in this state which is altogether absent from the full life of the angels.

Their incorruptibility

There is nothing in an angel that might fall out, come loose, or be cut off. An angel is totally incorruptible. Being completely simple, it cannot break up into parts; nothing of its nature can be lost for there is nothing composite about that nature. In simple terms, the angel does not go through that dress rehearsal for death which we call a change; above all it does not have to play the leading role in the drama of death. Thomas, rightly, says that every change is a kind of death; for in every change some thing is lost, even though something is also gained.

Corruption, as we understand it, is the result of the separation of the principle of unity and life from the matter it unifies and vivifies. Obviously this implies at least the fundamental complexity of form, or unifying principle, and of matter. Looking at it in the concrete, we can destroy a fresco by scraping it off the wall or by tearing down the wall it beautifies; that is, either by destroying the thing itself or that upon which it depends. There is no chink in the armor of the angels into which we might plunge the lance of destruction. The angel cannot be taken apart or erased; it cannot be destroyed by destroying that on which it depends, for it depends on nothing but God. God could, of course, destroy an angel; not by a blow of an almighty fist or the roar of a thundering *fiat*, but by the simple recall of the loaned existence the angel enjoys. In common with every other creature, the angel is not self-sufficient, its nature is not its existence; it lives by a borrowed, a participated existence. It too continues in being only because of the sustaining hand of God; there is no positive action necessary on the part of God to annihilate an angel, merely the withdrawal of that conserving hand without which an angel, and indeed a universe, falls into the nothingness from which it sprang.

Their variety and number

On the basis of their spiritual natures, we can speak of the angels as we would of members of the same family, emphasizing common characteristics such as immateriality, simplicity and incorruptibility. That generic sameness must not, however, betray us into conceiving of the angels as indefinitely numerous facsimiles of the one model. There is as much difference between one angel and another as there is between a horse and a man, for each angel is a distinct species, complete and entire in itself. In other words, angelic nature is not said of the angels in the same way as human nature is said of men; we differ among ourselves only by individual differences, specifically all men are the same. In each angelic species, on the contrary, there is only the one individual in whom the species is complete.

There is no point in a multiplication of individuals within an angelic species. In material things, such multiplication is absolutely necessary to assure the continuation of the species, for the individuals, reaching their allotted term of existence, cease to be; in the angelic order, the incorruptible nature of each angel is itself a guarantee of the permanency of the species. It might be argued that God's purpose in creating -- the mirroring of His divine perfections -- is better served through the multiplication of individuals within a species. But; as a matter of fact, it is by the variance of the species that finite creation achieves some little likeness to the smile of divinity, not through the material differentiation of individuals within the species.

With one exception, it is true that, throughout the created world, the individual is unimportant but for the part it plays in perpetuating the species. That exception is the world of man. There every individual is of supreme importance, for every individual is possessed of an eternally enduring soul, a soul that will outlast every other species in the material order. Really, the human exception is no exception at all. Throughout all of nature, it is the enduring, the permanent that is the object of nature's ceaseless care; because the individual's spark of life is so momentary a thing, it is unimportant in comparison with the constantly renewed existence of the species. It is on the basis of this identical principle that the human soul is so terribly important -- because it is not destined for the life of a moment, of a year or even of a century, but of all of an eternity. On the same grounds, men who see nothing spiritual, eternally enduring, in themselves arrive, with devastating logic, at the tragic conclusion that individual human life is a cheap, common, unimportant thing.

Even if there were some point in multiplying angelic individuals within the one species, it could not be done. Let us say we are discontented with our human souls and decide to do something about it. If we remember that our soul, being spiritual, has no parts, we can readily understand that there can be no question of trimming rough spots or rounding off curves. That soul, like all forms in matter and like all substances in the spiritual order, is utterly simple; if we could induce any change whatsoever, however small, we would have changed the whole thing. We might have produced something very pleasing but we would have destroyed a man. Any slightest variation in a substantial form results in a substantial change; and the rational soul of man is precisely that substantial form by which he is differentiated from every other creature in the universe. The angels are subsisting substantial forms; any slightest differentiation would not mean multiplication of individuals within a species, but a specific, a substantial change. There is, in fact, a possibility of multiplication within a species only when an essential element of that species can suffer modification that is not a substantial modification; or, in plain language, the principle of individuation can be found only in matter. The angels are completely independent of matter.

The implication of this specific character of every angel, taken in conjunction with the number of the angels, is staggering. For their number is beyond all computation. The Sacred Scriptures hint at this in such passages by: "thousands of thousands (of angels) ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him": It is right, eminently right, that the number of angels should dwarf the number of all other created things. The beauty of creatures is an imperfect image of the beauty of God and the whole purpose of creation was to mirror in creatures something of that divine beauty; the more perfect the creature, then, the greater the image, of divine beauty; the angels, as the most perfect of all created beings, are the most perfect image of divine beauty. By their multiplication the divine purpose in the universe is most effectively attained. Each angel portrays an angle, a shadow of the divine beauty, each much more distinct than the fragrance of the locust tree from the blossom of a cherry tree.

The white light of divine beauty is only partly appreciated by us when it passes through the prism of creatures. There it is broken up into the thin rays of color which alone may seep through to our mind and senses. The terrifying numbers of the angels give us some little idea of the streaming rays of beauty that pour from the world nearest divine beauty, the world of the angels.

Consequences of the angelic nature: in relation to bodies.

Perhaps it was some vague appreciation of this angelic beauty that introduced the words "angel" and "angelic" into love's vocabulary. Actually, to look like an angel is a dubious accomplishment; at least to human eyes, an angel is not much to look at. Insisting on their independence of the material, we have already made plain the fact that bodies in no sense belong to angelic nature; angels are immaterial, completely spiritual substances. Yet angels stood, sword in hand, at the gates of Paradise, they came walking down the road to Abraham, made the long journey with the young Tobias. These angels certainly had bodies. Where did they get them?

Obviously, these bodies could not have been the angels' own bodies; angels do not have bodies. Since they

did have them, they must have taken them for the particular occasion, somewhat as a man might hire a dress suit in the penury of college days. As to where they got the bodies, well, any answer is no more than a guess. After all, this particular body was only for appearance's sake; it was not necessary that it have a back as well as a front, that it be complete, a *human* body. In their search for the kind of body they needed, the angels were not reduced to grave-robbing. St. Thomas suggests, timidly, that the angels used compressed air as the material of these bodies. He was, of course, only guessing. There are many questions relative to these angelically assumed bodies more important than their source. Could, for instance, these bodies produce vital acts: could they see, take nourishment, grow, get old, rheumatic and creaky? The angel Raphael, declining the hospitality of Tobias, gave the answer: "I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you; but I use an invisible meat and drink which cannot be seen by men." No, these bodies were not capable of vital acts. Only living bodies, bodies informed by a substantial form proper to them, can do these things. Without bodies, devoid of matter and consequently of all quantity, an angel cannot be in place as we are; the surface of our bodies is, in a sense, surrounded. How can an angel be surrounded? It cannot be locked in a closet or folded up in the ectoplasm of a medium. Yet angels must be some place; they do not enjoy the ubiquity of God. The difficulty comes, as it so often comes, from our effort to conceive of everything in human terms. The angels are in place, not by a contact of quantity as we are, but by a contact of power. In other words, an angel is where he is at work. The philosophers have put all this in two words by saying that men are *circumscriptively* in place, while angels are *definitively* in place.

In relation to place

However we phrase it, the fact remains that an angel can operate in four corners of a room at one time; yet these four corners will be but one place for an angel. For an angel's place is where he is working: it may be that one material place exhausts the angel's power and then the material and the angelic place coincide; but it may also be that a dozen material places do not exhaust the angel's power and then, because our minds are so wedded to the material, we begin to insist that it simply cannot be so. The truth becomes plainer, and more startling, when we push it further. The fallen angels who chose the swine for their next habitation, were speaking literally when they told Christ their number was legion. An angel, you see, does not need a defined space; there is no danger of any number of angels crowding each other, tussling for the same strap, or blocking a doorway. There is no limit to the number of angels assignable to any one material place for the crucial question of quantity is one that does not come up in the angelic world.

In relation to movement

The manner in which the angels move, then, represents little difficulty since it follows their manner of being in place. If this particular angel has assumed a body, then, by reason of the body, the angel moves locally, step by step, trudging up one hill and down another. Otherwise, that is, without the assumed bodies, the angels are in place by their operation which is by intellect and will; they move as they change operation, with the speed, the ease and completeness of thought or desire. Gabriel was not out of breath on his arrival in Nazareth. It is true that the angels sat on the tomb of Christ the morning of the resurrection; but we must not read fatigue into that position. What could be more natural, having a body handy, than to sit it down. We might almost say that the process of sitting down might well be one an angel could take pride in. For no one having a body merely sits down: they may drop themselves into a chair and heave themselves out of it in open confession of aging bones; they may collapse into a chair as though from the sudden disintegration of bones, and drape themselves over it as formlessly as a rug; or they may make of the process a demonstration of suave serenity, sitting down as smoothly as a cat stretches, as bewilderingly as a mirage disappears, as swiftly graceful as the glide of a swallow. From the practical point of view, it was unfortunate there was no twentieth century commentator on etiquette present to discover just how one *should* sit down.

Conclusion: Companionship of the angels: An inspiration

Undoubtedly we can accomplish the complicated operation of sitting down without angelic help; but to

eschew the companionship of the angels entirely is to suffer a serious loss that may well lead to a misunderstanding of human nature itself. For a man is a cosmopolitan being alone in a provincial-minded world; he alone is spiritual, which is to say that he alone is impatient of matter, that only his thought scales the barriers of the universe, only his love holds fast to the dream of an eternal surrender, only his soul is dedicated to a task that only ceaseless energy and unending duration can possibly finish. It has never been good for man to be alone; it has always been good for a man to be in the company of those who cling to finer ideals, are possessed of greater talents, who strive for higher goals. His play in the game of life is steadily worsened if he meets only equals or inferiors; it is steadily improved if he moves in faster company where he has something to learn, something to imitate, something to urge him on every minute of the game.

An acceptance of the limits of man

Alone in the material world, a man is apt to develop eccentricities as absurd as the quirks that twist the recluse into a caricature of a man. He has, as a matter of fact, made the absurd mistake, looking about the world, of thinking that his was the supreme intelligence, his the supreme love, his the supreme achievement; he has made an angel or even a god of himself -- and then, reasonably, given in to despair. He has missed the companionship of the angels that would have opened his eyes to the feeble stumblings of his slow mind, the waverings of his love, the ready fatigue of his energy; he has missed a realization that would have given him hope, pride in the intellectual family of which he is the humblest member, and confidence in his efforts, knowing he did not work alone.

An insistence on the excellencies of man

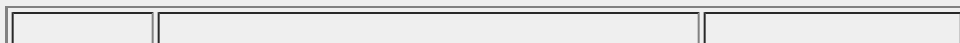
On the other hand, from this same loneliness, he is apt to make, and in fact has made, the mistake of completely underestimating himself. His supremacy to the material world was too great to be believed, its responsibilities too heavy to be carried by his narrow shoulders; so he brushed aside that supremacy and plunged to the level of the things beneath, a level that seared and withered his lonely soul. He missed the companionship that would have opened his eyes to his own incorruptibility, the speed of his thought, the timelessness of his love, the height of his goals.

The appeal of the angels

In other words, being alone, man has taken himself apart; and, as so often happens, one of the parts was lost in the reassembly of his powers. It is not, however, men as men, but philosophers or scientists who take man apart. Men do not break themselves into parts; they take man as a whole. Perhaps that is the secret of the universal appeal of the angels to the mind of men. In that angelic world, the soul of man is at home as it can never be at home in any lesser world; there the soul of a man finds the common language of the spirit, the ready understanding, the quick sympathy and unquestioning helpfulness that allow him to be completely himself, relaxed but intense, at home. For this is the world of the spirit.

Room for the angels

There is room enough in the world of nature for the angels. It would be a narrow, confining place without them. And room will be made for the angels as long as a man trudges the length and width of the world knowing his loneliness, humbly conscious of the limitations of his powers, awed by his superiority over the material world in which he moves. The hope, the vigor, the inspiration and the comfort of the companionship of these big brothers of humanity will not easily be surrendered; to one dedicated by nature to a search for the beauty and goodness of God, there will be slight challenge to the angels who most perfectly mirror that beauty and goodness. There is room enough in the world of nature, there is room enough in the heart of a man, for an angel who takes up no room.



CHAPTER X -- THE ANGELS' VISION
(Q. 54-58)

1. The angels' vision a dream of men
 - (a) From the beginning
 - (b) Among the first philosophers
 - (1) The fact
 - (2) Reasons of the fact
 - (3) Dual results of the fact
 2. The dream and the moderns
 - (a) Descartes' angelism
 - (b) Its legitimate descendants
 3. The dream of men a natural gift of the angels: perfect knowledge in a perfect way:
 - (a) In a perfect way, i.e. innately, intuitively, independently:
 - (1) This knowledge is innate
 - a. Relative to angelic essence
 - b. Relative to angelic existence
 - c. Relative to angelic intellect
 - (2) It is intuitive
 - (3) It is independent
 - a. Source of the angelic ideas
 - b. Source of the angels' knowledge of God
 - c. Source of the angels' knowledge of self
 - (b) Perfect knowledge
 - (1) The objects of angelic knowledge
 - a. Spiritual objects
 1. Other angels
 2. Thoughts and desires of men
 3. Mysteries of grace
 - b. Material objects
 - (2) Infallibility of the angelic knowledge
- Conclusion:
1. The dream of men is not without its excuse
 2. It is not without its divine reason
 3. Nor is it without its fulfillment

CHAPTER X
THE ANGELS' VISION
(Q. 54-58)

THERE is little of idleness in the universe; what little there is is not for long. For the penalty of idleness is frustration and, shortly, extinction. Apparently idleness can be indulged in by men with more impunity than any other creature of the universe; but the appearance of unpenalized idleness in the human world is an illusion. Actually, man is one with the rest of the world in the possession of that inner drive for the fullness of perfection that so ruthlessly stamps out the idle; he not only has this same drive, in him it exists in a degree so intensified that it seems to demand that he outstrip himself. He is possessed of a yearning for goodness and truth that pulls the heart out of him.

The angels' vision a dream of men

Unable to satisfy this quenchless thirst, men have, from the beginning both of individual life and the life of the race, been haunted by a dream; the dream of quick, easy, complete quieting of the remorseless demands of their very nature. Sometimes they have mistaken the dream for a reality, for the port itself instead of the guiding beacon; but, mistaken or not, the dream has persisted. Thus children go to school with lagging steps and race out of the classroom; vacation time is a release from prison and September is approached with the listless resignation of a doomed man's steps to the gallows. Yet "why" is never far from their lips; they want to learn, insist on learning, but easily, quickly, satisfyingly. It is as though the dream were born within them.

From the beginning

In the very beginning of the race, satanic ingenuity could devise no temptation so seductive as the promise to materialize this dream: "you shall be like gods, knowing good from evil." Awed by the splendor of that dream, the strong, unimpeded intellects of the first human couple became as credulous as a child listening to a ghost story on a stormy night. Even after that first terrible lesson had been learnt, after men had seen what might be expected from grasping at shadows and deserting reality, they still started their tower of Babel, that they might look into heaven.

Among the first philosophers:

The fact

It is not so surprising, then, to see men, in the first baby steps of philosophic thought, tottering towards the bright tinsel of the unceasing dream. The fact is beyond dispute. Hindu philosophy tried to reach the utmost boundaries of wisdom by one proud thrust. Impatient of the material world, the Eastern philosophers denied it; their intellects would be independent of all else and, by a kind of natural contemplation of self, would pierce into and be absorbed by the absolute. The Chinese philosophy of Lao-tse embraced a kind of wisdom through contemplation together with an esoteric principle of revolution; the two added up to a sort of self-hypnosis, aided by opium, whose goal was complete cessation of activity and reabsorption in nothingness, to become one with the first principle.

Reasons of the fact

To eyes made sympathetic by the vista of crumbled dreams that stretches the length of a lifetime, reasons for this fact of philosophical history do not have to be laboriously excavated from the ruins of the dream. Unquestionably glimpses of quick, sure, easy knowledge are given to men from time to time. A man's position in the units verse is a perch on the peak of an alp from which he can exult in the scoured cleanliness of sun-drenched clouds and the mysterious depths of the sky, depths that are above him not below him; or be sobered by the shadows, the fog, the ready darkness of the valley that lies at his feet. He stands nicely balanced between the spiritual and the material world. Standing on tiptoe he can almost peer into the city of the angels. Just as in himself he sees the gray spectres of his own bestial potentialities, so also in himself he sees an occasional flash of angelic beauty and perfection. It is not hard to understand a man dreaming of the wings of an angel or the claws of an animal.

Dual results of the fact

Then, too, just as there is no one so impatient with stutters as a stammerer, so there is no one more impatient of human intelligence than an intelligent man. Its weakness, its sluggishness, its inaccuracy, its dependence on the material world and material conditions are all a constant exasperation to him. If this is true despite the immense intellectual deposit we have inherited from the ages, how much more true must it have been in the early days of man's philosophic thought. Along with these two factors, there was a pride of intellect that was almost diabolical, as, in fact, is most human pride. It was a pride that could not, would not, stoop to the things love inspires. We look in vain for any mention of love among the Eastern philosophers. Love, you see, has a way of being satisfied with the crumbs that fall from the table. It is astounded at having so much, however little be given it; the haughty gesture expressing personal excellence is caught in mid-air by love's paralyzing glimpse of the excellence of God shining forth from the loved one. Love cannot be proud: so the early philosophers ruled out love.

The dream and the moderns

The results of this personification of a dream, this enthronement of the pride of intellect, were cataclysmic and, strangely, uniform wherever this dream took to itself a body. In Brahminism, in Buddhism, in Taoism the goal of wisdom was always the same: denial of the reasoning process, denial of reason's efficiency outside itself, finally, the destruction of reason itself; under such circumstances, the ultimate destruction of man, the surrender of personality and individuality through absorption in the absolute, was a foregone conclusion. If men would be angels, then they would in fact become neither angels nor men.

Descartes' angelism

Beginnings are always difficult things; perhaps that is why man is always so impatient at the beginning of things. At any rate, he is much more inclined to indulge in a dream than to swing an axe, even an intellectual axe. It was almost natural, then, that at the beginning of the modern scientific age some one should take refuge in the age-old dream of an angelic short-cut to knowledge. The modern father of angelism, which destroys both angels and men, was Descartes.

Its legitimate descendants

In its modern form, the dream restricted the material world's contribution to man's mental life to being man aged by human reason; as it turned out, this was an insistence on the complete independence of reason that later brought forth that astonishing child, pragmatism. The slow, plodding steps of reasoning were impatiently brushed aside in favor of the rapier-thrust of angelic knowledge which would contain all else that was to be known. And this knowledge was made a practically innate affair; indeed, if it were to be so independent, there was nothing else to do but insist on its innate character. After all, it had been completely cut off from the material world in which it existed.

The dream of men a natural gift of the angels: perfect knowledge in a perfect way

Even in this very early stage of the modern resurrection of man's favorite dream, there are some seeds of catastrophe. Obviously, the denial of the reasoning processes and of the contact of reason with the material world, isolates and perverts the mind of a man. The children of Descartes carried on his tradition boisterously, plundering the intellectual level of man's life like so many vandals bent, not so much on booty, as on destruction. Destroy they did: first intellect itself and finally, reaching the inevitable result of a dream made to walk, the humanity of man. Rationalism trod its suicidal way through Locke, Berkeley and Hume; then Kant rushed to the rescue of reason but his aim was bad and reason died from the shot he fired. From this orphaned home where philosophy was a beaten waif, there came forth idealism and naturalism: the first, linking up the old dream with Neo-platonism and the Hindu philosophies, thus sinking man in the unnatural depths of the world of pure spirit; the second, our American favorite, breaking up into the thousand and one varieties from pragmatism to naive evolutionism, in all of which reason is a thing of the past and man a creature with no future.

The dream has remained unchanged since the beginnings of the human race; it has appeared in philosophic dress again and again since the first puzzlings of the first philosophers. Its results have remained uniformly tragic; now, as always, the dream crashes in the unsounded depths of pessimism. And the lesson the dream teaches is still unlearned. We still do not agree that it is not by casting away the bone we have that we shall find food, it is not by trying to become something other than ourselves that we can accomplish anything but our own destruction. It is as true now as it was in the beginning that we do not improve nature by destroying it; that originality does not consist in being different but in the astonishingly humble courage to be ourselves. We do not attain perfection by pretensions to the angelic but by being most thoroughly human.

In a perfect way, i.e. innately, intuitively, independently

Through the ages, the promise of this dream which has haunted men was perfect knowledge in a perfect way. What man has striven for, even at the cost of his humanity, the angels have by their very nature. Their knowledge is had in a perfect way. Knowledge comes to the angel in the first instant of its existence, without loss of time or energy, without labor, and completely free of any dependence on the world of creatures beneath the angelic world. To put it with a brevity so extreme as to demand further explanation, we could say that the angels' knowledge is innate, intuitive and independent.

This knowledge is innate: Relative to angelic essence

Innate knowledge in the angels means precisely what one would suspect: that the angels are created with their knowledge, as men are born with their faculties of intellect and will. There is no worry about it on the part of the angel; knowledge is an integral part of the angelic nature. Yet this does not mean that the angelic knowledge is the angelic substance, the angelic essence. Angels are not large masses of knowledge wandering about the courts of heaven; nor are they subsistent intellects. The intellects of the angels, as the intellects of men, are faculties, potentialities: their knowledge is an act of that intellect. If, indeed, their intellects were identical with their substance then the angels would be identical with God; they would be subsistent intellects and intelligence is one of those perfections that of themselves are infinite, utterly Perfect. Subsistent intelligence, as we have seen, is a property of God.

Relative to angelic existence

Nor does this innate character of angelic intelligence mean that the angelic nature is given life by angelic knowledge the angel's knowledge is not its existence. This should not be obscure. After all, it is plain that a non-existing dog does not bite, nor is the bite of an existing dog the dog itself. So the existing angel is presupposed to the knowing angel; it does not know until it exists, nor does it exist by the fact of knowledge. As a matter of fact, the angelic existence, marvelously perfect as it must be to match the angelic nature, still falls short of the wide scope of angelic knowledge. Angelic existence is limited to that one angelic species, that one angel; while angelic knowledge is free to roam from God to worms and back again.

Relative to angelic intellect

In both men and angels, intellect is a power, a faculty, an accident perfecting nature. But the angel's intellect does not grub about among material things gathering its knowledge; hence its intellect is a single faculty, utterly, free of dependence on the phantasm of imagination or any other material thing. In us there must be both an active and a possible intellect, as we shall see more thoroughly later on in this book. The first finds the potentially intelligible material in the products of the imagination and makes it actually intelligible to the possible intellect, bridging the gap between the material and the spiritual; the second, actually understands. In somewhat this same way the infra-red ray camera and the human eye cooperate; the camera, on its film, making actually visible what formerly had been only potentially visible, then it is the eye that sees.

In the angels, the intellect is never merely a blank sheet waiting for knowledge to be scribbled on it, it is never merely potentially intelligent. Nor are the objects of the angels' knowledge wrapped around with the bandages of matter which hide their faces, only potentially intelligible. Their knowledge is innate; so the objects of their knowledge, from the very beginning, exist in them immaterially, in an actually intelligible way.

It will, perhaps, help us to grasp the immateriality of the angels and their knowledge if we remember that the whole field of imagination, which so enriches human life, is completely missing in the angelic world. The angels have no imagination. Of they had imaginations they would not be angels. For imagination is the function of a corporal organ, part of our sensitive or animal equipment; it is one of the links that bind us to the animal world, like a spinal column, hunger or death. Without a body, imagination is altogether impossible.

Angels, then, have never felt the sleekness of velvet or the hard gaiety of silk, the rush of wind on a spring day or the softness of a rich turf. They have never had the feel of clean clothes, the agony of tight shoes or a ragged collar. In fact they may know how these things feel, but their knowledge of them is purely intellectual; they have no sensitive knowledge, for the simple reason that they have no senses with which to know. This is the quite apparent reason why their knowledge must be innate; there is no way in which it can be gathered from the material world. On this same ground of their absolute spirituality, we must exclude all passions from the angels. Some of the early Fathers explained the wiles and craftiness of women on the grounds of a quite reprehensible carnal familiarity with the fallen angels: but this was a

very bad guess in a somewhat vague cause. Angels do not tremble with fear, pace the floor with anxiety or boil with anger. This sort of thing belongs in our world, not in the world of the angels.

It is intuitive

The intuitive character of angelic knowledge is much more readily grasped by our minds than its innateness; we ourselves have some little taste of that mysterious intellectual action of intuition. It is in us, quite normally, as the very first of our acts of knowledge; we know such things as tree, dog, man antecedently to our judgment that "this is a tree, dog or man." In other words, we have these concepts, not by the slow scrutiny of judgment and reasoning, but before these processes, by the first glance of intuition. In its higher forms it is the brilliant flash that illumines the minds of men of genius, the mystic penetration of the saints and the deep understanding of the simple faithful relative to the mysteries of faith.

It is independent

The angels' intellect is a cup capable of holding the overflowing knowledge of all created things; but the cup does not fill itself. That intellect is a faculty or potentiality; it must be fulfilled by some act, by some form. Certainly it is not filled by the angels' own substance, perfect as that may be; for the angelic substance is only one drop in the steady flow of creatures from the Creator, a picture of one mood of God which cannot represent the drawling splendor of all His other images in the world of creatures. This cup must be filled by something other than the angel itself; if the angels' knowledge of them created world is to be perfect, some medium other than the angel itself, some other form must fulfill the potentiality of the angels' intellect. That other form, that other medium, can be no other than the intelligible species, the ideas, the mental similitudes, the intentional existence of created things. There is no other possibility: God could give supernatural knowledge proper to Himself, as He does in the vision of His essence, but this would still be a gift, not a natural knowledge for an angel; the angel itself is inadequate to represent the whole created world; every inferior creature is not only inadequate, it is physically incapable of affecting the angelic intellect. The angels must know as we know, through ideas; where do these intelligible species come from?

Source of the angelic ideas

Certainly they cannot come from created things. We could as easily paint a mathematical point or wrap up the substantial form of a rose in cellophane as give an angel an idea of a flag by waving at the vault of heaven. Material things cannot act directly but only through a medium on spiritual things; in knowledge that medium is the phantasm of the imagination. There is, then, no way in which an angel can acquire ideas from created things, for it has no imagination.

Moreover, the thing is plain from the very manner in which the angel exists. We would be reasonably astonished to find a cabbage slinking up behind us with the grace of a leopard; cabbages move, but not precisely in that way, for movement follows the manner of existence. If that existence is a plant existence, then the movement is a plant movement; if the existence is animal, then the movement is animal. So our thoughts do not come together with even so slight a jar as that felt by the teeth meeting well cooked asparagus. The mode of existence of the angels is quite independent of material; their action or movement of understanding, then, is a smoothly intellectual thing. Let us look at the whole picture. Man has an intellectual potentiality unfulfilled by nature; God has no potentiality but perfect intellectual fulfillment, perfect act; in the middle, the angels, half-way between God and man, possess an intellectual potentiality perfectly fulfilled from nature, and so, of course not from the material world outside their nature.

The only source of these angelic ideas is God Himself giving them to the angels by directly infusing them into the minds of the angels. No higher angel will do for this first knowledge, as will be apparent from a later chapter on the speech of the angels. Here it is enough, by way of explanation of the incapacity of the higher angels, to point out that the angelic intellect and will, like the human intellect and will, are intrinsic accidents of the angelic nature; they are utterly inviolable, theirs is the sacred territory from which everyone, everything is barred violent entry. This is the garden where only God and the individual

possessor of that intellect and will can walk freely.

The angel, then, has intelligible species from God; about how many? No, the question is not nearly so absurd as it sounds; in fact its answer is decidedly illuminating. In our own case we do not base our judgment of intellectual acumen on the number of species, the amount of knowledge a man has acquired, but rather on how much a man can see in this or that particular species; it is not quantitative knowledge but penetrating wisdom that is the mark of excellence. Thus, a workman, who knows that he can get a brick off a roof by throwing it and sees nothing of the possibilities of its hitting someone on the head, is stupid. Thomas, in a comparatively few theological principles, could see the whole field of theology; a mathematician, in a few principles, can see the unfolding of the whole complicated area of mathematics; while a student, sitting under either Thomas or the mathematician, must be satisfied with little bites from the edge of the pie of knowledge.

Our judgment in this case is entirely reasonable. The closer a creature is to God in the natural order, the more it participates the divine perfections, the more perfectly it images God. Those nearer God in the intellectual order will, then, participate more closely the divine mode of knowledge; and God understands everything in the one species which is His divine essence. The angels as a class, have fewer and more universal species than men, being so far superior to them; the superior angels will have fewer and more universal species than the lower angels, precisely because of their superiority.

The angels' intellectual content is thus seen as infused intelligible species which are fewer and more universal the higher we go in the angelic order of perfection. How does it use these ideas? What is this intuition which is the normal manner of knowing for the angels?

Certainly the angel has no period of cooing and gurgling infancy while it awaits the age when ideas are possible to it; it undergoes no tortuous school days in which ideas are gathered one by one. The angel is in no way in potency as to the acquiring of its ideas; these ideas are had from the beginning. Nevertheless, the angels, like ourselves, cannot consider more than one species at a time. These species are forms actuating the intellect; to have the mind consider two of them there at the same time would be like having a man run in different directions at the same time, and with much the same results. In scholastic language, the angels are always in act as regards the possession of these species: they are in potentiality as regards the actual consideration of this or that species. In other words their knowledge, like the knowledge of God, is always actually possessed; but, like the knowledge of man, it has its potential element, it is only successively used. For a man, no matter how much affection he may have for the multiplication table, does not spend all his time thinking of it.

Though an angel cannot consider more than one of these species at one time, yet it can know many things at one time according as many things are contained in this or that particular species, much as a man, looking into one mirror, can see all the many things reflected in that mirror. In one species the angel sees all that it contains in just the one penetrating glance, as the eye of a camera in an airplane catches the detail of the city of New York as it paces restlessly between its confining rivers far below.

An angel can do this because the angel is a step higher in the intellectual order than men. The precise imperfection of the human intellect is its nearsightedness. It can see only one corner of the picture at a time; the world is a map too huge to be seen all at once by a human mind which must, instead, go slowly over the whole surface inch by inch, because of the weakness of our minds, we must come down from principles to conclusions like an old man cautiously feeling his way down a flight of steps; only when we reach the bottom, the conclusion, do we have a clear notion of all that might have been seen from the top by a stronger eye. Like children with a Christmas package, we must open things up, tear them apart and put them together again before we know what is in them. The one who made up the package or who has information from that original source, knows the whole story by merely identifying the package.

Source of the angels' knowledge of God

The angels do not reason their way down from principle to conclusion, not because they cannot, but because they do not have to. Their position between God and man demands the absence of the essential imperfection of the human intellect, the imperfection which makes reasoning, piece by piece judgment, necessary. It is, indeed, just this absence of the necessity for reasoning and judgment that makes it impossible for an angel to make a mistake in natural knowledge. There is nothing peculiar about this; it is the way intuition works. As a matter of fact, we make no mistake in our first act of intellect, our intuition of tree, dog, man; our mistakes come in our judgments and reasonings, in our hooking the wrong things together. "John" and "crank" may both be representative of objective truth; but when we hook the two together to say "John is a crank" we run the risk of error and rash judgment. Objectively, the steps down from principle to conclusion may be sharply cut and broad enough; but if we miss one of them, we tumble down to erroneous conclusions with a battered head.

Source of the angels' knowledge of self

Its own brilliant, purely spiritual, utterly immaterial essence is immediately present to the angelic intellect and is, in itself, completely intelligible. Consequently, it is immediately known by the angel without the necessity of a medium such as we must have. For it must be clear to every man that he knows his soul only through the revelatory character of his spiritual acts penetrating the material wrapping of his body. In this intimate, immediate knowledge of itself, the angel has a natural knowledge of God, as it also has in its knowledge of all other creatures; for nothing is fully known until God's part, the part of the cause and the exemplar, is known. The intelligible species by which the angels know all other things come only from God; they are the first copy of the ideas of God, the first participation of that supreme truth, the blueprint formed directly from the mind of the divine Architect.

St. Augustine put this beautifully when he maintained that the things of the world poured forth from God in a double way: intellectually into the minds of the angels; and physically into the world of things. In this account, the angels are looking, from the wings at the drama played on the stage of the world. He who wrapped up this great package which is the physical world, has given His own first hand knowledge of it to the angels.

Perfect knowledge

The natural knowledge of the angels is a vast sea that touches the shore of every created thing -- with one exception. There are no natural secrets hidden from the piercing intellectual eye of an angel -- except one; spiritual and material, all are laid open and naked before their eyes -- except one.

The objects of angelic knowledge

Spiritual objects: Other angels

On the spiritual side, they know themselves, immediately, by their own substance. More, they know every other angel in heaven or in hell in spite of the terrifying number of angels; of everyone each angel can say with perfect confidence "I knew him when." These other angels, too, have come forth from the creative hand of God, of them there exists, too, a perfect model in the divine mind; and as they came from God in their physical natures to exist in the universe, so they came from God intellectually to exist in the mind of the lowest angel.

Thoughts and desires of men

All material things are known to the angels for exactly this same reason, that is, because these material things too are creatures of God, effects of the first cause; a detailed account of them exists in the divine mind and is communicated to the minds of the angels. The mysteries of grace are completely above the powers of the angels. These supernatural secrets of God's own life and the share in that life He has planned for men and angels are totally beyond the entire powers of the natural order, which, of course, includes the angels. What knowledge the angels have of these things is a free gift of God by a special revelation to each particular angel; or, in the case of the good angels, in the beatific vision, the sight of the

essence of God.

Mysteries of grace

But there is one natural phenomenon that is without the scope of the angels' knowledge, that escapes the otherwise universal sweep of the angels' intellect. There is one thing too sacred for the eye of any but God, one private room where man devil or angel cannot enter in; that is the realm of the thoughts and desires of intellectual beings, men and angels. Only God can enter into the house of our soul; and even God cannot violate our sovereignty there if there is to be desecration there, we must be the guilty ones; if there is to be the perfume of sanctity pervading the soul, God and our selves must pour the fragrant oil of consecration

An angel can know future things that come about necessarily, as an astronomer can know of an eclipse of the moon years beforehand; an angel can guess very accurately as to future contingent things, as a weather forecaster can predict the path of a storm with reasonable accuracy; an angel can know singular things in their most precise singularity, as a housewife knows the price of bread or milk. But as to the movements of our intellects and wills, the angels have no grounds for more than a very poor guess until we have manifested such movements by our external actions. Even then, with the external actions there for all to read, they, and anyone else short of God, cannot be absolutely sure of the motives which inspired the actions. Really the devil has a most uncomfortable time of it in the pursuit of his devilish profession. He goes to the window, endlessly placing his bets on no more than a hunch; his mixture of hopefulness and despair must endure until the race is all over and the judges have handed down their decisions.

There is an obvious difficulty in this angelic knowledge of human affairs. If an angel does not know what Jim Jones is going to do at three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, how does it find out on Thursday what actually took place? We have insisted again and again that the angels have all of their intelligible species from the very beginning of their existence; they receive no more natural knowledge, either from the world or from God. Yet these past things are surely known, though as future they were not known. The difficulty is not so insuperable as it appears at first sight. After all, the ideas of God are eternal yet they are effective as divine decrees only in time; it was not just a few months ago that God decreed the creation of the soul of the Smith's newborn baby, but the decree was from all eternity. Even though the angels possessed all their intelligible species from the first instant of their existence, these species caused knowledge only after the existence of these future things in the material world. In other words, given the species from the beginning, the angel, by a decree of God, was barred from the use of this particular species until the event had occurred.

Infallibility of the angelic knowledge

All of this angelic knowledge is had without the possibility of misinformation, for God is the informant. There is no possibility of misjudgment, for there is no judgment involved in this knowledge; nor is there any chance of mistaken reasoning, where there is no reasoning. An innate, intuitive, independent, infallibly certain and perfect knowledge; a view of the universe second only to that of God; a perfect insight into the beauty, the variety, the perfection of the vast mirror which images the eternal splendor of the infinite -- such is the angels' vision.

Conclusion: The dream of men is not without its excuse

As you can readily see, that age-long dream of men is not without its excuse. There is such a perfect knowledge had in such a perfect way. Those momentary glimpses of incredible brilliance and penetrating simplicity were not illusions. The tales told by explorers of the intellectual world, the tall stories of the men of genius, the dark illuminations of the mystics that gave such a relish even to gall and vinegar, those solemn moments when our own minds are struck by this lightning from above -- all these may sound like the exaggerated ravings of a returned Marco Polo of the intellectual world. In actual fact, however, they are deficient only by reason of the poverty of the pictures they paint for us, an inadequacy as hopeless as a tin-type of the living beauty of a woman of the last century.

It is not without its divine reason

The dream did, indeed, have its excuse. It also has its reasons, for of course, we still dream. Its purpose is not to tease us with the cruel humor that dangles the bottle just out of reach of a screaming baby. It is not to humiliate us to the point of despair while we batter our brains out against a stone wall, as did the old and the new philosophers. The dream does not exist to tempt us to the rashness of presumption, moving us to cast away the crutches of human reason before we can walk or to play truant from school before we have learned to spell out the humble script of the material world. Rather, its purpose has been, and is, to keep alive in us that "unappeasable hunger for unattainable food," to fan that fire of divine discontent that never gives us rest, and to give us some little natural idea of the goal that never lacks inspiration, the goal of life close to God.

Nor is it without its fulfillment

The dream has its excuse; it has its divinely wise reasons; and it has its divinely generous fulfillment. True, we are men and men we must remain; there is no possibility of a fulfillment of this dream by natural means. But through the goodness of God, Who has not yet found the limits of generosity, the dream comes true supernaturally, by a wave of the fairy wand of grace and glory; it comes true, dimly now, through the share in divine life which grace brings to us, but with all the brightness of divine -- not angelic -- life in its fullness through the infinite reaches of eternity.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 10	Chapter Eleven --»
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CHAPTER XI -- ANGELIC SAINTS AND SINNERS
(Q. 59-60; 62-64)

1. Sanctity and sin in an emotional world.
 2. Enthronement of emotion:
 - (a) The fact.
 - (b) Its excuses.
 - (c) Its reasons.
 3. Emotion and the appetite of man.
 4. Appetite of the angels:
 - (a) Its nature -- free will.
 - (b) Its distinction from nature and intellect.
 - (c) Its denial of emotion.
 5. The love of the angels:
 - (a) Its nature: necessary and elective.
 - (b) Its objects.
 - (c) Its goal.
 6. The sin of the angels:
 - (a) Possible sins.
 - (b) The actual sin:
 - (1) Its object.
 - (2) Its sponsor.
 - (3) Number of angelic sinners.
 - (4) The punishment of the sin.
- Conclusion:
1. Human nature seen in the light of angelic saints and sins
 - (a) Potentialities for good.
 - (b) Potentialities for evil.
 2. Consequences in men of angelic virtue and sin:
 - (a) Humility.
 - (b) Fear.
 - (c) Self-respect.

CHAPTER XI
ANGELIC SAINTS AND SINNERS
(Q. 59-60; 62-62)

Sanctity and sin in an emotional world

OUR modern world has enthroned emotion as the ruler of life and day by day new subjects throng to the palace to be presented to life's royalty. Some men make their obeisance to the brutally rough emotions that answer arguments by blows, that glory in butting against a tree instead of side-stepping it. and relax to the crunching of bones; others bow their heads to the squishy variety of emotion, the soft, deadly things that keep a man in a state of collapse before uncouth life.

Enthronement of emotion

This emotional surge has not been a purely popular outbreak incited by sensational journalism. It goes much deeper than that. In fact, from the intellectual beginnings of the modern era to our own day, it has come from the top down; it is the logical outcome of subjectivism in religion and rationalism in philosophy. Surely the ordinary run of men can, to some extent, be excused for accepting the distorted photograph of a purely emotional man. They have been led into this thing by their leaders; coaxed, bullied, laughed, argued, threatened into it. As a result, however innocent of his plight the individual may be, man today finds himself in the strangely inhuman world where sanctity and sin are obsolete words faintly recalling the time when religion was not a matter of feeling, conversion a kind of epileptic fit, salvation a matter of that good feeling that comes from digestive perfection. From the very existence of the words sanctity and sin, one gathers that once upon a time men did not know they were ruled by biological necessity, thought they were possessed of a free will that gave them command of their lives, that moral codes were not a societal fashion and that men were different from animals.

The fact

If the world were such as our moderns paint it, sanctity and sin would have no more place among men than they have among puppies or roses; for sanctity, like sin, is the fruit of a controlled appetite making its choice under the deliberate direction of one who is in command of his actions. That emotion plays a supreme role in the life below man is beyond question; but this life is below man. That emotion plays a large part in man's life needs no demonstration; but that we should come to think of emotion pushing man, willy-nilly, from birth to death, almost defies explanation.

Its excuses

Perhaps it would not have happened, in spite of philosophy's attempted assassination of the intellect, religion's metamorphosis of faith from an intellectual virtue to a feeling, and the constant barrage of the sensible laid about the heart of a man, if we had held fast to the antidote for this over-familiarity with the material world. Unfortunately, we allowed ourselves to become strangers to that spiritual world of the angels, relegating it to the region of myths, fairy tales and poetry. As a result, we have concentrated on one side of our nature to the complete neglect of the other and become as lop-sided as slaves perpetually chained to the same side of a Roman galley.

Its reasons

Our nature entitles us to a welcome on both sides of the railroad tracks. We cannot spend all our time with the angels under penalty of becoming so queer that even the angels, for all their charity, will have nothing to do with us; we cannot throw in our lot with the animals without becoming so bestial as to frighten the beasts. The animal has a place in our lives, as has also the angelic; but neither the one nor the other can carry on a war of extermination without destroying itself. If the truth be told, we are nearer to the angels than to the beasts, for it is the spiritual within us that is in command; familiarity with the angels, consequently, carries none of the immediate threats involved in rooting with the animals.

Emotion and the appetites of man

Certainly the place of the emotions, the movements of his sense appetite, in man is made startlingly clear by a consideration of the appetite of the angels. For, of course, the angels have appetite. In an earlier chapter, treating of the will of God, it was pointed out that will is to intelligent beings what sense appetite is to the animals -- the mainspring of action. Absolutely everything has within itself a tendency or inclination to its full perfection and to all that pertains to that perfection; an inclination that finds its expression either in straining to the attainment of that perfection or in enjoying that perfection once it is possessed. The general term for the faculty from which this inclination proceeds is appetite. Our long, intimate acquaintance with and respect for the world about us moves us courteously to extend the term to things incapable of knowledge and call it natural appetite. But the extension of the term is sheer courtesy; for these things do not move so much as they are moved, inexorably following the course laid out for them by the knowledge of God.

In the animals, this appetite is sense appetite; in intelligent creatures it is will. In both, this faculty of desire is completely blind. Nor is it to be pitied or sneered at in its blindness. It is supposed to be blind. Its work is not to know but to desire; if it does that, as it always does, we can ask no more of it. It makes no attempt to take over the work of the faculty of knowledge, it does not peer into the future with sightless eyes or plunge ahead before a guiding hand offers its absolutely necessary direction. Nor can it improve on the light thrown before it by the faculty of knowledge: a dog does not dig his paws deeper in dry weather as a plant does its roots. the dog simply looks for a shady spot; a man does not dig for bones or eat a special kind of grass, but he does seek for truth, for love and for happiness, a quest that never disturbs the contentment of a dog. In other words, the appetite of any creature is of the same caliber as its knowledge.

Appetite of the angels

When the creature in question is a complex combination of the material and spiritual, possessed of sensible and intellectual knowledge, as is man, there will, of course, be two appetites present: the sensible and the intellectual which is called will. The noise of battle within the household of his soul will not let a man seriously doubt the presence of these two appetites; for they get along much less equably than the jealous wives of a polygamous chieftain. When the creature in question has the splendid immateriality of an angel with its unadulterated intellectual knowledge, its appetite will be the intellectual appetite or will with no rival quibbling about its choices.

Its nature -- free will

To say that the will of the angels is a free will is to say no more than must be said of will wherever it is found. A noisy child with a penchant for hammering the furniture may indeed turn out to be an excellent boiler maker when he grows up; but because he can see the impediments to pleasant chitchat involved in such a vocation, he can, if he likes, refuse to follow his natural bent. For intellectual knowledge can know supreme truth and thus open the way for the will to desire supreme goodness; but the intellect can also know particular truths and the reasons for their particularity, their limitations. Because of these limitations the will can and does accept or reject them, that is, the will is free. Not everyone who likes putting out fires becomes a fireman, quite possibly because one so heartily dislikes being doused with water in zero weather. The point is that an intelligent creature, in the face of particular goods, can always choose because he can always see not only the goodness but also the particularity, the limitation, of that goodness.

Its distinction from nature and intellect

The angelic nature must definitely stay at home, eternally bound within its own limits; the angelic intellect is a hostess that sees all the world but only within the walls of its own house; while the angelic will is a visiting vagrant that wanders the length and breadth of the fields thrown open to it by angelic knowledge. The angelic intellect, like all intellects, is eternally at home, but in a home filled with a cosmopolitan group of guests, all of whom must follow the rules of the house; the angelic will goes out to the objects desired uniting itself to them. It is this characteristic of intellect and will that is so trenchantly expressed in the statement that an intelligent creature becomes what he desires but makes what he knows a part of himself. He can know muck without soiling the intellect, but he cannot desire it without smearing himself. Obviously, then, the free will of an angel is something quite distinct from the angelic nature and from the angelic intellect.

Its denial of emotion

While it is true that an angel can know and will, it is also unquestionably true that an angel cannot feel the excitement of racing blood, tragedy's sudden stab in the heart; it cannot be carried outside of itself with anger, faint at the sight of a snake or be overwhelmed by a rush of sorrow. For there is no room in the angels for emotions in the sense of passions or feelings. The angels, you see, have no bodies; and these passions are distinctly sensible or animal, movements of the sense appetite.

Lest we rush to the conclusion that angels are cold, clammy, impersonal creatures, it would be well to remember that an angel's joyous song heralded the Savior's arrival in Bethlehem: that an angel shared the agony of Christ in the Garden -- and comforted Him; that the archangel Gabriel minced no words in reply to Zachary's disbelief of his message and did not hesitate to rap him sharply on the knuckles with that severe sentence, "thou shalt be dumb." Yet it was this same severe angel who immediately appreciated Mary's fear and surprise, and his first words were words of assurance to dispel that fear; the archangel Raphael was a matchmaker of the first order, smoothing the way for the seemingly impossible marriage of young Tobias. These are not the actions of living icebergs.

The doubt about the warmth of the angels, however, persists. We think a man or woman without feelings, as fishy-eyed as a gambler, has something missing, is somehow queer, inhuman. As a matter of fact, we are right: such people are queer, as queer as a man without a head, for something belonging to human

nature is not there. Lack of emotion is not at all virtuous; it may be a misfortune, making a man a monstrosity; or it may well be a vice. For man has not only a soul, he also has a body; he is not only rational, he is also animal; he has an intellectual appetite, but he also has a sensitive appetite. The movement of that sense appetite towards sensible objects, coming from the imaginative picture of good or evil and involving a physical or corporal reaction, is ordinarily called emotion, feeling or passion. So, for example, an actress who throws herself into a part can actually produce the corporal changes that mark out the path along which the sense appetite is running -- she can weep, blush, turn pale, tremble, gasp.

These passions, amoral in themselves, are of immense value to man. By their help a man can muster up the courage to ask for a raise in salary, by the simple trick, for instance, of getting himself angry enough; the atmosphere of a church or a few minutes on our knees can awaken the will's desire to pray. These passions, in a word, react on the intellectual appetite, spur it into action or, being deliberately aroused by the will, complete the circle and make the action of our will that much more intense. Using these passions of ours, the cunning of God not infrequently coaxes us into greater spiritual activity by doling out sensible sweetness and consolation to His children, coddling them a little or bestowing a pat of encouragement and reward.

By reason of this intimate interaction between the will and the passions, these latter can also be an immense danger to a man. They can overwhelm the intellectual appetite and put a man at the mercy of the same motive power that dictates the actions of beasts; in opposition to the will they can terrify it into paralysis, weaken its action, cool its intensity to a vapid, lukewarm, nauseous thing. The men who succumb to the terror of persecution, the seduction of sin's occasion, the respect of men, the despair of life are all living witnesses of the danger of passion out of control. On a milder scale, the steady death rate in good resolutions is eloquent testimony to the existence of a rival appetite which the will cannot regard lightly.

The love of the angels

Of course these sensible emotions are not in the angels. Angels have no bodies, so they can have no sense appetite, no imaginative pictures, no corporal reactions. But this does not mean they are cold, unloving and unlovable creatures. They have an intellectual appetite and its movement is as proportionately more perfect than ours as the angels themselves exceed us in perfection. That angelic appetite has also met with good and evil, with triumph and defeat. There is joy among the angels in heaven; and there is sorrow, hate and despair among the angels in hell. Some have desired great things and now delight in the possession of the objects of their desires; others have chosen rather the petty than the great and now are tormented by the possession of the objects of their desire. But these emotions of the angels are not physical movements of passion; they are something infinitely superior, something whose nature opens our eyes to some of the possibilities within ourselves -- for we, too, have an intellectual appetite.

Its nature: necessary and elective

To understand something of those possibilities, and their limitations, we must see clearly the great difference between the knowledge and love of the angels and the knowledge and love proper to men. Quite naturally, and with no effort, we know some things perfectly; such things as that today is not yesterday, that we are not someone else, that happiness is the supreme value and so on. But we do not know all things naturally, easily, perfectly. Our love has the same split personality: some things we love naturally, necessarily; others we are free to embrace or reject, towards them we can be niggardly and cautious or recklessly generous. But the reason is not the same for this similar characteristic of our knowledge and our love. Our intellect sees valley after valley, but only after climbing the intervening hills; its imperfections are due precisely to the fact that it does have to climb hills and clamber down the other side. Our will is like a woman who tries on hat after hat, finding none that does her justice; it grasps one after the other of the goods offered to its choice, not finding any one that includes all good, one that forces its choice on the will.

Its objects

The angels, too, love their own good, their own goal, their own perfection naturally and necessarily; they cannot help themselves any more than we can. As in us, the angels' natural and necessary love is the spring from which proceeds that free, deliberate love of other things; because somehow, in some way, these things are bound up with their goal, their perfection, their happiness. Thus, loving themselves naturally and necessarily, they love the same qualities in other angels, just as we love -- the common human characteristics of human nature in other men. We can dislike a man because he is mean, unjust, successful, generous or virtuous; but it is completely impossible for us to hate a man because he is a man, because he has a soul or a mind. The same is true of the angels.

Its goal

Like ourselves, the angels love God naturally and necessarily even more than they love themselves; for, loving their goal, their perfection, they are loving a similitude, an image of God. They are God's, they belong to Him, as we do; naturally and necessarily they work back toward Him Who was their beginning. If they did not, there would exist a purely natural love in the angels that would be a perverted, twisted thing, loving to a greater degree something that was less lovable. Moreover, God Himself would be the author of this perverse love, as He is the author of nature; and this natural love would have to be destroyed by the supernatural love that was designed by God to perfect men and angels, the love that loves God above all things. Freely and with full choice, the angels love themselves, as we do; moreover, their love, like ours, extends to everything that is good. Their will, like our own, does not need to be coaxed out of doors; the only invitation necessary is a hint of goodness.

In all this there is a great similarity between angels and men; that similarity must not lead us to make the mistake of identifying angelic and human activities in the fields of knowledge and love. The similarity in love comes from the objects of that love; the angelic love in itself is something to make us gasp. In contrast to it, our passions seem like tottering steps of an infant compared to the smooth, consuming stride of a runner.

The love of the angels is not a spark slowly developing into a flame; it is an instantaneous bolt of lightning. The angel's will moves as does its intellect, like a rapier thrust straight to the heart of goodness. This love does not last for a day or a year; it is a lightning bolt caught in mid-air in all its burning splendor -- for an eternity. It cannot change, as ours does, by discovering unlovable characteristics in its loved one; it has all the knowledge from the start. An angel cannot fall in love with a face and then discover the face was false; it cannot become uninterested, disloyal, fluttering from one love to another. The angelic embrace cannot end. That love cannot be halfhearted, lukewarm, timid, cringing before obstacles. An angel does not fall into love; it plunges in with crushing force. This love is a drive not to be stopped by obstacles: it is a consuming fire devastatingly complete; it is a surrender that is eternally unconditional. It is the dream that is buried in every human heart, the closest approach to divine love in the created universe. Can an angel have joy, delight, sorrow, despair and hate? Ah yes; and to a degree that, like the divine, terrifies us.

When God looked at the work of creation and found it good, He might well have been concentrating His gaze on the angels. From the first moment of their creation they possessed perfect natural happiness. Their intellects were perfect, their knowledge complete; their appetites, following in the footsteps of this perfect knowledge, were also perfect and in perfect possession of their natural goods from the very beginning. Indeed this work was good; even a divine artist could stand back from this masterpiece smiling that quiet smile of a master surveying his perfect work. The angels were perfect.

But they were not perfect enough to satisfy the infinite generosity of God. There was still something that could be given to these creatures, a perfection above nature, a goal beyond the goal proper to angelic nature, a share in a life beyond the perfection of angelic life; they could still be raised to the height of supernatural happiness, to a share in the life of God, to an admission to the vision of God which is

heaven.

Such a goal of love is not to be lightly had. It must be earned, earned by personal efforts. Such efforts, even when put forth by a nature as perfect as the angelic nature, are utterly worthless of themselves; this goal is above nature and nothing nature can offer serves as a ladder to reach that end. The angels, too, needed grace, faith, hope, charity; the tools, that is, with which to carve out an eternal life with God. The tools were given to them from the first instant of their creation; but the goal had to be won by a use of those tools. Even of the angels it is true that divine happiness is not forced upon them; if they would live forever with God, it must be through their free choice.

The sin of the angels

Possible sins

This was the trial of the angels -- the choice between life with God or without Him. This was their term of probation, their opportunity to make a success or a failure of their lives. The issue was soon decided, for the angelic choice moves with swift directness to its object never to relinquish it. The choice was made irrevocably, eternally. By one good act the angels merited heaven -- some of them; and the issue of heaven or hell was closed forever as far as they were concerned.

The victorious angels, as they stepped into heaven, brought with them the fullness of their natural knowledge, losing nothing on the way. From that time on they were eternally incapable of sinning, not merely because of the unchangeable nature of their love, but because any appetite in possession of the infinite good is not to be lured away from that adequately satisfying lover by the fetching smiles of anything else. Nothing can be more attractive; everything else is only a participation, a mirroring of the beauties of that infinite goodness. This was the end of the angels, the final halt of the march to goodness and truth, the end of the road. From here on, what progress was made would be purely secondary, accidental, as inconsequential as a flower slipped into the lapel of a coat, and as absurdly pleasing as a totally unnecessary testimony of divine thoughtfulness.

The actual sin

It was a long road the angels travelled in an incredibly short time. In fact, it was much too long for some of the angels; not all reached the end of it. There is not only love in the angels, not only the sublime perfection of that love in its elevation to the supernatural plane; there is also the abuse of love which is sin. At first sight, it is difficult to see how an angel could sin. A man can stumble into sin when ignorance makes his vision defective; but there is no defect in the angel's knowledge. An angel cannot be rushed into sin by a storm of passion, for it has no passions. There can be no question in the angels of the long, bitter discouraging battle against habit that a drunkard faces; for bad habits were certainly not infused by God and there were no preceding acts by which such habits could be built up. This was the angels' first sin.

In a very real sense, it *was* difficult for the angels to sin. So difficult, in fact, that to the mind of St. Thomas (though not all theologians agree with him) it was completely impossible for the angels to sin in the purely natural order. The immediate, intrinsic and natural rule of morality for them was their own intellects; these were perfect and were perfectly followed by the will of the angels. If they had not been lifted to the supernatural order, they could not have sinned, could not have gone to hell; but then neither could they have gone to heaven. There would have been no angelic sinners; nor would there have been any angelic saints. That has always been the risk of the high goals; the low, level places are safer, so safe indeed as to be worthless. It has always been dangerous to make "reckless leaps into darkness with hands outstretched to a star."

Its object

Even in the supernatural order, an angelic sin is a difficult business. Even there, no imperfection is possible in the angels preceding sin: no darkening of the intellect, no absence of knowledge, no refusal of the will to follow the intellect; the angels could not choose evil, thinking it good. But they could choose good

evilly. True, that statement throws no glaring light on the mystery of the angels' sin; but the truth that does dispel some of the darkness is wrapped up tightly in that brief statement. For while it is true that there could be no imperfection in the angels before sin, it is equally true that imperfection before sin was not necessary in order that the angels should turn away from God.

In treating of angelic knowledge, we saw that the angel received its full consignment of concepts at the very first moment of its life; but an angel, like a man, can consider only one concept at a time. What concept is considered at this precise moment is a matter to be decided entirely at the taste of the particular angel. It can consider this one, or that one, or none at all. In this precise power lies the key to the solution of the mysterious sin of the angels. In the concrete, it is not difficult to determine what sin the angels committed. They really had no such dazzling variety of evil as is displayed before the human tentative purchaser of evil. Only two sins were open to the angels, for only two sins directly appeal to spiritual nature: the sins of pride and envy. Moreover, envy could come about only as a consequent of pride. Concretely, then, the angelic sin could be no other than a sin of pride. How did that particular sin actually come about?

We have a rather accurate picture of the process if we can imagine the glamor girl of the year, looking her very best as she prepares to step out of her room, stopping, as she naturally would, for one last approving glance -- and standing transfixed by her own beauty. So the angels, considering their own beauty and perfection, were enchanted. There they stopped, captivated refusing to let their minds consider the further supernatural end to which that lustrous natural beauty was ordered. In this sense they wished to be like God -- nothing could be more beautiful, nothing more perfect, they would be sufficient to themselves, placing their happiness, their final end, in themselves to the scorn of the supernatural happiness which was the beatific vision. The splendor of the angelic beauty fascinated them: they refused to look beyond it to the infinite splendor of the vision of God.

The glamor girl's rapt admiration of herself could hardly be morally serious. Certainly it would not be an eternal choice; eventually her ankles would get tired or her stomach would demand some food. But in the angels, this fascination was a deliberate mortal sin.

It was mortal for it involved turning away from God, rejecting the final end for the created good which was the angelic nature. Moreover, it was sinful. True, it is no imperfection in the angels not to consider this or that idea, generally speaking; just as it is no sin in a Catholic to refuse to wonder what day of the week this happens to be, But if the Catholic fears this may be Friday, and he refuses to wonder about it lest he discover that he must subsist that day on the hated fish, he sins. So, too, with the angels; faith them, it is an imperfection and a sin not to consider this or that idea when they are obliged to consider it. The whole thing was deliberate, that is free and finder control. Surely the consideration of their own beauty and the embrace of that beauty was entirely voluntary; nor was the refusal to consider the vision of God, or the lack of all such consideration, a forced, necessary thing. In the angels, as in us, the mind turns to this or that subject of consideration as we wish it to; the euphemistic phrase, "a wandering mind," carries with it the pleasantly flattering, but completely false, implication that our mind is busy at one thing or another all the time. our imagination wanders, but our minds work at the task we assign them. In the angels, that is even more true. In this case, then, the angels directly and expressly willed the consideration of their own beauty; the lack of consideration of the vision of God was willed indirectly and implicitly. They put themselves in the position of a man who refuses to listen to his own faults and limitations because he is so heartily in love with himself.

It seems clear that this sin demanded no imperfection in the angels *before* the sin. This lack of consideration of the final end was not before the sin, it was a part of the sin. The sin began in this inconsideration and was consummated in the evil choice of themselves made by the angels. To put the whole thing in strict theological language, thereby showing mathematicians that they are not alone in their esoteric terminology, we could say that the inconsideration of the final end was first in the order of formal cause, since the judgment of reason is the rule of choice; but in the order of efficient and final cause, the angel's evil choice of themselves was first since the free will moves the intellect to act.

The angels' sin was a rebellion, a wild, hopeless, stupid rebellion. But it did have a splendid leader. Lucifer, who headed the rebellious hosts, was, in the natural order, the greatest of all the angels, good or bad. In other words, the most perfect nature that God has ever produced was the first to rebel against Him. Any of the other angels had only to look a step above to see a creature more beautiful than himself; but there were no creatures more beautiful than Lucifer. He was the most perfect image of the splendor of God; to realize he was only an image, he would have to look to God Himself. Pride was the sin of the angels, not weakness, ignorance or passion; and surely the greatest of the angels had the most reason for pride.

In the angelic world, the defection of Lucifer had a considerably greater effect than would the apostasy of a Pope in Christendom. He did not drag any of his fellows to hell with him by the scruff of their necks; but by way of example, suggestion or even, perhaps, persuasion he mustered quite an army. Scripture gives us an indication of this by declaring that all the devils are subject to Lucifer; according to St. Peter, speaking of sin, "by whom a man is overcome, of the same also is he a slave." It would seem to be the order of divine justice, that we are subject in punishment to him to whose suggestion we have consented in sin; him whom we choose as a leader in evil we shall have for a master in punishment.

Number of angelic sinners

To assign a number to the legions of revolting angels is, of course, sheer guesswork. No tally sheet of the devils has been given us and there is no other way in which we could know how many followed Lucifer. Since, however, sin, of its very nature, is against intelligence and a violation of natural inclinations, it would be rash indeed to suppose that, in a nature so perfect it allowed for no mistakes, the majority fell into sin. It is much more probable that not as many of the angels sinned as conquered.

At any rate, these sinful angels, forever after known as devils, had committed supernatural suicide. They were, from then on, supernaturally dead, as helpless to climb back to the heights of the supernatural as a dead man is to scramble out of his grave. They had thrown away that participation of divine life which is sanctifying grace and were, henceforth, incapable of producing any work worthy of heaven. Their intellects were stripped of all that supernatural affective knowledge, such as would produce love; the gift of wisdom had been tossed aside; and the speculative intellectual knowledge that might have come to them by future revelations was cut down to a dim, vague light. Indeed, from then on they would receive only such knowledge as was necessary for the working out of the divine plans; even such knowledge would be, for them, a suspect, torturing, uncertain thing stripped of the infallible certitude that comes from the supernatural virtue of faith.

For all that, they were a splendid lot as they trooped from heaven. Sin, of itself, does not destroy the integrity of nature as rebellion destroys the integrity of an empire; and theirs was a splendid nature. Their intellects retained the full perfection of natural knowledge, the complete freedom from the impediments of ignorance and passion. Their wills were still the splendid instrument of desire which recognized no impediment to its attainment and no solvent of its embrace. But these splendid wills were forever confirmed in sin. The devils had no opportunity to repent, no second chance to remedy an initial mistake. In the first place, such a second chance depended, in them as in us, on the purely free gift of divine grace; of themselves they were helpless. But over and above that supernatural helplessness, repentance is naturally impossible to the angels. An angel cannot turn back. The act of its will, like that of its intellect, is one swift, eternally enduring act. Whether it be to good or to bad, the angel must stand forever committed to its first choice, eternally loyal even though that loyalty be to the standards of hell.

The punishment of the sin

Such inescapable loyalty brings no joy to the devils. There is sorrow in hell, penetrating, despairing sorrow proportionate to the great joy of which the brilliant wills of the devils were capable. Their wills can and

do resist the things that are in place of the things that might have been; the salvation of souls, the joy of the blessed, their own misery in hell are constant sources of unceasing sorrow. In fact, if this sorrow were not in the devils, it would be absurd to speak of their punishment, for punishment means, essentially, something against the will, something undergone with regret. But, of course, there is no physical pain, no passion of sorrow in the devils; horns, tails, pitchforks and leering grins are no part of the diabolic equipment. These are, after all, angels; and angels are purely spiritual beings.

The instant their sin was committed, the devils were hurled into hell, the place of their eternal punishment. Evidently the fires prepared for them there could not physically torture them; a spiritual nature cannot be made to sizzle over a fire. Yet this fire can, supernaturally, be a real punishment; if, for example, it was endowed with the supernatural power of limiting the activity of a spiritual nature (as Thomas thought), it would place the particular devil in somewhat the same humiliating position of a strong adult confined in a baby's play-pen. From time to time, some devils are allowed to wander the world for the exercise of human virtue, itself a humiliating and infuriating occupation; though there are some who have never been outside the gates of hell, as there are angels who have never left heaven. Whether in hell or on this earth, every devil carries the essence of hell with him -- the despairing knowledge that all is lost forever. It may be that the fire of hell accompanies these wandering devils to humiliate their proud power, or perhaps it is only the humiliating thought, that they must return to that infantile enclosure which is forever in their minds.

Conclusion

Human nature seen in the light of angelic saints and sinners

This is the field of angelic love: the stupendous natural beauty and power of it, the heights to which it climbed and the depths to which it plunged; ringing through every instant of it is that mysterious, somehow terrifying note of forever, of eternity. This is the race to which we are kin. This is the love upon which ours is modelled; for we, too, have an intellectual appetite, a will capable of these heights, of these depths, and for an eternity.

Potentialities for good

Because of that will of ours, we too can attain to the beauty of that angelic vision that was too much for the pride of the angels, so dazzling is it; we can go this far and further, to the heights which some of the angels did not climb to the vision of the eternal splendor, the life of God Himself. Our love, too, is capable of just such loyalty, plot such wholehearted surrender. In fact, it is only in proportion to our approach to this love of a spiritual nature that we are worthy of our own immortal souls. This is the love that can and must dominate the emotions, the passions, that we have in common with the animals. This is the love that is betrayed by the emotionalism of our day. For, in a sense, we can go down a bit lower than the angels we can not only lose God, we can do what the greatest devil cannot, we can give full rein to emotion and put ourselves on a level with the beasts.

Consequences in men of angelic virtue and sin

Humility

Familiarity with this love of the angels, giving, as it does, a knowledge of our unsounded potentialities for good and evil, is a source of virtues that are strangers to a world of emotion. For it brings a man face to face with the truth about himself. In the face of that truth he may well be humble. Emotion, uncontrolled passion, is not humble but greedy, self-centered and, strangely, satisfied only with its own destruction. It is good to realize, when we stride along in the pride of life, conscious of our strength and bolstered up, perhaps, by a long escape from sin, that the greatest of the angels fell. It is a distinct deterrent to the rash inclination to flirt with the occasion of sin to know that, without such obstacles as the passions present to reason and will, the most perfect nature God ever made was plunged into hell.

Fear

Knowing the truth of himself and the angels, a man might well cultivate a healthy fear. For indeed devils are not mere myths. They are terrible realities; they are enemies with natures intact in their superiority and perfection, on fire with a hatred of God and all that smacks of God. Their very hate drives them on to focus their splendid intelligence on the destruction of God's kingdom on earth, His friendship in our hearts and our eternal life with Him. Our salvation may well be worked out in fear and trembling.

Self-respect

Yet the truth about himself makes no snivelling coward of a man. We are of the race of the angels. Our lives, our love are not mere biological accidents, individually of no importance. Like that of the angels, our life and our love can escape corruption, dimming of activity, the rusty wearing down and weary creaking of a last moment of life. We are above the common, the ordinary, the ephemeral; we are of a long line of spiritual nobility. Our name is one to be kept honorable; for, like the angels, we must live with that name forever.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 11	Chapter Twelve --»
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CHAPTER XII -- THE KINGDOM OF MAN (Q. 65-74; 90-93)

1. Scriptural account of the kingdom of man:
 - (a) Modern rejection of the story.
 - (b) The two elements of the story:
 - (1) The fact of creation.
 - (2) Account of the distinction and adornment of the universe.
2. Unreasonable rejection of the fact of creation:
 - (a) Résumé of proof of creation.
 - (b) Different senses of the word "evolution:"
 - (1) A scientific hypothesis.
 - (2) A pseudo-scientific solvent on a universal scale.
 - (3) A philosophical explanation of the universe.
 - (c) Interrelation of creation and evolution.
3. Unjust rejection of the account of distinction and adornment:
 - (a) The purpose of the account.
 - (b) The language of it.
 - (c) Injustice of its rejection.
4. Origin of the kingdom of man:
 - (a) Thomas' approach to the question:
 - (1) His three principles.
 - (2) His chief interest.
 - (3) The science of his time.
 - (b) Causes of the kingdom of man.
 - (c) The work of distinction -- the first three days.
 - (d) The work of adornment -- the last three days.
 - (e) The rest of God -- the seventh day.
5. Origin of the lord of the world:
 - (a) His soul.
 - (b) His body.
 - (c) His partner:
 - (1) Time and manner of the production of woman.
 - (2) Her relation to man.

Conclusion:

1. Pertinence of the question of the origin of the world:
 - (a) To the mind of man.
 - (b) To the life of man.
2. Contrast of the answers:
 - (a) From the appraisal of reason.
 - (b) From the consequences of each.

CHAPTER XII THE KINGDOM OF MAN (Q.65-74;90-93)

Scriptural account of the kingdom of man

Modern rejection of the story

IN THE Book of Genesis there is an account of the beginnings of the world that has amused the scholars of our age. In fact, their amusement was so huge that they shared the joke with the man in the street. The story was pleasant enough in its way: hardly plausible, still it was taken seriously by millions of men before the clear light of science exposed it for what it was: a myth among many similar myths. In that bright light, it looks as ridiculous as an actor caught in broad daylight with his make-up on.

Such amused tolerance is the product of a sense of immense superiority, superiority so great as to make it unnecessary to bother about details. In any field, such superiority is dangerous: it is the sort of thing that topples an experienced lineman from a telephone pole, that makes a drunkard challenge the world. Superiority is a heady drink to be sipped, not gulped; however enticing its bouquet, clear its color and warming its taste, it too easily brings on early morning regrets. Perhaps our moderns are only gay, not really drunk, though they have proved steady drinkers of this

dangerous drink; they have not yet reached the morning-after stage, but they have been careless, they have laid the bases for the groans of regret.

The two elements of the story: The fact of creation.

Account of the distinction and adornment of the universe.

Along with the story of the world's distinction and adornment, they have, extravagantly, carelessly, blindly, thrown out a momentous fact, the fact of the origin of the world. They have tossed the whole thing out like an old rag doll. Perhaps nothing stamps Thomas as so completely out of date, in the eyes of the moderns, as the fact that he took this story seriously: Surely, nothing so clearly marks him off from modern thinkers as the fact that he saw the two elements in this story: the momentous fact of creation and the simple account of the distinction and adornment of the world. His intellect bowed before the first of these, as an unimpeded intellect must always do homage to solid truth, and he could mete out justice to the second because of his firm grasp of the first.

Unreasonable rejection of the fact of creation

Rejection of the fact of creation is unreasonable, not in the sense a man is unreasonable because he is slightly pig-headed or extremely meticulous. This rejection is unreasonable because it is an open flaunting of reason.

Résumé of proof of creation.

In a former chapter we have treated the matter of creation quite thoroughly, insisting that the world was brought into existence by a first cause creating it. However, a brief restatement of that reasoning will not be out of place here. A first cause means no more than an utterly independent cause; that is, a cause that has nothing or no one before it, that is in every sense first. To be independent in this full sense of the word means to be completely self sufficient as well as to be the first source of all else. Creation is commonly defined as "making something out of nothing"; more profoundly, it is the production of something independently of any pre-existing subject. In a word, it is the production of the whole being not merely a part of it, not disposing for it, or bringing it forth from something else. So that creation, the truth so eminently clear to reason and so solidly taught by faith, means simply that the world was produced by the first cause in the way proper to that first cause, that is, with complete independence. If we postulate anything on which this first cause depends, we are simply denying that this is a first cause and we push the problem just that much further back; we do not solve it. For it will always remain true, that where we discover someone leaning, depending, there will be something to lean on, to depend on; and the stability of this latter will not be the product of the feeble one who drapes himself on it. Complete independence in act means the production of the effect from nothing.

The reasons given for this explanation of the universe are those given for the existence of God. They can be put briefly by saying that either this was the way things were produced or there are no things -- which last is evidently false. There is no other way to account, not only for the universe, but for the very least thing in it. The question here is not merely of mountains, continents and planets; but of even a speck of dust or the wink of an eye. one cries out the existence of the first cause as loudly as the other, or of all together. An endless chain of dependent causes does not explain any one of them or all of them, for their very dependence precludes the possibility of their being self-sufficient, the source or the first; that dependence demands something upon which to depend. Either there is an independent or first cause, or there are no effects; either that first cause created, if it acted at all, or it is not first. The fact of creation, with its strict adherence to the facts of the world, is not something a man needs to feel self-conscious about or to apologize for. Rather, it is something demanded in the name of all that is reasonable.

Different senses of the word "evolution

Reasonable or not, this fact of creation has been swept out of men's minds along with the rest of the account given in Genesis. But the house need not be left empty; in place of creation we can have evolution, either all at once or on an installment plan that eases the pain of its acceptance by spreading the burden over millions of years. Lest such a statement bring on, with the promptness of an echo, the charge that we are anti-scientific, ultra-conservative or behind the times, let us investigate the meaning of the word "evolution."

Such an investigation is important for the word designates a strange set of triplets; one or the other may enjoy the confusion of a stranger who cannot distinguish them, but each will indignantly resent having the faults of one of the others attributed to her, especially the faults of the weak sister of the three.

A scientific hypothesis

Most properly, the word is taken to refer to a scientific hypothesis. As such it was, and is, advanced as a scientific record of the development of life. As a scientific hypothesis, and within its own field, it has immense value. The mass of cumulative evidence supporting it certainly classifies it as a first class working theory; and this is all the scientist seeks. It is not, nor is it in this sense intended to be, a final explanation of the universe. The object of science is not an explanation but the uncovering of a universal; it does not seek the last cause, but a general law; its reasoning does not terminate in conclusions or explanations, but rather in the generalizations which are called scientific laws.

In this proper sense, no philosopher or theologian can have any objection to it. To contrast an adherent of the creation explanation and an evolutionist in this sense is as silly as it would be to consider as mutually exclusive terms the words "democrat" and "nordic." The only possible source of conflict here would be the extension of this scientific working hypothesis to the origin of the human soul. That would be stepping outside the field of science immediately, for it would be to step outside the field of experimental observation; moreover, it is a step not taken by the scientist.

A pseudo-scientific solvent on a universal scale

The word "evolution" is also widely used for a pseudo-scientific theory that is in the nature of a patent medicine to remedy all intellectual ills by resolving all difficulties. It is considered applicable to nearly all fields and is actually wielded with the recklessness that formerly characterized the use of arnica or camphor. It is, for example applied to comparative religion and adduced as the explanation of the present existence of monotheism; to sociology and hailed as the explanation of the alleged development of monogamy from promiscuity; to ethics as the explanation of Christian ethics developing from a completely amoral condition -- and so on and on and on.

This approaches the ridiculous. If a man concludes, from the fact that the theory of relativity works beautifully in mathematics and explains many phenomena in physics, that everything is relative, he might, at any moment, logically start to use a pair of shoes for a handkerchief. These pseudo-scientific statements are quite groundless from a purely scientific point of view. As a matter of fact, the evidence shows no development of monotheism from polytheism or atheism; there is much more evidence for the conclusion that monotheism was the primitive form. A promiscuous society has yet to be discovered; and again the evidence of anthropology, insofar as it allows of a conclusion, points to monogamy as the primitive form of marriage. An amoral condition of men is a modern nightmare, not a scientific fact; some of the most surely primitive peoples we have yet discovered hold a high moral code and practise it. These things are flatly unscientific; yet they are solemnly advanced day after day, in publication after publication as though no scientific discoveries had been made since first the theorists started their castle building untrammelled by the brick and mortar of evidence.

For these things, there need be no sympathy whatever. They are without justification. They have none of the beauty of a fairy tale, the utilitarian efficient of a swindler's story, the venerable dignity

of a myth, the plausibility of a lie or the humor of a whopping joke. Least of all have they any of the characteristics of a fact. They have only the ugly repulsiveness of intellectual degeneracy.

A philosophical explanation of the universe

In its third sense, "evolution" is seriously advanced as a philosophic answer to the question of the origin of the world. This philosophic theory, which denies causality and finality, assumes that the process of change is a self-sufficient explanation both of itself and of the perfection of the universe. One form of this explanation declares that the story reads like this: some primary stuff -- very imperfect -- eternal or mysteriously coming into existence of itself, has slowly developed, thanks to chance and environment, with the force of inexorable law into the complicated world as we know it today. A scientist would have a graphic picture of all this if, in the vacuum he has created, there should suddenly appear a puff of smoke fragrant of a blend of Virginia and Turkish tobacco; and then, under his astonished eyes, the smoke took form, developing into a perfect ring slowly floating off (without air to float on) and, as a last delicate touch, sporting just the suspicion of a bit of lipstick to support the illusion that there had been a smoker's mouth and a cigarette in back of the whole thing.

Another form of this explanation pictures a mysterious life force, again utterly imperfect, necessarily surging its way up through matter (which is unexplained and, indeed, not a reality at all) into the perfections we know today. In this opinion there is no material world, for only the process of change is real and that does not stop long enough for it to be recognized, let alone given a name. The words seem obscure, but the idea becomes perfectly clear when you picture the change of expression from joy to sorrow on a man's face, first blotting out the joy, the sorrow, the face and the expression. Both these forms of the philosophic explanation called by the name of evolution are extended to include man, body and soul. Both deny the idea of a cause, or a starting point, outside the process of change. And both necessarily deny an intelligent finality to the whole affair.

Interrelation of creation and evolution

All three of these senses of evolution -- the scientific, the pseudo-scientific and the philosophical -- must be seen in relation to creation if there is to be any dissipation of the confusion that has come from using the one word in three distinctly different senses. Quite evidently there is no possibility of conflict between evolution as a scientific hypothesis and the fact of creation. Creation is explicitly a statement of the last cause, the ultimate explanation of the universe; and, just as explicitly, science is not interested in last cause or ultimate explanations but only in the uncovering of general laws. Science has no professional interest in the source of these laws or in the nature of the law-giver, or, indeed, in the very existence of such a legislator.

In the sense of a pseudo-scientific theory, there is no possibility of honest conflict between evolution and creation, or indeed between evolution and anything else, any more than there is a possibility of the babbling of a child clashing with some eternal truth. This theory is a positive insult to human intelligence; the audacity of its proposal assumes that we know nothing of the actual state of science, that we have heard nothing of the findings of science for the last twenty years.

In the sense of a philosophic explanation of the origin of the universe, evolution dashes head on with the act of creation -- and it is just too bad for evolution if reason be the witness of the accident, or even the undertaker. In this sense, evolution is nothing more than the process of change on a grand scale, the change from potentiality to actuality, the realization of potentialities. To use some examples from an earlier chapter, it is the becoming of the statue from a marble block, the becoming of the surgeon from the butcher, the becoming of the masterpiece from the paints and canvas. To claim self-sufficiency for such a process, to posit it without explanation and blandly declare that it explains itself and everything else, is contrary to reason, unintelligible and so patently false.

Let us look at it a bit more closely. It is frankly a denial of the principle of causality and finality, that is, it makes the world a lustrous brat that was unborn but is growing, a play unfolding without beginning or end, a book without starting point, plot or finish, a motion that not only did not start and is not going anywhere but which has absolutely nowhere to go. This denial is reducible to the contradiction which is an identification of opposites and it brings the mind up sharply against a dilemma. Either there is no difference between the potentiality and the actuality, between the canvas and the masterpiece, for the potentiality is the producer of the actuality by the mere process of change, by merely moving itself, of itself, to that perfection; and this amounts to a denial of evolution itself for it is a denial of change. Or, the other horn of the dilemma, this latest perfection produced by evolution is not the same as the potentiality from which it developed; in this case, it came from nothing of itself. This gives us something from nothing with no other cause added; more simply, it staggers the mind with the incredible contradiction that nothing is something.

This may seem much too brutal a simplification of evolution, since nothing has been said of the millions of years involved, the power of the process of change, environment and chance. In a sense, the charge is just; this is a simplification of evolution. It has disregarded the table decorations, the hors d'oeuvres and the liqueurs to concentrate on the meat and potatoes of the meal. But, as a matter of fact, millions of years do not help or hinder the problem; time has nothing to do with the central difficulty, it is merely a measure of the method of development not the explanation of that development. The process of change is merely a statement of the method of development, of how the change was brought about: it is not an explanation, not a statement of cause, it does not tell us why there is a world at all.

But then look at the part environment plays in the scheme; and necessity; and chance! Well, look at them. What produced the environments? What is the source of the necessity? What is chance, in this case, but the mathematician's "x", a statement of a common factor. The whole thing has been succinctly put in these words: "When there is change, there is reason for change -- and the reason for change can be found only in something not involved in that change. It follows that if there is such a thing as a process of change with a definite and discoverable law which embraces the whole of physical reality, the whole physical reality must have a non-physical environment." For change and evolution presuppose the environment and the environed interacting on one another.

Unjust rejection of the account of distinction and adornment of the universe
The purpose of the account

The rejection of the fact of creation is a violation of the reason of man; it is unreasonable in the sense of being mad. The rejection, on scientific grounds, of the Scriptural account of the distinction and adornment of the world has a petty meanness about it for it is definitely unfair. The purpose of Moses in writing the account given in Genesis was to instruct an unlettered people in the fundamental truths of the religious and moral order. He wrote that they might know the obligation of adoration and gratitude to Jehovah, the author, governor and conservator of all things; that he might preserve his people from idolatry in recalling to them that every Creature has its reason of existence in a superior cause, that every creature is destined to serve man, the Crown and masterpiece of creation, and not to be served by man.

The language of it

Moses did his work in masterly fashion. His language is necessarily one of great simplicity; but its grand figures speak vividly to the imagination, it pictures the sweeping lines of the universe in terms that slam against the senses. In fact, the account often approaches the grandeur and rhythm of sublime poetry.

A hundred and fifty years ago men were smiling at the tale of Moses because it said nothing of the nebular theory of the generation of the planets, the physics of Newton or the optical theories of

Descartes. Today the smile comes again because there is nothing there of relativity, no statement of the principles of thermodynamics or of evolution. A hundred and fifty years from now another generation will continue to enjoy the huge joke of Moses not stating the scientific theories of that future time. In other words, the account is rejected primarily because Moses was not a bungler, because he did not fill a lesson in religious and moral truths with a scientific jargon that would meet the approval of all ages.

Of course it is vain to look for chemical formulas or mathematical statements in this account; there is no display of geological evidence and no anticipation of biological discoveries to be found in it. It was never intended as a scientific account; if it had been, it would have completely failed of its purpose, leaving the Hebrews of the desert glassy-eyed and slack-jawed in astonishment. It is unjust to look for contradictions to modern science in an account that was avowedly non-scientific. The very nature and language of the account made it so evidently elastic that the earliest Christian commentators could find hardly a word that was not open to widely different interpretations in the factual field: thus "day" might have meant twenty-four hours, many such days, an indefinite period of time or even a stage in knowledge; the creation of plants might have meant the instant establishment of perfect species or only the establishing of these species in germ for development; light, firmament, earth and many another word were seen, from the beginning, to be of this same indefinite character.

Injustice of its rejection

Briefly, the account of Moses is an account that admirably serves its purpose, and that does not serve a purpose foreign to it. It is unjust to tie it down to the science of any one time; and unjust to cite it as contradicting the science of any one time. It can and does oppose pseudo-scientific theories that are at bottom philosophical, for it is avowedly expository of the philosophical truths that are at the roots of all being.

Origin of the kingdom of man: Thomas' approach to the question:
His three principles.

St. Thomas, approaching the account of creation from the vantage point of his faith, laid down some common sense principles. To him it was obvious that the truth of Holy Scripture must be held inviolate; after all, it is the inspired word of God and so there is nothing of truth which can be more sure. It also seemed clear to him that when it is possible to expose the Scriptures in many ways, no one position or interpretation should be so narrowly held to that, if it be certainly established that such a position be false, a man would nevertheless presume to maintain it. Such a man would justly be held in derision by the infidels and so block the infidels' way to belief. Thomas saw the necessity of remembering that Moses spoke to an unlettered people; condescending to their ignorance (*imbecillitas* is the word Thomas uses) he proposed only those things that were manifestly apparent to the senses. After all, man did not lose the knowledge of natural things by his sin, nor that science by which the necessities of the flesh are provided. In Scripture, then, man is not taught these things, but rather the science of the soul, which science he had lost by his sin.

His chief interest

Thomas, in other words, makes it plain at the beginning that he is not approaching this account in search of scientific explanations. His interest, as a theologian, was centered on the metaphysical truths which that account avowedly advanced for the Hebrews: creation as a fact and as an act proper to God; the first cause of all things: and the final cause of the world. Thomas was not particularly interested, then, in this account as scientific; nevertheless, in exposing it, he was obliged to make use of contemporary science, as we are today. Thomas knew the science of his time well; in this treatment he did not try to investigate that science, to improve it or criticise it. He merely used it.

The science of his time

To understand his exposition of the account of Genesis, it will be necessary to have at least a nodding acquaintance with the physics of Aristotle which was the science of the thirteenth century. To the minds of the men of that time, the universe was made up of seven concentric planetary spheres contained within an eighth the sphere of the fixed stars, containing in their turn the earth as a center. Above the heaven of the fixed stars began the invisible world, that is, the crystalline heaven, or heaven of the waters, which was the source of rain and the Empyrean heaven, or the heaven of light, which was the abode of the angels. The matter of these celestial spheres was strictly incorruptible because their forms completely exhausted the potentialities of the matter. To each sphere a moving intelligence was assigned; its work being to direct the circular motion of the particular sphere, not to inform it or vivify it as a soul vivifies a body. Below the lowest sphere, that of the moon, are arranged the spheres of the four elements, namely, fire, air, water and earth. By rights, each of these should be gathered up in a natural site with a resultant perfect equilibrium; but, in fact, they are intermingled. Since their natural tendency is to strive for their natural site, there results the distinctive movements of the elements, thus fire goes up, earth goes down.

Causes of the kingdom of man

With these ideas in mind, we already have a fair notion of Thomas' treatment of the account of creation. The first efficient cause was, of course, God, for Thomas had none of the modern madness about him. God is also the final cause or the end of the universe. The eternal ideas in the mind of God are the formal cause in the sense of exemplary cause. And, since all things come from God, both the matter of things and their intrinsic forms are from God, existing, of course, only in conjunction as composites.

The work of distinction -- the first three days

The act of creation was an eternal act of God. As to the unfolding of that eternal act in time, these were two phases: one of distinction and one of adornment. The first three days of creation were occupied with the work of distinction, for obviously there can be no adornment until there is something to adorn. The first day saw the distinction of light and darkness; the second day brought the distinction of heaven and earth, the firmament dividing against the waters; on the third day the waters of the earth were gathered into seas, dividing seas from dry land. The land carried its quota of plants as a man wears his clothes, for the plants were not so much an ornament as an ordinary and decent covering for the bare earth.

The work of adornment -- the last three days

The last three days were filled with the pleasantly creative labor of decoration, God appearing as the interior decorator of the universe facing a crucial test of His divine good taste. Thus, on the fourth day He concentrated on the heavens, adorning them with the sun, moon and stars; on the fifth day the waters received their bewilderingly various adornment of fishes, the air its fragmentary beauty of birds; the sixth day was dedicated to the adornment of the earth with its animals, among which was man. But he is so important that his production deserves, and gets, special treatment.

Throughout this exposition, Thomas is content to coast along, explaining the natures of the different products in terms of the science of his time, signalling the great differences in the interpretations of the Fathers, assigning reasons for the precise order in which these things were produced. Some of these reasons are penetrating and humanly interesting to an extreme, the reasons, for example, for the production of the stars. Every corporal creature has three ends: itself, a nature above it, and the universe. Moses, in accounting for the stars, considers only the second, the utility of man: the stars serve man by giving light for the direction of work and the acquisition of knowledge; by furnishing a change of seasons to destroy the ennui of an unchanging climate, to conserve health and to allow

the necessary food to be raised -- things that could not happen in an eternal winter or an eternal summer; by furnishing opportunities for business and work by allowing the forecasting of dry and rainy seasons.

The rest of God -- the seventh day

By the end of the sixth day, creation was over and done with. Everything that was ever to exist was made by that time, either actually or virtually, that is, in its full perfection or potentially, in germ; as for human souls, they existed at least in their exemplar, in the mind of God. Creation was an accomplished fact; God then rested. But the rest of God by no means implies that God's action in the world ceased on the sixth day, there was no question of a Florida trip or an ocean voyage on a divine scale to get away from it all. He operates unceasingly in conserving and governing the world. The seventh day, marking the repose of God in this sense, is fittingly kept holy; for the sanctification of everything consists precisely in its reposing in God as God did in Himself on the seventh day.

Origin of the lord of the world

To come to the creation of man, we find him destined to occupy a peculiar position linking the material and spiritual world in himself; consequently, it is necessary to consider the element of the spiritual and that of the material in him separately. Really, the spiritual offers no rational difficulty, though it has been the stumbling block of intellectuals for hundreds of years; but then what could be more fitting than that a professed intellectual should stumble over a block that was not there.

His soul

It is immediately evident, and also a doctrine of faith, that the soul of Adam was certainly not an emanation of the substance of God, an outpouring of the divine stuff. From what has already been said of the infinite perfection and ceaseless act of God and what is quite evident of the limitation and imperfection of our own souls, there can be no question of identity of the two. The soul of Adam must, then, have been produced; and there is only one way to produce a spiritual substance, that is, by creation. It cannot be knitted, woven, grown or manufactured. It cannot be made from any material stuff; the attempt to maintain that it can promptly involves the contradiction that the soul is both spiritual and possessed of parts. Nor can it have been made from any preexisting spiritual substance; such a substance, precisely as spiritual, is devoid of parts and thus cannot have anything taken from it without being destroyed. The soul of man is created; and that means that it was produced immediately by God, for the utterly independent mode of action which is creation is proper to the only utterly independent agent. Even though the angels were willing to take on a little extra work, God Himself could give them no part in this labor which is possible only to omnipotent power. It is the common teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church that the human soul was not produced before the human body, though philosophically there is no impossibility involved in such a previous production. But then, neither is there any reason to be found for such a previous existence. Certainly, if Augustine is right and the body was only virtually produced during the six days of creation, there is no reason why the soul must necessarily have come into actual existence in that period.

It is plain, then, that on the question of the soul of man both faith and reason stand diametrically opposed to the theories of complete evolution. Because the human soul is spiritual, it can come only from God and must come directly from Him. There can be no question of its slow development, or, indeed, of any development of it; not only because there is nothing from which a spiritual substance can be developed, but also because, being devoid of parts, the soul is had all at once or it is not had at all. In any question of the evolution of man, if we are to stand on reasonable grounds, his soul must be excluded from the discussion; otherwise we place him on the level of material creation in violation of the evident fact that his acts exceed the limits of the material.

His body

In the production of the body of man, St. Thomas says no one element (fire, air, earth, or water) was exclusively used. As God had all things *eminently* in Himself, as the angels had all things *intentionally* (that is, by knowledge) in themselves, so man was a kind of microcosmos, having almost everything in his composition: spirituality in his soul, a likeness of the heavenly bodies in the stability of his make-up, and the earthly elements in his physical constitution. The question of the production of the body of man was really a question of disposing the material for the fit reception of the human soul.

Certainly that disposition could not have been accomplished by other human beings, as it is today; there were no others. Nor could it have been, naturally, the work of some other animals any more than a pair of tigers, let alone a pair of mountains, can dispose the material for the generation of a mouse. It was the work of God: perhaps immediately, by the direct divine formation of the body; perhaps mediately, that is, through lower animals to which such power had been specially given or, as Augustine would have it, the body was only virtually produced in the work of creation.

Thomas, as opposed to Augustine, inclines towards the immediate production of the body of man by God because of the absence of any sufficient natural factors for such production. But he agrees that there is no philosophical reason militating against the gradual preparation of the material for such a body by other forces acting through powers given them by God. In any case, it is never a question of any other than God producing the final human composite made up of body and soul; the question is merely one of the preparation of the material for the infusion of the soul by God. In a word, as far as the body of man goes, there is no reason for serious opposition to the theory of evolution; on the other hand, there is no compelling reason for an enthusiastic embrace of every evolutionary theory advanced. A good many have gone by the board already; probably a good many more will follow. So far it is not at all proved that the body of man actually did develop from some lower form.

The actual design of the human body was an artistic triumph worthy of divine ingenuity. What defects there are in man's constitution come from the nature of the material that had to be used if man were to be the link binding together the material and the spiritual worlds; no amount of skill on the part of the craftsman can make a sword durable if he is confined to tin as to his material, nor can divine ingenuity find any natural escape from the defects of matter when matter must enter into the essential composition of a creature. As we shall see later on in this book, and again in the second volume, these natural defects were remedied by the preternatural gifts given man for his life in the Garden of Eden.

It is true that some animals have keener smell than men, others keener sight, and so on. But this was because man's senses were ordered to his higher knowledge so that a nice balance was struck lest any one of his senses interfere with his reason; not many human ears are so keen that a man cannot think because of the racket made by a cat tramping over a rug. In the fundamental sense of touch, and in those internal senses which so immediately serve reason -- imagination, memory, appreciation -- man far excels the animals.

We have no horns, claws or covering of hair and, normally, our hides are not too thick; in other words, man is shorn of the weapons and coverings naturally given to other animals. He does not have even a speck of fur or just a few of the porcupine's spikes. In place of these natural protections, man has his reason and his hands: by these he can prepare weapons for himself, provide himself with covering and the other necessities of life in an infinite variety. It is only the human female that does not have to wear the same coat of fur for a lifetime.

Man stands erect while the other animals normally go about on all fours; and for very good reasons. His senses are ordered primarily to intellectual delights, not to the search for sensible delights; he should not have his face to the ground as though concentrating on sensible things but rather high up where he can get a broad view of the sensible world, seeing it from all angles. To give his interior

powers full play, it is right that his brain be placed above all the other parts of his body, that nothing might weigh heavy upon it and interfere with its operation. If man did not stand erect, he would have to use his hands for front feet, thereby seriously interfering with their usefulness; if he went about on all fours, he would have to take his foods with his lips and mouth, dispensing with all books of etiquette but at the same time thickening his lips, hardening them and roughening the tongue to the impediment of his powers of speech. Moreover, as the superior part of a creature is that by which nourishment is taken, the stature of man accurately places him in the world of creation: the plants have their superior part (the roots) pointed toward earth; the animals occupy a neutral position; while man points towards heaven.

His partner

In the very beginning, God Himself noticed that man needed a helper; a fact that has been observed by, or called to the attention of, many a man since. It was fitting, then, that woman should have been created from the very beginning of things. However, the fact that Adam needed a helper did not imply that woman was created that she might crawl into overalls and go out into the fields; for such purposes Adam might better have been given a hired man. But obviously the human race would not have lasted very long if God had created only a man.

Time and manner of the production of women

According to the medicine of his century, which, of course, Thomas did not correct, woman was an incomplete man, a half-baked male, whose unfinished characteristics come about through some weakness in the parents, some disposition in the human material or some extrinsic cause such as, for example, a strong south wind at the time of conception. Nevertheless Thomas thinks it is unjust to consider woman a cosmic accident; she was not an accident, this creature was made on purpose, deliberately planned by God. Further, he insists that the notion of subjection of woman to man be properly understood. It by no means signifies that woman is the slave of man, subject to man for his utility; rather, the domestic subjection is an ordinary requisite for order; it is subjection, not inferiority. Of course, when more than one free individual are living together and working for a common end there must be someone in charge, one governor, one director. Certainly this subjection is not inferiority; above all, it is not inferiority in any subjective sense: woman is not less human than man, her soul cannot be denied equality with his, and so on. Rather, this subjection is a statement of difference, of unequal gifts that counter-balance each other, making of man and woman a balanced whole. Among the peculiar gifts of man Thomas mentions discretion of reason, which beyond doubt means excellence in speculative reasoning; leaving the obvious corollary to be drawn, namely, that woman excels in practical reasoning.

Her relation to man

There are many reasons why woman was fittingly formed from Adam himself. Among others might be mentioned the preservation of the dignity of the first man as head of the whole human race, by way of likeness to God Who is the head of the whole universe. Then, too, this served to augment and conserve the love of man for woman as for one who came from himself, giving it some what the note of the love of a parent for a child; this increase and protection of love was of great importance in the human species where the union of the two sexes was indissoluble. As in the domestic life man is the head of the woman, it was fitting that woman come from man as from her principle; into the union of the two there was introduced, from this moment of origin, a note of sanctity and consecration from the fact that woman, proceeding from the side of man, was the figure of the Church proceeding from the side of Christ.

It is to be particularly noted that woman came from the side of man, formed from his rib. she was not taken from his head, lest she get the notion of dominating man; nor from his feet, lest she be despised by man as subject to him by way of a slave. To Thomas it was obvious that woman's body

was immediately produced by God; for certainly no one else could produce such a masterpiece from such humble material.

Conclusion: Pertinence of the question of the origin of the world To the mind of man

In concluding this chapter it is very much to the point to insist that this question of the origin of the world is not a purely speculative or academic affair the outcome of which makes no difference to individual men and women. The human mind is simply not made to shrug off a question as fundamental as this. That innate, driving insistence to know the why of things that gives the mind of man no rest is hardly likely to be content to know what this or that wheel is for while the meaning of the whole vast machine of the universe is hidden. The human mind has to have an answer to this question, however many others remain unanswered; and it will have an answer, though it concoct it from the monstrous materials of falsehood offered it by a world afraid of truth.

To the life of man

After all, a man has to live in this world, use it or be used by it year after year. Is it of no importance to him to discover that the whole is devoid of meaning and his puny life is a kind of vital insanity? Is it of no importance for him to be given a meaning that is totally false; that, for instance, reduces him to a part of a process, an accident in a biological experiment, a moment in the life of some organismic monster that uses him to his own destruction? Is it not important that he should find that the world he lives in is an intelligent product of a supreme intelligence, that he is its peak, that all beneath him is for the carving out of an eternally enduring personal life? It is hardly likely that men, embracing these different answers to the question of the origin of the universe, will live their lives with the same hope, the same intensity, the same courage, the same strong effort: for men, however ignorant they may be, are not universally fools.

Contrast of the answers: From the appraisal of reason

In our time, the answers to the question of the origin of the universe boil down to two, the answer of creation and the answer of evolution; that is to say, there is only one answer given, the answer of creation, for the other denies the necessity of an answer for a universe that is without cause or purpose. On the grounds of reason the modern man is hardly offered a choice, at least in this sense that there is little choice for the human mind between madness and sanity. The one, on the basis of a self-sufficient universe with no trace of its self-sufficiency, offers a man a process in place of an explanation, a contradiction in place of truth, fiction in face of facts, disorder as the explanation of order. The other, on the basis of a supreme cause whose existence can be demonstrably shown, faces the facts and bows to the inherent dependence of all that is not God; it gives man an explanation, challenges him with the truth, and commands his respect for the order he cannot hide from his eyes.

From the consequences of each

There is much more to the apparent choice than the intellectual aspect of truth or Falsehood; there is the difference between despair and hope, between a livable human life and a life that is completely shorn of livability. For if there be no personal end to human life, there is no point in personal concern with the means of living that life, means that can be means only in name. If there is nothing above that man, there is no ground for his hope, no sense to his sorrows, no excuse for his efforts, no reason to his courage; love, triumph, success, justice and all the rest are catchwords coined to lure man into a struggle where he loses even though he wins. But if he comes from the hand of God and goes his way to God, if every hair of his head is numbered, every moment of his life under his command, and ultimate success or failure not only a possibility but a certainty, then, indeed, man has something to live for. He can, and will, face the risks, take the blows, struggle to his feet after defeat, refuse to quit and scorn to bow his head to the things that are his servants. Yes, it does indeed make a difference what answer is given to the question of the origin of the world; the

difference, in a word, between a human and an inhuman life.

[«-- Back](#)

A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 12

[Chapter Thirteen --»](#)

CHAPTER XIII -- THE LORD OF THE WORLD **(Q. 75-80)**

1. The unknown lord:
 - (a) Essential knowledge about man.
 - (b) Essential ignorance about man:
 - (1) Its varieties.
 - (2) Its origins.
 - (3) The escape from it.
 2. Life of the lord of the world:
 - (a) Principle of life.
 - (b) Its immaterial and subsistent character.
 - (c) Its immortality.
 - (d) Its incompleteness:
 - (1) General notion of matter and form.
 - (2) The soul the form of the body.
 3. Is Equipment for action of the lord of the world:
 - (a) in general:
 - (1) Distinction and number of the potencies of man.
 - (2) Their subject.
 - (3) Their duration
 - (b) in particular
 - (1) Some lower potencies:
 - a. Vegetative potencies.
 - b. Sensitive potencies:
 1. External.
 2. Internal.
 - (2) Higher potencies of knowledge:
 - a. Active and possible intellect.
 - b. Reason and intellect.
 4. Volitional equipment of the lord of the world. (Next chapter.)
- Conclusion:
1. Philosophy based on ignorance of man is a philosophy of degradation.
 2. It is possible only by a distortion of one side of human nature.
 3. Its result is the destruction of the whole of human nature.
 4. Its goal is despair.

CHAPTER XIII **THE LORD OF THE WORLD** **(Q. 75-80)**

The unknown lord

A GREAT deal has been made recently of the things we do not know about man. A best seller of not so long ago spent many dark pages on detailed statements of the damage our ignorance has done, institutes of human relations have been set up in great centers of learning to weave our piecemeal knowledge into a durable fabric; scientists are busy with every detail of man's physical life. For all our awakened interest in the study of man, the cardinal point has been overlooked, namely, that the essential thing to know about man is what he is.

Essential knowledge about man

We must at least know the nature of man before we can intelligently discuss any detail of his life. If this much is not known, there can be no real knowledge of the powers of man: we may be impatient at them, as a child is angry with a toy bird because it will not sing; or we may overlook them, as a starving man might sit down to die on a priceless antique chair, not knowing its value in terms of money and food. Without this essential knowledge, a man can be satisfied to eat the husks of swine when he might have been dining on the fare of kings or he can be straining after the impossible, surely he cannot know the boundlessness or the limitations of his hopes. The very necessity of nature itself guarantees the different actions of a pet monkey and a canary bird, but man has to know what he is and where he is going; he must choose a goal for his actions and point them at that goal, for his actions are deliberate. Only by

knowing such a goal, fitted to the kind of nature he has, can a man determine whether his life has been a success or a failure, for it is only in terms of a human goal that a human life can be judged.

Essential ignorance about man

The essential ignorance about man, then, is the defect of this essential knowledge. Man must know himself, must know at least *what* he is, if he is to live a human life. In spite of the essential importance of this fundamental knowledge, men from the beginning -- and perhaps more so today -- have made serious mistakes about the very nature of man.

Its varieties

He has been seen as pure spirit, an angel or a god, with the disastrous results of despair or the tragically comic results of childish pretense. He has been judged to be a mixture or conglomeration of spirit and matter, a lost spirit imprisoned in the flesh or a wandering mind; a strange monster whose constituent elements are more incompatible than oil and water. In our time, the tendency has been to exclude the spiritual from man altogether; from this premise, the steps have led steadily downward until there is now no further step to be taken.

In this materialistic light, man has been seen as a mere animal, a nice, bright, friendly animal, to be sure, but no different essentially from the rest of the animal world. Some of those who see man this way think he should make the most of his animality; others advise him to try, for appearances' sake, to forget it; still others ask him, while insisting on his pure animality, to act as though he had a spiritual soul. Another group sees man as merely a chemical compound. His essence will some day be reduced to a chemical formula, his dreams are no more than the things that happen in a test tube: meanwhile he is not to be too upset by the action and reaction, the explosions, the precipitations and strange flavors that mark his life, since there is, after all, nothing he can do about it. This would seem to place man low enough in the scale of things to satisfy his bitterest enemy; but another group has found a still more insulting estimate of man. Man is only a machine, necessarily producing the acts he does, the thoughts he thinks, the struggles he puts up, the illusion of love much as a sausage machine turns out its product if the right material is fed into it.

Its origins

These truly terrible estimations of the nature of man might have come as a numbing shock to our age if we had not been so well prepared for them. As a matter of fact, they are not even a surprise; they are the inevitable result of a refusal to take the whole of man into consideration in determining his nature, the willingness to take the frosting or the cake, but not both. Then, too, this insulting ignorance of man did not happen today or yesterday. Very early in the history of mankind the attempt was made to get along without the material world. A no less energetic denial of the spiritual world dates from the Greek materialists and is almost universal in America today. Naturally, if either matter or spirit is denied in human nature, that quiet, peace-loving creature we call man is replaced by a monster. Modern philosophy eased into the denial of the spiritual by quietly assassinating the intellect. With that out of the way and man's knowledge completely limited to the field of the senses, there is little to differentiate man from the physical world in which he moves.

The escape from it

Not infrequently, the denial of the material or the spiritual in man has been motivated by cowardice, a flabbiness of heart that sought escape from the difficulties of human life by denying the humanity of it. For there are difficulties in the material side of human nature that no shocked rolling of the eyes, no amount of deep breathing or self-hypnosis can obliterate; just as there are terrific responsibilities in the spiritual side of man's nature that no amount of pleasure, no constant round of activity, no self-induced forgetfulness can wipe from the mind of a man. To men and women who shudder to mix with the rough reality of physical existence, an easy way out has been to deny it; just as those who preferred to cast their

lot with the animal, or even with the inanimate, world, made their path easier by denying the spiritual. The pity of it has always been that these men could not follow their chosen paths alone but have always attempted to justify themselves in their own eyes, and in the eyes of men, by preaching their foolishness from the housetops to ensnare the simple, silly ones of the world.

Life of the lord of the world

There is no need to set up a super-science and dedicate it to a life-long search of hosts in order to get some hint of what man is. The knowledge of human nature is not so difficult to come at. All we need do is to look at the human activity that goes into the living of human life all about us, or, indeed, within us. We may whip a puppy for chewing up shoes, but we are not silly enough to whip a tree for crashing through the roof in a storm; we know one little bit about these different natures by the way they act, at least we perceive that the whipping may do the puppy some good and that it will have no effect on the tree whatsoever. We are not surprised that lilacs do not sing, though we expect song from a bird; and we are sure that no amount of careful watering or fertilizing will make a sidewalk any longer. In all this, we are proceeding on a judgment of different natures reached by a knowledge of the activities of those natures. It always remains true that activity follows the same line as the nature from which it proceeds; things have specifically different activities because of their specifically different natures.

Principle of life

So we can tell immediately the difference between the living and the dead. To ask what is a man is only to ask what does a man do, what is his particular specific activity, what can we expect from a man that we can expect from absolutely nothing else in the world. If he is alive, he must be active, for, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, life is immanent activity. That activity vividly mirror the nature of the principle from which it flows in man, just as it does in a bird, a tree or a horse.

Its immaterial and subsistent character

One of the obviously distinctive things a man does is to know. From the objects with which this knowledge deals we have an immediate indication of the nature of man. Just from these few pages, it is clear that man knows cake, frosting, puppies, trees, canary birds, sidewalks and lilacs; as a matter of fact, man knows all material things, or he can know them, something he could not do if his faculty of knowledge had anything of material in it, any more than his faculty of vision can see all colors looking through green glasses. In other words, all corporal natures are fixed within corporal limitations; if the mind of man were corporal, then that corporal limitation would impede its knowledge of other corporal natures, just as a bad taste in a man's mouth affects his relish of everything he eats. From the point of view of its objects, then, one action of man, the act of intellectual knowledge, is immaterial, which is the same as saying that it is spiritual.

Its immortality

We are thus forced to admit, from the ordinary activity of man, that man has an operation independent of corporal nature. If the activity is independent, of course the principle from which that activity flows is of that same nature -- it is independent of corporal nature, it is spiritual. This independent principle of activity, since it can operate free of corporal nature, can exist free of corporal nature; for always the operation follows in the steps of the nature from which it proceeds.

To look at the matter from the point of view of man's activities themselves, rather than the objects of those activities, the very fact that man reasons is evidence that the principle of his reasoning is independent of corporal nature. At first sight, this statement looks obscure; but if we take it apart, see it step by step, its full force is clearly seen. Reasoning is no more than the comparison of judgment with judgment; and a judgment is normally a comparison with an abstract idea. In other words, the independent nature of reasoning has its first foundation in our possession of abstract ideas. We may grumble at wetness or marvel at beauty, but we shall never drown from falling into wetness or be injured by bumping into

beauty. We can know not only this thing, but *things* in the abstract; a feat that surpasses the concrete character and singularity of the corporal world. This is an activity explicable only by a principle that itself surpasses the corporal, for, as the non-lethal blows of an infant's fist will clearly show us, the effect is not greater than its cause, the activity does not surpass the manner of existence.

Many consequences of man's possession of abstract ideas are advanced in proof of the spiritual character of his soul. It is noted, for instance, that man alone speaks, has a moral sense, holds to religious ideals, can learn, cook his food, concoct weapons and so on. To these are added the long list of outstanding human achievements. But, as a matter of fact, these additional arguments are quite unnecessary; from the basic arguments of the objects of man's activities and the activities themselves we have a clear insight into the fundamental differentiation of man's soul from the souls of the brutes.

Animals, as living creatures, also have innate principles of life and activity, they have souls. In their activity, however, the brutes betray no operation that is independent of corporal nature; their activities are the activities of sense life. Consequently, the principle from which this activity flows, as it cannot act dependently, cannot exist independently; again that central truth must be insisted on, activity is an indication of the nature of the soul, as an effect is an indication of the nature of its cause. The very intensity of these brute activities is distinctly limited; noises too loud will deafen them as lights too bright will blind them, for the corporal change demanded in every sensitive operation corrupts the sense which it affects. On the contrary, the object of intelligence, as it is more perfect, rather than corrupting the intellect, perfects it for other and more intense operations. To put the whole thing simply, it is enough to point out that even in their knowledge the brutes do not know *things*; they know this or that thing, not the abstract. It is not surprising, then, that they have never reached to the consequences that have followed in man from the possession of abstract ideas. It has been well said that the "animal is a queer mixture of stupidity and natural accomplishment; of cleverness and unteachableness; of natural ability and no development." These things cannot be said of a man.

To conclude, from the independent existence of the human soul, that the soul was the whole man, would be a serious mistake. A man is, or at least should be, no less human when he eats than when he thinks. It would be much less tiring if a woman could accomplish her shopping in the few seconds it takes the mind to run through a department store, while her body was tossed into a corner or laid out comfortably on a bed; but it cannot be done. It is the same person who walks, laughs, talks and thinks. Man is not to be defined by his soul alone. That human soul, great as its prerogatives may be, is still only a part of man, an essential element of the composite that is man. It is no less a deformity to exclude the body from the notion of what man is than to exclude the soul; whether you make a god, an angel or an animal of man, you have destroyed man. This point need not be labored: if man's nature is indicated by the objects with which his activities deal and by those activities themselves, it demands no philosophical cleverness to see that he has a body as well as a soul.

Its incompleteness

In fact, we can push this further and say that even though that immaterial soul is spiritual and immortal, it is still incomplete without the body. Obviously the human soul is simple. for, lacking all material, it cannot have parts. The very notion of parts postulates quantity, a divisibility that is inseparable from matter and so unthinkable in a substance that is immaterial. Moreover, the fact that it is utterly simple and at the same time capable of subsisting of itself (as it quite evidently is capable of operating of itself) is a definition of its spirituality; a subsistent principle of activity independent of matter is spiritual. It is immortal, for there is no way to destroy it. It cannot unravel, it cannot come apart; it cannot be separated from that which gives it life, for it is itself the principle of life; it cannot be swept into oblivion by the destruction of another on which it depends, as a lamp might be destroyed by the collapse of the stand on which it has been placed, for it is independent. In other words, it is incorruptible because there is no possibility of either intrinsic or extrinsic corruption.

It can, of course, be annihilated by God. But this is not so much a question of God's reaching out to strike

it into nothingness, as of God's not reaching out to conserve it, cutting off the supply of existence from the human soul. For the soul of man, like everything created, merely borrows its finite existence from the infinite existence of God; it is not independent of the first cause either in its entry into existence or in the continuation of its existence. In common with all created things, the human soul has the metaphysical composition of essence and existence.

Yet this soul without its body is incomplete; it is not fully itself unless it be united to the body. It is not an angel, assuming a fictitious body for an occasion; it is the lowest substance in the intellectual world and ordered, by its very nature, to union with the body. Left to itself, it could discern nothing; its mind would remain a blank sheet, radically incapable of completing itself by its own strength, sterile and inactive without the complement by which alone it enters into relation with the objects it can know and assimilate.

It is an extremely grave mistake to look upon the soul's presence in the body as a punishment, making the body a prison in which the soul serves its time. The body is good and a source of good to the soul joined to it; it is the one link by which the soul can attain its complete perfection. Nor is this an oddity in the universe. Rather, it is a continuation of the harmony that runs through all the work of the divine architect: the imperfect is always for the perfect, the eye for the whole man, vegetative life for sensitive life, sensitive life for intellectual life, all for the sake of the whole. On a larger scale, each creature is for its own act, its own perfection, the less noble for the more noble, all for the universe and the universe for God. The soul, then, is an incomplete substance tending to complete itself; and by this very tendency, it is a principle of operation. It is a perfection crying for its fullness; and that fullness is obtained through union with the body.

Its incompleteness: General notion of matter and form.

The difficulty is how to unite such a splendid spiritual substance with the matter which, thus united, becomes the human body. A mere mixture of the two will not do. An utterly simple soul cannot be stirred into matter as sugar is in coffee, any more than a mathematical point can be dropped into a glass of wine. It is not sufficient merely to throw them together, as so many rocks in one pile; for the secret of this creature man is his unity, he is precisely one whole and all his acts testify to that unity. Nor is it enough to postulate a mere association of the two, like a rider in a saddle or a motor in a boat. These two incomplete substances must be united in a way that will result in one complete unit, one complete whole. In other words, the soul must be the substantial form of the body.

To a man who is not a philosopher, the words "matter" and "substantial form" look as formidable as a mechanic's tool kit does to one who lacks mechanical ability. If we describe matter as the determined element and substantial form as the determining element of physical things and then look at the two in the concrete, their terrifying aspect vanishes for then they cease to be strangers and we recognize them as old, familiar neighbors. It is obvious, for instance, that before the soul's coming, there is only the possibility of a man, the seed and the ovum, not a man; after the soul departs, there is nothing left but a corpse. It is clear, then, that it is the soul that determines the matter of the body to its human status; it is the soul that gives the body its specific note, making it human. It gives the body being and is the source of the body's human activities; we should be quite right in being frightened, astonished or utterly incredulous if a corpse sat up and guffawed in the face of the mourners.

The same truth is evident if we look at it from the side of the specific operations of man. It would be pointless to sit hour by hour by a corpse trying to argue with it, waiting for an inspiring word or a flash of genius to come from the dead man's mouth. It is the soul that is the principle of intellectual operations, that is, of the operations by which man is distinguished from every other creature, his specific operations. It is, then, the determinant of the species in man, his substantial form.

Substantial forms are an active, domineering race. The common note of their work has left a common mark on all of them, however low or high they may be, they are as easily recognized as officers of an army drilled to the perfection of precision. No one of them, for examples can tolerate doing its work

through an underling; no one of them will give an equal a word to say in its work; all are much too self-sufficient to travel in pairs; all are fussy enough, and capable enough, to keep every inch of their domain under their thumb every single moment.

The soul the form of the body

Of course, the soul of man, being a substantial form, shares these common characteristics. It is not united to corporal matter through a medium, an underling, such as a sensitive soul, one other body, or some other accidental or substantial form. its union is immediate; and it leaves no room for any other soul in man. The soul is the unique cause of man's being, of his living, his animality, his human characteristics. Nor is this particularly surprising. It is a common fact of nature that the more powerful forms have more extensive activity. Thus, in the hierarchy of forms, the inanimate have the very minimum of activity, that of being; plant forms embrace the activity of the inanimate forms and add their own; animal forms include the activity of the inanimate and the plant forms, and add their own; and so on. To put it another way, the higher forms have a greater quantity of being; they have shared more fully, participated more completely of that supreme being. They imitate God more closely and exclude all inferior forms as superfluous; they themselves have all that the inferior forms possess, and more. Like every other substantial form, the soul is present in every part of the matter it informs, in every part of the body; and it is whole in every part of the body. The tail is not less feline than the head of a cat, nor is a finger less human than the head of a man; yet what there is of humanity in every part of man comes from the specific principle of humanity within man, from his soul. Instead of thinking, as we ordinarily do, of the body, containing the soul, it would perhaps be more accurate to think of the soul containing the body.

Man, then, is a composite made up of matter and form, of spirit and matter. Neither of these constitutes the species, both are incomplete; but from their substantial union comes that lord of the material world which we call man, the creature whose form is supreme among all forms in matter, reaching that peak of domination of things physical that brings us to the borderland of angelic independence. So much for the nature of man. We know now that he is not divine, not angelic, not bestial, but human.

Equipment for action of the lord of the world:

In general: Distinction and number of the potencies of man.

A glance, however, at man's actions will show us at once that we have not investigated all of man's equipments. The soul is the radical principle of all action; but then, the locomotive is the principle of all motion of the train, but it moves *by* its wheels. That is, the soul does not directly produce these actions of man; a man walks but *with* his feet and legs, he talks but *with* his tongue, he thinks but *with* his intellect. As a matter of fact, God is the only one whose act flows directly from his essence, He alone rather *is* His intelligence than *has* His intelligence. This truth seems obscure, but actually it is so obvious that it is hard to see. A man's soul is a substantial form: it acts directly in the substantial line to complete the substantial composite. Now, patently, man's actions are not substantial things: his laughs do not clutter up the house his thoughts do not have to be bathed, fed and sent off to school; they are accidents in the philosophical sense of existing only in something else, not in themselves. Their immediate cause, then, is one proportioned to them, an accidental form, not a substantial one. Supposing the contrary were true, suppose the soul did produce all the acts of man directly. By its very essence the soul is a determining principle, it is the active, the moving principle; it cannot take a day off, demand a sick leave, or retire for a siesta for its very nature demands ceaseless determining activity. Of it is the direct cause of our actions, then we never stop talking, thinking, willing, hearing, seeing and all the rest; which, thank God, is completely false.

If we are to act, we must have proximate accidental principles of action. Being what we are, we shall have to have a great many of them. Creatures below man reach a moderate perfection by few movements; man himself reaches a very high perfection by many and complex movements; the angels reach complete perfection by very, very few movements; while God has infinite perfection without any movement at all. Perhaps the full significance of this can be grasped from a parallel in the human order: some men maintain

a precarious health by many remedies; some maintain perfect health with a few remedies; while others, have perfect health without ever entering a drugstore or consulting a doctor. In other words, the multiplicity of our accidental forms is at the same time a statement of our perfection relative to the material world, and a statement of our imperfection relative to the spiritual world.

Their subject

For all their number and complexity, there is no difficulty distinguishing these proximate accidental principles of operation which are called the powers or faculties of man; we have only to look at their destination to escape the misfortune of trying to use the ear for sight or the eye for sound. There is, in fact, a distinct hierarchy of these powers of man nicely graduated according to the universality of the objects at which they aim. The vegetative powers act only on man's own body; the sensitive powers work on all sensible bodies; while the intellective powers extend to all being. The same hierarchy can be traced if our measuring rod is the degree of immateriality of the object at which the different powers aim. Thus bare life transcends the inanimate character of matter; sense knowledge receives material things within the knower, stripping them of the ragged clothes of matter, but leaving them the familiar material conditions; intellectual knowledge completely strips its guests of all matter and material conditions, insisting that they put on the bright garment of immateriality before they enter the house of the mind.

Their duration

Neither is there much difficulty in determining, in a general way, the location or place of residence of these faculties in man. The inorganic powers of intellect and will which operate with intrinsic independence of matter are to be found in the only inorganic element of the human composite, in the soul of man. It is only the soul that can act with intrinsic independence of matter. The vegetative and sensitive faculties of man are clearly not to be found in the soul alone, for they are intimately involved in matter; neither are they to be bound in the body alone, for the body alone cannot produce the acts proper to these powers. Rather they are powers subjected in the composite of soul and body; not in either of the constituents of this composite. From this it is evident that the faculties of intellect and will endure as long as the soul endures, that is, forever; on the other hand, the vegetative and sensitive faculties endure only as long as the composite which is man endures, that is, until the separation of the soul and body in death.

In particular

Coming down to an examination of these powers of man in particular, we encounter somewhat the same difficulty as would be found in a complete survey of the life of the universe. Man is a little universe in himself; certainly he has, in himself, a summary of the life of the universe and, consequently, a multiplicity of faculties that is all bewildering, in its way, as the spectacle of the varied life in the world in which we live. To inspect each of these faculties in itself, without relation to anything else, would seem to serve no purpose beyond increasing our bewilderment, just as a study of the individual parts of the universe, with no attempt at correlation merely packs a man's head so full of facts and his eyes so full of sights that he can neither think nor see. We must, then, throughout, try to see these faculties of man in their relation to man himself and to the rest of life in the universe; we must read them in their context, not in isolated texts; they must be seen in the grandeur of the whole picture, not in violently extracted sections.

: Some lower potencies:

From this point of view, man has powers in common with the plants, others in common with the animals, and still others that are entirely distinctive to himself. In all three we meet again that harmonious flowing of one into the other that marks the whole genius of creation. There is a union between these different faculties so close as almost to defy an attempt to mark clearly the line that distinguishes them; it is this close harmony that has been, too often, the cause of the eager attempts to conclude that man is only a plant or only an animal, or that all animals and plants are intelligent beings as man is.

Vegetative potencies

The vegetative powers, common to man and plants, have, as their primary purpose, the inception of life and the protection of that life; this purpose is accomplished through three distinct operations, namely: generation; growth or increase to the point demanded by the perfection of the body; and finally nutrition or the conservation of that life. Of the three, generation is supreme and intimately approaches the activity of the animal or sense faculties; it is the only vegetative faculty that operates on a body other than its own.

Sensitive potencies:

The sensitive powers of man parallel the same powers in an animal. A teacher, who was not at all sure of himself, facing a class that was far too inquisitive for comfort, could hurry past these by stating dogmatically that these powers are of two kinds, external and internal, frowning heavily the while to snuff out any question before it could break into flame. But, of course, this would be cheating; for it would be ignoring the fact that there are five external senses and four internal ones, for a grand total of nine. Still, the teacher certainly would have his reasons for sidestepping a subject as complex as this.

External

The whole picture of the five external senses in operation can be obtained by observing so commonplace an affair as a man coming home from work and wandering into the kitchen as dinner is being prepared; providing, of course, that the man is normal, that he does take a taste of this and that, drop a comment or two and then get out from under his wife's feet. If he spent the long moments that intervene before the serving of dinner in analyzing that little jaunt of his into the kitchen, he would discover something like this. Two of his external senses had made a contact with sensible reality as real as a contact of a fist with a face, and with the same consequent material modifications, on a much milder scale, to be sure: his sense of touch had been struck by the warmth of the kitchen; his sense of taste was affected by the nibble which did things both to the sense itself and to the food he had so cautiously pilfered. Ruminating further, he would notice that two other external senses, while not smashing into sensible reality, had definitely been in contact with it through a medium: he had smelled the cooking food and heard his own words to his wife. The last of his external senses, his sight, had accomplished its purpose without direct contact, without material change either in his eyes or in the objects of sight: his eyes had not actually caressed his wife, she had not climbed into his eyes, nor was the food mangled by his greedy glance.

Internal

A great help in drawing up his analysis was furnished by his internal sense which goes by the name of common sense, discriminating between the work of the external senses, protecting him from using his eye for tasting and so on. For each of the external senses is nailed down to its particular object; consequently some common centre of sense perception is necessary, some clearing house which distinguishes between the external senses and their operations. This man was led to the kitchen in the first place by another of his internal senses, his imagination; for obviously, viewing these senses now purely from the animal or sensitive angle, it is only by the power of retaining a sense species gathered by the external senses that an animal can set itself in motion to obtain an absent good. His retreat from the kitchen was dictated by his estimative faculty with its power to directly apprehend the harmful or beneficial qualities of sensible things that are certainly not the object of the eye, the ear, the nose or any of the other external senses. These are not strictly sense qualities. Finally, as he sat there thinking it all over, he would be regaled by his memory, the last of his internal senses, which is a storehouse of the sensible species; from it are spontaneously revived species precisely as *past*, a non-sensible quality that escapes the imagination and so demands another faculty or power and which is so particular, so contingent, as to demand that it be taken care of by the sense powers of man. It is to be noted that the estimative power and the memory approach analogously very close to the operations of the intellect, being differentiated from it by the particular character and material limitations of their objects.

Higher potencies of knowledge

Over and above the vegetative and sensitive principles of operations, man's distinctively human faculties are the spiritual powers of intellect and will, of knowledge and volition. These are so complex in their operation, and so very important that they will receive separate treatment in the two succeeding chapters of this volume. In this chapter, however, a few rough strokes must be added to complete the picture of man's specific equipment at least as regards knowledge.

Active and possible intellect

Two intellectual faculties are distinguished in man: one that can know but as yet does not, the possible intellect; the other, which does not know but makes knowledge a proximate possibility. This distinction is really no more than our recognition of the fact that man does learn and that he learns of abstract things. He has, then, a faculty that acquires knowledge. But the objects of our knowledge are universal or abstract (as we have already seen to some degree and will see more thoroughly later) and universals are not to be found wandering about the streets, hiding in woods or swimming in streams. If only the possible intellect existed, only the faculty which acquires knowledge, nothing would ever be known. Another faculty is necessary to make these concrete, existing things of the world fit subjects of our knowledge; the faculty that universalizes these concrete things, that makes them abstract, is called the active intellect.

Reason and Intellect

What we ordinarily call intellectual memory is really not a separate faculty at all; it is merely the act of our intellects retaining the intellectual species. Certainly it does not retain these species precisely as past, for that is a concrete, limited, material connotation which is proper to the sense faculties and impossible to immaterial, universal objects. Neither do the words "intelligence" and "reason" denote different faculties, but rather different acts of the same faculty: the one, a simple direct knowledge of truth which approaches the mode of angelic knowledge; the other, the labored acquisition of truth by way of comparison which is proper to man. "Synderesis" and "conscience," too, must be ruled out as distinct faculties: the first is no more than the habit by which we hold to first practical principles; the second is merely a practical judgment of the intellect as to what is to be done or avoided, what is right or wrong.

Conclusion:

1. Philosophy based on ignorance of man is a philosophy of degradation

From even this superficial glance at man, it is evident that he is a composite of body and soul. Within himself he contains the powers of inanimate, plant and animal creation; and surpasses them by his distinctively human power. He is not an animal, though he has a body, he is not an angel, though he has a spiritual soul that cannot be destroyed. He is a man, the connecting link between the material and the spiritual worlds. A philosophy that is blind to this essential knowledge of man is necessarily a philosophy of degradation, however sincerely its authors intend to defend man's humanity, however high they hope to elevate man, however desperately they champion human beings.

It is possible only by a distortion of one side of human nature

These are not merely large statements that can be supported only by fragmentary evidence and loose interpretations. They are facts evidenced abundantly in both the theoretical and practical sphere of twentieth century life. On the theoretical level, for example, modern philosophy, neglecting the spiritual in man, degrades man to the level of an animal, a chemical or a machine; or, neglecting the material in man, degrades him to wraith-like proportions and exiles him from the world in which he must live. In either case, there has been an ignorance of man and so an ignorance of man's life. He has been tricked into attempting to live the life of an animal or to parody angelic or divine life; but it has been made consistently more difficult for him to lead human life.

Its result is the destruction of the whole of human nature

In the practical spheres if man is an animal obviously he can demand no more from himself than he demands from other animals; if made, such demands are hopeless of fulfillment. High ideals, noble goals, respect, honor, enduring love, self-mastery, justice and all the rest are illusions he is foolish to take seriously. Under these circumstances, why should not a man plunge into gangsterism to the contempt of the rights of all others; why should not a government be contemptuous of the human individual, of the human rights of its own subjects, what is there to hold it back from sheer brutality practised on the most immediately advantageous scale? Or, to go to the other extreme, why should men not despair in the evident hopelessness of trying to live an angelic life devoid of angelic equipment, why should they not mock at themselves as they absurdly pose on the throne of divinity? What motive is left For a man to struggle for success, for mastery of himself, for virtue and a goal worth reaching for?

Its goal is despair

To ignore one side of man is to make a monster out of him. To make him all angel or all animal, we must destroy half of him. And man can no more live in that condition than can a horse that has been split in half. His very animality becomes a thing of disgust to the animal world; his angelic parodies, a shock to the invisible world. The end of either mistake can only be a complete loss of the notion of a human individual, a sacred person, not to be sunk in a mass, a race, a nation, not to be debarred from contact with a world into which he has been born. That is, the end of either mistake must be despair. Man has one end and he was given a nature equipped for the attainment of that end -- and adequate to no other. Of course he must fail miserably if he is made to aim at an inhuman goal by reason of his conviction of inhuman powers to achieve a goal.

<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 13	Chapter Fourteen -->
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CHAPTER XIV -- THE WILL OF THE LORD OF THE WORLD (Q. 81-83)

1. A disturbing fact:
 - (a) The mystery of the human will.
 - (b) Irritation at the mystery.
 - (c) Facts of the mystery.
 2. The appetite of man:
 - (a) Fact of his appetite.
 - (b) Its harmony with universal order.
 3. The humanity of man's appetite:
 - (a) of his sensitive appetite:
 - (1) The fact of it.
 - (2) Its varieties.
 - (3) Its relation to reason and will.
 - (b) of his intellectual appetite -- the fact of it.
 4. The nature of man's will:
 - (a) Universality of its object.
 - (b) Necessary objects.
 - (c) Free objects:
 - (1) The nature of freedom:
 - a. Freedom and necessity.
 - b. Freedom and law.
 - (2) Proofs of freedom:
 - a. From the nature of human knowledge -- proximate source of freedom.
 - b. From conscience.
 - c. The moral argument.
 - d. Argument from divine government of universe -- radical source of freedom.
 5. Relations of will and intellect:
 - (a) Mutual movement.
 - (b) Mutual superiority.
- Conclusion:
1. Facts of man's appetite.
 2. A disturbing fact in the universe.
 3. A disturbing fact in human life.

CHAPTER XIV THE WILL OF THE LORD OF THE WORLD (Q. 81-83)

A disturbing fact

THE last chapter, this one and the next are dedicated to answering the question: what is man? In the last chapter, it was the essence of man and his faculties in general that were principally concentrated on. In this chapter, we shall examine in detail one of the faculties of man that easily stands out as one of the most momentous facts in the universe -- the motive power of man's human actions, his human will.

The mystery of the human will

From the beginning this human will has been one of the great mysteries of the universe; and it will so remain until the end, particularly to those who are committed to a statement of the universe in terms of physical formulae. To this clerkish mind, the will is a fractious pupil disgracing the whole institution by its wanton irregularity. It escapes all measurement, all calculation. As though it were a grinning imp tossing the clumsy giant of the universe about with a kind of spiritual ju-jitsu, the will expends, with insolent ease, enormous energy in ruling the complex kingdom that is man and his

possessions; yet no trace of that energy has been recorded. In a world bound by strict necessity, the will alone is totally unpredictable; in a systematic universe, it stands out incorrigibly individualist. It remains an unknown quantity as far as physical science goes; it cannot be managed but only carefully coaxed and yet, while itself so utterly intangible, it is quite capable of managing the physical world about it.

Irritation at the mystery

No wonder it has driven the wise men of our time to despair. It simply does not fit into the kind of orderly picture our times demand; so it has become necessary, to save the picture, to destroy the will, to banish it from the earth by a scientific *fiat* -- which, exasperatingly, itself is a product of a human will.

As a product of the human will, this very banishment has the will's refreshing variety about it; as though to underscore the huge joke of the will reading the decree of its banishment in a terrifying voice and at the same time listening to it in an attitude of abject terror, trudging off in heart-breaking loneliness and at the same time cozily sitting at home surrounded by friends. Some men have accomplished this banishment by reducing the will to mechanically monotonous regularity and necessity which, they insist, is the universal movement of all that exists. Man does what he does because he cannot help himself, rising and falling, scurrying to escape or rushing to attack drifting or driven but all the while jammed compactly into the serried ranks of the physical where no one gets out of step. This is the camp of the determinists, no little group even in our day though they belong, properly, in the nineteenth century.

Another group effects the banishment by a wave of the wand of science to make all things in the universe as unpredictable as the movements of the will of man. This is the modern school of indeterminism which insists there is no necessity whatever in the world; the apparent regularity is the product of our mathematical minds. The technique, however, is far from modern; for it has been an old, old trick, when faced with a problem, for men to solve it by denying first one then the other extreme of the dilemma.

A much more widespread type of banishment today aims at a kind of compromise by making man merely an animal, enjoying no more freedom or responsibility than the others, but no more machine-like than the others either. These are the evolutionists who have carried our popular journals and newspapers by storm and have taken charge of educational philosophy to corrupt the foundations of Christian civilization utterly.

Finally, a group less bold than the others, destroys the human will by insisting that human knowledge is limited to particular, sensible things. We can know only what can be measured and weighed and observed scientifically; so man's appetite is limited to particular, sensible things to the exclusion of freedom.

All this makes for as orderly a picture as that of a city which insists that there be none but green traffic lights lest the citizens become confused. But it is not a pretty picture any more than a completely gray world would be a pretty world; nor is it a true picture, a fair representation of either the world or of men. These pseudo-scientific philosophers have falsified the accounts, writing down "identity" for "order" to obtain a neat result at the expense of facts.

Facts of the mystery

The facts must be met if we are to understand human life, if we are to understand and direct our own actions. It will not do to excuse ourselves from murder on grounds that would excuse a tree from growing or a cat from stretching; as a matter of fact, we know the act is entirely our own. The facts are that we have a common relationship with the animals; and, no less clearly, that we have the unique gift of freedom. No matter how these two appear to confuse the orderly world we have

drawn up for ourselves, both must be faced, for we are not trying to lull ourselves to sleep with bedtime stories but rather to light our anxious steps with the lantern of truth.

The appetite of man: Fact of his appetite

Man's motive power is certainly not that of a machine: he has an appetite. In an earlier chapter, appetite was described as the driving force of every creature in the universe; its object was pointed out as the good, possessing the smack of desirability that draws all things to action. In irrational nature, it is called natural appetite, the obedience to natural physical laws; in the animals, sense appetite, or obedience to natural physical laws operating through animal instincts; in man, it is human appetite.

The necessity for a distinctly human appetite will be clearer if we understand the close connection between the inclination of appetite and the form or determining principle. Every inclination follows some form; it may be on a least of woven steel links or the leash may be as physically intangible as a divine command, but inclination must, of its very nature, be tied up with a form. A moment's thought makes the thing obvious; surely inclination, if it means anything, means a tendency in a determined direction and the principle of determination is precisely form. A difference in forms, then, demands a difference in inclinations to desirable objects, that is, a difference in appetite. Thus, inanimate creation and plant life possess only their own physical form, their own substantial principle of unity and life, with the result that they follow, necessarily and rigidly along the lines of that one form in entirely predictable fashion.

A creature that can know, however, possesses more than its own form. It cannot, of course, have many substantial forms, many principles of unity and life; but it can have, over and above its own substantial form, the forms of other things, forms received into itself by knowledge, determining knowledge and appetite over and above the determination given them by their own substantial form. The animal, for instance, by his sense knowledge receives particular forms -- the form of a bird, a bone, a man; by that knowledge, a wider scope, a greater difference of object is immediately given to the animal's appetite. Man, by his intellectual knowledge, possesses the universal, the specific, form of things and immediately has an infinite horizon thrown open to his appetite. To reach out to that infinite field of good revealed by the universal character of intellectual knowledge, there must be a distinctly human appetite, an appetite distinctly proportionate to the knowledge of man.

Its harmony with universal order

Nor is this an upheaval of the universal scheme of things. This is not making a special exception from nature for man; rather it is an insistence on facts as the manifestation of an order worthy of the supreme wisdom of the architect of the universe. Man is different in his appetite, precisely because he is different in his nature. Why should he be moved as the stones or animals are since he is neither a stone nor an animal? There is the same beautiful hierarchy in appetite that there is in being, in perfection, within the universe; the same gradual revelations of the beauty and perfection that is God's.

The humanity of man's appetite: Of his sensitive appetite

This is really the key to the apparent contradiction of man's appetites, the often insisted on war between the flesh and the spirit. As a matter of fact, man has two appetites for his nature is a complex of matter and spirit; he receives the forms of other things, not only in an intellectual, universal fashion but also in a particular, sensible fashion as do the animals. He has, then, two appetites: a sensitive and an intellectual appetite; but both are human, both belong to man, neither is in any way a detraction from his human nature. Indeed, the denial of either one is tantamount to the destruction of the humanity of man.

The fact of it

Because it is so hard to deny the fact of wet feet or too salty food, there are few today who question our possession of sense knowledge. We do see the difference between a brown hat and a purple one, we hear a flat note in an otherwise splendid aria, we do smell the toast burning much too late to do anything about it. In other words, we, too, possess those particular species that come by the way of sense, the particular forms of things other than ourselves. As appetite marches in the footprints of knowledge, as the inclinations follow the forms possessed, there can be no doubt of our possession of a sense appetite. We can, and do, dislike burnt toast or flat notes, brown hats or purple ones; we can, and do, enjoy the brisk air of a fall morning or the lazily relaxing rays of a summer sun. You may, here and there, find a philosopher today to deny this; but there is a very good chance of your meeting him in Florida for the winter or in Maine for the summer.

The sense appetite, like all appetite, has to do with good as its proper object: either it sits back in lazy enjoyment of the good possessed, like a stuffed puppy dozing by a warm fire; or it watches with nervously alert eyes for a chance to seize the good that is not yet had but must be had. In the latter case we have the reason for action; man's inclinations ate no more than appetite's gentle hints or nagging demands that leave him little doubt as to what he still lacks and that give him little peace until he sets out on the long quest for the good.

Its varieties

This is the general object of the sense appetite. There is, however, a striking difference in the particular objects of sense appetite. A starving man will fight for a scrap of food just as readily as a well-fed man will relish the last dainty delicacies of a banquet; a man will, in other words, not only reach out for and enjoy the good things, he will do the hard bitter things that seem to go flatly against his inclinations for good and pleasant things. There are, then, two faculties of sense appetite: one runs after the good precisely as good or runs from its opposite; the other is the fighter of the sensual side of our nature, the champion of the milder (concupiscible) appetite and its objects. This faculty, the emergency (or irascible) appetite, deals with good but precisely as difficult; its work is the conquest of difficulties and the overthrow of impediments to the milder appetite.

A detailed treatment of these two sense appetites is proper matter for the second volume of this work. Here it will be enough merely to catalogue them. Thus, from the mild appetite there spring such fundamental inclinations as: love and its opposite, hate; desire and aversion, relative to an absent good or evil; and delight and sorrow, the first of which is rest in the possession of good, the second, repugnance to the presence of evil. From the emergency appetite come hope and despair, daring and fear. and, finally, anger. It is sufficient, for the purposes of this volume, to note the distinction of these appetites and the common source of all the inclinations in the fundamental ones of love and hate. The whole subject of the passions of man, that is, of the movements of the sense appetite, is taken up in exhaustive detail in the next volume.

Its relation to reason and will

None of these are evidences of intellectual appetite. In fact, there very often is sharp conflict between the intellectual appetite and these sensual appetites as many a man can testify when, holding desperately to his moment of high resolve, he refuses a cigarette though his mouth is watering for it, our attitude towards this conflict of appetites raging within us is a penetrating indication of the interrelation of these appetites; the fact is, we are not neutrals, not even belligerent neutrals, we are intensely interested in seeing the intellectual appetite come out on top. Thus, when a man becomes violently angry he is "beside himself"; a man is "crazy with pain," "paralyzed by fear," and so on; that is, these sensual appetites have usurped complete control with the result that this man is no longer a man, he is not himself, he is, for the moment, an animal. We naturally expect the sense appetites to be subjects in the kingdom of man; wizen they are not, their victim is in the grip of animal appetites, the supreme motive power of his actions is not that distinctly human appetite that

is will, but one of its subjects.

These sense appetites do, as a matter of fact, obey reason and will. Normally we do not fly from evil as a sheep does from a wolf, in blind panic; we do not run in out of the rain as a cat does. We might even deliberately stay out in the rain for reasons that never occur to a cat. The movements of our sense appetites are not the instinctive reactions of an animal; when they are, we do not boast of them, we are ashamed. They are made to follow the reasoning of an intellectual being; that is what we mean by self-control and why we are rather proud of it as evidence of our more thorough humanity, of our having lived up to ourselves.

Not that the sense appetites always obey reason. Anger can flare up so suddenly as to take control in a surprise rebellion; animal love can gnaw away the foundations of resistance so slowly and imperceptibly that the fort caves in on its defenders when at last they rush to the defense. The soul has an utterly despotic control over the members of the body that move at its command; a hand or a foot does not rebel against the soul's orders to move. But the reason and will exercise only a kind of political control over the sense appetites; these latter can rebel, and they do.

The reason for this difference is fairly obvious. The members of the body are executing faculties, they fulfill orders; of themselves they have no sovereignty, no power of movement. But the sense appetites have a kind of sovereignty of their own. They are made to move at the command of man's deliberate will; but they are also moved by sense objects and phantasms of the imagination. A man can awaken chagrined at having his dream-banquet interrupted by an alarm clock before he had taken a bite, or he can awaken with a sigh of intense relief at escaping the horrors of a nightmare; and all this, after he had tucked his mind away for the night in, the heavy blankets of sound sleep.

Of his intellectual appetite -- the fact of it

Man has his own substantial form to which responds his natural appetite; he has the sensible, particular forms gathered by sense knowledge to which his sense appetite responds; and, finally, he becomes all things, he possesses the forms of all being, by his intellectual knowledge and to this his intellectual appetite or will jumps to answer. Again, this appetite, like all appetite, deals with good, that alluring perfection that spurs to action or that, once possessed, quiets the clamors of appetite. But, since it follows the universal, intellectual knowledge of man, its proper object is that universal good that is known by the intellect. It can, of course, reach out for any particular good; but only the universal, the supreme good is worthy of its mightiest efforts and this alone quiets all the will's desires.

The nature of man's will: Universality of its object

Good in general, or, to give it another name, what fulfils desire, happiness, is the adequate object of the will. By its very nature, the will must march under this standard. Absolutely nothing can be done precisely under the aspect of evil; the murderer must see his crime as somehow good, the lonely schoolgirl must get some good out of her prolonged homesickness or there would be no murders and no blues. Whatever the particular goal to which the will runs, it must be painted in the colors of happiness; once a set goal is chosen, then the means necessarily connected with that goal take on some of its necessity and must be willed. If a man sees happiness in wealth, in pleasure or in God, then the things necessarily leading to wealth, to God or to pleasure cannot be objectionable to him, they cannot take second place until the goal itself has been changed. To put it in the concrete, it is impossible for a man to commit mortal sin without abandoning God as his ultimate happiness and final goal; that is precisely the terrible tragedy of mortal sin, that it does involve abandoning God for some glimmer of His beauty in the pool of the world.

Necessary objects

Over and above this natural and absolute necessity of willing our end, our perfection, the necessity

which is the starting point of all voluntary action and which is itself entirely agreeable to the will, there is another necessity to which the will is entirely subject. A graphic statement of this necessity is seen in the willingness with which a man abandons his wardrobe in order to escape from a burning hotel. The necessity is, of course, hypothetical; he could have remained on guard protecting his clothes until he was burned to a cinder, but if he wanted to live, the clothes had to be left behind. Undoubtedly there is an element of unwillingness in this; but, at the same time, there is a very complete Willingness; he does not make his exit from the flaming hotel like a sulky boy but like a scared cat. He willed this particular end of escape, and, willing that, he necessarily willed all that was involved in the task of escaping, even to the abandonment of a hard-won wardrobe.

Free objects: The nature of freedom

There is something of this element of unwilling willingness in man's embrace of any particular good, for one can not be had without the exclusion of others; it is only in the embrace of the infinite good that a man abandons all else and gains everything, only in that supreme good is every other good to be found. Experience is witness enough, however, that the note of reluctance is not a serious impediment to man's choice from the glittering counters of goodness. In both the natural and the hypothetical necessity, there is a thorough voluntariness that tones down the strong, severe lines of necessity's stern face. In coercive necessity, the necessity of brute force, sternness is changed to savagery. There is nothing here to attract the will. Yet, for all that, it is a puny thing; for neither is there in it anything strong enough to bend the fragile will of the weakest of men. A man can be beaten to a pulp, tossed into a gangster's automobile, hustled into a concentration camp or even nailed to a cross; he cannot be forced to will these things. For one of the mysteriously strongest things about the human will is that it cannot be moved by any force in the world; there is an inherent impossibility in the notion of applying leverage to a spiritual thing and no one knows this better than a sinner. No one but himself and God knows how absurd is the plea that he has been forced to commit sin.

Freedom and necessity

Granted that there are some things that must be willed necessarily by a man, it is quite clear that not everything he chooses has been willed necessarily. In other words, man, in regard to some things, enjoys a gift unique in the physical world -- the gift of freedom. Let it be well understood, however, that freedom here is not used in the same way in which it is proudly displayed today in such modern catchwords as "freedom of speech," "freedom of the press" or "freedom of conscience." Freedom does not mean the ability to do anything, say anything, believe anything; that is not freedom but freedom's abuse. That this is an abuse and not freedom itself is readily recognized when the thing is brought down to the concrete; it is not freedom that allows an orator to harangue a crowd into committing adultery With this man's wife; nor is it freedom in whose name newspaper advertisements and full powered propaganda urge men into an abuse of love and a flouting of nature; neither is it freedom's privilege to undermine the very social structure without which men cannot live. Freedom does not mean that a man has been turned loose on the world, released from all order, all direction, from all purpose; that is not a privilege, it is a condemnation to a bestiality far surpassing the animality of the brutes.

Freedom and law

To apostles of license, every law is an insult to every individual citizen; every restriction is a cause for rebellion and men can live only so long as they have the physical force to maintain that life against all their fellows. Freedom, rightly understood, means no more than the right to choose between means to an end. There is no question of freedom relative to the end of man's activities, just as there is no question of freedom relative to that end once it has been attained in heaven. Freedom is man's badge of responsibility; it is a consecration to obligations rather than an exemption from all that demands courage and sweat and tears in its accomplishment. Freedom revolves entirely around

the means to an end. Consequently the things that are not means, the things that lead a man away from his end rather than to it, have no place in the essential notion of liberty but in the description of its degradation and abuse. It is true that a man can commit murder, but that does not mean that he is free to murder; in committing his crime he is not exercising his liberty, he is abusing it.

For free will, like every other faculty of man, was given him that he might attain his full stature, his full perfection; that is, that by it he might attain his end. A deliberate aversion from that end is as revolting a perversion as the Epicureans' resort to the vomitorium after a full meal. This faculty of will was not created to make a mockery of order but to make order's perfect accomplishment a personal achievement.

Nevertheless it is true that freedom does denote the absence of necessity. Is it necessary that we have a choice between two objects? Does, for instance, the fact of my town possessing only one newspaper destroy my liberty relative to newspapers; or, if there is only one theatre in town, is my liberty done away with? Evidently if there are more than one newspaper or theatre, I am free to choose between the competing purveyors of news and amusement. But I am no less free even when there is only one: I can read or refuse to read, I can go to the theatre or stay at home; in other words, the fundamental liberty of acting or not acting remains. The theologians call this the liberty of exercise, in contrast to the liberty of specification which involves two or more objects; it is this liberty of exercise which is absolutely essential to freedom. This is the freedom that we enjoy before every act and even during that act; for always we have the power to stop willing. It is, then, not at all necessary that the choice between good and evil be offered a man if he is to retain his freedom; indeed, there is much more opportunity for freedom's exercise when evil does not enter into the picture at all, much less chance for it when evil is rampant.

As an immediate consequence of this we are driven to a sane view of law. For in this light, law is not an infringement of liberty but rather a guarantee and protector of it; the Ten Commandments, for example, ruling out the things that draw us away from our end, do not destroy the material of liberty but concentrate our attention upon it. A police force which effectively operates against crime, protects liberty. License, unrestricted action in whatever field, be it license of the press, of the radio, of speech, of morals, is the most serious menace liberty has to face; for license not merely abuses the freedom of the one guilty of it, it directly and immediately interferes with the freedom of others, preventing their steady progress to their end by their free choice.

Proofs of freedom

If this freedom of men were being attacked by some jealous race that did not possess the gift itself, such an attack might be understandable. But when men themselves are eager to deny this faculty, when they battle with all the energy of fanatic strength, with all the ingenuity that can be commanded by wealth, educational advantages and institutions to champion the abuse of this gift, then we are facing a perversion that outdoes the excesses of paganism. Today it is extremely necessary to defend the freedom of man from a vast army of intellectuals in America. What proof have we of freedom?

From the nature of human knowledge -- proximate source of freedom

The immediate source of man's freedom is to be found in the intellectual character of his knowledge. By this knowledge, man is the only spectator on earth of the drama of the universe; he can enter into the inmost nature of everything else and he can step outside of himself, his is not the provincial view of the animals, but the cosmopolitan outlook that knows values and their limitations because it has the material for comparison. All appetite follows in the steps of knowledge and is proportionate to it, for appetite of itself is necessarily blind. All the universe moves to a goal: some of its creatures with slow, plodding steps in the dark, guided by the knowledge of the governor of the universe; others move from object to object as the flashlight of sense knowledge lights up the beauty of this

sensible thing and leaves the rest clothed in the darkness of mystery; but men, with the floodlight of intelligence lighting up the whole scene see clearly the obstacles of evil, the helps of particular goods, but over and above they see the goal to which they race. The appetite proportioned to this intellectual knowledge can be satisfied with none of the attractions of the roadside stands; it drives on to the goal of all, the universal good that only man can know.

To look at it from another angle, the fact that we can know the universal enables us to appreciate the limitation, which is to say the imperfection, of the particular. We can see the good in the particular and take it to ourselves; or, seeing its limitation, its undesirability, we can pass it by. It is precisely this limitation of everything less than the supreme good that makes it as impossible for the particular goods to force the will as it is for a thimbleful of water to fill a twelve-gallon pail. It is only a good without limitation, without weak points, without undesirability that is proportioned to the will; only this is an adequate object, only this can move the will necessarily. Faced with anything less, the will is free.

The moral argument

On the moral side, an obvious argument for freedom is offered by several commonplace facts. Clearly, it is silly to fine a man for speeding if he is not the driver at all, but one driven by necessity. It is a stupid gesture to reward bravery if courage is merely the violent interaction of chemical reagents. It is absurd to exhort man to control his passions, to strive for goals, to hold fast to ideals if in all this he has no choice. In other words, the advice, counsels, exhortations, commands, rewards, punishments, the whole juridical process presuppose the freedom of man.

In fact, the whole question of morality and moral standards is irrational without the fact of freedom. If a moral law means anything, it means a law that does not force but obliges, a law whose subjects are capable of violating it in contrast to the subjects of a physical law. A legislature does not rule on the size of the ears of subjects, though it does insist on the payment of taxes. A modern philosopher, insisting that man is an animal, a chemical or a machine and at the same time talking of right and wrong, decent and indecent, noble and disgraceful is stultifying himself; the college student, accepting the principles of such teaching, is doing the rational thing when he throws all morality overboard.

From conscience

A much more intimate proof of our freedom comes from the undeniable fact of our realization of that freedom, from the testimony of psychological conscience. Before a man lights a cigarette, he knows he does not have to light it; while he is smoking, he is sure he can stop at any time; when the smoke is all over and done with, the conviction of his freedom remains. He knows he has not been pushed about by cosmic forces. A man knows he is guilty of wrong because he is so sure he could have done right; he knows this thing should be done here and now, but he is just as sure that he can refuse to do it.

Nor is he an eccentric, queer and lonely in his eccentricity. The same convictions are quite universal among men. Consequently, when a criminal pleads for mercy on the grounds that he could not help committing his crime, he is actually advancing a plea of insanity, at least of temporary insanity. A professor can hold forth on the theory that the heritage of society dictates human action or that neurones or reflex arcs are the real movers; but he will probably report to the college authorities any student who laughs aloud or strolls out in the middle of the lecture.

Argument from the divine government of universe -- radical source of freedom

There is, finally, the proof of freedom from the beauty, the order of the divine government of the universe. Everything else in nature is moved according to its particular nature; a cat never barks,

nor does a tree bite. Why, then, should man be the sole exception? Why should man be moved like a thing that is not human when he has human nature? Why should he not be moved in the human fashion, that is, freely? Why should man be subject to the necessary movement that regulates those whose knowledge is limited to the particular or which have no knowledge at all, when he has a universal horizon that is an image of the divine horizon? Why should his appetite, capable of the universal, be forced to desire what is so plainly imperfect? In other words, as we saw in the chapter on the divine will, God is the radical source of our freedom by His divine government of the universe; we are free because the power of His will reaches out to all that is real, not merely to the creature, not merely to the action, but also to the mode in which that action is placed, to its freedom or its necessity. The first mover, when it is a question of moving man, moves him according to his human nature -- freely.

An interesting point comes up here indicating the power of a lie if it is big enough and told often enough. Of recent years, it has become the fashion to look upon modern philosophers and educators as the champions of man while the Church is considered a reactionary enemy of all that is wholesomely human. Yet, if one were to run down the list of truths that every Catholic must hold as infallibly true, he would find such things as this: man is a creature of body and soul, his intellect is valid, it can certainly know truth, his will is free, he is in command of his life, one might well wonder -- who is my neighbor?

Relations of will and intellect

The interrelation of intellect and will is a matter to be unraveled at length in the second volume of this work. It must, however, be mentioned here because the intimacy of their interaction is obvious from what has been said; and the fact of that interaction presents the mind with a difficulty that cannot be slurred over. Since every appetite is blind and follows the steps of knowledge, evidently the will depends on the intellect for the object of its movement; a man cannot, for example, desire God as his supernatural happiness until God is known to him by faith. Yet the will is the principle of all movement in man, so that the intellect moves to its considerations under the motion of the will; it is entirely up to the girl herself whether she will consider her big feet and be downcast or her pert nose and be considerably cheered.

Mutual movement

The will cannot move until the intellect has shed its light, yet the intellect is moved by the will; certainly, this has the appearance of a vicious circle. Really, there is nothing vicious about it. The circle is broken by the admission of the obvious truth that the movement of one or the other must be first; granted that first movement, their interaction goes merrily on. That first movement is from the intellect, for it is fundamental that we must know what we are to desire. What moves the intellect to its first consideration? That first movement must come from an outside agent; and the only outside agent who can act directly on the soul is God.

Mutual superiority

In his comparative estimate of these two faculties, St. Thomas considers the intellect the nobler, at least in the abstract and in the perfect state of heaven. His reasons are solid. From the point of view of their objects, it is clear that the object of the intellect is more simple, more abstract; which is to say that the intellect's object is less tainted with particularity, and has, therefore, less of limitation, of imperfection about it. From the angle of man's goal, which is the beatific vision, the direct, intuitive knowledge of God, the nobility of the intellect stands out boldly; for the perfection of man, like the perfection of anything else, consists in the highest act of his highest faculty. The enjoyment or fruition of God, the will's part in man's happiness, comes by way of consequence, it is a kind of corollary of that beatific vision.

In this life the action of the will may well be more noble than the action of the intellect by reason of

the very nature of their objects. For truth, the object of the intellect, is in the intellect, while good, the object of the will, is in things. The practical consequences of this fact are momentous. Thus, St. Thomas could be an angel of purity while possessing an expert knowledge of impurity; a detective can have an exhaustive knowledge of methods of robbery and still be an honest man. In other words, the intellect takes everything in on its own level. What we know exists in us in our way, whether it be worms or God; knowledge does not elevate or degrade us, rather it levels things to the one human plane.

The will, on the contrary, does not take things into itself; it goes out to things. We become what we desire. If that be infinitely above us, we are lifted out of ourselves to that superior height; if it be beneath us, we are dragged down to the level of what we crave. If we place our goal in God, we soar to divine heights; if we revel in the pleasures of the animals, we are dragged down to the mire of animal existence and further, for we can think of ways of being more animal than the animals.

Conclusion: Facts of man's appetite

From this survey of the appetites of man we can understand that these appetites do upset the pretty pattern of uniformity modern philosophy has pieced together. They are disturbing factors in the universe and in individual life; they always will be. In fact, they are supposed to be. They are planned by the divine architect as restless springs of action that would allow a man rest only when the walls of heaven had been stormed and divine life itself shared. The aim of life and of the universe is not dull stagnation but high attainment; and these appetites are the motive forces driving us on to that high goal.

Our sensual appetites are not a den of iniquity nor a holy of holies. It is as much of an injustice to man to look upon these appetites as gods to be honored in clouds of incense as it is to throw up our hands in horror and view them as unclean things. They are neither one nor the other; they are the very homely, very human equipment of that image of God which is man. They are capable of great heights and equally capable of great depths -- but only at the instigation of a higher authority which alone is to be blamed or praised.

That higher authority is the deliberate will of man; a source of terrific potentialities and responsibilities, opening up terrifying prospects of failure, driving on to actions that only a courageous human heart could dare to try. But it is also the source of sacrifice, of the extravagance of love, of success, of virtue, of heaven. By that will God can be ours, but by it, too, we can throw in our lot with Satan.

A disturbing fact in the universe

The human will is a disturbing fact in the universe. perhaps because it is the supreme Fact. The crowned head can never rest easy; a subject world, whether within or without man, always holds possibilities of rebellion. But it is precisely this deliberate will that gives man dominion over the whole of creation, including himself. It is the key link in that beautifully forged chain of being that stretches from the crudest form of existence up through the glory of the angels to the splendor that is God.

A disturbing fact in human life

Of course it is a disturbing fact in human life. It is a constant reminder that we are human; and sometimes that comes hard. It would seem so much easier to look on our selves as machines, to lose ourselves in the dreamy softness of emotionalism, to let down the barriers to animalism very easy, very weak, and very cowardly. But if it is a constant goad driving us on to be worthy of our humanity, it is also a constant defense against the horror of despair and the filth of license. It boldly stamps all of human activity with the human trademark -- "mine"; the mark of control, of proprietorship, of pride as well as of responsibility.

The human will is disturbing for it makes us full sharers in the divine perfection: capable of knowing and acting as God does, through intellect and will; of sharing in the work of divine providence as no other member of the physical universe shares, completing that image of God in the physical universe. We alone, of all these creatures, have the power to rise to direct possession of God, For we alone, of all these creatures, have the power to rise in open rebellion against that God and continue in that rebellion for eternity.

[«-- Back](#)

A Companion to the Summa -
v.1, ch. 14

[Chapter Fifteen --»](#)

CHAPTER XV -- THE MIND OF THE LORD OF THE WORLD (Q. 84-89)

1. The puzzle of heights and depths.
 - (a) Nature's bases for mystery of knowledge.
 - (b) Pertinence of the problem of knowledge.
 2. Modernity and the problem:
 - (a) History of the modern view.
 - (b) Position of the moderns.
 3. The defense of knowledge.
 4. The nature of knowledge:
 - (a) Its characteristics: immaterial, immutable, universal, necessary.
 - (b) Its source:
 - (1) Negatively.
 - (2) Positively from sensible things.
 - (c) Its manner and medium:
 - (1) Abstraction
 - (2) The results of abstraction -- the intelligible species.
 - (d) The order of knowledge.
 - (e) The accuracy of knowledge.
 5. The objects of knowledge:
 - (a) In the sensible world.
 - (b) In the soul.
 - (c) Above the soul.
 6. Knowledge in separated souls:
 - (a) Distinction from earthly knowledge.
 - (b) Objects of this knowledge.
- Conclusion:
1. The shock of the problem.
 2. Significance of the answer:
 - (a) Relative to the universe.
 - (b) Relative to human action.
 - (c) Relative to participation in divinity.

CHAPTER XV THE MIND OF THE LORD OF THE WORLD (Q. 84-89)

The puzzle of heights and depths

MOUNTAIN climbing and deep-sea diving appeal to only a sporting few among men. There is a considerable danger in each, increased, perhaps, by the hint each carries of the tragic character of extreme height or depth to the human individual. He knows if he goes down deep enough he will be crushed by outside pressure; and if he goes up high enough he may suffocate from lack of oxygen before he explodes from lack of outside pressure, but suffocation is small comfort. Indeed, it is probably the element of comfort rather than the fear of danger that keeps most men on the prosaic level of smooth earth. Whatever can be said of the thrill of heights and depths neither can compare in sheer comfort with a sleepy street on a summer evening or a soft chair and a warm fire on a wintry night.

The most comfort-loving man cannot dodge all heights and depths; but he can dislike them wherever he meets them. Usually that dislike is prompt and unmistakable. Even though we have stepped into an express elevator of our own free will, its almost instantaneous plunge down thirty stories leaves us with a sense of incredulousness and blurred fright. It is not so much a matter of danger or discomfort as it is that we have simply come down too fast; we are not built on the express model, we labor up step by step and come down even more cautiously. Our minds work that way, our wills work that way and, as far as we can arrange it, all the details of life follow the same pattern. Put our arrangements are by no means sufficient to

cover the whole span of life. With no warning whatsoever, we look into the eyes of another and suddenly realize there has been a mutual plunging into the depths of a human soul: we are numbed and stumble away in a kind of dazed unbelief. Genius may labor over stubborn material for hours on end, then suddenly there is a Hashing insight that sends the mind into the heights like a frightened angel scurrying home; even genius is slightly dazed, incredulous, though its disbelief be hidden in a competent silence.

If we look down from the heights through the window of a speeding plane, railroads, ships, cities and forests look like toys; they can hardly be real -- again that note of dazed disbelief. If you can picture a man getting that same view without moving a foot off the ground, you have some idea of his incredulousness before the fact of his own knowledge. His mind puts him off to one side of the universe, or above it, giving him a plane passenger's view of the whole as if he were no part of it. Without any warning, that human mind plunges past the surface of men and things down to the very depths to reveal, not something about men and things, but men and things themselves; and in a fraction of time that defies analysis with an absence of intervening steps that jars us out of our apathetic plodding. It is no wonder that this thing of knowledge has been a prime problem for philosophers from the beginning; it is no wonder that they have approached the problem in a somewhat sour humor, irritated, almost angry at the speed, the mystery, the heights and depths of it.

Nature's bases for mystery of knowledge

Moreover, the problem has an immediate and crucial interest for every individual. For if it is true that appetite must follow knowledge, then it is precisely because of this mysterious, far sweeping, universal knowledge of man that human appetite surpasses that of the animals. It is because man can search the heights and the depths that he can be satisfied only by the supreme good. It is, then, the universal, abstract knowledge of man that is the immediate source and explanation of his freedom in the face of limited, imperfect goods; it is this distinctly human knowledge that gives him dominance over the physical world and himself; it is this that ultimately explains the responsibilities of human life, the possibilities of personal success and failure, of victory and defeat, of moral life and its ultimates of heaven and hell as being within reach of human activity. In a word, it is because man has a distinctly human knowledge that he has distinctly human desires and so distinctly human acts; that human life lies on a plane just below the angels and far above the brute world of matter. This, then, is no mere academic problem, this problem of knowledge; it is not to be shrugged off but to be painstakingly investigated.

Modernity and the problem: History of the modern view

It is not strange that the philosophy of our day has lost no share of the universal interest in the problem of knowledge. What is surprising is that the activity of modern philosophy should be centered chiefly in denying the humanity of man's knowledge rather than in trying to explain it. But the fact is plain. This opposition to the humanity of man's knowledge is one of the chief grounds for the rejection of the scholastic answer to the problem -- the so-called naive notion of the scholastics that the knowledge of man exceeds the content of sense knowledge yet takes its rise from the senses and the sensible world. The moderns have rejected one or the other of these two elements or the conjunction of the two. one school will insist that the world of sense is a world of illusions, it is the mind that we are projecting and playing with when we play the game of knowing the world about us; the other completely disregards intellectual activity, or tries to, reducing such activity to the world of the sensible, automatic, blind, instinctive forces. In this way the heights and the depths, the mystery and speed and all the rest are done away with by the simple expedient of blowing up the sensible world or of strangling the mind of men; quite a high price to pay for the comfort of level territory.

Position of the moderns

The technique of escape from the problem of knowledge is by no means new. It was tried when philosophy was young and many a time since; still the world goes on and the minds of men go on. But a

man who is trying to run away is not to be discouraged by previous failures; inevitably the technique would be tried again. The modern attempt can trace its intellectual roots to the beginning of the modern era when Descartes assumed his artificial chasm between the mind and the world of reality, an assumption that forced him to build the fantastic bridge of totally unwarranted parallelism. A fantastic bridge to span an assumed chasm seems fair enough; but men took it seriously.

Kant gave this assumption a philosophical flavor by apparently justifying it, when, with typical modern clumsiness, he rushed to the "rescue" of the humanity of man's knowledge against the positivistic attacks of Locke, Berkely and Hume. The rescue was effected by murdering the victim. Kant proceeded by assuming that what is not given *formally* in experience comes *wholly* from the mind; such an unqualified statement as "sugar is sweet" is obviously not given formally in experience for all sugar cannot be experientially tested for its sweetness, so the statement must take its rise wholly from the mind. Both of these elements of Kant's original assumption were then developed independently to their logical conclusion of naturalism and idealism. The problem of knowledge was escaped again by the same technique of denying or disregarding one or the other of its constituent elements, the world or the mind. Still there were the stubborn facts remaining unexplained: both the world and the mind refused to be snubbed.

Coming down closer to our own day, Bergson made a polite gesture towards intellect as he stabbed it in the back by his contention that the intellect was not an instrument of valid knowledge and reality was so fluid a thing that it could not be known without being stopped in its flow and so falsified. The result was that we had neither a worth-while mind nor a world with which we could come into contact. The intellect of man was not a valid investigator of the world of reality; it was a falsifier, a maker of useful (not true) concepts whose whole purpose was action. William James accepted the Bergsonian gesture with open arms, developed his Pragmatism (or disregard of truth in favor of utility), thus turning a valid scientific method of inquiry into an immensely popular and thoroughly worthless system of philosophy.

Today we reap the fruits of this wild sowing. For it is our age that has come sharply up against the express attempt at a thorough invalidation of the intellect and its activity or even a downright denial of the existence of the intellect. That means that we are heed with a denial of human knowledge, with all the consequences of such a denial for philosophy, science, human activity and human life. We are the victims of a modern "rescue" of men by modern "champions" of man's humanity.

The defense of knowledge

In an earlier chapter, it was shown that the Church had been forced to come to the rescue of the humanity of the very nature of man and to defend the freedom of human action. The same is true of man's knowledge. Just as the Church insisted that man was human, not animal, not angelic, not divine; just as she insisted he was master of his own actions, not the slave of blind forces within or without himself; so she insists on the humanity of his knowledge, the validity of his intellects. Man's knowledge is not the mere sense knowledge of the animals, it is not the innately perfect knowledge of the angels, it is not the sum total of all knowledge as is God's; it is the knowledge proportionate to human nature, to a spiritual soul informing a material body -- a rational knowledge taking its rise from the senses and the world of the senses.

The nature of knowledge

In this matter, the difference between these two, both claiming championship of man, is that the one not only admits the existence of the spiritual, it sees the spiritual, not as something extraordinary, not as supernatural, but as an integral part of the natural order; the other, impressed by the vividness, the size, the multiplicity and the constancy of the sensible world and sense impressions, cannot tear its eyes away from this fascinating part of nature and so can see nothing else. The nature of man is a startling thing in the universe; it is a fusion of the material and the spiritual, the link binding together the spiritual and material world. But man is not, from that fact, a supernatural creature, a freak in nature, an upstart that must be

reduced to a lower level. His knowledge, too, is a startling thing, taking its rise in the physical world and reaching to spiritual heights that far surpass anything in the world beneath man; but it is not, from that fact, an unnatural, preternatural or supernatural phenomenon, it is not to be treated as necessarily an illusion or an absurd paradox that defies understanding. It is entirely natural; and quite naturally it possesses such spiritual characteristics as immateriality, immutability, universality and necessity.

Its characteristics: immaterial, immutable, universal, necessary.

A man's knowledge of a stone, a tree or another man immediately leaps far ahead of the particular notes of this stone, this tree or this man and presents the knower with a concept that is universally valid, one true of all stones, another true of all trees, another true of all men. It is coin of the realm of truth that is accepted even in eternity. It is not only universal, it is as necessarily stable as the natures of those things known, because it is precisely those natures that are known. As long as a circle cannot have its nature changed and still be a circle, as long as man remains man, that is, as long as the essences of things cannot be falsified, this knowledge remains immutable.

That knowledge exists in a spiritual soul, in the immaterial faculty of intellect, in the only way in which it can exist there; that is, freed from the limitations of matter. It outstrips the contingency, the changeableness, the singularity of the physical world, taking on the characteristics of the spiritual world, yet faithfully representing the world with which it brings a man into immediate contact. There is indeed truth in the concepts of wetness, of beauty and of humanity; though it is not wetness but wet things, not beauty but beautiful things, not humanity but humans that have physical existence in the sensible world.

Its source: Negatively

Yet, in spite of its decidedly spiritual nature, it is a serious error to trace this knowledge to any but a source proportionate to that composite nature that is man's. Certainly we do not know things, as God does, by simply looking at ourselves, knowing our own essence. A concentrated and exclusive study of ourselves may teach us some surprising things, but the number of things it will not teach us is positively staggering; and, if we continue this one-sided study long enough, we shall end up by not even knowing ourselves. We are men, not gods. We could know all things in our own souls only if the things existed there beforehand to be known. They do exist in God, the divine exemplar, the model to which all things were made. We have only the norm proper to our nature, the substantial form which is our spiritual soul; it has the capacity to receive unlimited forms of other things by way of knowledge, but only the capacity. A savage of Tierra del Fuego can search his soul from now until doomsday, go into a very trance of introspection, and never come up with the knowledge of an automobile. In other words, we cannot know all things by simply knowing ourselves because we are not the cause of all things.

To a man whom the Lord has delivered up to study, the story of Catherine of Siena receiving profound knowledge through a miraculous infusion of ideas has an appeal that may well be tinged with envy. Not an hour of study went into her knowledge, no single difficulty kept her mind in turmoil for weeks, no book wore down her eyes, no error shook her judgment. Think of it! But do not think of it as the ordinary mode of acquiring human knowledge; that is the way the angels get their knowledge and men are not angels. It hardly seems necessary to argue the point, yet some men have been captivated by the joyous ease of innate ideas and argued that so men knew the world. If this were true, we would never be potential knowers for we would have our knowledge from the beginning. Then, too, there would be the insurmountable difficulty facing us, namely, that men born blind cannot know color and men born deaf cannot know sound. It might also be pointed out as somewhat strange that all men should forget all they naturally know.

Positively -- from sensible things

Our knowledge does not come pouring into our heads from some outside source such as Plato's separated ideas. Any teacher will testify that nothing can be poured into a student's head, nor even hammered in; the student has to reach out and feed his own mind. As a matter of fact, in such an hypothesis there would be no excuse whatever for man having a body; it would be at best an obstacle and at worst a prison, rather

than the essential constituent of his very nature.

Its manner and medium

The strongest argument against these dreams of easy human knowledge is the facts which clearly indicate that our knowledge takes its rise from sensible things. The apprenticeship of childhood is an absolute requirement for the mastery of adult knowledge. The sensible world acts upon our senses giving rise to that sense knowledge we have in common with the animals, writing its permanent record in the phantasms or images of the imagination. So far sense knowledge carries us and no farther. It is the gay knowledge of children, full of vivid colors, rippling sounds, swift movement, delicious odors and lingering tastes with none of the animal's fear to tone down its gaiety.

Abstraction

From this highest level of sense knowledge, intellectual knowledge takes its rise. That transition from the sensible to the intellectual, however, is not made simple by saying it quickly; it represents difficulties that have been too much for many a philosopher. For the phantasm is sensible, particular, concrete; moreover, no sensible thing can act on a spiritual substance, cannot bump it, squeeze it, tickle its fancy, or take it by the throat. How, then, explain the immaterial, universal, necessary concept in the spiritual intellect coming from such a sources.

Admittedly men start off with their minds a blank page; such knowledge as we have, short of a miracle, must take its rise from the senses. It is also unquestionably true that everything in the world of experience is singular and concrete, not universal; while our knowledge is obviously universal. Yet St. Thomas denies that the universals are wholly from the mind, as Kant would have it. That denial is precisely the refusal to admit an identification of "what is not given formally in experience" with "wholly of the mind." Much that we know is not given formally in experience, such a prosaic thing, for example, as the sweetness of sugar; but this does not make it wholly a product of mind. The universality of man's knowledge has some root in the concrete, singular world of experience.

The specific nature of this dog is the same as that of another dog or, indeed, of all dogs. It is precisely the common nature enjoyed by all dogs which makes this creature a dog and not a horse. In technical language, this means that the specific nature, or essence, of the concrete thing is negatively universal. The scholastics called this ratio or absentia; let us use a word with which we are now familiar and call it a form. It is differentiated in each dog by individual elements, the elements that contribute the "thisness" of the particular dog. This form of a sensible thing cannot exist in the physical world without individuating elements supplied by matter -- a fact that experience forces on our mind; we are not chased by a universal dog or introduced to universal human nature. But it is evident that the specific form itself is not averse to universality; it does, as a matter of fact, exist in many dogs at the same time.

To have this form in its universality, then, means no more than to have it without the individual elements matter has given it; the *universal form does exist fundamentally in things*. Can it be unearthed in some way from particularity, from the "thisness" of the concrete things. This is the work of the intellect, by the process of abstraction, to make formally universal what was only fundamentally or potentially so.

Since scholasticism has been put in the stocks, this process has become famous; it is one of the missiles most frequently hurled at the hapless scholastic head. All rumors to the contrary, it is not a surgical operation cutting apart the individual and universal elements; it is not a matter of slapping a universal tag on a patently concrete thing at our own subjective pleasure or necessity.

Abstraction is in no sense a separation; it is simply a distinct consideration of the form to the disregard of the particularity of this thing, somewhat as a man might regard the redness of an apple without consideration of its sweetness, or the softness of soap-suds without regard to their taste. It is the same trick mathematics uses in considering quantity without regard to beauty; or that art uses in considering beauty without regard to the mathematician's quantity. Obviously the scholastics have taken out no patent on the

process.

We have a faculty of intellect, called the active intellect, whose sole work is to throw light on the sensible image or phantasm to make the universal stand out from the particular as a spot-light makes one girl stand out from a chorus. This light, focused on the specific nature in the phantasm, enables the intellect to concentrate on its proper objects the universal nature of the thing, to the disregard of the particularizing elements of it.

The results of abstraction -- the intelligible species

The result of this distinct consideration, or this process of abstraction, is the intelligible species or form, representing the essence, ratio or form. More strictly, it is certainly not the universal nature existing in the mind in the same way as it exists outside; but it is the same nature existing in the mind in a different way. Whereas in the concrete thing, the dog, for instance, it exists physically, in the mind it exists intentionally; whereas in the dog it was only fundamentally universal, potentially intelligible, in the mind it is formally universal and actually intelligible.

The intelligible species or form is not a sheer luxury; it is indispensable for distinctly human knowledge. This concrete thing is certainly singular and our knowledge is just as certainly universal. If this concrete thing is ever to be known intellectually, it must be made actually universal, actually intelligible. Without such a universalization, the possible intellect (our other intellectual faculty) cannot produce the positive act of knowledge. Let us put it this way. Precisely because the possible intellect is capable of knowing all things, it is not determined to any one, just as the eye, because it is capable of seeing all colors, is not determined to any one. Without such determination there can be no knowledge, just as without some color there can be no sight. The determination of the intellect is by the intelligible species or form. Just as the form or essence gave the universal nature in the physical order resulting in the concrete dog, so it gives the universal nature in the intellectual order resulting in our knowledge of the dog. We might see the whole picture as a double sharing in the ideas of God: physically, in the order of existence, and intentionally, in the order of knowledge.

A common mistake that has turned many a philosopher against scholasticism centers upon the intelligible species. The notion has somehow got around that the scholastic is never in contact with the world: he knows an intelligible species, an idea, but not the world of reality. As a matter of fact, the intelligible species is not the object known; rather it is that by which we know the thing. It is not the object but the medium; just as light is not that which is seen but that by which color is seen, so the intelligible species is not that which is known but that by which a thing is known. We can, in fact, sail serenely through life without ever suspecting that we have a species, and be none the worse for it; but if we have no suspicion of possessing knowledge, we cannot sail through life, we shall have to be towed. It is only by the reflective, that is, the philosophic, consideration that we advert to the presence of species at all.

Nor does this make our knowledge exclusively universal, barring us forever from an intellectual knowledge of singular things. The *direct* object of our knowledge is the universal; the singular is no less an object, but it is seen *indirectly*, as we might see something from the corner of our eye without looking at it directly. It is, in fact, quite impossible for us to make use of any one of these intelligible species without adverting to the phantasm from which it was abstracted; so that in using any one we must indirectly, obliquely, consider the singular from which it arose. It is by direct intellectual knowledge that I know "man"; but it is also the fruit of intellectual operation that enables me to say "John Smith is a man." The knowledge of the concrete individual "Smith" is intellectual, but indirectly so.

There is no chasm between the intellect and the sensible world; rather there is identity. To know is, in a sense, to become the thing known; it is to have one's own form physically and the forms of the known things intentionally. Knowledge is a vital action, not a mere passive reception or an automatic response. It is a union so intimate that we cannot so much as consider our act of knowledge without considering the object known; we do not know the act of our intellect knowing, but the act of the intellect knowing

something.

The order of knowledge

As it starts off on the long, hard road of knowledge, the baby knows a puppy long before it recognizes the genus brute; for the first things we know are singular things, not universals. Sense knowledge must come first, furnishing the material for intellectual knowledge; and sense knowledge is of particular, singular things. Really, the infant has some vague, blurred knowledge of things at rest, things in motion and things colored, before it begins to play with the puppy. It passes from the mere potentiality of knowledge to actual knowledge; the medium between those two extremes is imperfect or confused knowledge. Thus a man standing on a hill and peering down a long road will first see something approaching; then he will be able to distinguish it as some animal, then as some man and finally he will recognize the individual traveller. The process is the same if considered from the angle of the time element; the child will distinguish a man from other animals before it distinguishes one man from another. In the intellectual order, the same holds true: first we get the more general notion; and only as knowledge gets more perfect does it become less general.

Our progress is necessarily slow, step by step, because the door of our minds will not admit more than one intelligible species at a time; some one or the other may contain many interrelated notions, as one mirror may reflect a roomful of people, but the intellect can no more be actualized by different forms at the same time than a man can run in different directions at once. If we were to store this consideration of intellectual knowledge right here, we would not have gone beyond what the scholastics call "simple apprehension," that is, the knowledge of things immediately perceived through intelligible species.

Of course we cannot stop here; this is only the first of three steps. First we grasp the essences of things; then we compare these forms one with another, tack on or deny certain properties, accidents, habits, circumstances, a process that is called judgment, the fertile field of everyday mistakes; finally, a comparison of judgments gives us the act which has given its name to our type of intellectuality the act of reasoning and it is here that philosophers are weighed and, not infrequently, found wanting.

The accuracy of knowledge

Until we get past the simple apprehension of the essences of things, there is no chance for error in our knowledge. The healthy intellect can no more make a mistake about the essences of things than a healthy eye can about color or a healthy ear about sound. The essences of things are the proper object of the intellect, the reason for which it exists; it is made precisely to know them.

Error in judgment and reasoning is not only possible, it is a fairly common fact. At least, many people, other than ourselves, frequently make mistakes. Judgment and reasoning involve composition or division; we can and do put the wrong things together or refuse to put the right things together. There is truth in the concept of a grumbler, as there is truth in the concept of man; but it may, in this particular case, be totally unjust to judge that this man is a grumbler in other words, we cannot make a mistake about the essences of things but we can be mistaken about the properties, the accidents and the circumstances of this or that essence. The bases of our mistakes in judgment are much the same as the bases of our mistakes in conclusions, though the principles from which we argue be correct; that is, we make the comparison too quickly, without consideration, without grounds for such a union, or through prejudice rather than on evidence, and so on.

Some men do make more mistakes than others, if for no other reason than because some men do not understand as well as others. It is not merely a matter of better physical equipment, more apt organs of sense, keener imaginations and better memory; but because of a distinct difference in the quality of the intellect itself. We can improve our minds. But no bit of magic can change them from the tabloid class into the intellect of an Aristotle or a Thomas Aquinas.

The objects of knowledge

The field of knowledge thrown open by intellectual activity seems almost limitless in comparison with the feeble knowledge enjoyed by the animals. If we keep our eyes fixed on the brutes, we might be able to persuade our selves that there is no knowledge superior to our own. The fact is, however, that human knowledge has its limits; rather than approach the question from this deflating angle, let us inquire just what we do know.

In the sensible world

As we have seen, we know particular things indirectly with an intellectual knowledge, by a kind of reflection on the phantasm of the imagination. We know necessary things, like first principles, laws of the physical world; and contingent things, like grandmothers, and school days. We can even know some future things, like eclipses or next week's blizzard; but we know these things, not in themselves, but in their causes as a man knows there is trouble in the offing from the scowl on his wife's face. As for future things like a laugh, a sin, a yes or a no, they can only be guessed at by us at a great risk of having our guess turn out wrong. To see in themselves the future things that proceed from Free causes is not the prerogative of men but of God.

In the soul

We can know our own soul, its nature and faculties, not by meeting them on the street or by abstracting them from ourselves, but from the acts they produce. The acts, for instance, of the intellect and will are known by reflection: we know that we know by considering the act of *knowing something*; we know that we will by considering the act of *willing something*. This reflexive power is our special gift, a gift proper to intellectual nature alone; we are the only ones who can stand aside and look at ourselves and our acts critically, with an almost disinterested objectivity, as an angel might look at the earth.

Above the soul

Things above us, like the angels and God, because they are completely free of all material are evidently not the proportionate, natural, direct objects of our knowledge. There is no point to our standing on tiptoe trying to snatch them into our minds directly; we must be satisfied to learn about them the long, hard way, by reasoning up from the material world we know so well. In this way we can know them, not comprehensively, not directly but, as in the case of God, by tracing His effects for the clues they give us as to His nature, stripping off the imperfections of the created world to get a glimpse of the uncreated, attributing all perfection to the one possible source of that perfection. This was, in fact, the procedure we followed in the very beginning of this book in treating the nature of God.

Briefly, then, the direct object of human knowledge is the essences of things abstracted from singular, concrete things. From this basis, all judgment and reasoning proceed.

For a complete survey of the problem of knowledge there still remains the question of knowledge after death, for the soul of man does not die and it is precisely in the soul of man that his knowledge is centered. Separated from the body by death, the soul has lost its medium for investigation of the physical world, indeed of contact with that physical world. The helplessness of the soul seems even more striking when we remember that we cannot make use of a single intelligible species without referring to the phantasms of the imagination; and, of course, these phantasms cease to exist with death.

Still, this separated soul is the same soul with exactly the same nature it had before death, retaining possession of all the intelligible species amassed during life; it is consequently a rational soul, proceeding on the path of knowledge by that process of comparison which is judgment and reasoning. To deprive an artist of color or a musician of all sound would be not nearly so tragic as to leave such a soul in a blank oblivion after death; it would be the most despairing, most frustrated of creatures. But how can it know?

Knowledge in separated souls

The answer to the difficulty is to be found in the fundamental truth that the mode of activity is determined by the mode of existence; thus the form of material things, when it enjoys a physical mode of existence, acts as the substantial form of a concrete thing, but when it enjoys an intentional mode of existence in the mind of man, it acts as the intelligible form of the intellect, causing knowledge. The separated soul has a different mode of existence than it enjoyed on earth; it exists without the body. Consequently, it should have a different mode of knowledge that, while not supernatural, is yet not the natural mode of knowledge of the soul when it is actually informing the body.

Distinction from earthly knowledge

The mode of existence the separated soul has is that proper to such separated spiritual substances as the angels. It therefore knows not only by the species gathered in life, using them as the angels use their concepts, but also by new species infused by God. Not that this new way of knowledge elevates the soul to a more perfect knowledge; in fact, this knowledge is inferior to that which was had and used by reference to the material part of man. The separated soul is like a little boy wearing his father's clothes, or a street peddler sitting in on a conference of European diplomats. This soul is sporting its big brother's mode of knowledge and is not quite capable of handling it.

The angels understand through fewer and more universal species, and quite perfectly; the soul, confronted by such a species, is like a man, totally ignorant of philosophy, forced to use the metaphysical principles of St. Thomas. He sees something in them, can make some use of them; but nothing like what St. Thomas could see in them and do with them. But precisely because these species are such angelic things, coming directly from God, they have the advantage of doing away with the necessity of physical contact with the sensible world, of being totally independent of distance, free of the necessity of reference to the phantasms of the imagination.

Objects of this knowledge

In that state of separation from the body, the souls know other souls, just as the angels do. They have some knowledge of all natural things, but rather a vague, confused knowledge; whereas the angels, with the same kind of species, have a perfect knowledge of all natural things. This confused character of the separated souls' knowledge -- due to the species being too big for them -- also limits their knowledge of particular things to a blurred vision, as though their intellects could not quite focus. Evidently more determination must be had than is to be found in the species themselves if a clear, distinct knowledge of particular things is to be enjoyed; there must be some other force focusing the intellect to the point where the details stand out clearly, such a force, for instance, as some preceding knowledge, some bond of interest, of love, of natural inclination to this particular thing, or a special ordination of God.

As a result, souls separated from their proper bodies have no natural knowledge of what goes on on earth. They can know particular things clearly only through the determinations we have just mentioned; and such determinations cannot do away with the fact of separation from the physical world and the souls' lack of natural contact with it. That the curtain which hides the doings of men might be drawn aside momentarily by a miracle is of course possible; that the blessed in heaven have a clear knowledge of the drama of earth supernaturally, through the essence of God, is quite true. But naturally speaking this is impossible to the soul after death.

Looking out over the vista of human knowledge, we can understand something of the dazed unbelief, the frightened incredulity of modern philosophers. The thing is a distinct shock; it goes up too high, down too deep. and with a speed that jars us out of the plodding pace of the material world. It is even a little irritating in its mysterious intangibility. The temptation is to sulk a little. like a man who sees something that simply cannot have happened but nonetheless does; he will not quite admit it, though he cannot deny it without admitting to himself that he is stubbornly fighting the facts.

Conclusion: The shock of the problem

The shock of human knowledge falls principally on the man who has focused all his attention on one part of the universe and made it impossible for himself to see the smooth harmony of the whole. He has studied the material side so expertly and intensely that he eventually becomes convinced that nothing else exists or can exist. It is almost too much to ask him to see the light of intellectuality as a great sun with rays streaming from it, for such a figure demands a view of the whole of the universe, not merely a part of it. Thus, in the very center, all things are understood by the one flaming sun itself, God knowing through His own essence; as we get further away from that center, the light becomes dimmer, less penetrating. The angels understand through a few of these powerful rays, and perfectly; man, as the rays get dimmer, needs many to light the way and then only imperfectly: finally, on the level of brute and inanimate creation, the light dies out altogether and things must be steered through the darkness by the hand of God.

To take the same universal view from the other side, we see the creatures which work towards their perfection and that of the universe without knowledge of their own, but solely through the impress of the knowledge of God. Up a step we have the animals seeking their limited ends through a particular knowledge of the senses which precludes freedom; man stretches forth to his infinite goal through the universal knowledge of intellect, seeing the goal and each step towards it, but laboriously, step by step, with many an error; the angels dart to the same infinite goal easily, naturally, perfectly with a complete and infallible knowledge; God Himself is that goal, knowing Himself, possessing Himself by His very essence.

Significance of the answer: Relative to the universe

No, man's intellectual knowledge is not a freak in a physical universe; it is but another strip in the film unfolding the beauty and perfection of God, a corner of a blueprint which fits perfectly into the universal plan of the divine architect, a link in the chain that binds the meanest of creatures to the absolute perfection of God. Intellectual knowledge is not a freak but a demand of the humanity of man, the rightful trappings of his state as lord of the physical world, sharer in divine providence with the divine ability of looking ahead, considering his goals, providing for himself and for others in that kingdom.

Relative to human action

This human knowledge, because it is so intimately a part of man himself, is an indispensable condition for human activity, intellectual or otherwise. Without that universal, necessary, immaterial knowledge, the physical sciences, philosophy and the arts are impossibilities; without that knowledge of absolute, universal truth there can be no freedom, no morality, no striving for heaven, no ultimate union with God for eternity. Only the possessors of intellectuality survive the inevitable death which stalks the physical universe. Only those who can know the wide stretches of the immaterial can taste eternal life With its eternal vision; all else must pass.

Relative to participation in divinity

It is only those who defend that intellectuality of man who can be counted among the friends of man and of truth; for only these are ready to face facts and to take up the burdens and privileges of humanity. Only those who accept the guidance of that intellectual beacon are worthy of the humanity which has been given them, only these take their place in the divine plans, and hold a valid claim to the title that belongs to man -- the lord of the world.

CHAPTER XVI -- EVE'S FAMILY AT HOME (Q. 94-103)

1. World memory of an age of gold:
 - (a) Tradition and mythology of Greeks and Romans.
 - (b) Place of moral factors in this tradition.
 2. Philosophical versions of this original age:
 - (a) A world of hate and strife (Hobbes).
 - (b) A world of unrestricted individualism (Rousseau).
 - (c) The modern world of mud.
 3. Principles for the investigation of the original state of man:
 - (a) The integrity of nature.
 - (b) Cause and essential notion of superiority of the original state.
 4. The individual in the Garden of Eden:
 - (a) His intellectual equipment and progress
 - (1) That of Adam.
 - (2) That of his children.
 - (b) His will his justice and his peace.
 - (c) His physical nature:
 - (1) His passions.
 - (2) Conservation of his life:
 - a. Food drink and vital actions.
 - b. Impassibility.
 - c. Immortality.
 - (d) His relation to other individuals--equality and inequality.
 5. Domestic life in the Garden of Eden:
 - (a) Difference of sex.
 - (b) Generation of children.
 - (c) Condition and care of children.
 6. Social life in the Garden of Eden:
 - (a) Necessity of political organization.
 - (b) Slavery.
 - (c) Dominion over the physical world.
 7. Physical surroundings of the first man:
 - (a) The situation of Paradise.
 - (b) Its inhabitants.
 - (c) Man's place in it.
- Conclusion:
1. Difference from the account of Genesis:
 - (a) In the pagan tradition.
 - (b) In renaissance philosophy.
 - (c) In modern materialistic philosophies.
 2. The significance of these differences:
 - (a) For an estimation of the nature of man.
 - (b) For an appreciation of the work of God.
 - (c) For a determination of individual possibilities and goals.

CHAPTER XVI EVE'S FAMILY AT HOME (Q. 94-103)

World memory of an age of gold

THE statement of man's evolution has been hurled at our minds so constantly and from so many different directions that we are apt to overlook the fact that this idea is fairly recent. Men did not always maintain that man began from a woefully inferior status and gradually worked up to his present perfection like the hero of a success story. For centuries men cherished a precious memory. They told, with poignant regret, the story of an initial happiness and perfection that was only gradually lost as men descended step by step to the present miserable state; whatever the century this "present" represented, it was always a miserable state for the old days were always best.

Tradition and mythology of Greeks and Romans

There are written records of such a memory dating back as far as nine hundred years before Christ,

Hesiod's *Works and Days*. According to that first of the Greek poems, the days of men were fittingly divided into ages of gold, of silver, of brass and of iron. That first golden age, an age quite distinct from the age of the heroes of Greek mythology, was a moral paradise; there was no sin in it, no injustice, no moral evil whatsoever, but all men lived in a delightful peace and harmony.

Much later, the Roman poet Ovid gave evidence of the vitality of this ancient tradition by recording the fabled division of the days of men, insisting again on the golden age as an age of faith and justice. Of course physically it measured up to an Italian ideal: an eternal spring with gentle breezes, rich harvests springing up spontaneously, with none of the unpleasantness of cold, ice or snow. The degeneration of man goes on steadily until the iron age (the "present" of Ovid) is reached. He describes it thus: "The last age was of hard and stubborn iron. Instantly all kinds of wickedness broke out in this age, of a more degenerate turn: modesty, truth, and honor fled, in place of which succeeded fraud, deceit, treachery, violence, and an insatiable itch to amass wealth."

Place of moral factors in this tradition

Throughout all these ages of the pagan tradition of an original state of perfection of men, the emphasis was steadily centered on moral factors. There was no question of man being driven down or up by blind, irresistible forces that left him stripped of praise or blame, even though the loss of the golden age was due to an overthrow of the reigning god, Saturn, and his replacement by Jupiter. The perfection of the golden age was seen as essentially a moral perfection; it depended on the absence of evil and was characterized by a profound peace and a harmony that echoed the deepest wishes of the human heart. In that age, men were happy because they were good; as that perfection became a memory, sin made its entrance on the stage of the world.

Philosophical versions of this original age

A world of hate and strife (Hobbes)

The precious memory was definitely abandoned when the renaissance philosophers attempted to picture the natural state of man in such a way as to support a political theory. The exceedingly fearful and timorous Hobbes, championing the English monarchy's power and protection, insisted that all men are essentially bitter enemies because their happiness consists in exceeding their neighbors. By nature, all were equal, all self-seeking; so that the natural state of man was one of terror, war and a supremacy held by might -- a condition of things that was particularly terrifying to a man like Hobbes. Men finally realized the futility of all this and the necessity of a common power to keep all in awe; they ceded their rights to the sovereign, not by a contract with the sovereign but by a contract between the subjects. They are now completely subject to the king.

A world of unrestricted individualism (Rousseau)

Rousseau went to the other extreme, insisting that men did not need a government to give them peace and happiness; all they needed was to be let alone. The theory of Rousseau might well have been expected. It was one of the periodic swings of the pendulum that had been throwing its shadow back and forth from the beginning. By one swing the position was reached that man was badly damaged somewhere along the line, some integral part of his nature had corrupted so that, as he now exists, he is essentially evil. At the opposite extreme, it was insisted that man had absolutely nothing the matter with him, needed no help from anyone in any line; he was in as good condition now as he ever was, as perfect as the day he was made. Rousseau, clumsy, ill at ease in society, plagued by complexes of inferiority and persecution, not only championed an absolute individual liberty and an emotional participation of life untrammelled, he attacked all authority. It is precisely because of authority, discipline and convention that man has been ruined; these things must be done away with. In his original state, man was good, as was nature and God. Man's original peace, goodness and innocence have been destroyed by human institutions. Both Rousseau and Hobbes denied the social nature of man in his original state; the one picturing society as a corrupter of human nature, the other as an artificial savior of man from himself.

The modern world of mud

With the advent of a thoroughly materialistic modern philosophy, the happy memory of an original state of perfection of man was doomed. What perfection man can claim must find its source in a purely material universe that certainly did not produce effects above the material. Man was an integral part of a completely material world, to be explained, examined and evaluated as any other part of that universe. Thus man is pictured as a product of an evolving process within that material universe, a purely material product whose original state was at worst a primeval slime, at best a brute animality; his present position is not due to a degeneration or a fall, but to centuries of a steady climb that has left him qualitatively the same as his animal ancestors.

Sin, faith, justice, morality had no part to play in the origins of man, as they have no serious part to play in his present life. The change (for the better) that has taken place in man explains itself; for it was the very process of change that brought about the improvement. Man is the result of a blind necessity, of the interaction of natural forces that need no explanation. No credit can be given him for his present or past condition; no hope can be held out for his personal future. He is caught in a relentless tide of progress without a goal and without a beginning; in that progress he is an unimportant phase.

Principles for the investigation of the original state of man

St. Thomas was familiar with the ancestors of the renaissance philosophers; he knew materialism in its earliest forms; the dreams and memories of the pagans were packed away on the shelves of his memory. But when he came to treat of the original state of man, he resorted to none of these; rather he was content to go to the factual account in the Book of Genesis, examine it, analyst draw out its implications, fill in its blank spots with reasonable hypotheses to give us a full picture of man in his first home.

The integrity of nature

Before plunging into the story itself, St. Thomas lays down some fundamental principles that give his whole treatment a unity which makes its rational character stand out strikingly. The first principle he insists on is that nothing that was natural to man was lost by man's sin. When we speak of fallen nature or of the wounds suffered by nature through the sin of Adam, we do not mean that human nature suffered a bad smash-up and was condemned to hobble through the ages a hopeless cripple. True enough, human nature was injured, but in the same sense that a man is injured when he is left naked by the roadside. Objectively, he is in the same condition as a man who has never had any clothes, though he certainly feels a great deal worse. So human nature now is in the same condition it would have been had Adam never received any extraordinary gifts; but it has been stripped of those gifts which Adam did receive. This is not a gratuitous assumption. There are sins enough in the world to give us material for a thorough check on the fact that sin, in itself, does nothing to destroy the integrity of human nature.

Cause and essential notion of superiority of the original state

By way of a second principle, St. Thomas points out that the cause of the original perfection of man was his original justice. That is, man was created in sanctifying grace with his soul completely subject to God; this subjection extended right on down so that man's sensible appetite was subject to his reason, and the physical world was subject to man. These two, original justice and original perfection, went hand in hand in Adam. They were, however, quite capable of separation, for one was within the order of nature, though not of human nature, while the other was above all nature. So, in the Blessed Virgin Mary, there was the same supernatural perfection and perfect justice as in Adam, with the same complete subjection of her soul to God; but without the accompanying extraordinary gifts of Adam's original perfection.

The individual in the Garden of Eden

The extraordinary gifts that went to make up the original perfection of Adam were not supernatural but preternatural; that is, they were not entirely above the powers of all created nature but they did not belong

to man by the principles of his nature. The immortality given to Adam, for example, was quite different from the immortality to be enjoyed after the general resurrection; this latter is something intrinsic, flowing from the body's participation in the spiritual qualities of the soul. While that of Adam was an extrinsic thing, supplied to the first man from an outside source. His immunity from suffering, or impassibility, was not that incapacity for injury which the blessed in heaven will enjoy because of the penetration of the body by the spiritual qualities of the soul; it was rather an escape from harm through prudence and providential care, an extrinsic rather than an intrinsic gift. Man's dominion over the created world followed the lines of his dominion over himself: as his sense appetite obeyed his reason, so did the animals obey his command; but, as he had no power of command over his vegetative powers, so neither could he command the vegetative and physical powers of the world, but he could use their help without impediment.

In other words, while the individual man in the Garden of Eden had considerable advantages over the individual man or woman of today, he was not in any way essentially different.

His intellectual equipment and progress: That of Adam

Adam started off the human race on its long life; as its proper starting point, he represented that race in its perfection. Just as he began with physical perfection -- without the bother of being born, growing up, developing his muscles and so on -- so he also started off with an intellectual perfection. In fact, this latter perfection was quite necessary in view of his position as head of the race and, consequently, as teacher of all who should come after him.

As the first human teacher, Adam brought an equipment to his task that has never been equalled since by any member of that noble profession. He did not see God directly, seeing the divine essence, for that is quite super natural and, once had, cannot be lost; that is, if Adam knew God in this way, he could not have sinned. Rather, he knew God as we know Him, but more perfectly. After all, he had none of the worries about bread and butter clothing and housing, not to speak of the family's future, that distracts the mind of man today. Moreover, the clarity of his insight was not the least bit clouded by passion. From the effects of God, particularly from the act of the human intellect and the nature of the human soul, Adam's mind rose quickly and easily to a knowledge of God. His knowledge of the angels was had in the same way. But it is important to notice that Adam knew these things and all others as we know them, through intelligible species.

As for his knowledge of other things, well, Adam had to teach and govern the human family and, obviously, he could not teach what he did not know. His natural knowledge extended to all those things that men are intended to know, that is, all those things implicitly contained in the first natural principles of knowledge. St. Thomas inclined to the belief that this knowledge -- an extraordinary gift not to the individual Adam but to Adam as head of the human race -- was an explicit, complete and perfect knowledge. Not that Adam knew every singular thing: that this stone would fall into this river at such a time, and so on. Nor did he know future free things, like the thoughts of men. His supernatural knowledge (his knowledge of the mysteries of faith) was limited to those things necessary for the correct government and guidance of human life in that original state of existence.

We do not have a full grasp of the intellectual stature of Adam unless we look beyond the rich deposit of knowledge given him to the use he could make of it. Many a deeply learned man is the answer to a swindler's fondest hopes; many an expert in one line is a simpleton in another. We make our mistakes through haste, prejudice, passion, insufficient evidence, in a word, because our reason is not in complete command of the situation. Adam's reason was in absolute command, command of his own kingdom and of the world; he was incapable of mistakes in judgment and reasoning. He was, then, a deeply learned, very wise and exceedingly clever man.

That of his children

If we were born in paradise, we would have had all the advantages of reason in full command; but we could not have looked forward to such equipment as was given to Adam as head of the race. There would

still have been school days, and plenty of them. We would have acquired our knowledge through the senses, we would have had to discover things for ourselves, be taught by others and so, bit by bit, pick up full knowledge. It would have been a much easier job, it is true, than it is today: {or nothing, either in ourselves or in the outside world, would have interfered with the process of learning -- no day dreaming, no laziness, no heat, cold, hunger, thirst or stomach-ache.

His will, his justice and his peace

For all his cleverness, Adam might have been a very unpleasant person, even a holy terror in the Garden of Eden, if he were not also a very holy man. As he was created, his will was good. Moreover, there would have been no point to God's delaying the gift of supernatural life, keeping Adam cooling his heels as he dawdled about the meaningless tasks of a purely natural life; Adam was created in sanctifying grace and, as he was destined to glory as the angels were, there was no reason why he should not have started off earning his reward immediately. In fact, this sanctifying grace and consequent total subjection to God were the foundation of the whole perfection of Adam's state.

With sanctifying grace, he had all the virtues, though, indeed, those that implied some imperfection never flowered into action until after he had sinned. How could he be penitent who had committed no sin; or what field was there for mercy in a place that knew no misery? The virtues that did bloom into acts produced acts that, considered in themselves, were much more worthy of merit than ours are; for the perfection of his nature removed all obstacles to grace and all possible imperfection in his works, whereas with us there is the constant pull of the sensible world, the difficulty of attention, the flabbiness of our will. Still, because our acts are sometimes so difficult to place, the very doing of them indicates a much greater willingness, even eagerness, than if they were produced with an ease that made close attention entirely unnecessary.

It might seem difficult to understand how a man as intellectually and morally perfect as Adam could have sinned if we did not know that the sublime perfection of the angels was not proof against sin, and if we could scrape up any sufficient cause of our own sins other than our own free will. The sin of Adam will be treated at length in the second volume of this work under its proper title of original sin. Here it is enough to notice that we are in no position to sneer at Adam. If we had been born in paradise we too would have been born in sanctifying grace, for that original justice of Adam's was a gift to the whole human species, it was not a personal thing for Adam alone; and grace was the foundation of original justice. We, too, would have had the fullness of virtue, as Adam had; and, like him, we could have lost it if we made up our minds to lose it. Heaven would not have been guaranteed, nor would hell have been an impossibility for us; such complete security comes only from the vision of God which is the end, not the beginning, of human life. Indeed, the odds are that some of us would have sinned even if Adam had never offended God; and our sin would have had the same tragic consequences for our children that Adam's had for his. We would have lost the extraordinary gifts for ourselves; of course we could not give to our children what we ourselves no longer possessed.

His physical nature: His passions

During their short stay in the Garden, Adam and Eve got on very well together. Of course they had human passions; they were human, after all, and passion is an integral part of human nature. That they were buoyant with hope, alight with desire, urged on by love was entirely a matter of their own free will, for these passions were under the complete control of reason. It must be admitted, though, that only some of the passions of the milder or concupiscible appetite -- love, desire, hope and joy -- had any place in Eden; the other passions -- anger, despair, hate, fear and all the rest -- presuppose evil and there was no evil in paradise. The battle between flesh and spirit, then, did not get started until the reign of peace that was a part of paradise had come to an end. There were no gluttons or drunkards in Eden, no one cowered in fear or boiled with anger, men were not beside themselves with passion, their intellects clouded, their lives swayed by the sensitive appetite. This was not the way men were started off on their earthly life by God.

Conservation of his life: Food, drink and vital actions

It is not certain whether Adam and Eve used forks; but it is certain that they took time out, now and then, for a bite to eat and a sup to drink. They did not have glorified bodies; in all its essential actions, their human nature was not different from ours. The natural consumption of energy involved in physical activity, the burning up of cells and tissues, demanded constant repair work by way of food and digestion. Moreover in the children, if there had been any, the necessity of growth would no doubt have produced the same prodigious appetites we see in children today.

The first couple might have been vegetarians for the little while they enjoyed this original perfection; on the other hand, Eve might have been an excellent cook and exceedingly proud of her skill. There is no way of outlawing steak from the menu of the Garden, for the use of animals for his own welfare is only a vindication of man's dominion over the animal world, not a proof of savagery. It might be argued that Eve would not have been condemned to the drudgery of cooking; but that is to overlook the fact that cooking is drudgery only to a blundering cook and to draw a purely imaginative, and false, picture of Eve languidly posed against a fitting background for all the endless hours of the long days. No woman can keep that sort of thing up all the time.

Impassibility

The natural consumption of energy was taken care of by ordinary food; but the gradual running down of the physical organism of man's body is not prevented by food, even by very good food, as we well know. In heaven, this natural mortality is provided against intrinsically when the soul communicates to the body not only what powers it has as a substantial form but also some of the properties it possesses as a spiritual substance. In the Garden of Eden, this natural mortality was temporally staved off by a special food, a food with special properties given it by God, the fruit of the tree of life. The eating of this food from time to time was to have kept man in his prime until such time as God took him to his eternal happiness in heaven; for the gateway to heaven from paradise was not death.

Adam and Eve did not have tougher skins, arms and legs that could not be cut off or lungs that could not become infected. The thorns on the rose bushes of paradise were just as sharp as they are everywhere else; and man's skin was just as tender. Adam and Eve were incapable of injury and sickness; but not because their bodies were somehow different from ours. Rather, this impassibility was an extrinsic gift, one that did not flow from the nature of man but came to him from the outside. In plain terms, man escaped injury and sickness by his own prudence and by the action of divine providence, just as many of us do today; only in that original state, this was the ordinary, the universal thing. In other words, man then had sense enough to keep his fingers away from thorns, to avoid the injurious things; moreover, divine providence assured him of not being taken unawares. It can be safely said that many a stranger in New York keeps divine providence a great deal busier than ever Adam did. Adam, of course, had the distinct advantage of his command over the animals; under such circumstances, it would not be much of a trick for him to maintain his seat on a horse or to cow a savage dog.

Immortality

Though they would be very nice things to have at the present moment, the impassibility and immortality of Adam are not to be compared with that which awaits us in heaven. Neither of these gifts totally outstripped the powers of nature. They are not to be considered as supernatural but as preternatural, that is, in the same class with such a gift as might be given to a farmer enabling him to take off after a chicken hawk by merely flapping his arms. Flying, you see, is not above all the powers of nature; it just does not belong to the nature of man.

His relation to other individuals--equality and inequality

Let us suppose for a moment that Adam had not sinned and, after all these centuries, we, as tourists, were to take a trip to the flourishing cities of these perfect men, would it be as dull an affair as standing for

hours to watch a mass production gadget roll out of a factory? No, indeed; on the contrary, we would be astonished by the variety in evidence there. One person would be brighter than another, one would have a stronger will, one would be bigger, another more beautiful, of different coloring, different individual attractions, more pleasing personality, and so on. Life would certainly not be dull; particularly as the minimum of any of these things would still represent the perfection that excluded all evil, all defect. There would be no beauty parlors or plastic surgeons. A girl would not have perfect eyes and a nose that had best be forgotten. No man would be so fat as to be too fat, or so thin as to look scragged. For perfection of types, it would be a kind of super-Hollywood, with none of the bitter tragedies of disappointment lurking under the surface. Human beings would, indeed, be unequal: different in sex, different in body, different in virtue, different in intellectual gifts. But none would be deficient; all would enjoy that special equality that makes every man perfect and every man a sovereign being.

Domestic life in the Garden of Eden: Difference of sex

The diversity of sexes in man's original state is plain from the account in Genesis. That it should have been so is plain from human nature itself: with only one sex, the species would have been incomplete, indeed, the individuals would have been incomplete as the sexes complement and perfect one another. So Eve was given to Adam as a helper, particularly in the work of generation.

Generation of children

There would, of course, have been generation in the Garden of Eden. Thomas thinks this is true beyond all doubt, though it might be argued that, since generation is for the maintenance of the species, it was unnecessary in this state where men did not die; or, at least, it would have been sufficient to restrict the generative act to Adam and Eve since they were to live forever. Such argumentation overlooks the fact that the individual man is much more important than as a mere means to the good of the species. Nature intends the enduring and each man and woman, by reason of an immortal soul, is a much more enduring thing than any species however complete. In other words, the purpose of generation is not only the duration of the species but the multiplication of individuals within that species. As for the notion of restricting generation to Adam and Eve, St. Thomas says that it is as much a part of man's nature to live the domestic life and have children as it is to eat; so much so, that in the Garden of Eden there would have been no sterility, no perpetual virginity, everyone would have married. To this end, it would have been necessary that there be as many boys born as girls; Thomas thought that the control of the sex of the child would have been in the power of the parents, thus eliminating months of maternal anxiety and guesswork. At any rate, there would have been children born in those days, and born in exactly the same way as they are today; for, from the very beginning marriage has been a holy thing. However, the physical difficulties and pain of childbirth would have been avoided by man's preternatural gift of dominating nature and of impassibility.

Condition and care of children

Certainly there would have been no danger of the domestic life of paradise going on the rocks through sheer ennui. Couples there would not be driven to non-existent divorce courts through the boredom of having nothing to do but look at each other. There would have been children -- and that immediately accounts for many hours of work. For these children would be as children are today: helpless, in need of care, nourishment, education and training.

There would have been work outside the home, too, something to take care of Adam's spare moments. The biblical account tells us that our first parents were to guard and work the place of paradise. Work, it seems, is not something man was meant to escape; when he succeeds in dodging it, he is inevitably miserable. This work, whether of Adam or of Eve, would have been something like the born mother's joy in her children, the chef's artistic pride in a pot of stew, or the book-keeper's delight in his hobby of gardening. It would not have been laborious, distasteful and fatiguing; but rather a joyous source of pleasure. The reason for assigning work even in paradise seems quite obvious; man needs work for the

fullest development of his powers and, indeed, for the full perfection of his knowledge, at least for the experimental discovery of just what man himself can do and what nature can accomplish under his guidance.

There would have been no private property in Eden; such a division of property is necessary for harmony, order and efficiency where there is the constant threat of disorder, confusion and laziness. There was no such a threat in man's original state. Man would not have been an anarchistic individualist; social and political life would have been real necessities for man even in his state of perfection. This is apparent from the very inequality of individuals in that original state, an inequality that even Rousseau found no way to deny. That one should excel another in knowledge and virtue would be unfitting such a state if that superiority did not itself contribute to the welfare of the inferiors. In fact, it is a general principle that such superiority imposes the obligation of direction and assistance to inferiors; virtue and knowledge, in other words, are not only assets, they are also liabilities, ordained to the welfare of others.

Social life in the Garden of Eden: Necessity of political organization

Moreover man is a social animal. His full perfection is not to be attained in a solitary state of life; true, he might succeed in existing alone, but he could not reach to the enjoyment of that full human life of which his nature makes him capable. In Eden, then, men would naturally have lived in society, that is, they would have united for a common end to be obtained by a common means; which, of course, implies common direction. Obviously ten firemen, following their individual ideas as to when and how to get to a fire and what to do about putting it out, would be a great curse to insurance companies; just so, a society without a governor would be no society at all but a cluster of individual outposts forbidding in their armament.

Slavery

The political society of Eden would always be the type that dominates a man or directs him to his own and the common good. The domination of one man over another, which we know as slavery, by which one man uses another exclusively for the proper ends of the first did not exist in paradise; indeed, such domination could not exist until the bond that kept man subject to God had been broken.

Dominion over the physical world

Man's social, domestic and individual life was made much easier and more pleasant by the dominion he exercised over the physical universe, a dominion that was modelled on his own command of himself. He could call a tiger (if he wanted a tiger) and get immediate obedience, just as he could command his own animal nature and get immediate and complete results. But he had no such command over the plant and inanimate world. He could call a carrot (if he wanted a carrot) until he was hoarse; he would have to go to the carrot, it would not come to him. He dominated this part of the world as he did his own physical nature, using it without impediment, joyously and freely. He could not order a plant about, but he could escape the embarrassing labor of biting on hard celery in a quiet dining room.

Physical surroundings of the first man: The situation of Paradise

Where was the Garden of Eden? St. Thomas, judging from the rivers that sprang from it according to the biblical account, thought it was somewhere in the East. Wherever it was, Thomas thought it had the physical characteristics of the more pleasant part of Italy on a perfect day. He did not exactly say this; but he did draw the line at snow and ice, holding out for an equable climate, being particularly insistent of the advantages of a warm sun. It was not to be too hot nor too cold, but in between with a pleasant variety that would not call the inhabitants' attention to their lack of clothes.

Its inhabitants

Speaking of inhabitants, it may be worth noting that Adam was an immigrant to the Garden of Eden while

Eve was a native; Adam, you remember, was made outside the Garden and brought in by God himself, while Eve was made on the spot -- a fact that may or may not be significant. There were to be no dogs allowed in Eden, for this was an exclusively human habitation. The only animals there, normally, came at the express command of the human inhabitants. There a man could take a siesta and not wake up to find the cat asleep on his stomach or a visiting lioness surveying his tousled condition with a critical eye. However, the life there was by no means to be a continual siesta. There was to be work, man's work and woman's work. plenty of it; a work that was to go on, joyously, until the "Master of all good workmen" would put an end to the labor, easily slipping man into his eternal home where he could see for the very first time what heights happiness could reach.

Conclusion: Difference from the account of Genesis In the pagan tradition

Many of the details of this chapter are supplied by St. Thomas, arguing sometimes strictly, sometimes only plausibly, to complete the full picture of man's original state. Putting aside those details and concentrating on the bare skeleton of the account in Genesis, it should be evident that this story is not to be shrugged off as just another myth, even though we do not take into account the infallible authority of the God of truth Who inspired it. Unlike the pagan tradition, this is not the kind of story men think up about themselves, or even about their relatives. The pagans of Greece and Rome made the original state of man one of long duration, with long accounts of the idyllic life during all those years of perfection; its loss was attributed, not to the fault of men, but to the overthrow of a god. Genesis insists that this say of men in the earthly paradise was hardly a moment in the long life of the first couple, stating baldly the hard bet that was most unflattering; for the brevity of that stay was immediately due to the wilfulness of men themselves. The biblical account tells what glorious chances man had, and of how he immediately muffed them. Having muffed them, man was left as he would have been in a state of pure nature; the trials, labor and difficulties of existence today do not offer material for self-pity or excuses on grounds of disability, man has his full equipment for life.

In renaissance philosophies In modern materialistic philosophies

The renaissance philosophers, in defiance of the facts, denied man's social nature, making of him a beast of prey or a paragon of virtue. Genesis makes no such mistake about our nature; God does not make mistakes. Nor, for that matter, can man fool himself about his very nature, though he may tell himself fables about himself by way of escape from reality. The materialistic philosophy that has such a hold on the world today specializes in denial of facts; it makes man merely an animal, thoroughly un-moral; it denies the undeniable facts of his immaterial, spiritual soul and even the more inescapable fact of his origin from a first absolutely perfect first cause. This version of man's nature, like all the others, cannot afford to sneer at the account of Genesis. An air of superiority cannot gloss over the stubborn facts of God's causality and man's nature as we undoubtedly have it today.

The significance of these differences: For an estimation of the nature of man

Indeed, it is only by facing these facts that we get a real appreciation of man's nature. Only thus can we see him as spiritual and physical, as enjoying a freedom that even God must respect, a freedom that can hurl him ashamed from the portals of an earthly paradise or rush him triumphant into an eternal one with God. Only by facing the facts can we see man as he is: a creature made for work, for love, for marriage and a family; made to learn, to perfect his virtue, to approach to God and ultimately to rest with Him. And only in appreciating these things can we be fair to ourselves.

For an appreciation of the work of God

Honesty before the facts enables us to appreciate the work of God, seeing Him remedying the defects that naturally follow from the very ingredients of human nature, even though such correction demanded the

planning of extraordinary gifts by the all wise architect of the universe. In the light of the facts we can see that the plans were spoiled, not by the architect, not by the builder, but by man himself.

For a determination of individual possibilities and goals

The present state of man is man's work, not God's; even that initial tragedy was made a thing of hope and inspiration by the Son of God's redemption of those mistakes of men which we call sins. Because of the insistent part God has played in the destiny of that nature of ours, we can hope, labor, pray, love and live life to the full; for there is a paradise to which we can attain that alone fulfills the longing of our nature, that alone gives human life meaning and purpose. The story of man's beginnings is a sad account of what might have been; but it is also a vague hint of the glories that yet can be.

<<- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 16	Chapter Seventeen -->
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CHAPTER XVII -- GOVERNMENT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD (Q. 103-105)

1. Nature and purpose of government:
 - (a) Its essential postulate.
 - (b) Its proper act.
 - (c) Its condition.
 2. A modern paradox:
 - (a) Championship of this conception of government.
 - (b) Recognition of proper act of government in the universe.
 - (c) Denial of government in the universe.
 3. Necessity of government in the world:
 - (a) Principles of solution.
 - (b) The proofs.
 4. Details of the government of the world:
 - (a) The governor of the universe.
 - (b) The subjects of government.
 - (c) The nature of government of the universe.
 - (1) Its immediacy.
 - (2) Its universality.
 - (3) Its efficacy.
 5. Effects of the government of the world:
 - (a) Conservation.
 - (b) Movement of creature:
 - (1) Divine power and the effects of created causes.
 - (2) Fact of divine operation in every created agent:
 - a. Necessity of this in general.
 - b. Necessity in particular -- relative to human will.
 - (3) Divine power and miracles.
 6. Distinction of eternal law providence and divine government.
- Conclusion:
1. Impossibility of the denial of divine government in the universe
 - (a) On modern grounds.
 - (b) From its consequences.
 2. The truth of divine government.
 3. Completion of the picture of God.

CHAPTER XVII GOVERNMENT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD (Q. 94-103)

Nature and purpose of government

AS FAR as equipment goes anarchy is a condition of affairs that is remarkably easy to set up. All it requires is a people content to live aimlessly, destructively and with what protection an individual can give himself. On the contrary, politically organized social life involves decided difficulties in its establishment and maintenance; for this men must live purposefully, constructively and under a common protective direction. In this matter, our times have not veered to the easy side; anarchy has no general appeal to the twentieth century. Government, on the other hand, may well become the idol before which all men bow. In its roots, the word government implies direction, piloting; we have held fast to that notion of pointing men at some goal, though we have at times gone too far in the manner used to achieve this pointing, even so far as to think it was permissible for a government to take all its citizens by the scruff of the neck to direct their steps.

Its essential postulate

At any rate, it is clear to our minds today that government implies something to be governed, something to be directed; so that, broadly, we mean by government the rule or direction of a community. The essential postulate of government, then, is a community and a community comes into existence precisely because individuals concur in a common end, in contrast to the exclusive pursuit of individual ends in anarchy.

Anarchy means lawlessness, while government means law; the defect or collapse of law is the collapse of government, for law is government's proper act of direction. Anarchy needs no executive or judicial elements for, by nature implying indirection, it has no law to execute, no norm by which to judge; the equivalent of anarchy can be quickly achieved in any government by the simple oversight of the fundamental character of the legislature and the attempt to supplant it by executive or judicial action. For the executive and judicial functions are consequent to law which is the absolutely fundamental and proper act of government.

The primary paralysis, followed by discord and ultimately by open riot, that would result if a dozen onlookers of a chess game were privileged to make all moves along with the players is a faint suggestion of what would be the condition of society if there were no unified direction, no unity in legislation. If the hypothesis be extended a little further to the point where these onlookers and players huddle around a non-existent game, we have some idea of the impossibility of unified government and law without the fundamental unity of a common end among the citizens; for without that unity of end, which is the source of the common life, the root of the community, the brick and mortar that holds society together, there would be no game of politics to be played.

Its proper act

With this conception of government our time, and particularly our country, has no quarrel whatsoever. Perhaps this age will be outstanding in history for its universal acceptance of these fundamental notions of government; certainly never before in the history of the world has there been such a universal championship of government's proper act of law. As evidence of this we have the naive faith in the power of law which has led us into a kind of mass production of law for a variety of purposes that staggers the mind. We have made use of law for the correction of every kind of evil, economic, financial, physical, moral and social, and this in such meticulous detail as to make ourselves somewhat ridiculous. We do, indeed, believe in law and the power of law. As a last, if perverted, tribute to this championship of government we have the world-wide drift to the absolute in the state, even among nations who fight absolutism.

Its condition

Our modern almost worshipful attitude towards science is a recognition of the proper act of government in the physical universe and on a world-wide scale. Surely, scientific procedure and scientific knowledge has never been held in higher esteem; we are even willing to go to the length of denying validity to any other procedure or certitude to any other knowledge, reducing all intellectual efforts to the level of science. Yet the goal of science is nothing more than the discovery of law; it seeks to uncover a common way of acting, a community of activity and thus a common end. To put it briefly, science is really a demand, with full assurance, of an order in nature. The highest moments of scientific adventure are those marked by the discoveries of just such laws. Science does not attempt to reach conclusions or offer proofs; its interest is in the universal or common law which tells the story of how things act, that is, it is concerned with a fuller knowledge of the laws of nature.

A modern paradox:

Championship of this conception of government

In ordinary times we would say that law, order, a common way of acting, a common end all bespeak a community and a government of that community. But these are no ordinary times. The educated man of today, holding fast to modern tenets, is in the anomalous position of championing cosmic anarchy yet of giving full confidence to a scientific search for the laws that rule that anarchy. He must insist, in an age that puts complete faith in the multiplication of laws and the power of government, that the universe must be lawless, without government since it is without a governor. The world-wide drift to the absolute in political power and state direction has for its basis a philosophy that denies direction to the world, and which upholds the attainment of world progress without direction. By some mad paradox, we trace political

and social ills to poor direction, poor government; while we trace perfection in the universe to a complete lack of direction, a complete absence of government.

Recognition of proper act of government in the universe

This is hardly an intelligent position. But then our age has had many a bitter quarrel with intelligence and the hard feeling has gone so far that we have decided to disown intelligence or even to prove that there is no such thing; perhaps it is expecting too much to look for intelligence in so bitter an enemy's camp. This modern absurdity in the face of the order of the world can trace its origins back to that first attack on direction, that first positing of the principles of anarchy in religious circles that has come to be known as the Reformation. If religion could get along nicely without direction, there is after all, no reason for other things to put up with the meddlings of government. What was reformation in religion was scepticism in philosophy, running the whole gamut from humble doubts to bold denials and reaching its smashing climax in our own days when the existence of a faculty capable of valid universal knowledge is hardly taken seriously.

Denial of government in the universe

When the philosophers had finished cutting their own throats and had come to the harmonious conclusion that they could not get anywhere since there was no intellect with which to philosophize, science was ready to step into the breach with definite indications that it, at least, could get somewhere; philosophers immediately rustled to stake out claims in the territory of science; somehow they made science the foundation of philosophy, forgetting that science itself had no foundation except on the condition that the sceptical philosophers were wrong in the first place in rejecting the intellectual foundations of philosophy.

The confusion has become so much a part of modern life that today men can deny world government and uphold world law. In fact, we have become so oblivious of the absurdity of this position that we begin to feel a little superior about it, smiling pityingly on those who assert that if government is necessary for order and progress in the affairs of politics, anarchy is not the answer to order, law and progress in the universe. How droll!

Necessity of government in the world:

It may mean little to the modern that the truth of divine government of the universe is explicitly stated in Scripture and that Christ Himself hammered that truth home; but at least, in the name of rationality, the overwhelming evidence should not be passed over in silence. And the evidence is overwhelming. We saw something of it in the beginning of this book in proving the existence of God. There it was brought out that the fact of irrational creation constantly acting for its own good demands the existence of a directing intelligence; in other words, that the order in the universe demands a supreme governor.

In treating of divine Providence, the three alleged explanations of order in the universe -- chance, necessity, some cause within the universe -- were examined in detail. Each of the three were rejected: chance because it was not an explanation of order but a statement of the existence of an order which, in a chance case, had been clashed with; necessity because it demanded as much explanation as the order it was advanced to explain; while the fact that the universal order included everything in the universe made it impossible for any natural cause, itself a subject of that order, to explain the existence of the laws to which it bowed. It was in that same chapter on providence that it became evident that the internal finality of things -- the order of the ear to sound, of the eye to sight, of the individual to the species and so on -- was, too, a created thing demanding further relation to the things around it. In other words, no one creature was an isolated being from this point of views but a part of a universal plan that existed in the mind of the intelligent first cause.

This truth of divine government has been like a haunting melody which a man cannot drive from his mind. It came up again in the examination of creation and evolution when it was brought out that God, as a perfect agent, acted quite differently than do His creatures. We must act to acquire some missing

perfection, while God can only act to share His goodness since He has all goodness from eternity; the only possible end He could have, then, in creating must have been Himself, the sharing of His divine goodness, that is, the only goal to which the world could be directed was God Himself. Obviously such a task of direction demanded a supreme governor, a governor commensurate to the end for all the laws laid down would have to have that end in view.

In this chapter the melody is heard again. It cannot be silenced. Nor is this surprising. The fact of order and government in the world is so fundamental that it must arise again and again in any treatment of God or of the world. In this chapter we shall really get down to bedrock, digging deep enough to uncover the relation of the fact of world government to the very first principles of thought and being. Of course the job demands overalls, dynamite, hard labor and plenty of perspiration; but it is a job worth doing.

Principles of the solution

To allay that insidious form of fear which bears the euphemistic name of laziness, it might be well to give this task an air of ease by stating at once that the principles, upon which the proof of the government of the world rests, can be reduced to just two, namely, the principles of sufficient reason and of finality. Both of these are immediately reducible to the first and absolutely fundamental principles of identity and contradiction. Without these latter principles there could be no thought and, indeed, no being.

Taken in the concrete, the principle of sufficient reason is made perfectly clear by the fact that dogs bark and chicken bones are very bad for puppies though bread and milk is an entirely harmless diet for either mongrels or thoroughbreds. In its theoretical form the principle reads like this: "everything that is has a sufficient reason for itself and for the harmony of other things with it, either from its very essence or from something else." Evidently those things that flow from the very nature of a dog, from the fact that it is a dog, have their sufficient reason in the nature of the dog. In this sense, the principle of sufficient reason is no more than an insistence on the principle of identity: this dog is a dog, this nature is itself, so of course a bark is to be expected from it. The things that do not come from nature itself but from outside cannot have their sufficient reason in the nature. The dog does, in fact, die; clearly, then, its existence did not come from canine nature itself. What does not come from the nature must come from somewhere else, that is, from outside the nature; and to say that the sufficient reason of anything is from outside the nature is no more than asserting the principle of contradiction. In other words, we insist that this dog is not something other than a dog, it is not a dog and a god at the same time, it cannot, at the same time, be a contingent being and a necessary being.

The principle of finality, which has the inestimable merit of brevity though it gives no rest to the world, is: "every agent acts for an end." A penetrating mind is not necessary to see that this principle is immediately reducible to the principle of sufficient reason; it is, really, no more than a statement of the fact that there is a reason for every action. Every nature has a determined, or specific, effect; thus a dog barks, a man laughs or thinks. There is then a sufficient reason for this constant way of acting, this specific determination whether that reason be from the nature itself or from some one else who communicates it to this nature; if there is not this sufficient reason, then do not be surprised if a dog laughs in your face or your fiance sits back on his haunches and bays at a romantically full moon. A denial of the principle of finality, you see, immediately involves a denial of the principle of contradiction; this lad may be a man and, at the same time, a dog. The effect of barking could exist with no determination or tendency in the cause of all, it could just pop out of a man's throat for no reason whatever and might change to the chirp of a canary bird just as it passed the soft palate. The same mad story would hold good for the act of which this is an effect, for the faculty which produced this act, and, ultimately, for the nature in which this faculty resides. All would lack determination, yet have it; be what they are and be something different; Alice would have a new wonderland.

In other words, an efficient cause is never a sufficient explanation for an action. The fact that a man throws a brick is by no means the whole story; when the police catch him they will be crude enough to ask a few questions, especially as to why he threw the brick. The fact that a lecturer does deliver a lecture is

not a sufficient explanation of his talk; it might, in fact, be difficult at times to come at a sufficient explanation. If one act is placed rather than another (as happens wherever there is such order as we find in the world) then there must be a determination, a reason, an end for that action.

The proofs

With these fundamental principles clearly in mind, we can advance to an investigation, let us say, of a very young cabbage plant that has just been set out. It spends no time trying to find itself, reading up on vocational guidance or waiting for the mood to strike it; without going off in a corner to sob in self pity, with no search for a soul mate, it promptly drives its roots down for moisture while it reaches for the light and warmth of the sun. Moreover, all the thousands of cabbages set out each year will do exactly the same thing. Here, certainly, we have un intelligent beings acting in a most intelligent way: with constant, orderly effort to attain their greatest perfection and the perfection of their species. Clearly that order comes from the very nature of cabbages; but the determination of the nature does not explain itself, for the nature did not give birth to the determination, it did not exist before the determination. The orderliness of this procedure comes from some one outside that nature. When it is remembered that not only cabbages but all of irrational creation portrays this same orderly action, we have evidence of the existence of an intelligence that guides the whole of that irrational creation.

It may be objected that this does not argue to a world order, but merely to an order within each species; just as an orderly, affectionate family does not necessarily argue to a well governed state, or even to a state that has a moderately decent government. This is the old objection that internal finality does not argue to external finality, the modern illusion that scientific laws governing particular natures can be admitted while it is denied that nature as a whole is going anywhere. Granted that we cannot know the whole of the divine plans with our finite minds, it is impossible to grant order within the species and then deny order to the universe.

Details of the government of the world:

The governor of the universe

In the first place, no creature, no species, is isolated. They bump, clash, embrace, nourish and are nourished: they have relations to one another, which is to say there is an order between them, an order in the whole. This very order of one thing to another is a created thing; it does not exist of itself, does not explain itself, has not sufficient reason for itself within itself. It must, therefore, have that sufficient reason from outside, it must have a final cause outside itself, a goal that is not itself. In plain language, the governor and final end of the universe is something that escapes the universe itself, that is without its limits; that something is God. For, as we have already seen, everything created, everything that has not sufficient reason of itself within itself, falls within the natural or created order; only God. Who is supremely self-sufficient, is outside that order.

The same point might be argued from a different angle by pointing out that the end or goal corresponds to the beginning or the efficient cause. Since God is the cause of the world, He is its final end and the sole possible director or governor of the world to that final end. More simply, every agent acts for an end; the very first, or utterly independent, agent upon whom everything else depends must act for Himself.

Many men have been deceived into thinking the universe is without government because they have overlooked the striking difference between the government of the world and human government or human direction in any form. Just as we cannot pour knowledge into another's head, so neither can we put a principle of action into any other being; we may train a dog to bark at intruders but we cannot claim to have instilled the bark into the dog. No matter how benign our direction or government may be, it is always a kind of violence, at least in the sense that it is always from the outside; it is never a match for that easy, flowing direction that comes from nature itself. The direction or government of God, however, is not violent even in this sense; it does not come from the outside because His causality, unlike ours, reaches to the depths of being. The particular nature itself is such because of the divine plans and the

divine execution of those plans; He does put the bark into the dog. That His direction is followed easily, naturally, from the very principles of nature does not prove there is no government of nature; rather, it is a constant natural parade of the government of God.

The subjects of government

As for subjects, well, no census taking is necessary. It is as impossible to find a creature not subject to that government as it is to find a creature that is utterly sufficient to itself. God is the only self-sufficient being; from Him all depend and to Him all go as to their end. He alone is the governor of the universe; everything in that universe stands in need of His direction to Himself, that is, everything depends upon Him for its nature and for its existence. We shall see this dependence again and more fully in a few moments. Now it is sufficient to point to the universal application of natural laws as an indication of the universality of the government of God. Those laws are the proper act of His government, directing all creatures to the common end of the community which is the universe.

Its immediacy

This, of course, does not mean that if a man looks up quickly when he hears a landslide bearing down on him that he can see God slowly straightening up from the effort of putting His shoulder to the mountain. God does not have to move everything that moves in the world by a personally immediate movement any more than the President of the United States has personally to enforce every Federal law. As a matter of fact, the extreme perfection of the government of God is more manifest in His sharing of causality with His creatures. The dictator's technique, for all its appearance of strength, is a confession of weakness; such a ruler must destroy liberty, he must execute rivals and concentrate all power in his own hands for he is not strong enough to exist otherwise.

Its universality

Nor is there any danger of some subordinate cause in this divine government exceeding orders and starting a reign of tyranny unknown to the central government. We have already seen, in treating of the knowledge of God and His providence, that no smallest detail escapes Him: indeed, it is because every detail exists in the mind of God that its existence is possible, for everything in the universe is but a reproduction of the model which is the divine ideas. A divine newspaper is an unthinkable thing; not that there need be anything wrong with newspapers, but there is simply nothing going on in the world that is news to God. Even divine patience could not tolerate a newspaper under such circumstances. Neither is there anything happening, in the universe to wreck His carefully laid plans. There is no danger of a coup d'état overthrowing the government of God, for everything in the universe is so utterly dependent upon Him. There is no cause that can impede His action, because there is no cause independent of Him.

Its efficacy

Even the case of rebellion on the part of man does not escape the order of divine governments. For, while the sinner throws himself outside the divine order to the end of the universe, he hurls himself into the divine order of justice which is no less a part of the plan of the universe. The rebellion of sin itself cannot be complete; for the physical act of sin, since it has real existence, must be traced to the first cause of all reality. It is only the missing palate the defect of order, the hole in the human act, that is the exclusive property of the human will.

Effects of the government of the world: Conservation

Coming down to particulars, two effects of this divine government that must be stressed are the conservation of things in existence and the part God plays in the movement of creatures. That the hand of God is necessary for the support of things in existence is a truth of faith abundantly clear from the Scriptures and defined again and again by the Church. Its truth is clear by the power of reason alone; we

need only to grasp the meaning of conservation to see its necessity. Taking the word in its most obvious sense, that of continuation of existence, there is no difficulty in seeing that a being is independent of conservation by another insofar as it is independent of another for its existence. That means that everything in the universe is continued in existence by God.

Understand, this is not a matter of warding off a blow, or snatching a child from under the wheels of an automobile. There are things in this world that do not need touch conservation as this; it is not necessary, for instance, to put a soul in an oxygen tent nor to protect an angel from bombs. This is a question of moment to moment supply of existence somewhat like the question of moment to moment supply of air to a man to sustain his life. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, existence is one of those perfections that are not an integral part of nature, that in themselves have no limitation and that are, consequently, participated, borrowed, from the one source where they are had in their infinite fullness.

Perhaps it could be put more simply by saying that conservation is a continuation of the act of creation which first supplied existence; only that being is independent of all conservation which is independent of creation, which has the fullness of existence by its very nature -- not animal existence, not human existence, not angelic existence, but existence without qualification. In other words, only a completely self-sufficient being is independent of conservation by others, that is, God Himself. Everything else that is continues to exist only because its existence is immediately furnished by God.

To ask if God could annihilate a creature is merely to ask if God could cut off the supply of existence of any creature. The answer is obvious. The production of every created thing was a free act on the part of God; of course the continuation of that act of creation is a free act on His part. Annihilation would not demand any special activity on God's part but merely the cessation of His creative activity. In other words, if God were suddenly to become the static thing modern philosophers are willing to tolerate as divinity, the universe would plunge into nothingness.

It is quite another question to ask whether God will annihilate any creature, or all of the universe. We have it on faith that God will not annihilate human souls or the angels. But, putting aside the field-glass of faith and squinting at the question with the naked eye of reason we can get a reasonable view of the probable durability of the physical universe. God, in His dealings with the universe, has not, after all, so much choice; He must act either naturally or supernaturally, that is, He must operate either within the laws of that universe as laid down by Himself or outside those laws. Within the laws, or naturally, God will certainly not annihilate spiritual substances, such as souls and angels, for the very good reason that there is absolutely no natural way in which they can be destroyed, there is no natural force capable of their destruction. As for material things, well, on purely natural grounds it would seem that matter itself remains enduringly as the subject of all change; it is the subject of corruption rather than the object of corruption. But, then, that means little more than maintaining that, on natural grounds, material things would always remain at least potentialities.

Supernaturally, or by operation outside the natural laws, the answer is quite easy. God works miracles to manifest His grace; and annihilation does not manifest grace, in fact, it does not manifest anything, for in itself it is a denial so absolute as to leave not even an echo by which it might be located. It is much more a part of divine power and goodness to preserve or conserve things than to annihilate them by utterly pointless miracles.

The effect of conservation is fairly easy material of investigation, perhaps because it is so far above us; at least it is not complicated by a creature's action, for existence is the proper effect of God. The effect of God's government which is His movement of creatures is something else again; for here the creature enters intimately into everything but the miracles of God.

Movement of creatures

Divine power and the effects of created causes

God can, evidently, produce any effect that a created cause can, just as a bishop can produce any of the

effects produced by powers he has delegated to a priest. For the causality of every created cause has its roots deep in God; it is a delegation, a participation, a sharing in the divine power. In particular, God can, without a secondary cause, move matter to form, can move bodies, the human intellect and the human will. What was said above about the government of God must be kept well in mind here, namely, that the movement of God in nature does none of the violence to nature that human movement does. Consequently, God cannot force the human will for that is to do violence to it; rather, He moves it freely, according to its nature. We shall see more of this in just a moment.

First we must touch on a type of divine movement that is taken up explicitly in the opening chapters of the second volume of this work. This is movement only in the sense of attraction; it is not the effect of a push or a command but the result of an allure, an enticement, the eager rush inspired by the perfection of goodness. The attraction of everything desirable in this world is only a traveller's tale of the wonders of the Supreme Good, leaving unsaid the ineffable delights that alone will satisfy the human will's thirst for the universal good.

So much for the possibility of the action of God in the universe. The actual fact of His movement is the foundation for the first two proofs already given for the existence of God. In its briefest form, the reason for the fact of divine movement amounts to this: the active principles of the created world -- the forms of things not only depend on the first cause for their intrinsic natural qualities, their actual existence and conservation in existence, they also depend upon God for their application to action, for that transition from mere potentiality of movement to actual movement. After all, it is not only the nature, the existence and the conservation that are real; the movement to action and the action itself are also real and so must be traced to the source of all reality.

Fact of divine operation in every created agent

This is not to make God the only cause and all created causes mere figureheads, instruments of divine causality; when a burglar strikes his victim over the head, we are quite right in blaming the burglar. Confusion in this matter usually comes from picturing God and the created cause as two horses tugging a heavy load up the steep hill of actions. God and the created cause do not work side by side in the same order; one is the first cause, the other the second cause, that is, one works through the other. Perhaps this will be more easily understood if we remember that the action of God falls on the created cause rather than on the effect of that cause; the proper effect of God is to move the secondary cause to its actual causing, to change it from a potential to an actual cause then to continue its conservative action of the causality of that created cause.

Necessity of this in general

This divine movement of secondary causes is absolutely universal; which is to say no more than that no reality escapes dependence on the first reality. In things which cannot be moved necessarily by any created causes, such for example, as the human will, this divine movement must be immediate. Something of this has already been seen above where it was pointed out that divine movement not only does not destroy freedom but is the only possible source of it. Certainly, the will must be moved from its potential willing to actual willing if it is ever to make a choice: if it is moved by any set of circumstances, it is not free in the face of those circumstances; if it moves itself, then it is already determined, that is, it is not possessed of that indetermination necessary for freedom. It must be moved but in a way consonant with its freedom; only God can move the will freely.

Necessity in particular -- relative to human will

This sounds very obscure; and it should, for it is a mystery, a great mystery. The apparent contradiction involved in it is not, however, difficult to resolve. The resolution is merely a matter of our keeping in mind that nothing real exists without the sustaining hand of God. The will is a reality that must have its sufficient reason in the first cause; the act of the will is also real and must also be reduced to that same

source of reality; but the very mode of the act of the will, its freedom, is, too, definitely within the order of the real and, consequently, it is not to be absolved from dependence on God. The same note can be produced by a bird and by an opera singer; the freedom of the latter needs no less explanation than the necessity of the former. The only adequate explanation is God. How can God move the will freely? To understand this it would be necessary to comprehend the divine movement. Remembering that the divine movement is the same as the divine essence, it is clear that such a comprehension of the infinite is beyond the powers of a finite mind. There precisely, in the infinity of the divine movement, lies the mystery of human freedom. And a very good place for it, too.

Divine power and miracles

Over and above the action of God in the physical universe establishing its laws, conserving and fulfilling them, there is another type of action on the part of the divine governor which we have come to call miraculous action. That there is such action, surpassing the established order of nature, can be immediately seen from the numerous accounts of miracles in Scripture: the truth has been solemnly defined by the Church, as, for example, in the Vatican Council: "If anyone says that miracles cannot be performed and therefore the Scriptural accounts of miracles must be relegated to the class of myths and fables, or that miracles cannot be certainly known or the divine origin of the Christian religion be proved by them, let him be anathema."

As a matter of fact, the possibility of miracles should be beyond dispute from the very nature of the government of the world. God did not tie His own hands by establishing the natural order; and a miracle is nothing more than God's action outside of the natural order which was freely instituted by Him and entirely subject to Him. Not that God can surprise Himself by a wondrous action exceeding the whole order of nature; we have no business picturing Him as standing back amazed and a little chagrined that He had not thought of such a thing earlier. The eternal knowledge of God includes everything that will ever happen be it natural or miraculous.

From the point of view of the created causes, a miracle is a work of wonder; but seen objectively, it is merely a manifestation of the evident truth that the establishment of the natural order did not exhaust or limit the power of God. That order is dependent on God, not God on the order. The natural order and miraculous works do not stand glaring at each other like irreconcilable enemies. A miracle is not a violation of nature nor a destruction of natural laws; such a thing is an impossibility involving the contradiction of God acting against Himself. The nature of things is left intact by a miracle, it does no injury to natural laws; but through a miracle, a power transcending all the limits of nature makes itself known.

Distinction of eternal law, providence and divine government

For the clarity of the record, it may be worth while, in closing this chapter, to note in passing the interrelation of eternal law, providence and the government of the world. In the second volume of this work the question of eternal law must be gone into thoroughly. Here it is sufficient to point out that eternal law is the first principle from which providence and divine government of the world flow as conclusions. Providence is the plan of God covering every detail of the universe; while the government of the world is no more than the execution of the divine plan. Eternal law and providence are, obviously, in the mind of God, and from all eternity; the government of the world is, of course, in the universe itself, it began with that universe, for its proper work is to direct that universe to its final end, God.

Conclusion: Impossibility of the denial of divine government in the universe: On modern grounds

From all this, it is evident that the modern denial of government in the world is nothing less than a denial of any end, goal or purpose for the universe; many a philosopher today will explicitly insist on such a denial. Yet modern philosophy's own efforts seem to be directed desperately at a foundation for unity in the world, efforts that range from pantheism through the organismic philosophies to rank materialism. That

is, they agree that the universe is a unity, has some common bond, yet they deny the common bond that ties that universe together, the bond that ties every community together, the bond of a common end. The reduction of the world to matter does not give us unity but disparity; nor is a common origin sufficient to explain the harmonious interaction of the universe.

Certainly, none of the modern theories explain the determined mode of action that rules the universe. This is law and law is the act of government; it is absurd to proclaim the unity of the world, to extol the discovery of its laws, to insist upon the preeminence of science, and, at the same time, to deny government. Government without a common end is a contradiction in terms; if the cosmos is an anarchy with no discoverable laws, then government can be called into question, but not otherwise.

From its consequences

If government be denied by the denial of a common end for the universe, then there is no basis for science or philosophy; there is no reason for the way things happen, for reason, the why of things, is itself a statement of end, of order, of government. Why seek laws if there is no reason for laws and no source of them? Why seek the ultimate causes of things if there is no reason for any cause? The whole intellectual game men have been playing for centuries is the futile amusement of a child. On this basis, attempts at reasonable human life and human activity are an absurdity that approaches the proportions of a cosmic joke. Can there be a determined, an ordered, way of living and acting which we call human when there is no goal, no end to such a life, to such activity? Why do this rather than that, why live up to this or that standard, why differentiate between man and a clod of earth unless there be reason for that difference, unless there be determination, order, government?

The denial of the government and finality of the world sounds daring in a classroom or in a book that not too many people will read. But no one has dared to take it out of that academic atmosphere and put it to work in its destructive entirety in the practical details of everyday life except such thoroughly un-academic people as gangsters and military tyrants. Here and there a naively logical student makes a public expression of what he has been so solemnly taught, or actually puts it into practise in a concrete act -- and he is crushed under a wave of horror and condemnation coming even from the very institution in which the madness was taught. This madness simply will not, cannot work in everyday life; in fact, it is the destruction of the foundation of all activity. It reduces life to an utterly insane dashing about in a circle whose only termination can be exhaustion.

The truth of divine government

The truth of the divine government of the universe answers all the yearnings which from the beginning of time have sprung from the depths of the human heart: the yearnings for unity, for activity for progress, for accomplishment, for hope, for peace, for perfection, for God. This truth gives the only solid ground for the science we prize so highly today, for philosophy, for ordinary human life. Its denial is a violation of reason, of humanity, which brings crashing to earth everything that humanity prizes. It cannot for an instant be separated from the details of everyday life without immediately ushering in confusion, anarchy, stagnation and ultimately despair. To put it briefly, this truth, as is the way of truth, meets the facts; the facts of the world and of life in the world.

Completion of the picture of God

The truth of divine government completes the picture vaguely outlined by the divine architect in the perfections of the universe. Those shadowy images, those fragile mirrorings of divine perfection, attain a clarity that alone makes them intelligible when we see their relation to the original: when we see which way they point, to what direction they go. It is from this divine harmony of the community which is the universe and its steady progress to its final end that we see God, not as the dull, static being modern philosophers frigidly embrace, but as the living intelligence Whose intense activity penetrates to the last moment of time and to the utmost depths of nature. He is not a cold, uninterested, tyrannical ruler of a

world which He has forgotten, but the intimate director of the smallest actions of the world and of men. He is not the infinitely distant and humanly meaningless god that makes the modern shudder and hug himself the tighter, He is the immediately present first cause and prime mover to Whom our destiny will link us in a personal unity for an eternity. He is the governor of the world.

[«-- Back](#)

A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 17

[Chapter Eighteen --»](#)

CHAPTER XVIII -- GOVERNMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD (Q. 106-109)

1. Communication as an essential of social life.
 - (a) From the nature of government.
 - (b) From difference of government.
 2. Communication among the angels:
 - (a) Its reasonableness.
 - (b) Its double nature: enlightenment and speech.
 3. Illumination and enlightenment in the angelic world:
 - (a) Its nature.
 - (b) Its mode of operation.
 - (c) Its subject matter and effects.
 - (d) Its characteristics.
 4. Speech among the angels:
 - (a) Its nature.
 - (b) Its mode.
 - (c) Extent and subject matter.
 5. Angelic government in the universal order:
 - (a) The notion of hierarchy:
 - (1) Human hierarchy.
 - (2) The angelic hierarchy.
 6. Government and order in hell:
 - (a) Necessity of harmony in hell.
 - (b) Speech of devils.
 - (c) Subjection of the devils.
- Conclusion:
1. A prescription for utopia.
 2. Place of man in the government of the spiritual world.
 3. Social life of heaven.

CHAPTER XVIII GOVERNMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD (Q. 106-109)

Communication as an essential of social life From the nature of government

POLITICAL action consists in working together to the common end under a united direction. Notice the word "common"; for every time the note of common is struck in the field of politics, the fact of communication is solemnly announced. Men do not get very far in political union if they are enemies so bitter that they have built an impenetrable spite fence between their minds. For government supposes an end common to a multitude, since it consists in directing the many to that one end. That there must be a goal over and above the individual one is brought out by a contrast of anarchy with government, for anarchy is the acme of complete self-interest, the pursuit of an individual end to the exclusion of all else; logically, anarchy reaches its full maturity in a solitary inhabitant of a desolate island, at least a desolate spiritual island. A common end among men who cannot communicate with each other is unthinkable.

Try to imagine men existing with absolutely nothing in common -- neither race, species, ideals, thoughts - and you have a picture of loneliness so desolate or of savagery so intense as to give the woes and wars of men as we know them a merry air. If, by an impossible hypothesis, government did exist among such men, it would be a sterile, stagnant, dead thing; for the proper act of government, the means by which that common end is reached, namely, law, is itself a communication from the governor to those governed, the flagship's flash to the fleet. Such a government might look well under glass or mounted on a signet ring; certainly it could serve none but a decorative purpose.

It is essential, then, that we investigate the matter of communication for the rest of this book will be engaged with the question of government. In the last chapter, we saw something of the government of the physical world in general and what God can and must do in the movement of creatures to their end; in this

chapter and the succeeding ones, we shall investigate the part played in the government of the world by creatures -- angels, men and irrational creation.

From difference of government

Before plunging into the question of communication among the angels, it might be well to dispose of the inevitable objection against the necessity of communication for government. It will unquestionably be pointed out, it always has, that chemicals and trees do not communicate with each other or with members of the same species, yet they follow immutable laws thus giving incontrovertible evidence of government. The objection is well worthwhile in that it brings out clearly the two distinct classes of creatures which are directed by the divine law governing the universe.

One class is governed and in no sense governs itself, that is, the inanimate world, the plant world and the world of brutes. Plant and inanimate creation is completely devoid of communication; yet in that creation there is perfect unity of action, of end and of direction. The point to notice is that this direction is all one-sided. This plant and inanimate world is like a world of slaves whose slavery is so abject that their end, their direction, the very response made to direction comes from the governor. These creatures are passive participants in divine providence. The brute world has some kind of communication; at least there seems no hesitancy on the part of a mongrel in reading rightly the confidently low-pitched growl of a bull dog, a cat and her kittens succeed in making known their mutual needs and anxieties. Here the crucial fact is that the brutes have no communication as between subject and governor; that is, they have no recognition of nature's commands as commands, no knowledge of laws as laws, but only a necessary response to an extrinsic principle which has stamped its directions in the essential principles of brute nature. This is but another form of passive participation in providence.

The other class of creatures are governed in the strictest sense of the term. They are not only governed, they take an active part in that government and, in a very real sense, govern themselves. They share in divine providence passively by obedience to physical laws and actively by acting as a principle of direction for themselves and others. These are the creatures of the rational and intellectual worlds, men and angels.

These creatures can do what they are told; but they know they are being told and why they are being told. If the reason for the command remains obscure, there is certain to be some discussion, sharp criticism and even open revolt. These creatures not only have communication among themselves but also with the governor and his government: they know the common end and the different means to that end, they are consciously aware of the laws directing them to that end. All of this has been said effectively in what has come to be an American symbol: the general store, with its cracker barrel and homespun politicians, is a declaration of the sharp difference between the role played by men and by the rest of the physical world in the divine government; when such gatherings become popular among fleas or birds, we can begin to feel uneasy about the reality of that distinction. Until such a time, men will proclaim that truth even though they gather to deny it.

Because of our intellectual nature, the angels and ourselves are free, we have a choice of means to that common end. That freedom establishes beyond question individuality of thought and action; it thus gives rise to the infinite variety of social life and, at the same time, makes absolutely essential the communication we call speech if there is to be any social life. For speech is the means by which those strikingly different individualities are moulded into one social whole which works coherently through government to its common end. The very first evidence of group action comes with the first evidence of communication in the brutes; but they are a physical whole rather than a moral unit, they are pushed by the will of another, rather than united to govern themselves to a consciously recognized common end. However, even such group action as they have would be impossible without at least a minimum of communication.

Communication among the angels

We must establish communication among the angels, then, before there can be any talk of government among them: and, since they are a part of intellectual creation and should have an active part in governing themselves, their communication must be not merely of subject to subject but also of subject to governor and government. The establishment of communication among the angels is exceedingly simple. For angelic nature is not the type to sit sullenly in a corner without a word to say, feeling all alone in the world. The angels are one step higher than men in mirroring the divine perfections; in comparison with their intellectual powers, our own minds are cripples, limping along on crutches. They are intellectual natures, which means that they must have a knowledge of the end for which they were created and for which they act, as well as of the means by which that end is to be obtained. In other words, by the very fact of being intellectual, they must know the purpose of government and the laws by which that purpose is achieved: if this be denied them they have been changed from angels into something considerably less than men.

On the same grounds of intellectuality, as we have seen, the angels must be conceded freedom, the choice of means to their end, for appetite follows knowledge and an intellectual appetite can be satisfied only by the universal or supreme good. Even though there are no vicious temperaments among them, they are strikingly different personalities who necessarily demand communication as a means of moulding the multitude into a social and political whole. Anarchy, you will remember, cannot happen among the brutes; it is knowledge and freedom that makes anarchy possible and that also gives rise to that active share in government -- but only on condition of communication.

One comforting thing about intellectual nature is that every individual has something to communicate all the time. The hushed silence of patients in a doctor's office is a ghastly thing, whereas the effortless chatter of women on a streetcar has a comfortable human air about it; it is true that we have nothing to say only when our minds, hearts and imaginations have been utterly inactive, it is never true that we must search desperately for an original thought, for any thought that is ours is original. The personal element that colors every thought, every emotion is so distinctively original that it has never been seen before in the world and never will again; no one can possibly get at it until we have brought it out and made a gift of it to the world. For all these things are not the result of response to mere external stimuli but the totally incalculable and utterly secret results of highly individual activity.

Unlike other creatures, members of the rational and intellectual world cannot reach their fullest perfection except through others, that is, through the medium of social life. Society, whether among men or angels, is not a luxury of civilization but a necessity of nature. The rest of creation has an elaborate equipment for life and needs it badly, for life there is a solitary, pioneer affair; man has only his reason, his hands and other men, the angels have only intellect, will and other angels. To deprive such as these of communication would be much more serious than pulling a lion's teeth or making a cat wear leather heels.

It is not only angelic nature but the whole scheme of the universe that cries out for communication among the angels. As we approach the perfection of God, the imaging of divine perfections is more perfect; we come up the steps of perfection through mere being, then life, sense knowledge, rational or human knowledge to the heights of the intellectual life of the angels. Each of these grades of perfection has its own proper activity flowing from, and in full harmony with, its particular nature. So the supreme and necessary divine action is that substantial communication which is the Trinity; its closest image is the communication of thought and its consequent awakening of love; then, running down the scale of perfection, there is the communication by generation in the brutes and plants; and, finally, only a faint vestige of the Trinity is to be found in the mere existence of the inanimate world.

It is only the man who is conscious of his weakness who dares not share his strength, the frail man who must conserve his health, the ignorant man who must be niggardly with his knowledge, and the fool who has nothing of wisdom to offer; for it is a universal law of perfection that it seeks to scatter itself, to communicate itself to others. A miserly man of great wealth is an object of contempt even to himself for, in a sense, he is so dull he has not yet realized his wealth; his heart is still the heart of a street gamin who must use teeth and claws in the acquisition and defense of every penny. Without any other argument than

the perfection of angelic nature, communication between the angels is an obvious truth; such perfection must be scattered, must be shared and in the only way possible to an intellectual nature, that is, intellectually, by the revelation of a concept or truth to another mind.

Its double nature: enlightenment and speech

In general, this intellectual communication among the angels corresponds to communication between men; it may be described as the manifestation of the angelic concepts to another angel. Among ourselves communication takes the double form of teaching or just talking, of revealing a concept as dependent from the first and supreme truth or as dependent from the individual will of the talker; we can demonstrate the freedom of man or we can mention our love of the opera, a favorite restaurant and our preferences for the company of certain people. In the angels, this distinction is much more sharply differentiated than in us; to its parts theologians have given the imposing names of illumination (or enlightenment) and speech.

Enlightenment is nothing more or less than what we call teaching, understanding teaching, of course, as the manifestation of truth and not as the exposition of wild theories of a man bent on being different or the Panicky wanderings of an unprepared professor. The concept revealed in enlightenment or illumination does not depend on our will but on the first truth; that is, it corresponds; to things as they are. Obviously, we are not teaching others when we bore them with our dreams, impress them with our good intentions or wheedle them with our wishes. Teaching among the angels is quite a different procedure than it is among men. For angels do not teach one another by unwinding a long chain of reasoning to drop the anchor of truth in another's mind; reasoning is a human necessity for a human weakness, the crutch on which our minds hobble to the truth. The angelic teaching is not flavored by a liberal sprinkling of images, illustrations or contrasts; these are products of imagination and imagination is totally lacking in the angels. For them, the task of teaching is one of complete simplicity; they bring about the knowledge of truth in another angel by fortifying the inferior intellect and then manifesting the concept they wish to impart, taking the lower angel by the hand and then turning on the light.

It is true that the fortification of another intellect is a somewhat mysterious action. It cannot be by any direct action on the intellect of the angelic disciple, tightening its bolts, throwing up a few supports, or pouring in distilled strength; only God can act directly on the intellect and will. It seems rather to be an indirect bringing out of a little better than the best that is in a disciple, spurring the pupil on to actions that would not be possible to him alone. St. Thomas gives an invaluable clue in his use of the word "comforting" to describe the superior angel's action on the inferior's intellect. With this comfort, the inferior angel understands much better, as a small boy sleeps much better in his mother's bed on a stormy night though he must do his own sleeping, or as an infant walks with assured help handy but falls instantly when that help is not in reach; so boys are bolder and more mischievous in the comforting presence of the gang.

The real sense of Thomas' carefully carved word is even stronger than this. For the inferior always works better in union with the superior, as vegetable life in animals is superior to that in plants, and sensitive life in man is superior to sensitive life in animals. Though the parallel is not exact because we are specifically equal, this same thing can be vaguely seen in the activities of men: a man plays better golf when his rivals are his superiors at the game, a man does better thinking when he is wrestling with an intellectual opponent who has him outclassed. On the contrary, a few years in the gutter will be no help to the finish of a cultured woman, there is a distinct intellectual deterioration in the thinkers of the Church in the absence of real opposition, muscles that are not strained become flabby. Just the fact of working with a superior intellect is itself a strengthening, a comforting of the inferior angel's mind.

The second step in this teaching, the manifestation of the concept, is accomplished by simply breaking it up. We have seen that a superior angel understands by fewer and more universal concepts; to hand down these concepts unchanged to an inferior angel would be like giving a child his father's clothes. They might be much better clothes, but are much too big for the child; so, in themselves, these superior concepts are much better concepts. but they are too big for an inferior intellect and result in only a vague, confused

knowledge. They have to be cut and shaped to fit the intellect of the angelic disciple, made more particular, their universality shrunk.

None of the angelic doctors can really be called specialists. The subject matter for their teaching embraces the universe of created things. It has not to do with the essence of God or the beatific vision of that essence; after all, every angel sees the divine essence to its full capacity and, anyhow, that essence cannot be manifested through teaching for it cannot be contained within the limits of any concept however universal. This angelic teaching concentrates on the divine works which are in God as in their cause, that is, with the plans of the divine architect, the ideas of God, and their execution. Naturally the superior angels possess those plans in a way most like the divine possession of them, being more perfect images of God and closer to the source of those ideas.

Perhaps the best example of this manifestation of truth among the angels would be a ray of light speeding from its source, broken up into its different colors here and there, but never stopping until it had reached the limits of creation. Just so the manifestation of a superior angel sweeps on, not merely to one angel but to all inferiors. accommodating itself to the mind of each, but never stopping until the lowest angel has been enlightened. The ray of angelic light cannot penetrate the will of any other angel; that is sacrosanct. Not even the angels can do more than coax the will of another to act, enticing it with a lovable thing, but never exerting that infallible allure that is proper to the Supreme Good itself.

But that angelic ray of light does sweep over all the intellects of the inferior angels, illuminating them, purifying them of all nescience, perfecting them, like the rays of the sun removing darkness, giving light and revealing the object of vision to the sight. Of course, the sweep of this ray is always from the top down, from the superior to the inferior; for only those who know more can teach, at least among the angels. Here there is no question of one being more expert in one line and less in another, a potential teacher of one, a necessary disciple of another: for in the angelic world, the superiors are always closer to God, they are pre-eminent in knowledge and sanctity and thus know more of all things than those beneath them.

There is no slightest stinginess in the doctrinal illumination of the angels. The superior tells all he knows, fully shares his superiority with all other angels in response to that urge of goodness to diffuse itself; this is a constant spiritual generation, an intellectual begetting that is absolutely unstinted. Nor is the superior any the worse for it; he remains superior for this greater knowledge is proper to him, these intellectual clothes fit him alone. All others can participate in that knowledge, but imperfectly, each in proportion to its intellectual ability. Eon after eon this angelic teaching goes on; with no night to interrupt, the angelic suns pour their rays in an eternal day for always there will be new things revealed about the world of created things, revelations that come first and best to the superior angels. Even after the world has passed and judgment has been pronounced, there will be a constant necessity for this illumination, the inferior minds will always need the comfort and manifestation of the superior angels, for this angelic learning is only participated, borrowed, as the air borrows a note from the throat of a singer and cannot maintain it without the constant support of the singing throat.

Speech among the angels

Not all angelic conversation is of this solemn doctrinal type; among the angels there is that intimately personal speech that runs gaily through the days of human life in the bright garments of chatter, gossip, hopes, dreams, wishes and experiences. For each angel has all that priceless treasure of richly original and mysteriously individual knowledge that is an inalienable possession of personality.

Its nature

St. Thomas calls this type of angelic conversation "speech." Both illumination and speech run none of the hazards and labors of voice production, enunciation and articulation, not to speak of lisping and stuttering, that do such strange things to human conversation. Both these types of angelic communication are accomplished effortlessly and with absolute accuracy by a simple act of the speaking angel. With the

angels, the mere fact of a concept being directed to another assures the understanding of that concept.

We possess a concept in three distinct ways: habitually, as we hold to the multiplication table, not using it oftener than is necessary; actually, when we consider it here and now and, in a sense, talk to ourselves; finally, as ordered to another, as when we put an idea to work building a house, revealing a truth or unveiling the privacies of our personality. It is by no means enough for us to ordain a concept so the mind of another; a gag will keep our thoughts tightly imprisoned within ourselves, deaf ears are barriers that keep us circling the mind of another, indeed, even words themselves conspire against us, refusing to bear the heavy burden of intense concentration or clumsily spoiling the fine shadings of a thought too fragilely perfect to suffer transportation. Our concepts can be hidden from others either because we refuse to reveal them or because the very grossness of our bodies make ineffable the beauties that so captivate our minds; we are obliged to use external words and signs, and, often enough, the very externality is a positive impediment. It is precisely this obstacle that is missing in the angels.

Its mode

How does the listening angel know it is being spoken to? To us this seems decidedly mysterious, though we have hints of the answer when, now and then, we feel someone's eyes upon us, we grasp a thought before it has been uttered, a word before it has been formed. St. Thomas says, quite simply, that just as our senses are moved by sensible things, so the intellects of the angels are moved by intelligible things; just as sensible signs excite the external senses, so through concepts the mind of the angels can be excited to attention.

When we consider that one angel can talk to another across the whole width of heaven, it might seem that heaven would indeed be an eavesdropper's paradise. It is true that distance has no part to play in angelic conversation, for the intellectual operation of angels abstracts from time and place that so enclose matter, the impediments that cling to our conversation through its phantasms and external words. Yet, as a matter of fact, heaven would be hell for an eavesdropper; for, though all of heaven be between the two, one angel can talk to another in perfect privacy because the sole excitant to attention is the will of the speaker. In fact, no one need ever know that these two were talking at all; there is absolutely no way of plugging in on the conversation for it passes through no switchboard.

Extent and subject matter

In the case of illumination, it is the superior angels who do all the talking; but the same is by no means true of the intimately personal conversation of the angels. Inferiors can talk to superiors, and have something to tell them, or even to God Himself; this speech, you will remember, depends on the will of the speaker and the personality that is proper to him alone. What does one of the lower angels say to God? Well, there is a colloquy with God that is uninterrupted, a lovers' chat, a constant expression of admiration, adoration and awe at His excellence; now and then there will be an occasional conference as regards the things to be done in the ordering of the universe.

Angelic government in the universal order

The notion of hierarchy

The perfection of angelic communication, with its necessary exclusion of the misunderstanding and emotional prejudice that so mars human social life; indicates something of the perfection of the angelic principalities. These have been given the name of hierarchies, a name that is defined by St. Thomas as a "sacred principality" with the full implications of a prince, his subjects, the community or multitude directed by the prince to its end. God, the supreme prince, as the first cause, lord and governor, is prince of all the angels, as well as of all men and indeed, of all creatures. The universe itself is a principality whose prince is God, whose subjects are all creatures and whose common end is God.

Human hierarchy

But hierarchy is a sacred principality, that is, it is a term reserved for a community capable of participating in the holiness of God, capable of virtue and victory or of sin and defeat, a free moral community. Of these free moral creatures whose common prince is God not all belong to the same state within the great divine empire; the mode of government of each group follows the nature and activity of the subjects governed, for God is a very wise prince. The human hierarchy receives the government of God under sensible similitudes and is a separate state; the angelic hierarchy receives this divine direction in its intelligible purity, without the medium of sensible things.

The angelic hierarchy

Since government, political and social life follow the natures and activities of the subjects, particularly when the governor is wise, it follows immediately that the social and political life of the angels is vastly different from our own. It will involve no temperance or uplift societies, there will be no athletic clubs or sewing circles in it; plays, games, sports will all be ruled out. All of these presuppose bodies and the angels have no bodies. They have only that double operation of a purely intellectual nature, the type of operation that is God's own, the operation of intellect and will. Whatever differences there are within that angelic state will have to be based on these operations.

Each angel is an individual species, since there is no way of multiplying individuals within a species that excludes the individuating principle of matter; yet we find three main lines of intellectual activity within the angelic state, three grades of universal understanding constituting the three angelic cities or the three hierarchies of angels. The first knows the reasons of things as they exist in the absolutely universal cause, God Himself; they stand in the vestibule of God. The second, with a less perfect, less universal knowledge, knows the reasons of created things as they exist in the most universal created causes. The third knows the reasons of things as dependent on their proper created causes.

Just as in any city not all men can be traffic policemen or stenographers, so among the angels there must be a distinction of offices and duties if general confusion is to be avoided. So in each of the three angelic cities, three different orders are distinguished. The first angelic city centers its activity on God Himself, contemplating the essences of things in God. Within it are the Seraphim, the highest of all the angels, who excel in their immediate union with God and their flaming love for him; from this fiery love comes their name. Next are the Cherubim with the plenitude of wisdom which their name indicates, excelling in the knowledge of the divine secrets, the wisdom of divine providence; they have a clear vision of the first operating virtue of the divine model. Last in this order are the Thrones who have a perfect knowledge of the end of all things and so of the disposition of the divine judgments. The Thrones have the note that is common to this whole order; the Cherubim retain this and add a special note; the Seraphim possess the note of both Thrones and Cherubim and add another still higher note. Indeed, this interrelation within each hierarchy is universally valid: the lowest order has the common note, which is possessed and surpassed by the immediate superior. The orders of this first hierarchy can be compared to men, all of whom are friends of a king: but one has the right to enter familiarly into the presence of the king; another knows the secrets of the king; the third is united to the king in a perpetual companionship.

The second angelic city, engaged with the universal created causes, has for its proper object the general ordering of means in view of the end and therefore demands the distinction of three orders. The first is made up of the Dominations to whom pertains the distinction of the things to be governed; then the Virtues to whom belongs the faculty of fulfilling the things to be done, imparting to general causes the necessary energy; and, finally, the Powers who are busy with the details of how things to be done or commanded are to be carried out in detail.

The work of the third angelic city is primarily one of execution for its object is the particular causes of created things. The leaders in this city, the Principalities who deal chiefly with the beginnings of actions, are the leaders in that angelic work of execution which consists of announcing divine things. Next are the Archangels whose work is the announcement of great things to men and the care of goods that are at the same time general and particular, such as the truths of faith and the divine cult. Finally come the Angels

who announce the ordinary things and take care of the particular, individual goods.

Within each of these orders there are many, very many, individual angels. If we knew them perfectly we could distinguish all their proper actions to the last detail. But, knowing them only imperfectly and vaguely, we cannot know that each has this particular work and this particular place within his order, just as meeting a strange factory worker in an exclusively textile city, we can know no more about him than that he works in a mill. It is to be noted that the foundations of these orders are the different natural perfections of the different angels, perfections which we have seen are carried over into the realm of grace; consequently they endure even after there is no world to be directed to its proper end.

It would be a legitimate question here to ask how much of this doctrine on the angelic hierarchies is of faith. There is, in fact, very much of it that leaves no room for doubt. It is clearly of faith that the angels speak to one another and to God from the varied and numerous statements of such conversations in Scripture. The Council of Lateran has defined the existence of three hierarchies of angels in each of which there are three choirs; the names of these choirs are all contained in Holy Scripture. To this may be added the evidence from the liturgy of the Church: the Te Deum, the offices of the Guardian Angels, of Michael, Raphael, and so on. The detailed development and philosophical explanation are the work of St. Thomas, drawing upon the rich tradition of the Fathers, especially Gregory and Pseudo-Dionysius, the biblical functions of the angels and the philosophical tradition of movers of the heavenly spheres. He gives a new organic structure to the world of separate intelligences by his arrangement of them on the principle of lessening intellectual illumination, perfectly assigning their place in the universal order and keeping in perfect harmony the grades of participation of the divine perfection.

Government and order in hell

Necessity of harmony in hell

A treatise on the government of the spiritual world would be incomplete without a word on hell. For, of course there is government and some kind of order in hell; as a work of God, hell cannot escape the plans of the divine architect. There is a kind of perverse harmony in hell, a concord of wickedness such as we might find among thieves or murderers. It is a cooperation, not of friendship or social leanings, but of viciousness aimed at a common goal, not of achievement, but of destruction. The basis of that concord, that order of hell, is the natural gifts of the fallen angels, just as the natural gifts of the good angels make up the basis for their hierarchies. Natural gifts are not lost by sin precisely as sin, so a natural superiority and inferiority was carried over into the realm of sin by Lucifer and his followers. There Lucifer is supreme because he is naturally the most perfect of all the devils and because his sin was the greatest.

It cannot be much comfort to him, for there is no more potent cause of misery than the commission of evil, especially for a clear intelligence; to be a leader, to be supreme, in sin is at the same time to be the greatest in misery. What little satisfaction might be had from a sense of power is turned to ashes by the fact that the greatest of the devils is subject to the least of the good angels, for all order and dominance is originally in God and is participated by creatures in proportion to their propinquity to God. Indeed, often a little vinegar is added to the ashes as when, for instance, a mere man like the Curé of Ars is given complete superiority over the whole horde of hell.

Speech of devils

Conversation is not lacking in hell, though it is undoubtedly far from edifying; for the devils still have their angelic wills and concepts. There is no illumination, no teaching, in hell, and not only because the devils are so wholly evil that they give no help whatsoever to another; the fact is that illumination is always in reference to the order of the first cause and they are completely in disorder relative to that first cause. However, now and then, the good angels tell the devils some things that it may be necessary for them to know for the working out of the plans of divine providence.

The perfect social life of the angels is not to be attained by men this side of heaven; but that does not stop men from dreaming. Perhaps it is because we are such close kin of the angels that even a momentary

consideration of their lives afflicts us with a traveller's nostalgia; they seem like big brothers who have beaten us home by many a weary mile. We envy them a little, dream our dreams of homecoming, and try to make the shelter of the moment look something like the home at the end of the road. That family yearning for perfection that drives men restlessly on has made itself felt no less strongly in his social life than in his individual life. Men have dreamed their dreams of the perfect society, put those dreams down on paper apologetically or belligerently, and tried, with an inevitable futility, to make the dreams come true within the walls of an earthly city.

It is not strange that some shadow of the angels should hover over those dreams and those gallantly conceived theories; the tragedy is that not more of the angelic pattern was woven into the plans; the stark fact is that all of the angelic prescription for utopia can never be filled by men. As a rule one or two aspects of the angelic society have been fastened on to the complete neglect of the rest. The community of goods among the angels, for example, has seemed a splendid ideal to men: that the wealthier should dispense all of their goods, unstintingly, constantly, joyously in a blaze of beneficence as life-giving and as dependable as the warm smile of a spring sun, that would make the ideal state among men. Or that the superiors should always be superior, that those who have most should continue to have it: that the more intelligent should always be rulers and the less intelligent always subject without a murmur of discontent - either of these would make for utopia among men.

Conclusion: A prescription for utopia

AS a matter of fact, the angelic utopia is not made up of one or the other of these factors. It is true that there is a complete community of goods, an unstinted generosity on the part of the superiors; but that community of goods does not involve a classless angelic society, that generosity on the part of the superiors in giving is perfectly matched by the generous subjection of the inferiors in receiving. In this society, superiority is measured rightly by propinquity to God; the greater are those who most closely image divine perfection in being, knowledge and love; the generous are those who have most to give and the goods they scatter so freely are not lost to the givers though they are received by others. Superiority here involves a responsibility of constant teaching that others might be helped, subjection involves a constant docility that help might be received; order is thus perfect and government a benignly indispensable help.

Place of man in the government of the spiritual world

That perfection has not yet been seen on earth; nor will it be seen, if for no other reason than that men are not angels but fallen men. The angelic hierarchy is, by its nature, distinctively different and more perfect than the human hierarchy; but it is not so different that the gap between the two cannot be spanned by a bridge of the supernatural. For in heaven, men will be like the angels and, indeed, will close up the ranks broken by the sin of the devils. The high dreams of men have roots deep in the plans of God; they are not to be pulled from the minds of men by disappointment, disillusionment or a failure so constant as to be habitual. Men will dream on; and, eventually, the dream will come true -- and stay true.

Social life of heaven

However, the angelic doctors will have a teaching task of the first magnitude on their hands when men take over their part in the social life of heaven. We shall have much to learn, so much that we shall spend an eternity in the learning of it; not that we shall sit in absorbed silence drinking in knowledge while not daring to betray our ignorance by so much as an unguarded word. We shall have plenty to say and the angels will have plenty to learn; for each of us brings a mysteriously rich personality with us, a personality that yields to no explorer of truth but ourselves. In other words, the lines of communication between ourselves and the angels will be wide open; it would be neither human nor angelic if immediate and constant advantage were not taken of such an opportunity to get a word in.

CHAPTER XIX -- THE ROLE OF THE ANGELS (Q. 110-114)

1. The heavenly movers of the material world:
 - (a) A modern denial.
 - (b) An historical affirmation.
2. The fact of angelic activity in the world:
 - (a) Its proof.
 - (b) Its limitation.
 - (c) Its consonance with the dignity of material causes.
3. Angelic action in the world of men:
 - (a) Indirect action: on the intellect and will.
 - (b) Direct action: on the sense faculties.
 - (c) Relation to human dignity self sufficiency and freedom
4. Angelic ministers to the material world:
 - (a) Assisting and ministering angels.
 - (b) Place of superior angels.
 - (c) Limitation of ministering angels.
5. The role of angels in the world of men:
 - (a) Of the good angels -- guardianship:
 - (1) Subject of this guardianship.
 - (2) Dignity and distribution of the guardians.
 - (3) Effects on the guardians.
 - (b) Of the devils -- attack:
 - (1) The fact and causes of hostility.
 - (2) Its limitation.
 - (3) Physical attacks of devils:
 - a. Infestation.
 - b. Obsession.
 - c. Permission.
 - (4) Moral attacks.

Conclusion:

1. Role of the angels and scientific thought.
2. Role of the angels and philosophic thoughts.
3. Role of the angels and moral thought:
 - (a) Appreciation of supra-human aid.
 - (b) Value of this appreciation.

CHAPTER XIX THE ROLE OF THE ANGELS (Q. 101-114)

The heavenly movers of the material world

THE modern rejection of the idea of angelic activity in the material world is a fact that need not be argued, least of all to the moderns. They are rather proud of it as evidence of the happy transition of the world from infancy to maturity, putting away poetic and mythical notions to subsist on the solid meat of facts. In reality, this denial of angelic activity is not due to the world's having grown up so much as it is to the world getting childish.

A modern denial

It is expected that a child will take a fable as a fact and miss the moral it makes, so the moral is carefully pointed out at the fable's end. Just so some delightful phantasy is taken seriously today and ridiculed; a Christmas card portraying tiny angels going about with tapers to light the stars or playing violins to put music in the wind is smiled at as a pitiful relic of a superstition that is long in dying. As a matter of fact, no one seriously supposes that the stars are like street lamps to be lit at night and extinguished in the

morning by sleepy or yawning angels, nor that music is injected into the wind by a kind of super-broadcasting station; even if some men did harbor these fantastic notions, they would not be nearly so close to madness as those who suppose the light came from darkness and the wind from a vacuum. The phantasies, however, are not philosophical expositions or theological tracts; they are phantasies, beautiful phantasies that a normal child is quick to appreciate.

More often this denial of angelic activity is not so much a matter of conviction as of aversion, like a child's fight against an afternoon nap because it interrupts his play. This modern rejection is not a result of a conviction of the impossibility of the supernatural (absurd as such a conviction may be) but of an aversion to the suprasensible because it interrupts the game of exclusive concentration on the glitter of the sensible world. In speaking of the angels and angelic activity as such, there is never a question of the supernatural, for the angels, as created substances, are part and parcel of the natural order; but there is always question of the suprasensible, for the angels are pure intelligences, devoid of all corporal qualities and characteristics. It is precisely because of this suprasensible character of theirs that the angels have fallen out of favor with the modern world. A suprasensible creature automatically puts a limitation on man's engrossment with the sensible world, it puts a stop to his childish pretense of having everything in his hands to make or unmake at his scientific hat. As soon as an angel comes in, man has to stop playing God; and he likes to play God.

It was just this absolute devotion to the game of materialism that turned modern philosophy so sharply away from the intellect and that now leaves that philosophy high and dry as neither philosophy nor science but only anti intellectual.

An historical affirmation

Historically, this modern position is an infant in arms. Angelic movers of the universe immediately found their place in Oriental philosophy; Plato placed a spiritual substance over every corporal thing as an integral part of his doctrine of self-subsistent ideas; Aristotle, while disagreeing with the Platonic doctrine of separated forms, admitted the angelic presidency over the material world, though he restricted it to the more universal agents of the corporal world, the heavenly bodies. The Arabic philosophers, with Avicenna, held to the Platonic teaching but made those spiritual substances a conglomerate whole which was called the active intellect. The Fathers of the Church and the scholastics placed different corporal substances under the presidency of different angels, not because of any peculiar affinity in the angels, but because of a definite orderly arrangement on the part of divine providence. But all retained the central notion of spiritual activity in a material universe. It was when the modern world went back to the childhood of Greek philosophy with the re-birth of materialism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that all activity was centered in the material world itself; all existence, all life, all being were centered in the material world when that philosophy reached the full flower it is enjoying today.

The fact of angelic activity in the world: Its proof

The angelic activity in the material world is stated plainly in Holy Scripture; to take just one instance, when the travelling eunuch had been baptized, Philip was moved across the country with the easy speed with which a man's mind moves from one thought to another. As a matter of fact, this state of affairs is eminently reasonable, indeed, it is demanded by the order of things all about us. In the political world we insist that particular power be ruled and directed by the universal so we carefully distinguish the gradually mounting powers of cities, counties, states and federal government. The idea was not a brilliant inspiration unheard of before in the universe; it was merely another case of man's genius copying the artistry of nature. In the physical world the particularity of a form is a declaration of its subjection: minerals are subject to plants by reason of the plant's power to assimilate other forms to their destruction; the plants bow to animals which can assimilate forms by particular knowledge; all physical nature is beneath the dominion of intellect and its power to assimilate all forms.

Its limitation

Every material form is, by the fact of its materiality, particular, limited to the here and now while the angelic forms are universal precisely because they are free of matter. Just as in the material universe the less particular directs and administers the more particular, so the universal spiritual forms should direct the determined and particular forms of material creation. In fact, such administration on the part of the angels seems to be demanded by the effects which, in an earlier chapter, we have called accidents, that is, the effects that are not the direct result of any one material cause but that come by way of surprise from the clash of material causes. In other words, there are things happening in the material world not wholly explicable by material causes alone; and this is particularly evident when we keep in mind the universality of the order in that material world.

Its consonance with the dignity of material causes

This does not mean that the angel's equipment for government includes an Aladdin's lamp. An angel cannot change a horse into a cow by a wave of a wand, or by a wave of anything else; in fact, an angel of itself cannot produce a single material composite, not a tree, a rock or an animal. The information of matter by its form is not an angel's work; that belongs to the material causes or to God Himself. We can think ourselves into a fit of sickness, or drive ourselves on by will power long after the point of exhaustion; but an angel can do no such thing to the material world. The difference is that our soul is immediately united to matter as the form of matter; the angels have no such connection with matter and so have no means of effecting a formal, intrinsic change. What changes they can produce in matter must be made from the outside, by extrinsic causality.

Of course, they can produce some changes in matter. After all, the superior has all the power of the inferior; if a bird can charm a man or a shark can take off his leg, these things are not to be denied to an angel. Indeed, the angel, being superior, has the power of all beneath him in a superior way; he will move corporal agents more smoothly, more efficiently, more powerfully than any material cause. There is no real reason for surprise when the angel produces effects with a material cause that the material agents themselves could never produce; we are not particularly surprised that a cook working with such clumsy materials as a fire, a barnyard fowl and some stale bread, can produce a beautifully browned roast chicken stuffed with dressing, though we know well enough that the fire, the chicken and the bread could never achieve such perfection left to themselves.

The angels can move bodies with a corporal movement; nor should this have to be argued very seriously. We grant the power to a bull, particularly if the matador is a little slow or clumsy, and surely an angel is superior to a bull. It is inconceivable that a bull should toss an angel, but quite within the realm of possibility that an angel should toss the bull. Really, this angelic movement of bodies is just another case of the beautifully interlocking hierarchy of being in which the lower, in its supreme activity, touches the higher order. For local movement, as we have seen in considering the grades of life, is the supreme activity of a purely material composite and the activity which should naturally be immediately subject to a higher, a spiritual, nature.

What difficulty there is in this truth is a difficulty of imagination rather than of conception. We can easily understand men throwing a ball with their hands or bumping into doors with their noses; but the activity of the angels in regard to such things seems not so easily grasped. It seems a distinct disadvantage to lack a body, particularly in a game like baseball or football. The difficulty arises from our insistence on carrying over the imagery of human activity into the world of the angels. We argue that because a man cannot throw a ball without hands, of course an angel is just as helpless. The fact is that a body limits and contracts the activity of a spiritual substance rather than aids it; because of its union with the body as its form, our human soul cannot move other bodies except through its own body. The angel, not suffering this limitation to a particular body, can move other bodies freely, without the use of a corporal medium; the very absence of a corporal medium makes it impossible for us to draw imaginative pictures of the process, such as an angel getting set for a blow or swinging in a graceful arc before hurling a ball.

It must be constantly insisted that this angelic activity is within the natural order. It in no way conflicts

with nature or the causality of secondary material causes; it is itself a part of nature and a secondary cause. The one thing it does to material causes is to make their operation more perfect through union with a higher cause.

It is completely certain that the angels, of themselves, work no miracles; that is God's proper field, for a miracle must exceed the whole order of nature. They do things that may seem wonderful indeed to a particular material cause; but then it would seem wonderful to a stone, could a stone enjoy wonder, that so small a boy could impart On it the preternatural gift of flying through the air.

Angelic action in the world of men: Indirect action: on the intellect and will

Coming to the world of men, it should be immediately apparent that an angel can no more pour knowledge into a human brain than can a human professor; for the intellect is one of those intrinsic accidents, inhering directly in the substance of the soul, that no created agent can get at directly, either to read the thought hidden there or to put new thoughts alongside the old ones. If a man wants his guardian angel to know what he is thinking, he must speak out; not even an angel can read one's thoughts.

Direct action: on the sense faculties

Angels can, of course, teach men in somewhat the same way in which they illuminate inferior angels. The process, however, is not exactly the same. There must be the same comforting or strengthening of the intellect and the cutting of the angelic concept to fit the inferior mind; but this is not quite enough. The human intellect cannot digest raw intellectuality. Its natural way of knowing is by abstracting the idea from the sensible image or phantasm; the angelic idea must be given a coating of the sensible before it can be swallowed by the human mind. It is not necessary that we know an angel has enlightened us for the fact to have taken place: though we must, of course, realize that we have a new idea. Much the same thing happens in human affairs and we think nothing of it; how many employees have dropped a thought on the boss's brain, then sat back patiently waiting, letting the idea sink in to such a depth that the boss will take it for his own and push it to the limit. Many of the good thoughts we have, the inspirations, resolutions, hopes, kindnesses are not the result of our innate goodness but of the patient labor of a teaching angel, thanklessly repeating the lesson over and over again.

Relation to human dignity, self-sufficiency and freedom

Our will is no less sacrosanct than our intellect. No natural agent, angels included, can force that will to action or move it directly. What is done with a will is done indirectly: coaxing, presenting lovable objects, desirable actions, threatening it, as we wheedle a child with a piece of cake or frighten a criminal with the threat of the electric chair.

The dreams that warned Joseph against Herod were quite ordinary operations of an angel. Not that all dreams are angelic in source or material; but it should not be hard to see that the angels have the power to impress images upon our imagination or to present our senses with external stimuli. We can hurry, shivering, into a theatre in the dead of winter only to have the blistering summer day pictured on the stage so affect our imagination that the air seems sultry and perspiration pours from us. A fairly moderate stomach-ache can start our imagination off on the most woeful series of images; a single buzz of a mosquito is sufficient for us to imagine whole chunks of our legs being bitten off. If the necessarily clumsy make-believe of the stage, a bodily indisposition, or the faint stirring of one of our senses can so vividly affect the imagination, we can be very sure that the angels can do a better job with it.

Both the senses and the imagination are corporal, organic faculties, powers we have in common with the animals and so, of course, under the presidency of the spiritual world, open to spiritual activity. The exercise of angelic activity in these fields demands nothing extraordinary on the part of the angels; if they can move material things locally, they can stimulate our senses and imagination. Unlike the intellect and will, our senses and imagination can be got at from the outside.

Angelic ministers to the material world

Nor is this angelic activity in the world of men an affront to our self-sufficiency, our dignity or freedom any more than the activity of a professor is an infringement on the dignity or freedom of his students. Rather, it opens up a much greater field to human minds, strengthening and uplifting them; this activity is a perfection of human nature within the purely natural field which human nature of itself could not attain.

Assisting and ministering angels

Place of superior angels

While there is no work to be done in the material world so great that the least of the angels could not take care of it, there is an orderly distribution of angelic activity according to divine providence that leaves the first hierarchy of angels exclusively engaged in the courts of heaven. St. Thomas makes the comparison with the regime of a temporal kingdom in which not all of the counselors of the king are ambassadors, some remaining permanently at the court as participants of the secrets and counsels of the king, others receive the royal commands and plans and pass them on to the actual messengers.

Limitation of ministering angels

In the court of heaven, the highest hierarchy (Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones) are members of the divine household whose whole activity is centered on the divinity itself. The first choir of the second hierarchy (Dominions) serve as the medium between the heavenly court and its messengers; while the last two choirs of the second hierarchy (Virtues and Powers) and the third hierarchy (Principalities, Archangels, Angels) have the actual administration of the material world. From the supernatural point of view, inasmuch as all enjoy the beatific vision, all the angels are said to be assisting angels, assisting at the throne of God; but from the natural point of view, the first four choirs (Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions) are assisting angels; the last five (Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels) are administering angels. Of the two groups, the assisting angels are far more numerous, a conclusion reached on the grounds that what is more perfect in the world, what is more directly and fully an image of divine perfection, is more directly the intent of nature and nature's author. Just as there are many more angels than there are corporal species, so there are many more of the higher angels than of the lower.

The role of angels in the world of men:

Of the good angels -- guardianship

The particular role of the good angels relative to the world of men is one of guardianship. This may sound a little insulting to the adult human for it implies protections direction, inspiration, comfort and encouragement. Why should all this be necessary? Isn't man able to take care of himself; why treat him like an infant?

Subject of this guardianship

The assignation of guardian angels to men, a fact completely certain from abundant places in Holy Scripture, is not a peculiar exception for the case of men by way of precaution against their infantile debility; it is merely an insistence on man's integral place in a perfectly ordered universe. In that universe, the lower is ruled and regulated by the higher, the movable and variable by the immovable and invariable, the lower material things by the higher material things, the corporal by the spiritual. Certainly man, through his free will, can avoid evil but not perfectly as the constant victory of passion eloquently testifies so also the universal knowledge of the natural law can guide man to good, but the application of that law to particular cases gives man too frequent an occasion for a bad mistake. In spite of the help that comes directly from God, the help of grace and the virtues, there is plenty of room for the work of the angels in the practical perfection and application of these virtues. There is no need for pride stiffening our necks at the mention of guardianship; look at the human record.

Dignity and distribution of the guardians

Angelic guardianship is not limited to a group, a class or a race; it extends to every individual human being. If we find it hard to believe the extravagance of divine generosity in delegating a heavenly prince to every human being, it is principally because we so consistently underestimate the dignity of the human individual in the scheme of the universe and the plans of the divine architect. On the same grounds, the crucified Son of God was a stumbling block to the Gentiles.

In the material world, divine providence, while extending to the smallest details, evidently intends and extends particular care to that which is enduring. Thus, for example, we see the extraordinary precautions taken by nature to preserve the species and its seeming carelessness towards the individual when it has a spawning fish lay millions of eggs that a few might come to maturity. The human individual, from the point of view of perpetuity or endurance, rates higher than any material species; for his rational soul is by nature destined to an eternal existence. The enduring individual of the human species is the particular care of divine providence, a care which expresses itself with at least the same emphasis as is given to the material species. The individual human being has a particular guardian angel because he is immensely important in the plans of the divine architect.

As a matter of fact, there is probably no man who does not have the help of more than one of these guardian angels because there is no man who is not a part of some larger body, some social organism. As these social organisms, like the laws that govern them, are of their nature perpetual, they have their own guardians; there is an angel guardian of a kingdom, a state, of a city, perhaps even of a diocese, a parish, a religious order or a monastery.

The angelic guardians of individual men are drawn from the lowest choir of the third hierarchy, the choir of the angels. Each angel, of course, differs from all others as much as a stone differs from a tree; for there is the gap of species between them. Within the choir which furnishes guardians for men there is the same graded order of perfection that is to be found in the whole universe; and that graded order is made use of in the actual assignment of guardianship. The more perfect angel is given the greater work, thus preserving the proportion between the perfection of nature and the perfection of function; for example, the more perfect angels are given as guardians to those men from whom more is demanded in the line of spiritual perfection, such as the saints, of intellectual labors, as the men of genius, of work for the common good, as statesmen, and so on. Where the object to be guarded is more universal, the guardian angel chosen is of a higher choir; so, going up the list of city, state, kingdom and so on, we pass up the line of the angelic choirs destined to guard the world of men.

Coming down to particular cases, St. Thomas denies that Christ had a guardian angel because He was, from the very beginning of His life, in possession of the beatific vision; and it is the work of a guardian angel to lead men to that vision which constitutes their eternal happiness, so the individual man has no guardian angel in heaven or in hell, but rather a companion reigning with him in heaven, or a persecutor punishing him in hell. Christ rather had an angel ministering to Him than a guardian protecting him. Man in the garden of Eden had a real need of a guardian angel, even though he could suffer no danger from the rebellion of his sensitive nature or from the material world in which he lived. As the event proved, there was always the supreme danger of attack from the devil. The infidels, the thoroughly wicked, even anti-Christ himself will have guardian angels, as follows from the general ordering of the universe and of men. Nor is this guardianship in vain; without it, these men would be very much worse. In fact, the loss of a guarded soul is not to be laid to negligence on the part of the guardian angel but to the wickedness of the individual soul which is always free to plunge itself into hell.

The guardianship of the individual soul begins, in the opinion of St. Thomas, at the moment of birth, not at the moment of conception. While it is true that the child in the womb is certainly possessed of human nature, it so intimately belongs to the mother as to be almost a part of her, as the fruit is a part of the tree; during that time, the child is guarded by the guardian angel of the mother, not by its own guardian. Beginning at the moment of birth, that guardianship continues up to the moment of death when human nature is disintegrated by the separation of the body and soul. At no time during the span of human life is a

man deserted by his guardian angel, at no time is he without the protection of that heavenly prince. No matter what he does with his life, no man suffers the loss of that unrelaxed vigilance and untiring patience of his angel.

Effects on the guardian

How does the angel feel about it ally Would it not be entirely reasonable if the angel of a first class sinner were to throw up the whole job in disgust? At least the angel would seem to be entitled to a little disappointment or even chagrin at the total waste of his magnificent efforts. As a matter of fact, the angel's peace of mind and happiness in no way depends upon the activities of man; it is not wearing its heart on its sleeve, that heart has been given to God. The guardian angel is in possession of eternal beatitude and so impreguably protected from all sorrow; its will is in perfect accord with the divine will so that whether man follows the order of merit to an eternal reward or the order of justice to eternal punishment, he cannot cause sorrow to an angel by stirring up a conflict between God and His messenger. There is, however, a real possibility of conflict between the guardian angels of different individuals or of different principalities, as for instance, in the case of war, when the aims or needs of these different subjects of guardianship are diametrically opposed. Here again the conflict is more apparent than real and certainly cannot result in bitterness between the angels involved. Both angels are perfectly united to God, in complete harmony with His divine will and, of course, that divine will is in harmony with itself; the conflict comes from an incomplete knowledge of the divine plans and ceases as soon as those plans are revealed. The angels know this; during the interval preceding such a revelation, they do not sever diplomatic relations, refuse to speak to each other, or contaminate the air with nasty innuendoes. Each does his utmost at his own task, satisfied to be fulfilling the task assigned by the divine Master.

This doctrine of the guardian angels is by no means merely a popular sentiment in the Church, as Calvin thought. The fact of guardianship is absolutely certain and of faith from the Scriptures themselves. That every one of the faithful has his particular guardian angel is quite clear from Holy Scripture and is the universal doctrine of the Fathers of the Church. That not only everyone of the faithful but every human being has his own guardian angel is the common teaching of the Doctors of the Church; that every kingdom, province and city has its own angel seems quite clear from Scripture. St. Thomas thinks that public persons, destined to work for the common good, have another angel commissioned as guardian for these specifically public works. That every parish, order, monastery and so on has its own angel is a probable opinion that seems to follow immediately from the principles behind the general guardianship of the angels.

Of the devils -- attack

Besides the good angels there are also fallen angels; which fact would immediately lead one to suspect that angelic activity in the material world is not exclusively of a beneficent nature. These devils harbor no love either for God or man; their very nature gives them the power to act on the senses and imaginations of men, to coax the human wills and to feed human intellects with the material for knowledge. They have the motive for acting and the power to act; the fact is that they have acted in the material universe from the days of the first man.

The fact and causes of hostility

Of course such activities are definite attacks on men, attacks whose history has its roots deep in the beginnings of the universe. There is first of all that terrifying hatred and envy of God that so consumes the devils now. Pride led them to ape the self-sufficiency of God; pride can not now let them forget the shamed exposure of their insufficiency. As it led them to ape the divinity itself, so now it leads them to ape the divine government of the world; Satan's kingdom sends its own ambassadors into the material world to work to the ends of evil that divine beneficence might be thwarted. Over and above this pride and envy of divine things, there is a definite hatred and envy of men as participants of the divine life and divine happiness, an envy that drives the devils on to every effort to impede that union of God and men.

Its limitation

The devils are not stragglers from a once proud army, plundering where and when they like; they are not guerilla bands that have escaped a pursuing army; nor are they an army of evil that has fought the legions of God to a standstill. They are by no means out of control; rather they are definitely and completely subject to God. The extent and power of diabolic attacks on men are themselves subject to divine ordination; the divine government is wise enough to fit even such things into the working out of the perfection of the universe, for it knows how to use evil by ordering it to still greater good.

Physical attacks of devils: Infestation, Obsession, Possession

Now and then, but rarely, the devil makes a spectacular display by attacking men physically. This might be of great importance for advertising purposes, if the devil needed advertising; it has little importance from any other point of view. Three classes of these physical attacks have been distinguished by theologians, ascending to a climax of impotent fury. The first, called infestation, consists of an attack centering on the surroundings of man rather than man himself; noise-making, throwing things about, breaking articles of furniture, mysterious knocks on doors and walls, and so on. It was this sort of thing that plagued the Curé of Ars night after night for so many years during the pitifully few hours he could set aside for sleep. Obsession, on the contrary, is a personal attack, but essentially an exterior attack directed to physical injury and so to the instilling of terror; in its effects, it does not go beyond the attack that any man might make on another by blows or kicks.

The real crescendo in these attacks is reached in what is called possession. Here the devil approaches internal domination of the person involved for he takes over almost complete control of the lower faculties of the possessed person: imagination, senses, even purely vegetative and animal operations. So much is this true that during the time of possession, the one possessed has no control over these faculties. It must be remembered that this attack is also no more than physical, that it has no moral significance and is without the power to sway the will or act directly on the intellect; that is, it is incapable of forcing a person to commit sin. Sometimes possession is permitted by God with no fault whatever on the part of the one possessed; at others, there are definitely assignable causes from the side of the victim: such, for instance, as openly selling the soul to the devil, weakening the will by constant practise of hypnotism, flirting with the devil, or openly inviting him in, through spiritualistic seances, frequentation of astrologers, fortune tellers and so on.

Moral attacks

The moral attacks of the devils are really much more serious; but because they are much more commonplace and not at all spectacular, they are much less feared by men and women. We call them temptations. It is a mistake, of course, to comfort ourselves with the thought that all temptations come from the devil. As a matter of fact, temptations have entirely efficacious causes in the appetites, habits and companions of men; indeed, some of them may come from God Himself. For, after all, a temptation, strictly, is nothing more than an experiment, a trial, to determine the powers of the one tempted. It is this nature of temptation that shows so clearly the difference between temptation as it comes from God, man or the devil.

The temptations from God are rather to show a man himself and others of what stuff this man is made and of what he is capable. Thus, the terrible temptations and trials of the saints were evidences to the saints themselves and to others of how great things they must suffer for God and how utterly dependent they are on God. The temptations that come from men are normally for the purpose of the tempter, to discover things for himself and, perhaps, to obtain things for himself. Thus, for a man to tempt God is a sin because it proceeds from doubt or incertitude of God's power; a man may tempt other men either to help them or to injure them. When the purpose is injury, the spiritual seduction of others, the tempter is doing the devil's work for this is precisely the aim of the devil's moral attacks, to seduce man, to lead him into sin. The passions of man and the world about man are said to tempt man, but only materially, offering him the

material for sin. Obviously they have no conscious purpose of temptation behind them unless they are used by a conscious agent such as the devil or another human being, as indeed they often are. Indirectly we might blame all sins and temptations on the Devil insofar as the exemplar of all sin and the corrupter of human integrity came about through the temptation of Eve by the devil. For the most part, however, we get along in sin very well without the devil, even without the help of anyone but ourselves. We cannot do the supernatural work required for heaven without supernatural help; but we suffer no such insufficiency in the order of evil, we are quite capable of sins that damn us to hell without any suprahuman aid. Not all sins are traceable to the devils; but there is no class of sins to which the devil does not tempt men and women.

In the course of such temptation, it is quite possible for the devil to work marvels, just as it is for the good angels to work marvels; but not miracles. The devils have lost none of their natural powers through their sins; but neither have they gained any supernatural powers as a result of their fall. The works of the devils are marvels only from the point of view of the material causes with which they are worked; the serpents produced by the Egyptian magicians, the fire from heaven that consumed the herds and family of Job, the crash of the house which killed his sons -- these were not tricks but stern realities with the devil for their author. They were certainly not miracles.

It would seem, granted the natural cleverness of the devil and the clemency of God, that once the devil has been thoroughly beaten by a human individual, he would pretty well abandon that manner of attack on that individual. Usually it works out that way. After all, there is no sense in throwing armies against a fort that has proved invincible. On the other hand, once a weak spot has been found by the devil, it is fairly certain that there will be many future attacks on the same place and along the same line.

Conclusion: Role of the angels and scientific thought

The role of the angels in the government of the material world is not likely to be the subject of a scientific paper within the next few years; it is to be devoutly hoped that no conscience-stricken American millionaire leaves a legacy to set up a laboratory for such an investigation. The results would be doomed beforehand to a most unscientific character. Science has nothing to offer by way of proof of the angelic governors for such a matter is simply not subject to scientific methods of inquiry. By the same token, there are no grounds for scientific attack on the role of the angels in our world. Science and the suprasensible cannot come to grips. If science thinks, at any time, that it is attacking or destroying the notion of angels and angelic activity, it is in the throes of a nightmare. Don Quixote was much more sane, attacking windmills with a lance, than is a scientist attacking the invisible, intangible, immaterial substances of the angelic world with a scalpel or a microscope.

Role of the angels and philosophic thought

Nor can the role of the angels be disproved by philosophic thought. Some philosophers have thought they found a way around this by first strangling the outer guard of the angelic world, the human intellect; unfortunately, with the death of the intellect, philosophy ceased to breathe and the former philosophers were stripped of all but scientific equipment. Facing the facts of the existence of man's intellect, the order of the universe and the hierarchy of being, the angels and their activity in the material world are demanded; a demand that was recognized as genuine by generations of philosophers.

It is true that the activity of the good angels cannot be demonstrated by the human reason alone; any one of these effects could be produced directly by God Himself. Yet the activity of the devils seems to present us with definite proof of the presence and activity of spiritual substance. It is to be remembered that philosophy and science do not exhaust the possibilities of certain knowledge for man. He can still be told truth by one who knows all truth; he can still receive knowledge in unadulterated form directly from the first truth by way of revelation on the authority of the first truth, Who cannot deceive or be deceived, the role of the angels in the material universe is indisputable.

Role of angels and moral thought:

Appreciation of supra-human aid

The moral thinking of men offers an added source of conviction of the activity of the angels, for it brings home as nothing else can, the need of man for suprahuman aid. Our own human weakness is a splendid reason for the strength and help of the angels. The realization of the hordes of far superior beings on the alert for the downfall of man makes the doctrine of the guardian angels a necessity if terror is not to hold sway over the human heart. With our eyes open to the weakness of man and the strength of the forces of evil, the way is clear for a full flowering of virtues essential to the living of human life. We are quite willing to exercise a healthy caution, not at all resentful of the truth of a wholesome humility; concretely, we are much less likely to flirt with sin, temptation or the occasion of sin on the false assumption that nice people like ourselves do not succumb to the things we are hardly likely to develop, in the moral order, that careless confidence that sends a veteran steelworker hurtling to his death; we shall cultivate a sound, rational fear.

Value of this appreciation

The comfort and courage of the presence of the guardian angels is not an invitation to sluggish mediocrity of effort but an inspiration to outdo ourselves. The importance of man in the universe, underlined by the fact of angelic guardianship, is something to be held fast to as the solid ground of self-respect and evident refutation of the slimy theories that would sink man in a mass. Purity is not nearly so difficult in the presence of angels who stand continually in the presence of God. All of these virtues are obvious conclusions from a man's admission of the truth of the angelic government of the physical world. Perhaps the most obvious of all is the one that will be most slow in its growth, that graciously human virtue of gratitude. If the angels would only frown at us by way of reminders or stand conspicuously till we were forced to think of a tip, if they would cough, but no, they are entirely unobtrusive. It is entirely up to us to murmur a word of thanks, or go haughtily on taking their indefatigable service for granted.

<<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - v.1, ch. 19	Chapter Twenty -->
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CHAPTER XX -- THE ROLE OF MEN AND OF FATE (Q. 106-109)

1. A fundamental truth -- integrity:
 - (a) The view of the slave.
 - (b) The view of the coward
 - (c) The view of a man.
 2. Fact of the activity of corporal creation.
 3. It The mode of this activity:
 - (a) Philosophic explanations.
 - (b) Principle of this activity.
 - (c) Influence on human actions:
 - (1) Distinction of human action and acts of man.
 - (2) Direct influence on human action.
 - (3) Indirect influence.
 - (d) Influence on the spiritual world.
 4. Fate:
 - (a) Its definition in general.
 - (b) Its harmony with and distinction from providence.
 - (c) Its inevitability and universality.
 5. The role of man:
 - (a) Physical action on the material world.
 - (b) Strictly human action:
 - (1) of man's intellectual powers:
 - a. On the minds of others.
 - b. On the material world.
 - (2) of his generative powers.
 - (3) of his nutritive powers.
 6. Man's place in the government of the world:
 - (a) Relative to divine and angelic action.
 - (b) Relative to the material action of bodies and of other men.
 - (c) Man's own power and place.
- Conclusion:
1. Summary of this volume.
 2. The Lord of the world.
 3. The divine architect.

CHAPTER XX THE ROLE OF MEN AND OF FATE (Q. 115-119)

OLD things may be best but if so they are badly cheated, for we give them nothing like the proper attention excellence deserves. Old things become so familiar, so comfortable that they seem to mould themselves to our shape, abandoning their own, as though at the same time to wrap their arms about us and proclaim their surrender of themselves to be merged with us. They do really become a part of us to such an extent that we see as little of them as we do of ourselves; it is almost shocking to have an old thing brought sharply to our attention, as confusedly embarrassing as a suddenly realized excess of introspection. These are to be taken for granted, as we take our hand, our eyes, our minds for granted; which is to say, they are to be persistently overlooked.

A fundamental truth -- integrity

All through this book a fundamental truth has cropped up again and again; it is no surprise to meet this old friend in this final chapter we are so accustomed to this familiar truth by this time that it seems like an old friend; and, like an old friend, we can easily take it for granted, pass it by, overlook it, sure that there will be no recriminations, no enduring enmity as the result of our blindness. Perhaps we can best express this familiar truth by pointing out that a coward multiplies the dangers he must face and dies a thousand times; or that one lie must always be patched up by several others. The reason for both of these is that one fact cannot be dodged without a hundred others crashing into us head on, one stone of truth cannot be crushed without an instant need for extensive repair work to prevent a collapse of the building. In other words, a man cannot toy with any part of the divine plans without defacing the edifice.

If through cowardice, aversion from unpleasant truths, ignorance, pride or any reason whatsoever, we take away any least thing from God, the universe, or any part of that universe, we reduce the whole to chaos; undoubtedly because the whole is so perfectly ordered on the model of divine truth that it is not patient of the least error. The fact remains that if we try to run away from the omnipotence of God, we throw ourselves into the remorseless maws of a heartless machine; if we exalt man above all else, we destroy him; if we attempt escape from the bitterness and struggle of a material world by fleeing from it, we become lost in a shadowy world of phantasy; if we exalt the material world, we are helpless before a monstrous divinity fabricated by falsehood.

In a word, there is no substitute for truth, the whole truth. There is no corner of the universe so distant that in it we can bury an unpleasant fact of that universe beyond all discovery. The facts must be faced, all of them. The truth must be admitted, all of it. In spite of himself, man cannot turn his back on a fact, a truth, a detail of the plans of the universe; he can only pretend to, shouting his pretensions the louder as the ominous tramp of truth's boots pounds down the avenues of his mind.

The view of the slave

There is no cause for astonishment, then, in the fact that the view of men on the activity of material creation in the affairs of the universe profoundly affects their views of God and of man, particularly when the original view has something in it of fact-dodging. In the concrete, the interrelation of our views of the material world, man and God is startling. Take, for example, the view that is almost universal among modern philosophers today, the view that cedes supreme activity to matter, in fact, insists that there is nothing else, no other source of perfection. This is a slave's view of the world, of man and of God; in such a world, man is just a part of an unthinking aggregation or process, without significance in his beginning, without hope in his life, with no goal to crown his death. God, in such a world, is non-existent.

The view of the coward

This picture is so monstrous it is no wonder men have turned coward in the face of it. It leaves no room for God or moral responsibility, thus apparently releasing man from burdens; but at the same time it leaves no room for order, for intelligence, for purpose, for value or for meaning. That is too much for a race whose first question is "whys", and whose constant quest is for happiness. Some men of today have tried to run away from this horror by denying its existence, much as a frightened boy on a lonely road will try to still his chattering teeth by assuring himself there are no ghosts. There is no material world: or, if it does exist, its activity is not its own in any sense but that of a spirit, preferably our own human spirit. Other men have not had the energy for even this much of a gesture of protest against the horror. In them, cowardice reached its supreme goal of abject surrender in the suicide of humanity when men said that while material creation did not exercise the only activity, its particular action was wholly irresistible. Material creation operates, they say, with a necessity and inevitability that admits of no control, no interruption, no escape; men, in the face of this inexorable movement of the material world, are helpless pawns.

The view of a man

In contrast to this distorted view of the plans of the divine architect, there is the human view which, since man is a shadow of divinity, is also the divine view. It sees in the material world a real activity, operating at the command of physically necessary laws; but an activity that is only a part of a world activity, a subordinate causality with its definitely subordinate place in the workings of an orderly universe. The material creation is subject, above all, to the supreme mover; it is controllable by those shaven in divine providence, the intellectual creatures we call men and angels. True enough, this is a hard view: it demands courage, insists upon responsibility, on action, on persevering effort, but it also gives room for meaning, for hope, for success, for *human* life. It is a view that has all the brilliance, the inflexibility, the suavity and peace of the whole truth.

Fact of the activity of corporeal creation

If it is remembered that the activity in question here is not that of living things but of inanimate creation, the fact of material activity can hardly be seriously questioned. The activity of living things has already been treated at some length in this book. Here we are interested, not in that immanent activity that is within and for the agent, but in the transient activity that passes from the subject to the outside; the kind of activity that we see, for example, in a chemical reaction, radio-active substances, in the long, graceful sweep of the wind, the rush of the rain or the hushed falling of snow.

A few men deny the existence of such activity; but not many, perhaps for the very good reason that such a denial is much more than open violence to common sense. The denial is itself a reflection on the power of God, as though He were a weakling tyrant Who did not dare share any of His power, guarding His causality in niggardly fashion lest another, sharing it, should discover His fundamental weakness; to protect Himself, He made all creatures merely puppets of His omnipotence. The denial, if sustained, would mean that the whole order of cause and effect had absolutely no existence in the material world; with the result that the investigations of science were sterile, empty gestures fruitless of result, that the whole field of human activity, of moral responsibility and purposive action were no more than the hazy illusions of a mind too long locked up in solitary confinement.

Indeed, it would have results even wider than this. For it would mean that the material world had absolutely no reason for existence. The perfection of substance is in its function, that is, the reason for activity on the part of creatures is the attainment of perfection lacking to them or, in other words, they exist for the attainment of their ends. Deny this activity and you blast out the rational foundation for the existence of the material world. To put the thing in modern words, you destroy the dynamic character of the world, reduce it to stagnation, to decay, to ultimate nothingness.

The mode of this activity: Philosophic explanations

By far the greater number of men readily admit the fact of the activity of the material world. In trying to explain this evident fact, philosophers have offered a variety of opinion that pretty well exhausts the possibilities and the impossibilities. So true is this, that practically every vagary of modern philosophers is reducible to the three following explanations of older philosophers. According to the Jewish philosopher, Avicenna, material activity was only an apparent activity; really that activity was the result of a spiritual power that penetrated all bodies. Plato and the Arabian philosopher, Avicenna, (with considerable difference of detail) explained this material activity by saying the part played by matter was only a preparation, a stage-setting, a disposition; the real activity was due to an immaterial, spiritual principle. The Greek materialist, Democritus, would have it that the action of the corporal creatures was merely a case of the flow of atoms from one body into another.

Aristotle and St. Thomas went deeper into the question and solved it by answering the question why bodies act at all, rather than the question of how they act. They decided that the principle of activity was the individual perfection of the acting body; and very reasonably, too, for few men are seriously hurt by being struck by an imaginary automobile, it is only a real body that can act, and only insofar as it is real. The proportion, in other words, of the activity of a body corresponds to its possession of perfection, to the actualization of its potentialities; it can act on other bodies only insofar as these other bodies lack perfection, that is, have unfulfilled potentialities. To put this into the ruthless brevity of scholastic terminology, we would have to say that a body can act insofar as it is an act and according to the potentialities of the subject upon which it is acting.

To Aristotle and Thomas, this immediately brought to the fore a continuation of that hierarchy of being we have seen so often; for there will be a scale of activity in bodies corresponding to the scale of their perfection. If there exist bodies which have completely realized all their potentialities, whose form has completely exhausted the possibilities of their matter, then these will be the supremely active bodies, the first corporal movers. The science of their times offered Aristotle and Thomas just such perfect bodies in the celestial bodies; these were then placed at the top of the scale of material activity, influencing all other corporal action.

Principle of this activity

The scientific basis of this conclusion has long since gone into the discard; it has been decided scientifically that the stars and planets are not bodies of a different kind from those that exist here on earth. But the metaphysical principle explaining the activity of the material world -- the principle of individual perfection -- has lost none of its validity. The seeds of material activity are the potentialities, realized and unrealized, whose interplay works steadily to the ordered perfection of the material universe.

Influence on human actions

Though he believed the heavenly bodies were the first corporal movers, directly playing their part in the activity of every lesser material thing, Thomas made it plain that the influence of these bodies did not upset or destroy the field of human activity. These heavenly bodies, after all, were but another part of a well ordered universe, as also is man; they have their specific nature, as has man. One does not destroy the other; rather, both take their proper, orderly place in the divine plans.

Distinction of human action and acts of man

To see the exact influence of material agents of the human order, it is necessary to understand that there is much about man that is outside his control; the growth of his beard, for example, his size, what he says in his sleep, the blunders he makes in his absent-mindedness. All these, as distinct from specifically human acts, are called "acts of man." The distinctly human acts proceed from man's intellect and will; of these man is the master. The distinction could be put simply by saying that the spiritually controlled acts of the human race must be distinguished from those that escape the spiritual control and which are material in their origin and fulfillment.

Direct influence on human action

Stated in these terms, it is not difficult to see that human acts have no direct relation to the activity of the material bodies, much less any direct subordination. This is no more than saying that the material cannot act upon the spiritual, that a dust storm cannot soil an angel, a star cannot affect the free will of a man, nor can a planet pour ideas into a human mind. If it were otherwise, there could be no human actions. Man would act like the rest of material nature, following necessary physical laws; that is, he would have no free will, no choice of action, no responsibility, no control over himself or anything else. In a word, the human world would no longer exist.

The direct action of the stars on the human intellect or will is a metaphysical impossibility and is in flagrant conflict with the unquestionable facts of humanity and human activity. Nevertheless the belief in the subordination of man's life to the stars has been for centuries a coward's refuge from the struggle of being human, and never more so than today. Thus, a famous American newspaper columnist, recently dead, could write that today astrology is no longer a dubious calling practiced by and for the shabby inhabitants on the fringe of the underworld. Today especially it is a straw for a sinking world whose following is in the highest stratum. One reader of the stars could leave a quarter of a million dollars at her death; another, of distinctive lineage and social impressiveness, makes her engagements for February in Palm Beach; for March, April and May in New York; for June, in London.

Indirect influence

That the stars, or any other bodies, might well have an indirect influence on the actions of man is self-evident from the very nature of man. He is material as well as spiritual and his material side can, of course, be acted upon by any other corporal force; undoubtedly, his material side has an influence on his spiritual actions. This is news to no one at all. It has been no secret that a full moon and a smooth sea have done a noble part in arranging human romance.

Coming down to the particulars of the influence of these things on the intellect of man, it is evident that a man in physical agony does not do his best thinking: that the disturbance of his sense faculties by the racket of a boiler factory, the stormy arousal of his passions or the churning of his imagination all upset the workings of his intellect. The same things have an undoubted part in influencing or upsetting man's free choice. But no matter what the disturbance on the organic side of man's nature, the fact is that it is on the organic side, not on the spiritual side. There is no question of direct action on the intellect and will; nor can the will be forced to act, disturbance or no disturbance, precisely because it is a free will. Its action is forced only by the universal, supreme good: anything less may present a seductive appearance, but never an utterly convincing one.

Influence on the spiritual world

Of course the angels or devils do not have to scurry for cover in April showers or sigh sadly under a spring moon; floods or blizzards, stars or suns can have no influence, direct or indirect, on the activities of spiritual substances for there is no point for material contact. As a matter of fact, material activity is limited even in the material world. Even if there were such supremely perfect corporal movers as the ancients visualized, their action on purely material creation would not proceed with nearly such inevitability and necessity as astrologists would have us believe it does in the human field; for there still remain inexplicable from the point of view of order those accidents or clashes of material causes which cannot be reduced to any one natural physical cause.

Fate

The astrologic enthusiasts must be enrolled among the rationalists and modern fatalists who rather indignantly deny the idea of a divine providence as unworthy of either God or man and then, paradoxically, turn wholeheartedly, for a solid foundation of the world and of life, to a juggernaut called fate. If for no other reason than that the idea of fate plays so large a part in the lives of so many men, it is worthy of examination.

Its definition in general

Generally speaking, fate might be defined as a hidden cause from whose activity nothing can escape. Actually, this definition is capable of widely different interpretation. In one sense, this hidden cause may be taken to be the disposition of the stars; from this disposition absolutely everything comes about necessarily, even the most intimate acts of knowledge and love. This is the sense in which the fatalist takes the word; and the sense which has been roundly condemned as heretical by the councils of the Church.

Its harmony with and distinction from providence

Another, and perfectly sound sense, identifies fate with divine providence: either with divine providence immediately or with the effects of divine providence, that is with the orderly disposition of all creatures and their activities in view of the end of the universe. In this sense, fate is no more than a restatement of the Catholic doctrine which we have already seen in treating of divine providence; and, in this sense, there is no question of an inescapable necessity that destroys human freedom, whatever be the infallible efficacy of divine ordination.

The attempt to read our fate is the mighty task of trying to read the mind of God; for, if we are looking for the reason of this orderly arrangement of the things of the world, the reason, the ultimate answer, is not to be found in the stars, in the entrails of chickens, in the turn of a card, in the leaves of a teacup or in any of the rest of the trappings of the readers of the future. It is to be found in the plans of the divine architect of the universe. The actual execution of those plans is to be found, of course, in the universe itself; that is, the formal carrying out of the divine plans, the formal disposition of creatures which is the effect of divine providence and might be called fate in a Catholic sense, is all about us. In foretelling the weather, then, we are not trying to climb inside divinity; in a very real sense, however, we are reading the plans of God as

they are executed by secondary causes.

Its inevitability and universality

If we keep in mind the distinction between causal fate, which is divine providence, and formal fate, which is the effect of divine providence, the degree of inevitability in fate (taken only in the Catholic sense) is easily and rightly understood. That causal fate which is divine providence is, of course, completely infallible and certain; God makes no mistakes and receives no news from the world. But it is the mysteriously omnipotent infallibility of an infinitely good God, whose every action is a guarantee of the integrity of every created nature. The formal fate, which is the effects of divine providence or the disposition of secondary causes and their activity, has no metaphysical inevitability in itself. Secondary causes are interfered with every day in the week; in fact, it is precisely to thwart a secondary cause that we carry umbrellas on rainy days and laugh at the rain. The purely material world produces its effects with a physical necessity; while the human world suffers only the moral rule of the law of God.

On the basis of this same distinction, it is not hard to determine the subjects of fate and the extent of its kingdom. For absolutely everything is subject to causal fate, the plans of the divine architect which are divine providence. To formal fate, or the action of secondary causes executing divine providence, only those things are subject which are naturally subordinate to secondary causes; that is, God Himself, the angels and the spiritual faculties of man must be excepted.

The role of man: Physical action on the material world

Coming now to the last phase of the government of the world, the part man plays in cosmic activities, it is clear that the material side of man needs no special treatment. He cannot lift up a mountain, though he may lift up the baby; he can be drowned, shot, run over, suffocated or done away with in thousands of other more or less artistic ways. His material being and activity is subject to the same laws, the same limitations and enjoys the same possibilities as the rest of material creation. His distinctive activity is an intellectual one. A question of distinctively human activities in the workings of the universe is a question of what man can do about that universe with his mind.

Strictly human action:

Of man's intellectual powers. On the minds of others

Let us restrict the question still more and ask what man can do with his mind to the minds of others. More simply, can one man teach another? The fact of man's ability to teach another by sharing with them his ideas is solidly established by the routine experience of human life; if this teaching ability is not a fact but an illusion, then it is the grand illusion or modern life on which untold hours and incredible fortunes have been totally wasted. What is not so clear in this matter is how this transfer or communication of ideas takes place.

One explanation, that of Averroes, declared that one man taught another by giving the student the teacher's own ideas, much as one plane refuels another by giving away its own gasoline. The sense of this explanation was not that only the thing known was the same, that the subject matter of ideas was identical, but that the very intelligible species of both intellects were one and the same. Plato made education a kind of alarm clock; its purpose was merely to jog the memory of the student. For the ideas are all in every mind from the very beginning and have only to be aroused to be converted into actual knowledge. Aristotle, and Thomas after him, insisted that every man starts life with a blank mind; that each mind is a distinct, personal faculty to be perfected by distinctly personal ideas. This blank mind has potentialities; education is nothing more than the actualization of these potentialities, the reduction of the power to know to actual knowing. The teacher, in this case, is not a refueling plane, not an alarm clock, but a hod carrier bringing the materials to bricklaying students.

Moreover, as we have already seen at some length, the channel through which knowledge enters the mind is that of the senses: for the human mind, short of direct action by God, can gather ideas only from the

phantasms of the imagination which, in turn, are the product of sense activity. The teacher's work then is not directly to place ideas in the mind of the student, that would be too much to ask even of an angel, but rather to furnish the material for ideas, to offer the sensitive and imaginative approach, or, as St. Thomas puts it, to take the student by the hand and lead him slowly, carefully from what is known to that which is as yet unknown.

Consequently, the very first condition for the teacher is knowledge of what he is trying to teach: he must know where he is going if he is to lead others to a goal of definite knowledge. His actual procedure, like the procedure of all art, must be modelled on the procedure of nature for, as St. Thomas points out, a man, left to himself, proceeds from the things he knows step by step to what he has yet to learn. He goes from the naturally known principles to the conclusions that follow from those principles. Nature is always the principal cause as well as the model; art takes the tricks of nature and then by them helps nature along.

To put it still more concretely, the teacher takes his student in hand, leading him on to the things to be known from the student's own slender stock of knowledge by proposing sensible examples, similitudes and contrasts, stepping up bit by bit from the less universal to the more universal truths, or stepping down the same way from the first principles to less universal conclusions. But his particular job as teacher is to show the connection between the principles and conclusions. In the trenchant phrase of Aristotle: proof (demonstration, teaching) is a syllogism causing knowledge.

The limitations and extent of this ability of man to teach are evident from this process of teaching. A garage mechanic, as such, cannot teach a statistician to play with figures; nor can the statistician, as such, enlighten the mechanic on the inner life of an automobile. Yet there is no man however wise who cannot learn something; nor is there any man, however ignorant who has not gathered some knowledge that another lacks. In fact, this can be pushed a little farther by saying that the humblest child with the use of reason can tell things to the greatest of the angels, things that the angel, of itself, could not know for the mind of man is an inner sanctuary where only God enters freely, so that the thoughts of our mind can be known to another only through our condescension in revealing them. It would undoubtedly be presumptuous for the most learned of men to attempt to teach an angel natural truths; for one of the precise notes of angelic superiority over human nature is their absolutely perfect knowledge from the first instant of creation.

On the material world

The power of our mind over matter not formally joined to the human soul amounts to absolutely nothing; we can blow out a candle with a whiff of breath, but no amount of mental concentration will snuff out the flame. Even relative to our own body, the effects we can bring about by the use of the mind must be through the instrumentality of the material faculty of imagination; an imaginary ocean crossing can make us sea-sick or a broken thermometer make us shiver with cold in an overheated room. But imagination will never break one of our legs; nor will any amount of mental effort coupled with imagination knit a broken leg. This instrument of the imagination, in other words, has very definite limitations. It is possible for intense mental concentration to render us impervious to sensible stimuli; so St. Thomas could have an ulcerated leg cauterized and be quite unconscious of the pain and the cauterization. It is to be noticed, however, that the concentration does not destroy the external stimuli it ignores; Thomas undoubtedly would have been a joy to a very poor cook, but the spoiled food would still have been spoiled food.

Death's separation of body from soul, rather than increasing the power of man's mind and will over material creation, naturally speaking decreases that power; by death, man loses his one medium of contact with the material world. From that time on, even such a relatively simple activity as local movement, like pushing an enemy downstairs, is beyond human power.

Of his generative powers

As for the other powers of man, well, they naturally have the same limitations as the physical world of which they are so intimate a part. Thus, the generative powers of man can have only physical results. In

the lower animals, the sensitive or animal souls are directly caused by generation; after all, they are no more than material forms and are produced, as other material forms are produced, by the action of material causes. But man's soul is spiritual; and a spiritual substance can be produced in only one way, by the direct creative action of God. Certainly it cannot come from material causes, for it far exceeds them; nor can it come from the spiritual, which, by their very nature, are utterly simple, incapable of division, increase or diminution. To claim that human parents produce the soul of their offspring really amounts to a denial of the spirituality and immortality of that soul; which means, really, a denial of the humanity of that soul, putting it in the same class as the souls of plants and animals coming from material, dependent on material and corrupting with the corruption of matter.

The human soul, then, comes directly from the hand of God. However proud a young father may be of his child, he must give God credit for the greater work; the child is more God's than the parents'. The work of the parents is to dispose the material of the body, prepare the home for the reception of the immortal guest which is the human soul.

Of his nutritive powers

On the side of nutrition, man, in common with every other living thing, has that extraordinary and mysterious activity by which food and drink are changed into integral parts of his nature. As the individuals of the human race increase, the original deposit of humanity is not split up or spread thinly to make it go farther; there is a definite and substantial conversion of nourishment into the human material which makes up the human bodies.

Man's place in the government of the world: Relative to divine and angelic action

Before concluding this final chapter, it might be well to sum up the forces of the government of the world precisely as they affect men and women. We have seen that man is completely subject to the government, the movement of God. That movement, far from being an affront to his nature, is its guarantee and, indeed, the sole cause of man's existence, his life, his soul, his liberty, his fulfillment. The angels cannot directly act upon our intellects or wills. Whatever their power, they are helpless before the individuality of man's free will. The good angels exercise their power in guarding man, protecting him from external evils, teaching him subtly, anonymously, working effectively on his senses and his imagination, encouraging and comforting him. The devils use that same angelic power to tempt man or, sometimes, to attack him physically, but always within the limits placed by the mercy of God.

Relative to the material action of bodies and of other men Man's own power and place

Physical creation cannot get past the barriers of man's spiritual nature any more effectively than can the angels; his intellect and will stand supreme in their privacy. But, of course, man's animal nature is open to the influence of material action; and so, indirectly, his intellect and will can be affected to some degree by this extrinsic, physical activity. The efforts of his fellow men leave a man serene in his independence; again his intellect and will acknowledge no master save God. His fellows can teach a man, ministering the materials of knowledge: they can act upon his physical nature; but no one, no thing, can take away his mastery over his own life and the consequent responsibility he bears for the failure or success of that life.

Conclusion: Summary of this volume

The work of this volume might be stated with extreme simplicity by saying that it was devoted to a study of God and the world; broken down to its full significance, that certainly means that it studied almost everything. Obviously that is too much for any one volume to do; nor did this book attempt to study everything in all its details. Rather it kept a steady eye on the universal harmony of the world and its Creator, concentrating on the broad outlines of the plans of the divine architect, lest the beauty of the plans be hidden by a mass of details. Even those broad outlines of the architect and His plans are awesome.

There was, for example, the question of the existence of God, then a study of His nature and attributes, as well as a glimpse into the inner divine life which is the Trinity, the distinction of the three divine persons in one divine nature.

The next step was the processions of creatures from God, which included the production of these creatures, or creation, and their distinction into angelic, corporal and human. A study of the natures of each of these culminated in the question of their conservation and harmonious interaction by the universal government of the universe.

From this study two facts stood out in bold relief as a sharp challenge to modern thought: the fact of the importance of the human individual and the fact of the orderly planning of the divine architect.

The Lord of the world

These two are a challenge to modern thought. For the first is a sharp denial that man must reconcile himself to existence on a purely material plane where he is individually, totally unimportant; a part of a process, a moment in cosmic development, a unit in a mass whether of race, class, party or mere earth. It is a flat repudiation of the cowardice that would surrender rights, hopes, ideals, success, independence and control in order to escape responsibilities, disappointments, failure, labor and self-control. It is an indignant attack on the theories that urge a man to resignation, cynicism in all the fields of distinctively human endeavor: in knowledge, love, controlled action, attainment of a goal worthy of manhood. For from this study it is clear that man is indeed lord of the world and lord of himself; a provider for himself and for others, a governor of himself and others, a giant on the earth who, with no more than his reason and his hands, makes use of all the material creation and cannot be made use of by anything in the world. He is intelligent, he is free, he is responsible; his life has meaning, it is going to a definite goal that is intimately personal. And he alone, of all creatures in the material world, can say that he will or will not go along the path that alone will lead him home. He is the master; the rest, his servants. He is the lord of the world.

The divine architect

The second fact is an even more fundamental challenge to our times. It is an open revolt against the madness that holds for a world without meaning, a god without intelligence and a man without purpose. It refuses to keep submissive silence in the face of absurdities such as the assumption that order came from disorder, something from nothing, progress by chance or without explanation and government from anarchy. It challenges the modern world to attempt to put these absurdities into concrete living of human life; and scorns the intellectual dishonesty that preaches one doctrine and lives another. For from this study, it has become apparent that God exists, a supremely intelligent, completely omnipotent, infinitely wise, utterly perfect God. The imaging of the perfections of divinity in the world of creatures was nowhere seen more clearly than in the orderly hierarchy of perfection and limitation; on the basis of fact, of authority, of reason the order and wisdom of the divine planning and government stood out. While, on the same basis, the attempt to deny divinity, to explain the world without God, science without divine government, or philosophy without first truth was shown to be impossible. In other words, from the irrefutable evidence of His edifice of the universe, the existence and nature of the divine architect was shown to be visible to those images of His divinity to whom He consigned the lordship of earth.

A COMPANION TO THE SUMMA
VOLUME II -- THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
(Corresponding to the *Summa Theologica Ia IIae*)

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CONTENTS

[FORWARD](#)

**CLICK Q. NUMBERS FOR
ONLINE ENGLISH SUMMA**

I. <u>THE ESSENCE OF HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 1-5)</u>
II. <u>THE MEANS TO HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 6-10)</u>
III. <u>TOOLS OF HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 11-17)</u>
IV. <u>HAPPINESS AND MORALITY</u>	<u>(q. 18-21)</u>
V. <u>HAPPINESS AND PASSION - I</u>	<u>(q. 22-29)</u>
VI. <u>HAPPINESS AND PASSION - II</u>	<u>(q. 30-39)</u>
VII. <u>HAPPINESS AND PASSION - III</u>	<u>(q. 40-48)</u>
VIII. <u>HAPPINESS AND HABIT</u>	<u>(q. 49-54)</u>
IX. <u>HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE</u>	<u>(q. 55-58)</u>
X. <u>STEPS TOWARDS HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 59-62)</u>
XI. <u>HABITS OF HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 63-67)</u>
XII. <u>THE BREATH OF HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 68-70)</u>
XIII. <u>HABITS OF UNHAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 71-74)</u>
XIV. <u>THE CAUSES OF UNHAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 75-78)</u>
XV. <u>UNHAPPINESS FROM THE OUTSIDE</u>	<u>(q. 79-81)</u>
XVI. <u>EVOLUTION OF UNHAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 82-85)</u>
XVII. <u>THE RESULTS OF UNHAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 86-89)</u>
XVIII. <u>THE COMPASS OF HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 90-94)</u>
XIX. <u>SIGNPOSTS OF HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 95-108)</u>
XX. <u>HEIGHTS OF HAPPINESS</u>	<u>(q. 109-114)</u>
XXa. <u>Appendix: Doctrines on Grace</u>	

[Back](#)

[Chapter One -->](#)

Volume II: Ia-IIae

FOREWORD

1. HAPPINESS
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 1-5\)](#)
2. HUMAN ACTIONS
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 6-10\)](#)
3. REASON AND WILL
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 11-17\)](#)
4. MORALITY
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 18-21\)](#)
5. PASSIONS
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 22-29\)](#)
6. CONCUPISCENCE
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 30-39\)](#)
7. EMERGENCY
PASSIONS
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 40-48\)](#)
8. HABIT
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 49-54\)](#)
9. VIRTUE
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 55-58\)](#)
10. CARDINAL VIRTUES
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 59-62\)](#)
11. INTEGRATION
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 63-67\)](#)
12. HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 68-70\)](#)
13. SIN
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 71-74\)](#)
14. CAUSES OF SIN
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 75-78\)](#)
15. EXTERNAL CAUSES
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 79-81\)](#)
16. ORIGINAL SIN
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 82-85\)](#)
17. SINS' RESULTS
[\(Ia-IIae, q. 86-89\)](#)
18. NATURAL LAW

[\(Ia-IIae, q. 90-94\)](#)

19. **POSITIVE LAW**

[\(Ia-IIae, q. 95-108\)](#)

20. **GRACE**

[\(Ia-IIae, q. 109-114\)](#)

Appendix on Grace

CHAPTER I -- THE ESSENCE OF HAPPINESS (Q. 1-5)

1. The key to the mystery of human life is happiness:
2. Happiness consists in the attainment of the goal of life.
3. The study of happiness must begin,
not at the beginning, but at the end, the goal:
 - (a) There is a goal of life:
 - (1) Fact of man's goal -- from his activity.
 - (2) The failure of modern philosophy.
 - (b) The nature of this goal:
 - (1) It is uniquely human.
 - (2) It is ultimate:
 - a. Each man has but one goal.
 - b. That goal is the source of all other desires.
 - c. It is the same for all men.
 - (3) It is the end of all creatures, but differently:
 - a. By participating an image.
 - b. By essential participation.
4. Objective Happiness -- determination of the beatifying object:
 - (a) Three possible -- and historical -- mistakes:
 - (1) External goods: riches, honour, fame, power.
 - (2) Corporal good: the body itself, its pleasure.
 - (3) The soul of man.
 - (b) The true object in whose possession lies happiness is the Universal Good.
5. Subjective or Formal Happiness -- the attainment of the goal:
 - (a) it is possible -- from a comparison of man's faculties man's goal.
 - (b) it is accomplished by an act of man:
 - (1) Not by any of his inferior acts.
 - (2) But by the supreme act of man -- intellectual vision.
 - a. The essence of formal happiness.
 - b. Two common errors in regard to this formal happiness:
 1. Cannot be had.
 2. Would not give happiness if it were had.
 - (c) Characteristics of formal happiness:
 - (1) Once gained it can never be lost.
 - (2) It cannot be had by natural power alone.
 - (3) it is strictly a personal accomplishment.
6. The perfection of happiness:
 - (a) The three essentials or happiness: vision, comprehension, joy.
 - (b) Role of the body in happiness.
 - (c) Role of external goods.
 - (d) Role of friends.

Conclusion:

1. Key to present or imperfect happiness -- where and how happiness is to be found here and now.
2. Activity and progress as a measure of happiness.
3. Answers to the puzzles:
 - (a) of activity.
 - (b) of despair.
 - (c) of boredom.

CHAPTER I THE ESSENCE OF HAPPINESS (Q. 1-5)

Here we have, as a matter of fact, reason for the same terror that engulfs a man at the beginning of his study of God. The terrific complexity of man's life and man's activity might well seem an overpowering assignment for the limits of one volume. The scope of those activities, stretching from ocean to ocean, from pole to pole, from the earliest beginnings to the limitless future, would be far too much to touch upon, let alone plunge into, if man were not man. Because he is man, there is an element of unity that binds together the whole sweep of man's doings as closely as his nature binds the individual; there is a common harmonious note that reveals the meaning of the whole apparently discordant chorus.

The key to the mystery of human life is happiness

That note of unity and harmony is human desire. The same force that has driven men apart, that has set nations at one another's throats, that has wiped individuals and races off the face of the earth, is at the same time the one great focal point of human agreement and harmony. All men agree on this -- they want what they want. And because of this desire, men act. In the attainment of what they want we have the essential notion of happiness. It is not pleasure, not enjoyment, but the possession of the object of desire which constitutes happiness. And in this sense all men want to be happy. Happiness is the key to the mystery of human life, of human activity.

Happiness consists in the attainment of the goal of life.

The material of our study in this volume, therefore, is human action, particularly in its culmination in happiness. It is fortunate for our feeble courage in the face of this task that the fundamental notions involved are so clear. At least most of us will agree theoretically on what a human action is; certainly all of us will agree practically in determining when a man is acting humanly. Theoretically, an act is human over which a man has control, an act that is done deliberately, i.e. on purpose, for a precise reason, to attain a definite goal. When we catch ourselves up now and then and ask in astonishment, "Why in the world did I do that?", only to find there is no answer to the "why" of that question, we are right in concluding that we need sleep, or a vacation, or a visit to the doctor. For while a human being has certainly placed an act, he has not acted humanly. Practically, we have a whole set of phrases to express the difference between a human action and one that is not human. A servant explains: "I'm sorry, I didn't mean that"; and of course the apology must be accepted, even though the coffee spilled on us is, unlike most coffee, incredibly hot. A man whose foot has been trampled in a subway crowd says what he says because he "is angry, not himself". we are "beside ourselves" with indignation, "in a trance, absent-minded, forgetful, cross, hysterical or terror-stricken", and of course our actions are not human.

The study of happiness must begin, not at the beginning, but at the end, the goal

For if human they are, then they must be done for some reason, to some end, for some goal. For, after all, action has to do with the attainment of the object of desire, and the object of desire is precisely the goal or end of that particular action. The study of happiness, then, cannot begin at the beginning; it is too intimately wrapped up with the finish or goal. It is not that man's head is befuddled, but rather that man has the kind of head which makes it necessary to begin at the end. He is not living his life backwards but has that divine faculty of standing off to one side and looking at his life, or of looking ahead of his life, and so is capable of appreciating its meaning as well as its humour. And looking ahead, he will see that the goal does much more than flavour the action directed to it; it does even more than explain the existence of that action, as we shall see presently. For on the determination of the nature of that goal depends the meaning of the whole life of a man, the nature of all his activity, the very destiny of man.

There is a goal of life: Fact of man's goal -- from his activity.

From what we have seen of action that is human, we know the life of man has some end or ends, some goal or goals. The very fact that an act, to measure up to our requirements of human action, must be deliberately controlled, places it as coming from deliberate will; the act is ours and imputable to us because we have willed it. This is universally true of any act that presumes to be human; so that human activity comes from the human will and goes to the object of the human will. In other words, it is placed because of some good, some end, since it proceeds from the instrument of human desire (will) whose only object is good.

The failure of modern philosophy

Here we come upon one of the most drastic failures of modern philosophy. Face to face with the unquestionable fact of finality -- purposiveness -- in human action, modern philosophy has taken refuge in the murk of vague speculation. In the face of modern contempt for any but the most empirical knowledge, modern philosophy has committed itself to the building of castles in the air. It is dangerous to attempt to

classify modern ethical theories; they are so intensely flavoured by the individual philosopher's personal outlook and background that almost every man has a system of his own. But, roughly, we can split modern ethical theory into three classes: (a) the first tries to explain this finality of human activity in terms of the society to which man belongs, reducing ethics to positive law, to some form of public opinion, to sociology; (b) the second attempts the same task in terms of a necessity of the universe in which man moves, whether mechanical or animal, reducing ethics to mathematics, biology, or psychology; (c) the third, faced with the dilemma that reduced Aristotle's magnificent reasoning to vague muttering, makes a god out of man and talks in frankly, or insidiously, subjectivistic terms, describing its ethics as individualistic, emotional or autonomous.

The human being, in whose name all this has been done, is an intensely individual and practical being. To explain patiently that his efforts, his sufferings, his triumphs, his courage, his loyalty, his failures have no objective significance for him personally, merely exasperates him. If all his activity is only in the name of, and for the vague purposes of a very intangible, perhaps very distant, community perfection; or is only the ceaseless grinding of a giant machine, the necessary, irresistible urging of an animal, or the frail spinings of his own mind, he will do one of two things: either he will stop all his effort, all his activity, or he will push the theorizing of philosophies into the room with the children's toys and make his own decisions. And this latter is precisely what he has done. The position and influence of philosophy in our universities today are adequate testimony of philosophy's failure in the field of ethical theory. The pursuit of wealth, of power, of pleasure, of food or drink, of physical perfection, or of scientific inquiry as the goal of human life, gives the other side of the picture, the failure of philosophy in the field of ethical practice.

Men and women of today are no more satisfied with tables than were the men and women of any other age. And if we are to get at the truth of human happiness, we cannot simply scramble human activity with every other form of action in the universe. To act for a goal of our choosing, and that means to attempt to attain happiness, is a uniquely human fight. Other things, other creatures, may be propelled towards a goal by the drive of physical necessity or of animal instinct, much as an arrow is shot towards a target by the impulse and aim of the archer. But only man can direct action towards a goal, for only man is in control of his actions. Control of action involves deliberate will, the ability to see the connection between the tools used and the job to be done, between the means and the end. To envy the secluded happiness of a pampered lap dog is a waste of energy; he cannot be happy because he cannot know what it is all about. We might, indeed we do, whip a puppy for chewing up slippers, we hope that he will remember the whipping in connection with the slippers and avoid both; but we never think of absolving him from his sins.

Aristotle, and St. Thomas after him, laid the solid foundation for the investigation of human activity by tying its goal up with the order of reality. In his treatment of God, St. Thomas triumphantly vindicates both the reality and the sublime supremacy of the divinity by first showing its connection with the very first principles of being and thought. Here, in the very beginning of his investigation of the meaning of human life, we see him laying down the same metaphysical basis for his thought, bringing out clearly the connection between that goal of human activity and the first principles of reality.

The nature of this goal: It is uniquely human

Precisely because a human action, to be human at all, must be directed to some goal, to some good, it follows that there must be some goal that is the last, the ultimate explanation of all human activity. Just as all movement must have one supreme beginning if there is to be any movement at all (as we saw in the first volume in proving the existence of God), so all human movement must have one goal, one end, if there is to be any movement at all. In concrete terms, I buy a boat-ticket to Europe, either because the supreme goal of my life is the possession of such a ticket, or because I want that ticket for some other purpose, such as to go to Europe. Whatever it is I strive for, I want that thing either for itself, or as a step to getting something else. Of course no one starts to climb a flight of stairs devoid of the conviction that the stairs go somewhere, that they have some end; for after all the whole purpose of stairs is to get us to some other place. So, no human being starts a chain of action that is going nowhere; for the whole reason

of acting at all is to get somewhere, to attain some object of our desire. This is the first argument used for the existence of God, but taken from the order of efficient cause and put to work in the order of final cause. To question its validity is to demand action and at the same time, in the same breath, make action impossible.

Each man has but one goal

A final, ultimate, supreme end, or goal, is necessarily solitary, unique. In simpler language, no man or woman can have two final goals at the same time, any more than a person can walk in two directions at the same time. Action is a majestic flight towards a landing field; and motion, swift or slow, crooked or straight, has only one final stopping place. The family likeness of all desirable things -- goodness -- is an unerring clue to their common origin and final resting place.

That goal is the source of all other desires

This ultimate, supreme goal is the giant power-house from which the current flows out to all other lesser goals. This is the head of the house of desirable things, from whom comes all the beauty and allure of the lesser members. These lesser ends are intermediaries, steps, which have value because of their connection with the supreme end; separated from it, they are as pathetically useless as a bridge torn from the banks of a river it was meant to span.

It is the same for all men.

In a very real, very objective sense, this supreme, ultimate good which draws forth all human activity is identical for all men. For on this one point are all men agreed; the purpose of their action is happiness. And it is precisely this supreme end which can fulfil that purpose. Actually, the ends of human activity are as multiple as the energies men put forth in search for happiness, as diverse as the mistakes men make in trying to determine just what that final, supreme good is. A man with a thick tongue and a headache is not a dependable judge of the tastiness of a breakfast; neither is a perverted will a dependable judge, of the object in which human happiness is to be found. Our next steps in the investigation of the essence of happiness will be the determination of the healthiness of the human appetite or will, the concrete discovery of just what particular object can confer happiness on man.

It is the end of all creatures, but differently

But first, and passingly, we might point out that the majestic force which has swept the universe on from its dim beginnings towards its final goal has made no exception in the case of man. He may be the very summit of nature, the lord of the world, but he is none the less a part of that natural order, subject to those same natural laws, and moving along with nature to the same supreme end. For it is quite true that the end of nature and the end of every man in nature is the same; as all motion must have had the one source, so it must have the one final resting place, the one goal. In this same sense, we might say that Admiral Byrd's plane, his dog, and himself all reached the same goal, the South Pole, but certainly not in the same way. So with the creatures of our universe: some by merely existing, some by living, others by living and feeling, reach a little image of that final good; while men and angels speed on to the very core of that final good on the wings of knowledge and love.

Objective Happiness -- determination of the beatifying object: Three possible -- and historical -- mistakes

It is the peculiar genius of our race to be able to make mistakes. And that genius has been exhausted in the attempt to determine the object the possession of which will mean happiness for us. Men have placed their chips on every number that the universe offers in the gamble for happiness, and they have always been wrong. As a matter of fact only two classes of mistakes were possible: placing all chance for happiness in some external, particular good, or on some good within the nature of man himself, whether of body or of soul.

External goods: riches, honour, fame, power

Of the external seducers, riches have played a leading role, but their beauty has been an illusion produced by make-up and a spotlight. For the ultimate goal of man cannot exist for anything else; because it is ultimate it is desired for itself, it is never a step but always that to which steps lead. And riches, whether natural (such as food and drink) or artificial (such as wealth) are always steps, always *for* something else: the first *for* the sustaining of life; the second, even more obviously, *for* the purchase of natural goods.

The other external goods -- honour, reputation, power -- are just as easily disposed of as being claimants to the place of honour in man's quest for happiness, no matter how many millions of men and women they have fooled. Natural and artificial riches, as instruments used by man for his ends, are servants, not the supremely desirable answer to his lifetime of longing. Honour and reputation are quite outside of the man himself and indeed often independent of his efforts; in any case they bring nothing intrinsically within the scope of a man's own being. Honour is rather a witness to excellence than the constituent of happiness. Reputation (fame or glory) is another witness, not in us at all but in those who are honouring or praising us. These are frail things, often grossly erroneous, as we well know, at the mercy of every circumstance, and presupposing, not establishing, some claim to happiness. No, these are not the reason for man's existence, the final goal of all his efforts.

If the supreme good to which every man dedicates his life could be conceived as capable of being utterly vicious, capable of being possessed and still leaving its possessor a fool, or even dragging a man down to the gutter, we might be forced to hesitate before the throne of power in determining the object which will give us happiness. Power is quite capable of all these things; but, by the same token, it is incapable of being the final answer to man's quest for happiness.

Corporal good: the body itself, its pleasure

Since his happiness is not to be found in the universe in which he lives, man looks, quite logically, in the only other obvious place, within himself. But his body is no more helpful than was the whole scope of the universe. Its conservation, its health, its beauty, its sensitive acumen or vegetative prodigality, are no more the explanation of man's activity than the conservation of a ship is the real purpose, the last end of a captain. The captain's job is to make a port, to navigate his ship; everything else about that ship serves this master purpose. The body's job is to make possible that activity we call human and all of its various and complex workings serve that same master purpose; ministering the material to the intelligence and will which the body serves.

The soul of man

To pass immediately to a consideration of the soul of man would be to treat with contempt the mistake about happiness most common in our own day. And no human mistake deserves contempt, if only because there is behind it a human heart which, until its last beat, is capable of that incredible courage that snatches victory from despair. What of sensual pleasure? Can a man lose himself here and find the complete happiness whose absence has been the driving force of all his days? Because there is so much of the animal in us, this is a mistake easy to make and difficult to remedy.

But mistake it is. For if human activity is distinctive, the goal at which it aims is no less distinctive, not at all a place where we must lie down with the brutes. As a matter of fact, a child does not have pleasure because it is enjoying ice-cream, but because it has ice-cream to enjoy. In other words, pleasure, delight, does not cause itself, but is caused by possession of some good, some end. No pleasure can make up happiness; rather it must always follow humbly in the wake of happiness, like a train-bearer following a bride.

Our attempt to determine the object which will bring man his happiness has thus far been entirely a consideration of facts. It has been no more than a pattern of the final or the ultimate, demanded by every

human act, laid on the actual choices made by men. We have not been theorizing, not preaching, but simply comparing facts and rejecting obvious misfits. This strict adherence to facts brings us to the last possibility -- the soul of man. It is the end of a great experiment; the last step which many have not bothered to make because they think the answer could not be other than the right one, the one sought. But honest facing of the facts cannot allow cowardice to creep in at this last stage. Let us put that pattern of finality, of supremacy in the order of things desirable over the soul and its possibilities -- and the answer again is no! They do not match.

Indeed, if they did match, there would be no necessity for the bustle of human life; man would be happy from the very beginning. The very urge of man's nature that he get out of himself, as well as the shrivelled, distorted result achieved by the introvert, are indications that man's happiness does not lie within himself. Man, by his knowledge, can in a sense take all things into himself. He can become all things, and so he can desire all good. But he *is* not all things, he is not God. Neither he nor any creature is all good; and only that which can satisfy man's desires can bring him happiness.

The true object in whose possession lies happiness is the Universal Good

The object of his pursuit of happiness is not outside man and in the universe; it is not within man, body or soul. But this does not mean that the whole affair is a grim joke of cosmic proportions. It is still real, still decidedly objective, this beatifying object -- but it is above man and the universe. It is the answer to the human capacity to desire all goods and be satisfied with none; it is the final good that can leave nothing to be desired; it is *the absolutely universal good, outside and above man; outside and above the world, outside and above any good that bears the brand of limitation, of particularity.*

Subjective or Formal Happiness -- the attainment of the goal

A boy is not happy because an apple will bring him happiness; but because he has the apple in his possession. Neither is a man happy because the universal good will bring him happiness; but because he possesses that universal good. The attainment of the final goal, not its mere existence, marks the close of the pursuit of happiness. And that means no less than our having reached out and taken possession of the final good, bringing it into ourselves, making it our own. In this strictly formal sense, happiness, the final accomplishment of our human actions, is indeed within man.

Dr. Cabot of Harvard (*The Meaning of Right and Wrong* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1936), p. 112 ff.) insists that man's business in life is to grow. The dimly seen truth behind this statement is the same as that behind modern philosophers' insistence on progress, advance, constant change, evolution without end. For to the naked eye it is apparent that action and perfection have a strange affinity. When I have absorbed all that an educational system can offer me in the way of knowledge, quite patently I have more of perfection than I had in my grammar-school days. A potential opera star has much less perfection of voice than the opera star who has realized her potentialities. It is quite true then that perfection is in exact proportion to actuality, as true of man as of plants, or indeed as of God.

Happiness possible -- from a comparison of man's faculties man's goal

Consequently, this ultimate perfection of man, which is his complete happiness, is to be found in his consummate, most perfect act. In modern terms, substance exists for the sake of function; the ultimate in perfection of any substance, then, will be its most perfect function. More simply, the goal of life will be the realization of the best that is in man.

It is accomplished by an act of man

This truth is so obvious that, stated in common-place language, it seems almost insulting to intelligence. Everyone knows that man's desires are satisfied only by his reaching out and getting what he lacks. Of course, since some object he now lacks will satisfy his desires, will bring him happiness, the thing for him to do is to reach out and get it -- a feat that is accomplished by using the tools at our command, human

actions.

Not by any of his inferior acts

Since we know what we are after -- the universal good -- we can immediately exclude all those operations that are not distinctively human, those sense operations common to all animals, whose goals are not universal but particular goals. This action must be a distinctively human action, i.e. an act of intellect or will. And again the process of exclusion is simple. I can desire a hat in a draughty room by a mere act of my will: I can enjoy the possession of that hat with my will. But if I ever expect to have that hat, I'll have to get up and get it. As a universal good is not something to be had by reaching out my hand, or by calling a servant, the only possibility of its possession is by an act of my intellect. Can I make it? Why not? That same intellect can know all things, even the universal; and it is the universal good that I am after.

But let it be well understood that no substitutes will do. My will can be satisfied only when I possess that universal good, only when it is present within me by my knowledge of it. The lofty considerations of truth offered by philosophy or science will not do; not even the absorbed contemplation of angelic beauty will be tolerated patiently. It must be all or nothing: either the universal, all-embracing good, or the failure of the pursuit of happiness. The intellectual perfection that will help me to take more steps towards a goal is not sufficient; rather that is necessary which will mean no more steps.

But by the supreme act of man -- intellectual vision

In plain words, I must see God. From the very beginning I have been driven by the desire to plumb the depths, to be unsatisfied with the superficial, to know the inner workings, the very essences of things. And having come upon the traces of God in nature, having learned of His existence, my nature will not be satisfied until I have seen the very essence of God.

So far Aristotle managed to trudge up the last hill in his pursuit of happiness. He saw man standing at the summit of the created universe; at the peak of man's nature was the intellect; and the zenith of that intellect's activity was the contemplation of truth. Here, he concluded, must lie the happiness of man: in the supreme act of his supreme faculty, in the perfect realization of his greatest potentiality.

Looking down from these heights, Aristotle was brought to earth with a crash. The men of that earth were real; the labours, interests, worries of their lives were decidedly real and left very little room for silent contemplation. Perhaps their offices were not as busy then as ours are today, but certainly their lives were. Moreover, how many of these men were capable of contemplation; and how long could the best of them keep it up? What an end to the quest of happiness! Such was the way Aristotle must have felt about the whole thing. His courage and devotion to facts were great enough to make him hold doggedly to the conclusions facts had forced upon him; but they were not great enough to make him take the last few steps that were possible to philosophy -- to come out clearly with the last conclusions demanded by the facts. He chose to leave them vague.

Two common errors in regard to this formal happiness:

Cannot be had.

Would not give happiness if it were had.

Two obvious difficulties jumped at Aristotle -- and at men ever since. For it seems evident that man cannot see God, and, even if he did, the act, like all his acts of contemplation, would endure for only a short time and could not give him happiness. To these objections St. Thomas had the infallible answers of divine faith. As a matter of fact, men do see God; and in their vision is their supreme happiness. (Ex Constitutions Benedict XII, "Benedictus Deus" H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbobrum* (Freiburg, Germany: Herder & Co., ed.; 17, 1928), #530.) It is quite certain that the universal Good, the essence of God, cannot be crowded into a mental concept, nor be abstracted from sensible things; and yet that is the way our intellect works. Yes, the way it works naturally; the way it works at the present time, not because of its intelligence, but because of that crutch which intelligence must use and which we call reasoning.

Man can be, and is, lifted above that lowest grade of intelligence; he is enabled to throw away the crutch and come to grips with divinity, not through an image or a concept, but in the way the divinity sees itself - through the immediate union of that supremely knowable essence to the intellect of man.

Supernatural? Of course it is supernatural. But that fact is no more of an affront to man's self-sufficiency, to the efficacy of nature, than is the fact that man is born without protection and clothes but is given hands and reason to make up for the deficiency. Here he is given a free will by which he can co-operate with the supernatural help infallibly offered him and reach the happiness which hangs over his head. That the contemplation of divinity is unsatisfying in this life, is beyond all question; and if reason could not have discovered that fact, faith would broadcast it to the four winds. (Council of Vienna, condemned propositions of Beghards, 1,4,5. (Denzinger, #471,474,475).

But that dissatisfaction is in this life, seeing that divinity through a glass darkly and while we are sadly pressed by all the necessities of physical existence. Aristotle was right as far as he went; but it had not entered into the mind of man that God would insist on such a perfect image of Himself in the unfolding of the goal of human activity.

Characteristics of formal happiness:

Once gained it can never be lost.

It cannot be had by natural power alone.

It is strictly a personal accomplishment.

Of this ultimate goal, then, it is strictly true that it is supernatural, not to be attained by natural powers. Yet, paradoxically, it is strictly personal attainment. No other creature, neither man nor woman, nor the highest angel in heaven, can get it for us; nor will God force it upon us. We approach it step by step, by our own human actions, working with the constant help of God; and the last and eternally enduring act by which we grasp God Himself is an act of our intellect, something that can no more be done for us than our thinking here and now can be done by someone else and still be ours. Once had, this supreme good which satisfies all our desires and puts an end to the quest of happiness cannot possibly slip from our fingers. On its part, the beatifying object cannot dry up and blow away, it cannot decrease or cease to be what it essentially is, the universal good; on our part, we cannot get tired of it, there is nothing else that can tempt us from it, that can seem to have something that is not contained in that ultimate goal. Otherwise it would not be the ultimate, the universal good. Just as now we must will everything under the guise and in the name of good, so then we must will everything in the name of the divine good -- what attractiveness there is in other things, comes from this final end.

The perfection of happiness:

The three essentials or happiness: vision, comprehension, joy

Summing this up: a universally good object and its attainment by us is required for our complete happiness. In that attainment of the final goal there is involved the intellectual vision of the beatifying object; not merely a passing glance, but a tenacious grasp, an enduring comprehension of that object, and, finally, the eternally enduring joy (or rest) of our will, our appetite, in the accomplishment of our goal, in the possession of the all satisfying good.

All else that may be involved in our final happiness, however much it may contribute to the perfection of happiness, is secondary and relatively unimportant -- a delicate touch perhaps, like a drop of perfume on the gown of a perfectly dressed woman, but adding nothing substantial.

Role of the body in happiness

In this way, the reunion of body and soul will add to the perfection of the happiness of man. After all, his body belongs to a man, the soul was made for union with that body, and without it, the soul is in a very real sense incomplete; but the addition of the body will not add to the essential joy and glory of the soul, rather the other way around. From the soul will come joy and glory to the body, much as at present a light

heart gives buoyancy to our steps.

Role of external goods

This overflow from the soul to the body will carry that body far beyond the limits of natural perfection. Often the body is in command of the situation at present, as the protest of our knees at an overlong prayer will testify; but then, the body will be completely subservient to the soul as it was meant to be. It would seem difficult then to find a place in the perfection of happiness for external goods. At present they are ordained to the needs of physical life; even the most sublime contemplative needs food and clothes. But the question of clothes in heaven would seem to be still very much open to debate.

Role of friends

Friends, of course, there must be, in the same way that we must have our bodies. They are our other selves; something of ourselves would be missing without them. And this is true, even though the principal end of friendship -- the opportunity to help, to sacrifice, to give to others -- will no longer exist; that subtler, infinitely precious joy in the beauty, the triumph, the happiness of friends will give a splendidly human air to the courts of heaven.

Key to present or imperfect happiness -- where and how happiness is to be found here and now

All of this may seem very far away, very unsatisfactory to men and women who are engaged in the actual pursuit of happiness -- as always the tape at the end of a race seems infinitely distant from the starting line. We want happiness now. What can we do about it today? What, if any, is the possibility of some happiness in this life?

Activity and progress as a measure of happiness

All of the answers to questions that might be put about present happiness are contained in what we have already said. Perhaps one of the most important is that no perfect happiness is to be had this side of death. It is an important thing to know. What happiness is possible can be had only by going in the general direction of that final goal, for because of that goal every other good is desirable, every other good has what power it possesses to satisfy the longings of our hearts. And what happiness can be had will be had slowly, trudgingly, little by little, with many an imperfection, distraction, interruption mixed in. The degree of present happiness is in exact proportion to our approach to the final goal of life, as the heat we feel from a fire is in exact proportion to our proximity to the fire. In utterly simple language: happiness, even the imperfect happiness this life can offer, is a matter of approaching God. The closer we get to Him, the greater our share of this imperfect happiness; the farther away we get, the less happiness we can expect to garner. The words of the child's catechism are an adequate summary of all we have said: man was made to know and to love God. The goal of life is the knowledge and love, the vision and enjoyment, of divinity; what happiness we get in this life will be through an imperfect knowledge or love of God, either in Himself, or in one of the mirrorings of divinity which we call creatures.

Answers to the puzzles: of activity, despair and boredom.

The rush of New York life is not necessarily an improvement on the sleepy quiet of a tiny Irish hamlet. Man gains his happiness by activity; but not by every activity, rather by activity that is going somewhere, going to the right place. There is such a thing as being so busy we have no time to live; having our heads so full of knowledge we have no chance to think; or our hearts so crowded that there is no place for love. Activity for activity's sake, bustling for its own sake, may help us to forget, may prevent our thinking, but it will not bring us happiness. Progress is indeed a measure of happiness -- if it is progress towards God. But progress in time saving devices, or labour-saving devices, in wealth, health, strength, beauty, athletic ability, business efficiency -- all of these can easily be synchronizing with flight away from the ultimate goal of human life. At best they are helps; at times they make that true progress easier. There can be no question that a young man of today has made less real progress as a result of fourteen or eighteen years of

intensive educational efforts than did the Apostles by rubbing elbows with Christ for three years. A man or woman who starts off in high expectations of grasping full happiness within the span of human life is headed straight for despair; for despair is the fruit of reaching for the impossible. The person today starting life with a denial of life's goal, of the ultimate universal good, has no choice, eventually, but to choke out life or to attempt to choke out reason. The first is despair. The second produces a weariness from trying to pretend that the petty particularities of the universe can be the absorbing explanation of human activity, the goal of human life, the reward for the pursuit of happiness. This is boredom.

[«-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

[Chapter 2 --»](#)

CHAPTER II -- THE MEANS TO HAPPINESS (Q. 6-10)

1. The means by which happiness is attained are utterly simple yet distinctive:
 - (a) Simple -- at the finger-tips of every human being.
 - (b) Distinctive -- proper to man alone.
 - (c) These means are human actions.
 2. The distinctive core of human action is deliberate control:
 - (a) By this, man's life, his activity and his destiny are things apart in the universe.
 - (b) Fundamental character of modern errors on the nature of human action.
 - (c) Enemies of deliberate control:
 - (1) From within a man himself:
 - a. From the senses:
 1. In contact with evil.
 2. In contact with good.
 - b. From the intellect.
 - (2) From the outside.
 3. The environs of human action in general:
 - (a) Their name and number: who, what, where, by whose help, when, why, how.
 - (b) Their importance:
 - (1) For the complete story of a human action -- comparison of journalist's and theologian's quest for truth in human action.
 - (2) For judgment, public or private, of a man's act.
 - (3) For the individual's choice of action.
 - (4) For his very activity.
 4. Particular conditions of every human action:
 - (a) Why:
 - (1) To attain the object of desire; always because of good principally because of the end or goal.
 - (2) Not exclusively but primarily because of the goal -- every other object of desire is with reference to the goal.
 - (b) By whose help -- the motive forces of human action
 - (1) Intellect's part.
 - (2) Part of the senses.
 - (3) Part of the will itself
 - (4) External influences.
 - (5) God's part.
 - (c) How:
 - (1) Naturally.
 - (2) Necessarily:
 - a. With regard to a proper object.
 - b. Because of sense appetite.
 - c. Because of divine influence.
 - (3) Freely.
- Conclusion:
1. The means to happiness are perfectly proportioned to the object whose possession gives happiness:
 - (a) They are universally possessed by men.
 - (b) Effective from the beginnings of reason.
 - (c) Rigidly personal.
 - (d) Completely sovereign.
 - (e) Utterly simple.
 2. They are in complete harmony with the unity and effectiveness of nature and natural law.
 3. They alone are worthy of the dignity and intelligence of man.

CHAPTER II THE MEANS TO HAPPINESS (Q. 6-10)

Our task in this chapter is one in which philosophy needs no theological help. If we accept the quite accurate definition of philosophy given by a modern philosopher, "the attempt by reasoning to know what is ultimately real", we are quickly brought face to face with the absorbing problem that occupies us in this chapter.

Two very human pictures show how deeply this problem concerns the human heart. A mother, fondling her infant, ponders what the future holds in store for the baby. What will it become? Will it be happy? Behind this universal query lie the deeper questions: what is the meaning of this tiny life, what is it for, where is it going, how will it get to the goal where alone it will find happiness? "To know the ultimately real!" At the death-bed of his father, or of that same mother who had wondered about his life, the same questions meet the son. What becomes of these loved ones? What was the meaning of their lives? Was that long courageous trek through the years only for this? Or is there a further goal? And even where these questions have sure answers, there are the further questions that keep loved ones always close by keeping them always dependent: did they have the right tools for the carving out of their lives, did they know and use the means that would bring them success, did they take the steps that would bring them home? Bethlehem and Calvary, the two pictures -- birth and death -- which bring men and women face to face with the necessity of knowing the ultimately real of human life.

In the preceding chapter, in determining the object in the possession of which happiness alone could be found, we saw part of this ultimate reality. We saw the goal, the final end, the supreme answer to the quest for happiness. Here we are looking at a no less important angle of that ultimate reality, that ultimate meaning of human life, in examining the means by which we can reach that goal.

The means by which happiness is attained are utterly simple yet distinctive

The answer is by no means merely a speculative one. If these means to happiness are open only to the very wealthy, or to the very poor, man's life takes on the proportions of a practical joke, played on a cosmic scale with a ruthlessly cruel lack of humour. These things cannot be the exclusive possession of the very wise or the very ignorant; of the very wealthy or the very sick; of the man of power or the timid weakling. They cannot be the private property of any class, any group, any nation, without making a farce of the very peak of natural perfection that is found in the story of human activity.

They must be utterly universal and, despite their efficacy in bringing a man to his goal, must be of so uncomplicated a nature that a child can wield them with the sure touch which proclaims mastery. If human life has a meaning, if there is a final goal of human action, then that meaning, that goal, is proper to every human being. Not personality, not age, not talent, but the very fact of being human is the just claim to the possession of the means to happiness.

Simple -- at the finger-tips of every human being.

In our last chapter we said that happiness means the possession of the object which brings happiness, the grasp of the good which is back of all desire; and that this possession is the fruit of our own action. More concretely, we showed that human life has a goal -- the supreme universal good; the individual man is happy when by his action he possesses that universal good, when he is brought into immediate contact with that final end through the vision of God. The steps to that final goal are simply human actions. These are the means by which man can attain to happiness, and these alone. And it is precisely these means that all men, women, and children, from the dawn of reason, have at their finger-tips.

It would be interesting to examine the false goals of human endeavour from this angle; to wonder, in a kind of stage whisper, how huge a wave of despair would sweep the world if it were true that health, food, pleasure, riches, fame or power was the final goal of us all.

Distinctive -- proper to man alone.

But we have finished with the goal for the time being. Let us look more closely at the means to human happiness. A characteristic of these means, as striking as their universality, is their distinctiveness. While they belong to every single man born into the world as a natural birthright, not another creature in the world can possibly possess them. They are the family heritage which can be claimed only on the grounds of human blood; the pontifical robes of the lord of creation which no impostor can possibly wear. Only a human being can produce a human action.

These means are human actions

A man can crash into a brick wall even more resoundingly than the blindest of insects, he can howl like a dog, be as vicious as a tiger, as stupid as a sheep. In fact, he can disguise or cast off the humanity of his actions to the extent of being more animal than the animal. But it does not work the other way around. For only a man is capable of that deliberate, that controlled action by which he can move himself to his goal. Everything beneath man is in the servant class, answering the beck and call of an outside power. Man alone is master of his life, of his action.

The distinctive core of human action is deliberate control

What is the secret of that distinctiveness? What is the human action's inner core whose presence makes such a startling difference between the wielding of a fork and the rooting of a snout? We could call it by several names. Perhaps the simplest would be "control"; "deliberate will" would be another. Whatever its name, its presence or absence is the determining factor in the humanity of our actions. This control makes the difference between the fatal blow struck by the fury of blind rage and the paid assassin's silent knife-thrust.

By this, man's life, his activity and his destiny are things apart in the universe

At the roots of this deliberate control is man's unique ability to choose. Precisely because he can look beyond his action, he can control it; because he knows the connection between the job to be done and the tools at hand, he can pick his tools. Because in his heart he carries the image of the supreme good, he can see the defects in anything less than the supreme good, he can choose this because of its good points, reject that because of its defects, or sit back in contempt and refuse to be bothered with anything which does not bear the mark of complete perfection. Whatever the course of his action, he has exercised that solely human faculty of self-control. The trip from birth to death is not along a track utterly determining the course man will follow; because of the voluntary character of his actions, man is sitting behind the wheel in complete control.

Take away that control and you take away the human character of man's actions. By this control is man alone capable of triumph or failure. He is the only one in the universe with the paradoxical capacity for sin and sanctity, for mistakes and successes, for nobility and meanness, because he alone can answer for his actions.

Fundamental character of modern errors on the nature of human action

It is not an easy thing to carry that responsibility. Perhaps unconsciously, men sometimes try to escape its difficulties, forgetting its privileges -- and forgetting that there is no escape. One way of attempted escape is to take too much to drink; another way is to philosophize man out of existence. If man's actions are only the overflow of deep, unconscious surgings (Freud) or the swelling tide of an irresistible and blind life-force (Bergson), man hasn't any worries, nor has he any hopes. If his activities have no more significance than the arching of a cat's back at the sight of a dog, an animal response to external stimuli (Watson), he must make up his mind to lead a dog's life and like it. If his intelligence is merely the last phenomenon in a long and inexplicable process that cannot reach a goal without destroying itself, like the latest bubble on a glass of champagne (S. Alexander), it is silly to get excited about control, or goal, or happiness, or humanity. It may be comforting to make man an animal, or a machine, or a process; but it is not the comfort of truth, of facing the fact that man continues to be man. These modern errors are much more sweeping than has been realized by many people; and the devastation they bring is the result of their attack on the distinctive core of all human action -- deliberate control.

This deliberate control is the result of self-movement with a knowledge of the relation of means to end. In other words, it requires over and above the intrinsic principle of movement common to all living things, a knowledge of the goal and the steps to that goal. Over and above the intrinsic principle of movement and

the particularized, determined knowledge of sensible ends common to all animals, it demands a universal knowledge of the end and of the relations between that end and the means to it. In a words it is self-movement, movement from within, which knows where it is going and why it is going this particular way.

Enemies of deliberate control: From within a man himself

We can picture this movement from within, this deliberate control, as a long journey from the inner recesses of man's soul. Looking at it in this light, we see again that it is not easy to be human, to hold tightly to our humanity. Within the kingdom of ourselves, the jealousy of the universe is concentrated, steadily directed at our unique privilege of acting humanly. We are masters of ourselves, but our subjects are always ripe for rebellion. As that journey from the inner recesses of our soul gets under way, it meets a formidable enemy in the animal life of the senses.

From the senses: In contact with evil

Whether that animal life is fleeing from impending evil or rushing headlong after an alluring good, it always carries with it serious dangers to the control of our actions. Indeed, as we shall see in more detail later on, it sometimes goes to the point of completely destroying that control, as in the terror-stricken mob that fights hysterically to escape from a burning theatre. When that happens, there is no longer any question of human action or human responsibility, of human progress towards a goal; the humanity of our actions is destroyed in the exact proportion to the interference with that control.

In contact with good

Where the attack is not so much on control as on the willingness of our actions, fear of evil and desire of good operate differently. A pilot, through fear of being forced down by ice on the wings of his plane, will lighten the plane by throwing overboard precious gasoline the loss of which will certainly shorten his journey and perhaps bring disaster to it. He does not want to lose the gasoline, yet in the circumstances there is positive eagerness to be rid of it. Fear makes him do something that in itself is displeasing, something that he does unwillingly; yet, in these conditions, the loss has his complete consent. The pilot is much like a man with a horror of bitter medicine, who is quite willing to take the medicine, not because he has changed his views on the matter, but because the bitter dose is necessary for his health. The allure of good, rather than cutting down our willingness, directly and immediately increases it. our passion for the theatre may seriously threaten the control of our actions; but at no time do we trudge up to the box-office on unwilling feet, like a small boy returning to school after vacation, with an air of woeful martyrdom.

From the intellect

Even further back in the course of this movement from within ourselves, almost before the journey has started, a no less deadly enemy is met in the intellect itself, an enemy that goes by the name of ignorance. There is something particularly repellent about the word "ignorance" that makes us instantly resent its application to ourselves. To be called a rascal may mean that our morality is seriously being called into question; but if the epithet is "ignorant rascal," it is not only our morality, but our very humanity that is under attack. For the implication is that we are lacking in something we should have, something that directly affects that control of action which is distinctive of humanity. "Ignorant" is just a little worse than "half-wit" or "stupid", for these things cannot be helped; but ignorance implies that somewhere along the road we have failed to pick up what we should and could have had; something necessary for the manliness, the humanity of our actions.

This repulsiveness of ignorance is easily understood from its concrete results. When it precedes a particular action, it makes us do things that otherwise we would never think of doing: silly things like spreading shaving cream on a toothbrush, and eventually on our teeth; petty things like short-changing a newsboy in a strange city; tragic things like killing a man when we thought we were shooting a deer.

A more despicable type of ignorance is one which we are quite willing to tolerate, indeed even to protect,

because it allows us to sidle out of things. It is a thoroughly hypocritical ignorance which gives an unhealthy odour to our bad deeds, as well as to the good, and which, though quite successful in destroying goodness, leaves evil intact. It is this sort of thing that keeps a man from looking at a calendar, lest he discover this is the day on which he must pay a bill, or that this is the day on which he cannot eat meat. It is the thing that closes our eyes and ears to the needs of others, lest the obligation of charity force us to open our purses.

From the outside

A third type of ignorance affects our actions very little, for even if we were not ignorant, we would have done the same thing. The results would be the same; but the action by which those results are produced would be quite different. In other words, like all ignorance, this kind robs our activities of the human mark which alone gives us a title to pride or to remorse. So a gangster on a vacation, intending to shoot a bear, actually kills a rival whom he has been seeking vindictively for months. And not even a gangster can be proud of that sort of achievement.

The environs of human action in general

Going back to our original figure of a long journey from the inner principle of movement, we can all appreciate the difficulty of being human when we get out of the territory within our control. There was difficulty from the senses and the intellect within our own kingdom; in the foreign territory of the external world, there is the enemy of violence. When we step into this foreign territory, the central core of distinctive human action, can and does, rely confidently on the magic cloak of its spirituality and wanders inviolate up and down the roads of the world.

Some of its messengers or its lesser lieutenants may be and often are captured, dragged into enemy ranks, shot down; but the commanding generals can never be taken. True enough, they are behind the front lines and far enough behind to be safe -- as far, in fact, as the distance between the world of matter and the world of spirit. A strong man might succeed in forcing water down your throat, but he cannot make you want to drink; your finger might, by force, be pressed against a button that will electrocute a man, but you cannot be forced to want to kill. Violence may make you smell, or hear, or see, or feel; you may be forced to run, or to walk, or to dance. But nothing in the whole universe can make you will. That inner principle of distinctive human action is inviolable by any external power because there is no leverage for violence against spirit, such as the soul of man and its faculties are.

All this has had to do with the central core of our human acts. To be satisfied with this as the whole story of human acts, would be like conceding that a home consists only of four walls and a roof, all other appurtenances -- light, heat, water, furniture, and so on -- are totally unimportant. Or, more accurately, it is like feeling that we know all about a house from a photograph which completely isolates the house from its surroundings and gives a view of only one part of the exterior. As a matter of fact, the neighbourhood in which the house is situated is important: the house might be sunk in the midst of freight yards, enthroned in a private park, sagging in the squalor of a tenement district, or dwarfed by the brick walls of skyscrapers.

Their name and number: who, what, where, by whose help, when, why, how

The same is true of a human act. We cannot really know it until we know its surroundings. The surroundings, the neighbourhood of a human act, are grouped together in the theological term, "circumstances". As a matter of fact, when we have run through these circumstances and discovered who did the thing, where it was done and why, when it was accomplished and how, and who helped, we have covered all there is to know about the event. We not only have a view of the neighbourhood, we have the whole family history and a fairly accurate prediction of the future.

A full grasp of the meaning of any act is impossible without a consideration of these angles. It may be a matter of no moment that a man trips over a dog and goes sprawling; certainly the identity of the dog

hardly seems important. But if it happened to be the president of France who tripped over the favourite hound of Adolf Hitler, it would certainly make headlines, and perhaps, an international "situation".

Their importance: For the complete story of a human action

-- comparison of journalist's and theologian's quest for truth in human action

This truth has been recognized since the world began. In our modern times, a good example of it is the pursuit of news by a reporter. Newspapers recognize that news values may be hidden by the incompleteness of a story; hence the fundamental "w's" of every reporter (who, what, why, when, where) are no more than a demand for the complete story of any human activity. A theologian, indeed, is not looking for news value; but he is looking for the truth, and truth can be had only when all the returns are in.

For judgment, public or private, of a man's act

In the example we have already given, of a man killing another while hunting deer, it changes the story completely when we know how and why the man was killed. To the confessor hearing a penitent confess that he broke open a door, it makes a great difference where that door was, whether on a tabernacle, a prison, or a burning theatre. Whether a penitent, taking a little drink, swallowed whisky or poison; whether it was Sunday or Monday that he got lazy and stayed in bed all day, these are not mere details, but elements necessary if we are to get to the truth of our own or any one else's actions.

For the individual's choice of action

There are times when a review of those circumstances might hold us back from action entirely, or certainly change our course of action. An honest man running for public office might well have his doubts about continuing the campaign when he discovers that the bulk of his support comes from politically entrenched gangsters. Or a parent might well halt the upraised hand, realizing that the reason for the spanking now being administered to a child is the parent's own indigestion. In fact, a person who cannot answer the question "why" relative to one of his actions, is a little bewildered and sneaks a look over his shoulder to seek if anyone noticed him acting so foolishly. If the same thing happens often, he begins to doubt his sanity. If it is the usual thing, there can be no doubt of insanity and the individual is promptly locked up.

This or that particular action may lack one or other of these circumstances; after all, the furnishings of a mansion have no place in a four-room flat. But there are three general conditions that are to be found and investigated in every act which lays claim to humanity: why was it done; how was it done; by whose help?

Particular conditions of every human action:

What is the excuse for human activity; why is any human act placed? Why does a man work or love or suffer? The answer to that question was the whole burden of our last chapter. The answer is, briefly, to attain the object of desire, to satisfy desire; or, more simply, to obtain a good, for desire never seeks evil. Human action is a search for a good, and, ultimately, a goal; for every thing desired is sought either for itself or as a step to something else. Principally, then, man acts because of the end or goal of his life; he acts that he may attain happiness. Everything else that is desired, every other object of his activity, is such only because it has something of the goal, something of the end about it.

By whose help -- the motive forces of human action

The helpers of a human act are those who contribute in some way to that movement from within which is the essence of living movement, to that deliberate or controlled movement from within which is of the essence of human life. In the first volume of this work we saw that will, the human appetite, was the principle, the starting point of all movement in man. Here, we are looking for the elements that might play some part in putting that motive principle to work, the spark that might start the engine of human activity

roaring.

Intellect's part

Within a man himself, the work of the intellect is primarily not to move but to know. By knowing it can contribute to the movement of the will; and it is precisely in that way, in recognizing good and presenting it to the will, that the intellect enters into the movement of the will. The intellect presents a target, stretches a tape across the track; the will must be at the root of the actual movement.

Part of the senses

The intellect gives the will a look at the desirable object as it is in itself. The senses play a much more indirect, but very often a much more important and preponderant part. Waiters on Pullman cars very rarely make the mistake of tossing a cheery greeting in a man's face in the morning until they have served him coffee; not that the cheery greeting has changed in its desirability meantime, but the man has changed considerably. Watching a football game, an otherwise staid and responsible citizen considers it quite the proper thing to throw away his hat, shout himself hoarse, and pound a perfect stranger on the back; an hour later, in the privacy of his home, such actions are far from appealing. The dispositions of the senses can and do colour an object, hide or enhance its appeal, and so swerve the will away from or coax it into actions that would not be performed under other conditions. It is an indirect, a coaxing, movement that never has the efficacy of force but always has the subtlety of intrigue. Passion, prejudice, headache or plain grouch are by no means the prime movers in a man's life; but the part they play is not inconsiderable.

Part of the will itself

The influence of outside forces is of the same indirect type. Little Mary's smile may be most winning, but it cannot force the permission for just one more piece of cake. The heavenly bodies play their parts, as witness the power of moonlight, or zero weather, on the activities sponsored by our wills. But, in spite of the ludicrous faith that reads all future events in the stars while starving to death for lack of clients, no material thing, no external force, can reach into the sanctuary of a man's soul. That is another world; the world of spirit that is impervious to the clumsy pushings and shovings of the world of matter. The wise man dominates the stars, as he dominates all things else in the universe.

External influences

There is only one external influence of which the will is not independent; there is only one barrier between the will and complete independence. And this barrier is really a bulwark, for its absence would be utterly calamitous for the will, as it would be for any other creature; it would mean instant annihilation, for it would mean severance from the first independent source of all that the human will is or can hope to be.

God's part

Where you find complete independence, there you find God, the first mover, the source from which flows every perfection. On this first mover the will is utterly dependent. God can and does move the will of man. Indeed, the thing is self-evident, at least as regards the first movement of the will; for the particular will of any man started its activity some time and that is explicable only by going back to the first mover. Activity is not explained by inactivity, any more than apple pies are explained by apples.

It is not necessary to make a god out of the human will to safeguard that will's autonomy. The fact that there is only one first cause does not destroy but rather establishes the efficacy of nature's working; the fact that there is only one being who is life, does not destroy but rather explains the vital nature of every living thing; and the fact that there is only one first mover, does not weaken but rather establishes and fortifies the power of the human will to move itself.

Conditions of every human action: How

And this brings us to the last general condition of every human act. How does the will move? It may be quite sufficient to know how to drive a car in order to make a transcontinental tour; but to know something of its inner workings, what makes it go, and, which is of more importance, what might have made it stop, is a decided comfort when something has to be done about a sudden breakdown miles from a repair shop. It might be enough for a man to know how to steer his actions to their goal in order to make a success of living human life; but to venture into the rough country of our materialistic age, to meet obstacles that challenge the power of those human actions constantly, it is more than a comfort, it is a necessary precaution to the successful completion of the journey to know just how the machinery of human action operates.

Naturally

The man who seriously maintains that absolutely every movement of the human will is under the control of a man, is as absurdly optimistic as the man who would cure a broken leg by deep breathing or mental concentration. His account of things reads like the blurb on the jacket of a best-seller; trying to push man up into a class with the deity, he succeeds only in turning out an impossible freak which has no place in nature, in heaven or in hell. For the facts are plain; man is a part of the natural universe, not a discordant note in the harmony of the spheres. The laws that govern nature also govern man and move him to the end of all nature. It is nature that is the source of movement in other living things; and man must go back to the same source. It is not merely a question of parallelism, rather it is a matter of concrete facts. The foundation of all knowledge is a set of principles which we naturally know, not something that we figure out for ourselves. So the foundation of all movement in man, the source of all desire, is a movement that is natural to us, about which we can do nothing but submit; all other desires spring from a natural desire that makes its appearance as soon as we are capable of any desire. Towards these objects of natural desire, the will moves naturally not freely; in the concrete, the will cannot but desire good, quite naturally it cannot act for evil. It naturally desires a last end, naturally desires all those things that belong to a man by his very nature, such as life, knowledge of truth, and so on.

Necessarily: With regard to a proper object

As the will sits enthroned, watching the parade of particular desirable things marched before it by the intellect, it is indeed a monarch of all it surveys. No one of these things can snatch the will from its throne; the allure, the beauty of no one is so great that some flaws cannot be found. The intellect automatically and irresistibly must know truth that is clearly presented to it; the eye must naturally, necessarily see colour presented to it. For truth in all its forms is the object of the intellect, and colour is the object of the eye. But no good, short of the universal supremely perfect good, can rush the human will into necessary action, for only that supreme, final good is the adequate object of the faculty of human desire.

Because of sense appetite

A man may have a seemingly irresistible personality; but there will always be someone who can find something displeasing about him, for, as a matter of fact, he is not irresistible. Nothing is irresistible but God. The appeals presented by our senses, by the passions, by the whole inferior nature of man, inflict necessity upon the will only in proportion as they interrupt the sway of reason's command over a man's life. The alcoholic is helpless in the presence of drink because he is not human in the presence of drink; but as long as our actions remain human, so long is lower nature our subject and not our master.

Because of divine influence

The miraculous works of Christ in Palestine consistently produced a double effect in the bystanders: an elemental fear, such as we feel in an earthquake, a fire out of control, or when standing close to a giant locomotive; and an admiration that was nothing less than astonishment, bewilderment. These are always the results of contact with the divine. Divinity touching the limits of the created world always puts a paradox before our minds, perhaps because our experience, however rich it may be, has mostly dealt with

human, understandable things. It is no surprise to find the divine in contact with the human will offering us another of those divine paradoxes -- the admirable, wholly astonishing, and utterly bewildering fact of the human will being moved by God and yet moving freely.

Freely

We can get some little foothold on this marvel but we can never take it apart, as we might an internal combustion engine. We have noticed the wind bending a small willow tree almost double, swaying the Empire State Building only a matter of inches, and picking up dust and carrying it across thousands of miles. Yet all this is without any change in the wind; the difference in the effect is rooted in the different natures of the things moved. In the same way, the divine movement of the universe to its end will move the tree, the cat and the man each according to its nature, each differently, none violently; always respecting, nay, perfecting, the intrinsic principles of each nature. And it is the nature of man, precisely because he can have universal knowledge, to be free in his choice of particular goods.

Let us not try to soften this truth any more than we would try to hide the artistic beauty of sculptured marble by draping it in clothes; rather let us bring the truth out in a strong light where every detail of its beauty can be appreciated. The influence of God on the human will not only respects human liberty, it causes it; without that divine movement, it would be impossible for humanity to enjoy the freedom, the control, that sets it apart from the rest of the universe. We went into this very exhaustively in the first volume. But it can be put thus briefly: the mode of the human action, its freedom, is as real as the action itself; and, like all reality, it must be traced back to the first cause of all reality. In other words, the causality of God, unlike our own, is not limited to the surface of things, to mere externals, but plumbs down to the intrinsic principles of nature itself. It extends, not merely to the act produced, but to the way in which this act comes forth into the world, whether that way be one of necessity or of freedom. The one can no more exist without divine movement than can the other.

**The means to happiness are perfectly proportioned to the object whose possession gives happiness:
They are universally possessed by men.
Effective from the beginnings of reason**

"To know the ultimately real" of human life! an aim that tugs at the heart of everyone and makes every man a philosopher. This is a task that, if accomplished, presents us with a picture that explains much of the beauty we have half-grasped, expresses the thoughts that have haunted our minds, explains the power and significance we have vaguely glimpsed in human affairs. This present chapter presents the other half of the picture; and, showing something of the ultimate reality, it of course matches perfectly the fragment of the original masterpiece we have uncovered in the preceding chapter. That was the goal, these are the steps to it; that was the end, these the means; that was the destination, this is the course along which we run to it.

**Rigidly personal
Completely sovereign**

The goal, we have said, was open to all men without exception on the grounds of age, ability, power, wealth, health or any other consideration but that of humanity. It could be shared by all men and lose nothing of its splendour, its perfection, its satisfying beauty. It could satisfy the least and the greatest of all desires entertained by the human heart; and yet it was no mass happiness, but an individual affair, strictly personal, reigning supreme in the field of the desirable.

Utterly simple

The means to the end seen in this chapter but bring out the further simple yet overpowering beauty of the original fragment of the picture. Human actions are the universal and exclusive title to eminence of every human being. They are at the finger-tips of every man, woman and child from the dawn of reason; and they are of a simplicity that makes their manipulation by a child accurate,

masterful, effective. For how else could heaven be filled with those who were so heartily welcomed. by Christ on earth?

Stirred into being by desire, these actions pursue the quarry relentlessly, tirelessly, as long as life lasts in man the hunter. No obstacle can hinder the pursuit, no violence lessen its effectiveness, no shortness or length of time be too little or too great for ultimate success. And each hunter of happiness goes about his business in his own way. Not only is each man an individual different from all others who have ever lived or ever will live; the means he uses (his actions) are his very own, mirroring his personality; yes, every single act will bear the stamp of the time, place and dispositions of the agent and be set apart as a thing distinct in the history of the universe.

They are in complete harmony with the unity and effectiveness of nature and natural law

Yet these means to happiness are a part and parcel of the universal progress of nature to the end which was also the beginning. Like every other living thing, the perfection of man is the full development of his nature, the perfection of his highest act, worked out from the principles inherent in that nature. Like every other created nature, the means to the individual goal are furnished to each member of the species from the very beginning. Man is not a freak dropped by mistake in a universe that is foreign to him; he is not the whole of it, not the ultimate end of it all, nor is he an accident, an unimportant, unforeseen phase of it all. He is at the peak of the material, at the lowest rung of the spiritual, moving, as is everything else, to God -- but in man's own way of knowing and loving the God he seeks.

They alone are worthy of the dignity and intelligence of man

In a way Chesterton was right when he considered it an insult to suspect that a man was incapable of a bad action. For it is his unique privilege to be able to fail, as well as to be able to succeed. To a mind that can stretch out to universal truths, to a will that can thirst after the universal good, it is no less than an insult to suspect that the course of life will be marked out step by step with no choice, no variation possible. Man would rightly be as restless under a regime that laid out every step of his life in the instincts of his nature, as an intelligent adult is restless listening to someone read out the titles of a movie. He can look ahead of life, can stand to one side and be a spectator of the whole glamorous parade, even of himself; do not expect him to go through the motions like a robot incapable of thinking for himself. In fact, do not expect him to go through life in any way except as a man. Do not expect him to use means to win his way through, other than means that are worthy of his manhood, worthy of his intelligence. Insistence on anything more, on anything less, is not paying just tribute to God, to man, to nature, to positive facts. But rather it is plunging into the world of make-believe because the world of reality offers no escape from the humanity of man.

[«-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

[Chapter 3 --»](#)

CHAPTER III -- TOOLS OF HAPPINESS (Q. 11-17)

1. Necessity of familiarity with tools of successful living.
 2. Necessity of familiarity with ingredients of these tools.
 3. Two ways of considering human acts:
 - (a) Empirically (scientifically):
 - (1) Physiologically.
 - (2) Psychologically.
 - (3) Mathematically.
 - (b) Philosophically:
 - (1) In themselves.
 - (2) In their morality.
 4. Story behind the controls of human action:
 - (a) General Principle -- reason is the form of human activity.
 - (b) Story in detail:
 - (1) With reference to the goal or end -- apprehension, volition, conation, enjoyment.
 - (2) With reference to the means:
 - a. On the part of the intellect -- counsel, judgment, command.
 - b. On the part of the will -- consent, election, execution.
 - c. Two characteristic: all are uniquely human; all are controlled.
 5. Practical views:
 - (a) Birth and growth to maturity of human act.
 - (b) Decision and execution in every-day life.
 - (c) The government of the kingdom of man.
- Conclusion:
1. Forging the tools of life, as well as wielding them, demands delicate balance:
 - (a) Blindness of sheer will.
 - (b) Practical sterility of sheer intellect.
 - (c) Despair of endless steps.
 2. That balance makes the difference between bungling and skillful living.
 3. Skill in living is essentially in the act of command:
 - (a) What interferes with command interferes with our mastery of life.
 - (b) By command man shares the labours of Providence.
 - (c) Law and the reign of law are impossible without command which is the heart of control.

CHAPTER III TOOLS OF HAPPINESS (Q. 11-17)

In the search for speculative truth, the farther one gets from the concrete, singular, matter-of-fact affairs, the closer one approaches to the truth sought. On the contrary, if the search be for practical truth, perfection lies in coming to grips with concrete details. A theoretical chemist can sit at his desk and, with no more help than that given by a sharp pencil, can pursue his labours happily and effectively; but the practical chemist must be mechanic enough to know how to assemble the apparatus for his experiments or even to create that apparatus, or he will get no results at all.

Our work in this volume is of a decidedly practical nature; so practical, in fact, that it is the business of every human being. Our task is the examination of the whole problem of human happiness. Every step we take is a step down into the every-day world of human affairs; in every chapter we come closer to the roar and confusion of human activity.

So far we have been looking at men and their deeds in a general way. We found what happiness consists in and how it is grasped by men; in other words, the meaning of human life and human activity. The problem of the last chapter was the humanity of human actions, the examination into their mysterious power to make a success of life, their ability to win happiness. And that secret was summed up in the words "control" or "deliberate will". We saw that it was by the actions under man's control that he wins happiness; that only such actions were admitted by men and women as human, and everything that could remotely affect that control was a subject worthy of investigation.

Necessity of familiarity with tools of successful living

In this chapter we are coming down a step further, penetrating into the control room of every human life, trying to discover what does the controlling and just what actions are controlled and how. Since it is by his activity that man makes a success or blunder of his life, these human actions are the tools by which his happiness must be worked out. To use tools effectively, one must be familiar with them. It is not mere superstition that leads the baseball player or cricketer to insist on his own bat; the fact that I am using someone else's pen may not be the whole explanation of the execrable character of my penmanship, but it contributes a part; a stenographer trying out for a job on an unfamiliar machine is not necessarily offering an excuse when she says she could do better on her own typewriter.

For their effective use, tools must not merely be fitted for the particular job in hand. They must be practiced with, weighed, measured, hefted. When it was said that one of the first requirements a good surgeon is that he be a good mechanic, a great truth was expressed; for the surgeon, like anyone who must use tools, is great when he has made his tools a part of himself, an extension of his own hands, of his own brain.

Necessity of familiarity with ingredients of these tools

We must be familiar with the tools we are going to use on the job of living. But a mechanic's knowledge is not enough; we cannot buy those tools, we must create, must forge them, we must know what goes into their make-up. A lawyer preparing his brief must view the case from every possible angle, and then very carefully include, and even more carefully exclude, material from that brief. A doctor who writes a prescription which stops dandruff but paralyses the patient has written a very bad prescription. In the same way, the man who looks at only one angle of the job of living, who considers only one phase of his tools, or who concentrates on one ingredient in their manufacture, will do a very bad job of living.

Two ways of considering human acts

Actually we can exhaust the possible views of man's activity by looking at human actions from two angles: from the angle of science, looking for the answer to the question "how?"; and from the angle of philosophy, looking for the answer to the question "why?".

Empirically (scientifically): Physiologically

Science can, and as a matter of fact does, examine human actions. And this is quite proper. Man is a living organism, he is an animal, all of his actions create some little ripple on the pool of physical nature. Physiology can quite properly examine and correlate the results of its examination of the blood, the nerves, the muscles, the brain of man in his different activities. Experimental psychology can properly compare the common elements in human and animal activity; it can search out the physical basis of neuroses, the springs of hate and fear, anger, despair and all the rest. Scientists can measure and weigh, make up averages, statistics, ratios, quotas, and be entirely within their scope. All this is an invaluable contribution to human knowledge.

Psychologically

Tragedy enters the picture when it is supposed that all this, or any part of it, is the whole story of human actions; or, indeed, that it is the important part of the story. As far as human actions are concerned, science is always on the outside, looking in. It is just as unfair to expect the whole story from science, as it is to expect an account of a football game from the wistful boy standing outside the stadium listening to the cheers. The account becomes more accurate the closer we get to the inside; for the whole story, we must get inside the brain of the man who is running the team.

Mathematically

This mistake is not the mistake of scientists, but of modern philosophers. Each one of these sciences has been erected into a philosophy over the protest of the scientist. For example, in recent years an associate professor of psychology at a mid-western university, has expressly insisted on the fact that science is seeking the ultimate causes, not seeking the answer to the question "why?", but only the proximate, immediate causes in answer to the question "how?". In other words, science, examining human actions, examines everything but their humanity. This last is the philosopher's task; and philosopher's task it will continue to be as long as it remains impossible to put the spiritual under a microscope or to dissect it with a scalpel.

Philosophically

The investigation of the empirical or scientific angle is something we can safely leave to someone else whom we consult from time to time as the occasion demands -- or perhaps not at all. For the key to successful living lies precisely in the humanity of these actions of ours, in their subjection to our control. That angle we cannot leave to anyone but ourselves; that element must permeate every action in every instant of its existence, and is our business every moment of our lives. Whether we like it or not, we must be philosophers.

In themselves

Do not let that frighten you. It does not necessarily mean long hair, fits of abstraction, or that vague far-away look which is such a deterrent to sprightly conversation. Many a farmer has raised successful crops, though he never saw an agricultural college; but he did go to school -- to the very difficult school of experience. And that same school has, early in life, made a philosopher of every human being. It will be evident from the example used farther on, that what is to be said in this chapter is not an abstruse, totally unfamiliar bit of doctrine. But rather, like all scholastic philosophy, is organized common sense.

In their morality

From this all-important philosophical angle, which will give us the whole story of human action, we can look at the controlling and controlled actions of our everyday lives, cutting them off from every other consideration, and considering them solely in themselves, one by one, as they pour forth from the great centre of human movement. That is the work of this chapter. In the next chapter our work will be to consider these actions in reference to good and evil, to their morality or immorality, to try to plumb the depths of a question which has turned the modern world upside down.

Story behind the controls of human action

As we look into the control-room of human activity, we can see two great dynamos -- the intellect and the will of man. The work of the first is to know; that of the second is to desire, to move, to enjoy. The will of itself is blind; like every other appetite in every other creature, it trails along, following and limited by knowledge. The intellect, of itself, is powerless to move itself or anything else. Yet from the combination of these two, we have that distinctive human product -- movement with knowledge, controlled or deliberate movement, that is the means by which happiness is obtained. Not movement alone, not knowledge alone, but controlled movement makes a success of life.

Right here, in the very beginning of our inspection of the control-room, we seem to have met an insuperable obstacle. It is impossible to expect a movement from the will until some object of desire is letdown; yet there can be no movement to knowledge, or to anything else, without having recourse to the source of all movement in man, his will.

General Principle -- reason is the form of human activity

The answer is easy enough. But, to grasp all its implications, it is necessary to remember that reason is the form, as it were the soul, of human acts; as the soul of man gives life to his body, so the reason of man

gives humanity to his acts. It is because he can know the universal that man can choose between particulars; because he knows the relation of the tools to the job in hand, because he knows why he is placing this particular action, man is in control of his activity -- and only man. From the very beginning, then, reason must lead the way; until reason has placed its stamp upon the coin of human activity it is not coin of the realm.

The apparently vicious circle of the interaction of intellect and will is broken by tracing the beginnings of that interaction to nature and ultimately to the source of nature. Reason must lead the way; but the first movement of reason is inspired, not by the activity of the will, but by a push from nature.

Nor does this mean that man has been singled out from all the pupils in the school of the universe and made to stand in a corner alone and in disgrace. Rather, he is running along with "the gang," safe in the assurance that he is "one of the fellows." For no creature that has a beginning, telling later in life the story of its successful career, can make the boast proper to the so-called "self-made man." It must make the confession that it was given a start, it must trace back its earliest efforts to that solid power of natural principles. Or, going farther, everything that has a beginning, precisely because it began, must be traced to that which alone had no beginning, to the God of nature. This is true of everything -- existence, life, sensibility, knowledge, activity of any kind; and so, of course, of human activity.

Keep in mind that when we speak of the beginning of human activity, we are talking of its end or goal. For it is because of the end or goal that human activity starts at all. A man does not adjust his false teeth in the morning for no reason; but for several good reasons. In fact he has a good reason for everything he does, or he must convince himself that he has; otherwise he will be forced to doubt the humanity of his own actions. And this is a very discomfiting doubt. In other words, there is human activity because of desire for an object, because there is an end in sight. And the whole of that activity is moulded in view of the object of desire, or the end.

With reference to the goal or end -- apprehension, volition, conation, enjoyment

The beginnings of human action deal with the end of human action. Looking for the roots of that controlled action which alone is human, we must look first at the actions of intellect and will that deal with the goal or end. And of course the first act of the intellect deals with the work of knowing. The very first step is knowledge or apprehension of the end. The will, riveting this end proposed by the intellect, pays it the flattering tribute of wishfulness (volition). Further impressed by the desirability of this end, the will does more than merely wish; it wants this end or goal, and that means it is ready to take what steps are necessary to get it. Finally, when the attainment of that desirable object is over and done with, the will sits down to enjoy the possession of its goal.

A schoolboy taken on a tour of a hospital sees the surgeons actually at work. He thinks they are splendid and wishes he could be a surgeon. If he stops there, that will be the end of it. But if he goes further and wants to be a surgeon, if he thinks that is the greatest profession in the world and one that he is going to master, then there is some chance of his one day sharing the joy of surgeons.

This undoubtedly explains why so many of our "good resolutions" disintegrate so rapidly; they are not good resolutions at all. They are merely wishes, castles in the air; and of course when they come into conflict with something we really want, they come tumbling down without any noise, dust or confusion precisely because they are so very frail. I once knew a priest some six feet three inches tall and weighing close to two hundred and fifty pounds, who had always cherished a secret desire to be a jockey. All of us have some such sneaking desire: bankers seem to favour being railroad engineers in their dreams; politicians dream of heroic days as firemen; university professors prefer great detective deeds, and so on. It is a harmless sort of game, for we appreciate the fact that it is a game of dreams, of half-wishes and not of real desires. We treat it as an absurd game and laugh at ourselves, unless we grow cowardly about life and try to exchange the world of reality for a world of dreams. Then we court disaster. But it comes as somewhat of a shock to realize that our unfulfilled resolutions belong in this same class of dreams.

No risk is taken with the beginning of all human activity. The goal that is naturally, necessarily known by the intellect is goodness; what the will necessarily wishes is the good, the desirable; moreover that is what it wants, what it will take steps to attain, and what alone will satisfy it. There is no question here of freedom, of control; but of rigorous, natural necessity. Never, at any time, under any circumstances whatever, will you find men or women willing, searching, pursuing anything but what is good, or what appears to them good. They cannot help it; they are built that way.

That solid foundation of human activity, the element of it that needs no control, does not detract from man's mastery of his life but rather makes it possible. If the front wheels of an automobile were not capable of being swung from side to side, we could not control an automobile's direction; but the same would be true if all the rest of the automobile had the same capacity for indirection. It is quite necessary that the seat remain stolidly beneath the chauffeur. A polo player can control his pony, but only because there are some very fundamental things about that pony that are beyond his control and independent of it, e.g. the dependability of the position of the horse's legs. A polo pony with legs as collapsible as those of a bridge table would not be of much help in a polo game. The variable ultimately rests on the invariable, as the dependent rests on the independent.

With reference to the means

It is only when we come down to a consideration of the steps to the goal, the means to be used for the end, that there is question of controlled action. And here too, naturally, begins the question of human responsibility, human success and human failure.

With reference to the means:

On the part of the intellect -- counsel, judgment, command.

The machinery of human activity is not unlike a gasoline engine. We have an infallible automatic starter in nature; once started, the interaction of intellect and will is like the steady interaction of the different cylinders of the gas engine. The explosion in one prepares the way, gives the pressure necessary, for the succeeding explosion in the next; so each act of the intellect prepares the way for an act of the will, which in turn makes necessary an act of the intellect and this again is followed by an act of the will. When our human engine is running smoothly, it is difficult to separate the action of intellect from that of will, so quickly and intimately do they run into one another; but let one cylinder misfire, and we have a stuttering, coughing, creeping paralysis of the whole powerful engine.

These acts of intellect and will go in pairs, like policemen in an unsavoury district of a large city. It is, in fact, the only safe way to travel; for if, we are to get anything done, we cannot do it blindly without disaster, nor yet can we accomplish it by mere thinking. Because human activity is controlled action, it demands both intelligence and power; for every ounce of power there must be an equal amount of direction of that power. The direction, the traffic officer of human activity, is intelligence; the source of power is the will.

On the part of the will -- consent, election, execution

If we follow the mental processes of a little girl investing the coin which has just been advanced from the family treasury, we shall have an accurate account of the process of controlled use of means to an end. This little girl knows that money exists to be spent, the end is clear, desirable and desired, indeed intended. The question is what means will best accomplish the perfection of inventing it. So she takes counsel with herself and sees that both toys and chocolates are adequate and desirable means. She consents to the fact that both of these are good and desirable. But which one to choose? This demands a judgment between the two, which falls, let us say, on chocolates. That decided, she elects to buy the chocolate and is now ready to make her purchase. The passage from choice to actual purchase, the execution of that choice, is accomplished under the direction of the intellect's command, the end is in her possession, the chocolate in her hands.

Two characteristic: all are uniquely human; all are controlled.

Each of these acts flows into the following act and depends on the preceding it. So the consent is reasonable because of the preceding counsel; the choice is not blind because of the preceding judgment; and the command effective because of the preceding push of the election or choice. In spite of all the intricate dodging and ducking involved in running, the football-player invariably puts one foot down after the other: left, right, lot, right, with never a break in the regularity of the succession. So in spite of the intricacy of the human activity under this or that set of conditions, invariably it will be the product of an act of the intellect, followed by one of the will, followed by one of the intellect, and so on -- with never a break in the regularity of the succession.

All of these acts are under our control. We do not have to take counsel, we can rush into things, we can do the first thing that enters our minds. We do not have to consent to the material counsel has laid before us. We do not have to select one from the many good things to which we consent; nor is it beyond our power to refuse to make a choice at all, even when there is only one worth-while thing offered to us. We can take any or all of them; or we can leave them. And that very control gives these acts the stamp of humanity. We are in the driver's seat, doing the driving; everything else in the universe is driven by an irrevocable necessity.

Each one of these acts is different, in a class by itself. Counsel offers an array of good things; judgment picks out one. Consent is but comfortable complacency in all the good things offered by counsel, without the labour of choosing any particular one. While command is like the pest at a week-end party who, full of energy, is constantly breaking into the moments of quiet loafing with the cheery exclamation: "Let's do something."

The whole purpose of human activity is, after all, to get something done, to reach up and to hold happiness. It is not at all surprising that the act of command should have very much the same part formerly had by commanding generals in the days when war was a gentleman's sport. Command dashes up and down the lines, dictating every move made. Whenever anything is done humanly, whether within a man himself or externally, it is because that act has been commanded; otherwise it escapes the mastery of the man himself and is no longer human, no longer controlled.

Command swings back and forth behind the lines of human activity, ordering every movement. Nothing that has to do with the means to an end is, outside its authority. Counsel, consent, judgment, election -- somewhere in all of them and behind them all you will find command. Not merely the movements of a man's hands and feet, but of his intellect and will are at his command, subject to the orders issued by his intellect.

Its very important position demands that we look at the act of command more closely. It is an act of the intellect, sandwiched in between the will's choice and the will's movement to execution or use, keeping intact that invariable successions acts of intellect and will. But the very efficacy of command tells us that it is not merely an act of the intellect; it smacks of power, of effective movement, and that is the work of the will. In command, then, there is an element of intellect and an element of will; and at that, it is only right and just that such a responsible office-holder in the control-room of human activity should combine the two essential elements of all human activity, i.e. control and movement.

Perhaps the relative position of these two elements will be dear from the mere statement that command is effective orderly movement. It is not mere movement, but ordered, directed, aimed movement. The movement comes from the will; the direction and the communication of that direction to the executing potency -- eyes, hands, feet, etc. -- is the work of intellect. Before there is room for command, we must have arrived at definite choice; to step beyond this choice into the field of execution means that this movement to execution, like all movements of the will, needs direction, needs intelligent aiming. The movement which comes from the will flows along intelligent channels under the direction of the intellect. Command, then, briefly, is an act of the intellect, presupposing a movement of the will.

A tourist visiting the Cathedral at Cologne can become so enraptured of the detail work about the door that he never sees the inside and has no conception of the sweeping lines of the exterior. But if he goes back along the street which stretches straight out from the Cathedral and sees it as a whole, the very details which are so precious find their proper place in the plan of the whole and make a fitting preparation, as they were meant to, for the grandeur of the interior. The same is true of a study of human acts; we can so bury ourselves in details as to miss the beauty and significance of the whole.

Practical views: Birth and growth to maturity of human act.

With a better perspective we can see the ingenuous sweep of human activity, and it must strike us at once that the origins of burden control can be accurately described in the homely terms of the human origins of every individual. The conception and birth of human activity is taken in hand by nature and runs its course to a happy conclusion necessarily, infallibly through the acts dealing with the end -- apprehension, volition, intention or conation. The baby has arrived; the process of growth to maturity is ready to begin.

Decision and execution in every-day life

The beginnings of that growth will of course be under the protecting wings of home life -- the period included by counsel, consent, judgment and election. The first effortless days of innocent, unworried childhood correspond to age of courted and consent. Rugged adolescence, with its mighty determinations and sweeping judgments, its trials, struggle, and high hopes, will represent the process of judgment and election. The final sortie out of the protection of home life into a cold world and to the ultimate triumph of founding a home is the phase taken in by command, execution and enjoyment.

A view of the imposing structure of human activity from yet another angle, enables us to see it as the double process of making up our minds and carrying out our intentions. As to the goal or end, there is no difficulty; our mind is made up for us by nature, leaving us no worries about apprehension of the end, its volition or intention. But making up our minds about the means to attain that end is another matter. We must shop about rounding up the means at hand by taking counsel. If there is only one way of doing the thing, of course we do not bother about counsel nor do we take counsel about unimportant trifles. There are no long mental processes involved in hitting a nail with a hammer.

Counsel is necessary and helpful. And it immediately involves our consent to the desirability of the means it has rounded up. But both counsel and consent become painful processes if they do not quickly lead further. An example of this is the mental agony of a woman with an extensive wardrobe who cannot get beyond consent to the beauty and desirability of all her gowns, even though her husband is shouting: "We will never make it."

If she is ever going to get to the party, she must make up her mind. She must judge which dress will be best for the occasion and then decide to wear it. This decision does not put the dress on for her, much less get her to the party in time. The decision must be carried through, must be commanded and executed or her intentions are never carried out. She cannot go to the party with only her mind made up.

I think it is fairly evident that all this is not mere theorizing, but a statement of homely facts with which everyone is familiar. From everyday life we have a whole host of exhibits of every one of these steps, caught as though they were suddenly frozen, or surprised and buried in just the exact posture by a flow of faithfully preserving lava. There is the eternally deliberate, over-cautious man who never has all the possible means rounded up, the budding novelist who is never quite ready to start his novel, the newly and secretly married couple who are still looking for better ways of breaking the news at home. There is the person who can never find anything good enough to win approval and consent, like the woman shopper who exhausts the clerk by "just looking." There is the child so enraptured of all the candy in the show case that it cannot make the bitter judgment which will exclude all others in favour of the one which its precious penny will buy; or the man faced by the problem of choosing between the peace and pleasure offered by an evening of poker with the boys or an evening at home. There is the procrastinator who never

reaches a decision, who is always going to look into this or that, see about this or that; the man with a toothache who knows the tooth should be pulled but never quite decides to have it done; or the women who knows her in-laws should be visited, but never decides just when that visit should be made.

When we come to the point of actually getting things done, the difference between choice and command jumps out at us from every day of our own lives. Hard as decision or election is, it cannot be compared with the encountering of actual details and obstacles involved in really doing the thing. How often we have chosen to clean up our desk on a certain day and how often we have scuttled out from under that choice. There is always much more embarrassment involved in coaxing a precocious child to speak its piccolo before company than in merely electing to have the child show the company what an extraordinary child it is.

The government of the kingdom of man

The whole process is indeed nothing more or less than the process of the government of the kingdom of man and his empire of the universe. It is the question of the intelligent control and direction of his life, his activities, his contacts with the universe to the one end of attaining happiness.

The ends or purposes of this government are taken care of by nature, the foundation is solidly laid by our naturally necessary acts relative to the end -- apprehension, volition, conation. The deliberations and decisions of government, the weighing of the means and the choice of the particular one which will have governmental sanction, is the work done by counsel, consent, judgment and election. The legislative branch is entirely concentrated in the act of command; and the executive, carefully following the letter laid down by the law, extends to all that is subject to man's intellect and will.

These acts can be graphically presented in this manner:

ACTS OF INTELLECT		ACTS OF WILL	
Dealing with the end			
1. Simple apprehension		2. Simple volition	
3. Judgment proposing the end		4. Intention	
Fruition or enjoyment of end.			
Dealing with means.			
A. In Intentional Order.			
5. Counsel		6. Consent	
7. Judgment		8. Election	
B. In Order of Execution. it.			
9. Command or precept		10. Active use	
Passive use in the executing faculties.			

There will be the absolute subjects of intellect and will themselves, never giving an instant of worry about rebellion; the colonies, partly but not entirely subject, have some very definite powers of their own -- the sensitive nature of man; finally the autonomous members of the commonwealth who can only be called subjects by a kind of courtesy -- the vegetative side of man's nature. That is man's kingdom. His empire is the universe which he can and does use to his ends. His use of it is an expression of his power over it, of the ability he has to command.

Forging the tools of life, as well as wielding them, demands delicate balance

The scholastic used to say that the superiority of man over the rest of the universe was plainly seen in the perfect balance of all the elements of the universe in man. He was a little universe in himself; yet a universe where no one angle protruded to mar the beauty of the whole. Certainly balance between intellect and will, starting out from the firm foundations of nature to the fitting climax of the vision of God, is the secret of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of human action.

Blindness of sheer will; practical sterility of sheer intellect

Let the will play an overbearing part and the result is a ruthless, blind release of power, a reign of unseeing terror whose only effect is incalculable damage to the individual and to everyone with whom he comes into contact. This is the tragic half-truth that the world would have us bow down before today when it tells us man is merely an animal. Subordinate the will entirely and there results a futile, cold, sterile creature incapable even of dreams; another of those tragic half-truths, a caricature sponsored by Descartes and his followers in their attempt to make man angelic instead of human.

Despair of endless steps

Deny to man the solid foundation of nature, the end from which activity starts and to which it unerringly goes, and man is placed on an endless treadmill with only the escape of despair and death. This is the third tragic half-truth, widespread today in the philosophers' insistence on man as a part of society, a part of a process of social development, and nothing else, coming from nowhere, going to no place, merely keeping the wheels of society turning.

That balance makes the difference between bungling and skillful living

Tragic as these half-truth are, they cannot compare with the catastrophe involved in the complete falsehood that would deny both intellect and will to man, that would deny both end and means, making him mercy a machine. That is the uttermost depth beyond which one cannot go; its very depravity serves as a brilliant fog to bring out the sublimity, the brilliance, the vigour, and comfort of the complete truth about man and his activity -- that he is the image of God, on his way back to God. We cannot take this or that part of man and neglect the rest without doing violence not only to truth but to man himself. We must take the complex whole, keeping a delicate balance between the control-room and the subjects of that control, and between the elements involved in the control-room itself. That balance makes the difference between man as he is and man as he is grotesquely caricatured today; maintenance of it makes the difference between bungling life and living skilfully. Let man bank too sharply to one side or the other, go up too steeply or down too steeply, let the engine falter, and the soaring flight of his activity comes tumbling down to crash in failure amid the things of mere earth.

The act of command: what interferes with command interferes with our mastery of life

That skill in living is epitomized in the act of command. What interferes with that command, interfere with our mastery of our own life. It makes no difference whether that interference comes from within or without us; when our ability to command weakens, we have begun to turn over the direction of our life to someone or something else. It may be the rebellion of passion, the inertia of boredom, the attraction of another personality, or a too great delicacy for the feelings of another, that is robbing us of command; whatever it is, it is making a direct attack on our ability to live successfully. Whatever contributes to that command, whether it be discipline, self-denial, or energetic use of our power to command, builds up our power for living. It may very well be that outside the kingdom of ourselves, our comments are entirely disregarded; but that does not make a great deal of difference. The important thing for successful living is that within our own kingdom, within ourselves, that command be supreme.

By command man shares the labours of Providence

All other creatures in the universe participate passively in divine Providence by natural inclinations guiding them to their respective ends. They are mere subjects of that law. But over and above this, man takes an active hand in the affairs of Providence, he is not merely a subject but something of a legislator for himself, able not merely to be provided for but actively to provide for himself and others. And this active participation in divine Providence is immediately brought about by his act of command.

Law and the reign of law are impossible without command which is the heart of control

This is the law of his internal kingdom. By it the reign of law is set up and the anarchy, the brutality, the ruin of lawlessness stamped out. This is the deepest secret of the control which stamps an act with

humanity; this is the heart of control.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 4 --»
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CHAPTER IV -- HAPPINESS AND MORALITY (Q. 18-21)

1. Comparison of physical and moral goodness and evil:
 - (a) Roots of morality.
 - (b) A definition of morality.
 - (c) Rules of morality:
 - (1) Proximate rule -- reason.
 - (2) Ultimate rule -- the eternal law.
 2. Sources of modern attack on morality:
 - (a) The identification of the real and the tangible.
 - (b) Rejection of a personal end of man.
 - (c) Attack on authority -- graduated according to authority attacked:
 - (1) Divine authority.
 - (2) Ecclesiastical authority.
 - (3) Civil authority.
 - (4) Paternal or domestic authority.
 - (d) Conclusion to a morality that is irrational or more logically though more rarely, to amorality.
 3. Morality of human action in general:
 - (a) Sources of morality:
 - (1) Object of action.
 - (2) End of action.
 - (3) Circumstances of action.
 - (b) Acts good, evil or indifferent in themselves.
 4. Morality of human actions in particular:
 - (a) Intrinsic acts -- meaning of "good will":
 - (1) Dependence of this goodness:
 - a. On the object; part played by intention.
 - b. On the rules of morality.
 - (2) Sole norm of bad will.
 - (3) Conformity with the will of God.
 - (b) Extrinsic or commanded acts:
 - (1) A double standard of morality.
 - (2) Interaction of these standards.
 - (3) Moral significance:
 - a. Of external acts.
 - b. Of the result of an action.
 5. Consequences of goodness and evil in human activity:
 - (a) Sin and virtue.
 - (b) Praise and blame.
 - (c) Merit and demerit.
- Conclusion:
1. Place of morality:
 - (a) In the order of nature.
 - (b) In the nature of man.
 - (c) With reference to religion.
 2. Impossibility of escape from morality.
 3. Morality and the pursuit of happiness.

CHAPTER IV HAPPINESS AND MORALITY (Q. 18-21)

It is always disconcerting for human nature to discover reality where only the stuff of dreams was expected. A man who was dreaming that he was present at the Deluge, and wakes up expecting to stretch luxuriously in the enjoyment of a warm, comfortable bed, only to discover that the roof is leaking and he is being thoroughly drenched, is disconcerted. So is the man who dreamed about burglars, only to awake to a ransacked house. When we have nicely classified something among the intangible and unimportant material of dreams we like to have it stay that way. A little idiosyncrasy of ours, perhaps, but one that will make the subject-matter of this chapter decidedly disconcerting.

Comparison of physical and moral goodness and evil

It has been quite a fashion these last years to contrast the physical and moral much as we would the real and the unreal: the physical is the strong, undeniable, dependable order of the natural; while the moral is in the class of the fluttering subjective or the intangible supernatural.

Let us look honestly at the two. Physical goodness is not hard to understand. A blind cat has not as much physical goodness as a cat with two good eyes, because it lacks something that a cat should have, that we can reasonably demand of a cat. So, in a very tense moment of a cat show, the decision of the judges must hinge on which of the contestants has all that a cat should have. The absence of wings will not affect that decision a bit; a cat just does not have wings, and the lack of them is no reflection on the cat. Our norm of physical goodness, then, is correspondence to the demands of a particular nature.

We can put this more profoundly by looking at what gives a cat, or anything else, what it should have, considering its nature. Hit fatally by an automobile, the cat in question ceases to have any of the perfections of a cat. So with a man, death robs him of the perfections due to human nature. He may make a wonderful corpse, astoundingly natural in appearance, but in appearance only. His soul, the principle bringing him his specific perfections, is gone. So the form or soul of a cat is the source of the physical goodness of the cat. When the cat has all the perfections its form can give, it is a perfect cat; it lacks goodness, or suffers evil, in so far as it lacks any of those perfections due to the form proper to cats. All this holds true of everything in the order of nature, indeed, in the order of reality. It is our knowledge of these natural forms, or essences, that enables us to judge between the physical good and evil.

If we apply all this to actions, we shall find an exact parallel. A horse's act of eating is good in so far as it has all we can expect of such an act, in so far as it measures up to that principle which gives it its perfection and makes it stand out as different from all other actions. Concretely, in so far as it does what eating is supposed to do, that is, nourish the animal, the act is good. The form of an act, the perfecting principle, which marks it as different from all others, is the object of that act; just as a motion is marked out as different from all other motions, by the goal or object of that motion. The goodness of an act, then, is judged in relation to its form. We are still in the physical, undeniably natural order; and, as is evident, the same principles that determine the physical goodness or evil of a thing as tangible as a cat or a mountain, determine the physical goodness or evil of an action in that same physical order.

Roots of morality

To step into the moral order means no more than to step into the order of human actions. The query concerning their moral goodness or evil is no more than a query as to the goodness or evil precisely as human. Just as all other actions are judged good or bad in the light of their form, specifying principle or object, so also human actions are similarly judged in the light of their form, or object. The difference lies in this: the human action, precisely as human, is a controlled action, an action that is aimed, an action put forth under the guiding hand of reason. So the object of human action is an object responding to that principle of reasonable control.

In other words, a human action like all other actions, indeed like all other things, is good or bad according as it has all it should have, or lacks something that belongs to it. To say that its goodness is moral is merely to insist that its goodness is human. To speak of human action, free action, or moral action, is to speak of exactly the same thing. Whenever a man places an unreasonable action, he places an immoral action. Driving along a mountain road and deliberately turning off over a precipice instead of following the road, a man has placed a morally evil action, because that action did not measure up to the object of human action, the object understood and aimed at by reason, even though the quick turn off may have been a clever bit of manipulation of an automobile.

There is no distinction between the real and the moral order; things moral are just as real as things physical, in fact more so. Their roots are buried in the same metaphysical beginnings of thought and being which make the truth and goodness of each a matter of exact proportion to their existence or being. Morality is not the ghostly door through which the sleepwalker passes unhindered, but the solid barrier

that will wake him up with a crash if he bumps into it.

A definition of morality

Morality, quite simply, is nothing more than the relation of a human action to its proper object, to its object as a human or moral object. One goat may butt into another, looking very much like one football player butting into another; but the acts are quite different, for one is human, the other is the act of a goat. One was placed in view of the end; the other was not. One has a moral object, the other has not.

Rules of morality: Proximate rule -- reason

The determination of the rule of morality is then ridiculously easy. The rule of goodness for a cat, a mountain, or a horse's dinner was the form of each of those things; the exemplar, the perfecting principle, which made them stand out from all others and to which they measured up. The same is true of the rule of human or moral actions: it will be their form, that which makes them stand out from all others as different. We have already seen that actions are human in so far as they are controlled; it is this which makes the difference between a man's hat being blown off and being thrown away at a football game. It is reason which aims human actions, which makes them human. The determining principle of goodness or evil then involves the principle of control; it is the end known and aimed at by reason. Reason is the immediate rule of morality.

Ultimate rule -- the eternal law

The human reason is not a magician at the wave of whose magic wand morality comes into existence. It is a decidedly workman-like faculty whose job is to know and command. To cast it in the role of creator, as principle author of morality, is a silly contradiction of facts. Rather, the realization of just what reason is and does, indicates immediately that behind it is the first cause of morality, as behind the howl of the tornado is the first cause of all physical things. Behind human reason stands divine reason. To measure up to the rule of morality which is human reason, means to measure up to that supreme rule of morality -- divine reason -- which is mirrored in our own created reason.

Going back to that poor cat before it was hit by an automobile, no one of us makes the mistake of thinking the form, the soul, of that cat created the cat, even though here and now it was the measuring rod of the cat's physical goodness. Behind it was the eternally enduring essence or form existing in the mind of the creator, the eternally true exemplar by imitation of which the created form or essence was set up as the norm of feline perfection. So behind every created thing is the divine architect's model of that thing, the ultimate criterion of its truth, its goodness, its perfection. Behind every action, behind every human action; is that same array of plans in the mind of the divine architect; for action, and human action, belong in the real order and demand the same explanation as everything else in that real order.

Morality, then, is not something of caprice, not even of divine caprice; but part of the essential truth of things. It is just as impossible for anyone to make an essentially bad action good as it is to make the essence of a cat the essence of a donkey. Morality has the same solid roots, the same inviolable nature as the earth on which we walk.

All this is disconcerting, for it puts our modern world in the position of the little boy stoutly denying he ate the jam in spite of the generous layer of jam on his face. Our modern attack on morality is an attack on fundamental facts that simply will not be denied; and it is only by the exercise of mental gymnastics worthy of a madhouse that we can even imagine we are denying those facts.

Sources of modern attack on morality: The identification of the real and the tangible

Because the attack is against fundamentals, the root of our modern scoffing at morality go back to fundamentals. One of the earliest roots, and one which is rapidly dying today through the advance of scientific discovery and consequently of scientific humility, was the identification of the real and the

tangible or sensible. If the only real things were those which could be weighed, measured, cut up, used as subjects in a laboratory, then of course morality did not belong to the real order. For no one has as yet stumbled over morality in the dark or preserved it in alcohol. Unfortunately this also included loyalty, friendship, love, beauty, wetness and a host of other things that the world has always insisted were realities of no mean proportions.

Rejection of a personal end of man

Much more to the fore today is the rejection of a personal end of man. This rejection has taken various forms, subjecting the human individual variously to a mechanical, biological, or sociological process in which he is merely filling a gap. Whatever its form, it immediately does away with the necessity of morality by doing away with humanity. The precise mark of human action is control, the aiming of action; where there is nothing to aim at, it is silly to spend time correcting the sights of a rifle. Since human action and moral action are the same thing, the removal of humanity from an action is an effective squelching of morality in that action.

Attack on authority: Divine authority, ecclesiastical authority, civil authority, paternal or domestic authority.

An older, but still strongly enduring source of this modern attack on morality is the attack on authority. It really should not be an attack on morality at all; in fact it can be such only by misunderstanding what and where morality is. From what we have seen, the essential morality does not depend on authority, even on the authority of God; but on the same foundations from which the physical order has its stability. But the notion somehow got around that human beings were moral because they were told to be so, because they were little children ordered about by a somewhat tyrannical parent; a lessening of the authority of that parent, then, was understood as a loosening of the reins of morality. So step by step we staggered down the ladder of authority. First, divine authority and that of the Church which claimed divine authority was rejected; then the authority of churches which admitted they had no divine authority. The next reigning authority was that of the State; from there only two more steps were possible -- to the paternal or group authority of the family and to the completely subjectivistic authority of the individual himself. At every one of these steps some men and women have stopped. You will find those who trace their morality to themselves, to social approval or tradition, to civil law, to dictates of ecclesiastical authority; and you will find others who have rejected all of these one by one until their theoretical morals consist in the arduous task of pleasing themselves.

Conclusion to a morality that is irrational or more logically though more rarely, to amorality *p This does not mean that the modern world has gone immoral. Not at all. Very often the proponents of these particular varieties of morality are themselves living up to a very high moral standard. What it does mean is that the modern world *should* have gone immoral. To propose a moral theory side by side with the contention that morality is not real, that man has no individual purpose or goal to his life, or that morality is merely somebody else's dictum, is absurd. It is unreasonable; it will not stand any searching criticism; it simply does not measure up to the facts. Building on such fundamentals, or lack of fundamentals, the really reasonable thing, the really rational conclusion, would be amorality -- denial of morality. Or, briefly; we are in the position of the boy with jam on his face; we are caught with morality in our very make-up no matter how loudly we may deny it. Our attack has been against a straw man; if we bend over closely enough to make sure the enemy is dead enough to justify a shout of victory, we cannot but discover he was stuffed with straw.

Morality of human action in general: Sources of morality, object of action.

To discover the immediate sources of morality it is necessary merely to look closely at any human action. Take such a very ordinary thing as eating a meal. If we analyse that action, we obtain an accurate idea of what contributes to the human or moral goodness of dining. We will find that this action, and every human action, has three parts and from each part some morality can flow. No matter who eats the dinner,

what the diners capacity, or who pays the bill, the natural object of a dinner is to repair the tissue burnt up by the expenditure of energy during the day. That is what dinners are for, that is the reasonable object, the end known and aimed at by reason. It is something quite independent of the individual diner; something universally true of all dinners that justly claim the name.

End of action

The second part of the human action lies in the purpose or intention of the agent. Perhaps a man is dining merely for sociability's sake -- "he isn't a bit hungry"; perhaps because he wants just one more dinner before going to the electric chair so that the pangs of indigestion will make him forget everything else; perhaps he is so stuffed with food that one more bite will fill him and he has chosen this novel form of suicide. Whatever his purpose, it can go beyond that which naturally and essentially belongs to the dinner as such.

Circumstances of action

The third part of the human action is made up of the circumstances -- the neighbourhood of a human act which must be let down for the complex story of human goodness or evil. For instance, a man might carry his lunch to the opera and eat it between the acts; he might go at his dinner a little too ardently; he might eat it at midnight knowing it is going to keep him awake all night; and so on.

Acts good, evil or indifferent in themselves

At any rate, considering these three elements of a human action, we have considered all possibilities; there is nothing else that enters into a human action. What morality, what human goodness or evil there is in an act, must come from these three sources. The first of these, the reasonable object of the act itself, gives the essential, necessary goodness or evil which will always and under all circumstance cling to the act. So theft's object is to take unjustly what belongs to another; that distinguishes it from all other human actions, good or bad, makes it essentially in all times and under all circumstances an act which is essentially bad, or bad in itself. The object is an intrinsic form giving the act its moral nature; to compare this form, giving the action moral life, to reason, giving the action humanity, is like comparing the form constituting a house distinct from all others, to the architect's conception according to which the house is built. As these objects, these internal forms constituting the moral essence of human actions, are good, bad or indifferent so also are the acts. In more concrete terms, according as the objects of these acts lead to the end or goal set by reason, they are good; as they lead away from or impede the attaining of that goal, they are bad; if they contribute nothing one way or another in themselves, they are indifferent. A kind act is always good in itself; an unjust act is always bad in itself; taking a walk is in itself indifferent.

Over and above this essential goodness or evil of the human action in itself, there is the morality added by the end or intention of the one acting. I can give a poor man five dollars in order to enlist him in the ranks of crime; I can murder a dictator in vindication of my democratic principle or I can take a walk in order to induce a heart attack. And in all these cases some added morality has come through my immediate purpose, regardless of the natural end of the individual acts in themselves.

Something like the effect a neighbourhood has on the desirability of a home, of the effect clothes have on the appearance of a man, is the effect of circumstances on the morality of an act. They are accidents, adornments or disfigurements; they may play as vastly different roles as a drop of perfume or a misstep plays in the magnificent entrance of a society leader. They may make an act better or worse, more serious or less so; but they leave the act essentially intact. When they do not, when they actually change the moral species of an act, they have given up the secondary role of circumstance and stepped into the stellar role of object. The fact that the man who receives a blow is a bishop may be only an added circumstance in one sense, making only an accidental difference; but over and above the essentially unjust nature of this act, is the added affront to religious reverence that gives the act an entirely new nature.

Morality of human actions in particular

All this is very much like scattering the insides of an automobile over the floor of a garage and saying proudly to the owner: "Well that's what takes" you from New York to Los Angeles." The owner might reasonably reply: "Yes, and that's what's going to take you from automobile repairing to piano tuning if you don't get it together again." We have taken the human action apart to examine its goodness and evil. But we must now put it together again to see how it drives toward good or wanders off after evil.

In the process of reassembling the inner parts of the human action we come upon friends from a former chapter. Among others there are those acts of the will which precede actual external action, that enter intimately into the making up of our minds and always precede the execution of our purposes -- intention, consent, election or choice.

Intrinsic acts -- meaning of "good will"

All of these flow immediately from the will and are produced without the help of clever fingers or stumbling feet. They are elicited by the will in contrast to the outside acts that are executed under the force of command coming radically from the will. Where do they fit in the scheme of morality?

They should play a very important part. After all, good and evil are the direct business of the will. It is the job of the feet to walk, of the ears to hear, of the intellect to understand; but it is the will's exclusive task to be engaged with good and evil. This division of good and evil is the proper division of the actions of the will. Put in another way, the end or goal of activity is the proper object of the will; and a thing is good or bad precisely because of its relation to that goal or end of activity.

Dependence of this goodness: On the object; part played by intention

One phrase of that last sentence is particularly important: the proper object of the will is the end or goal of activity. It is important because it greatly simplifies the question of the morality of these intrinsic or elicited acts of our rational appetite. To determine whether my almsgiving was good or bad, it was necessary to consider not only the natural purpose of almsgiving but also my intention in giving the alms. But in determining the essential value of these intrinsic acts of the will that is not necessary. In these intrinsic acts, the purpose of the one acting and the purpose of the act itself always coincide -- the proper object of the will is precisely the end or goal intended. We give a person credit for his good intentions, and rightly so; not in the sense that such an intention justifies everything a man does, but it does at least justify the intention. The inner form, the specifying principle, that which marks this act of the will off from all others, is at the same time the object of this inner act and the end of the agent -- they are one and the same thing.

On the rules of morality

This does not mean that we are setting up the will as a swashbuckling king who can do no wrong. It can do wrong; in fact it is the fountain source of evil as well as good. It is not an independent creator of morality, making good whatever attracts it, as Midas made whatever he touched into gold. Its goodness or evil is to be judged by the same rules that determine the morality of every other human action, i.e., first and immediately by the rule of reason.

The inner form which gives the intrinsic acts of the will their morality must be set alongside the outer form, the exemplar, to see how it measures up. That outer form, that architect's conception, is reason's knowledge and judgment of the human object of this or any other act. I intend to help my neighbour and that intention is morally specified by its object or end; but that end is good because it measures up to the rule of reason declaring that such an object leads a man to the goal of human life. On the contrary I intend to injure my neighbour; again the morality is determined by the inner form and it is bad because it does not measure up to the rule of reason, because reason declares such an act leads a man away from the goal of human life.

Sole norm of bad will

The sole standard by which men of good will can be distinguished from men of bad will is the rule of morality, which is reason. Reason proposing a good end to the will does not make that will good or bad; but the will is good if its acts are in agreement with that reason, they are bad in so far as they violate that rule. It is in acting against an end proposed by reason as good, or intending an end proposed by reason as evil, that the will is bad.

Conformity with the will of God

A good grasp of this notion takes all the trickery out of the difficult task of conforming our will to the will of God. A special revelation of God's intentions is not necessary; it is not necessary that we have a blueprint of all the detailed devices of divine Providence; we do not have to spend agonizing hours on our knees trying to discover if this is or is not the will of God. We have only to follow our reason. The human reason does not make up the moral values. The unchangeable moral essences are not the product of human but of divine understanding, they are naturally known, accurate mirrorings of the divine plans ready to hand for every man and woman without the laborious pacing of the corridors of eternity. In this or that particular thing God and ourselves may be at odds without our realizing it -- we pray very earnestly, for example, for someone's health when as a matter of fact renewed health would be the means by which he would make a failure of the life he is now prepared to end so successfully. The difference, the disagreement with the will of God is merely material; formally, our ends are God's ends if our ends are the ends of reason.

All this will perhaps become more clear when we look at the acts intrinsic to and commanded by the will, walking down the highways of life arm in arm. Of course they always do take their strolls in just that fashion when the commanded act appears at all. And with astounding results. Former friends may snub the commanded act unmercifully when they see his companion; or on another day, the commanded act may receive salutations from the influential who would not notice him alone, or would pay him only the almost unconscious tributes given to creatures on a lower stratum.

Extrinsic or commanded acts: A double standard of morality.

The commanded act, by reason of its own proper object and so of its own moral essence, is good or bad in itself. No matter what the intention with which it promenades, this goodness or badness remains intact. If the commanded act is itself indifferent, it will be good or bad according to the intention, the end aimed at.

Recently, walking up Lexington Avenue, I came to Fifty-Ninth Street and, inevitably, met the "sandwich men" stooping under their enthusiastic placards. Usually these people are quite indifferent to the world surging past them: eyes blank, or vague with dreaming of a hot cup of coffee, hopeful with the approach of the end of their long vigil. But this particular night one stood out, a young Italian girl, perhaps eighteen years old with that madonna-like beauty that is almost an Italian heritage. She stood absolutely motionless, facing downtown, her eyes tightly closed and with an agony of unutterable shame stamped on her face. Realizing that her tightly locked eye alone prevented a flood of scalding tears, one could appreciate the sublime courage and desperate necessity that drove her through the long hours of her shame. And it was not hard to form an idea of how the virgin martyrs of early Christendom or the modern martyrs among the nuns of Spain must have looked enduring their martyrdom.

Interraction of these standards

The object and moral essence of almsgiving is good. The act is good in itself. But if from a strain of sadistic crudity a man approached that girl and offered her a coin, the almsgiving would have been horribly bad. Theft is bad; if, seeing this girl, a man thought how nicely she could use a thousand dollars and so went into the department store on the corner and somehow stole a thousand dollars with the best of intentions, the act would still be bad. Looking or not looking at a human being is a morally indifferent act; but to stop and stare at this girl to enjoy her misery would be bad; to tear one's eyes away in a rush of pity

would be good.

Moral significance: Of external acts

As a matter of fact, all this can be morally complete without anything being done for the world to see. My intention to torment the girl, followed by my decision to give her a coin might stop right there; and morally the case is complete as I have just outlined it. Does the actual giving of the alms add anything to the sin already committed? Over and above the damage such external action might do (as in the case of theft) each external sin at least adds a note of intensity, fixing the will in its determination to go through with the act; the very doing of the act extends the whole activity of the will over a longer period; and sometimes it actually increases the number of these acts of the will. A timid burglar intends to humiliate his competitors by a huge theft and decides on a particular victim. Later he weakens and gives up the idea; but the next night his courage comes back and he enjoys a very successful evening. He has committed two sins of burglary, though getting only one bit of loot.

Of the result of an action

Looking back for a moment, we see the sources of morality as the object of the human act, the end of the man acting, the circumstances under which the act is placed and the external execution of the act; all play their part, and their success or failure is judged by the strict critic reason. But that is not quite the last act; we cannot ring down the curtain until the consequences of that external act have made their bow.

An aviator soaring over New York suddenly become bored with just riding around and decides to end the ride right there. If he jumps out depending on his parachute to land him safely, he has no right to indignation when a policeman arrests him for the murder of the people his crashing plane has killed. On the other hand, a joke told at a banquet with such success that a listener swallows his false teeth and dies does not mean that the wit has committed murder. Effects that naturally, necessarily or even usually follow from an action are intimately connected with it and cannot be disowned as so many illegitimate children. But effects that happen once in a lifetime, or that no one could foresee, have no claim on the heritage of good or evil left by the act itself.

Consequences of goodness and evil in human activity: Sin and virtue, Praise and blame, Merit and demerit P Our modern repugnance to the word "sin" is nothing short of absurd when taken in connection with our modern insistence on right and wrong, our judicial paraphernalia, our uplift societies and official reformers. A human act is humanly wrong when it is unreasonable, when it does not conform to the rule of reason; it is right when it does. And that is exactly what is meant by sin and acts of virtue. This or that is a sin precisely because it conflicts with reason; it is good and virtuous because it conforms to the rule of reason. To demand the substance and scruple at the name is just a little childish.

Of course we are blamed for sin and praised for virtue; just as we are blamed for wrong and praised for right. These acts, because they are human, have proceeded under our full control; they are wrong because we steered them deliberately in that direction, right because we chose to act in that fashion. There is room for remorse and satisfaction because human nature is in control of its activity. There is room for merit and demerit because there is room for success and failure, because there is room for justice to ourselves, to the world, to the divine architect whose plans we are working out.

Conclusion: Place of morality in the order of nature.

Perhaps one conclusion apparent by this time is that the question of morality is certainly a complex question. Of course it is; for human activity is a decidedly complex activity. But there are a few very simple, very fundamental conclusions which are evident from even this cursory glance at morality.

It should be clear first of all that morality is an integral part of the natural order. It is not something extrinsic, foreign, merely authoritative; but something that flows immediately and necessarily from the working out of natural laws. Like everything else in nature, man is governed by natural laws; and, like

their operation in every other nature, those natural laws in man do not violate man's nature. Just as the fulfilment of those natural laws is different in a chemical and in a chimpanzee, so is it different in man, following the difference of his nature. With everything else, natural law uses the whip of physical necessity, driving to its ends without the possibility of mistake; but human activity cannot be subjected to physical necessity and remain human, for it cannot be necessarily produced and at the same time be under our control. The necessity induced by natural law in human activity is a moral necessity, one admitting of choice, of mistake and success, because man's nature is a moral nature enjoying the ability to choose in paths to the goal of nature.

In the nature of man

Our human nature not only submits to morality, it cries out for it, it cannot exist without it. In every smallest human act, in exact proportion to its humanity, there is morality; for morality is nothing more than the fulfilling or violation of the law that governs human nature. According as a man's acts are directed to his goal, they are good; and so far as they turn away from that goal, they are bad. And every human action, as human, must be either for or against that goal; it is under control, going somewhere, either to the right place or to the wrong place. If we discover a man whose actions have no morality, either good or bad, we promptly lock him up; for by the same token his actions have no humanity, he is insane; they have no liberty and he is not responsible for what he does. Human, free, moral action are one and the same thing.

With reference to religion

Evidently morality is not a mere adjunct of religion. It is not something reserved to pious people, to believers in religion, and forbidden to all others; rather it is something exclusively demanded of possessors of humanity. It is not religion which produces morality but rather morality that of itself will produce religion; for religion is but one of the commands of the natural law which governs man's actions -- it is not the root or source of that law.

Impossibility of escape from morality.

To escape from morality means to escape from humanity. The attempt to overthrow the moral order is an attempt to deny the authenticity of human nature, to fly from the order of liberty. Like a child in a Halloween game, it puts a false face on human nature and expects the world to be frightened. The world is not frightened, it is amused; and if only the inanimate and brute creation were capable of amusement and laughter, the roar of amusement at the antics of these solemnly learned opponents of morality would fill all the vast spaces of the universe. It is impossible to run away from morality because it is impossible to run away from nature, because it is impossible to run away from humanity. In a word, there is no escape from the truth of things as they are.

Morality and the pursuit of happiness.

Everything we have said in this chapter has an immediate bearing on happiness. Let us recall that we placed the essence of happiness in the possession of the goal of life; we said that what share we can have of happiness in this life comes in exact proportion to our approach to that goal of life; all our human activity is but the means to that goal, so many tools by which we carve out happiness. And morality? Morality is the exact measure of man's success in living. Man is happy in proportion as he approaches his end; man is morally good as he aims his acts at that end, morally bad as he aims his acts away from that end. Our morality here and now is a statement of our account in the bank of happiness. Virtue is its own reward in this sense; that every virtuous act is a definite step towards final happiness, every virtuous act is a pocketing of a share in that happiness towards which we are striding. We cannot speak of morality without holding forth on happiness.

CHAPTER V -- HAPPINESS AND PASSION (Q. 22-29)

1. Opinion and fact of passion:
 - (a) Passion outcast as unworthy of man.
 - (b) Passion enthroned as all of man.
 - (c) Passion welcomed as part of man.
 2. Fact of passion is its own full explanation:
 - (a) Definition and characteristics of passion:
 - (1) Relation to knowledge.
 - (2) Subject.
 - (3) Goodness and evil.
 - (b) Distinction of passion:
 - (1) From reflexes.
 - (2) From feelings.
 - (3) From instincts.
 - (4) From habit.
 3. Varieties of passion:
 - (a) Generic: -- mild (concupiscible) and emergency (irascible).
 - (b) Specific:
 - (1) Love and hate
 - (2) Desire and flight.
 - (3) Delight and sorrow.
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 - (1) Hope and desperation.
 - (2) Daring and fear.
 - (3) Anger.
 4. Mutual relations of passions.
 5. Theories of passions:
 - (a) Resultant -- Lange, James.
 - (b) Concomitant -- McDougall.
 - (c) Emergent -- Cannon.
 - (d) Sexual -- Freud.
 - (c) Scholastic.
 6. The basic passions -- love and hate:
 - (a) Love:
 - (1) Double method of treatment: experiment and contrast.
 - (2) Varieties: natural, sensitive, rational.
 - (3) Division: selfish and benevolent.
 - (4) Causes: good, knowledge, similarity.
 - (5) Effects:: union, inherence, ecstasy, zeal.
 - (6) Appreciation:
 - a. Its value.
 - b. Its effectiveness.
 - (b) Hate:
 - (1) Object and cause: evil and love.
 - (2) Its comparative power.
 - (3) Hatred of self and of truth.
- Conclusion.
1. Balance of passions.
 2. Passion and human nature.
 3. Passion and human activity.
 4. Passion and happiness.

CHAPTER V HAPPINESS AND PASSION (Q. 22-29)

Opinion and fact of passion: Passion outcast as unworthy of man

It is a part of our American heritage, or perhaps more properly, our Anglo-Saxon heritage, to look upon passion much as a family arrived in society might look on a poor relation. It is something to be ashamed of, frowned on, denied in public, to regret. A severely reserved attitude seems much more worthy of us as men than does passion. So we go about looking very solemn in a silly way, like children desperately suppressing a giggle or a flood of tears, whistling to prove to ourselves and the world that we really are

not afraid in spite of the knocking of our knees or the chattering of our teeth. Yet this puritanical attitude makes generous allowance for such passions as sorrow, anger or desperation; and its champions positively revel in the sticky mists of sentiment which enable their minds to become hopelessly confused in a mild, genteel way.

Passion enthroned as all of man

At the opposite extreme we have the fairly recent importation which identifies passion with all that is best in man. Thus all of man's troubles -- nervous, domestic, social or even physical -- have their root in the fact that he has not given his passions full play. To be fully a man, one's passion must have had full sway from the days of infancy; otherwise a man is a neurotic or a weakling. It does not seem to be of any importance that following such a procedure man turns out to be a beast; perhaps because down in the hearts of the champions of this attitude, that is really what man is, merely another animal.

The clash of these extremes has tended to divide modern opinion into two camps, both of which are deadly enemies of the perfectly evident facts of human nature. No matter how many hours he spends practicing facial immobility before a mirror, no man can tell himself that he does not feel love, desire, fear, hatred and the rest. No matter how loudly he may champion the virility of giving full play to his passions, every man knows that his actions are truly human only when they are under his control; and every man is thoroughly ashamed, or at least considerably embarrassed, at the note of insanity, of inhumanity, that rings out so discordantly from his uncontrolled acts. Children learn very early that the very best time to ask for extraordinary favours is shortly after their father has thoroughly lost his temper.

Somewhere between these two extreme opinions the facts of human life slip by, and placidly pursue their prosaic way, utterly indifferent to the ebb and flow of the battle which no one ever wins and where both sides are always vanquished.

Passion welcomed as part of man

Wherever there is a man, there will be found passion; and wherever there is human activity, there also is control, an actual aiming at a target by man himself. These two indisputable and obvious facts really tell the story of passion; an old, old story which has been told in countless ways, none more simple than by saying that man has a body and a soul. Because he has a living body, complete in its equipment for sensitive or animal life, passion is an integral part of his nature, as it is of the nature of all animals. But because he is not a living body but a rational being in control of his acts, passion can never be all there is to man. To deny passion is to deny the animal life of man in the face of such obvious facts as the necessity of breakfast; to make passion the full explanation of human activity is to deny intelligence -- something that could not be done without intelligence, however unintelligent such a denial might be.

Perhaps even taxi-drivers enjoy a thrill of novelty in examining the latest models of automobiles: there is always some new gadget, some improvement, or alleged improvement, which puzzles the most experienced driver. The parts of the human machine are much more standardized; in fact no change has been made in the model, of which we have any historical record. Realizing that we have been driving this machine for years and years, it is no surprise to discover that we cannot be surprised. A statement of the nature of passion will bring nothing amazing; it has been a part of us from the very beginning and is as familiar as our own face, or our own hands. It is in fact a little surprising that men can quarrel so about it, particularly when it can be adequately described as nothing more than the movement of the sense or animal appetite in man.

Fact of passion is its own full explanation It is as simple as that. Very often "emotion" is used to describe what we are calling passion, the word "passion" being reserved for emotion with its cap tilted toughly over one eye. There is no argument with such usage as long as the meaning intended is made clear. But it does leave us without a name for the movements of the rational appetite or will. It seems much better to reserve the name emotions for any movement of any appetite of man, passion exclusively for the movements of the sense appetite. It is in this sense that we will use the word passion throughout

this and the succeeding chapters.

Definition and characteristics of passion: Relation to knowledge

Taken in this strict sense, we can expect of passion what we know to be true of any appetite, i.e. that it follows knowledge. Knowing is not its work any more than hearing is the work of the eye; nor can it know any more than the eye can hear. It was not built for that. But unless something is known and presented to it, appetite can never operate. A man who has never heard of baseball does not waste his time writing for a ticket to a game. And that same thing is equally true of every animal; it is only very recently that dogs began to desire dog biscuits. Like every movement of appetite, passion must come from a faculty whose job is precisely the job of desiring. It belongs in the faculty of desire much as vision belongs in the organ of sight. Passion as a movement of sense appetite can be immediately located in the organ of sense desire. It belongs in the body of man; if at any time it wanders into the apartments of the soul it is only by accident, merely because the two are so closely connected that it is remarkably easy to pass from one to the other like an echo running upstairs, or an insoluble problem in mathematics bringing tears to a child's eyes in the midst of his homework. In this way the sorrow in the soul of Christ penetrated to His body, and the gloom of a rainy day penetrates to our soul.

Subject

Like all sense activity, passion involves some corporal changes. The word passion, in its widest sense, has the signification of receiving something, of suffering or submitting to action, receiving an action within ourselves. In this very wide sense, we might suffer an idea, receiving an idea through the activity of material objects upon us. However ideas, and everything received in the spiritual part of man, are acquired without suffering in the sense of corporal change. It is the thing which must be changed to enter into the spiritual area of our being rather than that our spiritual side be changed to accommodate the material thing. But this is not the case in the sensible part of man. I remember talking to a cook who assured me he never had to eat because he was constantly inhaling food. Perhaps he did not eat. But assuredly he did not adhere to even this delicate form of nourishment without corporal, physical changes. The whole question of passion is in the sensible order; and sensible contact involves sensible changes. A man will flush with anger, pale with fear, his heartbeats quicken with desire, his muscle tense with hate -- whatever the passion and however profound the physical changes involved, physical changes there must be. An expressionless face and long training may hide many of these changes; but the lie-detector is just one source of evidence of the impossibility of ruling these corporal changes out of existence when passion comes into play.

Goodness and evil

From all this it is fairly evident that no amount of puritanical shrinking can confer the dignity of morality upon passion in itself; just as no amount of case records can sum up humanity in terms of pardon. We have seen in the preceding chapter that a moral action and a human action are exactly the same thing; and the most unlettered man of the street demands the brand of control, of mastery, before he will accept any action as genuinely human. Morality is inextricably tied up with the control of action. And passion is merely subject to control; it can be controlled or it can get out of control, which is to say it can be either human passion or animal passion, or, saying the same thing in another way, it can be moral, immoral or amoral. Of itself, like everything in the sensible order, it is morally indifferent. Physically, passion is good, an integral element in the well-being of man; but morally it is what we make it.

On the purely material side, these are the things we find always and inevitably in makers of passion: some knowledge -- "sensation, percept, imagery, idea"; -- movement of the appetite, i.e. "a tendency to merge with some external object or to adjustment bringing some change perceptible as agreeable or disagreeable"; and finally some organic, corporal changes which are nothing more than the recognition of stimulus "discharge of nerve energy, physiological resonances". It is in the second of these, the movement of sense appetite, that passion essentially consists. The first knowledge, is an indispensable condition for passion as colour is for seeing; the last, corporal change, an inevitable effect following passion like a fall

follow. loss of balance.

Modern investigations have served to confine the nature of passions. There have been so many scientific bloodhounds back and forth over the trail of passion that a hound set on the trail now can hardly be blamed if he chases some other dog instead of keeping after the quarry. Science is of course strictly within its rights in investigating this whole problem of passion. After all, it is a question of the sensible order, an order for which the whole equipment of science was designed. And the findings of science have been overwhelming in their detail and of incalculable value. Their very number and value, instead of excusing them from the demands of order, rather demand more attention to order; as an overcrowded desk is a more convincing argument for orderly arrangement than is the desk of the lawyer newly admitted to the Bar.

Going through the terms intimately connected and often confused with the movements of the sensible appetite which is passion, the differences are startlingly clear once they are pointed out, like the defects in a masterpiece or a precious stone once attention has been called to them.

Distinction of passion: From reflexes.

Compared to the reflex-arc which plays such a mighty part in behaviouristic psychology, passion is as different as the dog's grinding on a bone is different from the hum of a meat-grinding machine. A reflex is what happens, for example, in the winking of the eye when a doctor tries to pour drops into it. It is an immediate and mechanical reaction, totally unconscious, which makes no demands on previous knowledge. Passion is a conscious affair which cannot dispense with previous knowledge.

From feelings

Feeling is the "affective tone of sensation, pleasant or unpleasant", like the overtone of a resonant tinging voice, and is a radical pre-requisite of passion rather than passion itself. This affective tone can no more be separated from sensation than a smile can be cut off a face and put away in moth-balls. And sensation is at the roots of knowledge.

From instincts

Instincts stand at the end of the scale opposite from feelings. Briefly, an instinct is "a function with a physiological and a psychological foundation, a complicated behaviour pattern purposive in character usually operating for the benefit of the individual or race". It includes cognitive, appetitive and motive functions. Like passion, it is decidedly conscious; it is not a mechanical chain of reflexes. In it passion plays its part; but to identify passion with instinct is like identifying yeast with bread.

From habit

Reflexes, feelings, passion, instincts are all part of our natural equipment. They do not have to be laboriously acquired. As an indication of the truth of that statement, we have only to look at the difference in the distribution of knowledge or money and the distribution of reflexes, passion and instincts. Habits, on the contrary, are distinctly the product of our activity; we have habits because we build them up. We can be proud of them or ashamed of them as a man is proud or ashamed of his world. But if we have pride or shame in our instinct, passions or reflexes we have little to do and we have not used our leisure for thought.

Generic Varieties of passion: mild (concupiscible) and emergency (irascible).

It is a fact, which by the way I will not attempt to explain, that the English language lends itself much more easily to arguments on politics than to philosophical exposition. Certainly it is not because of any scarcity of English words; we have so many we can throw them about with the utmost abandon. But looking through those thousands of English words for an exact expression of a philosophical notion is like thumbing through a box full of old keys in the vain hope of finding just the one which will open the door.

It is not so surprising, then, that it is difficult to find words which will fit the generic classification of the passions. We can lift words over directly from the Latin and divide the passions into "concupiscible" and "irascible" passions -- and probably frighten some readers into abandoning this book. Or we can use the term employed quite recently, and call them "mild" and "emergency" passions; and put ourselves in the position of maintaining, for example, that love or daring is a mild passion!

Whatever the name, the distinction is based on the fact that one set of these passions has to do simply with good or evil, no other consideration coming into play. These are the mild or concupiscible passions. The object of the other set of passions adds to the notion of good and evil that of difficulty; these are the emergency or irascible passions.

Translated into concrete terms, this means that all the activities of our sense appetite can be summed under two headings: its loss or gain of the good and its struggle with difficulties, two phases with which every one of us is familiar.

Specific: Love and hate, Desire and flight, Delight and sorrow.

We shall treat every one of the passions in detail, starting in this chapter with love and hate. Instead, then, of stopping at each one for a miniature picture, let us try to get one sweeping view that will accurately locate each of these power houses of sensitive activity. Take, for example, the man to whom a long morning's sleep has been presented as an eminently agreeable, a good thing. He loves sleep whether he is actually enjoying it, looking forward to it, or merely remembering the one he had yesterday; with equal heartiness he hates insomnia whenever and however it is brought before his consciousness. He has been invited to his brother's place in the country for a quiet week-end and tonight as he rushes home on the subway he looks forward with eager desire to a long, refreshing sleep. Actually arriving at his brother's place, he learns that the neighbouring orphanage has burnt down and his brother is harbouring twenty-five orphans of tenderest age. He immediately takes the next train back to town in panicky flight from the inevitable insomnia that will rob him of his precious sleep; but the train is caught in a blizzard and he spends a miserable, back-breaking night in the smoking-car in profound sorrow at the loss of his sleep. The next night he makes up for all this and has the satisfying pleasure or delight in a long, long night's sleep.

Hope and desperation, Daring and fear, Anger.

Let us suppose there were no trains back to town that night. Here certainly is the place for emergency passions. Sleep will represent some difficulties; but the women of the house assure him these children are well trained, they are accustomed to getting to sleep very early and if he will do his part by rocking, say, ten of them to sleep everything will be well. So with high hope of overcoming the difficulty he sets about the business of rocking the children to sleep. When he has reached number four, he realizes that it is not every night orphans have a fire -- there is number one awake again for the third time. Despair creeps in; if this keeps up he will never get to sleep himself. Something must be done about it. With a daring extraordinary in so self-conscious a man puts all the children in bed and tries to sing them to sleep in mass formation. A few minutes of this makes him realize the hopelessness of the situation and he gives way to fears, the fear that there will be no sleep to night. He finally gets angry about it, and the women of the house who rush in thinking another fire and panic have started, only increase his anger. He turns on the children viciously, shouting them down and announcing to all and sundry that the first one that so much as whimpers will have his ears bitten off. This immediately creates a homey atmosphere again, the children feel safe and sound once more and immediately drop off to sleep. The evil of insomnia has been routed.

Mutual relations of passions

A closer scrutiny of this example will show quite easily and quickly this interrelation of the passions. If this unfortunate individual did not love and desire sleep, looking forward to the pleasure of its possession, he would have known no hope, desperation, daring, fear or anger. The all-night taxi-driver does not mind excitement at any time of the night. It is always true that the mild or concupiscible passions are at the root

of the emergency passions; in fact emergencies are radically due to the activities of the milder passions. An utterly bored individual has no use for emergency passions because nothing can interest him, nothing can arouse his mild or concupiscible passions.

Quite evidently, then, at the very root of the activity of the passions are love and its opposite, hate. If we wish to single out the most important of the remaining passions, we would not go wrong in picking hope, fear, joy and sadness. And the common bond tying them together, their common claim to importance, is the note of finality which rings out from each one, whether its peal be joyous or lugubrious. Hope stands last in the passions of pursuit (I love, I desire, I hope); fear holds the last place in the passions of escape (I hate, I fly, I fear); and at the very end of all passion's activities we have joyous possession or sorrowful loss. Anger, of all the passions, alone stands in proud isolation; it has no opposite, for its opposite -- meek submission to an evil actually present -- does not involve the activity of appetite but rather is a denial of this activity. At any rate the hero of our story is finally asleep.

Theories of passions:

Resultant -- Lange, James; Concomitant -- McDougall; Emergent -- Cannon; Sexual -- Freud; Scholastic.

The man has earned his sleep. Quiet has descended on the house, leaving us free to seek our excitement elsewhere. And there is no better place to find it than in the halls of science. Looking into this problem of passion, experimental psychology has arrived at various theories as to the nature of passion and where passion is to be located. One of the earlier opinions, that of James and Lange, identified passion with the bodily movements which are always found with passion. What we call passion is the result of organic and physiological changes; each distinctive passion is differentiated by the physiological changes in the subject of that passion. McDougall comes much closer to the truth when he ties emotion and instinct very closely together; but he tied the knot too tight. In his opinion each passion is always an indication and constant feature of some instinctive process; they always travel in pairs, one emotion to one instinct, with emotion the unchanging core of instinctive behaviour and instinct the great driving force of human activity. Cannon, who, with Sherrington, experimentally criticized James' theory and proved that different emotions could not be differentiated on the basis of distinctive physiological characteristics, thought that the passions flow out (emerge) on the occasion of the animal organisms encountering certain stimuli or situations and mobilizing the resources of the body *for an unusually strong response*. Freud simplified the whole thing, lowering it to a plane where everyone could talk about it, by tracing all emotion to the master instinct of sex. The driving force of this master instinct, libido, is fundamentally a basic desire for the preservation of the race; and however innocent the particular passion may appear, it has a relation to the master, sex.

All these, with the possible exception of McDougall, make the mistake of interpreting the passions in terms of the purely physiological. The scholastics insisted that passion was a phenomenon of the whole animal unit, involving psychical as well as physiological activity. They explained it as we have in this chapter, an explanation that really meets all the facts in the case.

Love: Double method of treatment: experiment and contrast.

There is, for example, the matter of love. It has its explanations. We can set about explaining love in experimental fashion, that is in laboratory fashion, by subjecting all of its physical characteristics to experiment; or we can attack it more philosophically by contrasting the passion of love with the higher emotion of rational love, constantly setting one off against the other as a jeweller brings out the brilliance of a gem by the sombre majesty of the case in which it reposes.

The last method presupposes two kinds of love in every human being, a supposition that is by no means gratuitous when we remember that man has two appetites and love is the basic movement of appetite. In fact with one or the other missing, man would be no man but merely animal or utterly angelic. Fortunately man continues to be man.

Varieties: natural, sensitive, rational

As a matter of fact, by extending the term a little, we can distinguish three kinds of love. In love's most essential meaning -- the first response of appetite to an object known as agreeable, good, fitting to the particular nature involved -- we can distinguish the response of plants to rain, of dogs to meat and of men to truth. The difference which irrevocably distinguishes the first from the other two, is that the knowledge followed is not the knowledge of the plant itself, but of its Maker. The plant loves rain in the sense that while the rain is good for the plant and the plant responds to this goodness, it does not know that rain is good; its mercy follows a blind drive of nature. Both animals and men, however, have knowledge and it is their individual knowledge which leads on their particular appetites.

Of course all three are to be found in man: there is the response of his lungs to air, of his sense appetite to a cooling wind on a hot day, of his rational appetite or will to the generosity of Calvary. It is these last two in which we are principally interested at present.

Division: selfish and benevolent

To make the contrast between these two more striking, we have only to look back over a day or two of our lives. We have no difficulty in recognizing innumerable examples of selfish love. It must be understood that this word "selfish" is not used in a derogatory sense. It is merely descriptive of that type of love which seeks to assimilate the objects it desires, which seeks to swallow them up in itself, the love that puts in exactly the same class our love of a beefsteak, of a house, of a chair, of a book or even sometimes of friends. It is best expressed by the idea of ownership; this chair, this book, this house is mine, I own it, it is a part of me. This is the difference between having friends and owning friends. Selfish love has no regard for the substantial nature or personality of the thing or person loved except as it belongs to or is a part of the one loving. Absolutely all animal love, or the love of passion, is of this type.

In contrast to this is beneficent love which includes the true love of friendship and the love we have for God. Instead of seeking to gobble up the thing loved, figuratively or literally, it has a profound regard for the individuality of the object of love. It does not aim at assimilation, at destruction, or possession of the object of love; but rather sees in the loved one another self. It is a multiplication of self rather than an aggrandizement of self; it promotes the intimate union demanded by love through union of will. This other self is the object of my efforts precisely because he is another self. What he desires is my desire, what offends him offends me, what thwarts his happiness thwarts mine, for we are one.

Rational love, the response of our will to good, can be either of the beneficent or of the selfish type. So it is possible to love a man because he is very wise in order to assimilate some of his wisdom; or because he is very virtuous in order to advance in holiness -- neither of these can be the product of the passion of love, yet both are of the selfish or assimilative type.

Whether the love be rational love or the love of passion, the underlying causal are always the same and, very strangely, are remarkably simple and clear to the eye of the philosopher. The sweet mystery of love is not mysterious in its causes but in the infinite possibilities of the human heart for action in the name of that love. For there are just three causes of love, causes that are not mutually exclusive but rather one builds up to and is included by the other. They are goodness, knowledge, and similarity.

Causes: good, knowledge, similarity

Knowledge is an indispensable condition for all love, as it is for all movement of appetite; the dream girl the bachelor seeks is not a creation but a composite of realities that have at one time or another entered into the bachelor's knowledge. It is not from love but from curiosity that a dog approaches his first dog biscuit. When people do not know quite as much about their partners as they thought they did, there is often more material for argument than for love. The element of goodness is no less fundamental, for goodness is the one and only object that attracts any movement of the appetite. No matter how scrawny or moronic a child may look, there is goodness there or there could be no love on the part of its mother. It is

not nearly so true that love is blind as it is that love has a much more penetrating eye, plumbing the depths of a human individual and often finding pearls of great price overlooked by all others. Even the most utterly depraved of men who have sold their souls to vice, can be loyal to that vice only because they see it under the guise of good. This much at least must always be true: whatever or whoever wins our love must wear the robes of goodness or instantly suffer the loss of that love.

We have often noticed that very handsome men are an easy prey for very homely girls and vice versa; very vicious dogs seem to run with very timid pets; interminable talkers have excellent listeners for friends, and so on. We shrug it all off by saying "opposites attract". As a matter of fact in the field of love they do not, they repel. The attraction is similarity, a similarity that even a cursory examination quickly reveals.

We have said that beneficent love, or the love of friendship, sees the person loved as another self. Where this other self has our same qualities and excellencies in its actual possession, such an extension or re-birth of self is easy, natural. Remember now it is not a question of identity, but of similarity; the love springs from the precise points of agreement. We submit to this reasoning when we nod wisely and agree that "they were made for each other", "they are a perfect match". But we are apt to be irritated about the matches that are not so perfect, in the sense of not being so obvious; and in these cases we do not hesitate to contradict ourselves and nature by calling upon the moth-eaten doctrine of the attraction of opposites.

The real solution is that in the latter case we are dealing with another type of similarity. Here it is no longer a question of both having the same qualities in their actual possession, but rather of one actually possessing some good and the other only potentially, or hopefully, in possession of it. It is from this type of similarity that the love of passion, and of friendship whose ends are utility or pleasure take their rise. The good listener has dreamed of being a great conversationalist and the very plain man has had visions of leaving whole clusters of girls stunned by his manly beauty.

Sometimes this works just the other way around, and instead of causing love it will cause envy and hatred, as, for example, when the excellence of another is conceived as standing in the way of our own perfection rather than contributing to it. So we have the refreshing varied offered by human life: we see strong men surrounded by weak ones who give undying loyalty, other strong men hindered, fought, even murdered by weaker men who resented this strength as an impediment to their own progress. We find wise men surrounded by fools; or wise men working hand in hand with other wise men towards greater wisdom; or wise men fighting wise men to the death, not because of their mutual wisdom, but because of what wisdom each was lacking.

It is a sobering thought, this realization that the objects of our love are so many mirrors giving us back accurate pictures of what we are or what in our hearts we would like to be. But it is still more sobering to step into the realms of love's effects.

Effects:: union, inherence, ecstasy, zeal

We cannot possibly treat the effects of love adequately in this chapter; indeed, they will never be adequately known and appreciated this side of heaven. But at least we can touch upon these effects briefly. There is first and obviously the effect of union: the union of similarity in the very cause of love, the union of affection in our appetite's stretching out to the good loved or setting it up as another self, finally the resultant union that comes of love's coupling bond, either by assimilation or by the birth of another self. This latter is a union approaching as closely to identity as is possible without the destruction of either the lover or the loved and is best expressed in the reception of Holy Communion.

Just how close that union is can be made plain by a little insistence on the second effect of love -- inherence. The very word indicates that the bond of love makes the parties concerned very nearly essential parts one of another. Taken literally it means that one inheres, exists in, the other. Perhaps that sounds exaggerated; but let us look at the facts. The person or thing loved is never out of our minds; our minds

are like a home where the thing or person loved moves about with complete familiarity, leaving an impress on every thought, every image, every memory, and once the thing or person loved has passed out of our lives, our minds are left in a condition comparable only to a lonely, desolate, decaying house. This intimacy is not less but rather greater on the side of affection. If it is a question of the passion of love, there is either complete joy in the presence of the thing or person loved, or restless, haunting, driving desire for that presence. Rational love is calmer but no less intense, making the friend as close to our affections as we ourselves are, and stamping every good we wish that friend with the mark of its destination -- to our other self.

That is only one side of the union -- the presence of the object of love in the lover. Why can the lover never be content with a superficial knowledge of the object of his love? What are the endless trifling things that lovers find to talk about? The answer to both these questions is found in the very necessity of the one loving to ponder, to inquire, to mull over and over every single thing pertaining to the object of his love. No, love is not blind, for always it must probe, must penetrate until it gets to the very heart of the one loved. Very simply, the mind of the lover inheres in, buries itself in, the thing loved.

And even more truly is the lover in the loved from the side of affection. So the passion of love will not be satisfied with mere possession, even with mere enjoyment of that possession; it goes further and seeks perfectly to assimilate the object to itself, to penetrate its inmost depths. That is why the ancient philosopher could so truly say a man is what he loves; whether that object be very far below and utterly unworthy of a man, or very high, even infinitely, above him -- where his love is there is a statement of what this man is. For unlike the intellect which lifts up or drags down all things to its own level, the appetite must go out to the thing loved. If it be love of friendship, so deeply is the affection of the lover plunged into the one loved that good done to the friend is a personal good; evil done to our friends is evil done to us. We are, as far as is possible in this life, not two but one.

All the other effects of love really follow from these two. By "ecstasy" St. Thomas means here "being carried out of oneself", and surely if our minds and our hearts are buried in another, we are carried out of ourselves. Probably one of the reasons why the ordinary business house is willing to let an employee go off on a honeymoon is because long experience has shown that at that time he is not worth his salt in the office. After all, if a professor can be so immersed in a mathematical problem as to forget about dinner, what can we expect of a man who is immersed in the intense contemplation of love? This is the reason why women can live out their lives in miserable hovels in the name of love and be supremely happy; why men can dedicate their lives to a drudgery of uninteresting work; and why children can slave for parents until their own lives are nearly gone -- and all be happy in the doing of these things for love. These people are working for their other selves; what contributes to the happiness of their loved ones is their happiness even though it mean the utmost of personal pain and suffering as it did, for example, to Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Of course, what is evil for our friends is evil for us and is fiercely resented; or, in the passion of love, what interferes with our possession of the desired good meets with our immediate opposition. This is "zeal" in the sense St. Thomas uses it here. An intense movement to exclude everything repugnant to our love, its intensity is in exact proportion to the intensity of our love, a very valuable norm, by the way, for judging the place of anything or any person in our lives.

Appreciation: Its value; Its effectiveness.

Does love do any harm? Is it dangerous? Well -- ! Anything as powerful as love can be dangerous; but it should not be. Its whole purpose is to supply us with perfection, to complete our nature. Certainly the love of friendship, beneficent, unselfish love, has no harm in it at all and can do nothing but constantly build up its possessor, working out the paradox that sacrifice is the most perfect way to the fullness, the perfection of our nature. But the selfish, assimilative type of love can be deadly, particularly when it fixes itself on an object unworthy of or dangerous to man. In fact any love is as deadly as the object loved; and this makes the eternally momentous difference between love of God and love of sin -- always our appetite finds the

level of the thing it loves. The material element in the passion of love, like the material element in any passion, can be dangerous in its excess. Men have been known to rupture a blood vessel or die of apoplexy in a fit of anger; and people have lost all desire for food and physically pined away in the name of love. Every passion involves some corporal, organic changes; and than changes can be carried to the point of organic destruction.

One more point. Put very simply by St. Thomas it is "love is the cause of all things the lover does". We can make this absolutely universal and say that love is the cause of all things that anyone does; and immediately we have furnished ourselves with material for infinite consideration. Think of that and then look terrifying complexity of human activity, the viciousness of diabolic activity, or the almighty activity of God himself! Or look at our own activities in the light of that statement and again we have an accurate indicator of that with which our heart is busiest.

Hate: Object and cause: evil and love

There is little excuse for a man's ignorance of where his treasure really lies. Our zeal, the objects of our love, our activities, even our hatreds, are indicators of where our love is centred. For if there were no love there could be no hatred. A man without hates comes very close to being no man at all; for he is a man without loves and consequently a man without a goal, without an excuse for any activity whatsoever. An extremely broadminded man very nearly answers this description. We hate those things that are directly contrary to the things we love, as a woman who fancies cats will often hate the very sight of dogs. Very often a surprise awaits the man or woman who looks closely at the hatreds they cherish in search of the object of love which inspired that hatred. Of the two, love is the stronger, strong enough indeed, to cause hate; but of course we might very easily hate spinach more than we love parrots. Men and women have often twisted this truth of love's strength in the face of hate, but the mistake has its basis in the fact that hate is often more strongly felt than is love. There is no rest for hate, except in the climax of love; hate as long as it exists is a fiery, consuming passion, but love finds a quiet joy in the possession of the good desired -- yet does not cease to be love.

Conclusion. Balance of passions

Let us sum up this chapter briefly, much more briefly than the subject-matter deserves. It is not a sufficient excuse for gluttony or drunkenness to say that man has a natural desire for food and drink; nor is it a sufficient excuse for uncontrolled passion to say that the passion is natural. Of course it is natural, but whatever it is, it is only one of a host of natural passions. To allow one to run to excess is to snuff out some of the others, a decidedly unnatural proceeding. In the animals this balance of passion is kept instinctively and is thrown out of gear only by some extrinsic, necessary, physical cause. But in man that balance is kept by the command of reason and can be thrown out of gear at the pleasure of the individual. It is not natural for man to let any one passion take over the command of his life, for the essence of his human activity consists in its control by reason. Passion acting naturally in a man is passion acting under the control of reason.

Passion and human nature

To be lacking this or that passion is not subject-matter for a boast. No one boasts of being a freak; and the man or woman lacking any one of these passions is a freak. As a matter of fact, if such a statement were made, it would very properly be the subject of considerable doubt; as though a person were to smile gently and say in a pitiful voice: "You know, I have no brain." It would be at least unusual. Passion is an integral part of the nature of man.

Passion and human activity

More than that, it is an integral part of the source of motive power in man. All the drive behind human activity comes from the appetites of man, sensitive or rational; and passion is the natural movement of the sensitive appetite. It is not surprising that passion plays such a part in our activities -- it should, for our two

appetite are so closely connected they inevitably react one on the other. Under the control of reason, passion can be as much of a help to human activity, as out of control it can be of harm. Normally our natural equipment is not handed out in lopsided portions. There is usually a definite proportion between the power of the sensitive and the power of the rational appetite. To be the possessor of very strong passion is not a guarantee of a one-way ticket to hell; it is rather the statement of very great possibilities either for evil or for good, for loving greatly, wholeheartedly. The development of those possibilities is a question of the object on which we fix our love. The conversion and lifelong loyalty of Mary Magdalen had their psychological as well as their supernatural explanations, as did the wise choice of Peter to be the successor of Christ as leader of the Apostles.

Passion and happiness

Happiness is the reward of human activity and the measure of man's steady steps towards his goal. Just as passion cannot constitute human activity, it cannot constitute human happiness. It is our common heritage with the brutes; what happiness it can give alone is brute pleasure that has always the taste of ashes in the mouth of a man. Passion can contribute mightily to happiness, as it can contribute mightily to the activity of man; passion can work mightily against happiness as it can operate mightily against the control that is the essence of human action. But whether passion, strong or weak, leads to happiness or away from it is in the hands of each man.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 6 --»
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CHAPTER VI -- HAPPINESS AND PASSION II - CONCUPISCENCE
(Q. 30-39)

1. Pertinence of this subject-matter:
 - (a) To spoiled children of twentieth century.
 - (b) On the grounds of humanity itself:
 - (1) Place of activity and goal in human life.
 - (2) Place of mild passions in relation to activity and goal.
 2. Passion of desire -- concupiscence:
 - (a) Its essence and location.
 - (b) Natural and acquired desires.
 - (c) Aversion.
 3. Pleasure and joy:
 - (a) Nature and distinction of the two.
 - (b) Their evaluation:
 - (1) In themselves.
 - (2) Relative to men.
 - (3) The scale of pleasure.
 - (4) Contrariety of pleasures.
 4. Causes of pleasure and joy:
 - {a) Work.
 - (b) Movement.
 - (c) Love:
 - (1) Union.
 - (2) Action of others.
 - (3) Action for others.
 - (4) Similarity.
 - (d) Sorrow.
 - (e) Novelty.
 5. Effects of pleasure and joy:
 - (a) Enlargement of soul.
 - (b) Desire and distaste.
 - (c) Keeness and dullness apprehension.
 - (d) Perfection of operation.
 6. Morality of pleasure and joy:
 - (a) Good and evil pleasures.
 - (b) Moral possibilities of pleasure.
 7. Sorrow:
 - (a) Its nature; distinction of the passion from rational sorrow.
 - (b) In contrariety:
 - (1) To contemplation.
 - (2) To pleasure.
 - (c) Scale of sorrows.
 8. Causes of sorrow:
 - (a) Evil
 - (b) Desire:
 - (1) For good.
 - (2) For unity and love.
 - (c) Power.
 9. Effects of sorrow: impairment of nature.
 - (a) Blindness.
 - (b) Depression.
 - (c) Debility.
 - (d) Bodily injury.
 10. Remedies for sorrow:
 - (a) Pleasure.
 - (b) Tears.
 - (c) Compassion of friends.
 - (d) Contemplation of truth.
 - (e) Sleep and a bath.
- Conclusion:
1. Mild (concupiscible) passions are peculiarly modern passions:
 - (a) Economic theory and concupiscence.
 - (b) Advertising, scientific discoveries, amusement and pleasure.
 - (c) Vividly contrasting positions on sorrow and pain:
 - (1) Of horror.
 - (2) Of glorification.
 2. Effects of this modern emphasis on mild passions:
 - (a) On make-up of man.
 - (b) On activity of man.

CHAPTER VI HAPPINESS AND PASSION II - CONCUPISCENCE (Q. 30-39)

EVERY age in which man has lived has had its share of passion because men are men. Passion, as an integral part of human nature, makes its inevitable appearance wherever men are found. But history would make very dull reading indeed if in every age, or in every man, passionate activity were compactly the same. Fortunately the emphasis on different passions is as shifting as the interplay of light and shadow, rain and sunshine on a spring day, and with results just as interesting and individual. Our own era, in spite of the long centuries which have preceded it, is no more a mere replica of what has gone before than is the thirteenth child of a family merely a copy of the preceding twelve.

Pertinence of this subject-matter: To spoiled children of twentieth century.

In this chapter we are talking of the mild or concupiscible passions -- desire and aversion, pleasure and joy, pain and sorrow -- a subject-matter which could expect attention in any age; but which *demands* attention and application in our own mild age. We are spoiled children. We have been treated far too well for our own good. Dr. Carrel has groaned in spirit and in print on the damage done to us by this constant coddling; whatever the damage, at least the facts are beyond question. It is not only true that our necessities were the luxuries of another age; we are dedicated to a programme of constant creation of new desires, new necessities. Every age has had its pleasures, our own has been overwhelmed with opportunities for amusement and self-indulgence and we are just starting. We are definitely committed to pleasure. We have developed a cult of joy which either shrinks in horror from sorrow and pain or goes to the opposite extreme of deifying suffering. At the very least our views of sorrow and pain are the sharp, vividly arresting views of extremists.

On the grounds of humanity itself: Place of activity and goal in human life.

Merely as products of the twentieth century, mild passions have an absorbing interest for us. As men and women, moving in step with all the men and women of every age towards the goal of all men and women or away from it, these passions, like all passions, intrude on every day of our lives. Human life is a swift movement to a definite end; it has meaning only because of the goal in sight; it is successful or unsuccessful, happy or unhappy as the goal is attained or lost. The dice the cast of which will determine that gain or loss are human actions, actions controlled, aimed at that ultimate target. These mild passions affect every action, they quicken every step or make it dragging, leaden, they colour every object which inspires that human activity. For they are nothing more than movements of the animal appetite in man, so closely joined to the intellectual appetite or will that the one is constantly affecting the other; and appetite is the principle of all movement in man, of every least activity and of activity's contribution to the goal of life.

Place of mild passions in relation to activity and goal

All this sounds very serious indeed; and it should sound serious. The investigation of the passions is no mere satisfaction of a tourist's curious interest in strange sights, rather it is the strategist's close scrutiny of the field of battle. Familiarity with passion may inspire us with a bored confidence which is dangerous, like that of a man who strides confidently in the dark through a room in his own house, and, very effectively, falls over a chair that is just a few inches out of place either in his memory or in the room.

Passion of desire -- concupiscence: Its essence and location

The obvious never seems very important, yet usually it is most important. Chesterton's remark that "it is not what a man proves that is important but what he forgets to prove" is a statement of a profound truth. It

is the truths a man takes for granted that are the pillars of his intellectual life; just as it is the things he takes for granted which are the actual determinants of his actions. A novice at structural steel work very rarely falls; he takes nothing for granted. Our familiarity with passion, the fact that we come face to face with it in ourselves and in others in all our human contacts, is not a reason for dismissing it lightly, but for really uncovering all that we can about it.

It is, for example, important to know where such a very common passion as desire (concupiscence) belongs in our human nature. If we walk back into the store-room of sense appetite, we have only to reach up on the shelf between love and pleasure to put our hand on desire. It is always there and no amount of moving, of disarrangement, no external or internal turmoil will succeed in putting it anywhere else. It is our sense appetite's reaching out for a good that is loved but absent, a good the possession of which will give us pleasure. Scrutinizing desire we have infallible evidence of what we love, and what will in our estimation give us pleasure. Corresponding to this passion of desire in the sense appetite there is, of course, the emotion of desire in the intellectual appetite or will: the first centres on the attractions of the sensible world and always carries with it the organic changes that are the toll exacted by all passion; the other centres on the suprasensible delights which completely escape the animal world.

Natural and acquired desires

With all our effort to increase desire, there is one class of desires which the most ingenious advertising man cannot influence. The natural desires, whether in the sensible field of passion or in the spiritual field of will, operate in a closed shop and no length of apprenticeship can win a membership card in this union. Apprentices are not necessary, for members of this union do not die. The reason for this is the complete stability of the individual natures. Natural desires reach out for the goods nature must have; and the nature of man, as long as he is man, always requires the same things for its existence and perfection. Limited in this sense, there is another sense in which these natural desires are insatiable. We may think we have enough sleep or food for the moment, but we are quite sure that it is for the moment only. Man is not one of the animals that take on enough food for the winter at one sitting; but even if he were, that desire for food would reappear with the chirp of the first robin. At the very moment when these natural sensible desires are satisfied, they completely disappear. This brings out sharply the dividing line between desire of an absent good and pleasure in a possessed good; never does food seem less desirable than immediately after we have furnished a big meal.

The advertising man's genius has an opportunity to prove itself in the field of acquired desire. Here the limits of desire are as flexible as the limits of love, and low range. the whole horizon opened up by knowledge. It is possible to teach a dog to drink coffee at night -- and have him keep himself and everyone else awake. A bright dog can acquire many more desires than a stupid dog because he can learn of the goodness of more things. If the advertising business were strictly limited to dogs, the individual dog approached by a salesman would have every reason to be flattered. But it does not work the same with human beings. It is not a compliment to have a man edge up to us on a street corner and offer to sell a genuine diamond for fifty cents. Even the dullest man is capable of infinite acquired desires because he is so bright, but because he is a man and the human intellect, with the human will only a step behind, of its very nature reaches out for the infinite, is never satisfied with any particular good, or any number of particular goods. Every man was made for the universal good, the universal truth.

A man is quite capable of desiring riches without limit; but it is quite stupid of him to expect even limitless riches to satisfy his desires. Joyce Kilmer's poem, "Pennies", accurately describes the twist a man puts in his nature by centring his desires on particular goods. The poem pictures a little boy standing perplexed and sad with a few long-hoarded pennies in his hand, sad because the first delight of ownership has gone. Suddenly he drops the pennies on the ground and sees them scatter, and immediately his old zest returns and joy is born again in seeking the lost treasure. Desire is made to do the double duty proper to desire and pleasure; because we have learned so well that none of these things once had will satisfy, our pleasure is put into the hunt for them, not in the things themselves. It is as though we read a book, not for the story, but that we might turn the pages; or run a race in the fervent hope that it will never end. Of

course there is no peace for such a desire, for peace is the end of desire and the end of such desires brings nothing but tears such as dimmed the eyes of Kilmer's "kilted Hedonist".

Aversion

Arm in arm with the powerful passion of desire, like a weakling clinging to a strong man, or a fool to a wise man, is the pettiest of the passions. In the last chapter we called it "flight"; perhaps "aversion" would be a more concrete name for that turning away of the appetite from the disagreeable or evil. It is not to be confused with fear, for fear is by no means a petty thing. Aversion has for its object an absent evil, the kind of thing that furnishes so much material for worry; but the evil which inspires aversion is not a great, difficult, or even imminent evil -- all those come under fear. It is not that we are afraid of thy particular evil, that we are in any danger from it, we simply do not like it. The idea of caressing a pet snake, the surgeon's enthusiastically detailed account of an operation given at the dinner table, a graphic picture of a murder spread across a newspaper, all might very well arouse the passion of aversion, even with surprising organic changes.

Pleasure and joy:

A much more important passion, and certainly a much more joyous subject for consideration, is the passion of pleasure. Its consideration can be a thing of joy; but the passion itself can never bring joy. In that statement we have the very important distinction between the act of the sensible or animal appetite and the act of the intellectual appetite in the possession of good. Joy is the movement or rather rest of the intellectual appetite, corresponding to pleasure in the sensible appetite. Or at least it is in this sense that we shall use the terms. Both occupy the final position in the mild emotions, in fact of all emotions, for to them is ordained the activity of all others. This is the reason for desire, for hope, for daring -- in order that the good loved might finally be possessed. They mark the end of emotion, as they do of life, for it is to this end that life and emotion began. Every pleasure, every joy, is a tolling of a great bell marking the passing of a struggle; perhaps that is why so often in the midst of pleasure or joy we pause to wonder if the prize were worth the effort and sacrifice that went into its winning. And often the tolling of the bell of pleasure seem" to awaken us from a dream to the bitter realization of the shoddiness beneath the bright tinsel which deceived us.

Nature and distinction of the two.

It is sometimes surprising, though it should not be, how much of profound truth is expressed in our ordinary choice of words. We are quite willing to say that a warm sunny day gives us pleasure; but we would be reluctant to admit that our meals are a source of joy to us. We prefer to save that word joy for something less obviously sensual, or at least for something superlative. Taking joy as the intellectual emotion corresponding to the passion of pleasure, there is a great deal of truth in this practice of ours. For considered in themselves, in the abstract, spiritual joys are far greater than anything the senses have to offer. After all, they deal with much greater goods, and our union with these goods, from which springs our joy, is much more intimate, more perfect, more enduring. The contrast of the joy of friendship and the pleasure of a cigarette shows us there is no comparison between the two from the point of view of value. As for union, well, certainly the cigarette does not penetrate the barriers of our mind and will to take up an eternally enduring position which nothing can change or corrupt, as does the true friend, nor are we plunged mind and heart into the very essence of the cigarette.

Their evaluation: In themselves

From our point of view, however, the sensible pleasures may be, in fact usually are, greater. We are, on the whole, very much better acquainted with the smell of clean fresh air than with the odour of sanctity; scalding coffee is much more vivid to us than the imperfection of the words we use after drinking it, for the coffee -- like all things sensible -- extorts the toll of organic change, leaving us something by which to remember it. Perhaps an even stronger reason for the pre-eminence of sensible pleasures is that they are direct antidote to sorrow, while spiritual joys have no correct pending sorrow, unless it be the sorrow of

their loss. The sorrow of a child over its lost pennies can be combated effectively by the pleasure of ice-cream, where a sublime exposition of the beauty of poverty would leave the child unmoved. Spiritual joys help us to sustain sensible sorrows, but they will not drive them out of our lives.

The scale of pleasure.

Comparing the sensible pleasures one to another, the greatest in dignity, the supreme in reference to knowledge, is sight. This comes closest to the boundary lines of the spiritual and ministers more heavily to the intellect than do the other senses. Our pity for a blind man as against our annoyance at a deaf man has some basis in fact.

Very often, however, our pity is based on the helplessness of the blind man, from the view point of the utility of sight. Really from this angle sight ranks much further down the list than does the sense of touch and the pleasure it gives. A horse in a majestic pose looking towards the east at dawn is not lost in the beauty of the sunrise but alert to the prospect of oats. In all the animals touch is more intimately wrapped up with the conservation of nature and so is more useful than any of the other senses. All other pleasures are with reference to the pleasure of touch. The sight of a deer may give a lion as much pleasure as it does a man; but the lion's pleasure will certainly not be the pleasure of an aesthete.

Contrariety of pleasures.

It is not hard to see that sensible pleasures are often directly opposed. They are the result of movements reaching different goals; their opposition is the opposition of their goals. There is the vivid contrariety, for example, of sleeping and listening to a brass band, or walking in the rain. But this is not true of the joy of virtue; no virtue is opposed to another, for all regard the same landing place, the same terminal or goal -- reason. If the act is virtuous at all, it will agree with all other virtuous acts in this one particular at least: that it is in harmony with reason, it is according to the rule of reason.

Although it will not be a joy of virtue, a man can act against reason and by his action win pleasure. In this sense, the pleasure of every sin is unnatural, unhuman, i.e. in violation of the rule of humanity in man, the rule of reason. The word unnatural, in ordinary usage, is reserved for things more monstrous than the violation of reason, though of course they include that. We apply the word only to violations of man's physical as well as his moral nature, things like cannibalism or bestiality. These totally unnatural things can bring man a pleasure, though of course it is thoroughly unnatural pleasure. This fact presents a real difficulty. Pleasure is a passion, and as such is an integral part of our nature, ordained by the author of nature to the full perfection of nature; yet here we find it in full vigour in an open violation of all that is natural to man.

The answer can only be that in these cases something is rotten in the individual nature. There is corruption there, a gangrenous decay which has eaten away some of the very bones of nature and left it lopsided. It might be a corruption of body, such as we get from sickness and fever; as a cold might make everything a man eats taste like so much leather, or a disease make sweet things taste sour, or make hot things feel cold. Some such physical corruption can make a man enjoy munching on a piece of coal or a lump of dirt. It may be a corruption of soul, a deterioration or obliteration or change of the natural inclinations of a man through bad habits, vicious education either by word or example, and from this latter corruption we have such practices as cannibalism.

The cause of these unnatural pleasures is significant. It means that where they have taken root, the nature of man has gone far along the way of corruption. This corruption has sometimes gone as far as actual putrescence, though accompanied at the same time by a kind of brilliance and unhealthy beauty, a brilliance that has been characterized quite rightly as the "phosphorescence of decay."

Causes of pleasure and joy: Work.

How can we win to that natural healthy pleasure and joy which is the natural goal of all our activity?

Well, one way would be to stop pitying the postman's dreary trudging of the streets or the sailors' weary days and nights on stormy seas and watch them when they have a day free. The postman takes a walk and the sailor rows a boat about on some lagoon. There is a real pleasure in the exercise of any of our faculties; what we do well we enjoy doing, what we do not enjoy doing is usually connected with some impediment to the operation of our faculties.

Movement.

It is pleasant to experience the movement from cold to warmth as we come home on a bitterly cold night; though the same thing is not so pleasant on a July day in the city. It is in this sense that St. Thomas takes movement as a cause of pleasure; the passage from one state to another, which of course would include such a thing as the movement from ignorance to knowledge. Not that St. Thomas would deny pleasure to an interpretative dancer through the exercise of her art; but he would insist that such pleasure proceeds from that very plebeian cause "work," the exercise of natural faculties.

Love: Union; Action of others; Action for others.

There are many causes of pleasure and of joy flowing from love. There is the supreme pleasure of passion and the supreme joy of will in that essential climax of love which is union. We explained this quite thoroughly in the last chapter, but it is worthy of note here that it is precisely this union springing from and culminating in our love for God and God's love for us that makes up the central joy of heaven. The successful or triumphant actions of friends bring us joy, for we look on their success, their triumphs, as our own; the multiplication of self by beneficent love (which includes friendship) is also a multiplication of the sources of joy. We might receive considerable pleasure from the actions of mere acquaintances, when, for example, they tell us how wonderful we are; or when these actions are the means by which we obtain some good. Actions for others are a cause of joy springing from love, for they are really love in action, responding to that deep desire of love, not merely to wish good, but effectively to wish good to another, to get something done for another, to prove to ourselves and to the world that our love is not a matter of mere words. When one of the Fathers said "love is not lazy" he was giving a very laconic expression to this truth; it is the explanation of the Christian paradox of emptying oneself that one's joy may be full, of having nothing but possessing all things, the paradox that explains the Christmas spirit and draws our eyes to the spectacle of God giving Himself to man.

Similarity; Sorrow; Novelty.

Because it is so intimately connected with love, similarity is a great contributor to pleasure and joy. At the same time it may, quite accidentally, be a cause of hatred and sorrow, as in the case of the twins who are a great joy to each other until they both decide to marry the same man. The disappointed girl may then withdraw into a corner for a satisfying fit of melancholy; but do not sympathize with her too much, for there can be joy even in sorrow. That is what makes operations such an engrossing topic among erstwhile patients -- the emphasis on such past sorrows if placed on the fact that they are past, or on evils that have been escaped, is a definite cause of pleasure. People who insist on knowing the worst, have joy as well as sorrow from the bad news; the joy which comes from knowing what should be known. Toyland or sightseeing is a perennial cause of pleasure and joy; the novelty of everything we see pleases us, not because of the ignorance of which it reminds us, but because of the knowledge it gives us, or at least the hope of knowledge.

Effects of pleasure and joy: Enlargement of soul.

Inevitably the effect of pleasure and joy is an enlargement of a man; the pleasure of passion is an almost literal enlargement, an aggrandizement which is the end of selfish love, an expansiveness easily seen in the pleasure afforded by a good meal. The same is true in the spiritual order, for there the possession of good is an addition of perfection to a man.

Desire and distaste.

In the sensible order of passion, when our desires are satisfied, we enjoy pleasure, and we have enough. In fact if we have any more it will cause disgust and distaste; perhaps later on, when desire awakens again, but not now. For these sensible goods can exceed the demands, even the capacities, of nature; a man can literally drink himself to death. But the goods of the spiritual order, instead of exhausting nature's capacity, perfect that capacity. The desire for them is never satiated, too much of them cannot disgust us, for we cannot have too much of them; though now and then, quite accidentally, because of weak knees, a headache or an empty stomach, they can become a source of annoyance rather than of joy.

Keeness and dullness of apprehension; Perfection of operation.

There is the same contrast between the passions of pleasure and joy in their effects on the mind of man. Joy increases the facility and effectiveness of reason, for the very workings of reason are themselves a spiritual joy, in no way hindering but rather increasing the joy of the soul. Sensible pleasure, on the contrary, impedes the reasoning of man in direct proportion to the magnitude or intensity of that pleasure. It is just as well that a man cannot talk with his mouth full of food; at least he will have more important things to say some other time. The vividness, familiarity and appeal of the sensible is too much of a match for the high aims of reason. It is this very power of sensible pleasure which makes physical relaxation and recreation such a boon to man. It really rests his soul, the way turning off a light rests a boy's eyes. And of course, as a final effect of pleasure and joy, our work improves. Not only is our soul rested by the pleasure, but what we like we work at more heartily, give it a more vehement attention and start the pleasantly vicious circle in which our work gives us more joy and our joy gives us greater capacity for work.

Morality of pleasure and joy: Good and evil pleasures; Moral possibilities of pleasure.

From what we have seen of natural and unnatural pleasures, it is evident that good and evil pleasures exist; the difference between the two is found in the object whose possession gives rise to the particular pleasure. For pleasure in itself, like any other passion, is neither good nor bad; it is the material from which we fashion good or bad deeds, the moral evil or moral goodness comes rather from our fashioning than from the material itself. What is true of pleasure is not necessarily true of joy, for the saint simply cannot make bad use of the joy of his virtue any more than a mathematician can square a circle.

Sorrow: Its nature; distinction of the passion from rational sorrow.

The course run by appetite is the course run by human life. At the end of human life there is heaven and hell; at the end of every human activity there is pleasure and joy, or sadness. These are the two great landing fields on one of which the soaring flight of every human action must come down. Perhaps many of us think we have a mechanics job at the airport of sorrow; but that is usually an exaggeration. We are all inclined to be very gentle with ourselves and to extend a heartfelt sympathy to ourselves on the slightest provocation. One of the most ordinary foundations of this self-pity is the failure to make the same distinction in these emotions that we have made in all the others: one sorrow is passion, the sorrow of the sensible or animal appetite when evil actually enters the house; the other is the sorrow of the intellectual appetite or will under the enforced visit of the same unlovely guest. If we count up our sorrows we will be astounded to discover how few of them can make a serious claim to entry into the domain of the soul. Almost all will be flatly opposed to the passion of pleasure, to sensible pleasure; for that is the way of such pleasure, to be always dogged by its very opposite. No sensible pleasure escapes the existence of its horrible twin. But when we enter the domain of spiritual joy, there is real difficulty finding apposite of joy outside of the very patent sorrow over the evil of sin. Certainly there is no sorrow standing over against contemplation or knowledge, unless we have recourse to sensible nature again and point to fatigue of body, or such an impediment to contemplation as a headache.

In contrariety: To contemplation; To pleasure.

Remembering that for sorrow there must not only be an evil present but we must know of its presence, it

is not too difficult to see that interior sorrows are much greater than are the exterior ones. Martyrs were quite logically willing to undergo the pain of suffering and the loss of life rather than the loss of virtue. Exterior suffering, which affects us through our bodies, is undergone quite as a matter of course every time we visit a dentist; it is repugnant to the appetite because of its repugnance to the body, while the interior sorrow is directly opposed to the appetite itself. We can, and often do, undergo these exterior pains joyfully, even eagerly, in the name of a higher good desired by our will -- like caring for a sick baby or having gallstones removed. Yet, counting over the sorrows that weigh us down, we find it is these lesser sorrows which make up the vast majority.

I remember, shortly after electric refrigerators and consequently ice cubes became a household word, seeing a very small child filch one of these cubes and crawl off to one side to enjoy himself sucking the ice. Suddenly he was screaming at the top of his lungs; his hand was so very cold it felt like it was burning, yet the ice cube was clutched in a death grip. Perhaps the child did not know the ice cube was causing his pain; or knowing it, wanted to hold the ice cube and escape the pain at the same time. At any rate he succeeded in giving a vivid portrayal of many of our relations to sorrow; very often we know what is wrong but we want to eat our cake and have it, and perhaps just as often the cause of the sorrow is by no means clear to us.

Causes of sorrow: Evil.

Yet in itself the cause of sorrow is ridiculously simple. It goes back, of course, to evil, but behind evil there is desire. Our constant effort to increase sensible desire is at the same time an increase of the causes of sorrow; a multiplication of pleasure inevitably multiplies its opposite.

Desire: For good; For unity and love.

An age of self-indulgence is invariably an age of discontent, disappointment and sorrow; it places its emphasis on the sensible side where every pleasure has its opposite pain. It is desire for good, for love, for the integrity and happiness of the things or persons we love that is at the root of sorrow, as love is at the root of hate. Our sorrows, like our loves and our hates, are invaluable indicators of what is closest to our hearts.

Power.

The mere existence of evil would not inflict sorrow on us; there must be that union effected between ourselves and the evil, as the union of love joins good to us and gives us pleasure and joy. So that the really active cause of sorrow is power, a power which cannot be resisted and that therefore succeeds in thrusting this evil upon us. There is a great difference between running head on into a fog and running head on into a door; and that difference lies in the irresistible power of the one to inflict evil on our senses and the helplessness of the other. The weakening of our power of command is inevitably a multiplication of our sorrows; where our power of resistance wears down, we are really conferring power on enemy forces - and this is a corollary to self-indulgence which is constantly skimmed over though in itself it is a powerful argument for discipline and self-control.

Effects of sorrow: impairment of nature. Blindness; Depression; Debility; Bodily injury.

Sorrow can be quite accurately conceived as a process of deflation. Pleasure and joy puff us up; sorrow puts a pin in the balloon and watches it collapse. That is exactly what sorrow does to us, it collapses us. A young wife whose husband has been killed in an accident will wander about in a daze, unable to think, with no interest in food or sleep, her step will drag, she will feel utterly fatigued, and that time of sorrow will be a serious drain on her strength. She is not necessarily a nervous type; these are not signs of hysteria. They are the normal effects of sorrow. It simply lets us down completely. In the extreme it can paralyse our reason, impede even our physical actions, actually do bodily harm. It does more than that; it turns the motion which is life in the wrong direction; instead of an eager pursuit of the goal of life, it becomes a rout, a constant attempt to escape, a flight from evil rather than a pursuit of good.

It is, in a word, something that must be remedied, and remedied as quickly as possible. This is not to be misunderstood: not every sorrow produces these effects fully, but every sorrow will produce these effects in some little degree. As a matter of fact, a moderate sorrow, while it cuts down our reasoning abilities, may actually contribute to the cause of learning; the old-fashioned use of the switch to make a boy learn his lessons, cut down the sweep of his mental wanderings but considerably increased his intellectual efforts on his studies because those intellectual efforts were the means by which he hoped to escape from his sorrow.

Remedies for sorrow: Pleasure.

One way of eradicating sorrow is to remove the evil which is causing it. But that is not always practical. There are very many and very practical remedies for sorrow, of which perhaps the most obvious is pleasure. The radio has cut down the sorrows of sick men; and a good movie is a first-class remedy for a fit of the blues. Where the sorrow is a sensible one, we can easily and quickly attack it by ministering physical pleasure. In other words, we are pulling a little wind back into our collapsed human balloon, and things are looking up.

Tears.

"A good cry" is not necessarily a sign of weakness; it may be the sensible thing to do as a remedy for sorrow. Actually it falls under the same heading as movies or radio, for it is a source of pleasure. It is always a pleasure for us to do what we are perfectly disposed to do at the moment; on a brisk day a man may feel like taking a walk, and it is quite true that "nothing would give him greater pleasure." The same thing is true of tears. When a person feels like crying, a flood of tears will be more than a relief, it will be a pleasure and will help very much in conquering sorrow. There is a deeper relief to tears than this. It is a dispersion of sorrow, a scattering of it to the four winds. Instead of pressing it down within us, we allow it to overflow outside of us, and immediately release the pressure of sorrow and rob it of much of its power.

Compassion of friends; Contemplation of truth.

Friends are a great help against sorrow, not only because it is a joy to know that we are loved, but also because their compassion shows us graphically that we are not carrying our sorrow alone. Going up the ladder of relief one step higher, mental concentration, contemplation of truth, is a very potent factor against sorrow, but only in proportion as we are lovers of truth. In itself it is the greatest of human joys and will one day make up the essential joy of heaven; but for a man whose love has been centred in the sensible world, whose pleasure has always been the pleasure of passion, there is little relief to be expected from contemplation. On the other hand, there is the story of St. Thomas whose ulcerated leg was cauterized very crudely by fire and the pain of it went unnoticed because of his preoccupation with a problem; while the martyrs, with their minds fixed on the eternal truth, could pass from life, as Thomas More did, with a laugh on their lips.

Sleep and a bath.

I am sure St. Thomas would be very impatient indeed with our preoccupation with sorrow if he could see our luxurious beds and abundant shower-baths. To his medieval mind, an immediate and practical remedy for sorrow is a sleep and a bath. When a Prime Minister told a former King to "sleep on it," he was giving sound Thomistic advice. We have said that sorrow deflates us, presses us down, actually drains us of energy and turns the whole motion that is life in the wrong direction, making it a flight; sleep and a bath renew our energy, restore the physical balance of our bodies so that we can and do take a saner view of our situations, and that saner view will of course include a condemnation of the attempt to run away from life. St. Thomas gives one more reason for the effectiveness of this last remedy: he says it is a relief by the subsequent pleasure it brings us and adds, in the laconic fashion of the schoolmen -- "*quod patet*," "and this needs no proof."

Conclusion: Mild (concupiscible) passions are peculiarly modern passions

If we look at Thomas's explanations of the mild passions and then glance at the tendencies of our time we must feel like a doctor who reads through a list of symptoms in a medical book and then listens to a patient recite that list as though it had been memorized. The applications to our time are so glaringly evident that we are almost forced to the conclusion that these mild passions are peculiarly ours, that in this twentieth century of ours they have reached one of the most flourishing states of their long history.

Economic theory and concupiscence.

Let us look at the facts. Our economic theory calls for a constant increase of concupiscence or the passion of desire. To take care of the excess products of man's production and at the same time guarantee its profits new markets must not merely be found, they must be created. People must constantly be made to need more things, need new things, to have their desire 'always on the increase.

Advertising, scientific discoveries, amusement and pleasure.

To this end we have one of the outstanding achievements of American genius in the field of advertising. Art, psychology, statistical science, modern printing miracles, untold wealth, all the genius of oratorical devices, of the theatre, and of the novel are poured into this great machine that out of it might come a flood of new desires.

Scientific genius is pressed to its utmost to satisfy these desires. Labour-saving and time-saving devices are necessities, the possession of which is not only a pleasure in itself but it releases us to sample freely the incredible opportunities for amusement and pleasure that are showered upon us from every side. We can see a very small but overpowering fraction of the possibilities our twentieth century offers the seeker after pleasure by spending a solid evening at the radio or attempting to read the titles of all the magazines which are dedicated to amusement.

Vividly contrasting positions on sorrow and pain: Of horror.

Because of this dedication to pleasure, sorrow and pain take on the guise of utter catastrophes. We would very much rather hide sorrow and pain in institutions at any cost than face them or give them our personal ministrations. Physical sorrow, disease and poverty all put a check on pleasure, when they do not make it impossible; and to an age dedicated to pleasure, there can be no greater catastrophe.

Of glorification.

Or, what is perhaps worse, pain itself is perverted, lifted up into the class of pleasures in the frankly militaristic states which are painting war under any form in such glorious colours. In Japan, for example, the highest joy in life is death on the field of battle; in the countries where the governing party has become a kind of deity, physical encounter and duelling are the great tests of manhood, suffering and death are supreme acts of worship.

Effects of this modern emphasis on mild passions: On make-up of man.

All of this has made a deep impression on the modern man. Dr. Carrel does not go so far wrong in his pessimistic summing up of the damage done to us by the "benefits" of the twentieth century. From what we have seen in this chapter it is evident that such dedication to sensible desire and pleasure, such horror or glorification of physical sorrow and pain, have a deadening effect on the mind of man in direct proportion to the emphasis on pleasure. And if such a dedication deadens the intellect of man, it deadens his intellectual appetite or will. The multiplication of desire and pleasure is also a multiplication of sorrow with all the devastating effects of sorrow: blindness, depression, debility, sapping even our physical strength and turning life's motion completely around. And with this ever-growing physical sorrow there is an insensibility to the spiritual sadness that should be our greatest concern.

On activity of man

Consequently the activity of modern man is not likely to be aimed at a spiritual goal that will alone perfect his nature. In fact it is less and less likely to be aimed at all, for the increase in artificial sorrow means a constant weakening of our resistance, of our power to command or to aim our actions, and a constant approach to a more complete slavery to things unworthy of our high destinies. Preoccupation with the sensible tends to have us concentrate on the immediate, the concrete, the so-called "practical," to the detriment, even to the impossibility, of coping with the universal, the absolute, the enduring thing which is truth, the proper object of our intellects, the goal of our human lives.

On outlook of man

It is not surprising that our age should be characterized by a philosophy that undermines intellect, by religious ideas that cannot ascend above man himself, by an acquiescence in the degrading conviction that man is no more than just another animal, or the despairing belief that man is only a part of something else, unimportant in himself: a part of a state, or of a party, or of a machine, or of a process.

Paradox of Man of Sorrows and His philosophy of joy

If we could stand aside from the whole world struggle for just a moment, we would see a double paradox that staggers the mind: the paradox of an age dedicated to pleasure with a philosophy of despair; and the paradox of the Man of Sorrows who could leave His follower only a way of the Cross and a philosophy of joy. Part of the solution of this double riddle is hidden in what we have been saying in this chapter and in what we laid in the preceding chapter. The passions are an integral part of man and so physically good; morally they are good or bad as they are aimed by us at the goal of life or away from it; completely out of control they rob us of all semblance of humanity in our actions by robbing us of control of those actions. They are then subordinate things, subordinate to the spiritual side of man; in comparison to the emotions of that spiritual side they shrink into insignificance, yet as part of the nature of man they are not to be scorned. The Man of Sorrows was never an instant without the joy of the beatific vision; the Man Who did not have time to so much as eat because He was healing all manner of sickness, Who did not shrink from the leper's touch, Who brought sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and did all things well, had no scorn for the passion of sorrow. But because He came that our joy might be full, it was necessary that He endure incredible physical sorrow in the name of an even more incredible spiritual joy. He did not pretend that man was an angel, nor did He tolerate his being merely an animal; but rather He insisted man was man, made in the image of God and destined to that supreme union of love which is the source of the supreme joy of humanity.

<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 7 -->
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CHAPTER VII -- HAPPINESS AND PASSION III
HOPE AND FEAR
(Q. 40-48)

1. Interrelation of mild and emergency passions:
 - (a) Difference of goals.
 - (b) Source of emergency passions.
 - (c) Effects of emphasis on mild passions:
 - (1) Decrease of power of command and lessening of emergencies,
 - (2) Increase of sorrow and passions of defeat.
 2. Hope and despair:
 - (a) Their nature:
 - (1) In men.
 - (2) In animals.
 - (b) Cause of hope -- experience:
 - (1) Paradox of hopeful youth.
 - (2) Paradox of cynical old age.
 - (c) Relation to love and work.
 3. Fear:
 - (a) Its nature and distinction.
 - (b) Six kinds of fear -- laziness, embarrassment, shame, stupefaction, admiration, anxiety.
 - (c) Things to fear.
 - (d) Causes and effect of fear:
 - (1) Defects.
 - (2) Power.
 4. Daring:
 - (a) Its nature and relation to hope.
 - {b} Its origins.
 - {c} Contrast of rational and passionate daring.
 5. Anger:
 - (a) Its composite nature and singularity.
 - (b) Its pre-eminence in man.
 - (c) Its causes and remedies:
 - (1) Excellence.
 - (2) Contempt.
 - (3) Satisfaction.
 - (d) Its effects:
 - (1) Pleasure.
 - (2) Bodily changes.
 - (3) On reason.
 - (4) On speech.
- Conclusion:
1. Champions of concupiscence.
 2. The twentieth century and the emergency passions:
 - (a) Passions of victory -- hope, daring, anger:
 - (1) Effect of dedication to mild passions.
 - (2) Hope, daring, anger of modern times.
 - (b) Passions of defeat:
 - (1) The multiplication of fear.
 - (2) The surrender of despair.
 3. Man the victim of the universe or its master.

CHAPTER VIII
HAPPINESS AND PASSION III
(Q. 40-48)

There is a certain optimism intimately connected with the start of a New Year. The badly scribbled page of the last year is torn out and thrown away and a virgin page awaits our pleasure; we may write on it what we will and in just the way that pleases us most. It is a nice thing for the rest of the world, for it gives them, by a pleasant fiction, a taste of what the Catholic enjoys, by solid fact, from a few moments at the feet of Christ in the confessional. But for a man or woman to expect to go through a new year without meeting a difficulty or emergency would be even more absurd than for a Catholic to expect by a good confession a complete liberation from the occasion of or temptation to sin.

Of course there will be difficulties and emergencies in the business of carving out happiness, which after all is the business of human life. And because this happiness is an intimately personal thing and the tools we use to carve it out are our intimately personal human actions, the difficulties encountered will be intimately personal difficulties. It is just another evidence of the beautifully perfect attention to detail on the part of the divine Architect, that we are equipped with intimately personal means of coping with these difficulties and emergencies.

It would be a mistake to picture this emergency equipment as a vague precaution, like a fire-extinguisher gathering dust on the wall; in fact the frequency with which we must use our emergency equipment brings out the solemn truth that all of human life is an emergency permitting of no coasting, no loafing along. The whole gamut of emotions destined to play the part of inner principles of vigorous action in the face of difficulty gets little rest in the course of an ordinary human day. The emergency passions -- hope and despair, daring and fear and anger in the sensitive appetite and the corresponding emotions in the intellectual appetite or will are like the crack troops of an army at war. Whether the army be advancing or retreating, they are in the thick of the fight as an advance or a rear-guard; even in the quiet moments of rest, they are the sentries guaranteeing the security of the army. For these emotions are indeed the champions, the defenders of the mild or concupiscible passions from which all activity springs.

Source of emergency passions

In the last few chapters we have gone thoroughly into the mild or concupiscible passions of love and hate, desire and aversion, pleasure and sorrow. We have seen love as the basic passion, the foundation of all action, the source from which springs every other emotional activity. In the last chapter we saw something of the necessity of the other mild passions, their possibilities for good and evil and the real threat to our times in the over-emphasis of these mild passions, particularly through a constant deliberate increase of acquired or artificial sensible desires and pleasures.

There is an intimate link between the mild and the emergency passions. Because love is so basic, all hope or despair, daring or fear, all anger takes its rise from the fact of love and its consequent desire. Without the mild passions there would be no necessity for the emergency passions, for there would be nothing for these latter to defend. A man who is thoroughly bored has no use for anger, despair or hope; he has no use for anything because he has no excuse for activity and, as he sometimes discovers for himself, he has no excuse for living.

Interrelation of mild and emergency passions: Difference of goals

We might picture all emotion, except sorrow and pleasure, as a swift flight to or away from some goal. It is after all nothing more than the activity of our appetite seeking to attain good or to avoid evil. But if this picture is accurate, there is a striking difference between the mild and the emergency passions. The first, the mild passions, while travelling in pairs, really seek different goals; the goal which one seeks is good, that which the other avoids is evil. Like emergency passions are grouped in pairs, but certainly they do not travel together; in fact each one of a pair rigidly excludes the other. They are flights that deal with the same landing field; one going to it, the other rushing from it. Hope and desperation look at the same difficult thing; the one rushing toward it, the other despondently surrendering before it. The saint, increasing his love for God, correspondingly increases his hatred of sin; but as his hope in the divine mercy increases, his despair and fear of the malice of the devil decrease even to the extent of enabling him to look upon the antics of the devil (as did the Cure of Ars) as a harmless and amusing break in the monotony of life, much as we might smile tolerantly on the growls of a toothless old dog.

Effects of emphasis on mild passions:

Decrease of power of command and lessening of emergencies

There are only two possibilities in the face of a difficulty or an emergency: the one is to fight with victory in sight; the other, to admit defeat either by flight or surrender. The passions dealing with difficulties can be quite accurately classified, then, as passions of victory -- hope, daring, anger -- and passions of defeat -

- desperation and fear. Their mutual incompatibility is even more evident if we call them the passions of strength and of weakness; strength and weakness in this matter do not mix, as a strong stomach and a weak head might very well belong to the same man. What contributes to the weakening of man is a contribution to his fear and despair, an attack on his hope, his daring, even on his anger.

Increase of sorrow and passions of defeat

In a very general way, then, our last chapter gives us some insight into the intimate connection of these emergency passions with the mild or concupiscible passions. We noticed that our dedication to sensible pleasure and sensible desire undermines man's power to command his own actions, made him more and more a slave driven by appetite, rather than the master directing the course appetite should take. As this tendency increases, the very occasion for these emergency passions decreases; in the final analysis, the man thoroughly bored with life and the drug addict are in much the same position: the one has no reason for commanding or directing his activity, for he has no goal in sight; the other has no power to command his activity, indeed has no desire but that which will not obey his orders. The increase of sensible sorrow consequent on a dedication to the mild passions, is a direct attack on the passions of victory, an embracing of the passions of defeat. The very finality of sorrow is a death-stroke to hope and an invitation swinging wide the door to despair.

Hope and despair:

Hope and despair -- at least here we are on familiar ground. Half our days and more than half our thoughts are charged with hope, surely no one can tell us much about that. Do we really know what hope is? A mother hopes her precocious son will become President some day, we hope some time to be able to sleep for about a week uninterruptedly, in our day-dreams we build up the towers of hope to heights that dazzle our friends and rivals. And none of this has anything to do with hope; it's desire, pure and simple. For while hope and desire both look to a future good and so are set off clearly from joy and pleasure in a present good, hope deals with a great and difficult good, precisely under the aspect of greatness and difficulty. One does not hope seriously that there will be tartar sauce with the fried oysters, that is much too petty for hope; and the one place where we experience absolutely no difficulty is in our day-dreaming.

Their nature: In men.

The goodness of this future good of hope, sets hope off distinctly from fear slinking out of the shadow of evil; the possibility of the attainment of that future good marks the boundaries that separate hope from the withering deserts of despair: Like all the passions, hope and despair are motions, surgings of the sensitive appetites: the one speeding to a good that in spite of its difficulty and greatness is judged possible; the other fleeing from good because its very difficulty makes it appear impossible of attainment. Impossibility puts an ugly mask on the good which awakened love, a terrifying mask that makes us forget the good in an abject surrender which is as contrary to hope as flight is to pursuit.

In animals

Perhaps you have noticed how very calm a dog can be about a bone that is out of reach; much more philosophic than a man is about the last train to town just disappearing down the track. In fact animals are generally much more stoical facing the impossible, much less prone to despair than are men. They appear more philosophic only because they cannot be philosophic at all. That paradox is the answer to a puzzling difficulty. The very fact that hope deals with the future would seem to exclude it from the animal kingdom; the leaden feet of the material never outrun the twin guards of time and space. Material nature has been confined within the narrow limits of the concrete, the particular, the existing; only a spiritual nature, made very closely to the image of God, can, like God, escape from time and space, peer into the future and beyond it into the halls of eternity. Yet animals hope and hope looks only at the future.

St. Thomas insists there is a kind of hope in the animals, but a hope which is following in the steps of a knowledge that is not the animal's but God's. It is an instinct, placed in animal nature by God, which will

send the lion racing after a deer that is not far off but which leaves the lion unmoved by prey much too distant to be possible of capture. Undoubtedly that is true. But actually the note of futurity disappears when we look more closely at the example, or indeed at the hope of any animal. That hope aims at a target within the limit of present, immediate possibilities; it would never enter a lion's head to take a correspondence school course to build up the tremendous possibilities the advertisements guarantee. It would seem as though the instinctive judgment between the immediately possible and impossible is the outer boundary marking off the animal's view of the present, the immediate, the concrete.

Cause of hope -- experience

It is not so with man. His hopes can scale the walls of heaven because his mind can know God; his despair can grovel on the lowest floors of hell precisely because his hope can aim so high. His despair can be a heart-breaking, shattering thing, tearing at the very roots of his being because man can look so very far into the future, because his hopes or the crash of his despair can be so long preparing. The animal appears calmly philosophic in the face of the impossible, because it lacks the key that would throw open the doors of philosophy and allow it to look down the long vistas of true hope -- the ability to think, to know the universal truth, to see the invisible God.

There is a certain note of astonishment in our discovery of hope in an old man and that astonishment is unjust. The amused tolerance of the phrase "hope never dies" and the grim lugubriousness of the Latin proverb "While I live I hope" are really the fruits of a disappointed egoism. Age is not a destroyer of hope, it is the patient, solid builder of rational hopes. I do not suppose there are many men who have discovered latent acrobatic ability by falling downstairs without injury, but any number of parallel discoveries equally startling can be found without difficulty. The surprise of Matthew at turning out to be quite a good apostle left him practically speechless all during the life of Christ. Experience often shows us that things are possible to us which we had never suspected of ourselves. But it does much more than that; it puts new possibilities within us. After all, a man does not stand still at any stage of his career. Even though his job be so uncomplicated a thing as shining shoes, he grows through experience. By experience things become possible to us that were not possible in the bright days of youth. The death of a young doctor or lawyer is a loss to the community because of what that man *might have become*; the loss of an experienced professional man is a loss because of what the man *was*. A comparison of the earlier and the more mature work of St. Thomas brings this out clearly in the field of scholarship.

Paradox of cynical old age < p> The one bad effect, if it can be called bad, which experience exercises on hope is to destroy false hopes. We expect hope to die out of a man in much the same way we expect his hair to fall out with increasing age, only because of the ridiculous over-estimation of our powers which has led us to so many disappointments. These disappointments have no basis in the transient qualities of the ideals we pursued; but rather in the acknowledgment forced on us by time that we are not quite the paragons we thought we were.

Paradox of hopeful youth

Yet, if we are in search of overflowing hope, it is not to old age we must go. The most hopeful people in the world, says St. Thomas, are young people and drunkards; defect of age or superabundance of wine is quite apt to paint the world in much rosier colours than the facts will allow. Nor is this unreasonable. After all, hope deals with the future and youths have plenty of future and very little past. Hope struggles hand to hand with the difficult and the great heart and abounding spirits of youth do not dodge but rather search out difficulties, champion hopeless causes and underdogs. Hope peers into the realm of the possible and youth has suffered too few repulses, faced too few obstacles to be anything but an easy believer in the possibility of things. A man in the expansive mood of too much good cheer is easily a match for the super-abundant spirits of youth; and there is probably no quicker way of making obstacles disappear and repulses slink into oblivion than to drown them in strong drink.

Relation to love and work

Perhaps another reason for the hopefulness of youth is that the loves of youth are deep, fast and strong; for love is, after all, the parent of hope. The grandchild of love might well be another love born of the family of hope; but the founder of the line must always be love. Urged on to what we love by a strong hope, we might very well learn to love a person who helps us in the attainment of what we hope. The benefits that God showers upon us are not merely proofs of His love for us, they are strokes of divine genius calling into life our love for Him from the clay of realized hopes.

Hope is an alert emotion that mirrors victory in its very face. It is dealing with the difficult and the difficult will suffer no slipshod attack to overwhelm it. It is difficult, for example, to walk on icy streets, so we give it our full attention. There is nothing lackadaisical about our stride, no peering at the sights or philosophizing on life in a great city. Our mind is fully concentrated on the business of keeping our feet; the one intention upon which our will is focused is that of pursuing our way in human fashion rather than on all fours. And, ordinarily, we make a good job of it. That is what hope does for all work undertaken through its inspiration; it makes it careful work, intent work and work well done which brings pleasure. It creates another of those pleasantly vicious circles by which our concentration on our work gives pleasure in the work and that pleasure increases our concentration.

Fear: Its nature and distinction

The passion of fear presents quite a different appearance. It is a passion of defeat, somewhat less than sorrow because it deals with a future rather than a present evil; it is the immediate parent of desperation. It looks into the face of a future terrible thing that can barely be resisted -- and runs. No wonder it runs; for fear as long as it lives looks only on the face of evil. Perhaps that evil is one opposed to nature itself, corruptive of nature and contrary to the very desire to exist; or it may be opposed to a good we have learned to love and desire. But whether the fear be a natural or an acquired fear, it takes one look into the face of evil and flees.

Six kinds of fear

The varieties of that flight of fear are illuminating, perhaps even amusing or embarrassing when we bring them down into our own lives. Fear is flight from a future evil which exceeds our power so that we cannot bear up under it. With that in mind it is easy to see that evil we fly from may be connected immediately with our own actions or with exterior things. The obvious evil connected with our actions is labour; and we fly from excessive labour by laziness. It is unflattering but true that a lazy man is a man in the grip of fear; the writer's difficulty in composing his first line gives him an appreciation of the solidity of the reduction of laziness to fear. The other evil affecting our actions is baseness or turpitude. The very red face and thoroughly embarrassed manner of a young nun going into the family entrance of a saloon to cast her vote is one of fear's ways of running away from this evil; the agonized shame of the woman taken in adultery and cast before the feet of Christ as her sin was bellowed to the four winds is another. One has to do with the baseness, immodesty or unbecomingness of an action to be done; the other with the discovery of a shameful act already committed -- a distinction nicely stated in the Latin (*crubescencia* et *verecundia*) but impossible of statement in English.

Things to fear

As to the world about us, fear creeps into our hearts when we are confronted with magnitude, with the unforeseen, the unprecedented, the unpredictable. And our flight takes the form, respectively, of admiration (amazement), stupefaction, and anxiety. Let us look at these more closely. Admiration, in its strict root sense, is the emotion called forth by such things as a sunset seen from the height of an alp, a storm at sea, the vision of truth, or the death of God on the Cross. It is a form of fear which flies from present judgment, mistrusting its ability to judge so great and new a thing -- but it inquires later on with the end of reaching an accurate judgment. It is rightly called the first principle of philosophizing. Stupefaction is a definite impediment to all philosophical inquiry, for it flies from both present judgment and future inquiry. It is a mental paralysis in the face of things that cannot happen but do; it is the way the

Indians felt upon their first contact with firearms or the way the Apostles felt seeing Christ walking upon the stormy waters of the lake of Galilee. In fact, admiration and stupefaction are to the intellect what laziness is to the external members of the body; an inactivity, a refusal to operate in the face of difficulty, a kind of paralysis in its presence.

Perhaps the most common form of fear is what St. Thomas calls "*agonia*" -- approximately translated by "anxiety". It deals with an evil that cannot be provided against because it is so unexpected, or so unpredictable. It is the kind of thing that spoils the start of a man's vacation by vague worries about what he forgot to pack, or makes a woman wring her hands. It finds eloquent and accurate expression in the agonized question "What shall I do?" and it is the emotion behind that activity that occupies so much of our lives -- the business of worrying, a business that in spite of all our dissipation of energy by no means exhausts the infinite possibilities of the things that might happen.

Causes and effects of fear: Defects

What is it that induces these different types of fear? What is there for a man to fear? It is quite evident that a man in good health has not much fear of death -- it is too far off; neither for that matter has a man facing the firing squad -- it is an evil that holds out no possibility of escape, so he considers himself as good as dead already. Two conditions must be had in the future evil that frightens us; it must be imminent and it must admit some possibility of escape.

More particularly we fear what happens suddenly, what comes as a complete surprise. A safety island that pops up unexpectedly before a man's car always looks bigger than safety islands should decently look; it is imminent and our eyes must be as big as saucers to take in its enormity. As a matter of fact the imminent character of an evil robs us of the chance to prepare to repel it, by the very suddenness of the attack we are stripped of the remedies we might have found. The same is true of an evil that appears irremediable; precisely because there will be no way of remedying that evil, we fly from it most desperately. We are quite right in giving the palm of heroism to a doctor who faces imminent death to care for the victims of a plague; and even more reasonable is shrinking from the irremediable pains of hell.

But strangely enough, at first sight, there is no reason for fearing sin. After all, sin is wholly within our own powers; no one can push us into it, trick us into it, we cannot fall into it by mistake. The object of fear is something which exceeds our power to repel. We might quite reasonably be afraid of the occasion of sin, knowing our own weakness from experience, but not of the sin itself.

We can be, and often are, frightened by fear itself. In fact this chain of terror can be sketched out indefinitely; we can be afraid of the fear of fear. Fear as a passion is not completely under our control; the phantasms of terror it calls up are also in the sensible side of our nature and are not completely obedient to our intellect and will. In a very real sense, the passion of fear is an evil outside of our spiritual nature and one which may possibly overwhelm our resistance. But this is true of fear only in the same sense it is true of all the other passions; they can be controlled by reason, man can repel fear. And if at any time they overwhelm reason, the actions produced during the interregnum of passion are not the actions of a man but those of an animal.

Fear can indeed be a very terrible thing; yet it is love that gets us ready for fear. It is because of our love for a thing that its opposite takes on the form of evil; so that a catalogue of our loves is at the same time an indication of the roads by which fear can invade our souls. Sometimes, very indirectly, it works the other way around and fear disposes us for love; as when a man, through fear of punishment, begins to keep the commandments of God, then begins to hope and through hope is led to love.

Power

A much more personal cause of fear is within our very selves -- our own weakness. It is because of a lack of strength that we are unable to repel the invasion of evil; fear is not merely a passion of defeat, it is a confession of weakness. The effective, direct cause of fear is the power and strength that are able to inflict

this evil upon us. Weakening our own powers almost guarantees the increase of fear with a double guarantee; a guarantee that assures our inability to resist evil and at the same time confers power and strength on our enemies. Yet the use of that power to inflict evil is something to be ashamed of rather than to glory in, for it is only by a serious defect in our sense of justice that we can wish to do injury to, inflict evil on, another. In the name of justice, such injury might be inflicted in retaliation; in the name of fear, it might be inflicted to avoid injury to ourselves as a nervous dog attacks a passing child; but to inflict such injury merely because we have the power is a perversion of the social nature of man.

Fear, particularly a great fear, is not to be lightly imposed on anyone. Man was made to reach out of himself to the world around him, to play host to the universe, bringing all things into his own mind, to scatter those gathered treasures in constant communication with his fellows and finally, to reach out and touch divinity itself. Fear reverses all this and drives a man into himself. As a citizen in a lawless town shrinks into the safety and quiet of his own home, or as the vitality of a dying man retires further and further into the depths of his being before quitting it altogether, so a man under the influence of fear shrivels up, contracts, withdraws into himself, even physically. We really shrink with fear; our feet get cold and our hands numb as we freeze with it. Our fingers tremble, our knees shake; we lose control over our exterior members through the process of shrinking into ourselves as a turtle draws itself wholly under the protection of its shell.

True enough, fear makes us much more willing to seek counsel and to listen to advice, but at the same time, like all passion, it makes our counsel much less excellent than if it were done free of the shadow of impending evil. If the lover sees all things through rose-coloured glasses, it is equally true that a man racked with fear sees all things through a fog of gloom; and the results of our thought are not worth very much if we are unable to see the truth before our eyes. Of course, a little fear may be a good thing, because it does move us to look about, to take counsel; as it grows it has the same effect on our mind, as it has on our hands and feet, seriously interfering with its operation when it does not totally impede the work of the intellect.

Daring: Its nature and relation to hope.

An imminent evil does not necessarily reduce us to this pitiable state of fear; it often awakens in us the contrary passion of daring by which instead of fleeing headlong to escape the danger, we hurl ourselves at it to conquer it. This aggressive approach to imminent danger flows as naturally from hope as desperation does from fear. The desperate man is essentially a coward, a beaten man, for fear is a victory over the man who is frightened; daring smacks of victory, as does hope, and is the passion most contrary to, most distant from, that of fear.

Its origins

It follows, therefore, that whatever increases hope and dispels fear automatically contributes to daring. We may work on this double cause of daring, either directly, by working on the motion of appetite itself, or indirectly, by working on the organic changes which accompany this motion of the sensitive appetite. A man's knowledge of his own powers, the strength of his body, his experience in facing danger, the greatness of his wealth or any other like consideration which bolsters his estimation of the possibilities of successful action directly increases hope, for hope, like all passion, follows in the steps of knowledge. So the realization of the power of others who are on a man's side, his multitude of friends, his confidence in divine help, all flow into and swell the stream of hope into the charging torrent of daring. Fear is susceptible of exactly the same direct influence. The realization that a man has no enemies or, much more powerfully, the knowledge that he has injured no one, pushes whole masses of fear to one side; the man who has many enemies, especially the man who deserves to have many enemies by the injustices he has committed, has good reason to be haunted by many fears.

Indirectly, hope is increased and fear dispelled by what St. Thomas calls warming up the heart. We have said fear numbs, freezes a man, withdrawing his vitality into the depths of his being; while hope demands

as its bodily accompaniment a great heart and abundant spirits. Anything, then, that contributes to the warming and swelling of the heart, the faster flow of the blood, the raising of the spirits, whatever acts against the shrivelling, numbing effects of fear, contributes to hope and daring. In the concrete, then, warm full-blooded people are naturally more daring; wine-drinking people have a ready source of daring at hand; while drunkards are daring not only because of the swelling of the heart and soaring of the spirits under the influence of drink but also because of the fog that clouds the brain and gives them illusions of grandeur as to their own powers. In this latter respect the inexperience of youth is a cause of daring by removing the cause of fear, i.e. keeping them in ignorance of their own weakness or of the presence of dangers. St. Thomas argues, on the authority of Aristotle and the scientific knowledge of his day, that a physically small-hearted creature should be more daring than one with a physically large heart -- because the small heart is warmed much easier and more quickly than is the large one.

At any rate, a pertinent conclusion of all this is that martyrdom is really not so astounding in the saints; it is an almost inevitable outgrowth of their supreme hope and confidence in the almighty power of God. Even Aristotle noticed that those whose relations with divinity are amicable are always more daring; the devil, after all, really is a weakling.

Contrast of rational and passionate daring

To appreciate this more deeply, it will be a big help to contrast the passion of daring and the intellectual emotion of daring, daring in the will. The passion of daring is immediately dependent on sensitive knowledge; it is quite likely to be immediately aroused, to plunge into danger without realizing the difficulties to be met and consequently to be easily and quickly discouraged. The intellectual emotion of daring follows in the footsteps of intellectual knowledge, it depends on the judgment of reason. It stops to think and that often leads us to misjudge it. For example, during the days of war hysteria, anyone who had not rushed into a uniform at the first declaration of war was a coward; or, among the members of a juvenile gang, the boy who will not rush into any and every fight is necessarily "yellow". The real evaluation of the two emotions, sensitive and intellectual, must be made not at the beginning, but at the end of the emergency; there you will always find the deliberate, intellectual daring, the emotion which started slowly, looked at all the difficulties, and then plunged into the fight -- that daring is always the strongest finisher. It is not surprised or discouraged at difficulties, it foresaw them; it is not downhearted at defeats, it expected them. It is, in fact, the emotion of a truly brave man, the emotion of a man who fully realizing the danger, cognizant of all its difficulties and defeats, still goes resolutely ahead to battle the impending evil. It is the daring of the ordinary Catholic in his battle against sin; the daring of the saints in their battles against themselves; the daring of the martyrs in their battles against the enemies of Christ. It is the kind of daring demanded by Christ of His apostles when He warned them again and again of what the world had stored up for them.

Anger: Its composite nature and singularity

We come now to the last, and perhaps the strangest of the passions, the passion of anger. Its strangeness is the strangeness of the hybrid or the mongrel; it has a little of everything in it, but is a very individual thing. Like all the emergency passions, it has its roots in love, but unlike all the others, it arises only from the immediate conjunction of many passions: there must be, over and above love, at least sorrow for an injury done us and hope of revenge before anger is born. Unlike all the other passions, it has a double goal, a goal of evil and a goal of good: it seeks vindication as a good to be desired, hoped for and thoroughly enjoyed; it rushes aggressively at the injury done as at an evil to be remedied by demanding satisfaction for it.

Its pre-eminence in man

Among all the passions, this one is very particularly our human passion; we have a special claim on it, we, far beyond all other creatures, have exploited it, and in a very real sense it is more natural to us as men than are any of the other passions. Considered from the part of the object, the passion of desire, at least the

desire for food and sex, is more natural than anger. But from the part of the subject, while desire is more natural than anger to all the other animals, in man anger has deeper roots in the rational nature than has desire. Anger fits in very well with reason; in fact it demands a comparison, a weighing of the injury done and the satisfaction to be demanded, that can be had properly only by the medium of reason. There is no such intimate tie-up between the desire and reason as there is between anger and reason. What we call anger in the animals is very often sheer fright.

Its causes and remedies

We can push this a step further and say that the naturalness of anger is greater than that of the other passions from the point of view of the physical constitution of the individual man. It is, for example, much more natural for a man with a choleric temperament to get angry than it is for a person physically inclined to coddle himself to be self-indulgent; the anger of the choleric individual will be aroused more quickly and thoroughly than the concupiscence of the effeminate individual. When we speak of being caught unawares by passion, of passion overwhelming reason before any defence could be mustered, our statements are more easily understandable of anger than of any of the other passions. Normally our other passions do not hit us over the head with the suddenness of a burglar's attack.

The very motive of anger is an indication of its profound basis in rational nature. We are never angry unless someone has done something against us -- or we think he has. In other words, the real root cause of anger is another's contempt for us; and contempt is an injury that does not give us even the solace of being taken seriously. It is not too hard for us to be merciful, forgiving to a man who in an agony of pain heaps abuse upon us; he really does not mean it, it is the pain speaking; or to the dinner guest who holds the French up to ridicule not realizing that she is talking to a Frenchman. This contempt is the result of ignorance and is not personal. But one who despises us personally will have little trouble arousing our anger. The person who has such contempt for our hopes and efforts as calmly, indifferently, or even seriously but persistently to stand in the way of the things we are trying to get done will feel the full force of our anger. While one who offers us that climax of contempt which is deliberate insult presents us with the supreme cause of anger.

Excellence, contempt, satisfaction

On our side, we are disposed to anger by the contradictory qualities of excellence and defect. An orator might not resent a remark reflecting on his strength but he would resent a reflection on his oratorical ability; an opera singer might easily fly into a rage at the orchestra leader's pitying smile for her high notes. The more unjust such contempt for a real excellence, the more irritating it is. A wise man despised by fools or an aristocrat made the butt of a rustic's joke has more reason for anger because the contempt is so much more unjust. On the other hand, the very fact that anger arises from an injury done us makes those who are most easily injured most easily aroused to anger. So men who are sick are often querulous; a deaf man is sensitive about his deafness; a poor man about his poverty, and so on. From this same point of view, it very often happens that excellence is a protection against the injury of contempt; a man who is sure of his own pre-eminence, his own ability, who has no doubt whatever of himself, is not seriously bothered by whispering, jealousy or the activity of rivals. It is usually the small man, uneasy because of the slim hold he has on excellence, who resents competition or even the slightest whisper, for even so slight a breath of wind might easily dislodge him from his perch.

Its effects: Pleasure

Anger has its compensations; one of its first effects is pleasure. There is joy in anger if it don not go beyond the bounds of reason and give us grounds for regret. Anger rises against an injury done and seeks, through vengeance, remedy for the sorrow caused by that injury. The pleasure of anger is in proportion to the anger and to the satisfaction obtained. If here and now we actually have our vengeance, if we succeed in killing the fly that has been irritating us so, the pleasure is perfect, if we are still looking forward to that vengeance, we enjoy it by making it present through hope or by rolling it over and over in our mind as a

child rolls a piece of candy around in its mouth, savoring it. That pleasure will even penetrate into our dreams and give our vision of vengeance a decidedly enjoyable turn.

Bodily changes

But on the other hand anger is a very disturbing passion. The motion of anger is one of preying upon an enemy, surging against him; quite opposite to the motion of fear and desperation and with quite opposite physical effects. It brings a rush of blood, a tensing of muscles, an acceleration of the heart that is excellent for the purposes of vengeance but which does the use of reason no good at all. To use our reason we need certain sensitive powers and the actions of these sensitive powers are impeded by a physical disturbance of the body such as anger produces. If we see a man grow red with anger, see him bristle, his neck swell and his face turn crimson we might expect him to suffer a stroke, but do not expect him to produce the fruits of profound contemplation.

Effect on reason and speech

One effect of anger, which from different points of view may be good or bad and which is not an invariable effect unless the anger be very great, is to dam the flow of words. Whether with reason, or seriously impeding reason, anger in the bellowing stage is really a mild sort of anger; in a more advanced stage it robs us of the ability to talk. We are literally so angry we are speechless; the corporal disturbance set up by anger so hinders the use of the external members of the body that the tongue simply will not function, and so impedes the use of reason that we could not find words even if our tongue would function. In fact the organic changes induced by anger are most manifest in the powers which usually mirror the activities of the soul -- the eyes, the face, and the tongue.

Conclusion: Champions of concupiscence

There are only two possible goals for all the activities of sense appetite, the goals of sorrow and of pleasure. To these all the others, and so, of course, the emergency passions, are ordained. Hope or fear, daring or desperation or anger are not stopping places for a man, they are means to the great final passions of the concupiscible appetite, sorrow and pleasure. They are the fighters or the quitters whose whole purpose is to rush to the aid of the mild passions or betray them by surrender. These emergency passions are the appetite's response to danger, to difficulty; an answer of victory or defeat.

The twentieth century and the emergency passions: Passions of victory

What part do the emergency passions play in twentieth century life? What is the height and depth, the fire and coldness of these passions today, together with their corresponding intellectual emotions? Our last chapter gives us the answer; let us compare it with the conclusions of this present chapter. We are definitely dedicated to the cultivation of the mild passions, to the constant creation of new desires, new necessities, to a coddling of our sensitive nature, to sensible pleasure. What does this do to the emergency passions of victory? Certainly our hope, daring, and anger will not be the high, bravely enduring, burning emotions proper to the spirit; for this insistence on the sensible attractions pushes the goods of the spirit farther and farther back into the dim recesses of our lives. There will be more of passion in our hope, daring and anger and less and less of intellectual emotion; which means that they will be scattered about on the million and one things that attract our animal natures. We will have many more hopes, many trivial hopes, hopes at the mercy of every passing circumstance; our daring will be of the rushing, passionate type which dies out as quickly as it flares up, which is easily disappointed, discouraged by difficulty, downcast by defeat; our anger will be more and more of the blind, brutal, unreasoning type with little regard for justice, but as our hopes spread wider and thinner, as they become more shallow and less enduring, we will have less and less to be thoroughly angry about.

Passions of defeat: The multiplication of fear

And the passions of defeat? Here we really reap the fruit of a dedication to the mild or concupiscible

passions rather than to their corresponding emotions in the will. We have said that our modern multiplication of pleasure automatically multiplies the possibilities of sorrow. It pushes farther out of reach the joy of the will which is the supreme antidote for sensible sorrow, the joy which is an integral part of the sacrifices of love and the death of martyrs. The spreading of hope in a shallow layer over the wide expanse of modern pleasures multiplies our objects of fear; there is so much more that can be taken away from us. And all down the line our power of command, of control over our own actions, is persistently weakened as, plunging further and further into the things of sense, we get further and further from that control-room of human actions which is our reason. Possibilities of sorrow multiplied, objects of fear constantly haunting us on every side, power of command and consequently of resistance steadily weakened -- what is left for the creature that is man but the passions of defeat? Is it true that we are more and more haunted by fear? Look at the advertisements in the magazines and newspapers; study the tactics of almost any political power or political party; look at the methods of propaganda for almost any cause; look at the modern attitude towards the natural difficulties of life -- towards marriage, childbirth, religion, work, thought, responsibility.

The surrender of despair

Is it true that we are more and more given to despair, that more and more we are willing to give up the fight in abject surrender? There are several signs of despair by which this question can be tested and answered; man can run away from the fight of human life in several different ways. He can plunge into a vortex of pleasure calculated to kill the operations of his mind; he can immerse himself in activities calculated to keep his mind from turning to the ultimate human problems; he can set himself seriously to forget these problems or can set out in the name of philosophy to attack their very existence; he can solve them all by deifying himself; or he can put a bullet in his brain and end the farce of being human without the courage to live humanly.

Man the Victim of the Universe or its Master

Actually man was equipped by nature for quite a different role. He was given an inner sanctuary inviolable to all attacks from all creatures; a source of joy, of hope, of love and all the rest, that could and should lord it over the sensible world, using it, as it was meant to be used, as a servant for his high ends. These champing steeds of human activity in the sensible order which we call passions, could and should be a mighty force under the intelligent control of well drawn reins. There is no comfortable middle way for man in this universe; he must be on top of it or at the very bottom. He is either master of the universe, of his passions, of himself; or he is the miserable cowering victim of all three. And it is only the individual himself who can effectively say whether he win be the victim or the master.

<<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 8 -->
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CHAPTER VIII -- HAPPINESS AND HABIT
(Q. 49-54)

1. Man of action and habit -- an unjust contrast:
 - (a) Animal "habits".
 - (b) Absence of habit in God.
 2. Basis of habit in human nature:
 - (a) The limitations of human nature.
 - (b) The limitless possibilities of human nature.
 3. Essential notion of habit.
 4. Location of habits in man.
 - (a) Physical side of man
 - (1) Body.
 - (2) Sensitive faculties.
 - (b) Spiritual side of man:
 - (1) Essence of the soul.
 - (2) Intellect
 - (3) Will.
 5. Cause of habit:
 - (a) Nature and the seeds of habit
 - (1) Intellectual habits.
 - (2) Appetitive habits
 - (b) Repeated acts:
 - (1) Possibility of habit produced by one act.
 - (2) Infused habits.
 - (3) Some theories
 - a. Physical.
 - b. Intellectual.
 6. Increase of habit:
 - (a) Physical and spiritual magnitude.
 - (b) Means of increase -- intensity of acts.
 7. Decrease and corruption of habits:
 - (a) Means of corruption -- absence of acts.
 - (b) Inviolable habits.
 8. Distinction of habits:
 - (a) Specifically -- by *objects*, matter and principles.
 - (b) Morally -- by relation to nature
 - (c) The compatibility of habits.
- Conclusion:
1. Habits and happiness:
 - (a) Habit and action.
 - (b) Significance of physical theories of habit.
 2. Consequences of habit's relation to happiness:
 - (a) Responsibility
 - (1) Of parents.
 - (2) Of educators.
 - (3) Of example.
 - (b) Personal evaluation, forecast and improvement.
 - (c) Relative importance of intellectual, moral and physical habits.

CHAPTER VIII
HAPPINESS AND HABIT
(Q. 49-54)

So far throughout this volume we have done nothing but renew our acquaintance with the homely, familiar elements of our daily lives. The subject-matter of this chapter is no exception to this mode of procedure. Indeed we are going to rub elbows with what we usually consider the most humble, the most homely and disappointing of all the servants in our individual kingdom -- our habits.

The very name "habit" calls to mind a whole series of homely, simple pictures, as the chance hearing of a consecrated phrase will bring up visions of a comfortable old chair, a sweet tired smile, or a bright curly head. "Habit" makes us think of umbrellas and rubbers forgotten because we so seldom used them, of people putting matches in their mouths and throwing cigarettes away, of absent-minded professors, worried mothers, and distracted sales girls.

Man of action and habit -- an unjust contrast: Animal "habits"; Absence of habit in God

Habit has the air of routine about it. It seems to belong most fittingly to those of us caught in a grey circle of sameness, drudgery, unromantic, unexciting, prosaic life. Quite the opposite is true of action, of danger, of the unusual, the extraordinary. We picture the man of genius as the man who steps out of this ceaseless round of the ordinary, who escapes from habit and startles the world by an unexpected, unprepared, singular action. Habit seems to cut us off from the class of genius and associates us with the plodding, cud-chewing cow, the puppy curling up in its accustomed corner at its accustomed time. The spark of divinity seems much brighter in genius than in the rest of us; we cannot even conceive God's being a victim of habit, perhaps principally because we cannot think of God mislaying His glasses.

This chapter is no exception to our policy of fraternizing with the apparently unimportant, familiar elements of our lives. And our notion of habit is no exception to the astonishing mistakes we make about the things that are closest to our own lives. We do make a truly astonishing mistake about the very nature of habit. It is strictly true that God cannot have habits, but it is no less true that an animal cannot have habits, while the man of genius is precisely the man with the most fully developed, most perfect habits.

Basis of habit in human nature: The limitations of human nature

Habit is something distinctively human. God does not have habits because His infinite perfection precludes them; the animal cannot have habits because its growth in perfection is completely arranged and wholly limited by the principles of its nature. But man cannot get along without habits and all his human powers are perfected only in proportion to the habits which he has developed. We can contrast human and animal nature as we would one of the Great Lakes and a small town reservoir; the possibilities of one as a source of drinking water depend on the pipelines that are run from it; the other has the pipelines already in and the slightest investigation will tell us immediately what its possibilities are. Or, looking at it from another angle, animal nature is a small cup full to the brim; human nature is an expanding vessel whose capacity grows with the amount poured into it; while God can have nothing more added to the infinite sweep of His divine nature. These additions, these modifications, these capabilities by which human nature alone grows are habits.

The limitless possibilities of human nature

It is the imperfect, created character of human nature which makes habits necessary; it has not as yet all the perfection it can have; something can be added to it. And at the same time it is because of the indetermined, indefinite possibilities of human nature that habits are possible. Concretely, three conditions are necessary for the possession of a habit: first, that the subject of the habit have a potentiality still to be realized, and this makes habit impossible to God; second, that this potentiality be not to one determined object, as the nose is to smell; third, that this potentiality is capable of being realized, not in one definitely determined way but in different ways. The last two conditions make habit impossible in the animals.

Essential notion of habit

An essential notion, then, of habit is determination. It is a limitation of a limitless faculty, a pipe-line from an immense lake. Our minds and our wills are capable of universal truth and universal goodness; that they get to work on particular truths, particular kinds of truth and goodness, it is necessary that they be pinned down, determined. Our acts are definitely determined, concrete, going towards definite objects; yet why should a mind or a will that is of its very nature indifferent to particular things and forced to action only by the universal, choose this action rather than another? The determination certainly did not come from our faculties, yet here it is in the act produced by these faculties, because of a further determination of those faculties by way of habit.

The work of habit is precisely to modify a man, to give a definite channel along which his limitless powers will flow. It is a determination, a qualification of a man disposing him well or badly either as to

his nature itself or to the operations for which that nature exists. It is evident that here we must step out of that indifferent, amoral atmosphere which clings to the passions. Habit has quite frankly to do with the end of nature, and we insisted that human things were good or bad morally as they led man to his end or led him away from it. So habits are definitely moral. They are morally good or morally bad. They help a man to his end or they lead him away from it; they contribute to the perfection of his nature and of his operation or they detract from his nature or hinder his operation.

It would be an error to confuse habit with a mere passing disposition. It is of the very nature of habit to be permanent, or at least, looking at its causes, difficult to uproot. Habits are really capabilities that have been developed by hard, repeated effort, consciously, deliberately until these capabilities are as deeply embedded in nature as a grafted branch on a tree. They become second nature to us and, like the operations of nature itself, the habits at work give us that joy which comes with easy, dexterous, masterful action, there is joy in living, breathing, walking, and seeing; and there is much the same joy in every craftsman's skillful labour, in the artist's long concentrated efforts, in the singer's ringing notes, in the thinker's clean-cut incision through error to truth, in the saint's insanely daring love of God.

These habits are our very own, developed under our command. They never escape that command. It is unjust to associate habit with traits of forgetfulness, as though habit had betrayed us and run off with the command of our lives. It is not because habit is beyond our control that we pour soup on the table, not noticing that no soup-plate was laid out; that is because we did not give any attention to the operation of that habit. In the beginning of habit, our alert attention and forceful will are necessary; as the habit grows stronger, less and less of that intellectual effort is needed but always habit is the perfect servant of the true master of human life. Its task, like the task of every perfect servant, is to make the work of the house easier, more quickly, unobtrusively, joyfully accomplished.

If we keep clearly in mind the distinction between habits ordained directly to operation and habits ordained directly to nature itself and only indirectly to operation, the actual location of habits within ourselves is a fairly simple matter.

Location of habits in man. Physical side of man; Body

The type of habit that is immediately aimed at the perfection of nature itself, such as beauty or health, the so called "entitative habit," in distinction to "operative habit," is really more of an habitual disposition than a true habit. After all, beauty can be quickly lost, as can health; the causes from which beauty and health flow are themselves quickly and easily changed while a true habit has a hard, grasping durability. The entitative habits can be located in the body of man; that is, they can dispose the body of man more perfectly in accordance with his soul, his form. But the operative or working habits belong primarily to the soul, for the soul is the source of all human activity.

This is more clearly seen when we remember that the body, like all material things, run along a one-way track that has been laid out to the last inch by nature itself. A habit in material things is no more necessary than a steering wheel in a locomotive. No more determination is necessary; indeed, no more determination is possible. The part the body plays in the operation of the soul, a secondary, ministering, disposing part, is an accurate picture of the claim the body has to habits -- a secondary, dispositive claim which would have no meaning whatever without the perfection of habit in the soul.

Sensitive faculties

This will be true also of all our sense faculties, our hearing, sight, smell, memory and all the rest. Indeed it will hold true of the whole world of sense life. An official tea-taster, a piano-tuner, a pickpocket and a surgeon all have developed operating habits in their sense faculties. They can do what an untrained man cannot do. The same is true of the dog who has learned to fetch the evening paper at four o'clock. But actually these sense developments have a claim to habit only by reason of their relation to the command of man's reason. In other words, if men left them alone, the animals would never develop even such traces of habit; and if men did not steer their touch, hearing, or taste along these particular lines there would be no

pickpockets, surgeons, piano-tuners or tea-tasters. Animals and sense faculties operate along lines strictly determined by the instincts of nature; of themselves they can go no farther, they need no greater determination. It is only the creative vision of man which sets up new ends and trains both animals and sense faculties to serve these ends.

Spiritual side of man: Essence of the soul.

It is, then, in the spiritual side of our nature that we must primarily look for habits in their full perfection. It is true that no natural entitative habit, i.e. no disposition whose end is nature, can be had in the soul, for the soul is the active principle of our nature, the source of all perfection, of activity; it disposes rather than itself by the object of disposition. A match is a great help in a dark room, but we do not hold it up to a burning electric bulb to increase the light. Yet because man reaches for things as high above himself as God, the soul can be disposed for this higher, supernatural life; and the disposition or entitative habit perfecting, disposing the soul for that supernatural life is called sanctifying grace and its perfect complement is the light of glory in heaven.

Intellect

The operative habits of the soul belong, of course, in the faculties by which the soul operates, in the spiritual principles of action which are intellect and will. Here habits are not only possible, they are desperately necessary. The intellect does not run along a determined track, nor does it start out on the trip of life with a knapsack full of ideas. It is a blank page capable of receiving every truth; it can seek truth for truth's sake alone, or with the end of action in view; it can judge by first principles, or from immediate things of the world. Determination is essential if there is to be action; such determinations are habits and are called intellectual virtues.

Will

The will is in much the same position. It is capable of all good, real or apparent; it can move towards its end or away from it; it can be good or bad; it is the great power station of human life, but feeder lines must lead its power in determined directions. And on the direction of these lines depends the results of that immense power; as the electricity coming from a power-house can kill a man in an electric chair or save the life of a man on a surgeon's table, so the power coming from the will is quite capable of blasting man to hell or snatching him up to heaven. Habits in the will are the moral virtues and the vice.

It must be noted that habit occupies a strange intermediary position between what the Scholastics called potency and act. Relative to the faculty, the intellect or will, habit is an active, perfecting principle which brings that faculty one step nearer to its ultimate perfection of action; yet looked at in relation to the act of intellect and will, habit is itself perfected, completed, and in this sense is potential. So a person who had a collection of good habits and never used them would be like a man who had a collection of powerful automobiles but who never left his house. Neither one would get very far. The habits would be as useless as the cars. The difference is that the very possession of habit is itself a good guarantee of the acts following from those habits.

Habits, then, are very necessary; we simply must develop them, and develop them we will. How do we go about it? Where do they come from? Perhaps these questions would be more exact if we put them in this form: "What can we do about habits?" and "What has nature done without our having any say about it?" The answer to these questions vitiate a great number of comforting excuses. We have heard of the "born musician", the "born worker", the person who is "naturally" patient, wise, humble, and so on. We say that because nature was not so kind to us -- we appear lazy, or irritable, proud and all the rest. Nature at times is a solid comfort to our self-respect.

Nature does have a hand in habits, but to identify habit with the efforts of nature is to identify the full-grown plant with the seed from which it sprung. Habits have their roots in nature, but only their roots. The rest of their growth demands some explanations that only we can give.

Cause of habit: Nature and the seeds of habit; Intellectual habits.

On the intellectual side we can really trace much to nature. One habit, common to all men, has substantial beginnings in nature, and that is the habit by which we understand first principles. Every man, once he knows what a part is and what a whole is, recognize the whole as greater than the part. More indirectly, nature lays the foundations of intellectual habits in the perfection of the senses. Because we need the sense organs in the work of understanding, keen, alert sense organs are a decidedly good start towards intellectual habits.

Appetitive habits

On the side of the will the start given by nature is really the sowing of seeds. Our natural tendencies, natural inclinations, are the slight push which starts us off on the long voyage of life. From our physical constitution, too, we have just such a nudge in definite directions; go one man, from physical reasons, will be more inclined to meekness than to zeal, another more to chastity than to patience, and so on.

All of this natural equipment very often goes under the name of "temperament"; a word used to cover a multitude of sins. The finished product, after the habits are built in, is usually called character. And really an artistic temperament, a bilious temperament or a choleric temperament is a very poor excuse for an utterly disagreeable character. Father Jarrett once said that a thoroughly nasty temperament was really a big help in the building of a very fine character, because it made us realize early the need of hard, earnest effort in the building of the right kind of habits.

Earnest effort is the solid cause of habit. No one but God can slip a habit into our souls as a handkerchief is slipped into a pocket. There is only one way to get a habit and that is by our own personal acts. A habit, after all, is a perfected disposition, a well-developed groove down which our activities slip easily, quickly, directly to their objects. Our acts wear that groove deeper and deeper, smoother, surer. The golfer's tireless practice, the athlete's training, the singer's scales are all faint pictures of this from the physical side and bring out the fact that by our every act we are determining the course along which our powers will flow.

It has been pointed out significantly that a habit really starts with the first act, at least the surface is scratched and there is a faint beginning of a groove. Even more significantly, every habit is charged with the past and full of meaning for the future; it is an accurate history of past acts, an assurance of swift, easy, pleasant action in the present, and it offers good grounds for a prediction of the course of future acts, for habit is not to be snuffed out in an instant.

Repeated acts: Possibility of habit produced by one act.

Nor is habit to be called into existence in an instant. Grim warnings are given that bad habit. are often produced by one act. It simply cannot be done. True enough, on the intellectual side, a truth can be so clearly presented that the intellect at once grasps it and never relinquishes it; the result is an intellectual habit by just that one act. But outside of the intellectual order we need both time and effort to build up the solid structure of habit. So from the side of the appetite it is clear from daily experience that reason cannot dominate the will or the sense appetite as truth dominates the intellect. Our reason can show us that this one act is eminently desirable under these particular circumstances; but if we remember that our will and sense appetite can reach out to many desirable objects and in many different ways, it becomes clear that the domination of one grooved way of doing things is not to be brought about with one gesture. The entitative habits of the body might be produced by just one act, as health might be restored by one dose of powerful medicine, but these after all have not the enduring qualities of true habits but are rather habitual dispositions resting on easily hindered or helped causes.

Infused habits

All this is in the purely natural order. In the supernatural order we have a whole group of habits -- grace

and the infused virtues -- which are caused instantly by God and not gradually by our acts. In fact, they could not be caused in any other way. They are dispositions or determinations to acts which are above all the powers of nature and they themselves are beyond the reach of any combination of natural forces. Because they lie completely outside the scope of the entire natural order they can come only from the one Being Who is not included within that circle of nature -- God Himself.

Some theories: Physical

Someone who looks on a man as smoothly sly can always hear insincerity in his voice. The same attitude makes supporters of a political candidate swell with pride at his remarks, while his opponents growl with disgust. This, of course, is the result of one-sided views; the other side also must be seen to discover truth. Modern philosophers have been occupied with a one-sided view of man; so much so that they are now convinced that only that one side, the animal side, exists. In all of man's actions they note with delight the overtone of a snort, a growl, a grunt or a whinny. When such champions of the material look at habit, they see just what they are prepared to see a purely physical, at most an animal, phenomenon. To some, habit is merely a chain of mechanical reflexes (Behaviourism); to others, stimulus and response do not quite sum up habit, there must also be a consideration of the history and present dispositions of the organism but merely the physical history and disposition (S.O.R. of Dynamic Psychology); still others insist it is merely a case of stamping in and stamping out physical associations (Thorndike). But to all of them it seems apparent that habit, like the rest of man, is not to be allowed to go above animal powers.

Intellectual

Perhaps some trace of this animal-worship has found its way into the writings of those who hold fast to man's spiritual soul; as though, because there are no muscles to kink, no co-ordination of parts involved in the operations of intellect and will, there is really no place for the kind of habit we have been describing, the habit which is really an accidental form determining and perfecting the faculty as the substantial form determines and perfects the body. They would prefer to have habits mere associations, but, of course, spiritual associations; or they quite frankly do away with habit altogether, at least in the will, reducing the whole differentiation of the will's acts to the power of the motive that is held before it. Unfortunately in this matter no compromise is possible; it is not merely that the facts will not allow it, the very indeterminate nature of the intellect and the will demands the determination offered by the accidental form of habit.

Increase of habit: Physical and spiritual magnitude.

It is important to hold fast to the notion of habit as form, as simple active principle, if we are to understand its increase. As a simple form, a principle without parts, there can be no question of increasing it as, we would increase a physical thing, by piling on quantity as though we were preparing a fat man for a circus side-show. Magnitude in spiritual things is not measured by poundage but by perfection; one angel is greater than another because it has more of being, more of excellence; one soul is greater than another supernaturally because it has approached closer to the source of all perfection, because it has more of charity; in the natural order, one soul is greater than another because it has more of the accidental perfection, the added forms of habit. Habit is made greater because somehow it is more perfect, either by extension to more things or by deeper penetration into the subject itself.

This sounds complicated but actually the extension of habit is as simple as the extension of health to more and more parts of the body, as the diffusion of love to more and more objects worthy of love, or as the discovery of more and more conclusions in a principle. Intensively a habit increases as it cuts its groove deeper and deeper, as, for example, the love of a married couple gets deeper, more solid, more a part of the married couple themselves with the intimacy and companionship of the passing years. Habit seeps into the marrow of our being as the heat of the morning sun seeps into the bones of the drowsy Italian sunning himself on one of the great rocks hanging over Amalfi.

Means of increase -- intensity of acts

Either way, true habits are increased by only one medium. That medium is our own acts; not by every act, but acts which are more intense, more earnest than the habit itself. Playing golf or tennis against excellent competition improves one's game, not only then but later; the thinker who limits his reading to detective novels or his conversation to mere gossip is on the down grade. One of the great virtues of good books is precisely that they keep us in the company of intellectual giants. A lazy, slouchy act, less intense than its habit, does the habit no good, in fact does it positive harm. After all, if the act is to be the cause of perfection to the habit, it must itself have something to give beyond the perfection of the habit. The act cannot just run along the groove, it must cut the groove deeper; it cannot itself be imperfect and hope to confer perfection on its habit.

This has the appearance of a contradiction -- the act proceeds from the habit as from an immediate principle, yet must be greater than the habit to increase it. But think for a moment of what the habit has already done. It has made the act more natural, easier, more pleasant; so that with the same amount of effort our next act is immediately better. In other words, it has done away with much of the strain which was necessarily present in the first action, removed much of the resistance, cut a pathway through a forest, like the pioneer settlers of the early West. Of course the next settlers can travel the same trail much more easily and faster, and they improve the trail. Eventually the trail becomes a road, then a paved stretch along which cars can roll with practically no difficulty; eventually it becomes a four-lane highway which almost drives the car for us.

From the notion of habit as a simple form, a perfecting principle, it is fairly easy to see that a habit is corrupted by a contrary habit. Just as we cannot have a human body both living and dead at the same time, for life is the result of its form or soul and death is the expulsion of that form, so contrary habits cannot exist together. One destroys the other. The channel of a river cannot carry that river in opposite directions at the same time; our habits are the channels of our activity. And of course these contrary habits, like all habits, are built up by individual act.

Decrease and corruption of habits: Means of corruption -- absence of acts.

It is not even necessary to go to the length of opposite acts and habits for the destruction of already existing habits. Mere laziness or sluggishness will weaken a habit; complete disuse of a habit will itself destroy that habit. This is particularly true of the moral habits, or habits of the will. They deal with the regulation of external acts and the passions; and of course if these are not being regulated they are proceeding without regulation, for they do not stop. In more simple terms, a man who is not producing good acts is producing bad acts; when he is not using his good habits, he is building up bad habits as well as neglecting the good habits, for no human action is morally indifferent.

In the intellectual field, mere disuse very much weakens and sometimes totally corrupts a habit. So the man who continually moves in a circle far beneath him intellectually is rapidly retrogressing; the man who spends his time daydreaming is decreasing his powers of thought and concentration; the man who spends his time reading trash is rendering himself less and less capable of reading anything but trash.

Inviolable habits

There are some few habits which no corrupting influence can ever reach. These are the intellectual habits which nature has had so nearly ready made from the very beginning, the habits of first principles, both speculative and practical. Upon this inviolable basis rests the perpetuity and validity of human thought and the absolute universality of moral principles. It would take a complete destruction of human nature itself to drive out of man the principle of contradiction, for example, and the distinction and obligatory force of right and wrong.

Distinction of habits: Specifically -- by objects, matter and principles.

We have a great variety of habits. But it is relatively easy to distinguish them. They are, after all,

principles of action; they are pointed to definite action, for they themselves are definite determinations. To avoid confusing them we have only to follow the direction in which they point. In other words, the objects of habits distinguish them as neatly as the different destinations announced for trains enable us to pick out the right train from the confusing number in the railroad station. So the habit of justice is easily distinguished from that of temperance; and both are different from the habit of prudence. In a general way, we can distinguish groups of habits according to their location, the habits of the intellect, of the will, and so on. But remembering that one faculty can have many habits, that its habits may be either good or bad, we can easily see that this is sufficient only to distinguish groups of habits, not the individual habits themselves. The same is true of the matter with which habits deal; it may serve very well to mark off groups of habits one from another, but we must go to the objects to which the habits are determined if we are to discover individual distinctions.

And habits are distinctly individual, as individual as the trains that look so much alike and pull out in the same direction from the same station. They are going to different places. It is as impossible to link habits together to make one long habit, as it is to couple trains with different destinations to make one long train. The case is different if parts are to be dropped at way stations; then the final destination gives unity to the train. Exactly the same thing is true of habits.

What has all this to do with happiness? Recall that in the early stages of this volume we insisted that the tools by which we carve out our happiness are our own human actions. By nothing else do we make a success or a failure of our lives. And habit's whole task has to do with action, human action.

We have seen in this chapter that habit is a graft whose fruits are produced in a way so similar to that of nature that we rightly call habit "second nature". Like nature itself, habit makes our acts flow ever more easily, more quickly, more pleasantly. Look behind that statement. If that statement is true, which incontestably it is, then habit has actually increased our natural powers. It has removed much of the resistance to our action, made much less effort necessary, offered an inducement to action in the very ease and pleasure of the effort. It has been said truly that if the will always had to make the same effort to produce its acts, to direct the hands, feet, etc., man would never advance; if no trace of the exertion put forth yesterday were evident to-day, man would stumble through life like an infant that has never learned to walk. It is optimistic to say that man would stumble through life. He would collapse very early in life, he would give up the struggle altogether, through sheer exhaustion.

Habit is the condition of all progress, as it is a necessary condition for activity. Indeed it is progress itself. The man of genius is capable of his extraordinary contributions exactly because so much perfection has been added to his natural powers by way of habit, so much of his energy has been saved by his "second nature".

Significance of physical theories of habit

Habit is the condition for activity, the condition of all progress. From our habits flow our acts. What, then, if we limit the possibility of habit to the animal level? Why, of course our acts are limited to that level. And as our acts are the steps by which we approach our goal, our goal itself must be an animal goal. Then the high aspirations of will, the great visions of intellect crash down and there clang shut the prison gates of the material, sensible, measurable which confine us at the level of the brutes. And that is the finish for the creature formerly known as man! All this is not an exaggeration; it is the commonplace denial of the spiritual nature of man put forth by the proponents of the physical theories of habit.

Responsibility of parents.

It seems hardly necessary to point out the terrific responsibility of those who guide youth in the formation of their habits. What is this but to choose their destination, put them on the train and stamp their ticket? This is what it means to be a father or a mother -- to have entirely at the mercy of your careless neglect and ignorance or of your zealous love and intelligent effort, the failure or success of your children's lives. It is a responsibility that cannot be shrugged off in the name of a bridge game or a set of nerves; nor is it

work for a faint or cowardly heart.

Responsibility of educators.

This gives an insight into the tremendous contribution of the religious Sisters to the Church in America in the training of Catholic youth. Only God himself can compute the number of successful lives that must trace the powerful beginnings of their success to this source. It also gives us an insight into an entirely different picture, a picture whose background at least breathes of despair. I mean the picture of American education under the influence of physical theorists, the naturalistic psychologists of education. It is doubtful if ever before in history has so much damage been done to humanity itself as has been done these last few years by the dominance of such a school with its tremendous influence over the teaching body of American schools.

Example

What we have seen in this chapter makes immediately clear the importance of example. What influences the actions of others influences their habits and so goes far in determining their future actions. And from the hero worshipping boy to the no less hero-worshipping man, example has been proved by long centuries of experience to be a powerful influence on the actions of others. The man in authority, the man or woman constantly before the eyes of others, the Catholic whose very Catholicity makes him stand out from the crowd, all carry this terrific responsibility, whether they like it or not.

Relative importance of intellectual, moral and physical habits

Habits furnish the element of unity in our actions. They are the record of the past, the force of the present, the prediction of the future. They bind the past to the present and future, tell us what we have done with the past, what we can expect of the future and what must be done if we do not particularly care for that prediction. In other words, for an evaluation of life up to the present moment, we must look to our habits; if we desire to improve, again we must look to our habits, but always with the realization that of all the habits, by far the most important for the success or failure of human life are those precisely which have to do with the goal of human life, with leading a man to or away from his end. Physical habits may improve the body; intellectual habits improve the mind; but it is only the moral habits that improve the man.

[«-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

[Chapter 9 --»](#)

CHAPTER IX -- HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE (Q. 55-58)

1. The opprobrium of virtue -- some modern conceptions:
 - (a) Equipment for a reformer.
 - (b) For a hater of joy and humanity.
 - (c) Result of ignorance of workaday world.
 - (d) A neurotic inhibitionism.
 2. Double basis of misconceptions:
 - (a) Ignorance of nature of virtue.
 - (b) Ignorance of nature of man.
 3. The nature of virtue:
 - (a) An operative habit.
 - (b) A good habit.
 - (c) A definition of virtue.
 4. The humanity of virtue:
 - (a) Its limitation to strictly human cognitive powers --perfect and imperfect virtue.
 - (b) Its limitation to strictly human appetitive power.
 - (c) A sufficient division of virtue -- intellectual and moral.
 5. The intellectual virtues:
 - (a) Speculative -- understanding, knowledge and wisdom.
 - (b) Practical -- art and prudence:
 - (1) Their distinction.
 - (2) Necessity of prudence for good living.
 - (3) Adjunct of prudence.
 6. The moral virtues in general:
 - (a) Distinction from intellectual virtues.
 - (b) Interdependence of moral and intellectual virtues:
 - (1) Moral virtue without intellectual.
 - (2) Intellectual virtue without moral virtue.
- Conclusion:
1. Virtue and successful action.
 - (a) In relation to particular ends.
 - (b) In relation to the goal of human life.
 2. Moral virtues and fullness of human life.
 - (a) Their importance proportioned to importance of goal of life.
 - (b) Their rewards are those of successful living:
 - (1) Immediate -- fullness of life.
 - (2) Ultimate -- possession of goal of life, happiness.
 - (c) Their denial is a denial of humanity of man
 3. The moulding of men and morals.

CHAPTER IX HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE (Q. 55-58)

The opprobrium of virtue -- some modern conceptions: Equipment for a reformer.

Our subject-matter in this chapter is virtue. Probably there is no part of our human equipment that has been more thoroughly misunderstood and more viciously maligned. A close parallel to our modern treatment of virtue was given a few years ago by Russian peasants to modern tractors which they considered mysterious, incomprehensible, perhaps dangerous, certainly very extraordinary and suspicious contraptions. If we were to attempt to sum up briefly this modern notion of virtue, our summary would not have to go beyond the statement that virtue has a double connotation to the modern mind: repression and ignorance.

For a hater of joy and humanity

It was not mere coincidence that led cartoonists to picture the champions of the prohibition law as dressed in a funereal ministerial garb. Quite recently a newspaper carried a full-page feature in which two contrary opinions were given as to the manner in which -- New Year's Eve should be celebrated. One held out strongly for a riotous type of celebration, in fact made a consequent headache the measuring rod of the celebrant's humanity, good-fellowship and normalcy; the other was a very prim affair, advocating the gloomiest type of introspection as a fitting -- "celebration". The pictures of both authors were given as a graphic expression of this contrast of "virtue" with joyous humanity; the author of the first opinion was pictured as an attractive young woman, beautifully gowned, flaunting a charming smile; the other author glared out at the world from a battleship type of face, fittingly framed in the finery of the Victorian era.

Result of ignorance of workaday world; A neurotic inhibitionism

This point of view is so common that it has an effect even on Catholics. How often do we picture virtue in terms of the very simple, naive old pastor, the kind of person who is quite likely to mislay collar, vest or shoes; good as gold, with a heart as big as himself -- but eccentric as the devil? Or we associate virtue with nuns, veils and cloisters as though it were a product of a super-human hothouse atmosphere. Virtue is looked upon as something to be taken cautiously, in small doses and in careful correlation to the individual temperament. The statement that all nuns are neurotic is not unusual, presumably on the grounds that nuns are virtuous and virtue is a neurotic repression vividly contrasting with the full, joyous, healthy expression of our human nature.

All this is, of course, sheer nonsense. But nonsense can be very deadly when it is taken seriously. It was nonsense that burnt witches and our present nonsense is much more deadly for the men and women, particularly for the boys and girls, of our time; for the agony it causes is not over in an hour or two, but drags its hopeless way through all of a lifetime and even all of an eternity.

Double basis of misconceptions: Ignorance of nature of virtue.

Like all nonsense, this particular nonsense about virtue has its roots in dank ignorance, a double ignorance of virtue and of humanity. As long as virtue is looked on as something beyond the ordinary, like forced feeding or the overtraining of an athlete, we are not likely to learn much about it. When it is considered as something unhealthy, like the sly smile of the demented, or as something hypocritical, like the guileless eyes of a vicious child, we are not likely to care to learn anything about it. And when we are told on all sides that it is something old-fashioned, immature, and unscientific, like red flannels, sulphur and molasses, or the dangers of night air, we become actually afraid of any familiarity with virtue, for we must keep up with the times.

Ignorance of nature of man

We cannot even begin to understand virtue if we have completely misunderstood man. To picture man as a machine or as a mere animal, rules out the very possibility of virtue as completely as it is ruled out of the clashing of gears or the whining of a puppy. We looked thoroughly into the nature of man in our first volume and saw that he was spirit as well as animal, possessed of a soul as well as a body. With that accurate conception of man before our eyes, let us look more closely at virtue.

The nature of virtue: An operative habit

Our very first glance at virtue brings out the astounding truth that virtue is not at all extraordinary, not at all mysterious, but rather a prosaic thing without which we simply cannot get through even an ordinary uneventful day. In plain language, virtue is simply another name for a certain kind of habit, namely for a good habit ordained to facilitating operation.

In the last chapter we noticed the striking difference between the equipment of man and of the other creatures of the universe. A chemical, such as sulphur, needs no education or training for its full perfection; it follows a rigid law of physical necessity which finds it fully equipped from its beginning for

its one determined action which can be placed only in one determined way. Much the same is true of the perfection of the animals; even though they have knowledge, they follow the rigid law of instinct which plots out every step of their way, tying them down to one narrow path plainly marked and hemmed in by a barrier that admits of no trespassing. But man starts off with his intellect and will be tied down to nothing that is less than God; his powers are like the waters of a great flood that must be turned into definite channels to produce definite results. These channels are the habits of a man.

There is, then, a striking difference between the action of inanimate creation, of animal creation and of man. The actions of the first two are strictly determined by nature from the very beginning; that of man must be qualified, determined by the habits which a man develops. These grooves which he cuts so deeply that they become a second nature and give his actions a delight, facility and promptness comparable only to that of nature itself, are operative habits, perfections of his faculties which determine the path his activities will take, conserve his energy and make possible an always greater action, an always greater perfection.

A good habit

If these habits direct his activity away from his goal they are bad habits or vices; if they direct his activities toward his goal they are good habits or virtues. Putting it in another way, we might say that a man is a very good thief, standing head and shoulders above his fellows in the quantity and quality of his plunder and the cleverness of his thievery; but of course we are speaking metaphorically. We could not say he was a virtuous thief. What we are saying is that he has habits that are excellent in their way, but that way is an evil, defective way; while virtue always implies perfection, the fulfilling of the possibilities of a man, the full realization of his potentialities. Virtues are good habits.

A definition of virtue

The identification of virtue with good habit immediately destroys the modern notion of virtue as a repression, an inhibition; habit is a principle of action, of activity. So that virtue is by its very nature a principle of activity; in fact it covers the whole field of good action. There are, of course, some very disagreeable people who operate in the name of virtue, people who, after the example of Martin Luther, are simply terrible when they are good. There is that whole class of the sanctimonious who shudder at contact with publicans and sinners. And there are those incorrigible gossips who are deeply irritated by one who refuses to speak unkindly. But none of this is virtue. In fact we could define virtue as a good habit by which a man lives rightly, without which he cannot live rightly, and which he cannot possibly put to bad use. If it is a human virtue, it is the result of our actions; if it is a supernatural or infused virtue, it is the result of the gracious kindness of God. But whatever kind it be, it cannot be the principle of those viciously unkind acts which are so often associated with the name of virtue.

You can hate virtue -- as the gossip hates charity because it is a constant and well-merited rebuke. You can be stupidly proud of virtue and frown on everyone else who does not give first-hand evidence of possessing that same virtue. But to accuse virtue of being the cause of an evil act is like expecting one channel to carry water in different directions at the same time. Virtue is a power-line to one definite, determined destination; and that destination is in complete harmony with the nature of man, it is good.

The humanity of virtue: Its limitation to strictly human cognitive powers --perfect and imperfect virtue

Virtue is not, then, a grim enemy of jolly humanity. It is as distinctively human as a quiet chuckle, a sympathetic smile, or a roaring laugh. No creature but a possessor of human nature has any use for or any possibility of having virtue; it deals with the production of distinctively human action, it is the smooth path along which actions which alone are proper to man run a rapid, pleasant race to their goal. If we are in search of virtue, we have only to look at man, and within man himself, to look at the two great principles from which human action alone flows -- the intellect and the will.

This double location of virtue, in intellect and will, brings up a distinction which answers a puzzling difficulty. It has often been noticed that a man can be an intellectual genius and a moral degenerate. A highly educated criminal is not only a possibility, but his very education makes his criminal activity more dangerous, more thorough, often more vicious. Socrates thought this could not be so, but the facts refuted him; our American educational system has made the same Socratic mistake and still cannot believe the facts can be right. After all, the whole purpose of virtue is to produce good actions; virtue in the intellect, then, certainly should make good men.

It does make good mathematicians, scientists, carpenters, and so on. But I can at least conceive of a carpenter being also a thief; and Bertrand Russell, who is an excellent mathematician, if he carries out one-half of his ethical principles is most certainly making a botch of his life. In other words, these intellectual virtues may make a man good in this or that line; they are incomplete or imperfect virtues. The explanation lies in this: some virtues give a man the ability to produce a good act but do not assure man of always using that faculty well; while others both give the man the faculty to act well and also guarantee the good use of that faculty. For example, grammatical habits give a man the faculty of speaking well; but even with those habits a man may speak very badly and certainly can violate the Ten Commandments. But a man with the habit of justice not only has the faculty of acting justly, but by that habit he does here and now act justly. He does an act of injustice only with difficulty and by deliberately pulling himself out of the groove of justice. In other words, these latter habits make a man simply good, not good in this or that line. They are the moral virtues.

This will be more clearly seen if we remember that the moral virtues reside in the appetite of man. As we have already seen so often, the appetite of man is the centre and source of all movement; its proper object is the end or goal of man and it is by reference to the goal of man that his actions are judged good or bad. We may say of the intellect that it is false or true; but only of the will do we say that it is good or bad. These complete or perfect virtues which make the whole man, not merely his faculties, good, belong to the will; and if they be found in any other faculty, it is only in so far as that faculty is moved by the will. Faith, for example, which is in the intellect, can perfect the whole man because the intellect assents to these supernatural truths only at the command of the will. Prudence, also an intellectual virtue, is a complete or perfect virtue precisely because of the order it implies to the will and the object of the will. But we shall see more of that later on.

Its limitation to strictly human appetitive power

For the present it is sufficient to stress this double classification of intellectual and moral virtues, as habits perfecting either the intellect or the appetite of man. The moral virtues, then, are good habits in the appetite of man, primarily in the will of man. We say primarily because there are the virtues of fortitude and temperance in the sensitive appetite of man, conforming his emergency and mild passions to the dictate of reason; but these virtues are virtues only in so far as the sensitive powers of man can participate in his spiritual powers. They are nothing more than the habitual conformity of the sense appetites to reason; in so far as they bend the activities and goal of the sense appetite to the activity and Goal of the will they make a claim to be perfect or complete virtues.

The will itself has need of direct determination by habit. To move to its own proper good presented to it by the intellect, the will needs no help by way of habit at all. It was made for that, shaped for that type of action, determined along that line. But to reach out for a good that is outside its own field, the good of a neighbour, for example, or to a good that is outside the whole of the natural order -- the divine good -- it needs the habits which we call charity, justice, and the virtues connected with justice. More simply, for pursuit of a good pertaining only to ourselves our will needs no virtues; but for supernatural or altruistic goods we cannot get along without habits. And the exclusive pursuit of merely selfish ends does not develop or perfect man but destroys him, for it cuts him off from all social life, human and divine, and makes quite impossible the attainment of the goal of all human living in which the whole essence of happiness consists.

A sufficient division of virtue -- intellectual and moral

These, then, are the virtues of man: the virtues perfecting his intellect and those perfecting his appetite, the intellectual and moral virtues. This is a sufficient and complete classification of the human virtues, or of the good habits, in man, because there are no other principles from which human actions can flow. In other words, these are the two great dynamos to which the power-lines must be connected; there are no others. We shall treat of the moral virtues in greater detail in succeeding chapters; here it is enough to name them -- justice, temperance, fortitude. Let us look more closely at the intellectual virtues with which our age professes to be so greatly in love.

I remember once seeing a seminarian, at home for a visit, greeted by a family of hard-working brothers. Everyone shook hands with him heartily and everyone immediately noted the contrast between his soft, callous-free hands and the rough hard hands of his brothers. The immediate verdict was: "Pretty easy; if you were home you would not have hands like that." I know the seminarian devoutly wished that the brain developed callouses that might be adduced as proof of work.

As a matter of fact that contrast has been going on from the beginnings of the human race. The man of action has been sneering at the man of thought as a dreamer, much as the French revolutionists hooted at the idleness and uselessness of contemplative religious Orders. And the philosopher, the brain-worker, has been looking with envy for generations at the day-labourer whose work was done when he laid down his pick and shovel. Whether thinking or acting is the harder job is unimportant here; but the contrast of these two is of immense importance, for it shows quite clearly the channels along which the activities of the intellect can flow and consequently shows the habits that may be developed in the intellect.

The intellectual virtues: Speculative -- understanding, knowledge and wisdom

Intellectual activities that are not in view of something to be done or to be made are speculative activities and the habits or virtues perfecting the intellect for these activities are the speculative virtues: understanding, science and wisdom.

Today we have picked out the middle virtue -- science -- and denied or neglected the other two, much as a woman might cling to youth and forget childhood, while vigorously denying old age, and just as impossibly. These are not three separable, unconnected habits but rather steps up in perfection; science supposes and absolutely demands understanding, while wisdom includes both science and understanding.

To grasp these virtues it is only necessary to look at the way our minds work. In the very beginning we gather first principles; from these we proceed to conclusions in this or that line; and finally we go back to the roots of things, to last causes, to ultimate explanations. The habit of first principles is understanding; as a habit of the first principles of thought it contains the seeds of all the sciences, as a habit of the first principles of action (synderesis), it contains the seeds of all morality and of all the moral virtues. Important? It is vitally important. Can we imagine a scientist proceeding to experiment without the principle of identity, of contradiction, of finality, or of sufficient reason; without knowing his right hand from his left, water from sulphuric acid, without seeking a reason for the unexplained? Yet modern philosophers solemnly assure us that this is the only valid way to gather knowledge. Moral life without that first principle, "good is to be done and evil is to be avoided", is just as impossible, for without it there is absolutely no basis for morality.

With the virtue of science we are quite familiar. Like all intellectual virtues it has to do with truth, with the firm certain hold on truth. The truth it seeks is that which can be deduced from the principles, or gathered from facts in the light of the principles furnished by the virtue of understanding. It always operates along particular lines: a science of mathematics, of chemistry, of physics, etc. We have let it stop there; but of course it includes much of philosophy and theology and is included in the ultimate reaches of philosophy and theology. Very simply, it is the virtue which deals with truth known through demonstration.

Another name for the virtue of science would be knowledge. Stopping at this point and looking around the

modern world we would feel very much at home. For the modern world has stopped at knowledge. And mere knowledge can be a disorderly, chaotic thing which can shatter a man's life just as a torrent of inharmonious sound can shatter a man's nerves or even his hearing. Knowledge of thousands of facts and conclusions from a dozen sciences may fit a man to be a robot in an industrial machine or to hold a chair in a professional school; but something more is needed to fit a man for living. A crowd of boys turned loose among the instruments of a symphony orchestra can undoubtedly produce as much noise, waste as much breath and work up as much perspiration as any symphony orchestra; but something more is needed for the production of music. That extra something is *order*.

And that is precisely the work of the virtue of wisdom. It is not satisfied with the immediate truth, as is knowledge; it wants the last truth, the last explanation. It is not satisfied to take a principle from some other science, it must go back to the very last and very first principle. Looking out from this vantage point, it sees the relation of one truth to another, one science to another, and, what is more important, the relation of all the truths, all the sciences, to the last truth, the final goal. Perhaps if we give this wisdom its ordinary names its work will be better understood: if it is divine wisdom we call it theology; if it is human wisdom it is called first philosophy or metaphysics. In either case it is the supreme speculative virtue necessary for any human life. It furnishes the answers to the fundamental questions of human life -- why, whence and where -- of the universe and even of God. It should be the prime object of education. The skeleton of it is given to the Catholic child in the catechism class; its possession can make the ignorant washerwoman very wise, its defect makes the learned professor very stupid. And it is one intellectual virtue which is a stranger to the American educational system.

So much for the virtues of the contemplative, the thinker, the pursuer of truth for truth's sake. While they are imperfect or incomplete virtues, remember always that they can be meritorious of happiness under the command of the will and that actually they are the beginning, the foretaste, of the joys of heaven, for the essence of eternal happiness consists in the contemplation of truth, the beatific vision. How about the virtues of the man of action, the practical channels of intellectual activity?

Practical -- art and prudence: Their distinction

Here again there is a clear-cut distinction between the maker and the doer, between the craftsman and the moulder of human actions. There is no one of us who escapes the work of moulding our own human actions, of steering them along the lines laid down by reason to the goal of human life. But a good many of us could eat a pile of lumber as easily as we could build a chicken coop; to some a hammer is an enemy with a personal grudge. The practical virtue dealing with the direction of human action is prudence; the other, the craftsman's virtue, is art.

It would seem as though our age had a positive genius for picking the unimportant and putting all stress on it. With only two practical virtues to choose from we pass by the one essential to human life, and exert our tremendous energies and undoubted ingenuity on the one that is not at all essential. St. Paul was, it is true, a clever craftsman; but I'm sure, hopefully sure, that heaven is full of saints who were clumsy with tools. Our great ability to make things, our inventive genius and technological perfection, our professional excellence and equipment has done some injustice even to art. While we have left the liberal or fine arts fairly intact, we have taken art out of the labouring man's life and in its place demanded only a monotonously precise speed to keep pace with the instruments of mass production.

Art is evidently an incomplete or imperfect virtue; it has no relation to the appetite of man. An atheist might make as good a violin as a saint. In fact an artist who deliberately violates the rules of his art, like the carpenter who wilfully hangs a door incorrectly, commits less of an artistic sin than the blundering artist who does not know any better. But quite the opposite is true of prudence; a man who deliberately steers his actions in the wrong direction is guilty of sin, while the man who steers his actions in the same direction not knowing it is wrong is guilty of no sin at all. The reason is that prudence is a complete or perfect virtue; it makes the whole man good. Nor is this a contradiction of what was said earlier about the intellectual virtues being incomplete virtues; for prudence is really an hybrid virtue, half intellectual, half

moral. It is located in the intellect, but the material with which it deals is distinctly moral material, namely human acts; prudence works on the acts of seeing, hearing, thinking, willing, loving, and so on.

Necessity of prudence for good living

It has a most intimate relationship with the appetite of man. In the speculative order, as we have seen, the truth of a conclusion depends intimately on the truth of the principle from which that conclusion proceeds. In the practical order, the principles are really the ends of the actions; it is the end in view which determines the whole character of an action, that is indeed the reason for there being any action at all. Prudence, as the chauffeur of human life, steering human actions, presupposes right ends, right goals. In other words, prudence, before it can take a step in directing human actions to their goal, presupposes the rectitude of the appetite of man relative to that goal.

Remembering that good living is synonymous with good operation, that success in human life is measured by the goodness of human actions, or, in other words, by their approach to the goal of human life, it is easy to see how important prudence is in the living of human life and what a monstrous thing has been done to our age in cutting out these goals which are the foundations of prudence. For good operation it is not only a matter of what is done, but also of how it is done; it makes a big difference whether the action is the result of a rush of passion or of the deliberate, controlled direction of reason. And the work of prudence is precisely to furnish that controlled direction that makes human action coin of the realm for the purchase of happiness. In art, the goodness or defect is not a matter of the disposition of the artist, but of the quality of the work he has produced; but the goodness or defect of prudence is a matter of goodness or evil in the man himself. It is his very action that is the material upon which prudence must work.

Adjunct of prudence

In the next volume we will go into the virtue of prudence exhaustively. Here it will be sufficient to point out the obvious fact that prudence presupposes a certain perfection of counsel or searching for proper ways and means, and a perfection of judgment in picking out the best means at hand. Prudence, of course, as it deals with human action to an end, has to do only with means to that end.

Evidently these five intellectual virtues are not enough equipment for full, hearty, successful human life. The optimistic stand of Socrates in holding that they were -- and our own American defence of the same position -- is really based on the notion that the only explanation of sin is ignorance. The notion behind this idea is that since all human actions are acts controlled by reason, reason is the supreme power in the government of our lives, a power which has only to crack the whip to have its subjects jump to obey. There is something in this, but not enough. True enough, reason is supreme, the first principle -- of human actions precisely as human; but the command of reason is by no means absolute in its power. Over the spiritual, yes; but it has no command at all over the vegetative side of our nature and its power over the animal part of nature is by no means the despotic power of an absolute tyrant. It is rather a political power that may at any time be upset by a rebellion, is frequently resisted and only rarely get whole-hearted obedience. The appetite of man needs good habits, habits by which its activity flows along lines demanded by reason. The moral virtues are quite necessary, and as distinct from the intellectual virtues as intellect is from appetite.

Interdependence of moral and intellectual virtues:

Moral virtue without intellectual

They are distinct, but not at all unrelated. In fact, without some of the intellectual virtues it would be impossible to have any moral virtues at all. At least these two -- understanding and prudence -- are absolutely essential to moral virtue. The work of the moral virtues is to modify the activities of the appetite of man, to conform those activities to the demands of reason, to act as channels that will carry the flow of appetite's activities in the direction demanded by reason. They are elective habits, constantly making choices aimed at the goal of life; they demand by their very nature a striving towards the right end and the counsel, judgment and command necessary to select suitable means to the end in view. Counsel,

judgment, and command are the work of prudence; the right leaning towards the true goal is the work of the moral virtues. More simply, it is impossible to produce right moral action without prudence; and prudence, as an intellectual virtue proceeding from first principles, is impossible without the virtue of understanding, i.e. without the habit of first principles.

It is a serious mistake to identify prudence with an extreme caution which goes about everything in the spirit that makes a man wear both suspenders and a belt. Prudence is not timidity or indecision or fear; it is intelligent moulding of human actions into tools by which happiness can be carved out. Prudence is not to be identified with education or learning; a very ignorant person can be very prudent in living human life, even though he can be easily deceived by an expert swindler in ordinary commercial affairs. Prudence is not something limited to one class or state of life, precisely because it is so absolutely necessary for all human life.

Intellectual virtue without moral virtue

And this prudence is the only one of all the intellectual virtues that is impossible without the moral virtues. The interdependence of prudence and the moral virtues is complete: there is no moral virtue without prudence, and no prudence without moral virtues. Understanding, science, art, even wisdom can be had by a man who is thoroughly bad; but not prudence. Not every theologian is a saint, not even every great theologian.

The reason for this dependence of prudence on the moral virtues is that prudence really comes to grips with the concrete acts of human life. It cannot be satisfied with general principles, general conclusions, general rules; it must here and now have an intimate grip on the particular principles affecting this particular act. To put it more exactly, since the principles of prudence are the ends of action, prudence absolutely demands rightness of intention here and now, demands striving towards particular ends that are good here and now. And this right striving for good ends in the concrete is the work of the moral virtues, as, for example, a chaste man senses immediately, intuitively, the slightest trace of impurity in an action, a gesture, a word, or a glance, or a charitable person knows intuitively the thoughtful act, the word, the smile demanded by the tortured soul of a neighbour. With this to go on, prudence can steer its way to the goal; without it, prudence flounders in a world of general precepts like a correspondence-school detective who has forgotten his book.

Conclusion: Virtue and successful action. In relation to particular ends

Summing all this up briefly, it seems immediately apparent that the modern world has grossly misunderstood virtue in attaching to it connotations of ignorance and repression. Far from repressing human nature, virtue is an absolutely necessary principle of all good human actions, whether intellectual or moral. It is, very simply, a good operative habit. Every man to produce human actions must have habits; so habits he will build up, whether those habits are good or bad. Let him discard virtue, good habits, and he is dedicating himself to making a failure of his human life, he is twisting his own nature, stunting its growth, making it lopsided. For human nature was not designed for the pursuit of evil any more than a razor-blade was designed for sharpening pencils; to fill that nature with bad habits and then expect it to produce successful human life is like filling a razor-blade with nicks and expecting it to produce a good shave.

In relation to the goal of human life

Virtues are the channels along which human actions flow to the goal of human life. They are the grooves, the trails cut by pioneer action, which make every other action that much easier, that much more perfect; they release a tremendous amount of energy for greater efforts, fuller perfections, fuller development.

Moral virtues and fullness of human life.

Their importance proportioned to importance of goal of life

While the intellectual virtues perfect a man in this or that way, develop this or that capacity, it is the moral virtues alone which perfect the whole man. If the attainment of the goal of life is man's one reason for living, if his partial happiness here and now is measured in terms of his approach to that goal, and his eternal happiness by his attainment of that goal, then there is nothing, humanly speaking, in this present life of ours outranking the moral virtues in importance. Their whole genius is the effective dealing with the goal of life and the approach to it.

Their rewards are those of successful living:

Immediate -- fullness of life;

Ultimate -- possession of goal of life, happiness

Consequently virtue has not for its immediate result the sour face of the reformer, the fanatic egoism of the neurotic, or the stupidity of the superannuated. Its immediate result is a full perfection, a blossoming of the human powers of man, a release of power for the doing of extraordinary deeds, a more and more joyous tasting of that abundant life which Christ came to bring to the world. Ultimately the reward of virtue is that stamp of success on life, the attainment of the goal of life which constitutes the happiness of man. That happiness is carved out by the tools which we call human actions, human actions controlled, steered to that one goal; these moral virtues are precisely the immediate sources from which spring the only human actions capable of being used as such tools, good human actions.

Their denial is a denial of humanity of man.

The moulding of men and morals

A denial of virtue is a denial of good habits. And that means either the abandonment of man to bad habits, or the denial to man of any habits at all, in other words placing man on the level of a machine or of the animals. It is to take the very humanity out of human actions; or at least to take the successful note of humanity out of those actions. For the work of virtue is to mould men, to protect human nature against any influence that would drag it down, limit it, or make it less than it might be. Virtue breaks down the barriers to full, free, human living, sets the powers of man ever more free, free enough ultimately to soar up to God Himself. In a word, it makes men more human by making them more moral.

[«-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

[Chapter 10 --»](#)

CHAPTER X -- STEPS TOWARD HAPPINESS (Q. 59-62)

1. The redintegration of human nature:
 - (a) Within itself.
 - (b) To God.
 2. The redintegration of passion:
 - (a) Distinction of passion and virtue.
 - (b) Moral virtue as cause and enemy of passion.
 - (c) Passion as material of virtue.
 - (d) The joy and sorrow of virtue.
 3. Factors of redintegration -- good habits:
 - (a) Necessity of plurality of moral virtues.
 - (b) Personal and social virtues:
 - (1) The social virtues.
 - (2) The personal virtues.
 - (3) Aristotle's enumeration of the virtues: fortitude, temperance, generosity, magnificence, love of honour, magnanimity, meekness, affability, sincerity, recreation (eutrapelia), justice.
 4. The leading factors: cardinal virtues:
 - (a) Their limitation to four: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance.
 - (b) Their claim to leadership
 - (c) Their mutual distinction.
 - (d) A scale of moral virtue:
 - (1) Virtues on the human plane.
 - (2) Ascending to the divine plane.
 - (3) Divine plane attained.
 - (4) The virtue of God.
 5. Redintegration of human nature to God:
 - (a) Name and existence of theological virtues: faith, hope, charity,
 - (b) Distinction from intellectual and moral virtues.
 - (c) Their number and contrast with human faith and hope.
 - (d) Their scale of excellence.
- Conclusion:
1. Virtues and the redintegration of human life.
 - (a) Individual life.
 - (b) Social life,
 - (c) Divine life,
 2. Virtue and complete human life.
 3. Virtue and energetic human life.
 4. Virtue and successful human life.

CHAPTER X STEPS TOWARDS HAPPINESS (Q. 59-62)

The redintegration of human nature

Modern naturalistic education has much to say about the integration of personality. To these psychologists and philosophers of education, this integration is a goal to which all educational efforts must be directed. It is not so important to us here to notice how wrong these educationalists are in their notion of personality or of integration; what is important is that we notice how right they are in pointing out the delicate balance of the creature man.

Within itself

It is puzzling for these modern educators to notice that man has something in common with stones, but is not a stone; he has life in common with plants, but is not a plant; and he has feeling in common with the beasts, yet of all the creatures he alone has need of having these elements properly balanced. The obvious explanation is that he needs balancing because he can unbalance himself; he alone has freedom. The task is really much more puzzling than these modern educators suspect: for over and above his extended substance, his life and his feeling, man has spirit in common with the angels and yet is no angel; he has an intellect and will that can reach to the uttermost boundaries of infinity, and which yet cannot say with

absolute power what his feelings will be, how far they will go, or what preponderant part they will take in his actions.

Looking at man as we find him today, it is evident that his parts must be exactly proportioned and his energies be nicely balanced one against the other, if the whole man is to function smoothly as a man. In a word, it is much easier to upset that smooth functioning of man's personality than it is for the runner to pull a tendon in his leg; and the results are more disastrous.

To God

We can go a step further and realize that over and above the nice co-ordination of the inferior parts of man to the one supreme director of human activity which is reason, there is a further co-ordination and subordination necessary for the full perfection of human development -- a subordination, co-ordination, integration to the supreme director of all activity, God Himself. And then we feel a deep pity for the bewildered educationalist who is trying so futilely to assemble the parts of man in one harmonious unit, with no notion as to what the finished product should look like. No wonder he stands back and scratches his head in astonishment at all the parts he has left over, at the weirdly different results of his efforts like a little boy who has fixed the clock. He has none of the comfortable security of the expert assembling the bones of prehistoric monsters; the monsters will never come back to give the lie to the expert, but man is always present, haunting the naturalistic educationalists with the bitter failure of his efforts.

Perhaps this need for integration is more vividly present to us who know so well that once man had that perfect subordination of sense life to reason and reason to God; and lost it. Because we know how it was once had, we know how to go about getting it again. If we lost our balance, at least we know it was lost and we know what is necessary for the maintaining of that balance. In very simple terms, we can pick ourselves up again because we know that delicate balance is obtained and maintained by the double medium of habit or virtue and grace.

The redintegration of passion

It is unfortunate that our democratic traditions made the word "subordinate" and "subjection" so thoroughly objectionable. The notion of subordinating passion to reason seems to us to have something of the unpleasantness and unfairness of tyranny about it, like the frowning annihilation of an impertinent student by an impatient professor. And this notion has been given some substance by the uncompromising fashion in which some men proceeded to the integration of passion, of the movement of the sense appetites, in the human personality.

To one group it seemed quite evident that passion was unworthy of the human personality, something the virtuous man could not admit without shame; so the Stoics and the Puritans would integrate passion by blasting it out of existence, or at least by refusing to extend to it the social amenities reserved for the respectable citizens of the human kingdom. Still others were so impressed by the naturalness and force of passion, that they would integrate it to the human personality by blasting humanity out of that personality. This is the group that recently has been telling us such bogey stories about repression, inhibitions, and the necessity of self-expression.

Distinction of passion and virtue

Passion, however, is neither pariah nor king. It has its place; and the work of the moral virtues is precisely to keep it in its place. Of course moral virtues and passions are different things; but that does not make them inimical things. A loud senseless laugh may make many enemies, or at least many grouches, but certainly it will not find itself squared off in a battle to the death with the vocal cords from which it proceeded. It is true enough that passion is the movement of the sense appetite and moral virtue the immediate principle of that movement; but that links them arm in arm rather than putting them at each other's throat. Passion of itself is morally indifferent, while moral virtue is always morally good; but that merely indicates in a vague way the work before the moral virtues.

It is wrong to picture moral virtue, as the moderns do, as sitting on the lid of the passions as a man might sit on the lid of the safety valve of a steam-engine, an uncomfortable and dangerous position under the best of circumstances. This view allows our imagination to picture all sorts of things as happening within man himself because of the terrific pressure brought to bear by the virtues; we half expect the virtuous man literally to explode before our eyes. Or we can see passion as the browbeaten underdog and immediately our sympathies are heartily enlisted.

Moral virtue as cause and enemy of passion

The moral virtues actually produce passion. Look at it this way. Passion starts from the sense appetite, and its goal, if it is to be human passion, is reason, measuring up to the rule laid down by reason, keeping to the road mapped out by reason; moral virtue starts from reason with all the charts and maps in its pocket. Its goal is the sense appetite which it is to steer along the road of reason. The only type of passion that virtue will operate against is the inhuman or beastly passion which disregards the rule of reason, which hurtles itself off the road of reason as a frightened horse might plunge over a precipice. And the moral virtues will operate just as earnestly against no passion at all as they will against this unreasonable, bullying, blindly crashing passion that is wrecking the whole delicate balance of human personality.

Passion, then, is not a browbeaten underdog, nor a simmering boiler of steam with no legitimate outlet. The other older notion, that passion is unworthy of the virtuous man, we have already treated of at some length. Let us stop for just a glance at one rather amusing angle of that opinion which our Anglo-Saxon civilization has taken to its heart. The ancient version of this angle was that the passion of sorrow had no place in the life of the virtuous man; it comes from evil actually present and the virtuous man allows no evil to happen to him. The modern version is that sorrow is unworthy of a man, by reason of his manhood; it is something for women and children -- at least the expression of it.

There is a little something in each opinion. It is absurd to say that no evil can happen to the virtuous man. He is, after all, human; he can suffer misfortune in his external goods, pain in his body, sin in his soul. Even supposing that here and now he is in the best of health and good fortune, without a sin to his name, it is hardly likely that he never committed a sin for which he can entertain regret; even in this highly improbable case, he can always very laudably be sorry for the sins of others. But it is by no means absurd to say the sort of evil which makes a substantial difference in the success or failure of a human life -- sin -- cannot happen to a man. It does not happen; it is deliberately chosen.

It is quite silly to maintain that an expression of sorrow is a reflection on manhood, unless we insist that men are freaks with an essential part of their nature omitted while women and children are complete human specimens. But it is not absurd to say that such expression of sorrow, like all other passions, must be under a man's control, under the guidance of his reason; that unless it is, it is a serious reflection on the very humanity of the individual in question.

Passion as material of virtue

Important as it may be to see passion clearly as the material of moral virtues, it is equally important to understand that passion is not the sole material of the moral virtues, or rather that it is not the material of all the moral virtues. We may picture the moral virtues as governors sent out by the emperor reason to the colonies -- the sensitive appetite. They arrive there, participating the power of the emperor, for the sole purpose of governing those colonies; and that means for the purpose of directing them to the common good of the empire. That common good will be the good of reason, according to the rules of reason, moving along towards the ends of reason. So that everything and anything that can be governed, ordained to that good of reason, is a proper subject of the moral virtues.

Concretely, it is not merely the passions themselves that must be conformed to reason if man is to have an integrated personality, his external actions must also measure up to this standard of humanity which is reason. Put in another way, we can say that reason not merely guides the sensitive appetite along its proper

road, it also guides the intellectual appetite or will which is the root principle of all activity in man. Moral virtues are no less necessary in the intellectual appetite than they are in the sensitive appetite. In the latter they regulate the passions of man; in the former they regulate the actions of man.

The joy and sorrow of virtue

The moral virtues of the will, in themselves, can operate without passion, as we can pay a doctor's bill without sorrow flooding our souls; passion, after all, is proper to the sense appetite, something we have in common with the beasts. But even here, because man is such a smoothly working unit, passion ordinarily makes its appearance. There is joy in the will at successful, smooth operation; and that joy reacts on the sensitive appetite to cause pleasure. As a rule the greater the proficiency and perfection in the will, the greater the joy and consequently, ordinarily speaking, the greater the passion responding to that joy like an echo responding to a shout in the mountains.

A man once told me of his operation. It seems that he was on time but, as sometimes happens, the doctor was late. So he was wheeled into a small side operating-room and of course the only way to pass the time was to look about the room. There for his interest and terror was a most splendid collection of bright shiny scalpels, scissors, pincers, a veritable armoury of instruments of torture. Somehow it seemed to him that operations would be much less terrifying if the doctor could do his job with just an ordinary knife; it would not be so bad if it were something like a boy-scout knife, full of gadgets for every purpose. But at least it should be simple, direct, to give less room to the imagination's frightful pictures. Perhaps much the same sensation comes upon a man the first time he stops to realize the complex assortment of virtues which a man must have to carve out a successful life. It would be much simpler if we were sent out to cope with life as the pioneers coped with the wilderour ingenuity; we would be hacking out our eternal homes as a pioneer hacked out his log-cabin with only an axe for an aid. But the finished product would not be much of a palace; and probably we would be scalped by Indians long before the house was finished.

No, the task of successful living is much too complicated a work. We need every one of the shining virtues which life offers us. One, no matter how complex, would only make a botch of the job. Looking at it from another angle, these moral virtues are governors of particular colonies participating in the power of the emperor reason; no one of them, however complex, could direct the whole moral life of a man, any more than a creature, however perfect and complex, can adequately mirror the beauty of God in which it participates.

Factors of redintegration -- good habits:

Necessity of plurality of moral virtues

Our shining set of tools for the job of living is easily divided into tools for inside and for outside work, or to call them by other names, virtues of passion and virtues of action, personal virtues and social virtues. Understand, of course, that every virtue has operations by way of effects, but here it is a question of the material upon which the virtues will work -- some deal exclusively with the passions, others with the actions of man. In other words, the aim of these inside or personal virtues is the conformity of man's inner life to the rule of reason; the aim of the outside or social virtues is to regulate man's relations with others by the rule of reason.

The foundation of this distinction is important and like most important truths is familiarly within reach most of the time. Put it this way: drinking a single glass of whisky can be a difficult mortification undertaken in the spirit of Lent for the man who is used to drinking a pint a day; for another man the same act would be one of sottish intemperance. A book that would make one person blush merely produces prodigious yawns in another. But no matter how bored a man is as he goes about his murders, no matter how lightly they affect his sleep, or how good they are for his nerves, they are always wrong, wrong no matter who does them.

In plain language, there are some acts whose goodness or malice must be judged in reference to the

individual performing them, according as they affect this or that individual differently, or even as they affect the same individual differently at different times. The virtues which deal with these, principally busy themselves with the emotions of the individual. There are other acts whose goodness or malice is completely independent of how we feel or think about them, for their goodness or malice is measured in terms of what is due to another. (The virtues of the first are the personal, of the second, the social virtues.)

Personal and social virtues:

The social virtues

It is immediately evident that the social virtues have one common note, a note that runs through them like a simple melody through all the complexities of a difficult piece of music. That note is one of debt, of what is due to another, of another's rights being respected. In other words, it is the note of justice. This is particularly important: important in its insistence on the fundamental truth that the bond of social life is mutual communication, the external relations of man to man, for only by such externals can man communicate with his fellow men in this life; important today in its bald condemnation of any and all social theories that have lost sight of the rights of others in their scramble for vindication of one class, have lost sight of the necessity of fostering and regulating these relations rather than destroying them.

This does not mean, of course, that when we have placed justice, the equipment for successful social life is complete. Our debts to others are widely different: what is due to God, to parents, to civil authority, to neighbours, to subjects, to inferiors, what is due as result of a contract, of promise, in payment for a benefit received -- each one offers a wealth of material for the labours of a virtue. We shall see each of these in some detail in the next volume.

The personal virtues

The personal virtues, whose material is the passions of man, automatically split into the virtues of the concupiscible appetite (from which come the mild passions) and the irascible appetite (from which flow the emergency passions). But their classification is not so simple as all this. In fact it is not at all simple. We cannot simply stop with two virtues, any more than a surgeon can stop buying equipment because he has a jack-knife. Nor can we simply click off the names of the passions and tie a virtue to each one. Evidently a man's love of food, his desire for it and his pleasure in it are all regulated by one virtue, so intimately are the mild passions connected by their common object -- the sensible good. Or again love and hate are the subject-matter of one virtue. Entering the field of the emergency passions, that intimate connection coming from a common object is missing; so we find hope and desperation dealing with a difficult good and regulated by magnanimity, daring and fear dealing with a great danger and regulated by fortitude, while anger is taken care of by meekness.

Aristotle's enumeration of the virtues

It all seems complicated, like the bewildering array of the surgeon's tools. I hope the reader will appreciate this complexity. One of the reasons why Aristotle's enumeration of the virtues is given in detail in the outline preceding this chapter is to win a hearty agreement on this complexity; such agreement, in fact, as will allow the unraveling of each particular virtue to be deferred until the next volume.

The leading factors:

Their limitation to four: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance

At any rate it should be a heartily comforting thought to everyone to realize all this complex assortment of virtues can be reduced to just four: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. These are the principal or cardinal virtues, the hinges upon which a man's life swings; they are the root virtues to which all the other perfect or complete virtues can be reduced. We classified the intellectual virtues as incomplete or imperfect because they perfected only a faculty of man without guaranteeing the good use of the faculty; or, in simpler terms, they made man good in this or that way, but they did not make him a good man. We are talking now of the integration of human personality, the assembling of the elements of humanity into a

smooth-running engine which will carry man to his goal; we are speaking of the making of a successful, a good man. Looking for the leading factors in that integration, we have only to look for the principal virtues among the perfect or complete virtues which make the whole man good. Prudence is the only intellectual virtue included in this list of four; and it will be remembered from our last chapter that the material of prudence is moral material -- human acts; while the principles of prudence are furnished by the moral virtues. In other words, the interdependence of prudence and the moral virtues is so complete that one cannot exist without the other.

Their claim to leadership; their mutual distinction

These virtues have a much stronger claim to principality than mere convenience. If we remember that the goodness of man consists in conforming to the order of reason, then it is immediately evident that order can exist in reason itself (prudence); or it is imposed on actions (justice); or is imposed upon the passions, either in so far as they impel a man to something contrary to reason (temperance) or tend to withdraw him from something that is according to reason (fortitude). Even more simply, looking at the location of these virtues, we find prudence in the reason itself, justice in the will, temperance in the concupiscible appetite, fortitude in the irascible appetite. By these virtues we have the fundamental perfection of all possible sources of human acts.

As we have pictured it in this chapter, the world is a huge human workshop, an assembly plant for human personalities. We can make an approximate job of the assembly by comparing the parts one to another; but for the first-class assembly necessary for the long, rough road over which the human machine must travel we must have the model before our eyes all the time. And that supreme model, to which all men must conform for a successful living, is God Himself.

The creatures of the universe make up a great vague mirroring of divine beauty, as though God had looked into the still waters of the pool of the universe and sunk His image in their depths. Each creature, each part of every creature, is a facet of a great jewel, throwing back to divinity one reflected ray of the divine beauty. So all creatures make their way back to God as to the source from which they come; each reaches its perfect fulfilment as it approaches closer to the beauty, the perfection of God. And all this is true of man, of every part of man, and, of course, of the virtues of man.

The virtue of God

It is ridiculous to speak of temperance, fortitude, justice and prudence in God in the same human way in which we speak of them in men. But vaguely they are moulded on the divine model. Trying to see that likeness, we see prudence as the very mind of God, temperance as the turning of the divine will to God Himself as in us it is the turning of appetite to reason; the fortitude of God is His unchangeable constancy, His justice the observance of the Eternal Law in all His works.

A scale of moral virtue: Virtues on the human plane

Perhaps it is easier to see the human personality's approach to that divine model by looking at the different stages of its assembly. In the first, purely human, stage man according to these virtues is more and more perfect in his handling of human affairs. Through the infused moral virtues, man comes a step closer to the divine model, for by them we find man rejecting all earthly things as trifles and directing all thought to divine things by prudence; by temperance, as far as nature allows, he edges away from the use of the body; by fortitude he strides boldly to the high things of God, unterrified by the thought of separation of soul from body; and by justice he wins the whole soul's hearty consent to this divine way of life.

Ascending to the divine plane

Finally, when the human personality has come as close to, measuring up to the divine model as the infinite generosity of God can allow, we see prudence penetrating exclusively into divine things, temperance undisturbed by temporal desires, fortitude indifferent to or ignorant of suffering, and justice perpetually

associated with the divine mind through the amicable pact of imitation. These last are the virtues of the saints, whether in heaven or on earth. Sanctity is the ultimate of integration of the human personality.

It is to be noted that for that integration of personality we have frankly stepped into the supernatural. The infused moral virtues, which come not from any effort of man but only from the generosity of God as an infallible accompaniment of His grace, are only a part of that victorious sally into the supernatural which wins the essential happiness of man.

Divine plane attained

It is not to a happiness proportioned to his nature that man is destined, but to no less a happiness than the participation of the life of God. Yet he must win to that altogether supernatural happiness by the homely steps of his own human acts; even his part in the divine life must be the fruit of his clever use of the tools of life. Ordinary tools will not do; yet they must be the tools of man. God does not ask us to carve out a crystal palace with a sledgehammer; He puts supernatural tools into our hands, rather He makes these human acts of ours supernatural, He gives them a divine edge, an eternal significance which enables a man to say to himself in heaven or hell that he was the workman who fashioned his destiny. This supernatural character is given to our acts by giving us supernatural principles of those acts, supernatural habits, supernatural virtues: one group supernaturally to regulate our human moral life -- supernatural moral virtues; the other to lift us up, even in this life, to the point where we can come into contact with the divine life itself -- the theological virtues.

Redintegration of human nature to God:

Name and existence of theological virtues: faith, hope, charity

These theological virtues, the virtues whose only object is God Himself, are utterly supernatural and utterly necessary, supernatural because they can come only from God, be known only through God's revelation, and go only to God, necessary because the goal of man is completely beyond his natural principles of actions, his natural virtues.

Distinction from intellectual and moral virtues

These are not intellectual virtues, nor are they moral virtues; their object is not the intellect of man, nor the appetite of man, but God. They are theological virtues. And yet they lift our whole moral and intellectual life to a supernatural plane. Put in another way, we can say that God equipped us no less adequately for the supernatural life, through grace, than He did for the natural life through nature itself. The knowledge of first principles upon which our whole intellectual life is based is natural to us; the will of man naturally tends to its natural object, naturally grasps that object when it is present. Faith makes the knowledge of supernatural principles connatural; hope makes the striving for the supernatural goal connatural; charity makes union with the supernatural goal, God, connatural. In other words, by these virtues we move about the broad fields of the supernatural with the easy familiarity of natives; we breathe the rarefied air of heaven as if our lungs were made for no other; our intellects and wills join in the family life of God as though this were our home. And indeed it is; for by these virtue, the supernatural is made second nature to us.

Their number and contrast with human faith and hope

We might possibly make a modern mistake by underestimating faith and hope. If we draw an exact parallel between these virtues and human faith and hope, our pride will make them seem unpalatable. For faith and hope, in the human sphere, have something defective about them, a note of uncertainty, of lack of insight, of helplessness. Surely they had none of the strong, sure stride of virtue about them. That is strictly true; for human faith and human hope are not virtues. But that uncertainty, helplessness, that staggering stride is not present in supernatural faith and hope which are backed up by the infallible authority and omnipotent strength of God Himself.

Their scale of excellence

As the fulfilment of man's age-long dream of becoming "like God", these virtues are infinitely precious, a treasure to be fondled again and again, to be dreamt over, to be guarded at any cost. We know whence they come. In running these jewels through our fingers again and again, the desire constantly comes to know more about them, to know all about them. We shall fulfil that desire as far as possible in our next volume. For the moment it will be enough to insist that since they are infused with grace all three appear instantaneously in the soul; there is no first, second and third. But, as we understand them, the order of their generation is: first, faith -- for we must know before we can love; then hope, for our goal must be possible to us; finally charity. But in the order of their excellence, charity leads all virtues, the other theological virtues included, for the object of charity -- union with God -- is the goal of all the virtues, all the actions, all the aspirations of man. It is the final goal of all human life, the essence of human happiness.

Conclusion: Virtues and the redintegration of human life.

We can sum this all up briefly by going back to our starting-point, the redintegration of personality. A stone exists but has no personality; a plant lives but is not a person; an animal has feeling but no one attempts to develop a dog's personality. Personality is more than mere existence, life or feeling: it is the peculiar characteristic of a living, feeling, intellectually knowing substance that is responsible for its acts. In other words, a person is one who has freedom, whose acts are under his commands, whose life answers to his steering.

The perfection of that personality, then, will be the perfection of that mastery of life, that command of action, or, in the terms we have been using throughout this book, the redintegration of personality consists in bringing the whole of man under the sway of reason, of extending those controlled acts that alone are human to every department of man's activities. The human personality is redintegrated, perfected, in so far as the will and the sensible appetites and their passions come more fully under the control and direction of reason. Even more simply: personality is redintegrated in proportion as the individual grows in virtue, for the whole purpose of virtue is precisely the extension of the sway of reason, the conforming of appetite to the rule of reason, the creation of grooves along which human action flows to the end of reason or the goal of human life. For the smooth unity, the easy, faultless functioning of this creature man, virtue is indispensable; without it man is hardly a unit, but rather a chaotic example of constant civil war. His individual life is nothing but the wreckage left by the warring armies that have passed again and again over every inch of its territory.

Social life

As virtue binds the energies of man into one mighty unit, it also binds men together into the unit we call society. It is the cement holding the bricks of society together, harmonizing, regulating, controlling all the external means by which alone men can communicate. There is no other means of holding men together except that of force; and where the mailed fist is the symbol and explanation of social unity, there is not a society of men but of slaves. It is justice alone that makes society possible; every attack on justice is an attack on society, every society based upon injustice has the seeds of its own dissolution within itself. It must cease to exist or its subjects must cease to be men, for without justice there is no human society, there is no conformity to the rules of reason, no travelling along the road of reason to the goal of reason, the goal of humanity.

Divine life

Virtue is the great integrator. Only by it can man live with himself; only by it can he find life with his fellows; and only by it can he live with God. It is the great peacemaker, putting man at peace with himself, at peace with his fellows, at peace with God. In its supernatural form it is a magic instrument lifting man from the natural universe to the supernatural life of God, stamping each of his smallest actions with the mark which gives it supernatural value, giving every moment of his life an eternal significance that makes

his lightest step echo for ever in heaven or in hell. And only when that last destiny has been for ever determined will man be fully integrated, or spend an eternity completing his disintegration.

Virtue and complete human life

From all this it is evident that virtue is not an integrating force in the sense of dwarfing half of man's nature, of blasting out his passion in favour of his reason or his reason in favour of his passions. By virtue alone can all the energies of man have their complete development; only by virtue can man live a complete, a full human life. He is not mere animal; nor is he pure spirit. That delicate balance between animal and spirit which will extinguish neither one but fully develop both can be had only by the inculcation of virtue.

Virtue and energetic, successful human life

Only the virtuous man is able to use his human energies to the full. All the sweeping force of passion and the sublime soarings of will are harnessed to the goals of reason and rush along the road of life in giant strides by virtue; without it man is like a mad dog, rushing now in this direction, now in that, retracing his steps only to come rushing back again, but always effectively barring himself from advancing towards his goal. Will and passion can accomplish great things when they are working together; but they work together only when they work under the order of reason. Working against reason they produce nothing but shattered hopes, fruitless quests, despairing hearts. Success in human living can be summed up in terms of good action, action in conformity to the dictates of reason; and the principles of good actions are good habits, or virtues. This is the end of education, this is the reintegration of the human personality that means complete, energetic, successful human living -- sanctity.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 11 --»
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CHAPTER XI -- HABITS OF HAPPINESS (Q. 63-67)

1. Two ways of considering a finished product:
 - (a) That of the busy genius, equipped with secretaries and assistants.
 - (b) That of the leisurely craftsman:
 - (1) Gathering up the shavings, putting things in order.
 - (2) Remembering, pondering the labour, the aims, and results of work.
 2. The finished product of virtue is second nature at its best.
 3. The labour of producing second nature:
 - (a) Nature's part.
 - (b) Man's part.
 - (c) God's part.
 4. The aims of second nature:
 - (a) The ultimate aim.
 - (b) The immediate aim -- mediocrity and the mean of virtue:
 - (1) The mean of the moral virtues.
 - (2) Of the intellectual virtues.
 - (3) Lack of a mean in the theological virtues.
 5. The result of second nature:
 - (a) The co-ordination of parts:
 - (1) Connection of the moral virtues.
 - (2) Connection of the moral and theological virtues.
 - (3) Connection of the theological virtues.
 - (b) Balance of the whole structure of virtue:
 - (1) Equality
 - (2) Inequality.
 - (3) Comparative excellence.
 6. Durability of the finished product:
 - (a) In time,
 - (b) In eternity.
- Conclusion:
1. Virtue and pride of accomplishment.
 2. Virtue and humility of the craftsman.
 3. Virtue and gratitude.
 4. the finished product -- second nature at its best.

CHAPTER XI HABITS OF HAPPINESS (Q. 63-67)

Two ways of considering a finished product:

That of the busy genius, equipped with secretaries and assistants.

We men and women of today have lost something very precious. As so often happens, the tragedy of that loss is increased by the illusion that the loss is itself a gain. It is bad enough to lose a friend, but to rejoice in the loss of a friend is tragedy! This modern tragedy is vividly exemplified in the story of a famous novelist who made it a practice to rise very early every morning, and write madly for three or four hours, sweeping the numbered sheets off his desk on to the floor. Then, while he took his morning stroll, his secretary gathered up the manuscript, arranged the numbered pages and packed the finished product off to the publishers.

That of the leisurely craftsman:

Gathering up the shavings, putting things in order.

Somehow that appeals to our love of the efficient, of speed, of accomplishment. Creative genius cleaning up after the work is done, sweeping up the shavings, arranging the loose ends, putting things in order is genius wasting its time and gifts; it is as incongruous a picture as that of a prima donna washing her own clothes or the mayor of New York dusting the furniture every morning before going to the city hall.

I wonder if our familiarity with machines has not begun to warp our vision, to make us see all things, even men, in terms of a machine. Surely we are inclined to forget today that man, like God, stamps his image

on his works. Something of our personality, something that no other force in the universe can contribute, goes into our labours and makes them really a part of ourselves. This is the foundation of the pride, the affection, even the tenderness of the true craftsman for the finished product of his labours. The wrecked safe bears the mark of the particular expert who ransacked it, as the perfectly rounded, clear note of the singer, the products of the carpenter, the bricklayer, the lawyer or the surgeon, all tell an intimate story of their authors as the universe tells an intimate story of God.

Remembering, pondering the labour, the aims, and results of work.

What we have lost is that exquisite joy of the old craftsman puttering about his shop, putting things in order in an easy, leisurely fashion that gives him time to stop a moment and run a hand over the smooth perfection of his work. What a time he had getting this particular part of the work done, how he planned, dreamed, worried; how eagerly he went back to the job as his dreams began to take shape; what secret pride there is in this child of this genius, even though none of his works seem quite to catch the elusive beauty and breath-taking grace of his dreams! He has not forgotten that when God finished His work of creation He surveyed His creatures and saw that "they were good". This is the way Adam would have worked naturally if sin had not distorted the very nature of work.

The finished product of virtue is second nature at its best

And that is the way we are going to work in this chapter. We have spent several chapters painting the picture of second nature at its best, laboriously painting in every detail of the structure of good habits in man. Now the work is done and of course things are scattered about. Let us stop and put things in order, pick up the odds and ends, pausing every now and then to steal a glance at the beauty of that painting, to remember smilingly the effort which went into it and the pride there is in it even though there is always a pang of disappointment that the reality never measures up to the dream.

The labour of producing second nature

It is well to remember that it was necessary to build in a second nature for man because of the paradoxical combination of imperfection and perfection. Because only the infinite can measure up to human powers, to tie those powers down to the finite and particular would be like holding down a spirited thoroughbred to a sedate pace. Or, to put it in another way, the tremendous energies of man's appetites, the tremendous horizons of his mind, had to be applied to particulars. Man's intellect and will are great power-houses from which the power flows along the power lines of habit. They are like a great reservoir from which channels must lead in different directions, according to the ends for which the water is to be used. The modifications of man's powers, these feed-wires, these channels, are the habits of man; and when they are good habits, they are virtues.

Nature's part

We have said it was important that these channels or grooves be built into man. He could not get far without them. Yet they had to be built in; they were not furnished by nature like a set of teeth, strong lungs or a pleasant smile. The best we could hope from nature was a nudge, a push in the direction of second nature. Or perhaps it would be better to say a shove; nature is never over-delicate and has definite notions about what man must construct within himself to make the most of his powers.

Nature is not over-delicate; to some she must appear niggardly. The natural inclination to know first principles instantly, the natural inclination to desire good, seem, from one point of view, slim foundations for our whole intellectual and moral life. Even granting that each individual has positive leanings, by his very physical constitution, towards this or that good habit, towards justice, or temperance, or fortitude, those leanings are inevitably balanced by others that make the acquiring of other virtues extraordinarily difficult. All in all, nature did not monopolize the task of producing man's second nature.

Man's part

A child puzzling over her homework probably feels hurt that the family will not tell her the answers and she feels she is neglected because she must work out the problems herself. The family is niggardly with its knowledge. But when she has solved the problems, not only the answers but the principles from which she proceeded will be hers. The case is the same with the niggardliness of nature. It is because man's acts are to be his, not nature's, that the immediate principles of those acts, the habits, must also be his. We are not mere animals with tough hides, long sharp teeth, and no hope; our goal is our own, our acts are our own, and we fashion those acts through the medium of the virtues or the vices.

This, then, is our part in the building of second nature. We are trying to make our powers respond to a command like a squad responding to a drill sergeant's whistle. The whole purpose of virtue is to conform action to a rule; and human nature has the double rule of its own reason and the reason of God. What falls under the rule of human reason, falls under the rule of divine reason. The one is in perfect accord with the other as the teaching of a bishop is in accord with the teaching of a pope. But it does not work conversely, for God is not limited to the capacities of human reason any more than the powers of a pope are limited to one diocese. We cannot bend our energies to all the mysterious goals of the divine reason; that is God's work. But we can, and must, cut grooves within ourselves along which our actions will flow to the goal of human reason.

We start from the push given by nature, much as the pioneer started from the push given him by the crowding of later immigrants. And like the pioneer we blaze the trail along which all other acts will follow, follow more quickly, more easily, more perfectly. The demand that our actions produce the habits from which they will proceed ever more easily may seem like asking the kitten to produce its mother before it can be born. But that is because we are underestimating that impulse of nature. The act produces something more perfect than itself -- its very principle -- only because it is supported by the powerful forces of nature itself, much as a physically timid king can rule whole races because of the backing of his army and navy. For just as the principles of intellectual knowledge are higher, wider, deeper than the conclusions which follow from them, so the broad inclinations of nature are more powerful than the habits which proceed from them through the agency of acts. Each act cuts the groove just that much deeper and makes the next act go just that much more surely to its appointed goal.

God's part

All this every man can do, must do. But only God can steer man to a goal above all nature; so only from God can come the habits which will give our actions that supernatural significance which enables us to penetrate the walls of heaven. The theological virtues, coming immediately from God, give us a start towards the supernatural goal of all men, much as nature starts us off towards a natural goal; to enable us to cope with the detailed means to that supernatural end, God infuses in us a complete set of moral virtues -- supernatural prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

However, a coin tossed down in the name of supernatural justice makes exactly the same clink as a coin which is given from natural justice. The temperate acts of a pagan give no clue by which they can be distinguished from those of a Christian. But they are distinctly different, as different as time and eternity. Even though it is impossible to detect the difference in the actions themselves, it is very easy to see that the infused virtues directing man's acts to the eternal vision of God, are very different from the acquired virtues ordering human acts to a conformity with reason. There is a difference even in regard to the immediate object of the different virtues, even though that difference is not immediately seen in the acts. So, from the acquired virtue of temperance, a man might curtail his too ardent desire for food for the sake of the health of his body or for the better operation of his mind; while, from the infused virtue of temperance, his aim would be to reduce that body to further and further subjection to the soul.

In other words, these infused virtues are not called supernatural merely because they come from God. They are above all nature, they cannot be acquired by any activity of ours, and their goal is no less above nature than their origin. Even their immediate object and the mode (of charity) in which they proceed place them in a class infinitely above the acquired or natural virtues. This is God's part in the production

of this second nature of man to give us with grace the infused theological and moral virtues; and an enormous part it is.

The aims of second nature: The ultimate aim

We have all heard thousands of times that virtue consists in a happy medium between excess and defect. Somehow, we have difficulty in being proud of that fact. It seems strange that we should demand such intimate and powerful activity on the part of God to make a man respond prudently by saying "harumph" instead of "yes" or "no". Actually that is not prudence at all; it is diplomacy or timidity. A happy medium is not a statement of a policy of straddling, of perching our soul on the topmost bar of the fence and taking good care we do not allow it to drop on one side or the other. It is not walking backwards down the middle of the road in order to confuse everyone, including ourselves, as to where we stand. It is not a dedication to an anemic life of grey mediocrity where nothing must be allowed to happen which is out of the ordinary.

The immediate aim -- mediocrity and the mean of virtue:

We make these mistakes by forgetting that "happy medium" is a technical term with a technical meaning. Virtue, as we have seen, is the one possible source of the extraordinary. By its nature it guarantees a steadily better, easier, more perfect result. In its supernatural form it is the secret of the mad romance with divinity itself, the hidden spring from which bubble up those impossible accomplishments, incredible hopes, and that constant reaching for the stars that give heroic proportions to the dullest of human lives. There is a huge difference between mediocrity and the medium of virtue, as great a difference as between the blustering cowardice of Pilate and the wide-flung courage of Paul.

This difference is vividly clear when we say quite simply that the medium of virtue is that demand which a man must meet to be worthy of his manhood; the medium of supernatural virtue is what a man must meet to be worthy of the friendship of Christ. Excess and defect, too much or too little, always have reference to some rule, to some norm which is the standard. A manufacturer has produced small whisky glasses which are graduated: the lowest mark has over it the caption "ladies", the second, "men"; the third, near the top of the glass, has no word at all, merely the picture of a very fat pig. Those lines are norms laid down to guide or shame the drinker into taking just enough. The rule of virtue is the rule of reason; excess is going beyond the bounds of reason; defect is offering less than reason demands. In matters of temperance, for example, excess is the glutton's gorging; defect is the miser's starvation. In either case there has been a defect of conformity to the rule of reason; the individual in either case has been somewhat less than a man.

The mean of the moral virtues

In fortitude and temperance particularly this excess and defect, as far as quantity itself is concerned, is a matter to be judged with reference to the individual himself; to what is excess or defect for this particular man. But of course the other circumstances of the act, the "when", "why", "where" and so on, must also be considered. In matters of justice, on the contrary, this happy medium of virtue is definitely objective. Justice does not deal with the passions, which vary in every man, but with external actions and words, with the means of communication among men. The material of justice always has reference to another, it is the altruistic, the social virtue, its medium is not proper to this or that man, but to all men. Even though I have not acted unjustly because of my ignorance, the thing I have done is still unjust, for it falls short of the objective rule of reason determining what is due to another.

As a matter of fact a "happy medium", in this technical sense, goes far beyond the field of the moral virtues. It is indeed universally true of anything that can be gauged or measured, that its good, its perfection, consists in a happy medium which does not go beyond the rule by which it is measured but which nevertheless meets the requirements of that rule. So an architect's plan is the rule according to which a house is built; it would be an odd house, indeed, which would astonish its own architect by its bizarre arrangement of rooms.

Of the intellectual virtues

In this sense, then, the immediate aim even of the intellectual virtues is to establish a happy medium, to conform to the rule by which the intellect is measured, to avoid going beyond it and at the same time not to fall short of it. That rule of intellect is the world of things as they are. The intellect is measured by the reality of things: when it attributes reality to fiction it fails by excess; when it denies reality to fact it fails by defect. Here we have again that beautiful gradation of thought, being and action which anchors all three to the world of reality and, ultimately, metaphysically, to the supreme reality. Here there is no possibility of endless vicious circles, of being lost in a subjective fog of value that is valueless; every step of the way our feet are on solid rock. The rule or measure of human actions is the reason of man; the rule or measure of the reason of man is the world of things as they are; and "the rule or measure of the world of reality, the world of things as they are, is the mind of the God of things as they are. Or, coming down the steps instead of climbing up, the mind of God is the architect's model to which the reality of things must correspond; the real world is the model by which the mind of man is measured; and the reason of man is the model to which the actions of man must conform.

Lack of a mean in the theological virtues

This is important for any slightest insight into that extravagance peculiar to human relations with the divine -- the faith that walks gaily through impenetrable darkness, the hope that no defeat can beat down, the love that is for ever doing impossible things. By this grasp of how things, and actions, and men are measured, we can see that the theological virtues are beyond measure. There is no excess or defect in faith, hope and charity; they have no rule, they have no measure. Rather they go straight to the rule and measure of everything, to God Himself. Any degree of these virtues exceeds all created rules; their perfection is limited only by the unlimited possibilities of the human mind and heart. A man who thinks he will reach heaven without sorrow for his sins is guilty of presumption, not because he has too much hope in God but because he overestimates himself, as the victim of despair underestimates himself. there is absolutely no limit to the flight of the human soul to God.

The result of second nature, the co-ordination of parts: Connection of the moral virtues.

The modern contempt for some of the virtues was brought home to me in a conversation with an aviator whose sympathy for religious under their strict vows and for the sad plight of an unmarried clergy was touching. Eventually he confessed that he had never before talked to a priest; and for a very good reason. He lumped priests and ministers of all kinds in one delicate pink class whose chief avocation was gossiping with idle women and drinking tea. His attitude had been very much that of the precocious columnist who remarked that he would like to be present when the meek inherited the earth -- to see the not-so-meek take the earth away from them.

Both of these men would be astounded to know that a man cannot have the virtue of meekness and not be strong, that sanctity and effeminacy are mutually exclusive terms, that in fact a man cannot have any virtue without having them all. Yet that is precisely the case.

Connection of the moral and theological virtues

We can put this briefly by saying that prudence, in the natural order, and charity, in the supernatural order, tie the virtues together very much as the soul binds together the powers of a man. Destroy the soul of a man and every one of his lesser powers ceases to exist; destroy those lesser powers of man, corrupt his body, and the soul departs. Prudence is the form of the natural virtues giving them life and movement to reason's end, just as charity is the form or soul of the supernatural virtues, giving them supernatural efficacy and movement to the end of charity, to God Himself.

The inter-connection of the virtues is as intimate and necessary as the union of soul and body. Let us

consider the cardinal virtues (as do many of the Fathers) merely as general conditions of virtue: then discretion belongs to prudence, rectitude to justice, moderation to temperance and strength or constancy to fortitude. To attempt to picture any one of these virtues without the others and still call the resultant acts the strong, smooth, goal-gaining acts of virtue is ridiculous. The Jews, for example, with extraordinary righteousness flung the woman taken in adultery at the feet of Christ -- but without discretion, without moderation, even without strength, for it was a cowardly thing to do.

Or let us take these cardinal virtues strictly as virtues, each busy with its own proper object. Then we have prudence as the chauffeur of the moral life, steering every action to the goal of reason; an act of fortitude, justice or temperance without prudence means that such acts are without order to the goal of reason, they blindly slam into the world of men and women regardless of results. And prudence is no less dependent on justice, fortitude and temperance. Whether it is a question of making things or of moulding human actions, in the field of the practical the starting-point is always the goal, not every goal, not a vague universal goal, but the immediate particular goal, as definite as the architect's goal of a house. These particular, immediate goals of human action are furnished to prudence by the moral virtues. In other words, the very principles from which prudence proceeds come from the moral virtues; while the whole direction of the moral virtues comes from prudence.

It is quite true that a famous criminal operated soup kitchens for the poor. Some champions of temperance have been notoriously imprudent, some of them quite unjust. A woman of the streets might be, indeed usually is, generous to the poor, the neglected, the weaklings. All these are facts. But they are not facts that militate against the strict connection of the virtues. At the very most these things can be called "imperfect virtues"; usually they are not virtues at all, but rather inclinations flowing from the physical make-up of the individual or from pity generated by personal experience. The criminal, the imprudent reformer and the woman of the streets produce these imitations of virtue to please themselves, because they like to do those things; not because reason dictates these acts, not because they are striding swiftly to the goal of reason. For, as a matter of fact, their contempt for other virtues is itself a contempt for reason and the goals of reason.

These are imitations wearing a false face of virtue, uninvited guests at the party of human respectability. They might escape detection in the crush at the height of the party; but if we watch them on their way home, if we notice the direction they take, what their goal is, it is immediately evident that they are impostors.

Connection of the theological virtues

We can, indeed we must, carry this connection of the virtues much further, even up to the heights of charity. Prudence is the form that breathes life into the moral virtues in the natural order; and in the natural order that living moral organism is quite independent of charity. It is at least possible that a pagan without charity should have a very high degree of the four cardinal virtues. But evidently the supernatural moral virtues are something else again. They come with grace and charity, exist only for the goal of charity and are lost completely with the loss of charity. Charity in the supernatural order occupies the same place as is occupied by prudence in the natural order: its task is to steer every activity of man, every other virtue, to the supreme supernatural end of man. Without that helmsman there is no possibility of any member of the crew reaching port. We can put this even more strongly by saying that life goes out of these supernatural virtues with the passing of their soul, which is charity; they are dead, and, with regard to the infused moral virtues, that means that they are non-existent.

With the other theological virtues, it means that they are dead in the sense that without charity they cannot move a step towards the goal of life which is the goal of charity. The directive power is missing. But they are not non-existent as are the infused moral virtues. A man tears down his whole spiritual structure by mortal sin; but the foundations of faith and hope are still there for the work of rebuilding. It is only by presumption, despair and infidelity that man can totally destroy the work of God in the building up of his second nature. Faith and hope remain but imperfect, crippled, ineffective virtues which bring man no

nearer to the goal which is the reason for all virtue.

Of course all this is true the other way around. To postulate charity without the moral virtues is like expecting a painter of miniatures to produce perfect specimens of his art with a whitewash brush. It is an insult to God, making the inference that He works much more clumsily in the order of grace than in the order of nature, for in nature He furnishes not only the drive to the goal but the means by which that goal can be realized. The same is true of the relation of charity to faith and hope. Charity is love. That a man has charity means that he is in love with God, that he has a love that is in a very real sense divine. Could that love exist without faith in the Lover, without hope in His strength and fidelity?

Balance of the whole structure of virtue: Equality

This is the high standard of perfect virtue. This is the closely-woven fabric of man's second nature; not a thread can be pulled out without the whole unravelling. But this does not make the second nature of man a standardized unit like the product of a mass-production factory. Saints do not come tumbling out of the workshop of virtue as alike as two cigarettes tumbling out of the same machine; nor do the virtues themselves follow one another about looking as much alike as identical quintuplets. Of course one is greater than another, charity, for example, and temperance; that is perhaps why they fit so beautifully together. And of course one man can be more virtuous than another, or more perfectly virtuous at one stage of his life than at another. There is a certain latitude in virtue, as there is in all things human, a scope which stretches from minimum requirements to full perfection, the distance between the humble Catholic barely squeezing between the closing doors of purgatory and the saint rushing directly into the arms of God. But there is too a certain equality, an inevitable equality, in the growth of the virtues in any one man, an equality of proportion like that of the growth of the fingers on a man's hand in spite of the difference in size between those fingers. A man may have more inclination to one virtue than to another, whether that inclination has its roots in his physical nature, in long hard practice, or in grace. But the actual increase in virtue is not a race that leaves some of the virtues trailing far in the rear, gasping for enough breath to keep them alive.

Inequality

Within the great clan of the virtues there are varying degrees of beauty, excellence, perfection. One branch of the family has a clear claim to nobility: the intellectual virtues perfect the highest faculty of man. In a sense they have a right to be a little superior; but they are a sterile branch, limiting their activities to the perfection of that one faculty -- producing good mathematicians or good carpenters, but not good men.

Comparative excellence

Still, remembering the high place of reason and the preeminence of reason in the direction of human life to its goal and even in the actual possession of that goal, it is as easy to graduate the moral virtues as it is to trace a family likeness. Justice stands at the top -- it comes closest to reason, it resides in the rational appetite, and like reason it is not content to stay within man himself but extends to all his relations to others, even to God. Next comes fortitude, again because it has more of reason, it brings greater realms under the sway of reason and bows down to reason the very appetite that has to do with life and death. At the bottom of the scale is temperance, regulating the appetite for the things that contribute to the life of the individual and the life of the species.

Within the intellectual branch of the family of virtue, wisdom stands at the very top because it aims at the highest perfection of the highest faculty, it includes within and reserves to its own judgment the far-flung fields of all the intellectual virtues. In the same way charity stands at the summit of the theological virtues, as aiming at the highest goal of all goals, directly at God. We can extend this perfection of charity further and say quite accurately that it is the absolutely supreme virtue, for its object is the goal which is the very reason for the existence of all the other virtues; the others are steps on the way to the final resting-place which has belonged to charity from the beginning.

Durability of the finished product: In time,

It is a beautifully balanced product, this second nature of man. One part blends into another with all the delicacy and unobtrusiveness of twilight fading into darkness. But it has all the sturdiness of hard, solid stone. True enough we can blast away the whole supernatural structure by mortal sin; and we can undermine the edifice of natural virtue by neglect or by serious cultivation of the vices. But short of all that, virtue carries on indefatigably up to the very gates of Paradise. What then? How much of all this laboriously wrought second nature will endure into and through eternity ?

In eternity

Of course the saints in heaven do not have to repress inordinate desires for food or drink, they do not have to steel themselves to endure suffering and death, or to resist temptations to theft. The material of the moral virtues is missing in heaven, except justice's constant rendering to God the things that are God's; but the perfect order those virtues strove to impress upon our lives is there in all its perfection. Much the same is true of the intellectual virtues. Their formal element, the ideas we so laboriously acquired during life, will certainly remain, for they are part of the intellect's equipment; but just as certainly, until the general resurrection, all the elements of our act of understanding which have a measure of dependence on physical nature -- the phantasms, the process of abstraction from the phantasms, the recurrence to phantasms -- cannot remain.

There is certainly no room for faith, hope or charity in hell; and in heaven what need is there of faith when we are seeing God face to face, or of hope of attaining His blessed presence when we are eternally united to Him? Charity alone, of all the virtues, remains in its full and perfect operation; for in this life its work is to unite us to God, and that is a work which it will continue to enjoy through all the long stretches of eternity.

Conclusion: Virtue and pride of accomplishment

Let us go back to the workshop from which we started this chapter. It is all cleaned up now, the odds and ends have been gathered up, things put in order, the shavings swept off the floor. There is the finished product of man's second nature before our eyes. Humanity has every reason for a great pride in that product. It represents the slow, careful, minutely detailed labour of many years. It has been built up, stone upon stone, by patient hands, by hearts that refused to be discouraged, by hands and hearts such as flung the medieval cathedrals against the sky even though the daring gesture took hundreds of years. It is like a path through a wilderness that only thousands of steps by feet that were too often weary could ever beat into such smooth hardness. Its progress was like the conquering of a wide empire which allows no slackening of command, of discipline, of vigilance or of alert devotion to the emperor, reason. It is what a man can become, must become, if he is to be worthy of his manhood, if he is to make the most of those tremendous energies, high hopes and keen vision that are his peculiar gift.

Virtue and humility of the craftsman

Yet we must stand amazed before it like the craftsman before the beauty of his work, wondering if after all we could have produced it. If we are completely frank with ourselves as we look at that completed product of man's second nature, we realize that actually we are looking upon the inner workings of sanctity -- for sanctity is the goal of virtue as it is the goal of life. In the face of sanctity the most thoroughgoing egoist is reduced to humble wonder. Is it not an incredible thing that man should be lifted up to the heights of God and live the life of God? Yet what else does sanctity mean? And we understand better why God takes such a personal interest in this work, why He throws all the force of His divine ingenuity into the making of that supernatural second nature by which man can come to God now that God has come to him.

Virtue and gratitude

It is an incredible thing, this personal interest of God. Even more incredible is the set of tools He has

delivered into man's hands, the almost miraculous instruments that turn the passing gesture of a man into eternal music, the yearnings of human love into a divine fruition, the vague gropings of a stumbling mind into the vision of the face of God. But all this is incredible only because we try to measure the generosity of God in terms of the generosity of man. Only because we are so very small is it difficult for us to believe that there can be One so very big.

The finished product -- second nature at its best

There it is. The finished product of the united efforts of God and man, second nature at its best, an array of habits of happiness that marches stoutly to the goal of man, the vision of God.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 12 --»
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CHAPTER XII -- THE BREATH OF HAPPINESS (Q. 68-72)

1. Historical visits of the Holy Ghost:
 - (a) Annunciation
 - (b) Baptism of Christ.
 - (c) Pentecost and the Apostles.
 2. Christ's promise of the Holy Ghost and His work.
 3. The Holy Ghost and Christ's followers to-day:
 - (a) The Church.
 - (b) Individual Catholics: gifts, fruits and beatitudes.
 4. Immediate preparation for divine-human action -- the gifts:
 - (a) Their purpose.
 - (b) Their nature.
 - (c) Their necessity for salvation.
 - (d) Their number.
 - (e) Their relation to the virtues.
 5. Divine-human action -- the fruits and beatitudes:
 - (a) That action in general -- the fruits of the Holy Ghost:
 - (1) Their significance and distinction from beatitudes.
 - (2) The field of this action: man in himself, among his equals, towards his inferiors.
 - (b) In particular -- in its perfection: the beatitudes:
 - (1) Distinction from virtues and gifts.
 - (2) Their double content -- disposition and beginning of heavenly life (merit and reward).
 - (3) The work of the beatitudes in voluptuous, active and contemplative life.
 - (4) The rewards of the beatitudes and of human life, voluptuous, active and contemplative.
 - (5) An accumulation of happiness.
- Conclusion:
1. A justification of astonishment:
 - (a) The usual effect of divine action.
 - (b) Of complete change.
 2. Paradoxes of Christian life:
 - (a) Having nothing but possessing all things.
 - (b) Losing life and finding it.
 3. The ordinary Catholic and the breath of divine life.

CHAPTER XII THE BREATH OF HAPPINESS (Q. 68-72)

In this chapter we are stepping into the region of unspeakable things, of things that are properly seen only by the eye of God, into a region that has been one of impenetrable darkness to the mind of man from the beginning. It is a region of mysterious and paradoxical things, like lights too bright to be seen or sounds too loud to be heard; like sights and sounds that leave a man blind and deaf by their very superabundance. Yet to us it is a friendly, familiar darkness, like the darkness in a home we have known from infancy, or of a house that has been so perfectly described to us that we find our way about easily, without fear, without stumbling, without hesitation, even very often without wonder.

In this chapter we are to examine nothing less than the movement of divinity, the activity of the Holy Ghost. It was a field particularly dear to St. Thomas as a Dominican, for a Dominican is himself a paradox whose only explanation is a burning love of truth; and of course one in love with truth is enthusiastically interested in every detail of the doings of the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost.

Historical visits of the Holy Ghost:

Annunciation, Baptism of Christ, Pentecost and the Apostles

There is a certain characteristic in these activities of the Spirit of Truth, we might say almost a divine trademark stamping them as belonging to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. It is somehow fitting that we should depict the Holy Ghost under the symbol of a dove; for the outstanding characteristic that

marks His work is one of flowing grace, swift power silently speeding down only to soar up to greater heights. When the angel Gabriel told Mary of the coming work of the Holy Ghost he insisted that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee"; at the baptism of Christ, the dove was seen to come down, hovering over His head; on Pentecost Sunday there was the sound of a mighty wind filling the house, and tongues of fire sat upon each one of them. In each case that powerful sweep from above. And in each case a soaring to heights, possible to men only by a very great change. From the low hills of Galilee the pure maid of the royal house was snatched up to the heights of divine maternity; the simple Carpenter of Nazareth, by a change not real but symbolic for our instruction, became the crusading Messiah whose victorious throne was a cross; twelve weak, badly frightened men became the fearless apostles whose footsteps made the square stones of every Roman road echo a march of victory wider than a Caesar's dream. And men, looking on, saw only darkness: a quiet woman from an obscure Jewish village, a criminal hanging on the cross, twelve madmen whose end could only be death.

Christ's promise of the Holy Ghost and His work

All this was not the end but only the beginning of an activity by the Holy Ghost which would become so frequent as to be commonplace to us, though it always remained impenetrable darkness to a mere spectator. Christ at the last supper encouraged the despondent apostles by His assurance that He would not leave them alone, that He would not leave them orphans, but would send them the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who would teach them "all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you". A significant promise! It is an assurance of the constant presence and activity of the Comforter and the supreme Teacher, of the Spirit of Love and the Spirit of Truth; an assurance that men, for all the coming centuries, will be soaring to ever new heights of truth and love, while other men peer into darkness.

The Holy Ghost and Christ's followers to-day:

The Church; Individual Catholics: gifts, fruits and beatitudes

Men, understand; not merely an institution. Twenty centuries of infallible pronouncement and defence of truth, twenty centuries of dogged loyalty to the Master on the part of the Church do not exhaust that promise. It is a promise made also to individuals. A very rich meal masterfully cooked, is rarely appreciated by those to whom it is served; it is more or less taken for granted by jaded appetites. But let a hungry man express his appreciation, not by words but by actions; or give the gourmand the time and opportunity to savour each morsel! Very often we Catholics are neither starved for spiritual things nor have we the keen, critical, insatiable appetite that alone does credit to the spiritual banquets served to us. And so the fact that this activity of the Holy Ghost is a personal matter to everyone of us, that every individual Catholic by the gifts, fruits and beatitudes of the Holy Ghost is the subject of this breath-taking activity of the Spirit of Truth, is practically taken for granted. Yet in us, as in those others, the divine trade-mark is always the same.

Immediate preparation for divine-human action -- the gifts

The activity of the Spirit of Truth within us is summed up prosaically in the three terms: the gifts, fruits and beatitudes of the Holy Ghost. But even such a cursory glance as we are able to give these three reveals something of the glory of Pentecost in our daily lives, something of the divine trade-mark of the Holy Ghost.

Their purpose

Perhaps we can understand this best if we keep in mind that notion of breathing upon, of inspiration, of swift, easy movement. Looking upon man as the subject of movement, as one moved, we can see immediately that the movers of man, the effective movers, are just two: reason within man himself, and God. Now the whole purpose of the gifts is to get man ready for the movement of God, to dispose him for easy speeding along the path towards the altogether supernatural goal of the vision of God. That some special preparation is necessary seems evident. Quite recently in this country we turned to high-speed

railroad travel. On some roads the desired speed was obtained by simply perfecting the locomotives, on others not only the locomotives but every car on the train was specially built with that high speed in mind. The difference between a ride on a very old coach behind one of these high-speed locomotives and a trip on one of the streamlined trains makes concrete the difference between a perfect disposition in the thing moved and a disposition not nearly so perfect. Or, to take an example much nearer home, in the explanation of a particularly difficult doctrine the preliminary notions, the foundations which prepare the mind for that doctrine, are absolutely essential; and the more difficult the doctrine, the more perfect must be that preparation.

That is precisely the work of these gifts. They are gifts, not merely because they come from God, but because they prepare us, in a way totally above our own powers, for prompt, easy movement under the inspiration of God. For the movement of reason, man is prepared by the virtues; for the movement of God, by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. We have summed up the absolute need of that preparation by the virtues by saying that if the same effort were required for every one of his acts as is necessary for the first, all man's progress, indeed all his action, would soon cease from sheer exhaustion. If, for example, every man had to put the same effort into walking as does the infant just learning to walk, how many twenty-mile hikes would ever have been taken? But after habits have been acquired, after man is more perfectly disposed for the movement by reason, the actions flow ever more easily, more perfectly. The preparation for the movement by God is no less necessary.

Their necessity for salvation

In fact so necessary is this preparation for divine action, that every man must have these gifts of the Holy Ghost if he is to save his soul. A young externe, starting his career as a surgeon, does quite a good job with an experienced surgeon looking over his shoulder; but he needs that older head for a while because the art of surgery is not yet perfectly his. The moon on a summer night does a fair job of shining; but because the light it gives is not its own, it badly needs the sun if it is to continue to give that silvery light. With us, in what is our own, what belongs to our very nature, we need no particular help. But the fact is the whole supernatural life, supernatural action and supernatural goal are not our own, they are not a part of our very nature; the supernatural virtues do a good job of making that supernatural life possible, but we need something more to follow the swift divine instinct which makes supernatural action an actuality.

Their nature

That extra help we get through the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Just what are they? Let us turn back for a moment to our chapters on the virtues. There we said that the whole work of the moral virtues was to make the appetites of man, rational and sensitive, readily obedient to man; the gifts of the Holy Ghost can be accurately compared to these moral virtues. As the appetites of man are made obedient, easily subordinate, to reason by the moral virtues, so the whole man is made obedient, easily subordinate, readily moved by the Holy Ghost through the gifts. Like the moral virtues, then, these gifts are habits. Thoroughly mysterious, extraordinary in their effects, yes. But utterly prosaic in their character of habits. They are a part of the supernatural furnishings of the house of our souls; we can bump into them, stumble over them, profit by them, forget about them as we do with an old familiar chair. That is often exactly what we do. It would seem as though it were a part of our human pride to be unimpressed until we are overwhelmed and to forget as quickly as possible that we have been overwhelmed.

Their number

The gifts have all the characteristics of other habits; but they are in no sense prosaic. True enough, like all habits, they are immediate principles of action. If we are looking for them we have only to look where all the other habits of man are crowded together like a mass of intricate cables, in the two great power-houses of human activity: the reason and the appetites of man. In reason we will find the gifts of understanding, knowledge, wisdom and counsel; in the appetite there are the gifts of piety, fortitude and fear. Like all other habits they have a solid permanency about them that makes us look on them as a part of us, like

friendly slippers or a comfortable chair. But unlike all other habits, they produce their acts in a fashion not human but angelic or divine.

Their relation to the virtues

This last point is important for an understanding of the gifts. That divine-human action which proceeds from the gifts is our action but produced in a way far superior to our mode of acting. Take, for example, the gifts perfecting the intellect by completing the virtue of faith. By the gift of understanding we penetrate revealed truths, not by pondering over them, deducing conclusions from them or thinking up arguments to bolster them; but swiftly, instantaneously, intuitively, with an action like the flashing dart of an angelic intellect or the probing glance of God. By the gifts of knowledge and wisdom we judge created things and divine things in this same way; not by laboriously comparing concepts as a child might painfully trace the resemblance of two pictures, but rather in a flash that gives us the conclusion without the slow hobbling steps of reason down the hill to that conclusion. By the gift of counsel we apply these truths to individual works, but again in that swift, infallible, angelic way. The gift of piety perfecting the proper action of justice, i.e. the actions which have reference to others, fortitude perfecting the appetite against fear of dangers, fear perfecting the appetite against inordinate pleasure, all have this same divine mode of action. The Holy Ghost is breathing upon us.

But these actions are ours. It is a mistake many authors make today to suppose that we are passive instruments under the action of the Holy Ghost; that He is doing the moving and we are passively moved. An adult makes an error against tact when he offers to carry a child who has just learned to walk, or to work out a puzzle for a child who is quite sure it can solve the problem alone. The child is insulted, resentful at this reflection on its own powers. God is never tactless. What we can do He allows us, indeed encourages us to do, He demands that we use our powers to their utmost; what we cannot do He generously makes possible to us by His help. God is very careful not to do our thinking, our knowing, our desiring for us; in fact not even God could know or desire for us. That we must do for ourselves. The astonishing beauty of this whole action of the Holy Ghost in us is not the marvel of divine action -- we have long known the infinite possibilities of God; it is the fact that these actions are ours. The mode of acting is God's, the very possibility of the action comes from God, but it is our reason that intuitively penetrates, judges, counsels; it is our appetite that plunges instantly to the heart and perfection of good. That vital assimilation of truth and goodness can come from no other but ourselves.

With all their glory, there is a note of humility about the gifts which brings them close to our human hearts. Utter perfection, unless it be the warm, sharing perfection of God, frightens us by its cold beauty. So in human affairs, high walls shutting off one heart from another often come tumbling down at some little sign of weakness -- a tear, a stumble, a defeat. It is not with real regret but with a feeling of friendliness that we see the gifts taking second place among the virtues. Their work is very much like the work of the moral virtues: the one perfects the faculties of man in relation to the movement of reason, the other, the whole man in relation to the movement of the Holy Ghost. Just as the moral virtues are inferior to and dependent on the intellectual virtues perfecting reason itself, so the gifts are inferior to and dependent on the theological virtues which have God Himself for their object. Again, just as the moral virtues are connected in and dependent on prudence, so the gifts are connected one with another in charity and dependent on charity. They come together with grace and charity, and with charity they go; there is no such thing as the possession of one gift without the others, though indeed the operation of one may predominate in one individual.

Divine-human action -- the fruits and beatitudes

The gifts prepare us. With these divine habits in our soul we are like an aeroplane drawn up to a starting line as its motors get the last warming up; it is straining to go, almost lifting itself off the ground, in need only of the petty touch of the pilot's hands to go soaring off. But in our case, we are not merely driven as is the 'plane; the flight is ours as well as the Holy Spirit's. We are ready for the divine-human action which is called the fruit of the Holy Ghost. That is the very simple difference between the virtues, the gifts and

the fruits; the virtues and gifts are habits, the fruits are the result of habits -- they are acts.

That action in general -- the fruits of the Holy Ghost

The term "fruit " is itself significant. It practically demands a bit of dreaming, as the scent of a flower in mid-winter will snatch us out of ourselves into a forgotten summer day's caress of sun and wind. We are almost doing the word an injustice if we do not have a picture of long rows of old trees, gnarled like an old woman's hands which have seen too much hard work. And there is in the word "fruit" something like the pride of accomplishment, that makes the woman forget her hands, looking back over the years and see what those hands have made possible for a son or a daughter. Just so a tired old tree could look back through the long days from the first budding leaves, through the beauty of blossom and the anxious days of young fruit, to this final day when the ripe, luscious fruit is offered as the supreme accomplishment and the tree prepares to die for another winter.

Their significance and distinction from beatitudes

In this case man is the tree. The fruit of man is his action. There is the same note of finality about the actions of man, a finality to be explained only by looking back along the rough road that made this action a reality; and there is the same fullness, the same lusciousness about them, for in them is packed all that man has to offer. It is the final offering, the supreme accomplishment of virtues, natural and supernatural, and of the gifts. Sometimes the fruit is rotten, and its rottenness finds its explanation deep in the man who produced it. This was the foundation of Paul's startling contrast: "Now the works (i.e. fruits) of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witch crafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like.. . " . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law" (Gal. v. 19).

There is a humourless trick which consists in the endless enumeration of details when the details are infinite and simply cannot be enumerated. It is the trick which has made so unpleasant huge tomes bent crooked with their load of footnotes, university dissertations with their staggering bibliographies and philosophers with endless authorities for things that need apology rather than confirmation. Fortunately St. Paul had a sense of humour. What a weary book he would have written if he had tried to name all the fruits of man and the Holy Ghost! One can find plenty of reasons for Paul's stopping at twelve.

Even with these twelve St. Paul, in the estimation of St. Thomas, covered roughly the field of human action. After all, the joint work of ourselves and the Holy Ghost is limited by our very nature; when we have spoken of man's actions in relation to himself, to his equals and to his inferiors, we have fairly covered the human field, for of course in perfecting himself he is acting in relation to his superiors. It is under these three headings that St. Thomas divides the fruits of the Holy Ghost as given by St. Paul.

The disposition of a man in himself is either to good or evil. In other words, we start from the rock-bottom of all human activity and see man disposed to good through love and we have the first of the fruits, "charity" -- an act, not the theological virtue. Then comes the immediate consequence of love which is "joy", followed by the perfection of joy which is "peace" -- not the stagnant peace of inactivity, but the progressive, vigorous peace of a heart undisturbed by outside attractions and free from the horrors of civil war, a streamlined peace of ordered energies concentrating on the one goal.

In relation to evil, man is protected from the confusion and turmoil of imminent evil by "patience"; and from the over-long delay of looked-for good by "longanimity".

The field of this action: man in himself, among his equals, towards his inferiors.

Relative to our neighbour, we will to do him good and the fruit is "goodness"; we can put that will to work and we have "benignity"; receiving evil from our neighbour, we tolerate it with equanimity and we have "meekness"; we refrain from injuring that neighbour by deceit or cheating and we have "faith". Relative to

inferiors, we have "modesty" in external actions, and "continency" and "chastity" in our internal actions. The whole is in vigorous contrast to the subversive, disintegrating, befouling fruits of the flesh enumerated by St. Paul.

**In particular -- in its perfection: the beatitudes:
Distinction from virtues and gifts**

In this matter of detailed enumeration, his Master showed a greater sense of humour than did Paul; surely He showed a profound knowledge of and consideration for us who were to try so clumsily to follow the long strides He took on His way to the Father. Out of all these fruits of man and the Holy Ghost, Christ carefully picked the outstanding, the most perfect, we might say the heroic fruits; then He gave His special blessing to those who should produce these fruits, leaving us the eight beatitudes as the cream of the crop, the most proper effects of the divine-human action coming from the gifts of the Holy Ghost. There is no mistaking Christ's special emphasis on these eight acts; but with an eye to our facility for making mistakes where mistakes are apparently impossible, He outlined these eight targets of our highest efforts in a way that made them conspicuous to the blindest of human beings. To each of these acts He attached an explicit reward. Not only an eternal reward which might be far distant, but a reward that should begin here on this earth, a reward that we can reach out for now and put in our pockets.

Their double content: disposition and beginning of heavenly life (merit and reward)

In each of these beatitudes, then, a double element is to be seen: an element of merit (the act itself) and an element of reward. It was as though Christ, knowing we would always remain children, realized that we would most certainly forget many things while running that short errand from birth to death; but with rewards promised immediately for these eight fruits, surely we would not forget them. Looking at this double element of the beatitudes from the vantage point of happiness, we see the element of merit as a disposition for happiness, the reward itself as the beginning, or -- in heaven -- the consummation of happiness.

The beatitudes, as their name implies, fall immediately into the classifications of happiness possible to men. Whether we are looking over the shoulder of Christ two thousand years ago, peering at medieval castles through the eyes of Aquinas seven hundred years ago, or glancing about the streets of a twentieth-century city, we see the same possibilities of happiness seized on by men. Then, as now, men sought happiness in voluptuousness (the affluence of riches, honour or passion), in activity or in contemplation. The first is an impediment to the true happiness of man, the second can well be a disposition to the true happiness of man, while the third in its imperfect state is the beginning of that happiness, in its perfect state, the very essence of that happiness which is the goal of mankind.

Since there is no human act worthy of the name which is not pointed to or away from true happiness, these highest acts of man -- the merit of the beatitudes -- are most intimately wrapped up with that happiness; they of all others go directly to the goal.

The work of the beatitudes in voluptuous, active and contemplative life

The falseness and irrationality of voluptuousness, the fact that it is a positive impediment to happiness, make it the object of attack for every good habit within man; the attack of the gifts is devastating. While the virtues move a man to moderate the use of riches and honours, the gifts make man totally despise them, make men "poor in spirit". Again the virtues moderate the fears, hopes and angers of the irascible appetite, while the 'gifts set man tranquilly free from them, make men "meek"; the virtues counselling moderate use of the concupiscible appetite's delights and sorrows cannot compare with the bold strokes of the gifts completely rejecting these things when necessary, or voluntarily assuming them in the face of necessity -- so there are those "who mourn".

In the active life the work of the gifts is not to attack, but, with a shouting enthusiasm, to transcend the dreams of men. The happiness of the active life can come only from our double action towards our

neighbour: the action of justice or of liberality, of giving what is due or spontaneously giving of our substance to those who are joined to us by some bond. The justice of the gifts is an eager justice, like the grasp of a man dying of thirst for a bottle of water; it is a hungering and thirsting after justice for which eagerness is a languid word. Their liberality is not limited by bonds of union, but by any and every necessity that allows that liberality to come into play; a liberality that is a rampantly charging mercy.

The contemplative life of men on earth is not so much a merit of happiness in itself, but rather a beginning of happiness. It has about it the quiet security and aloofness of a frail child marked for an early entry into heaven. The merit assigned for the beatitudes having to do with the contemplative life is really a merit of the active life, an effect of the gifts and virtues perfecting man in himself, making him clean of heart (unstained by passion or ignorance) or perfecting him in relation to his neighbour by giving him peace.

These are the heights to which men soar on the wings of the Spirit of Love and of Truth: poverty of spirit, meekness of heart, recognition of and regret for mistakes, a hungering justice, an unquestioning mercy, cleanness of heart and peace. In this way shall man escape the fruits of the flesh, to these ends shall man devote the tremendous energies of a nature that mirrors divinity, by these acts shall man taste on earth something of the happiness of heaven.

The rewards of the beatitudes and of human life, voluptuous, active and contemplative

For the rewards are concrete and immediate; yet they are only a beginning, a foretaste of what is to come, like the snack given to a child impatiently waiting for the serving of Christmas dinner. Yet these very rewards are as paradoxical as a virgin who is yet a mother, a Man who is God, or ignorant fishermen who are teachers of all the world. Probably no single truth gives us a clearer insight into the profound meaning of St. Paul's magnificent paradox than does this truth of the rewards of the beatitudes: " . . . as dying and behold we live; as chastised and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things".(2 Cor. vi. 9 and 10)

An accumulation of happiness For the excellence and abundance men seek in honours and riches, the poor in spirit, despising honours and riches, receive the excellence and abundance of the good things of God, the source of all good things -- the Kingdom of Heaven. The security and quiet possession that fighting men seek by quarrels and wars, the meek have given them; a solidity of possession of eternal goods that no word of ours will express except that firm, unyielding term "earth", "land". For the consolation against life's labours and sorrows which is sought in the pleasures of the world, those who mourn have the consolation of the Comforter Himself.

It is the same story in the active life of men -- the old story, the paradoxical story that is characteristic of the meeting of divinity and humanity, "he that loseth his life shall find it". While unjust men roam the long highways of the world plundering, taking what belongs to others that they might have their fill of temporal goods, those who thirst for justice shall be filled, filled with the joy and consolation of the Holy Ghost, filled with the good things of God. While men and women carefully push the misery of others from sight and mind in an attempt to escape the inescapable, they merely put themselves outside the bounds of a mercy that belongs to the merciful who have sought out misery to receive mercy. And as the final rewards, rewards which the heart of man cannot conceive, come the vision of God to the clean of heart and the sonship of God to the peacemakers who have so closely imitated their Father Who is in Heaven.

All through this discussion of the beatitudes mention has been made of only seven. The eighth has not really been lost or overlooked. Although with seven gifts, twelve fruits and eight beatitudes to be treated in one chapter, it might seem not unlikely that at least one should be forgotten. The real reason for not mentioning the eighth beatitude has been that it does not need to be mentioned; understanding the other seven, we have a good grasp of the eighth, for the eighth is a summary both of the merit and the reward, of the work and the happiness of the other seven. Martyrdom lifts man to the heights of divine-human

action and gives him instantly the fullness of reward; "those who suffer persecution for justice sake" quite fittingly are given the kingdom of heaven. In that work are all works, as in that reward are all rewards.

In fact each of these beatitudes is a summary of what has gone before; they are not disconnected, unrelated acts but progressive steps to always greater happiness. To possess something is much greater than simply to have it for the moment, for much that we have we do not firmly and peacefully possess. Even what is ours is often possessed with difficulty and sorrow to which consolation adds a note of perfection; and being filled with consolation, filled with the Comforter Himself, is much more than a passing smile of pity or a momentary handclasp of sympathy. Going swiftly up these steps -- we receive the mercy which, makes consolation unnecessary, we see the face of God which is the supreme mercy and finally we are sons of God. Beyond this even the ingenious generosity of God could lift only one creature making her His mother.

Conclusion: A justification of astonishment

--The usual effect of divine action

All this is not only a matter of eternity; it has its beginnings here and now. Now as in the beginning men are astonished. The crowds of Jerusalem were astonished listening to the Apostles and hearing every man his own tongue; and that astonishment never died down while the Apostles lived. Men and nations have never recovered from the astonishment of seeing God nailed to a cross, of seeing a Jewish maiden holding God, her Son, in her arms. Of course they were astonished. Men have always been astonished at sight of divine activity in the world of men. Christ walked up and down Palestine working miracles and leaving behind him a trail of very great fear. For what is astonishment but a form of fear, a fear that either drives us to our knees or sends us raging blindly to destroy what has awakened that fear; to kneel before the Cross with Mary and arise to follow the footprints of the apostles, or to tear Christ from the Cross, Mary from her throne and draw the curtain of oblivion across the dramatic picture of apostolic courage.

Of complete change

Now, as then, men are astonished, are afraid. They see a complete change, a startling change, yet peering they can find no explanation but only impenetrable darkness. The human eye cannot see into these realms, for they are divine. the careful preparation of the soul of man by the virtues and gifts is a secret of God's and the soul, a secret that might never disturb the equanimity of men. But the divine-human action of the fruits and the beatitudes is something that no human being can ignore, it comes from God, and God, whether we like the fact or not, is the beginning and the end of every human heart. No human being can stand in the crowd along the road and see God passing by without crying out -- in prayer or in hatred. the part of the Holy Ghost in this sublime action is itself enough to bring the strong legions of men to a clashing halt.

Paradoxes of Christian life:

Having nothing but possessing all things; Losing life and finding it

But when the incredible truth is met face to face, the truth that this soaring to heights undreamt of by men is still the action of men, there is reason for astonishment, for fear, for angry disbelief! To see utterly drab men and women snatching the prizes of happiness by turning their backs on all that the heroes of the world have treasured, is to see again the victory of the Cross and the death in the arena of the conquerors of death. It is to see the gifts of the Holy Ghost at work. It is to come face to face again with the eternal paradox that takes its rise from the blending of the energies of God and man, to meet again the "things that cannot be and that are ", to see men and women having nothing but possessing all things, losing their lives that they might find them. And that is very often too much for the pride of men.

The ordinary Catholic and the breath of divine life

Yet as long as there lives one follower of Christ, this divine breath of happiness will lift men beyond the stars. In the soul of every Catholic in the state of grace there is that full equipment of virtues and gifts. For

our very salvation these gifts are necessary -- and their acts are the fruits and the beatitudes.

[«-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

[Chapter 13 --»](#)

CHAPTER XIII -- HABITS OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 71-74)

1. The familiar but strange face of sin:
 - (a) Denied to be embraced.
 - (b) Denied to be shunned.
 - (c) Recognized to be fought.
 2. Sin and human nature:
 - (a) Denial of possibility of sin an insult to humanity.
 - (b) Recognition of possibility of sin a tribute to humanity.
 - (c) Commission of sin a betrayal of humanity.
 3. A contrast of friend and enemy: virtue and vice;
 - (a) Their incompatibility.
 - (b) A definition of sin (Augustine).
 4. Distinguishing marks of sin:
 - (a) Its accidental character.
 - (b) Its motive or object: God, self, neighbour.
 - (c) Some non-specific distinctions of sin:
 - (1) Mortal and venial.
 - (2) Commission and omission.
 - (3) Thought, word, deed.
 - (d) Place of circumstances.
 5. The disorder of sin:
 - (a) A step towards chaos.
 - (b) Inequality of sins:
 - (1) Essential gravity.
 - (2) Carnal and spiritual sins compared.
 - (3) Factors in gravity of sins:
 - a. Will and sense appetites,
 - b. Circumstances.
 - c. Damage done.
 - d. Condition of person sinned against.
 - e. Condition of sinner.
 6. The home of sin.
- Conclusion:
1. Sin and the modern world:
 - (a) Hatred of sin by Christ and by the modern world.
 - (b) Foundations of modern stand:
 - (1) Misconception of sin.
 - (2) "Not strong enough to fail."
 2. Sin and successful living:
 - (a) Individual life
 - (b) Social life.
 - (c) Divine life.
 3. Sin and happiness.

CHAPTER XIII HABITS OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 71-74)

To continue with this volume we must literally come down to earth. In our last chapter we scaled the heights of human possibilities in the line of virtue, in the climb towards happiness. Beginning in this chapter we must start to dig down, to look into the depths of human possibilities in quite another direction, in the direction of unhappiness, of sin. For it is true that in every one of us there are unsuspected possibilities of sanctity and of vice, of success and failure.

I think we are indeed down to earth again when we start this chapter by observing the technique of a great insurance company; at least we have come down a long way when we have passed from the activities of the Holy Ghost to the activities of an insurance company. The insurance company of which I am speaking has adopted a method of procedure well known to St. Thomas and spread it all over America in full-page advertisements in practically all magazines. The business of that insurance company is to keep people alive as long as possible; no one regrets a funeral more than an insurance company. In order to do that, the company has seen that it is not enough to tell people where good health lies, what it looks like and what its benefits are; it is also necessary, indeed more necessary, to see to it that people understand what ill

health is, what it looks like, its symptoms, dangers, remedies and preventions.

The business of St. Thomas was to lead men to happiness. To do that he recognized seven hundred years ago, as did Christ two thousand years ago, that it was not enough to talk about virtue, to explain what it was, how it worked, its full benefit of happiness; it was also necessary to say a great deal about sin -- what it is, what it looks like, its symptoms, dangers, remedies and preventions. The insurance company is not an enemy of human health because it warns so emphatically against sickness; nor are theologians enemies of human happiness because they warn us so constantly against human misery in its acute form of sin.

The insurance company stands solidly against the enemy of man's body; the theologian, against the enemy of man's soul. One is the sworn opponent of the enemy of human health; the other of human happiness. Both are fighting in the name of humanity. Yet the one has all the world for an ally; the other fights alone. Our nation and our time is always on the alert for the enemy of health, positively eager to talk about symptoms, operations, infallible remedies. But of the enemy of happiness?

The familiar but strange face of sin: Denied to be embraced

Our time certainly does not want to hear about sin. To many, such an enemy as sin cannot be admitted as existing; because sin makes such a charming companion for a while, thinking of it as an enemy would spoil it all. We have an attitude like that of a small boy who stoutly denies the existence of measles and disregards all warnings because he sees great possibilities in a good case of measles. There is no sin, there cannot be, it is silly to be careful about sin -- because after all sin holds out some tremendous possibilities.

Denied to be shunned

Still others wander through the streets of life carefully side-stepping sin, crossing the street to avoid the remotest contact with it. And all the time they proclaim to the world that their peculiar actions have no special meaning, they are a little eccentric, perhaps a little insane; but there really is no such thing as sin. There is no such enemy to run from; please do not pay any attention to the spiritual gas-masks, rifles, bayonets and hand-grenades -- these are just little eccentricities adding a touch of gaiety to life like the trappings of a masquerade ball.

Recognized to be fought

There is finally that alertly courageous group that refuses to surrender and refuses to run; the men and women who may be beaten to earth again and again but are still "strong enough to fail" and to fight again. This group looks on sin as the rest of the world looks on sickness, recognizing sin as just as much, indeed very much more, of an enemy. It is an enemy, therefore something to be fought. It is not to be hidden in the bosom of our families, not to be ignored while it does its deadly work, not to be wished out of existence, but to be recognized as the peculiar problem of humanity.

Sin and human nature: Denial of possibility of sin an insult to humanity

While sickness is something we have in common with all living things, sin is an enemy about which only men have to worry. Sin is the story of man's failure; and only man can fail because only man can succeed. Only man has control of his actions. Sulphuric acid never makes the mistake of freezing a man instead of burning him, nor does a dog make mistakes though he does meet with accidents. To say there is no sin is to insult the humanity of man; it is to put man in the class of inanimate or brute creation every moment of which is fixed, every step accounted for along the narrow path laid out by necessary physical laws from the very beginning. To deny the possibility of sin is to deny the humanity of man or to make him a freak in nature.

Recognition of possibility of sin a tribute to humanity the recognition of the possibilities of sin on the

contrary is the rendering of due tribute both to man and to nature. It is an insistence on the humanity of man, on his control and mastery of his own actions; and it is an equally emphatic insistence on his integral place in nature. He is not a freak, alone of all creatures excused from that general law which moves all things to the ends of nature, each according to its proper gifts; rather he is one with nature, moved by the laws of nature to the ends of nature -- but moved as a man, morally not physically. There is an even greater tribute to man in this recognition of the possibilities of failure, a tribute not of word but of deed. It is the tribute a man gives to his own humanity when he has the courage to face the terrifying truth of that humanity and its responsibilities; it is the courageous tribute given by the most abject of sinners who knows and admits he has sinned, a scathing denunciation of the cowardice of the man afraid to face his humanity.

Commission of sin a betrayal of humanity

But while paying that tribute to what nature is and should be, the sinner is actually betraying his humanity by his sin. He is twisting, perverting, turning that nature away from all it was intended to be and to do. That nature is a rational nature; in it reason should be king, all its energies should move smoothly along under the direction of reason to the goal of reason in which alone there is happiness for man. The sinner, whatever his sin, dethrones reason and puts some usurper on the throne of his soul; his energies are aimed, not by reason, but by the usurper, not to the ends of reason but against all that reason reaches out for. Every sin is unnatural, against nature, a betrayal of nature because every sin is against reason.

The more profoundly we become acquainted with ourselves, the easier it is to understand why we call God "Father" and why we are always children in His eyes. We never really grow up. An instance to the point is our delight in the childish device of vivid contrast -- beauty and ugliness, colour and drabness, laughter and tears. It was part of the gentle humour of God smiling on children that made of contrast the simple key to beauty, to love, even to wisdom for men. It was another evidence of God's stooping to men when He made contrast the gay path along which alone man walks to knowledge: of all the creatures beneath him, only man is capable of contrasting; and of all those above him, man alone stands in need of constant contrast.

A contrast of friend and enemy: virtue and vice

It is not astonishing, then, that our best insight to sin is obtained by placing it in vivid contrast to its opposite, by putting the enemy of human happiness side by side with the indispensable friend of human happiness. Sin and virtue, darkness and light, ugliness and beauty, decay and health, all are in that one contrast of good and bad habits.

Their incompatibility

We have said that virtue was a good habit; its opposite, a bad habit, is strictly called a vice. The fruit of the spirit and the fruit of the flesh, these two are an adequate statement of the opposite acts of good and bad habits, of virtuous acts and sins. The first proceeds from the spiritual faculty of reason in command, the second from the rebel forces which have overthrown reason. Sin, then, is the act which proceeds from a bad habit and goes into the formation of a bad habit. Goodness and evil are the opposite dispositions left in a man as a result of these habits and acts.

These two, sin and virtue, are sworn enemies. No house is big enough for them, no reasoning, pleading, excusing is powerful or pitiful enough to keep them from each other's throats. It is sometimes a question as to whether vice or virtue will come hurtling out the window; but always we can be certain of a fight. If the actual guests at the same inn happen to be mortal sin and the infused virtues, there can be no question but what one of them must take the road again seeking other lodgings. Mortal sin is not so hard on the acquired or natural virtues; a natural virtue, after all, is not destroyed by one act. Venial sin does much to destroy the genial air of hospitality, but can get along in a strained, weakening atmosphere with either the acquired or the infused virtues.

A definition of sin (Augustine)

By contrasting vice and sin with virtue and acts of virtue we have an accurate idea of the nature of sin and vice. This accurate notion was stated briefly by Augustine when he said that sin was "a thought, word or deed against the Eternal Law ". Thoughts, words and deeds are the material, the brick and mortar, from which sins are constructed; the formal element in sin, what sets it apart from virtue, is its opposition to the Eternal Law.

Distinguishing marks of sin: Its accidental character

The catechism defines sin as "a thought, word, deed or omission against the law of God ". But the word "omission" is a little unfortunate. It has the air of the accidental about it, like forgetting to take medicine or absent-mindedly going out without an umbrella. Actually sin is impossible without some positive act back along the road from which that sin has come. Sins do not just happen, they are willed; they are not accidents that stain our souls as ink might stain a table-cloth, we must deliberately throw the stain at our souls. For sins are human acts, acts for which a man is responsible, which proceed under his control and to an end which he has freely chosen. Otherwise acts, no matter how evil they may be in themselves, are not sins. So somewhere behind an omission, either by way of cause, or occasion, or impediment, we must be responsible for the omission; which means that somewhere we must have willed it, whether directly or indirectly.

Its motive or object: God, self, neighbour

Yet in another sense, sins are indeed accidents. The commission of sin puts us in the position of the little boy who wants to eat green apples but does not want the inevitable stomach-ache that goes with eating them. Nevertheless he eats the apples. The stomach-ache is an accident as far as his will is concerned, certainly his mouth does not water in anticipation of a stomach-ache, yet in another sense he is quite willing to accept the stomach-ache as the price to be paid for eating green apples. No man wants to be a sinner, wants to turn his back upon God, wants to give up all chance for happiness and condemn himself to eternal misery. But if all that is inevitably connected with what is desired here and now, the sinner is willing to pay that price for his sin. We never quite grow up; and there is no more convincing evidence of our constant immaturity than the childish reversal of values involved in sin.

Some non-specific distinctions of sin

Stepping into the world of sin is like stepping into a dank tropical forest nurtured to unbelievable growth by a sun of desire which kills healthy plants. The variety of sin rivals the variety of tropical growth, in fact surpasses it; for the variety of sin is limited only by the possibilities of a will whose limit is the infinite. It is of no use to look to that will for a distinction of the various kinds of sin; an examination of the motives of sin, meaning by motives the causes which produce sin, can tell us only that this act was or was not human, that it was or was not sin. From a terrible fear of humiliation or from a wildly passionate love can come the same sin of lying or murder; from the one motive of anger can come sins as widely different as blasphemy, theft and murder.

The reason for this is that sin, like every other human act, is a motion to a goal. In the world below man we can easily determine the nature of a motion by looking either at the goal or at the active power that produced the motion; for the powers beneath man run along a determined track that leads always to the same goal. But the powers of man have no set channel along which they must necessarily flow. So for the determination of any human act, virtuous or vicious, we must look to the goal towards which it is going, to the object of the act, to the thing desired that first set in motion that activity of a human being. In other words, the specific character of any sin, as the specific character of any virtue, its very essence, is to be judged by the object to which it is directed.

These objects of sin fall easily into a very general classification since the field of sin is the same as the field of virtue, indeed the same as that of every human action. A human act has to do with God, our

neighbour or ourselves. There is a profound thought behind this classification of sins into sins against God, ourselves or our neighbours, a thought we have met before and will meet time and time again, and yet one which continually slips into the back of our minds. That thought is the solemn truth that every creature beneath us is merely a tool or a servant; the universe is ours to use for God, ourselves and our neighbour - but neither God, ourselves or our neighbour is to be used, for anything in the universe no matter how powerful or attractive it may be.

Another way of stating this foundation for the essential distinction of sins is to say that man is governed by a triple rule: the rule of the reason of God, the rule of human reason directing the individual activities of man, and the rule of human reason directing the social activities of man. This is the triple law of human action: divine reason, personal human reason and political human reason. The first contains the second and third, for the reason of man has its validity precisely in so far as it is acting in the power of the divine reason. The dedication of men or society to any end less than the ends of man is a perversion, a twisting of nature, a rebellion against divine reason whose outcome is not freedom, not divine supremacy for man, but slavery -- a chaining of man to the world that should be his servant and his tool.

Every sin, then, has its essential character from its goal, as every motion has its specific character from the place to which it is going; surely the contrast between a baseball thrown for a perfect strike and one thrown at a spectator's head presents us with a picture of essentially different motions. We applaud the one and resent the other, particularly if we are among the assaulted spectators. Any consideration other than this one essential point of the goal of sin, may tell us something about sin but it will not distinguish one sin from another.

Mortal and venial

For example, we distinguish between mortal and venial sins; but this distinction does not set aside different sins. The same kind of sin, for example theft, might be either mortal or venial; so a Catholic confessing "his many mortal sins" is no help at all to the confessor. The reason is easily seen. We cannot distinguish a man from a monkey by saying the human animal is bald; that is an accident and we are looking for an essential, specific difference. We can distinguish one man from another by saying that one is a barber and the other a priest, because there is no essential distinction, no specific gap between men. The mortal or venial character of sin tells us graphically what the sinner can expect from his sin or what he has done by his sin, i.e. either he has irreparably destroyed the very principle of his order to the goal or he has wandered from that order without destruction of its principle. But, as far as the sinner is concerned, both of these are accidents as deplorable as the little boy's stomach-ache from his feast of green apples. Like everything else, sins are not distinguished by accidentals.

Commission and omission; Thought, word and deed

The same will hold true of sins of commission or omission. "Omission" or "commission" tells us how a sin was committed, whether the sin violated a positive or a negative precept; but it does not tell us what sin was committed. I remember a very small boy who came to confession and, after much embarrassment and many hacking coughs by way of getting a start, solemnly assured me he had, in the past week, "had five thoughts". It was quite a remarkable feat in this day and age. It seemed to me the matter called much more for congratulation than for absolution. As a matter of fact he had merely stated the first grade of all human action. In the order of sin that first grade is fulfilled and rises to its consummation by the steps of word and deed; as, for example, an angry man first has thoughts that will not bear printing, then words that will not bear repeating, and finally the full perfection of his anger blossoms out in mayhem or murder.

Place of circumstances

Perhaps we keep the rest of the parish shifting from one foot to another while we tell the whole family history of our sin, its neighbouring surroundings, and all the circumstances that could possibly or impossibly have entered into it. All these may be important, they may vary the gravity or responsibility of the sin; but they do not let the confessor or anyone else into the secret of what that time-consuming sin

was. For it is only the goal, the object of that sin, that gives it its essential character; and unless a circumstance steps out of its minor role of decorating that sin into the stellar role of object, it does not specify the sin.

The disorder of sin: A step towards chaos

It is important that we understand this specifying element in sin, important for several reasons. First of all, it gives us an insight into the terrifying variety of sin; and with that insight we can appreciate something of the dank disorder in the fetid life of the tropical forest of sin. We described virtue as the path along which human acts run to the goal of reason, as the channel leading the energies of man to reason's goal; and we said this was true of every virtue. All have the same goal; the man of virtue is a man of streamlined energies moving with smooth, easy grace and harmony to one end. The essence of sin is the disregard of the rule of reason, indeed of any rule but that of immediate desire for this particular object. The sinner is a victim of civil war. By the very nature of sin all order is disrupted: a thousand and one goals, even contradictory goals, are strained for at the same time; his soul is a chaos in which nothing can be accomplished, where even life itself is intolerable so that a man must get outside himself or go insane. That is the secret of the difference between the quiet peace of Christ coming from the unveiled face of God and the riotous peace of the world that dare not stop its wild pace an instant lest chaos overtake it, but must charge ahead carrying chaos with it, plunging with every step into greater and greater chaos. The virtues are intimately connected; but every sin is not only an enemy of God, an enemy of man, an enemy of society, every sin is a bitter enemy of every other sin, each striving for a mastery that will be its own destruction.

Inequality of sins

For sin, like every evil, would destroy itself if it could only be carried to perfect fulfilment. Like a disease which must have some healthy tissue to feed on destroys itself by its very growth, so sin by its growth eats away the thing which makes it possible -- the freedom of man. If it were possible for sin to go its full length, its end could only be the destruction of itself in the destruction of the reason of man.

Essential gravity

Sin can go as far as the destruction of man's freedom by making him a slave to his senses; but, thank God, it cannot go the lengths of destroying reason, for reason is a spiritual faculty against which no created force has any leverage. But the comparison with sickness gives us a clue to the different gravity of different sins. Just as one sickness is more grave than another, so is one sin more grave than another; the one as it more seriously attacks the principle of physical life, the other as it more seriously attacks the principle of reasonable life or of the life of grace. To put it another way, on the basis of our classification of the objects of sin we have an easy classification of the gravity of sin. All exterior things are ordained to man, and man is ordained to God; so sins directed against the external possessions of a man (such as theft) are less serious than those which are against the very substance of a man (like murder), and these in turn are less serious than those whose target is God Himself.

In so far as the objects of sin are opposed to the ends of reason, the sin has gravity; in so far as the virtues are tied up more intimately with the ends of reason, they have greater dignity. It is on the whole a fair arrangement. There is no unfair matching of a heavyweight sin with a lightweight virtue, cabin-boys do not fight admirals, raw recruits are not pitted against seasoned veterans. The graver the sin, the nobler and more dignified the virtue it attacks. In fact the arrangement is even more fair than this would indicate. All side-issues are thrown out, all petty annoyances brushed aside, when a greater virtue and a greater sin enter into their mortal combat; if there is a struggle at all it will be to the death. For of course the very nobility of a great virtue will easily sweep aside all but the correspondingly great sins, as a defending army will mow down the advance-guard of the invaders.

Carnal and spiritual sins compared

We could make a neat division of greater and lesser sins on the simple grounds of spirit and flesh; but in such a division it must be remembered that the comparison is general and supposes a parity in every other line. Otherwise we shall put ourselves in the silly position of a sports writer comparing two pugilists by putting the strength of one against the curly hair of the other. On this strict basis of gravity, then, the spiritual sins belong among the great, the carnal sins among the less great sins. There is of course much more shame and infamy attached to the carnal sins, as the course of the ages and the uplifted noses of the terribly righteous will testify. They do bring man down to the level of the beasts and no one realizes this more keenly than the carnal sinner himself. But from the point of view of the formal element of sin, the actual aversion from God and reason, there is much more of conversion to the creature than of aversion from God in the carnal sins, while the opposite is true of the spiritual sins. Again the spiritual sins are flatly directed against God and neighbour, both of whom we are bound to love more than our own body which is the object of the attack of the carnal sins. There is much more of deliberation and malice in the spiritual sins, much more of impulsiveness and the drive of passion in the carnal sins and in the matter of sin, the more a man is pushed the less is his guilt, because sin is always a matter of deliberate choice. Briefly, the spiritual sins to which we pay so little attention have more of the formal element of sin (aversion from God), more deliberation and malice, and are directed against a greater object. The sheep and the goats are not to be separated on the grounds of the carnal sins.

Factors in gravity of sins: Will and sense appetites

An absent-minded attendant at a shooting-gallery who shoots the clients in his fits of abstraction would be a great nuisance but hardly a great sinner. The rabid baseball fan who actually kills umpires in the excitement of a disputed decision is not to be compared to a cold-blooded gangster shooting his enemies in the back. For in establishing the gravity of a sin that deliberate will, which makes the spiritual sins so outstanding, holds absolutely first place. As a general rule, we might say that anything which adds to the deliberate will increases the gravity of sin; anything that detracts from either the deliberation or the willingness lessens that gravity. Indeed in this latter case the gravity and even the sin itself might disappear altogether -- when, for example, the rush of passion or the fog of complete abstraction destroys the humanity of the action.

Circumstances

Deliberate will increases the gravity of sin by giving it concentrated power, boring in more deeply much as a hot iron can give a bad, even a fatal, burn though it is applied to only one spot. An equally fatal burn can be given by applying the iron to a wider surface, even though it does not burn so deeply. In the same way sin's gravity can be increased by spreading it over a larger surface, making it extensively greater even though intensively it does not bore so deeply. This is ordinarily the role played by the circumstances of a sin. Over and above the essential evil given by the object of the sin, they add the accidental malice of time, place, manner, and so on. Of course it is possible for a circumstance to change the whole character of sin, as, for example, in the beating given to a wife and the beating given to a nun; but then we are no longer dealing with a circumstance but with a distinctly different object of sin.

Damage done

Among the other factors contributing to the gravity of sin, a place of dishonour must be given to the objective damage done by our sin. Perhaps we intended the damage; or perhaps we foresaw it and did not particularly care; perhaps we did not foresee it through sheer negligence; or maybe the damage was not foreseen, not intended, but nevertheless was directly connected with our action -- in all of these cases there is sin because in all of them there is an element of will, of effect flowing from our controlled action. Where that element is lacking -- for example, when the damage done is embarrassment to a lady by falling into her lap from a ten-storey building -- then the damage is not to be put on the bill of sin. It is just an accident.

Condition of person sinned against

It makes considerable difference who is committing the sin and against whom the sin is committed. We have said that in a general way the objects of sin are the objects of virtue: God, ourselves and our neighbours. Thus sacrilege against persons or things consecrated to God, even sins against persons who are very closely joined to God by virtue, will in themselves be more grave in proportion to the intimacy of that union with God. Sins against a mother or a father, against our children, against husband, wife, relatives, in fact against anyone who is joined to us either by a bond of blood, of natural necessity, or of gratitude, will all be more grave in proportion to the closeness of their union with us. In a way they are one with us, in sinning against them we are sinning against ourselves. The sins against a neighbour are more grave as they affect more of our neighbours: so an attack on the President is more grave than an attack on a private person because it really injures the whole community; or an injury done to a famous person will be more serious than the same injury done to someone who is entirely unknown, because of the scandal and turmoil it causes among the people.

Condition of the sinner

On the other hand, the sins of the saintly man are much more serious by reason of the high state of virtue he had reached. There is so little to excuse them. He cannot plead weakness with the same honesty as the poor sinner whose life is a long series of falls; his sin is a much more unforgivable evidence of ingratitude for the graces and friendship he has received; he was far, far better prepared to withstand the assaults of sin. So of course his fall causes much greater scandal than would the sin of anyone else. "To whom much is given, much is expected." Indeed the saintly sinner can expect much himself by way of punishment.

Home of sin

It has been a persistent modern mistake to look for sin in the nerves, muscles, health or illness of a man, in his home life or in his surroundings. Of course the object of that search has persistently eluded the searchers. This or that has been improved and we lean back to watch the death of sin; but sin does not die. Really we have not touched the stronghold of sin; nor can we remotely approach that stronghold until we have recognized the humanity of man and man's control of his actions. For it is precisely in that control-room, back in the spiritual citadel where only guests ever penetrate, that sin is to be found. Sin is a human action, proceeding from a human habit; and the habits of man are to be found in the one place where habits are necessary -- in the principles of human action.

As we have seen, the prime mover of man is the will of man. Here is the last stronghold of sin, of evil as it is of good; for it is the work of the will, not merely to move, but to move towards or away from a goal, towards or away from good. In the will first, and in the other faculties in so far as they are moved by the will, we find sin -- in the intellect, in the sense appetite for good, in the sense appetite to and away from difficulty, but always in so far as these things are subject to the movement of the deliberate will of man. Sin is essentially a rebellion; and a rebellion is possible only where government is possible. The supreme victory of sin is had when it has successfully rebelled against the government of reason not only in the colonies of the senses, but in the high seats of reason and will themselves.

Sin and the modern world:

Hatred of sin by Christ and by the modern world

This, then, is our preliminary survey of the field of sin. It leaves us with some rather astonishing results. Not the least of these is the contrary nature of the hatred of Christ and the hatred of the modern world for sin. Christ hated sin from the very depths of His divine being: sin is against all that God stands for, since it is an offence against the very mind of God; just as positively it is against all the God-man stands for, since it is the one enemy of human happiness. The Son of God who became incarnate that men might be free from sin, Who dedicated His life to the work of teaching men the truth that would make them free, of giving them an ever more abundant life, of leading them step by step to the goal of human life which is happiness -- of course He would hate the enemy of human happiness which is sin. And of course He would demand a like hatred as the badge of distinction from His followers: "If you love me, keep my

commandments."

Foundations of the modern stand: Misconception of sin

The hatred of the world for sin is hardly less thorough, but it is directed against the name, the idea, of sin rather than against sin itself. This hatred finds its most natural expression in a vituperative attack on those who insist on calling a sin a sin, who defend the exclusive privilege man has of making a mistake. Actually what the modern world hates seems rather to be the ostracism which sin is made to suffer; it would like to do away with this caste system of good and evil in the society of human actions. Looking at this hatred of the modern world objectively, we are forced to the conclusion that it is directed much more against men and women than it is against sin; for faced with the dilemma of admitting the possibility of sin and all its terrible consequences or of denying the humanity of man, the modern world turns all its guns on the humanity of man, determined to reduce it to the level of the chemical and animal world above which it towers.

"Not strong enough to fail".

To us who are so familiar with our own times, this modern attitude, unreasonable as it is, has its explanations. The modern world is fighting sin because it does not know sin; and it cannot know sin as long as it remains ignorant of man. It is impossible to understand the indignities of which man is capable until we have some understanding of his dignity; and in a world where the spirit is laughed out of existence, there is no possibility of grasping even vaguely something of the dignity of man, of the necessity of habit and of the possibility of that bad habit which is sin. Even where the pressure of the years pushes men and women to an uneasy suspicion of their humanity, of their high destiny and eternal possibilities, the recognition of sin comes hard; for sin is human-failure with human responsibilities for that failure. Always there will be those who are "not strong enough to fail".

Sin and successful living: Individual life This is one of the great reasons why our times are making such a botch of living. If we let this enemy of successful living have the run of the house, we can be sure there will be little of success individually, socially or supernaturally. The secret of successful living, as we have seen, is in the unification of the energies of man under one command, in their harmonious concentration on the one goal worthy of man. Sin is a disruption of that command, a dispersion of that concentrated power with a resultant state of civil war in the individual, of a scattering of his powers on goals totally unworthy of his manhood; it is a wasting of human energy, a complete failure of accomplishment, a smashing of the mirror in which was imaged the beauty and power of God. Every appetite is for itself here and now; the riot, confusion, total absence of peace in the soul of the sinner is a picture and a prophecy of the horror of hell.

Social life

In society it is every man for himself; and, as in the individual, it ends up by every man being against himself. As in the individual, we find men used as tools, ordained to the ends of things beneath them, the masters shining the shoes of the servants -- men bowing and scraping before military prestige, financial power, class domination, and so on. For here, as in the individual, the unifying goal of reason is swept to one side; the one possible means of cohesion for human beings -- a mutual respect for rights -- is made a thing of words with much the same results as in the individual: slavery or destruction, in the one case destruction of life, in the other, destruction of human society.

Divine life

Our world is in a bad way; men and women of that world are in a terrible way, for their very humanity is under fire. But even more terrible, their aspirations to the life of God have been definitely surrendered. Man is asked to find his peace, his hope, his courage, his complete happiness in this individual world of civil war, in the social world of slavery, with never a glance above the dreary scene that men have painted to inspire other men. For sin is, above all, rebellion against God; it is a deliberate descent from the plane

of divine life, with the knowledge that no power but that of God can ever lift us up to that plane again. And even God will not lift us up against our will. Sin is a surrender of all that gives meaning to that swift motion which is human life, for it is a surrender of the goal of that motion.

Sin and happiness

Sin and happiness? The confirmed sinner has a solid grasp on the bitter knowledge of the unhappiness of sin. He has found out for himself that neither in this life nor in eternity can sin bring happiness to man. Perhaps only the saint realizes as keenly that the happiness of man consists in the approach to and possession of the goal of man and that sin is a despairing flight away from the goal to its complete loss.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 14 --»
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CHAPTER XIV -- THE CAUSES OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 75-78)

1. Double root of modern discontent:
 - (a) Ignorance of cause of happiness.
 - (b) Ignorance of cause of unhappiness.
 2. An analysis of unhappiness -- sin.
 3. Possible causes of sin:
 - A. Internal:
 - (a) Proximate and immediate: intellect and will.
 - (b) Remote: imagination and sense appetite.
 - (c) Sole sufficient cause: will.
 - B. External:
 - (a) Movers of senses.
 - (b) Movers of reason.
 - (c) Other sins:
 - (1) As efficient cause.
 - (2) As material cause.
 - (3) As formal and final cause.
 4. Intellect as a cause of and excuse for sin:
 - (a) Ignorance as a cause of sin.
 - (b) Ignorance as a sin.
 - (c) Ignorance as an excuse for sin:
 - (1) As a total excuse.
 - (2) As a partial excuse, diminishing gravity.
 5. Senses as a cause of and excuse for sin:
 - (a) As a cause:
 - (1) Sense appetite as mover of the will; directly and indirectly
 - (2) Sense appetite as conqueror of reason:
 - a. Indirectly, by impeding action of reason.
 - b. The sinner's syllogism.
 - (3) The first principle of sin: inordinate love of self:
 - a. Conversion to creature.
 - b. Concupiscence of the eyes, of the flesh, and the pride of life.
 - (b) As an excuse for sin:
 - (1) Partial excuse: antecedent and consequent passion.
 - (2) Total excuse.
 - (3) Possibility of mortal sin of passion.
 6. The will as a cause of sin, never an excuse:
 - (a) Sins of malice, ignorance, weakness:
 - (1) Sins from habit.
 - (2) Sins from will.
 - (b) Comparison with sins of passion.
- Conclusion:
1. Root cause of unhappiness -- bad will:
 - (a) Modern remedies for unhappiness.
 - (b) Norm of good will.
 - (c) Means to good will.
 2. Good will and peace.
 3. Good will and happiness.

CHAPTER XIV THE CAUSES OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 75-78)

Nearly every good-natured unmarried brother has found himself, at some time or another, in the uncomfortable position of being left to mind an infant nephew or niece. It is a difficult position, for babies are mysterious creatures, particularly to unmarried brothers; if they could only speak up and ask for what they want instead of just sitting there howling! So the family comes home to find both the baby and its guardian exhausted. In front of the baby are piled up all the odds and ends a distracted mind could locate, like peace-offerings before the idol of an angry god; the guardian has sung songs, done tricks, made faces, poured out all his charm to no other end than the desperation of both the baby and himself. But two minutes after the family has returned, peace settles down on the house again.

Doctors are to be pitied on much the same grounds, though their difficulty does not come so much from

the attempt to discover what the patient wants as from trying to uncover the things that he does not want. It must take a tremendous effort on the doctor's part to look confident and undisturbed when he has not the remotest notion of what is wrong with the patient and yet evidently there is something very seriously wrong. Unless the doctor can find out what is wrong he is in as uncomfortable a position as the unmarried brother who could not find out what was right for the baby. And of course the patient is even more uncomfortable than the baby.

Watson, the founder of Behaviourism, once said: "Give me the baby", meaning that he could then make the adult to order. Well he certainly got the baby. In fact all of modern philosophy has been left with the baby in its lap and the howls of discontent and unhappiness grow louder, more despairing, day by day. All the odds and ends that a distracted philosophic mind could think of have been piled in front of the baby, like peace-offerings before an angry god: philosophy has sung songs, dreamt dreams, done tricks, laughed and frowned, suggested and threatened, but still the baby is unhappy. We saw some of these philosophic antics earlier in this book: playing that men were machines, or that men were animals, that they were processes, or periods, or even commas; men have been offered riches, liberty, sensuality, oblivion, slavery, glory, power and despair. But still they are unhappy, still the howls of discontent make the walls of the world shudder. Modern philosophy cannot make men happy; it does not know where that happiness lies.

But the situation is much more desperate than this; it is not merely a question of humouring the baby. A patient is groaning in agony and the doctor has no notion of what is wrong with him; modern man is desperately unhappy, and his doctors do not know where to look for that unhappiness. All kinds of remedies have been tried. It was thought that inhibitions were at the root of the trouble, that religion was to blame, that men were not educated enough, amused enough, comfortable enough or healthy enough; one thing after another was amputated -- the intellect, the will, then the sense appetites, but still the patient groans. And he will continue to groan. For just as modern philosophy is ignorant of the cause of man's happiness, it is also tragically ignorant of the causes of his unhappiness.

Double root of modern discontent: Ignorance of cause of happiness

Our frowns at the clumsiness of modern philosophers are very much like the dagger-glances the mother throws at the worn-out guardian of her child. The answers seem so very simple to us. In the first chapter we saw what makes men happy, where alone happiness is to be found. In this chapter, beginning the investigation of the causes of man's unhappiness, we will find the answers just as plain, as concrete, as solidly true as they were in that first chapter. Peace descends on the house again; or it would descend upon the house if these inexperienced guardians did not insist on pushing the knowing mother into a corner and continuing their attempts to placate the baby, utterly undiscouraged by the disastrous results so far achieved.

Ignorance of cause of unhappiness

The modern world never will discover where human happiness or unhappiness lies until it gives up the attempt to prove that men and women are not human. The unhappiness of human beings is not to be explained on the same grounds as is the wilting of a flower, or the misery of a shivering, half-starved puppy. There is vegetable life in man, there is animal life in man, and both of these can suffer adversity; but the whole point of human happiness is that there is human life in men and that human life can also suffer adversity. Of course that adversity is centred on the principles from which human life flows: it has to do with the intellect, the will, the soul of man. Quite simply, its name is *sin*.

An analysis of unhappiness -- sin

This is the root of human unhappiness. Other things may make life unpleasant, uncomfortable, extraordinarily difficult, but not necessarily unhappy. We can find happiness amidst the most abject poverty, in squalor, in sickness, in ignorance, in terrible physical fatigue, in back-breaking labour. But happiness is not to be found in the heart of a sinner. He may wear the mask of pleasure and carry an air of

bravado about with him as a protection from the pity of others. But no one knows better than the priest that no great sinner needs to be urged to shame and remorse; that sinner has drunk deep of the cup of misery and knows well its bitterness.

Possible causes of sin

What brings this miserable unhappiness into being? What is the cause of sin? To answer this question is our work in this chapter, a work that will be completed in the following chapter. The answer is easy if we approach the problem in orderly fashion. In our first volume we learned something of God by looking closely at the world; we know that in our daily life we can get a good knowledge of a man by looking closely at his work. In the same way we can get a good idea of the cause of sin by looking closely at sin.

Proximate and immediate: intellect and will

The very first glance gives us an obvious clue. Sin is proper to man, and that means it is a distinctively human action. Here we are on familiar ground, for we have looked thoroughly into human action, particularly into human action's principles of intellect and will and its all-important characteristic of control. Sin, like any other human action, is an act proceeding under a man's controlled direction to a goal of his choosing. In this, sin is like every other human act: it belongs to the man producing it, it is his responsibility, his tool. But unlike every other human action, there is something the matter with sin, something wanting, some serious defect which places it below the level of other human acts. It is precisely this missing element, this defect, that is the formal constituent of sin; this is the real root of human unhappiness.

We might explain this defect of the act of sin by saying that sin is a human act going to the wrong goal; or by pointing out that it is an act which has strayed off the road mapped out by reason, it is a builder's blunder as a result of disregarding the architect's blue-print. What is lacking, then, is the direction to the right goal, the conformity to the rule, to the plans of reason.

A room might be nearly pitch dark at high noon simply because of unusually dirty windows. It would not be a complex matter to flood the room with sunlight by washing the windows, though it might not be an easy job. The room's darkness is a defect, but not the same kind of defect as is found in sin. A room has no intrinsic claim to light, darkness is not a privation of something that belongs to a room by its very nature. It is a mere negation of light, a negation that can be corrected by simply removing the impediment of dirt from the windows. The defect of sin is more than a negation; the thing missing in sin actually should be there, it is a part of human action, without it sin stumbles along like a man deprived of his sight. We are not seeking here the cause of a negation, but the cause of a privation; no mere accident or impediment explains sin. There is something much more solid behind it.

Let us suppose a woman is in the flurry of last-minute preparation for a dinner. The guests are nearly due, so she takes ice cubes from the refrigerator and, in the confusion of giving three or four orders at once, she puts the ice cubes where they will not fall and can be easily found -- on top of a hot oven. A few minutes later she turns to the ice cubes to discover in dismay that an essential element of ice cubes is missing; an ice cube should not be fluid. There is a real privation -- not only for the ice cubes, but for the guests. What caused it? The fire of course. Still there have been fires burning for centuries before a single ice cube lost its solidity; certainly destruction of ice cubes is not the reason for the existence of fire. As far as the fire is concerned the result is entirely accidental. Fire has its own proper effect, but the accidental effect on the ice cubes is necessarily bound up with the natural action of fire, granted there are any ice cubes near the fire.

The same is universally true of the cause of privation as distinct from negation. Because a privation means the defect of what should be present, there must be some positive cause at the root of the privation; not that privation is directly produced by this cause, but rather this cause, producing its own effect, accidentally brings about the defect which is a privation of a due perfection. This is the case with sin. The

defect of sin is not a mere negation, it is a privation of something that should be in a human act. It must be traced back to a positive cause, to the cause which in producing its own effect, brings about the inordinacy of sin. In other words, it must be traced back to the cause or causes producing the positive part of sin, the human action from which this ordination is missing; it must be traced back to the causes or principles of human action.

Remote: imagination and sense appetite

The causes of sin, then, are the causes of human action, causes with which we are thoroughly familiar whether they be the immediate and proximate principles from which these actions flow (intellect and will) or the more remote principles (senses, imagination and sense appetite). Putting it in another way will perhaps make clearer the part of each. In sin we have an *apparent* good inclining the appetite of man to action. The brick and mortar of this sin -- the apparent good which is the motive of the whole action -- is furnished by the senses and the imagination; the first inclination to this apparent good, by the sense appetite; the absence of regulation is due to the intellect where prudence should be alertly directing every action of man rightly. But so far we have nothing at all: an apparent good, an inclination that as yet has no morality, and no regulation or direction, for there is nothing to be directed. It is only when the will, the first principle of movement in man, gets in its work of motion to the positive act involved in sin that we have the sin present. As we have just said, the cause of the privation is the same as the cause of the positive side of the act of sin.

Sole sufficient cause: will

Right here enters the very human procedure of shifting responsibility to shoulders other than our own. If something goes wrong in a corporation, the investigators discharge the lowest clerk; if a battleship runs aground, the sailor with no one beneath him is cashiered. Adam started it by blaming Eve for his fall and she promptly laid the blame on the serpent. That is what our age has been trying to do with sin. We have passed the blame from intellect to sense appetite, to imagination, to the senses themselves; finally sin finds itself tossed into the lap of heredity, environment, or even the weather.

External: movers of senses

But it simply does not do in the case of sin. It did not do for Adam and Eve and it does not do for us. Actually we make ourselves a little ridiculous when we try to trace sin's cause to the outside world. A glass of whisky does not ordinarily club a man into drinking it; it is only after he has taken it that it does any clubbing. In fact nothing necessarily moves the sense appetite unless that appetite is already disposed in that particular direction; a great deal of money and labour go into the making of a drunkard. Even if the senses were captivated immediately and necessarily, they are, after all, only the servants of reason and will, not giving the orders but taking them; and if they go to the impertinent heights of giving orders themselves, the humanity disappears from the action -- neither the senses nor anything else is doing the steering, giving the orders, for there is no order, no direction, in the act.

Movers of reason

Much the same is true of the intellect. Unquestionably a man cannot tell himself the lawn does not need cutting when the evidence plainly says that it does, for the intellect cannot resist truth. But how often will such evidence result in the actual mowing of the lawn? No outside mover can force the intellect to the actual accomplishment of things. Of course the will, since it must be free to sin at all, free here and now, cannot be forced by anything external to itself to the action involved in sin. These are the principles from which sin flows: intellect, sense appetite and will. Any action brought to bear on them may be some inducement to sin, but only an inducement; the real cause of sin must be found within a man himself.

Other sins:

Such a conclusion immediately opens up the possibility of the cause of sin being sin itself. Certainly

experience offers evidence enough that one sin leads to another, that once we start downhill the pace is rapidly accelerated; and sin is within man himself. What part does one sin play in causing another? It seems quite clear that by one sin we can and do remove the things that hold us back from other sins; the first murder is always the hardest, not because the next one is any easier but because the sinner himself is hardened through the diminishing of shame and the loss of grace. It is also true that sin, like any other human act, cuts a groove along which other sins of the same type run more easily, smoothly, pleasantly. One sin may act as the labourer bringing up the material necessary for other sins, as the miser prepares the material for sins of injustice. The swindler tells many a lie in order to accomplish his clever theft. But in none of these cases is a sin produced by a preceding sin; it is only made easier, more appealing. We are still left facing the unpleasant truth that sin must be traced back to the principles from which flow the acts that are wholly our own. Our task, then, is simple: which of these principles of a human act is the sole sufficient cause of the inordinacy which is sin -- reason, sense appetite or will?

Intellect as a cause of and excuse for sin:

Ignorance as a cause of sin

The contribution of intellect to the perfection of human action is one of knowledge and intelligent direction based on that knowledge. Its part in sin, then, will be a part played by the contrary of knowledge, i.e. ignorance. Understand, of course, that not every lack of knowledge is ignorance; very few passengers on a transatlantic liner could navigate the ship, but they are not all ignorant, for ignorance is a lack of knowledge that should be had.

Not every kind of ignorance will do for sin; it must be that very particular kind of ignorance, an ignorance of that which, known in time, would prohibit the act of sin. A man might commit patricide either because he lacked the universal knowledge that patricide was wrong, or through lack of the particular knowledge that this man was his father; but in either case, unless the ignorance entered into the act, the patricide would come about ignorantly but not from ignorance. Even when all the conditions are perfect for ignorance to get in its contribution to sin -- where there is a defect of knowledge that should have been had, and this defect enters into the act itself -- ignorance is still only an accidental cause of sin, a cause in the sense of removing the impediments to sin much as washing the dirt off the windows would be a cause of sunlight flooding a room. As a sufficient cause of sin, ignorance breaks down badly; we shall have to look to the senses and the will for the answer to the fundamental question with which we are dealing.

Ignorance as a sin

As long as we have granted ignorance this audition we might as well listen to its songs and see what it can do, even though we are already sure it cannot play the leading part. It cannot be the cause of sin, but perhaps it could be a sin; and here is a possibility that is positively intriguing. Submitting a sin to the powers of absolution, the Catholic has the sin completely destroyed; how convenient it would be if the ignorant Catholic could confess ignorance and by absolution have the ignorance destroyed, have knowledge poured into his head like water into a kettle! Nevertheless ignorance is a sin, but the absolution does not remove the ignorance but rather is directed against the negligence or malice which made this particular ignorance culpable. For patently not every ignorance is culpable; surely not that which cannot be overcome (invincible), nor even every ignorance that can be overcome, but only that which deprives us of a knowledge that we could and should have, like the lawyer's ignorance of the law, or the doctor's ignorance of medicine, or a professor's ignorance of the subject he is teaching.

Ignorance as an excuse for sin: As a total excuse

As an excuse for sin, the capacities of ignorance are also limited. We could put this role of ignorance briefly by saying that ignorance excuses from sin in exact proportion as it destroys the voluntariness of the act of sin. So the man who shot his father thinking he was shooting a deer is certainly not guilty of patricide. If he did not know it was his father he was shooting but did know it was a man, he would be guilty of murder though not guilty of patricide. In both these cases the act of patricide was altogether

involuntary. But if the hunter were a gangster who mistakenly shot a long-sought enemy thinking he was shooting a deer, then the ignorance would have nothing to do with the case at all; even if he knew better it would have made no difference in his action.

As a partial excuse, diminishing gravity

There are two rather distasteful conditions under which even the type of ignorance which renders an act involuntary does not excuse from sin. One is the case of affected or hypocritical ignorance, the kind of ignorance which makes us dodge knowledge for fear we will discover that this thing we are so in love with is sinful; the other is a lazy negligent ignorance by which a man does not know the very things he should, indeed must, know here and now. These are distasteful because they smack strongly of a cowardice that is totally unworthy of man, the cowardice that makes a man cringe from life, from the responsibilities of being human. It is a futile attempt to escape from reality into the world of make-believe and presence. And that is exactly why it does not excuse from sin; it does not really make this act involuntary, it just pretends to do so. Far back down the road up which this particular act travelled we will find the voluntariness trailing along, keeping far behind so as not to be identified with the act that here and now is begging pardon for itself on the grounds of ignorance. As a matter of fact the ignorance itself was *willed*.

A grasp of the validity of ignorance as an excuse for sin makes it easy to see the part ignorance plays in diminishing the gravity of sin. Evidently, the ignorance that totally excuses from sin, that totally destroys the voluntariness of the act of sin, also destroys the whole gravity of sin. Ignorance that is not the cause of the involuntary character of the act neither diminishes nor increases the gravity of sin. The ignorance that was willed directly in the voluntariness of the negligence which caused the ignorance does to some extent diminish the gravity of sin because it diminishes (though it does not destroy) the voluntariness and the contempt ordinarily involved in sin. But that hypocritical ignorance which is directly willed in order that we might sin more freely instead of diminishing the gravity of sin actually increases that gravity.

There is a point here worth noticing relative to the diminution of the gravity of sin through negligence. When we speak of the gravity of sin we are speaking of the evil of sin judged from the double viewpoint of the object of the sin and the malice of the sinner. Of course neither negligence nor anything else can change the objective, essential gravity which comes to a sin from its proper object; but the malice of the sinner can be affected, even though this lessening of malice results in an increased number of sins. So a motorist who has killed a person through negligence may not have committed as grave a sin as the assassin, but he may also have committed more sins in that one act than did the assassin.

Senses as a cause of and excuse for sin:

As a cause: Sense appetite as mover of the will; directly and indirectly

Coming back to our original question of the cause of sin, we find there are only two candidates still claiming the dubious honour of principal cause of the unhappiness of man: the senses and the will. Of the two, the senses will lead in most popular balloting probably because of their vociferous demands for attention. Comparing the two, the senses seem to be in much the position of the unimportant cog in a political machine who struts about grandly informing his simple-minded constituents that he is dictating the policies of the governor. Really the comparison is quite exact; from the very nature of sin as a human action, an action proceeding from deliberate free will, it is self-evident that the senses cannot be the whole cause, in fact cannot be a cause at all except in so far as they influence the principles from which that deliberately free act flows. Like the petty politician's influence on the governor, the influence of the senses on the intellect or will is decidedly indirect.

Certainly the senses cannot stroll up to the will and tell it what it must do; in fact nothing can do this. What they can do, all they can do, is indirectly to induce the will to follow their suggestion. It is a fact that when a man is intent on a problem good cooking is wasted on him; or when his energies are concentrated in one direction, his other powers are bound and gagged. As examples of this there are the injuries that go

unnoticed in a football game; on a more heroic scale, the unperceived agonies of the martyr who is caught up in an ecstasy of love. It works as well the other way around: not only does a concentration of our mental powers dull the perception of the senses, but a concentration of the sense appetite, a vehement rush of passion, saps the strength of the will. More simply, our powers are rooted in the essence of the soul; when any one of them is vehemently pursuing its object the others have to wait their turn or take a minor part in whatever operations are going on at the time.

Indirectly, by impeding action of reason

This is one way the senses can influence the will. The other is by blocking the intellect thus leaving the will without intelligent protection, as putting a bandage over the eyes of a blind man's dog leaves the blind man helpless, dependent on the leadership of anyone who comes along. In other words, the senses can sometimes impede the work of reason, and so influence the will. This impediment to reason may come about through the concentration of the powers of the soul in one direction, as we have explained about the distraction of the will; it may be a case of the soul being pulled in contrary directions by passion and reason; or it may be by a positive physical impediment to reason comparable to the impediment of sickness, sleep or drunkenness. It is almost literally true that a man in a violent fit of anger "sees red ", or at least that he is incapable of seeing anything else, perhaps of seeing anything at all.

The sinner's syllogism

We can put this more concretely by saying that a man might know murder is wrong and even that his particular act is murder; but the rush of the sense appetite impedes him from using the knowledge he possesses. Commonly this impediment of the sense appetite hinders a man from applying this universal knowledge to a particular case. The sinner, like every other man proceeding to a human action, arrives at his decision to act in this particular way by a syllogism, or a train of reasoning following the rational form. But instead of arguing rationally from "revenge is wrong", through "this act is revenge", to the conclusion, "this act is wrong and to be avoided", the sinner starts from a double principle. Side by side with the principle "revenge is wrong " he has the principle "revenge is agreeable, a source of pleasure". The rush of passion completely blocks the first; and the sinner goes on from the other to argue, "this act is revenge", "therefore this act is agreeable and a source of pleasure, a thing to be done". For it is always true that man must make all his acts wear the appearance of rationality, not only by way of protecting his own self-respect, but by way of protecting his own sanity.

This is the explanation of the pitiful cry of the sinner who says "I know I should not do this" but who nevertheless does it. He does know in an abstract, speculative way; but that knowledge is not allowed to proceed to the strict command or prohibition that would directly guide the action. In other words, the sense appetite swerving reason from its path is a sickness, a weakness that holds a man back: from producing results worthy of his manhood, as an infection in the eye would keep a man-from seeing with his usual clarity

The first principle of sin: inordinate love of self:

Conversion to creature

What is behind this rush of passion and its desperate attempt to cripple reason and sway the will, to rob the actions of a man of their humanity? The same thing that is behind every sin, the enthronement of ourselves. Here and now we want this desirable thing, we want it so badly that nothing else matters; that our desires be satisfied is more important than anything else, than any other consideration. In other words, we have placed self-satisfaction at the top of our scale of values; we have loved ourselves above all else. Yet in effect we have thoroughly hated ourselves. For this is not the healthy self-love which leads a man to God and to happiness; but a self-love that involves contempt for God and by that very fact a contempt for ourselves, for it dedicates us to things beneath us, to trifling things that leave our hearts emptier than before.

Concupiscence of the eyes, of the flesh, and the pride of life

That is the root of sin, the ultimate to which all sins can be reduced. More immediate roots or sources of the sins flowing from the passions are given in St. John's phrase "the concupiscence of the eyes, concupiscence of the flesh and the pride of life ": "of the flesh " indicates sins of what we might call natural passion -- gluttony, drunkenness, lust; "of the eyes" -- those sins of passion following in the wake of sense knowledge, imagination, sins turning about money, clothes, glory; "pride of life" -- sins flowing from the irascible or emergency passions, sins that have to do with fear, presumption, anger and the rest.

As an excuse for sin:

Partial excuse: antecedent and consequent passion

But whatever their immediate source, it is not hard to see what gravity the sins of passion have, to see how much of an excuse passion offers for sin. Evidently if I know some particular line of thought is going to make me very angry and I deliberately sit down and occupy myself with this train of thought, the flare of anger which follows does not offer an excuse for sin; it was itself deliberately willed, it is a sign of my complete willingness, and as a matter of fact by its intensity it sweeps aside all hindrances to that willingness. If I stamp on my own corn to arouse anger I have no excuse for what follows; but if someone else stamps on that corn very much against my will, I may have a very good excuse indeed. In fact there may be no sin at all if the rush of passion destroys my use of reason altogether, so that I am really blind with anger. But if it does not go so far as that, the sin is less grave in exact proportion as reason is deprived of its rightful command. As long as reason still has some command, it is possible to stem the flood of passion, diverting it, insisting on its obedience, refusing to give it the formal recognition of consent without which it cannot take its place within the august assembly of human acts.

Possibility of mortal sin of passion

Is it possible for a sin flowing from passion to be a mortal sin? Of course: of its very nature passion is not the enemy of reason and will but their servant; a servant that can also be sent on serious errands of sin.

The will as a cause of sin, never an excuse

Not reason, nor the senses are the sufficient cause of sin -- there is only one possible answer remaining to the fundamental question we set ourselves to answer in this chapter; for there is only one other principle of human action to consider -- the will of man. If we turn back to an earlier example we will find that the answer to that question was really contained in the question itself. The sufficient cause of the darkness in the room was the dirt of the windows -- that was sufficient to account for a negation; but the fire was the sufficient, if accidental; cause of the melting of the fee cubes. This last was not a mere negation but a privation a defect of a perfection that should have been there. That is exactly the case in sin. It is not sufficient to point to ignorance or passion which might suffice to explain a mere negation; for the privation involved in sin we must go to a positive cause, a cause producing something directly, a cause whose effect accidentally causes this privation in sin. In other words, we must go to the cause of the positive element in sin, to the cause of the physical act of sin, to find the cause of the privation of sin. That cause is the will of man. If we are looking for the cause of the privation involved in theft, we must go to the cause responsible for the physical act of taking a wallet.

Sins of malice, ignorance, weakness

The will is the sufficient cause of sin, for it is the only direct positive cause involved in that human act of sinning. The malice of a sin, then, is directly traceable to the part played by the will in that sin; the sin is more malicious as the will plays the greater role. Where the intellect plays the greater part we have a sin of ignorance, for that is the intellect's contribution to sin; where passion has most of the lines, we have a sin of weakness, for that is passion's contribution to sin; but where the leading man is will we have a sin of malice -- malice is the will's contribution to sin. It is true enough that in most sins there is some ignorance, some weakness; always there is malice or there can be no sin. It is a question of which plays the leading part; to say that one or the other enters into the sin is no more than repeating the evident though shocking

truth that sin is itself a corruption, its brightness, like the flush of fever, proceeding from corruption and leading to an even more serious corruption. For the very fact of sin presupposes corruption in the intellect, in the sense appetite, and always in the will.

Sins from will

Where the will chooses sin without the rush of passion or the fog of ignorance entering largely into the choice we have what is called a sin of malice; the same type of sinning is variously described as "sinning from industry", "knowingly choosing evil". Not that there is not choice in every sin, but rather that not every sin proceeds principally from the choice of the will. It may seem difficult to understand how the will, made to search out good and pursue it to the heights of divine good, can deliberately turn aside to evil; the answer is not so difficult though there must always be something obscure about sin -- it always remains "the mystery of iniquity". There are just two ways in which this mystery can be accomplished: by a corruption that makes the evil particularly appealing, even similar to the desires of the will, much as an eye infection will make light unpleasant and darkness agreeable; or by the removal of the things that keep us from sinning, the impediments to evil choice -- hope of eternal reward, fear of hell, shame, etc.

Sins from habit

Doing away with the impediments is like taking the sign "explosive" from a box of dynamite, for those impediments make evil stand out in all its hideousness. The corruption involved in a sin of malice is a more subtle and therefore more dangerous thing. It may be a physical corruption, like sickness or positive physical inclination, that makes this evil thing appeal to us so much; or, as is more usual, it may be the corruption of habit. The work of habit is to make our actions easier, more pleasant, second nature to us; and if those habits be bad habits, they make evil actions easier, more pleasant, more a part of our nature, with something like the appeal that nature itself has; something like the spontaneous response of will to nature is found in will's response to habit.

Comparison with sins of passion

All other things being equal, a sin of malice is much more grave than a sin of passion precisely because there is more of the will in it, and the formal gravity of sin is a matter of the deliberate will to sin. This is the fundamental explanation of the easy and deep remorse of the passionate sinner as contrasted with the stiff-necked stubbornness of the sinner from malice. The victim of passion has really sinned half-heartedly, his whole will was not in it and he comes stumbling breathless back to God as soon as passion has subsided. We might say the passionate sinner has really been interrupted in his pursuit of God and hurries to take up that pursuit after the unfortunate interruption. But the malicious sinner is a whole-hearted sinner, he does not find it easy to come back, he has not been interrupted in the pursuit of God but rather he has deliberately taken after another quarry. If that sin of malice be from the corruption of habit, it has a permanency about it that only the grace of God and a heroic human heart can prevent enduring through the eternity of hell.

Conclusion: Root cause of unhappiness -- bad will

This, then, is the sole sufficient cause of sin, the bad will of man. This is the root of human unhappiness, as distinct from the adversity of the plant or the brute, the malicious will of man knowingly choosing a temporal good that brings with it spiritual ruin. This is what is the matter with the baby left in the lap of modern philosophy, this is the trouble with the patient groaning while helpless doctors look on and speculate. Remove this and you will find human happiness wherever you find human hearts: in the poor, in the ignorant, in the sick, in the wealthy, in the learned, in men, women and children. For human happiness is no surface decoration to be snatched away by any passing wind of illness, misfortune, poverty or wealth; it is a treasure buried deep, as deep as the soul of man. It is locked up in the human heart, a treasure-room inviolable against any attack of any agency, a strongroom where only the master of the house or those to whom he has given the key may enter. It can be plundered only by its owner, squandered only by the man to whom it belongs.

How far wide of the mark we have gone in our times searching for remedies for the unhappiness of man! We have piled up gifts before man like peace-offerings before the idol of an angry god, remotely hoping that some one or the other would please him. On the positive side we have talked of better housing, better food, more education, more culture, more leisure, more health -- all of them good; but was it not evident from the first that thousands of men and women who had all of these things were desperately unhappy? So we went to the negative side, saying it was not something that men lacked, but something they already had which was making them unhappy. We took away the notion of sin, of God, of a soul, of a free will, even of an intellect; we took away all restraint from the passions, all responsibility from actions, all meaning from life. And was man more happy? God alone will ever know how much damage was done to humanity; only the men and women who were the victims can say what a bitter, despairing drink we made of unhappiness. We failed, utterly, miserably. And we will continue to fail until we are willing to face the awful but inspiring truth that the will of man is the sole sufficient cause of the unhappiness of man: awful because it puts the responsibility directly into our hands; inspiring because it puts the destruction of unhappiness within our power.

Modern remedies for unhappiness

The remedy for unhappiness is good will -- not in the pietistic sense of a revival meeting; but in the solidly human sense of a will that is pursuing its proper goal, striding along the road of reason to the goal of reason and tasting at every step something of the invigorating happiness of the goal, as a man approaching the sea will smell and feel the tang of it while still miles away.

Norm of good will

This good will is not something mysterious, esoteric; it is not something about which we wonder whether or not we have it; it is not something that claps us on the head like a falling brick. Any man by a few moment's thought can immediately determine whether or not he has good will; it takes only an examination of conscience, a perusal of the Ten Commandments and an application of them to our actions. For if our will be good, our actions will be good; and our actions are good or bad as they measure up or fail to measure up to the Ten Commandments. Or, in more philosophical language, our actions flow from our will and they are good or bad according as they move to our goal or away from it. The Ten Commandments express the minimum of goodness demanded for "good will".

Means to good will

How is this priceless boon of good will, this foundation of human happiness, acquired? Again there is no hocuspocus. It is simply a case of living up to the demands of reason, to the demands of our humanity, living the life of virtue. It is brought about by just those means the Catholic uses to insure the observance of the Ten Commandments: by doing what he can in building up the good habits or virtues, attacking, rooting out, avoiding the bad habits or vices; and for what he cannot do, calling upon the One Who can give him what he lacks -- by prayer, the sacraments and all the supernatural equipment God has so graciously put at our disposal.

Good will and happiness

It was most fitting that the message of the angels, "peace to men of good will", should have been delivered to ignorant shepherds. It should have shocked us into the realization that good will is independent of the circumstances of life; that good will is the ultimate foundation for peace even in this life of ours. For where can there be peace where there is no happiness; and where can there be happiness without the cause of happiness? Of course God would not put us at the mercy of circumstances which for the most part are out of our control; if human happiness was important enough to the divinity to warrant Calvary's sacrifice, it was something intended for every man, put within the grasp of every man, independent of the world he lived in, independent of the activities of other men, of devils, even of angels. It was to flow from the good will of the individual man.

CHAPTER XV -- UNHAPPINESS FROM THE OUTSIDE (Q. 79-81)

1. The inviolable sanctuary of the human soul:
 - (a) External forces and sin.
 - (b) External agents and sin.
 2. The fact of sin and human dignity:
 - (a) Enemies of humanity:
 - (1) Betrayers of freedom.
 - (2) Destroyers of freedom.
 - (3) Betrayers of truth.
 - (b) Defenders of humanity:
 - (1) Of human intellect.
 - (2) Of human freedom.
 3. God and the inviolable human soul:
 - (a) God's positive part in sin:
 - (1) The act of sin.
 - (2) Temptation, from creatures.
 - (3) Punishment.
 - (b) God's negative part in sin: blindness and hardness of heart:
 - (1) Turning from good and embracing evil.
 - (2) Withdrawal of grace.
 4. Helplessness of the devil.
 5. Power of the devil:
 - (a) Limited field of his operations.
 - (b) His activity material for virtue as well as vice.
 - (c) Limited character of his actual activity.
 6. Hereditary sin and the inviolable human soul:
 - (a) Fact of Original Sin and its transmission a certain truth:
 - (1) Nature's indications.
 - (2) Authority's proof: Job xiv. 4. Council of Mileve, Canon 2 (Denzinger, #102), II Council of Orange, Canons 1 and 2 (Denzinger, #174, 175), Council of Trent, Session V, chapter 2 (Denzinger, #788-791).
 - (b) The mystery and its difficulties:
 - (1) Voluntariness.
 - (2) Justice
 - (c) Theological explanations:
 - (1) By the transmission of the human soul.
 - (2) By transmission of corporal defects.
 - (3) By transmission of human nature (St. Thomas).
 - 7 Heredity and personal sins:
 - (a) Strict limitation of transmission to Original Sin.
 - (b) Universality of transmission to all men.
 - (c) Fundamental condition of transmission: "active principle of generation".
- Conclusion:
1. Basis of modern revolt against God:
 - (a) Original sin.
 - (b) Personal sin.
 - (c) Physical evil and punishment.
 2. Sin as evidence of the perfection of divinity:
 - (a) Nobility and generosity.
 - (b) Respect for inviolable sanctuary of human soul.
 - (c) Beneficent ingenuity and merciful justice.
 3. Sin as evidence of dignity of man.

CHAPTER XV UNHAPPINESS FROM THE OUTSIDE (Q. 79-81)

Perhaps one of the most distasteful tasks in the world is that of the man or woman engaged to demonstrate a product in a shop window. No human being enjoys being an exhibit. We put privacy near the top of the list of the individual's sacred things, privacy of thought, of desire, of the home. We can easily understand the unpleasantness attached to fame when an avid public gorges itself with details of wardrobe, breakfast and dinner, literary tastes, family history, and anything else that dogged reporters can ferret out. Curiosity, critical or admiring, easily reaches the point of persecution and is justly resented. We should have

something of our own, some rooms which only our guests may enter, some doors that only love throws open, some inner sanctuary where the curious and unfriendly cannot wander about to gape and snicker.

Human dignity suffers only one greater affront: the affront offered to a henpecked husband or to the citizen of a state ruled by a tyrant. It is an insult calculated to drag men down with a crash by snatching from them the fundamental control that makes their actions human. We resent being pushed about and we exalt the contrary idea of independence. And rightly so, for the very heart of the humanity of our actions is precisely their independence; they are human because they are ours and no one else's, because they are proceeding under our control to goals of our choice.

The inviolable sanctuary of the human soul

This resentment is not the unreasonable indignation of the man whose flattering day-dreams are brought tumbling down about his ears by stern fact; it is the righteous anger of the man who has been robbed. We have not deluded ourselves into thinking we have this inviolable independence, it is not the product of recent theories or pet day-dreams; we have known through the ages that we have an inviolable sanctuary because we have always known that we are human. We are not making a revolutionary claim to independence of action, because we have known right along that these actions are human, they are ours, they are dependent on no one else.

External forces and sin.

In our last chapter we were forced to the disagreeable conclusion that the one sufficient cause of that distinctively human unhappiness which is sin is the will of the individual man or woman. Disagreeable, yes, but in itself it is a confirmation of and tribute to the inviolable character of our human dignity. We are not pushed about in our human acts, even in such unworthy human acts as sin. Ignorance and passion may try to coax us or trick us into committing sin; but we commit sin only because we have so decided. Heredity, environment, the state of our nerves, our digestion, or any other factor external to our own will can offer no more than an inducement to sin. We have our own sanctuary, inviolable by any force; we are masters of our own deeds and not slaves plodding helplessly under the sting of the lash. For we are men.

External agents and sin

In this chapter we come to a consideration of the influence, not of things, but of persons, upon our human actions, specifically on the human action of sin. From our own experience, from our dealings with other men, we have an accurate idea of our independence and of the limitation of these external agents. We can make a child drink its glass of milk; but we cannot make the child want to drink the milk. Consider the full implications of that: the child is physically insignificant, intellectually just beginning life, totally devoid of experience, of the wiles of diplomacy, without powerful allies or the massive threats of great armies and navies; yet not all the military power of all times, not all the devils in hell, not all the wisdom of the ages can force that child to want a glass of milk! And sin is possible only under condition of being wanted, of being voluntary.

The fact of sin and human dignity: Enemies of humanity: Betrayers of freedom.

It comes as a great shock to men or women not afraid of their humanity but courageously proud of it, to find others positively eager to escape from that humanity. There is, for example, the great throng who would like to slip from under the heavy weight of human action and put the whole responsibility upon God, particularly the responsibility for that human action that is sin (Pelagius, Calvin, Zwingli). They would like to believe that we are helpless, driven mercilessly, necessarily into each particular sin by a totally contradictory deity. Others, on theological grounds, would believe that every action of every man is necessarily sinful; he cannot help himself and no one else can help him. All that God Himself can do is to blink at the sins and pretend they are not there (Luther).

Destroyers of freedom; betrayers of truth

Much the same destruction of human freedom has been attempted on scientific or philosophic grounds in our own day; though, by way of a sop, we are told to cheer up, even if we have nothing to say about our actions, there is no need to worry, because there is no sin. As if that in any way lightened the sweeping insult of denying humanity to men and women! It is no wonder that we resent this sort of thing, this insistence that we be content to be moved like pawns on a chess-board. It is not only an insulting denial of our freedom, of our mastery of our own acts; it is a shameless betrayal of truth, a demand that we embrace the absurdities of an evil divinity, of a godless universe, of a man who is not man, of a freak in nature absolved from natural law. The smile of friendship does not conceal the real enmity towards humanity there; if friendship there is, it is extended only to the streak of cowardice that is rare enough in a human heart and is always the guest of a shamefaced host.

Defenders of humanity: Of human intellect, freedom

Friendship is made of sterner stuff than the sentiment that gives a child pastry and chocolates by way of dinner. The surgeon's knife is often mercifully kind; a brutal truth usually springs from a much deeper affection than does a pleasing lie. The real friends of humanity have kept their eyes fixed on human happiness, on human dignity, on human freedom, on the truths of man, rather than on the lies that would please him for the moment. So, as we saw in our first volume, Christ and His Church through the years have been the defenders of human intellect (Vatican Council, Sess. III, chap. a, canon I, Denzinger, # 1806), of human freedom (2 Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canons 4 and 5, Denzinger, # 814, 815), of a really divine God (3 IV Council of Lateran, chap. I, "De fide catholica," Denzinger, # 428; Vatican Council, Sess. III, chap. I, Denzinger, # 1782, 1784), and of a universe with an intelligent purpose behind it. The booming thunder of authority was heard again and again when men, to deny their humanity, turned away from the persistent whisperings of reason. The real friends of humanity have insisted on the inviolable character of the human soul; our sins are our own because we are human, because we possess a citadel that no siege can reduce.

God and the inviolable human soul

There are parents who rigidly forbid anyone to touch their children for any reason whatsoever, the type that rushes to the superior of a school demanding instant punishment of the teacher who has dared to frown at, rebuke or slap their child. Yet that child is being for ever knocked about by his own parents. That is exactly the position we would be putting God in if we held that, after He had built an impregnable wall of freedom to protect the humanity of our actions from every created force, He Himself should step in to violate that humanity, to cause our sins. It would be no more comfort to us to be free from the molestation of the world than it is for the child to be free from the beatings of everyone but his parents; for we would know that at home, within our own souls, we could expect our humanity to take a constant beating.

God's positive part in sin

But God is not like that. He demands respect for the humanity of our actions from every creature He has produced; and He gives that humanity the same respect. There is no such thing as God pushing a man into sin as we might push a child into a swimming-pool; we have to jump in ourselves, for we alone are the direct cause of our sins.

The Act of Sin

Nevertheless, indirectly, God has something to do with our sins; He must have because there is something very positive, very real about our sins and every reality must be traced back to the first cause of all reality. Remember we defined sin in the last chapter as a human act that has turned off the road of reason; an action with something essential missing, an act deprived of the regulation of reason. The positive side of it, then, is human action; the negative side, the privation of something that every human action should have.

This positive side can be explained only by having recourse to God; God does cause this positive element of sin, as He causes our other actions -- not destroying our own causality in the matter.

As a matter of fact God could not be responsible for the privation of sin. Concretely this privation means turning away from our goal or last end; and that last end is God Himself. To suppose that God is the cause of the formal negative element in sin is to suppose God puts Himself in the ridiculous position of turning away from Himself, of making the absurd mistake of supposing something outside Himself is more desirable than His own infinite goodness. It would be as though a woman, looking into an old, cracked, distorted mirror were to think the face mirrored there much more perfect than her own.

In the negative side of sin we need no help from God. We cannot lay the blame for this defect of sin anywhere but on our own will. The staggering gait of a locomotive with flat wheels tearing over crooked rails is not to be traced to the power of the steam driving the locomotive. The flat wheels and crooked rails are sufficient explanation. A steel worker who disobeys the safety rules of the plant by using a cracked hammer pattering around the top of a crane is himself responsible for the cracked head of the man beneath him who is felled by the flying hammer; or the field manager of a large concern who disobeys the orders of the home office is himself responsible for the results that follow from that disobedience. The negative side of sin is precisely the result of going outside the field of the first cause, of disobeying the orders of our superior; for that we ourselves are alone to blame.

Ah yes, but God permits it! Could He not prevent all men from ever sinning? Well then, why doesn't He? It is the old cry of those afraid of life who would throw out merit, love, triumph, virtue and heaven because they are afraid of demerit, hate, failure, vice and hell. To ask why does God not do away with the possibility of sin is to ask why does God allow men to be men? Why does He not make them machines, or chemicals, or plants, or animals? Why do we have to face these terrible possibilities of failure? Why? Because we can face these other tremendous possibilities of success.

Temptations from creatures

God can prevent all sin, but should He? Is there an obligation of justice on His part to stop sin? Unless there is, we certainly have no claim to think injustice has been done to us. God does permit sins, permits even the negative side of sins according to the ends of His sublime wisdom and justice. The guilt of Roman tyrants fashioned the glory of the martyrs; many a proud soul in imminent danger of hell has been brought weeping to the feet of Christ through the humiliation of a degrading sin of the flesh, for always it is true that the evil God permits is ordained to some good. It is not always for the good of the individual sinner; sometimes it is for the good of others, sometimes for the good of the whole universe. But even the sinner himself is again and again the object of the divine mercy and the watchful providence of God; often we are allowed to fall into sin that, knowing the bitter taste of that joyful-looking cup, we might come to ourselves, know the reality of sin and, humiliated, come back to God. And where mercy has worked again and again in vain, the sinner's act will not escape the divine power for good; if it cannot serve the health of the sinner and the mercy of God, at least it will serve the divine justice which flows from that mercy.

Punishment P Remember now it is not a case of God's doing evil that good might come; we do the evil and the divine workshops are kept running at full capacity to turn that evil to some good. That is strictly true of the evil of sin. Of the evil of punishment, it is indeed done that good might come; that is its precise reason. Many an optimistic parent has placed great hopes in a spanking which was decidedly evil for the child; in fact it is only love and justice that can administer punishment and if we insist on running away from love we are actually insisting on embracing the punishment of justice.

There is a point here well worth mention by way of putting still more of our feeble human excuses for sin definitely out of the running. One of the older ecclesiastical writers was quite sure that women were created to torment men. There was something unfair about the beauty, grace and attractiveness of women; and he greatly suspected that women had learned their feminine wiles from the devil himself. No doubt there are the elements of a sincere compliment in this opinion. Unfortunately we cannot lean back

comfortably and laugh at antiquity from our superior age; for even today there are people who are sure drink is a curse originated for the degradation of man. Probably a little research would uncover many other instances of this mental kink that insists creatures were created to tempt men. Of course this is absurd. All that God made was good and ordained not to the downfall of man but rather to the attainment of his end; the universe was planned as his tool. Doctors have slashed their wrists with scalpels; but the scalpel was not designed as an instrument of suicide or murder. Creatures were not made to coax man into sin; it is rather the stupidity of men that perverts creatures to uses foreign to their original design, much as a contractor might conceivably turn out a machine gun nest from material the architect had planned for a penthouse.

God's negative part in sin: blindness and hardness of heart

Turning from good and embracing evil; withdrawal of grace

There is another angle of God's part in sin that meets with much unjustified complaint from men. Among the effects of sin frequently mentioned in Scripture is "blindness and hardness of heart"; a perversion of reason and will, of intellect and affections, that leaves the sinner buried in his sin as though he were put bodily into setting concrete which grew more rigid with every passing day. The blindness is a conversion to evil, a turning away from divine light comparable to the impatient movement of weakened eyes away from light in search of darkness; the hardness of heart is a reversal of the normal course of the affections of man so that instead of seeking the things that would turn man from evil he despises these aids to good. This blindness and hardness of a sinner are what make a death-bed conversion a marvel of God's grace; and which all too frequently result in death-bed tragedies that tear the heart out of the most experienced priest as he watches the sinner go defiantly down the road of death.

What part has God in all this? It is again the story of sin and its punishment; man furnishes the sin, God the punishment. In this perversion that appears in the habitual sinner, there is a double element: the adherence to evil and the revulsion from good; and the subtraction of God's grace which illumines the intellect and softens the heart of man. In their proper order we have first the placing of an obstacle to grace -- the sin of man; then the refusal of grace by way of punishment; finally the result of this punishment is blindness and hardness of heart. In other words, the cause of it all is the sin of man, for by sin alone is punishment merited. Why does not God overlook the sin? Ah, but He does time and time again, though each time this punishment was well merited, God does not turn away from us, it is we who turn away from Him; and even then the "Hound of Heaven" keeps relentlessly on our track until divine mercy itself surrenders before the obstinate will of the creature made to the image and likeness of God.

Helplessness of the devil

The devil may go about the world as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; but as far as directly causing sin is concerned, he is a toothless old lion. The devil is as helpless as any other extrinsic force or agent in his attempt to force his way into the privacy of our souls; in spite of the marvellous perfection of his angelic nature, he is as helpless as the toddling infant. This sanctuary of ours is absolutely inviolable. We have no more reason to fear that the devil will make us commit sin than we have to run in terror from the gurgles of an infant on the same grounds; the Curé of Ars plunged to the heart of the truth when he chuckled at the antics of this droll companion of men. The thunders, knockings, mysterious whispers and broken furniture were all part of a satanic masquerade calculated to have the same effect on men as a Halloween false face might have had on children thirty years ago.

Power of the devil: Limited field of his operations

However, the devil has enough to keep himself busy. He can cover the whole field of material and human operation in influencing our human acts; that means he can go from the senses up to the phantoms of the imagination -- and not a step farther. In other words, he can offer us inducements to sin as a merchant might offer us inducements to buy his wares; but he cannot make us want to buy. More concretely, the devil can produce in our senses all the results produced by external stimuli; all the physical and organic

changes which ordinarily accompany the passions; he can induce phantasms in the imagination. And what is all this but saying a spirit can work on a material thing? He can do all this -- if he is not restrained by God. The general lack of experience with diabolic activity is more than sufficient evidence of the extensive restraint imposed on the devil and his angels by the infinite mercy of God.

His activity material for virtue as well as vice

The devil started his downward career with a mistake and has been making them ever since. Imagine a football coach, because of his dislike for a certain athlete, putting him through twice as rigorous a training as the others; and as a result turning out a far superior specimen of physical ability. That is the sort of thing the devil is doing all the time. For all these inducements are the brick and mortar from which a splendid house of virtue can be erected; they are opportunities for the exercise of good habits, for cutting the groove of virtue deeper and deeper into our souls.

Limited character of his actual activity Ordinarily we do not cheat the devil of any credit he deserves for our sins and our temptations. In fact we give him much more credit than he has any claim to, not because we are inherently generous but rather because we are so eager to think well of ourselves and so reluctant to disturb the foundation of those very kind thoughts of ourselves. The self-made man who traces all his success to the excellence and persistence of his own efforts, and the town drunkard who lays all his misfortune at the feet of bad luck are extremes of the same human vanity which never tosses a morsel to a guardian angel but heaps the refuse on the head of the devil. Even if there were no devil at all, there would still be ignorance and passion to offer a line of sin attractive even to the connoisseur. However, in one sense we can blame the devil for our troubles; after all, he started them all by tempting Eve.

Hereditary sin and the inviolable human soul:

And speaking of Eve, and of course of her husband, we come to the one effective cause of our sins from the outside; a cause which yet, in a mysterious way, is not outside at all. Original sin with which we are born apparently violates that inviolable sanctuary of man's soul; apparently one sin has slipped into our private quarters without an invitation. But only apparently.

Fact of Original Sin and its transmission a certain truth: Nature's indications

It is necessary, before going into this question, to insist that original sin is definitely not a matter of myths, ignorant superstitions or inferiority complexes induced by a scheming ecclesiastical organization for its own ends. Original sin is a fact. Even nature itself gives us an indication that there is something wrong with man; in fact the modern world is quite ready to admit there is a good deal wrong, even to insist that almost everything is wrong so that the individual must be cared for like a helpless infant by his betters or his Government. But the modern world is not at all prepared to admit that this human defect is a matter of sin. But then the modern world does not know much of anything about the cause of human unhappiness, as we saw in our last chapter. It seems evident, though, that man alone, of all the creatures of the universe, is poorly equipped for the human things he is expected to do. A chemical, a plant or an animal is marvellously well equipped for every function nature demands; but man stumbles into the universe as poorly equipped as a Roman captive staggering into the arena. Considering the usual wisdom and efficiency of nature, this is very strange; considering the benignity and mercy of God and His providence it is inexplicable except on one ground: something has been taken away from man, he has been punished; and the one cause of such spiritual punishment is sin.

Authority's proof

These are only indications of a fundamental truth. Its absolute certitude is based on the solemn declarations of infallible authority. Our human minds might overlook or misread indications of a mysterious truth, indeed they might be blind to the valid proofs of an evident truth; but there is no room for human error. The fact of sin and of its actual transmission comes from a source that cannot deceive or

be deceived. A few of the references are given in the outline of this chapter; let me repeat the solemn words of the Council of Trent: "If anyone says that the sin of Adam injured only Adam himself and not his descendants; that losing the sanctity and justice he had received from God he lost them only to himself and not to us; or that through the sin of disobedience only death and the corporal penalties were handed down to the whole human race, but not sin -- let him be anathema." (Sess. V, chap. 2, Denzinger, # 789).

The mystery and its difficulties

For Catholics there can be no doubt: the fact and transmission of original sin are solid truths infallibly established. Precisely because we must believe, we are free to take this truth, turn it inside out, let our intellect run with the exhilaration of a man on skis down to the depths and up to the heights. Strange how men ever came to look on our dogmas as a limitation of truth. A scientist who has only an absolutely empty test-tube with which to engage his scientific energies might as well be paralyzed. Energetic investigation is possible only when he has something to work on. Our dogmas are distinctively positive things; they give us something and thus open up unsuspected fields for further inquiry. A denial of them just slams another door on the human intellect.

Voluntariness; Justice

We might consider just what original sin is, what its effects are, just what man has lost; and we will consider all these things in our next chapter. Here we are interested in just one phase of original sin -- how does it get into our souls? How is such a mysteriously spiritual thing passed on from parents to children; how can it possibly measure up to the essential demand of all human acts, that of control and voluntariness; and what is the justice of our coming into the world with such a stain as this on our souls, even granted that it is a sin?

Theological explanations:

By the transmission of the human soul

With the easy familiarity of Catholics accustomed to rubbing elbows with patriarchs, apostles, martyrs and virgins, of linking arms with the Mother of God and ushering the Son of God into the unpretentious cosiness of their own souls, the theologians of the Church from the very beginning made no excuses for their bold attempts to answer these questions. Augustine thought perhaps the sin was transmitted from parent to child by the transmission of the soul itself; an opinion of which he was dubious himself before his death, and rightly so. For the parents do not transmit the soul, all they can do is prepare the material into which God infuses a soul He has newly created; a spiritual soul is not the product of material agents, even of exalted spiritual agents such as men and women, it is not to be made out of something, but to be carved from nothing by an almighty stroke of an infinite sculptor's chisel.

By transmission of corporal defects

So other theologians decided that perhaps the transmission of original sin was to be explained by the transmission of corporal defects which certainly fell within the power of the parents; then the soul being infused into this infected body would itself become infected with original sin. Unfortunately for this opinion, the harbouring of the guilt of the wrong human act within the confines of a material body is simply inconceivable; that guilt is a stain on the soul, a spiritual stain; and we can no more make a material body the subject of something spiritual than we can wrap an angel in cellophane; look at the terrible time our modern philosophers have had trying to place intelligence in animals and to keep free will out of the human soul.

By transmission of human nature

No, these two opinions will not do. Even if it were possible to transmit the sin by transmission of body or of soul, there would still be the enormous difficulty of keeping that sin a voluntary act; and voluntary it must be if it is to be a sin. To St. Thomas these opinions seemed to involve more than great difficulties;

they involved impossibilities and that itself was enough to justify their discard, for we are not asked to believe impossible things. St. Thomas pointed out that there was a third possibility: original sin was not transmitted by the transmission of the soul, nor by the transmission of the body, but by the transmission of *human nature*.

Let us look at it this way. In the individual there are properties that are common to all human nature and there are family traits like long noses or red hair; both types of traits are passed on to the next generation according to definite laws. There are still other strictly individual traits which belong to the individual and die with him. In other words, in the individual nature there are some things that belong to nature; and there are some that belong to the individual, things that are acquired over and above the natural or specific perfections. The same was true of nature in the beginning: it had some traits that belonged to it as nature and other perfections that came to it by grace, perfections that we will see in detail in the next chapter.

If we imagine an individual given the chance by one trial to have the privilege of passing his strictly personal traits on to his children or to lose them both for himself and for his children, we have a fairly accurate picture of the position of Adam in the beginning of the human race. He had the chance by one trial to win for his children, or to lose for both himself and his children, the privilege of passing on not only human nature's own traits but the perfections that came to it in the beginning by grace. And he lost.

In other words, Adam was the head of the race, not only biologically, but also spiritually. Through his elevation to the supernatural order he was constituted by God the spokesman and agent of humanity, just as by his creation he was constituted physical head of the race.

Heredity and personal sins:

Strict limitation of transmission to Original Sin

This original sin, then, is my sin, not in so far as I am a person but precisely as I have received human nature. It is not a personal sin but a sin of nature, a sin committed for all human nature by the head of human nature, and coming down to every individual human being who receives human nature from that first head of the human race. So in the human seed original sin is present, not actually, but virtually in so far as that seed virtually contains human nature.

Actually this is my sin; I have sinned in Adam, not in the mere physical sense of being contained in Adam as in an ancestor, but in the sense of Adam having acted for the whole human race. Perhaps it will be more clear if we visualize all human beings as members of one body of which Adam was the head, the director; then somewhat the way that sin is in the assassin's knife-stroke because his hand is moved by participating in the action of his will, so sin is in the descendant of Adam the sin of Adam is participated by his descendants even though thousands of years have intervened.

Immediately an objection comes into our minds: why did we have nothing to say about the choice of this head of humanity? The answer is fairly obvious. If we waited for an election until every human being had a chance to cast a vote, the whole thing would have been ridiculous, for the great majority of the human race would have been long since dead and beyond any personal interest in the outcome of Adam's test. It was something to be settled immediately if the descendants of Adam were to reap any benefit by it; and there were no electors handy. Moreover, if we had been present and had a chance to pass on Adam's qualifications as head of the human race, we would have seen the most perfect man God ever produced (except Christ Himself Who was God) physically, intellectually and morally. Would we have been willing to make the gamble? Would we have been willing to accept the rewards if Adam had made a better fight of it?

Ah yes, but after all sin has to be voluntary to be sin at all; yet original sin invades even the womb of the mother to infect the soul of the still unborn child. Surely the child at that age is not exercising his free will, not producing voluntary acts. Of course not. Original sin is certainly not voluntary by an act of my personal will; but it is voluntary and mine as proceeding voluntarily from the head of the human race, the champion of the human race, the champion who failed.

Universality of transmission to all men

It is evident from this that the personal sins of Adam, the personal sins of any of our ancestors, are not part of our heritage. It is only this sin of nature that comes down to us, for only in this limited field did anyone have the power to act for us. We lost the acquired perfections of nature; but the other perfections come to us intact. On the other hand, no descendant of Adam escapes the contagion of this sin; it comes with the nature received from the head of the human race. The solitary exception is our Blessed Lady who was never contaminated by original sin through a special privilege of God in anticipation of the merits of Christ; and that is what we call the Immaculate Conception. Christ Himself, of course, did not have original sin; but He was not an exception to this universal rule for He did not descend from Adam by carnal generation. Carnal generation is the absolutely necessary condition for the transmission of this sin; just as the hands or feet can participate the sin of intellect and will in so far as they are subject to the movement of intellect and will, so all men participate the sin of Adam in so far as they are moved by Adam through the motion of carnal generation, i.e. in so far as they receive human nature from Adam.

Fundamental condition of transmission: "active principle of generation"

St. Thomas expresses this again and again by saying that the sin is transmitted by the active principle of generation, the father. That statement has been persistently misunderstood. The argument proceeds from Adam's headship of the human race, from the immediate father's headship of the family. The sin comes down through the male line precisely because Adam was constituted head of the race, the father constituted head of the family. To throw out St. Thomas's opinion on the grounds of modern medicine, if modern medicine has grounds for rejecting the scientific stand of the thirteenth century on the active principle of generation, this is to misunderstand St. Thomas. Carnal generation is the instrument of transmission of human nature and thus of original sin. The basis of our participation in original sin is the headship and consequent orderly subordination necessary for the good of the race and the good of the family. But it does follow from this that if God miraculously generates a man (as He did Christ) or if the scientist were to produce a man in a laboratory, in either case there would be no original sin, for the necessary condition of its transmission is missing, i.e. reception of human nature from Adam.

Conclusion: Basis of modern revolt against God:

Original sin, personal sin, physical evil and punishment

The modern bitterness against God has more than one explanation. There is, for example, the jealous preference of men for the idols materialism has set up; and this is no more than the logical climax of the gradual development of philosophy these past few centuries. A more recent source of this bitterness, recent only in its extension and in the sweeping devastation of its denials, might be dated from the despair of the World War. It is engaged primarily with the problem of evil and bitterly rejects God because of the evil it finds. Actually it is a strange mixture of insults to God, insults to men and absurd flatteries of humanity; like the incoherent ravings of a man gone mad.

There is first of all a violent rejection of a God Who would usher into the world men loaded down with the weight of sin and yet demand that they measure up to heights of virtue. This, they say, is a cruel, bitter, mocking divinity without the elemental justice of a crooked politician; a monster who made the world for the torture of men. Then, coming down a step further and taking the picture of God drawn by the destroyers and betrayers of human freedom as an authentic photograph, they vent their mad wrath on a straw god who never existed; on a god who creates men for hell, who pushes them into sin and awaits gleefully with a whip in his hand to punish the evil he himself has caused; on a god who should have prevented all this evil and did not. After having insulted God and insulted men by denying them the fundamental control of their actions, they leap to absurd heights in supposing the puny intellect of the creature they have so insulted is capable of taking in by one glance the sweeping plans of infinite wisdom. They meet hunger and thirst, pain, accident, death and injustice and demand to know why they cannot understand these things happening in a universe ruled by a good God. Why should not the creature who

cannot master one human science grasp all the intricate workings of infinite wisdom ruling a universe from His eternal throne?

Sin as evidence of the perfection of divinity

Nobility and generosity

Perhaps they are a little mad. At least they are a distinct disappointment to the race that bore them; for surely we, with our great gift of intellect, should be able to appreciate the patent evidence of divine perfection which sin parades before the world. The very possibility of triumph and defeat, of virtue and vice, of success and failure, of heaven and hell, is both a tribute to man and a generous sharing of divinity's power with humanity. Only a master sure of his power, supreme in his greatness, would dare to give so much independent power to his subjects; only a being infinite in his goodness would invite such a hopelessly inferior subject as man to share his own divine life; only a mind infinitely wise and a heart infinitely generous could have put into the hands of man the tools which would make that brilliant participation of divinity's life the product of man's own efforts. He could have made man merely an animal, a plant, a chemical. He could have put man on a spiritual dole and freed him of responsibility and self-respect; He could have tossed him the scraps from the tables of heaven as to a beggar who had no claim. But the astonishing thing He did was to treat man as man.

It is not well, in talking of sin, to forget Bethlehem and Nazareth, and the long, weary, discouraging years that led up to the climax of Calvary. It is not good to forget the bread of angels, the picture of the slave nourished on the body and blood of his Master, the strong flow of grace, the wide horizons opened by faith and hope. In a word, we are blinding ourselves if we refuse to see the manifest evidences of divine love as well as of divine justice, if we refuse to see that God has treated us not merely as men, but as friends.

Respect for inviolable sanctuary of human soul

But even as men, the very nature of sin itself shows us the thoughtfulness of God. He gave us the privacy our nature demands; an inner sanctuary that no force, no devil, no man can violate. And He himself refuses to challenge the inviolability of that sanctuary. That soul is our own; its actions can be forced by no one else. They are ours; they must be ours if we are to be held accountable for them, for only by proceeding under our control to our goals are they human actions. The same is true of: our sins, for they too are human actions.

Beneficent ingenuity and merciful justice

Even the abuse of our mastery of our actions furnishes overwhelming evidence of the beneficent ingenuity and merciful justice of God. Time and again our sins are turned to good; time and again we are snatched from the hardness of pride through the humiliation of other sins, brought to our knees by the awful face of sin and the kind face of God. Again and again suffering and misfortune serve as steps to bring us closer to the divine heights. Even the raging activity of Satan himself is made the material by which the sanctity of the friends of God is fashioned. And winch, after years of patient search for sheep that insisted on losing themselves, after silent years of unbearable insult, divine mercy sees the quest for love is hopeless, the very damnation of the sinner is made to serve the double purpose of warning, helping others and fulfilling divine justice.

Why should we have to face these awful possibilities? Why must we play the game of life and run the risk of defeat? These are the questions of the man or woman afraid to live, afraid to be human, the questions of the coward. These are the questions of those who would sacrifice freedom for fear of making a mistake, give up intellect for fear of ignorance, give up action for fear of failure, give up heaven for fear of hell, give up life for fear of living. We cannot have anyone of these without the possibility of the other; and our dignity as men is precisely that we can have, if we will, the most perfect of all, the triumph of life, a share in the life of God.

CHAPTER XVI -- EVOLUTION OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 82-85)

1. Beginning of sin in the individual:
 - (a) Original sin -- a disposition of nature.
 - (b) Original sin -- not a principle of action.
 - (c) Original sin singular in each individual.
 2. The essence of sin's beginning:
 - (a) Original sin formally -- the privation of original justice.
 - (b) Original sin materially -- concupiscence.
 3. The equality of sin's beginning:
 - (a) Original sin equal in all men.
 - (b) Inequality of inclination to sin not from original sin.
 4. Place of sin's beginning:
 - (a) Place of adherence -- the soul.
 - (b) Its place in the essence of the soul and the faculties of the soul:
 - (1) First in the essence of the soul
 - (2) By way of action in the faculties, first in the will.
 - (c) A defence of humanity:
 - (1) Bad will and corrupt nature.
 - (2) Infection in lower faculties.
 5. Damage done by sin to human nature -- "de fide" doctrine:
 - (a) To principles of nature.
 - (b) To original justice.
 - (c) To natural inclination to virtue:
 - (1) Never totally destroyed, even in damned.
 - (2) Infinitely impeded by actual sin.
 6. The "wounds of nature": Ignorance, malice, weakness, concupiscence:
 - (a) With regard to pure nature
 - (b) With regard to nature in state of original justice.
 7. Death and corporal defects as results of sin:
 - (a) Of original sin.
 - (b) Of actual sin.
 - (c) As natural to man.
 8. Root and beginning of personal (actual) sin.
 9. Sin's decoys -- capital sins:
 - (a) Meaning of capital sin.
 - (b) Distinction from mortal sin.
 - (c) Division and objects of capital sins.
- Conclusion:
1. Original sin and the individual:
 - (a) Integrity of his nature.
 - (b) His inclination to virtue.
 - (c) His sovereign independence.
 2. Personal (actual) sin and the individual:
 - (a) Its attack on nature's integrity.
 - (b) Its attack on the inclination to virtue.
 - (c) Its attack on independence.
 3. Plan of sin revealed.
 4. The individual, sin and happiness.

CHAPTER XVI EVOLUTION OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 82-85)

It has become the fashion in our day for great minds to escape their tremendous labours for a few hours by reading utterly fantastic stories, preferably detective stories. These are calculated to fire the imagination and to set the mind completely at rest; in fact they forbid the use of intellect under pain of ruining the story. The large number of great minds revealed by a check of the circulation of these stories is a little incredible. At any rate in one of these stories a doctor succeeded in accomplishing the impossible -- exchanging the souls of two men: the one was a middle-aged man, a chronic invalid who was forever taking medicine, suffering attacks of pain in the region of the heart, dragging himself along carefully, miserably, without hope; the other was a young man, vigorous, who had never known a day of sickness and who had all youth's hope for the future. Five years after the operation, the splendid young body which the chronic invalid had purchased was unrecognizable, floods of medicine were again necessary, the heart

pain was present once more and the future looked as dark as ever, while the decrepit old body taken on by the youth was operating perfectly, charging vigorously ahead into the alluring future.

Utterly fantastic, of course, but it brings out a point that is not at all fantastic, the point that our present activity is moulded by our future; and our estimation of the future is largely based on what we have received from the past. Many a rich man's son has ruined his life because the future was too securely fixed by the labours of his father in the past; and many a son inheriting a disgraced name dragged that name still further down because the future was so hopelessly black.

Much the same is true in the moral order. Some men have been terribly cruel to their fellow men because their own salvation (they thought) was perfectly arranged for them no matter what they did; others have been incredibly vicious because they were sure they had no chance for eternal happiness. Some men have given up the struggle before they had fairly started, sure that no man could win in this fight with the corrupt nature he had inherited; while others have taken disastrous risks serenely sure of the perfection of human nature.

We saw in the last chapter that man did inherit sin, that he was born with original sin on his soul by the very fact of receiving human nature from the first head of the human race. It is important that we know just what that inheritance is. We must know what the past has given us, because the present will be formed by our outlook on the future and our estimate of the future is largely based on our inheritance from the past. Many a game has been won or lost before the teams took the field; over-confidence or defeatism, the conviction of a superiority that makes effort unnecessary or of an inferiority that makes effort worthless -- one is as dangerous as the other in facing the game of life.

Even an atheistic doctor would be reasonably astonished if the new-born baby he was handing to the nurse were to speak up and flatly declare itself an atheist. We do not expect that sort of thing at that age. The baby can and does become mightily irritated at the way it is handled and gives voice in no uncertain terms to anger, fear, sorrow and pleasure; but it does not begin life by sowing wild oats. Whatever sin is on the soul of that infant is certainly not a personal sin but a sin of nature. It is something habitual, not a passing action; yet not a habit built up, for example, like chewing tobacco or dropping ashes on the rug.

Beginning of sin in the individual: Original sin -- a disposition of nature

In fact it is not a habit in the sense we have explained habits; it is more of an habitual disposition of nature itself. To visualize original sin in terms of habit leads us to make the mistake of considering original sin as a principle of evil acts from which all sorts of sins pop out at the first opportunity as mathematical solutions leap from the mathematician's habits of thought, or as thoughtfulness slips silently from the Christian's habit of charity. A much more accurate picture would be that of a symphony orchestra in which each man decided to be his own leader and express his personal moods in his music. Original sin is precisely that: a dissolution of the harmony of original justice. Picture it in terms of a complicated chemical substance where all the elements were beautifully balanced and then suddenly that balance was destroyed, as, for example, in the explosion of T.N.T. or dynamite; or, more humanly, as the attack of an illness which destroys the harmony and smooth co-ordination of our physical organism. That is original sin -- a languor, a sickness of nature, a destruction of the smooth harmony of humanity.

Original sin singular in each individual

It is possible to look upon original sin as multiple in as much as it is the beginning of sin in the individual, as the other sins of the individual are virtually contained in it; or considering that first sin of Adam with its elements of pride, disobedience and gluttony we can call original sin multiple. But strictly speaking, original sin does not multiply in the individual as lies do in the confirmed liar until they have formed a maze from which even the ingenuity of a liar cannot escape. There is just one original sin to each man entering the world. Adam, after all, had authority to act for us in only his one particular: the gaining or losing of the gifts nature had acquired by grace. What he did with the rest of his life, what sins he committed or what temptations he resisted has nothing whatever to do with the inheritance which comes

down to us. This is evident from the nature of original sin: it is a dissolution of harmony, the discordance of the elements of human nature. One such discordance is all one man can accommodate in the small house of his soul. The absolute authority of the head of the house has been destroyed and every member proceeds on the assumption that there is no one in command. It is very much the same as when the principle of harmonious operation in the human body, the soul, departs and each ingredient of the human body goes about its own proper function independently, separately, to the ultimate dissolution of that body; so with the destruction of original justice, the principle of harmonious operation in the soul of man, the faculties of man go their own discordant ways.

Suppose a sword were made out of the only material available -- tin. The workmanship might be perfect, but the result would be a poor fighting instrument; at the first stroke it would bend out of shape. If the material had been glass, then in spite of supreme craftsmanship, that sword would be brittle and would shatter the first time it was used. God, in creating man, set about to make a creature that would link the material and the spiritual world. Man was to be a small universe in himself, a difficult combination of the powers of the plant, the animal and the spiritual world. The precise difficulty came in linking the animal and the spiritual powers; to co-ordinate and yet not impair one or the other meant that in the one creature there would be two sources of activity, each with its own proper motion, stimuli and goal -- the animal and the rational appetite or will. By the very nature of the material with which He worked, God could produce only a delicately balanced, nicely harmonized but decidedly unstable creature; always the animal appetite would have its own field of activity, its own motion which would inevitably clash at times with that other independent motion of the human will. With the one seeking the supreme, universal good, and the other by its very nature concentrating on the immediate, the sensible, the particular good, civil war was inevitable.

From the very material that must go into human nature, then, there goes inevitably a defect just as in the tin or the glass sword. Naturally speaking, man must be defective in comparison with the rest of nature. God, in the beginning, overcame this natural defect by preternatural and supernatural gifts; and this state of defective nature preserved from its defects we call the state of original justice.

The essence of sin's beginning:

Original sin formally -- the privation of original justice

Original justice consisted precisely in the perfect subordination of the will or rational appetite of man to God and, as a consequence, the perfect subordination of the animal, indeed to some extent of the plant life of man, to his rational appetite or will. Briefly, it was an absolutely perfect harmony, the perfect balance, of the volatile ingredients of human nature. Original sin strictly and formally consists in the disruption of that harmony, in the insubordination of the will of man to God. From this fundamental insubordination all the rebellion of the lower side of human nature to the higher followed, much as the crash of the top of a huge smokestack follows on the blasting of its foundation.

Original sin materially -- concupiscence

When St. Augustine and the other Fathers speak of original sin as concupiscence they are describing the material or consequent side of original sin, the toppling of the upper structure of the smokestack. They are distinctly not speaking in terms of the gorgings of the glutton or the lust of the libertine; they are speaking of that general scattering of the animal appetites of man, each to its proper object, regardless of the welfare of the whole man.

There is an important point here, a point we have touched on before but which in this day well merits a repetition. The control of animal appetite by the will, the repression of anger or sorrow or lust, is not an act of violence against nature from which we can expect the awful punishment that nature inflicts on those who transgress her laws. Rather the refusal to repress those appetites, the grant of full play to passion in the name of nature, is a mockery that nature promptly and ruthlessly resents. For human passions, the animal appetites in human nature, were designed to be guided by reason. We are, as a matter of fact,

acting humanly only in so far as we have those passions under control.

Inequality of inclination to sin not from original sin

There is no ebb and flow in death as there is in life. So we are rather indifferent to the training of a guardian of a morgue; but not at all indifferent to the training of a hospital staff. If the morgue guardian were to make the rounds of his clients in an effort to see which was the deadest, it would only be because he had tired of playing solitaire. Death, as the absence of life, is absolute and equal in all men; original sin, as the absence of original justice, is just as absolute, just as equal in all men. the fact that one man has more inclination to murder than another is not because he has a bigger original sin than his neighbour, as one victim of an accident might have a bigger lump on his head than his fellow victim. The difference is due to differences in physical complexion, plus, of course, the difference built into each man by the personal habits he has acquired by repeated acts.

If I have a heavy dictionary and a newspaper side by side on a small table, I can efficiently and expeditiously put them both on the floor by simply pulling the table out from under them. The difference in the crash they make on landing and in the speed with which they fall is not accounted for by saying the table was pulled out from under each of them in a different fashion, or that one lost more of the support of the table than the other; rather the difference is bound up with the physical characteristics of a newspaper and a dictionary. Original sin has pulled out from under us the support of original justice; it has destroyed the leadership of our human orchestra; the difference between the racket made by the first violin and the bass drum is the difference between violins and bass drums.

We cannot, then, walk along the street detecting original sin in the shifty glance of one man and the bullying threats of another. We are often sure that just by looking at a person's face we can read his character, and sometimes that is true, but sometimes it is false. We must look deeper than the face for original sin.

Place of sin's beginning: Place of adherence -- the soul First in the essence of the soul

Like all sin -- all virtue too -- this sin resides in the soul of man, for only by reason of his spiritual soul can man either sin or be virtuous. But even that leaves a great deal of latitude, for in the soul we can distinguish the essence of the soul, the intellect and the will. Then, too, there are those subject faculties, the irascible or emergency and the concupiscible or mild appetites. Where does original sin fit in? A clue to the answer is had in the commonplace contrast of the man who drinks himself into a stupor to drown his worries and his companion who goes blithely along the road to stupor with him because he likes it. Both have committed the sin of drunkenness; but in one that sin is in the irascible or emergency appetite running away from a difficulty, in the other it is in the concupiscible or mild appetite seeking pleasure, even the pleasure of stupid oblivion. The difference is in the goal first reached by the motive cause of the sin. The motive cause of original sin is the transmission of human nature and its first complete goal is the soul precisely as the form of the body, precisely as the vivifying, specifying principle of human nature. Original sin finds its secure home in the very essence of the soul.

By way of action in the faculties, first in the will

From this depth of the human soul, the sickness of nature which is original sin spreads out to affect the actions of man, gradually becoming less and less virulent in its effects as it gets farther and farther from the focus of infection. It is like a strong light which becomes fainter and fainter as the length and width of its beam grow greater and greater. In relation to actions, original sin in its indirect fashion affects first the proximate principles of human action -- the will and the intellect -- and then the more remote principles of the animal side of man's nature. But first and principally it affects the will. After all, it should, for its opposite, original justice, fell principally on the will, completely subordinating it to God; then, too, the will is the first principle of action and motion in human nature. If original sin is to affect human actions it must get at the root principles of those actions.

A defence of humanity: Bad will and corrupt nature

This obvious truth is of tremendous significance in daily human life. It means that the infection which really must be worried about is the infection in the will, the insubordination to God; and that brings us squarely back to our analysis of the sole cause of human unhappiness in which we traced that source of unhappiness to bad will. In other words, if that first principle of human action is not pointed at the goal of reason we have an enemy in the heart of our own camp; while if the will is subordinate to God, if it is a good will, the infection in the lower appetites is relatively unimportant. It is not only possible to look upon the rebellion of the sense appetite as morally irrelevant; that is the only true way to consider this rebellion and, as a corollary of practical moral guidance, a smile of contempt is a much more deadly weapon against such a rebellion than hours of worry.

Infection in lower faculties

Perhaps a good deal of the over-emphasis we give to the infection of the sense appetite is due to a misunderstanding of the Fathers. Very often they speak of the sense appetites of man as being most infected by original sin and they especially single out the generative faculties, the sense of touch and the concupiscible or mild appetite in general. But always they are speaking of this infection in relation not to personal but to original sin. In other words, these things are said to be more infected because by them the infection is spread, for by them human nature is passed on to succeeding generations; they are not said to be more infected because there is a greater moral deficiency in them.

In fact in relation to our personal or actual sins, these appetites are much less infected. They are on the outskirts of the metropolis where the plague has struck and they receive only a slight attack. The intensity of their rebellion against reason and will is no indication of the infection they have suffered; that is merely the nature of the senses. Of course the senses move more intensely to their objects; their union with their objects is more immediate, the object is a concrete, immediate good producing vividly real physical changes in the organism itself. But this is not due to original sin. From a moral point of view this intensity has no significance whatsoever beyond that given to it by deliberate will; in other words, this intensity is significant only in so far as it is the creature of our deliberate control.

Damage done by sin to human nature -- "de fide" doctrine:

To principles of nature

Let us look at this concretely. Just what damage has been done to human nature by sin? Or better, just what damage can original sin, or any sin, do to our nature? Are we down in a gutter, foolishly thinking we can reach the stars when as a matter of fact we cannot drag ourselves up the few inches to the top of the kerb?

As we have already seen, the infallible authority of the Church solemnly declares that the will of man remains free despite original sin; (Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 5 (Denziger, # 815) that the intellectual operations of man have genuine validity, can actually work to a sure knowledge of God; (Vatican Council Sess. III chap. 2 (Denziger, # 1785) and the hopelessly pessimistic claim of the reformers that every act of man is necessarily sinful has been solemnly condemned by that same infallible authority.

Condemnation of the errors of Michael Baius in the Bull "Ex omnibus afflictionibus", Pius V, prop. 25, 35, 40, 67, 68, 74 (Denziger, #1025, 1035, 1040, 1067, 1068, 1074). Condemnation of errors of the Jansenists, decree of the Holy Office, Dec. 7, 1690, Alexander VIII, prop. 2 and 8 (Denziger # 1292, 1298). Confer appendix to chap. XX *infra*.

Examining the matter in more detail it is self-evident that original sin, or any sin, is incapable of destroying the constitutive principles of nature. A man caught in the grip of sweeping anger may do things that are not at all human, but he is no less a man after the anger than he was before. Body and soul, and

the faculties of body and soul which are of the very nature of man, remain intact; the nature of man cannot be changed without destroying man and no sin destroys the humanity of man.

To original justice

It is also self-evident that the original justice of man was destroyed by original sin. At least it is self-evident that such perfect harmony of subordination of the will to God, and of the lower faculties to the will, no longer exists, and our Faith tells us that the cause of this was original sin. Certainly we have not the preternatural gifts of immortality, freedom from suffering and pain that our first parents enjoyed.

To natural inclination to virtue: Never totally destroyed, even in damned

This much we know: nature remains intact and the gifts acquired by nature through grace are lost. What worries us is the inclination to sin, the damage done to man's natural inclination to virtue, the upset caused by original sin to man's inclination to act according to reason, to follow the paths of reason to the goal of reason where human happiness is found.

The statement of the question gives the lead to its answer. This inclination to follow reason is natural to man, it belongs to his very nature, and as such it is indestructible. In other words, it is an integral part of his rationality and that rationality cannot be taken away from man. This is so absolutely true that even in the souls of the damned in hell that inclination to virtue, to follow reason, must still persist; and it is precisely the existence of that natural inclination which accounts for the terrible remorse of hell.

Infinitely impeded by actual sin

Perhaps this will be clearer if we look at this inclination to virtue from different angles. There is first of all its starting point in the soul, then its goal in virtuous or reasonable action, and finally the sensible faculties which it must often use to accomplish that action. From the first angle, the starting-point of the inclination in the soul, the inclination to virtue is absolutely indestructible. From the second angle, the goal of virtuous or reasonable action, this inclination to virtue can be infinitely impeded by our personal sins; by our actual sins we can pile up the chairs, tables, beds, mattresses, pianos against the door lest that inclination to virtue break through from our soul into action. But that is blocking it from the outside, not trying to blast it out of existence. From the third angle, the sensible faculties used in the virtuous action, of course we can root out the physical grooves cut by former virtuous actions; we can tear up the natural physical propensities to this or that kind of action by building up the physical propensities to contrary action, or even by such things as diet, disease, surgery and so on we can so change our physical make-up as to reverse the physical tendencies to this or that type of action.

I remember meeting a totally astonished and considerably crestfallen young doctor who, because of inexperience, had made the serious error of curing a chronic invalid. His patient was a middle-aged woman who during her long years of illness, had seemed an almost perfect character; always cheerful, smiling, patiently enduring her sufferings, creating an atmosphere that drew a constant crowd of visitors, not so much to give their sympathy as to be inspired. Then along came this bright young doctor and practically overnight he effected a cure. There could be no doubt about the cure. It was so complete that the patient herself could not even feel sick, could not possibly stay in bed and retain any shred of self-respect. And overnight the perfect character turned into a shrewish, ill-humoured, discontented person who could be borne with only from a sense of duty. Of course the full brunt of her discontent fell on the head of the young doctor. He was as astounded as the good Samaritan would have been had the victim of robbers curtly ordered him to get out of sight until the photographers had arrived. The doctor could not understand that now this woman had no way to express the nobility of her character except by washing dishes and she did not care for the change; there could be no more lofty patience, no floods of sympathy from friends, no complete release from worries that might upset her. The doctor, in fact, had wrecked her "career".

The "wounds of nature": Ignorance, malice, weakness, concupiscence:

With regard to pure nature

A detailed explanation of this doctrine of original sin usually calls forth the immediate protest: "How about the wounds of nature?" It is a protest made in an aggrieved tone as though human nature has been done an injustice by being stripped of so many perfect excuses. Well, how about the wounds of nature? Theologians teach, quite accurately, that human nature has suffered four wounds: ignorance in the intellect, malice in the will, weakness in the irascible appetite and concupiscence in the concupiscible appetite. The positive side of that teaching is that the prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance of human nature have been damaged, that all the principles of activity in man are considerably less efficient than they were in the beginning of man's career.

With regard to nature in state of original justice

That is all true. But what human nature is under discussion? The purely hypothetical human nature that has all that naturally belongs to it and no more? Of course not. The human nature in question is that with which man started his career in the universe, the human nature that existed in the state of original justice, the human nature that had not only what naturally belonged to it but in addition had the supernatural and preternatural gifts by which God corrected the defects inherent in the very material from which human nature was made. In other words the theologians are engaged in a *de facto* discussion. From this point of view human nature has certainly been wounded.

Suppose we were to take two infants, both normal and healthy, and rear one of them in a nudist colony, the other in a socially prominent family in New York. After twenty years we bring the two together and put them on absolutely equal terms by stripping the clothes from the New Yorker. The product of nudist training does not consider his nakedness an injury; but the New Yorker is furious in his indignation at the injury done him. After original sin, we are in the state of the indignant New Yorker. Nothing that belonged to nature has been removed, only those acquired perfections that came to nature through grace have been stripped from us, and we very rightly feel that we have been injured. We have. But our nature has not been degraded; it is not a beaten, half-living thing that must drag itself bitterly to the performance of impossible tasks.

Death and corporal defects as results of sin: Of original sin

Take the obvious defects of death, sickness, injury, hunger, thirst, and so on. They are all unquestionable defects resulting from original sin. But they are also defects that flow from the very nature of man. If there had been no original sin and no original justice with its exceptional gifts, man would still face death, sickness, and all the rest. His nature contains the seeds of its own dissolution in its material composition. Original sin caused these defects only in so far as it removed the wholly supernatural and preternatural impediments to them by destroying original justice.

Of actual sin

We can summarize this doctrine by noticing the action of our own actual or personal sins. These personal sins of ours can also produce just such effects as death, sickness, injury, and so on. The point is that it is not precisely as sins that they cause this damage; it is as physical acts. It is the substance of the act, not its deordination or guilt that produces these physical effects. In other words, the object of the attack of any sin, as sin, is grace, but the grace attacked by original sin had dependent upon it a shining array of gifts to nature that were cast aside when that grace was rejected by Adam.

This is our inheritance of sin. With this heritage we start to carve out our own lives; slowly, step by step, day by day, action by action, we build up to splendid success or down to abysmal failure. We have already seen the elements that go into successful living; what starts us on the road to failure? What is the very beginning of the purely personal failures that ruin our lives?

Root and beginning of personal (actual) sin

Like all beginnings, the beginnings of personal sin are very simple, very clear. Sin, like all human action, is aimed at a goal; the beginning of our sins, then, can be traced to that first wrong goal which we placed before ourselves as the target of all our actions. More simple, it is an inordinate appetite for our own excellence that goes by the name of pride. We want this or that partial good for ourselves so badly that we turn away from the universal good and to ourselves. The formal element of sin, the aversion from God, belongs to the very nature of pride, whereas it is only a consequent of other sins, something accidental that is ordinarily quite beyond the intentions of the sinner.

This is the beginning, the end or goal in the mind from which all sin comes. As far as execution or the acts leading to that end goes, the first place is given to avarice, to the inordinate love of money. Not that every sin must come from avarice, but avarice is to other sins as the root is to the tree; it gives them nourishment, giving to man the faculty of both desiring and committing every other sin. There is no sin which the avaricious man will not commit to satisfy is avarice and every kind of sin can and ordinarily does arise from this inordinate love of money.

Sin's decoys -- capital sins: Meaning of capital sin

These are the two great starting points of sin -- pride and avarice; these are the two great first principles of human failure. Ranked just beneath them we have the sins that have come to be called the capital sins. There has always been much misunderstanding about these capital sins, a misunderstanding that has arisen from the notion that they are singled out as capital because they are so terribly evil in themselves. They are not. As a matter of fact some of them are essentially venial sins. Their precise danger lies in their ability to call so many other sins into being. They are the sirens of sin, the decoys that allure men to their doom. They are capital sins because they aim at partial goods which are outstanding in their attractiveness; they aim at particular goods that have a general appeal, goods that can be attained in different ways and so they almost automatically call into being a whole host of other sins as partners in attaining their ends.

Distinction from mortal sin

A few chapters back we touched on the various ways in which one sin can cause another. We noticed how one sin starts a groove or habit that makes the next sin of the same type that much easier and more attractive, as, for example, in the sin of drunkenness; again, one sin can be the labourer bringing the material for many other sins, as, for example, gluttony for the sins of luxury; finally one sin brings on another in acting as an end or final cause, as the avarice of the swindler generates fluent falsehoods. It is in this last way that the capital sins do their deadly work; it is only in this last way, by way of final causality, that one sin formally causes another. We may have two vessels designed to hold water but they will be decidedly different in form because we design them for decidedly different ends -- for bathing and for drinking purposes. The end determines the form of an action; so these capital sins, acting as ends or goal, formally call into being the other sins that help to attain their ends.

Division and objects of capital sins

This will be a little clearer if we glance at the partial goods which are outstanding in their attractiveness. Descending the scale of attractiveness we come first to the goods of the soul and see our own excellence with its corresponding capital sin of pride or vainglory; then the goods of the body, either individual or specific, with the corresponding capital sins of gluttony and lust; for external goods, there is the capital sin of avarice. All these have direct and immediate appeal. A hardly less powerful impetus is that to escape evil joined to good, with its corresponding capital sin of spiritual sloth striving to escape the labour involved in attaining the goods of the soul; the evil joined to the good of another is evaded either without violence by means of envy, or with violent resistance through anger. This is the field of the capital sins and it is the fundamental nature of this field, not the essential malice of these sins, that makes the capital sins so dangerous.

Although the capital sins themselves are very dangerous, a knowledge of their nature and significance is

of incalculable advantage both to the confessor and to the layman in the regulation and improvement of everyday life. It is, as a matter of fact, not extraordinary to have a penitent confess to boasting, vanity, quarrelling, disobedience, with no mention of pride; or to confess malicious gossiping and detraction with no mention of envy. The sins actually confessed are really symptoms; if they are recognized as such, it is possible to attack the moral disease at the point of infection and to produce some remarkable results in a short time. The attempt to battle each of these so called "daughters" of the capital sins results in little more than complete discouragement; failure is almost inevitable, for the real cause of the whole disorder is left unchecked, indeed unnoticed. In other words, the list of capital sins is not the fruit of a theological passion for systematic arrangement nor a memory-test for the child learning the catechism; it is a list of the fundamental diseases which produce human unhappiness. We make a serious and discouraging blunder by occupying ourselves solely with symptoms, mistaking the symptoms for the disease which calls them forth.

Original sin and the individual: Integrity of his nature

Summing this up briefly, we find that we have wasted a good deal of sympathy on our poor human nature. The injuries done to human nature by original sin do not give us grounds for excusing ourselves from the business of living. True enough we have lost much by original sin; but nothing to which our nature gave us title. In the beginning of man's life on earth God corrected the defects which necessarily followed upon the very material of human nature by supernatural and preternatural gifts dependent on the grace first given to Adam. The loss of that grace through original sin stripped us of all the extras God had heaped upon our nature; but no damage was done to nature itself. There is nothing wrong with our nature; but it could have been much better off. As it is, the constitutive principles of that nature remain intact with all that nature intended man should have; but within that nature are the seeds of civil war and ultimate dissolution. For within that nature is a delicate balance of contrary elements that make for discord in action and ultimate dissolution, the discord of animal and rational appetite, the dissolution inseparable from material things.

His inclination to virtue

Our inclination to virtue, rooted in the very rationality of nature because it means no more than the inclination to act according to reason, cannot be blasted out of existence. It must endure even through an eternity of hell and there furnish the basis of the terrible remorse of the damned.

His sovereign independence

The sovereignty of the free will of man is still guaranteed; no amount of rebellion, no amount of external force or internal collapse can make the human action of a man other than an action proceeding under his deliberate control to goals of his choice. In a word, coming into the world even with original sin on our souls we are still masters of our actions, masters of our lives, and with the assured help of the grace of God we are still capable of carving out an eternal niche in heaven by our seemingly insignificant actions. We still have human lives to live and we still have the means to live them successfully. Even now failure is our own because our actions are our own.

Personal (actual) sin and the individual:

Its attack on nature's integrity, on the inclination to virtue; on independence.

Our actual or personal sins may, when built into habits, be immediate principles from which flow other evil acts. But this is never true of original sin which causes other sins only because it has pulled out from under us the support of original justice by which those sins might have been impeded. But even these actual, personal sins cannot take away from the integrity of our human nature; man's nature cannot be changed without being destroyed and no man is destroyed by sin. These personal sins can pile up infinite obstacles to the operation of the natural inclination to virtue, they can block up the doors by which that inclination might have proceeded from our souls to action; but they cannot remove that inclination to virtue from the soul of man. Granted that they can break down or remove the physical propensities to this

or that act of virtue, the propensities that follow from our physical constitution, they must leave us rational creatures possessed of the inclination to follow the paths of reason to the goals of reason. They may attack the liberty of our wills, but again the attack is from the outside, doomed to failure before it starts. The rush of passion may set up a great clamour, the slow building up of habits may present serious difficulties, but always it remains true that the human action of a man is an action that has proceeded under his deliberate control, an action which is man's very own and for which he alone must answer because he alone was master of that action.

Plan of sin revealed

We cannot escape the task of living human lives by pointing to our inheritance of sin, or even by pointing to long lives of personal sins. As long as breath remains in the human body, man's life is his own. He is still capable of success or failure. It is no small help, in the living of that life, to know so surely just what methods of attack will be used to wreck human life. We do know. The plan of sin is briefly summed up in the capital sins, for their objects are the partial goods of outstanding appeal to human nature. It is certainly along these lines that sin will attempt to enter our lives; and it is these capital sins that will call others into being to attain their outstanding ends. The other sins are much more symptoms of these radical diseases, symptoms that patently indicate to us the root of our unhappiness and the means that must be taken to cure the diseases they reveal.

The individual, sin and happiness

The individual man facing the risks of failure and the chances of success in human living faces one enemy -- sin. He faces that enemy from the moment human nature is had. But always he faces it in the secure knowledge that it is not the kind of enemy that can overwhelm him by surprise or coerce him by force; rather it is an enemy that can enter the inviolable corridors of his soul only by invitation. It is not even a subtle enemy. All its plans of attack have been known through the centuries and its every appearance promptly indicates which of the limited number of roads it is using to approach the soul. Every man still faces the tremendous possibilities of human life, must face those possibilities. Their realization is through virtue moving to the goal of happiness; the failure to realize them is through sin moving to eternal misery. It is the individual man who must make the choice.

<<-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 17 -->
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CHAPTER XVII -- THE RESULTS OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 86-89)

1. The cult of beauty -- a modern paradox.
 2. Beauty of soul -- the splendour of natural and divine light.
 3. Immediate and fundamental result of sin -- ugliness of soul:
 - (a) Sin as cause of the staining of the soul.
 - (b) Essence of this stain: darkness.
 - (c) Duration of this stain.
 4. Consequent result of sin -- punishment:
 - (a) Debt of punishment as result of sin:
 - (1) Natural punishment.
 - (2) Sin as penalty of sin.
 - (3) Supernatural eternal punishment:
 - a. Fact of eternal punishment.
 - b. Its reasonableness
 - c. Its immediate causes.
 - (b) Quantity and duration of punishment.
 - (c) Duration of debt of punishment.
 - (d) Sole cause of punishment:
 - (1) Guilt of sin, actual or original.
 - (2) Vicarious punishment.
 5. Comparison of personal causes of punishment : mortal and venial sin:
 - (a) Their points of agreement and difference.
 - (b) Venial sin a disposition to mortal sin.
 - (c) Possibilities of venial sin becoming mortal and vice versa.
 6. A reversal of scale of values:
 - (a) Modern attitude towards mortal and venial sin.
 - (b) Carelessness towards venial sin:
 - (1) Its foundation.
 - (2) Its gravity -- results of venial sin.
 - (3) Venial sin a fault proper to fallen man.
- Conclusion:
1. Some definitions of beauty.
 2. Beauty and modern world:
 - (a) A surface worship.
 - (b) A worship that destroys its object.
 - (c) A worship whose end is despair.
 3. The home of beauty.
 4. Beauty and happiness.
 5. Beauty and God.

CHAPTER XVII THE RESULTS OF UNHAPPINESS (Q. 86-89)

Perhaps one of the saving graces of our age is the fact that we have begun to bring beauty back into the everyday life of man. Kitchens, bathrooms, peeling knives and face cloths are recognized as capable of attractiveness as well as of utility. That note of splendid order has crept into our designs of motor-cars, locomotives and railroad coaches. And perhaps we are beginning to imagine that we belong to an age that is in love with beauty; in proof of which we might adduce the constant interest in beauty contests, the elevation of actresses and actors to the rank of fabulously salaried individuals, our horror of ugliness, pain and suffering.

The cult of beauty -- a modern paradox

But against all this we would have to balance the ugliness of our industrial centres, the disorder of our economic life, the terrific toll we have taken from industrial workers, our lack of interest in the human things of human life -- the spiritual values of man. In other words, only a superficial observer could make the mistake of thinking we were in love with beauty. Only a superficial observer could fail to see that we have been robbing man of his capacity for appreciating the beautiful, blinding man to the sources of beauty, depriving man of his greatest beauty. There is a significance in the design of our streamlined locomotives, a significance that is made startlingly clear as one sees them slide beneath the huge buildings

that now serve as railroad stations, as an insect scuttles beneath a rock to escape the healthy light and air of a summer day. For all our love of beauty presents the constant paradox of love which destroys, the paradox of a creature made for the spiritual world vainly attempting to satisfy himself by burrowing into the sensible only to destroy both himself and the sensible world with which he has fallen in love.

Beauty of soul -- the splendour of natural and divine light There is a spark of that forgotten spiritual beauty in every man, or at least the possibility of that spark of beauty; a spark, tiny in comparison with the infinite fire of supreme beauty, but still bearing all the vital brightness that clings to the child of such a divine fire. It is very difficult to translate the Latin word used to describe the beauty which belongs to the soul of man (*nitor*). It expresses the sheen of new garments, the pure brightness of gold, the gleaming beauty of silver. Perhaps the best translation would be "lustrous splendour"; whatever the translation, it must call forth the image of pure streaming light, of bright beauty breaking forth from the soul to adorn the actions of man with splendour, like a burst of sunlight escaping from the splendour of the sun to breathe the breath of beauty into the lifeless, stained-glass windows of a cathedral.

We can gain a deeper insight into the beauty of the soul by looking for a moment at one of the briefest definitions of beauty. Beauty has been called the "splendour of order"; order, in other words, so clearly breaking through the material in which it is found as to command our attention and admiration. It is a profound, a compact definition, one that could well stand long and serious examination. But even a cursory glance at it gives us the clue to the essential beauty of the soul, for the soul has a double principle of order; the reason of man and the reason and wisdom of God. Both of these carry with them the notion of light, of clarity, of splendid illumination: the one the light in the hands of a wayfarer, guiding each of his steps, sweeping about the dark world around him in a constant revelation of truth, of goodness, of beauty; the other the powerful creative beacon that calls into being the path followed by the pilgrim man, that creates the beauty he sees, that calls him home to the source of all beauty.

It is in this double light that the soul of man was meant to bask. It should never for an instant be out of the field of this double light. All of its actions should shine forth with this brilliance which penetrates the very essence of the soul. This is the beauty of soul which is so hard to describe in stiff language: the splendour of the light of human reason, of divine reason and wisdom, breaking forth from the soul to give life and beauty to the actions of man.

Immediate and fundamental result of sin -- ugliness of soul:

Sin as cause of the staining of the soul.

The beauty of a stained-glass window could be destroyed by hurling a brick through that window; or that beauty could be rendered ineffective by hiding the window in a dark cellar where streaming sunlight could never filter through it. There is no brick that will shatter the soul; once called into existence it must go on and on through all eternity. But it can be hidden from the streaming light of human and divine reason; it can escape the paths mapped out by reason and slink into the dark by-ways of sin. In those by-ways it comes face to face with ugliness; in those foul alleys a man sees sights that take the light out of his eyes, the spring out of his step, the hope out of his face, that leave his soul stained and befouled.

For there is more to the ruin of the beauty of the soul than mere darkness. In our earlier treatment of sin we spoke of its double element: a turning away from reason and God and a turning to the partial goods the world has to offer, an aversion from the last end and a conversion to creatures. The first robs the soul of the splendour of the light of human and divine reason; but it is the second that befouls the soul. Every sin is unnatural, is irrational, every serious sin is a revulsion from the true goal of reason and of human life. But every sin is more than that. Every sin is a dragging of the human soul through the mud of earthly aims that destroys the sheen of humanity's splendid garments.

The pure, rich beauty of gold is destroyed when gold is mixed with some baser metal to form an alloy. Silver is tarnished by exposure, its beauty lost when it is bound to rougher, coarser metals to do the work of man. In much the same way does man stain his soul, mar its beauty with ugliness. We must stoop to

something beneath us, tie ourselves in intimate union with the world that was made to serve us, if ugliness is to enter our souls.

St. Thomas could have accurate, scientific knowledge of all the base things of which men are capable and yet be the "Angel of the schools", for he was not stooping to the level of these things, but rather bringing them up to his level; what a man knows he brings into himself, stripping the object known of all the material elements incompatible with existence within the mind of man. On the contrary, we are dragged down to the level of the things we love, for love goes out to the object loved and embraces it. Let a man's love soar above himself into the regions of divinity and man is lifted out of himself; but let that love plunge into the world of the beasts and man becomes a beast. In other words, we are brought back to our old conclusion that human unhappiness -- sin -- is in the will of man; it is by the act of that will, love, that the soul of man can be dragged through mire or can be mixed intimately with baser things and so robbed of the lustrous splendour that belongs to it on its own level or on the heights of divinity.

Essence of this stain: darkness

This accurate notion of the immediate and fundamental result of sin brings out some discomfiting truths. It lends a deeper meaning to the title "Prince of darkness", for it reveals that prince as the prince of sin. With sin and darkness so closely linked, we can understand why it is that only in the state of sin do the slinking inhabitants of the dark corners of the soul dare to make a bold appearance, like so many bats or owls which would flee from the blinding light of the sun. It is easier to understand that there is no beauty in night precisely as night; its beauty lies in what little light still exists, a light which because of the overwhelming darkness takes on greater value. The beauty of this pale light is a beauty of dreams, of fiction, covering up ugliness and allowing us to pretend that ugliness is not present. In the clear, bright sunlight we see things for what they are. Perhaps the truth is harsh, much less seductively soothing and flattering than the dream light of the stars. But we can make no such grotesque mistakes in broad daylight as we can under cover of darkness. The saints were not by any means "queer people", thoroughly eccentric, if not a little insane; they were rather persons of eminent sanity because they were walking in the light of day and seeing things for what they really are.

Duration of this stain

Unlike the course of physical darkness, the darkness of sin is not something that automatically comes to an end. It is caused by a turning away from the light of reason, not by reason turning away from our acts. It endures just as long as we remain turned away from the double light of human and divine reason, just as long as we give our love to things beneath us rather than to the goal of all humanity. It is a darkness that may last only for an instant, for a day, or a month or a year; or it may last through all the reaches of eternity. But certainly until a man turns back to the light of reason and God he is asking the impossible when he demands that darkness cease while at the same time he forbids all light.

It is not enough to claim that a man had stopped committing murder years ago. Sin, like every human action, is a motion to a goal but to a goal that is off the track of reason. Mere stopping at the goal does not effect a return to the path of reason; the sinner must turn around and come back, he must retrace his steps to the point where the road of reason was abandoned for the alleys of sin. He must turn from the creature in which he has placed his end and go to God.

Consequent result of sin -- punishment: Debt of punishment as result of sin: Natural punishment.

This is the first and fundamental result of sin, though oddly enough we are much more perturbed at the consequences of this ugliness of soul than at the ruin of the soul's beauty. It is odd. After all, we do not rail at the natural law that makes the rain pour through a broken window, nor at the wind that is carrying the rain through the broken window. If we have any growling to do, it will be at the little boy who has broken the window. What is more important, we shall do something about the broken window. That is the natural thing to do. But we are not at all natural in our attitude toward sin, perhaps because it always hits so close

to home.

Instead of looking at the cause of the punishment of sin -- at our own deliberately controlled action that brought the whole thing upon our heads -- we prefer to grumble about the type of punishment, the duration of it, the unkindness of God in demanding our punishment. As a matter of fact, we are demanding our own punishment. This act of sin is ours and we cannot deny the parentage of our own child; we have stained our souls and it is that stain that demands punishment; we have turned away from the light of human and divine reason, and so long as we stay turned away, we are crying out for punishment.

Sin as penalty of sin

In ruining the beauty of our souls we are rebels against order; we have attacked and reduced to ruin the splendour of order within ourselves. It would, as a matter of fact, be disastrous if this were a one-battle rebellion, if the order we have overthrown did not rise up in anger against us. For that would mean that we would be left undisturbed in the confusion and horror of disorder, in the darkness of ugliness; it is the ultimate of punishment in this life for the sinner to be delivered over to his own desires. That rising of the injured order in its own defence is the essence of the punishment of sin.

I am not at all sure that a worm does turn; at least it does not seem that it could do much damage even if it did turn upon its tormentor. But if it does not turn, at least it offers the defence of flight; and here it is one with all nature, for every order in nature rises in immediate defence against the attacks of an enemy, because every order has within itself the principle of self-conservation. The sinner has rebelled against a triple order; and all three of those orders rise up against him, defending themselves by punishing the rebel that threatens their integrity.

More concretely, the sinner has risen up against the order of his own reason, against the civil order -- political, economic or ecclesiastical -- if his sin be external, finally against the divine order. By each of these orders is he punished. And he is wholeheartedly punished, for in a very real sense this rebel has attacked everything contained in those orders. Order implies a bond of unity, such as the bond of charity that makes all Christians one, tying them together so intimately that an injury to their order is an injury to every Christian.

Still more concretely, we might say that the punishment inflicted by God for the attack on the divine order is the slowest, the most merciful, the easiest to escape. That undoubtedly sounds ridiculous to the modern mind; but look at the facts. Let a man knock down the mayor of a city, start a rebellion against the Federal Government, blow up a few department stores, or run off with the gold reserve of the Federal treasury and how much explaining could he do? How much absolution would he get? How many times would he be forgiven and told not to do it again? Who makes any effort to determine the quality of the contrition of a spy or a traitor during a war?

The punishments of nature are more severe, more relentless. Nature takes its toll regardless of the disposition of the sinner. A practical example of this to-day is found in the young couple who start off married life intending to violate nature's order, but only for a few years, until they are financially secure, until they have a better social status, or for more individual social activity. It reads, to-day, like a sensible programme. But only too frequently long before the allotted time is up, the wife hates the husband or the husband hates the wife; nature is exacting its toll for the abuse of love and no amount of sorrow, of absolution, or resolutions will soften that punishment. There are, of course, the more obvious punishments of nature: remorse of conscience, loss of self-respect, building up of inclinations to sin and tearing down of inclinations to virtue, physical toll exacted by sin, and the increasing slavery of the senses with the consequent lessening of capacity for love, for joy, for any activity that does not furnish fuel for that devastating fire of introversion.

St. Gregory's description of the physical effects of envy brings out vividly another angle of this automatic punishment of nature: ". . . paleness seizes the complexion, the eyes are weighed down, the spirit is

inflamed, while the limbs are chilled, there is frenzy in the heart, there is gnashing with the teeth." Even the sin itself can be its own punishment. Even more patently a sin is its own punishment sometimes from the very external difficulties which must be overcome to commit the sin; after all, the burglar does not enjoy climbing up ladders to rob second-storey apartments or unwittingly commandeering a radio car for his escape. Indeed the very essence of sin is itself a punishment, for, as we have seen, the sinner does not want to turn away from God, even though he wants this partial good more than he wants God and is regretfully willing to give God up because he so loves his sin.

Properly speaking, one sin is not the penalty for another. Penalty, after all, is something against our will; and sin is essentially a free act. Our sins, like all our acts, are our own; they are not thrown at us by God or by anyone else. They are not the infliction of a superior power but the choice of our own free will. In a way one sin follows another, even naturally speaking, for one sin, like any one human act, leaves its mark behind, blazes a trail, increases an inclination that will make the succeeding act easier, more likely.

Supernatural eternal punishment

From the viewpoint of the supernatural, one sin by destroying grace removes the helps that might have impeded the commission of other sins and so is indirectly the cause of other sins. Certainly the subtraction of grace is a penalty wrapped up with the sin itself; but still the following sins are our very own and not really penalties. However, in the supernatural order the penalty upon which our interest is constantly focused is the eternal punishment of hell. And it is the punishment which to the modern mind seems most ludicrous.

Fact of eternal punishment

This is not the place to enter into an extended discussion of hell. That is work which is taken up in detail in the fourth volume of this work. But it is essential here that we insist on the absolute certitude of the fact of eternal punishment as far as Catholics are concerned. The fact of eternal punishment is vouched for by the infallible authority of God Himself. It is expressly stated in Scripture;(e.g. Mark iii. 29; Matt. xxv. 46, xii. 32; 2 Thess. i. 9) and has been repeated again and again by the Councils of the Church (e.g. IV Lateran Council, chap. I, Denzinger, # 429; Council of Trent Sess. VI, canon 30, Denzinger, # 840).

Its reasonableness

It is quite a task, even for our efficient modern world, to laugh God out of existence. The attempt is in fact an insult to human intelligence. Yet to escape the fact of eternal punishment we must either laugh God out of existence or, what is no less insulting both to God and man, we must paint the divinity as a sentimental half-wit. Even without attempting a study of hell, from what we have seen in this book it is evident that a man cannot refuse to have the goal of life and still have it, since that goal depends on his choice; from what we have said in this chapter it is evident a man cannot forbid the entrance of light and at the same time expect the dispelling of darkness. More concretely, sin is a perversion of order, a rebellion against order that demands the resistance of that order; just as long as man insists upon escaping from the light of human and divine reason, just so long does he ask for punishment. When death intervenes, man's ability to return to the paths of reason ceases, for death shuts off the flow of divine grace. Putting it in another way, by sin man steps down from a supernatural plane; as far as his natural powers are concerned he can never again achieve that plane. Unless supernatural help be given, he must for ever remain off that plane; and supernatural help ceases after death. From then on for ever he must remain in the ugly darkness of sin and this is the essential pain of hell.

One of the foundations of our restlessness in the face of this truth is due to our visualizing hell in terms of a spanking given to a child for stealing cakes, while, as a matter of fact, it is like the blindness that follows on plucking out an eye. This latter destroys not only vision but the very power of sight; so sin destroys the very principle of supernatural life and refuses to take the steps that might win back that principle of life which is grace. The sinner refuses to return to God; he deserts God, he is not deserted by God.

Its immediate causes

The immediate cause, then, of this eternal punishment is a sin that disrupts the divine order, a sin that turns man from the path leading to his goal, i.e. a mortal sin. As long as he stays off that path, as long as that order remains disrupted by his attachment to partial goods in preference to the universal good, so long will that punishment endure.

Quantity and duration of punishment

It has seemed to many men and women that the notion of hell is particularly obnoxious because there is no proportion between the sin and the punishment. An infinite punishment for a moment of sin seems beyond the limits of the most severe justice. The truth is that the proportion is very exact indeed. We might put this proportion clearly and briefly by saying that the duration of the punishment corresponds to the duration of the guilt of sin, the quantity of the punishment responds to the gravity of that sin. In other words, the duration of this punishment is without limit because the sin never ceases, because a man never forsakes the darkness to turn back to the light; the quantity of that punishment is finite because no matter how wholeheartedly we turn to a creature, our embrace of that creature is still a limited, a finite act.

Duration of debt of punishment

Perhaps it will be clearer to state this in terms of the elements of sin by saying that the duration of the punishment corresponds to the aversion from the goal of life or from God -- and so is equal in all men, infinite in the sense of never ending for the double reason that it is a turning away from an infinite good and it is the answer to an eternally enduring choice.

To understand punishment, then, we must go to the root of it, to the first incurring of the obligation to undergo punishment. That starting point is the act of sin. It may be a thing of only a moment; but instantly the beauty of the soul is stained and the necessity of punishment is incurred. The connection between these three is intimate, absolute: as long as the sin endures, as long as the sinner refuses to turn back to God, so long does the stain remain on the soul and so long must he face the fact of punishment. Turning back to God, the sin ceases, the stem on the soul is removed and automatically punishment strictly so called, as an evil unwillingly sustained, ceases. Our renunciation of the sin and our return to the path of reason is itself an acceptance of the penalty for our fault, a willingness to satisfy for what we have done which takes all the sting out of the punishment. It may be only a few Hail Marys that we face so bravely, or it may be a few eons in purgatory; whatever it is, it is no longer punishment but satisfaction, an evil that we willingly accept (It is of faith that some debt of punishment -- temporal -- may remain after the remission of the guilt of sin and the debt of eternal punishment. Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 30, Denzinger, # 840). A delicate balance, an order, has been upset by our sin; and the equality of justice demands that that balance be restored, either unwillingly through punishment or willingly through satisfaction.

Sole cause of punishment: Guilt of sin, actual or original

But always punishment or satisfaction must be traced back to sin. We can no more expect someone else to undergo the punishment for our personal sins than we can expect to have someone else undergo our operation for appendicitis or our death agony. It is only when that punishment is no longer strictly personal, when it has become the proper matter of a group, that others can enter in. So the bond of charity that binds us to Christ and Christ to us and ourselves to all other members of Christ -- makes the satisfaction for the sins of any member of that body of Christ the proper task of everyone joined to Christ. In this way could Christ satisfy for our sins; in this way can we carry on the work of Christ satisfying for the sins of others. The common bond of nature makes nature's sin common to all children of Adam, and the penalties of that sin things to be carried on the shoulders of every child of Adam.

Vicarious punishment

Perhaps we can put this in another way by saying that the spiritual penalties of sin are something that must

be born by each man individually and personally; for these spiritual penalties, being the supreme evils to which man is subject, cannot be ordained to a good greater than that of which they deprive man. No one can go to hell as our substitute; no one can lose his sanctifying grace as a protection to our loss of sanctifying grace because of our mortal sins. On the other hand, the physical penalties of sin, depriving man of inferior and morally insignificant perfections, can be endured by others. In fact this is one of the privileges so jealously guarded by the saints; it is a task that at the same time perfects both the sinner and the saint, satisfying for one, elevating the other.

Comparison of personal causes of punishment : mortal and venial sin

Punishment is always dependent on sin; so that we can know accurately what punishment we deserve by knowing the distinction of sins. Of course, from the point of view of punishment, the most important of these is the distinction between mortal and venial sins. Mortal sin alone carries with it condemnation to the eternal punishment of hell.

It seems strange that the Church was obliged time and time again, particularly since the days of the Reformation, to insist that there were such things as venial sins. Normally we might expect men to be eager to look on sins as less grievous. But then the reformers were not normal. The despair of Luther, the unfounded confidence of Calvin and the narrow pride of Baius continued the work of the Pharisees in putting burdens on the shoulders of men that no man could bear, insisting that every single sin committed by men was a mortal sin. Indeed, to Luther every act placed by men was mortally sinful. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the modern world's swing to the no less insulting extreme of denial of all sin. Certainly it was the reason for the thundering condemnations of the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. II, Denzinger, # 804. Confer: Condemnation of errors of Michael Baius by Pius V, condemned props. 25, 35, 67, Denzinger, # 1025, 1035, 1067).

The distinction between mortal and venial sin is the distinction between sickness and death; the one destroys the principle of spiritual life, the other impairs its full healthy operation. Both classes are sins in the sense that both offend God; but that is the only similarity between them. There is no comparison between the sin that turns its back on human and divine reason, abandoning God and defying His law, and the sin that holds fast to the essential direction of human and divine reason, that clings to the love of the Supreme Good above all other things. There is a tremendous gap between empty-headed laughter and murder, between idle, harmless gossip and blasphemous hatred of God, just as there is a great gap between having a cold in the head and having a dozen machine-gun bullets in the heart. It is the gap between the irreparable and the repairable. Mortal sin, as far as the powers of the sinner are concerned, is definitely irreparable; only because Christ has died for us and because God is good can something be done about mortal sin.

Their points of agreement and difference

This distinction of mortal sin is not merely a question of subjective responsibility. Just as there are some diseases that are never fatal, so there are some sins that, objectively considered, are never mortal; essentially they are venial sins because the goals to which they are aimed are not contrary to the goal of human life. On the contrary, there are sins whose objective goal is in direct opposition to the goal of human life, sins that are essentially mortal, like murder, adultery and theft. Some of these latter are objectively mortal at all times, as, for example, murder; others are mortal only when the matter is grave, as in the case of theft or anger (*ex toto genere et ex genere*). The simple reason for this is that sometimes the object even of these sins is not in direct opposition to charity and the goal of life.

It is evident then that no matter how many venial sins are piled one on the other, the result will not be a mortal sin. The question is not one of weight or number but of the direction taken by these sinful human acts; and that direction is not reversed by the frequency of venial sin.

Venial sin a disposition to mortal sin

If there is to be any metamorphosis of mortal into venial sin it must be effected from the side of the sinner, from the side of deliberate control and not from the side of the object. The essences of these acts, like all other essences, are eternally unchangeable. But because they must be human acts to be sins, they must proceed under our deliberate control. A man who falls to his death from a window is not guilty of sin, whereas another man who kills himself by jumping from a window has committed the sin of suicide. Any defect in that deliberate control which makes an act human is also a defect in the sin; if either the deliberation or the willingness is seriously impaired, the essential morality of the sin is proportionately cut down. To say that there must be sufficient reflection and full consent for mortal sin is no more than saying that this sin must be a complete human act, an act for which we are wholly responsible because it proceeded under our full control to goals of our choice. In fact the malice of venial sin suffers the same decrease for exactly the same reason.

Of course no amount of concentration is going to make any change in a sin already committed. But I can make a very real change in a sin that would objectively be venial. I can, for example, become so enamoured of bridge or golf that I sacrifice everything else in life to satisfy my passion for bridge or golf. I have placed my final end in these things and stand willing to prefer them to everything else. Really what I have done is to make of bridge or golf an object that is directly opposed to the goal of human life; though certainly in themselves bridge and golf are harmless things. Or again a man can tell a very small lie for a very evil purpose, such as to ruin a man's character or to accomplish a seduction; while a lie in itself is a venial sin, yet here and now its direction is definitely changed, it goes far beyond the goal of mere lying to more tragic goals that are directly opposed to the ultimate end of man. And the lie itself becomes a mortal sin.

Possibilities of venial sin becoming mortal and vice versa

The example of the bridge or golf addict is not nearly so absurd as might appear at first glance. A venial sin, like any human act, starts the groove of a habit; it means that the succeeding acts become easier, more pleasant, more like nature itself. After a while these things become second nature to us, the appetite for them is constantly increased so that quite easily we slip into a way of acting that makes the love of play the end of our being rather than a means of refreshing the soul for the real tasks of life. That is one way in which venial sin disposes us to commit mortal sin; it is a psychological consequence founded on the nature of the habits we build into ourselves.

Still another way in which we are prepared for mortal sin by venial sin is by getting ourselves accustomed to offending God. We start out in little things, rebelling in a mild way against the divine order, rubbing elbows with sedition until we have to a great extent destroyed our respect for law. Then we are ready for a full-fledged rebellion that will outlaw us from the courts of heaven. This, as a matter of fact, is true of the overthrow of any order: religious, political, economic. It is rare, indeed, that beginnings are anything but small. It is not often that an expert thief got his start by filching crown jewels; the hardened murderer hardly had the same complete willingness and deliberation for his first murder that he enjoys for his fiftieth. It is as true of vice as it usually is of virtue that we "ease into it".

There is, then, a grave danger in venial sin, the grave danger of slipping bit by bit into mortal sin and so into the eternity of hell's punishment. We can look at venial sin as an offence against God and see that it outstrips any or all physical evils that can come upon the human race, and so is unjustifiable for any reason whatever. We can look at it as a disposition to mortal sin and so as something to be carefully avoided as a serious threat to our eternal happiness. Or we can look upon venial sin in comparison to mortal sin and see only the tremendous gap which separates one from the other and lightly dismiss a small boy's rudeness to his sister as "only a venial sin".

A reversal of scale of values: Modern attitude towards mortal and venial sin

No matter what viewpoint we take, it is difficult to explain the modern attitude towards venial sin. Certainly a world that has denied the existence of God is not worrying about a slight offence against the

divinity; an age that has laughed hell and heaven and sin to scorn is not worrying about a disposition to mortal sin. Yet very frequently among the neo-pagans of our age we find a scrupulous avoidance of venial sin. Petty theft, lying, rudeness, idle gossip, wasting of time are all looked on with real horror; even though side by side with this horror is an indifference to contraception, divorce, large-scale theft, unlimited greed, irreligion, and so on. In other words, they seem to have disregarded the absolute essentials of human life while clinging desperately to the things that make for the adornment, the perfection, the integrity of that life.

Carelessness towards venial sin: Its foundation

On the contrary, looking only at the gap between mortal and venial sin, those who are working desperately, courageously to keep intact the essential demands of reason are apt to shrug their shoulders at an unkind word, a white lie or a bit of gossip as "only a venial sin". But venial sin cannot be shrugged off. If a single lie would save the human race from extinction, that lie could not be lawfully told. Not only is venial sin an offence against God and a disposition to mortal sin, it carries with it sufficient evil effects to give us pause just considering the venial sin in itself.

Its gravity -- results of venial sin

The beauty of the soul does not emerge from contact with venial sin totally disfigured by acid burns or with long gashes dug by a destroying knife; but it does come out with a muddy face. Venial sin does not destroy the lustrous splendour of the soul because it does not turn the soul away from the streaming light of human and divine reason; but it goes far toward preventing that splendour of the soul from shining forth in our acts. It is like a heavy coating of dirt on the windows of a cathedral, blocking out the sunlight; or, more accurately, like a heavy bank of clouds blocking out the light of the sun. For venial sin does operate against acts of virtue, not only in the venial sins themselves, but in their effects -- the dispositions they cause to similar acts, the habits they engender, the increase of the appetite for sin, the impediments they place to the graces and movements of the Holy Ghost and to the increase of charity.

We can picture venial sin graphically as the ropes that securely bind the hands and feet of a man; they do no intrinsic injury to man's ability to act, but certainly they hinder his activities. Or venial sin can be likened to a heavy blanket hung between a warm fire and the shivering wretch who is trying to get warm; for while venial sin does not extinguish or even diminish the fire of charity, it does prevent the saving heat of it from spreading out into our actions as it could.

Venial sin a fault proper to fallen man

There is one more interesting point to notice about venial sin, namely that it is peculiarly our own. Adam or Eve could not commit venial sin until they had lost their original justice, no angel or devil is capable of venial sin, and no man with original sin on his soul can commit venial sin without having first either freed himself from original sin or committed mortal sin. All of these apparently disparate conclusions follow from the very notion of venial sin as a disorder affecting not the end or goal but the means. Evidently where there is perfect order, even the slight disorder of venial sin is not possible without the destruction of the basis of that absolutely perfect order; Adam and Eve possessed that perfect order which followed from the subjection of the will to God and of the lower powers of man to his reason. The angels, whose knowledge deals not with conclusions but with principles, cannot suffer disorder concerning the conclusions without disorder having first invaded the principles; and in the moral order, the end is the principle, the means to the end -- the material of venial sin -- are the conclusions. Likewise a man in original sin either has not reached the age of reason and so is incapable of any sin; or having the use of reason, must first make a choice of end or goal before dealing with the means to that end. That first act of choice of a goal will then be either an act of virtue destroying original sin, or an act of vice putting the stain of mortal sin on the soul, for it will be a choice of a right or a wrong goal.

Conclusion: Some definitions of beauty

Perhaps we can best sum all this up by going back to our starting-point -- to beauty. There have been men from ancient times who maintained that beauty is something completely objective, outside of man; there have been others holding that beauty was entirely subjective, a projection from within man himself. Both schools still have their disciples. Aristotle, and after him Thomas, insisted that beauty was neither entirely objective nor entirely subjective, but the result of the combination of both subject and object. St. Thomas expressed this neatly when he defined beauty as "that which being contemplated, pleases" (*quod visum placet*). In other words, beauty arises from reality plus a relation to a knowing subject.

Looking at the very foundations, we see that reality as merely known constitutes truth; reality as merely desired or possessed is the good; but reality as known and as pleasing because known is the beautiful. For beauty reality must affect the intellect, but not the intellect alone; it must affect the appetite, but in a disinterested fashion, in a fashion that precludes desire and possession, resting serenely in contemplation.

For beauty, then, there is demanded a fullness of reality; an integrity that means not only lack of defect but richness of perfection, a proportion that means the completion of perfect order, and a brilliance or clarity that means the presentation of that perfection and order in a vivid refulgence of the form or principle of perfection and order breaking through the material envelope and bursting upon our intelligence. Beauty is a thing of reality, not of dreams, a thing of full rich reality, a thing of splendid reality that is sought unselfishly, disinterestedly, with a serenity that precludes the clouding of passion.

Beauty and modern world:

A surface worship; A worship that destroys its object

It is because of the nature of beauty that in the beginning of this chapter it was said that we are not an age in love with beauty. We are not an age in love with reality, but only with that superficial, partial reality that falls under the senses. Our philosophers have chained man down to the sense world, so they have made his taste for the beautiful a taste that destroys the object it feeds upon. If the sense appetite of man is his only appetite, then his search for reality is an acquisitive, grasping, passionate search that can be satisfied only in absorbing the object of its search, that must be constantly immersed in the uproar of passion. And he must end his search in the realization that even the sense beauty available to him always eludes his grasp.

The home of beauty Actually the scale of the beautiful is the scale of being, of actuality, of reality. Our age has insisted that man stay on the lowest rung of the ladder. As we go up step by step through forms dependent on matter to forms independent of matter but in matter, through forms utterly independent of matter to the final pure form or pure act which is God, we are advancing by each step into worlds of ever increasing beauty. As our joy in those worlds becomes more and more disinterested, more and more unselfish, as our contemplation becomes more and more penetrating, more and more pure, this beauty breaks upon us with more and more force until in that last supreme vision we are indeed overwhelmed with beauty.

Of course sin is an attack on beauty, for sin is an attack on reality. It is an attack on the integrity, the perfection, the brilliance of humanity and humanity's acts; sin is a defective human act, a disorderly human act, a rebellious human act which does its utmost to destroy that form of human acts which is reason. There is in fact nothing of beauty in sin. That deliberately invoked ugliness deserves punishment; that deliberate attack on order meets with the prompt resistance of order; that deliberate clouding or destruction of brilliance meets the just deprivation of light and splendour.

Beauty and God

Sin is the enemy of beauty, for sin is the enemy of virtue. Virtue is the principle working for greater perfection, for the rich fullness of man's powers under the perfect order of reason; a principle whose climax is the ultimate perfection of man's union with the Supreme Reality which is the goal of his life. Virtue makes for constantly increasing beauty within a man himself, and a constantly more penetrating vision of the beauty outside of himself; it works for greater perfection and at the same time for greater

mastery over the lower faculties of man. That serene contemplation demanded for beauty is possible only where passion is under the rule of its master and where love is so great that it is able to be utterly selfless. The virtuous man walks in beauty to the goal of beauty which is at the same time the Supreme Beauty and the source of all that is beautiful. For the virtuous man walks the roads of reason to the mansions of God.

«-- Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II	Chapter 18 --»
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CHAPTER XVIII -- THE COMPASS OF HAPPINESS
(Q. 90-94)

1. Law and life
 - (a) Motion and its direction
 - (b) The goal and the path to the goal.
 2. Sources of confusion on law:
 - (a) Fact of confusion.
 - (b) Its sources: errors on fundamentals of human life.
 3. Essence of law:
 - (a) A command of reason.
 - (b) To the common good.
 - (c) By authority.
 - (d) Promulgated.
 4. Varieties of law in general:
 - (a) Eternal law.
 - (b) Natural law.
 - (c) Human law.
 - (d) Divine positive law.
 5. Effects of law:
 - (a) Making men good.
 - (b) Integral acts of law: precept, prohibition, permission and punishment.
 6. Eternal Law:
 - (a) Its nature.
 - (b) Its universal recognition as truth and law.
 - (c) Source of all law.
 - (d) Subjects of the Eternal Law.
 7. Natural Law:
 - (a) Its nature
 - (b) Its precepts.
 - (c) Source of virtue.
 - (d) Universality.
 - (e) Incorruptibility and mutability.
 - (f) Its obligation.
 - (g) Its relation to religion.
- Conclusion:
1. Life and law:
 - (a) Life, morality and nature.
 - (b) Morality and law.
 2. Law and liberty.
 3. Law and happiness.

CHAPTER XVIII
THE COMPASS OF HAPPINESS
(Q. 90-94)

If we could borrow several pairs of eyes from small boys in New York and through them look at a police officer patrolling his beat, we would be as surprised as would a primitive man if he could look through a microscope at a drop of water. Both policemen and water are taken for granted. Policemen are just another part of our lives; we hardly consider them for months at a time and then only superficially. But children have a knack of plunging deeper. To some of these children the policeman is a bogey man whose job is to spoil as much fun as he can, a person to be watched out for and to be fled as the supreme evil of a child's life. To others the policeman is nearly a god. He carries a gun, looks fine and brave in his uniform, is the master of the child's little world; the boy hopes that some day he too can find a place among the gods and be a "cop". Still others look on the policeman with that frank, easy familiarity which children give so freely to those who can walk sympathetically on their level. The "cop" is a big, good-natured, easy-going chap whom a boy can approach without fear of condescension or babytalk.

Of course we have outgrown all this. To us a policeman is just a policeman and we are rather smug about having discovered this great truth. As a matter of fact we have not grown up so very much. We have merely transferred the point of view from the policeman to the law he enforces. To some of us law is a spoil-sport, a barrier limiting our activities, an expression of tyranny to be evaded whenever possible. To

others, law is a kind of god; the supreme remedy for every evil is more legislation. To others, law is a friend directing men through the hazards of the traffic of life, a reasonable, human, friendly help to happiness.

Law and life: Motion and its direction

We must have some such view of law because law enters too intimately into human life to be overlooked. We must think about life because we must live life; that means that we must think about law. Just what we think of law will depend to a great extent on what we think of life. From our study of human life in this volume, we can picture it as a fairly brief walk toward some goal. The steps by which we approach that goal are our own human actions. More importantly, life is a walk to or away from the right goal, to or away from happiness; it is a motion that sweeps towards a goal of our choosing, a motion, in a word, that is going somewhere.

The goal and the path to the goal

Putting it briefly, we can say that human life is directed motion which reaches its goal at the moment of death. Saying that, we have stated the nature and work of law. The direction of the motion which is life is precisely the work of law. Law, then, is a friendly thing anxious that we keep to the right road. Its directions are not the impersonal information of the sign-post, nor the uninterested information of the complete stranger, but the friendly direction of one whose interest is great enough to include severity, of one who realizes our feelings of the moment are not nearly so important as the avoidance of personal disaster.

Sources of confusion on law: Fact of confusion

Yet this is not at all the view of our age on law. The output of our legislatures and the content of their laws are vivid testimony of our almost ridiculous faith in law. Our complete surrender of every department and activity of human life to the laboratory gives an inkling of our wholehearted worship of recently enthroned physical or scientific laws. Yet at the same time we thoroughly resent law, are not adverse to flouting it, demand the release of the individual from the clutches of law, and, as a final absurd touch, we insist upon tossing aside the only foundation upon which law can rest.

Its sources: errors on fundamentals of human life

All this is another of those modern paradoxes that come from the attempt to deny the humanity of human life and at the same time to live that human life. The strange part of this modern attitude is that we have any regard for law. What we think of life determines what we think of law; and our notion of human life is a sorry thing indeed. Our confusion about the goal or end of human life, or our denial of such a goal, thoroughly robs that motion which is human life of its meaning. Denial of intellect and will robs our actions of their personal character and so effectively freezes that motion which is human life, for the steps by which life moves to its goal are exactly our personal, our human actions, proceeding under the control of reason and will. We do not know where we are going, or indeed if we are going at all. We are sure in any case that we cannot move. Of course we will have fantastic ideas about the direction of human life.

Our work in this chapter is fairly easy because of what we have already accomplished. In the beginning of this volume we established the fundamentals of human activity, the meaning of human life. We are moving towards a goal by our action; law's work is effectively to direct that action in view of the goal. Of course we are not talking here of law as it is filed away for reference in a code nor as it is in the subject whom it obliges, but rather of law as it is in the lawmaker. In that strict sense we can accurately place law by remembering that law is a command, it is a rule of human action.

Essence of law: A command of reason

Law as a command indicates immediately that law in the legislator is an act of the practical reason, for

command, as we have seen, is that act of reason which takes charge of the difficult work of making our decisions materialize in spite of the difficulties offered by passing from the internal to the external order. In fact this notion of command clearly shows the elements of will and reason that go into law. It will be remembered that in command there is an element of ordination or direction, of intimation or declaration, and of movement. It is not merely movement, not merely direction, not merely directive movement to which no one pays attention; but effective directive movement. So law as command presupposes movement of the will, direction of that movement by the intellect, and the passing on of that directive movement to the subjects who are being directed. Directing or ordaining and the intimation of that direction are the work of reason; movement comes from the will.

This essential notion of law shows us the movement of the will flowing through the intellect to the subjects of law; the immediate, the eliciting faculty from, which law springs is the intellect. This is no mere academic point. Rather it is absolutely fundamental for an understanding of the limitations of government and the protection of human rights. The will of the superior, his whims and caprices, cannot be imposed on a community simply because he is the superior. His subjects are to be directed, not played with. His orders, to be law at all, must be reasonable, must be directions of reason to the goal of reason or they have no binding force.

This truth is tremendously important. Yet, like so many important truths, it is obvious. Take law as a rule of human action -- and certainly no one will question that -- immediately we remember that the rule of human action is reason and so of course law is a thing of reason. Our actions are human in so far as they are reasonable, reason is the rule by which we judge of their humanity; the form that gives them humanity, that breathes the breath of human life into their cold clay is our reason controlling, directing them along paths we have chosen. We can put this even more concretely by saying that law is an act of prudence, of that intellectual virtue whose work is to stamp the brand of reason on the actions that proceed from man. Like prudence, law does not select the goal or give orders concerning its establishment, it must take the goal as it finds it, for the material of prudence is the steps to that goal, the actions which are called forth by the attractiveness of that goal.

To the common good

Law, then, is not the produce of a legislator's indigestion or the nagging of his wife. It is a product of reason. Laws do not pop out of the legislature because the congress is in the mood for legislation or because there is nothing more exciting to do. Like all acts of reason they are themselves for a goal or they are not laws at all, not reasonable at all, not human at all. And the goal at which all law aims is usually called "the common good".

The phrase "common good" may sound a bit vague. Certainly it has been tossed back and forth carelessly enough to have the life shaken out of it. But quite simply it means the attainment of the end for which a society exists. If the society itself and the rule or law of that society do not go steadily in that direction, that society is an impostor in the social order. Let us take that phrase "common good" more concretely, in the sense of the common good of the state. The immediate common good of the state might be summed up in the one word "peace", or in the phrase "the preservation of unity". It is an end constituted by the assurance of the necessities of life to the subjects, by the establishment of internal harmony through just distribution of rewards and penalties and by giving security against external enemies. The ultimate common good of the state has been summed up by Thomas and Aristotle as "the life of virtue" or the life of reason for the whole community. In plain language it means no more than the assurance to all the subjects of the opportunity to follow the law of reason to individual perfection, the opportunity to live a successful human life.

Turning to the little kingdom which is the individual, we find the immediate end of the individual precisely the living of that human life, the steady progress to the goal for which he was made. The ultimate end for each individual is the attainment of that goal, the full perfection of human nature, the peak of human hopes realized in the eternal vision of God. Let us put it frankly and say the measure of the

extent of civil government is the need of the individual. The state exists for the individual as a man; the subject, as subject, is a part of the state and as such exists for the state. But he is a subject only in so far as he needs help, and the very ends of the state for which, as a subject he must work, are ordained to his life as an individual.

This is a harsh saying indeed for the ears of the modern world. But why should it sound so harsh? Why should the insistence that law aims always at the goal of presenting the individual with a chance to live a full human life sound like an insult to constituted authority and the majesty of the state? Who, after all, has the right to make these laws, who has the right to order this man or that man about, to tell him what he can or cannot do? Certainly no other individual has that right. A dictator may be strong enough to enforce his will or a politician corrupt enough to turn the state to his own ends and subtle enough to fool the people into following him. In either case the regulations made are not law but tyranny; these men are giving not government but injustice; it is not a state they are heading but a group of men and women beaten by force or intrigue into slavery.

By authority

"Stick to your last" is more than a proverb. We do not call in a psychoanalyst to care for a broken leg, nor do we expect the broad muscles of the back to decide a delicate question of political policy. Direction to an end belongs to the one for whom that end is a goal, to whom that end belongs; and the end of the state is not the property of any individual but of the community. The making of laws is the work of the community or of someone to whom that community power has been delegated, to someone who has care of that community. But whether the community is acting directly or through an individual, the goal of law must always be the same -- the common good.

Promulgated

There is one more point to be considered for the essential notion of law, namely its promulgation. Promulgation is not a part of the essence of law, it is merely law's application. If a law is to be obeyed it must at the very least be so published that the citizens or~subjects can know the direction their actions are expected to take. The classic definition of law, then, a definition containing just the four elements we have explained thus far, is: law is an ordination of reason for the common good by him who has care of the community -- and an ordination promulgated.

Varieties of law in general: Eternal law

For some reason or other, humanity often misses the obvious. We do not see the wood for the trees; it is a common human experience to overlook love because of its steady stream of unobtrusive thoughtfulness. Somewhat the same thing is happening today: the multitude of human and scientific laws are the trees that hide the forest, the bustling expressions of profounder government that itself goes unnoticed or is denied. The variety of law is not summed up in these two. The universe is very carefully governed (as we saw in the first volume of this work) and government or direction to an end is the effect of law. The universe is governed by a divine Governor, ordered by the dictate of the reason of God, ordered for the common good, the ultimate end of that universe, and that direction, that ordering, like everything in the mind of God, is eternal. Putting it in another way, the world is governed by God and a detailed plan of that government, which we call providence, exists in the mind of God; the root of that providence and government, the universal principles from which providence proceeds to its detailed conclusions and to the execution of those conclusions, we call the Eternal Law.

Natural law

In God that law is the Eternal Law; the same law as it is found in creatures is called the Natural Law. Natural Law is, then, nothing more than a participation of the Eternal Law by creatures. We find a purely passive participation common to all creatures in the form of natural inclinations to proper goals; or, again as passive but proper to men alone, in the light of reason naturally, intuitively knowing first principles;

and, finally, in its only active form, we find this participation in the natural dictate of human reason by which man regulates both himself and other creatures.

What this really means is simply that this law is natural, that God, having established nature, respected His own creation. For this means that every single thing in the universe is governed or directed by God but each single thing according to its nature. The truth is so obvious that we take it for granted but still overlook it. We would be totally astonished to see a squirrel developing like a tree or shrinking under spring rains like a cheap suit of clothes; and our astonishment would have this profound truth as its basis. Man, like every other creature, is a part of nature and, like every other creature, is governed according to his nature; that nature is a moral or free nature, master of its own acts. As far as he has animal and vegetable nature we find man subject to the same necessary physical laws, or passive participations of Eternal Law, which govern the rest of creation; but in so far as he is man, he cannot be other than his own director, he must somehow direct himself, he cannot be necessarily pushed this way and that and still remain free. His natural law must be a moral not a physical law.

Only in that active participation of the Eternal Law in man do we find Natural Law in the strict sense, i.e., as an active principle, a dictate of reason in the legislator. In every other case we are dealing with law not as it is in the legislator but as it is in the subject of that law. But man is in a sense a legislator for himself. For the complete statement of natural law in man, then, we must include his natural inclinations, the recognition of those inclinations by reason and the dictate of reason which follows naturally from this recognition. We shall look into all of these later on in this chapter. It is worth pointing out from just this silhouette of the Natural Moral Law that it is neither imposed from the outside upon man nor does it depend on the will but rather on the reason of almighty God.

Human law

Eternal Law is the universal principle from which providence proceeds to the detailed plan of world government. Natural Law is, in its own way, a declaration of universal principles from which men proceed to the government of human life. Of course these in themselves are not sufficient; universal principles never are. It was all very well for St. Paul to say that "charity fulfils the law"; theologians and confessors have been kept busy ever since trying to point out to men and women what here and now answers the description of charity. These universal principles not only need application, they need further determination. We know the pedestrian's life must be protected and there are several ways of protecting that life: we might destroy all automobiles, drive at five miles an hour or follow a system of traffic lights. Which shall be adopted? That is the work of human law and its reason for existence, namely further to determine the universal principles of Natural Moral Law. Human law was not meant to supplant Natural Moral Law or to change it but to supplement it by more definite determinations.

Divine positive law

In fact even these three are not sufficient for the important work of guiding man to his end. Over and above Eternal Law, Natural Moral Law and human law, a divine positive law is absolutely essential to fill in the gaps left by the others. Natural Moral Law does very well as the universal principle of guidance for man's natural life; but he has a supernatural life to lead. Even in the natural order, as we get further from the universal principles and closer to particular actions more and more mistakes creep in; and this guidance of man in successful living allows of no mistakes, since every error takes on the tragic aspect of personal calamity. As far as human law is concerned -- well, even if detectives had the intellectual acumen of the highest of angels, they could not uncover a man's infernal actions, the precise actions that are virtuous or sinful, the actions that determine the success or failure in human life. Human law deals only with externals and not too successfully as a glance around any large city in America will amply prove. Certainly law should punish evil; human law can take care of only a very little of the external evil that men commit.

Effects of law: Making men good

When human law does try to punish all evil the result is confusion and often comedy. We have had a prohibition law, a law closing an international bridge at an early hour to prevent Americans from gambling in a foreign country, and a law banning sweepstakes tickets from the mails. These go beyond the prohibition or punishment of evil. Many other laws go further in the same direction; so far, in fact, as to reach a point of hilarious absurdity and furnish the material for a regular cartoon feature in one of our monthly magazines. Behind all this is, perhaps, the notion that since law's purpose is to guide men rightly the purpose of law is to make men good. That notion is true enough as far as it goes; but not a step farther. Certainly every law tends to make men good citizens; but just as certainly no law which stops at the outer walls of man's citadel, which cannot reach in to guide the intellect and will of man, can hope to make men good in the full and absolute sense of the term. A good man is distinguished from a bad man precisely because the will of the first is straining eagerly to the goal of human life, while the will of the other is slinking away from that goal.

Integral acts of law: precept, prohibition, permission and punishment

Within its own field law aims at the limited goodness its guidance can confer. Sometimes it works to this end by stern command, again by frowning prohibition, at another time by suave permission or, frequently enough, by a punishment calculated to bring the offender to his senses, to teach a salutary lesson to others or to restore the upset balance of justice. Not that every law must do all four of these things; but there is no law that does not place one or another of these integral acts of law. In mentioning these integral acts of law St. Thomas makes no mention of obligation. He takes that for granted because obligation flows from the essential notion of law as an effective dictate of practical reason. The very nature of man which makes moral not physical guidance a necessity indicates that the force of such guidance cannot be physical force but rather the moral force which we call obligation. We shall see more of obligation later on in this chapter but this will suffice to close our general examination of law and its varieties.

Eternal Law: Its nature

Plunging into an examination of the Eternal Law means no less than fixing our attention on an act of the mind of God Himself. And we go at it rather nonchalantly, as a boy back from college wanders unconcernedly through the house with the complete assurance of one at home. Our attitude is a part of that "slavery of dogma" which sets us free to wander through all eternity and even to plunge into infinity itself. We belong there, we are at home. So we do not hesitate to apply strictly our essential notion of law to the eternal act of the reason of God which is the foundation of the orderly direction of the universe. Like all law this is an act of the practical reason of the Governor of the community which is the universe. Like all law, it directs that community to its common good which is God Himself. Like all law, it deals only with the means to that goal. And like all law, it is promulgated -- on the part of God from all eternity, on the part of the subjects, in time. All this St. Thomas has packed into his concise definition of the Eternal Law: "the type of divine wisdom which directs all actions and motions."

In itself the Eternal Law is one of the secrets of divinity to be unfolded to us when we see God face to face. Just now that law is known directly only by the angels and saints in heaven; only God Himself will ever fully comprehend it, for only the infinite can grasp the infinite and everything in God is without limit. We can know it only through its effects. As a matter of fact every man does know something of the Eternal Law.

Its universal recognition as truth and law

An industrial captain who could so efficiently organize his industry that the mark of efficient organization was apparent in every least employee would be a bit of a genius. If the office boy's attack on his lunch or the stenographer's stroke in powdering her nose reflected something of that organization and character, we would readily grant that the industrialist had extraordinary genius and extraordinary power. That is something like what we are stumbling over in the universe all the time. Every smallest particle of truth uncovered is an unveiling of the beauty of the Eternal Law; a lover of truth is a lover of law and the

searcher for truth is constantly discovering the beauties of the Eternal Law. Putting it more simply, the universe has somewhat the same relation to the mind of God that a house has to the architect's plan of that house. The intellect of God is the measure of the perfection of things, as the architect's plan is the measure of the perfection of the house; to us as onlookers, the house and the universe are the measures of the perfection of our knowledge of them. The mind of God measures the truth of things, and things measure the truth of our minds; and reason, as the rule or measure of things, is law. Every truth has its origin in the Eternal Law of God; every defect of truth is a falling away from that infinite measure of things as they are. Every man knows something of the Eternal Law, for even the humblest of us knows something of truth -- at the very least, the first principles of thought and action which come to us naturally with the use of reason.

This is not, it is true, a knowledge of the Eternal Law as law. But even under this formal aspect of law as law, the Eternal Law is known in its effects by every man. Even granting, for the sake of argument, that there is someone who is ignorant of the smooth order of the universe or some part of that order, some physical law, some relation of cause and effect, there is no man or woman who does not know the Eternal Law in its effect within themselves, ruling them, directing them. That is a statement which will be seriously challenged today. But it can be questioned only at the price of denying to men a knowledge of those first practical principles of human action, "do good, avoid evil "; or, putting it in another way, only by denying that men know they must act for a goal if their actions are to be human. Such a denial must proceed against all the evidence, as we have seen in the first chapter of this book. Even more simply, we can say that the denial of a knowledge of the Eternal Law as moral law operating within ourselves is a denial of the Natural Moral Law, for the Eternal Law as participated by men is the Natural Moral Law. Such a denial not only violates all the evidence, it goes to the absurd extreme of making man the freak of the universe, the only creature without a proper natural law. As a brief summary of all this, we can say that in man there is a double participation of the Eternal Law, one under the aspect of truth, the other under the aspect of law; and under both aspects the Eternal Law is universally known by all men.

Source of all law

If we refer back to our essential notion of law as an effective directive motion and apply that notion to the Eternal Law we are brought face to face with a profound and significant truth. Eternal Law is not only an effective directive motion, it is the first of such motions, the beginnings of all government; consequently it is the source of all other such movements, of all other laws. This is clear when we stop to realize that every other directive movement will do no more than carry out some detail of that government of actions and motions which is the field of the Eternal Law.

We can rigidly prove the primacy of Eternal Law by St. Thomas' first argument for the existence of God, the argument of the first mover upon whom all notion depends. All other laws are linked to this first law like railroad coaches to the locomotive; no matter how far down the train we may go, each coach depends for its movement on the motion of the engine. In the concrete this is evident. No human law can violate the Natural Moral Law and still claim to be a law, because it cannot still pretend to aim at the ends of nature, the common good of the state and the individual. So every human law is a law only in so far as it is in harmony with Natural Moral Law, and Natural Moral Law is nothing more than Eternal Law from the side of man. The truth is so obvious that we find it difficult to see it clearly. Every law is an ordination of reason; and every operation of reason is derived from that which is according to nature, from the first principles naturally known, which of course are mercy another bit of the Eternal Law as it is in man.

Subjects of the Eternal Law

The sweep of Eternal Law has the magnificence of infinity about it. It rules over the kingdom of the universe and embraces as its subjects absolutely every created thing, action and motion. Its magnificence is deeper than we ordinarily realize, for it not only includes the extent of the universe, it includes the depths of every created thing. Contingency, necessity, and freedom are products of this divine guidance which, unlike the guidance of human law, does not rest content with a subject's knowledge of its

ordinations but imprints those ordinations in the depths of every created nature. Just as necessity in the physical order finds its explanation in the Eternal Law, so freedom in the moral order is not an exception to but rather an indication of the all-including embrace of God's eternal guidance of His creatures to Himself.

Natural Law: Its nature

There seems to be no serious difficulty about the *de facto* ordering of the physical universe. The difficulty for our times comes in the ordering of the moral universe or, more technically, in the participation of the Eternal Law by the rational creature that is man. What is this Natural Moral Law which we insist is the guiding principle of man's human activity? Nature has the right to feel a very much insulted old lady for all the actions of man that have been blamed on her lately, for all the unflattering descriptions, for the out-and-out favouritism she has been accused of showing to the physical universe.

Acquaintance with her is not at all difficult. She attempts no superior or inferior airs when she steps into the higher world of rational life. She is her old, plain, dependable self. Of course man is guided by natural law -- he is an integral part of nature. Of course he is guided by natural law in accordance with, not in violation of, his nature. He is then guided to his end by a Natural Moral Law, for his nature is moral, free, rational, gifted with the ability to control his own actions, to pick his own path, to go to his end or away from it.

There has been a tremendous amount of vagueness attached to the notion of Natural Moral Law, a kind of dense fog clinging to it to give it an air of mystery, eeriness, unreality. It should not be at all mysterious. Like all other animals, man has natural inclinations; unlike all others he has the faculty of reason which recognizes these natural inclinations naturally; and the result of these two is a natural dictate or command of reason. There is no more to Natural Moral Law than just this: a passive participation of Eternal Law in common with all creatures; a passive participation proper to his nature; and an active participation of Eternal Law again proper to his rational nature.

In this last, the dictate or proposition of practical reason, precisely consists the essence of the Natural Moral Law, answering to all the essential notions of law we have exposed in the beginning of this chapter. But this dictate of reason is unintelligible as *natural law* without the preceding inclinations and light of reason. Put it this way. Separately the inclinations of man or the light of reason do not at all answer to the description of *law*; separately the dictate of reason does not answer to the qualifications of the *natural*, for it is not born in us. With the three elements taken together all difficulties about the Natural Moral Law vanish. This dictate is natural, necessary as flowing immediately and inevitably from the two preceding elements, dependent upon them.

Its precepts

Stated plainly, this dictate of reason robs the Natural Moral Law of all its vagueness. This first necessary and natural dictate of practical reason is: do good, avoid evil. The "good" here is that which is according to natural inclinations, the "evil" that which is against those inclinations; for the whole purpose of man's natural inclinations, as natural, is to indicate what nature needs for its perfection.

Let us compare the practical reason, which produces law, to the speculative reason of man. After all, they are not two faculties, but one; so the speculative and practical operations will proceed in the same manner. In the speculative order, dealing with truth for its own sake, the first principle is founded on "being" -- the object of the intellect -- and is: "what is, is", the principle of identity. In the practical order, which deals with actions, the first principle is founded on the object of appetite, the root of desire and action -- on "good" -- and is: "good is to be done, evil is to be avoided". In other words the goal or end, the object of desire, is at the root of all action, is indeed the sole explanation of intelligent action; this first principle demands that man act for his end.

But what is good? That is easy. Good is what is in accordance with the natural inclinations of man. The

natural inclinations guide the practical reason to good; then the practical reason guides the appetites of man and their inclinations to the attainment of that good. Nor is this a vicious circle. The inclinations of man's appetite are his guide to truth relative to the end or goal; for the means by which that end is to be attained, reason takes the lead and points out the path. This is only to say again that law does not establish an end, or point it out, but rather, as an act of the virtue of prudence, guides our steps to that end.

This is the first and fundamental command of the Natural Moral Law in man. From it, by way of conclusion, immediately follow the secondary precepts of the Natural Moral Law which are restated in the ten commandments, then the more remote but none the less direct conclusions.

The first is known immediately by all men; everyone can easily know the secondary precepts by taking the rational step down from the principle to these immediate conclusions. The remote precepts are known only by the wise and then with difficulty and with a frequent admixture of error. For always as we get further away from the principles we run greater risks of mistakes.

Source of virtue

Another way of classifying these precepts would be by comparison with the rest of nature. Some proceed from the natural inclinations we have in common with all creatures, such as those commanding the conservation of life; others proceed from the natural inclinations we have in common with all the animals, such as the command to generate and educate children; still others proceed from the natural inclinations proper to human nature, such as the precepts to know truth, to live in society, and so on. All of them are moral precepts because the acts they command proceed under the controlled direction of a moral or free agent. We cannot excuse any of our actions by pointing to parallel action in the animals and saying "it is natural". For us an action is natural only in so far as it harmonizes with the law of reason. This agreement with reason is not only the mark of naturalness, of humanity, it is the stamp of virtue; our actions are virtuous or good exactly in so far as they harmonize with the commands of reason, or, in other words, precisely in so far as they follow the directions of reason and move towards the goal of man. In one sense it is very true that all virtue comes from the Natural Moral Law, that is in the sense that all virtue is in complete harmony with Natural Moral Law; but of course there are many acts of virtue which are not demanded by nature. In fact Natural Moral Law deals primarily with those things which are essential for the living of human life.

Universality

On the face of it, Natural Moral Law should be universal. It flows from the very principles of nature itself and human nature does not change, however much we may coddle and embellish it. As a matter of fact the law is universal, the same for all men and in all men. There is no difficulty about the natural inclinations and the light of reason; these innate elements of Natural Moral Law are found in each and every man. As to the dictate of reason, the precise element of Natural Moral Law, we must distinguish very carefully between the different classes of precepts. The first and fundamental precept, "do good and avoid evil", is absolutely universal; always men act for good, every goal of action must wear at least the appearance of goodness. The secondary precepts, or ten commandments, are morally universal, i.e. they are known by the overwhelming majority of men because the overwhelming majority of men can see a conclusion that immediately follows from a first principle. Among the minority, some of these precepts may be unknown by reason of corrupt appetites, bad habits, education, tradition. And this is of considerable importance in view of our materialistic education in America today.

Actually the universality demanded by St. Thomas for the ten commandments amounts to this: none of these commandments have dropped out of the minds of all men; all nations or groups know the majority of these ten commandments. This type of moral universality seems to be experimentally vouched for by the findings of modern anthropology, as far as these findings allow conclusions to be drawn. The more remote commands of the Natural Moral Law can be, and frequently are, lost sight of for much the same reasons as militate against knowledge of the ten commandments, with the added reason of difficulty in

tracing the connection of these remote commands with the first principles of Natural Moral Law.

Incorruptibility and mutability

In other words, the Natural Moral Law is in one sense immutable; in another it is subject to change. Whatever change there is in Natural Moral Law will fall on the secondary and remote commands of that law; and that change can either be a real subjective change in the form of ignorance of those commands, or the apparent objective change involved in the mutation of the material with which a command deals. If a man leaves a knife with me for safe-keeping, I am bound in natural justice to return it to him on demand; but if he returns roaring drunk, not only am I not obliged to return the knife, I am forbidden to do so. The material of the precept has changed.

Its obligation

From what we have said so far, it must be evident that the Natural Moral Law in man is a completely intrinsic law, not a law imposed from the outside. It does not demand a knowledge of a legislator or an external promulgation; the natural inclinations, the light of reason recognizing those inclinations and the resulting natural dictate of reason all flow necessarily, naturally, from nature itself. But what of the obligation of natural Moral Law? How can man oblige himself morally? Or how can the principles of his nature oblige him? Is not obligation after all the imposition of the will of the superior upon an inferior? That is exactly the point. Obligation is no such thing. Law is a thing of reason, not will; and its obligation is established by reason, not by will. God Himself can no more change or dispense from the Natural Moral Law than He can change the essences of things, than He can change the eternal truth within Himself.

The whole difficulty has arisen from our misinterpretation of obligation. Moral obligation is a result of a double necessity: the necessity of an act in relation to a necessary end. It is necessary for me to go to Europe, so I am obliged to take a boat. My goal is necessarily fixed by nature, so I am obliged to place this act of justice which necessarily leads me to this end; I am obliged to refrain from this act of murder which necessarily leads me away from that goal. In other words, this necessary relation of act to end binds the will but does not destroy the liberty of the will, leaving intact the power of acting or not acting. The will is bound in as much as the goal is its object and the intellect proposes both end and necessary means to the will, but there is no question of direct coercion, of physical necessity imposed on the will.

The picture of obligation as a whip wielded by a tyrant according to his whims is altogether wrong. In the natural order, the command of natural reason, "do good and avoid evil", is no more than the command "act for your end", for "good" here means conducive to the end and "evil" means that which is leading away from the end. The will of man is a faculty whose object is the rational good, the end of man. Consequently it is essentially ordained to its act, which act is in turn essentially ordained to the determined effect -- the rational good of man. So that this rational appetite or will which is capable of willing the goal of man and is, moreover essentially ordained to this act and object, cannot refuse to will this end of man without losing the very reason of its existence, without going contrary to the essential order of things, without losing its conformity to right reason.

Putting it quite simply, the essential order of things, more particularly the rational good of man, is the proximate source of the obligation of the Natural Moral Law. It is a secondary but true cause in the moral order, producing a true effect, a true obligation.

Its relation to religion

The obligation of the Natural Moral Law no more demands a knowledge of God as legislator for its efficacy than do the first principles of the speculative order for their validity. This obligation follows from a first principle, the principle of finality, which like the other first principles has ontological value. The discovery, if it has been made, of a tribe keeping roughly to the ten commandments and at the same time possessed of no knowledge of a supreme legislator is not a contradiction in terms. This law is intrinsic, a natural law, a law that flows from nature; and obligation is an essential part of the notion of law or

command. Law, of course, is primarily a rule of order; but it is an effective rule of order which therefore includes in its very notion the idea of obligation.

That the Natural Moral Law does not demand an idea of God for its efficacy does not mean that God is a superfluity in the moral order. I do not need a knowledge of God to fry eggs; but without God there would not only be no frying done, there would be no eggs and no cook. The efficacy of the second cause does not exclude dependence on the first cause. If the first cause should cease to exist, the second cause would lose all causality; it is only in reducing the undoubted causality of the second cause to the first cause that this secondary causality is entirely explicable and intelligible. The proximate source of the obligation of the natural Moral Law is indeed the essential order of things as understood by natural reason and proposed to the will of man; but the supreme and first cause of this obligation is the Eternal Law and its author, God.

The Natural Moral Law is in the fullest sense a natural law, an intrinsic, efficacious rule by which man partakes actively in his own guidance to the goal of human life. Religion is not a cause of the morality inculcated by the Natural Moral Law; it is rather an effect of that law, one of the commands issued by that law. A primitive people who had no religion but had a morality embracing most of the ten commandments would be a people in whom the Natural Moral Law was operating effectively though not perfectly. Supernatural religion, of course, adds much to the motives and sanctions of the morality established by the natural Moral Law. But it is important that we stress that note of independence: the Natural Moral Law makes no suppositions, presupposes no mysteriously natural goodness or evil, it supposes only the existence of the first cause and then in its own right it establishes morality.

Conclusion: Life and law:

We can sum this up briefly by saying that law is a compass of life. It is much more a part of a man living a human life than the compass is of the navigator sailing the seven seas. We cannot live life without law; we cannot even pretend to go through the motions of living. We must have law and we must have definite notions about the nature of law, because we must live life and we cannot do that without having some notions as to what life is and means.

Life, morality and nature

Life and law are as closely intertwined as motion and its direction to a goal. Stating the nature of life in saying that it is a motion to a goal, we have also stated the nature and purpose of law; for law is exactly the direction of the motion which is life to the goal of life. It deals only with the direction of life; it does not constitute life, nor does it establish the end of life. There are limits to the powers of legislation, even of divine legislation.

The identification of human life and moral life is an immediate indication of the close connection of law and morality. Indeed morality is nothing more than conformity with the rule which regulates human life -- the rule of reason or law.

Morality and law

Human life is reasonable life, morality is accord with the rule of reason, and law to establish that morality and rule that reasonable life must be the product of reason. It is not the result of caprice, even of divine caprice; it is not the decree of a superior will. The power of command is a power of the reason and not of the will. It is an ordination, a direction of motion, an effective directive motion; so it is an act proceeding immediately from the intellect on the presupposition of the movement of the will.

It is a foregone conclusion that our view of life will determine our view of law. If life is a motion to a goal and law the direction of that motion, of course our view on the goal of life will determine our view on both life and law. This, then, is the whole explanation of our muddled views on law today, of our absurd faith in law, of our complete surrender of all departments of life to law, and paradoxically of our

resentment of and contempt for law: our views on life and the goal of life are hopelessly confused. We have reached the point of seriously doubting or openly denying a goal to human life, a meaning to human action, a personal freedom that would alone make those actions human.

Yet we go on producing laws on a mass-production scale, we go on uncovering details of scientific or physical laws until we have swamped ourselves in detail, we have hidden the forest in a profusion of trees. We have missed the obvious and essential, the law behind all laws, the government at the root of all order, the Eternal Law which is the source of all law and of all truth. It was not hard, then, for us to miss the participation of that Eternal Law in man, the Natural Moral Law; nor to misinterpret the whole purpose of those determinations of the Natural Moral Law which are called human positive law.

In fact we have lost ourselves in a maze of contradictions. While bending down before the power, majesty and order of nature, we have insisted on making man the one exception to that power, majesty and order, the sole freak in the universe, the sole creature escaping the government of natural law. In a way this contradiction was necessary to wipe morality and human responsibility from the minds of men, for it is quite impossible to include man in the natural order, to have him governed, as everything in the universe is governed, by a law that does not violate but perfects his nature, and at the same time to escape morality. Man's nature is free; his actions cannot be the result of physical force, physical necessity, and be human actions. The only law that can govern this moral nature without violence to it is a moral law.

This Natural Moral Law in man, as natural, is an intrinsic law, a law flowing immediately from man's nature with all the equipment necessary for the essential notion of law. Like all nature and all law, it depends on the source of nature and law, on God, for its very existence but it does not demand a knowledge of God for its effectiveness or for its binding power. It is not the product of religion but of nature; rather of itself it will immediately produce religion. Like human nature, it is universally found in man proceeding from the principles of that human nature. Like the Eternal Law, it is a thing of reason; as must also be all positive human law which is founded upon it.

Law and liberty

Law is necessary for human life because human life is free life, moral life, and law is the protection of liberty. Its moral character is an open evidence of God's great respect for the liberty He has given man; its purpose is a plain statement of the high things God expects of that human liberty. Its operation and limitation when it proceeds from human authority is a constant defence of man's position at the peak of the universe, above things, plants, animals, parties, states, nations.

Law and happiness

As life exists because of the goal of life which is human happiness, as morality is nothing but a statement of man's progress towards and share in that goal of life, so law is the official guide of man to his final happiness, to his final goal. Law exists for no other reason than that men should find their way home. The enemy of law is an enemy of life, an enemy of morality, an enemy of society, an enemy of God and, to reach the depths of despair, he is an enemy of himself.

[<<-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

[Chapter 19 -->](#)

CHAPTER XIX -- SIGNPOSTS OF HAPPINESS (Q. 95-108)

1. Positive law and man:
 - (a) A privilege of his perfection.
 - (b) A necessity of his insufficiency.
2. Division of positive law:
 - (a) Human and divine positive law.
 - (b) Their common ground -- essence of law.
3. Human positive law:
 - (a) Its utility.
 - (b) Its general characteristics:
 - (1) Rational -- derived from natural law.
 - (2) In harmony with religion -- divine law.
 - (3) In harmony with discipline -- natural law.
 - (4) Contributing to welfare -- common good.
4. Powers of human law:
 - (a) Universal, not particular.
 - (b) Not extending to all vices nor to all virtues
 - (c) Obliging in conscience:
 - (1) Just laws
 - (2) Unjust laws -- contrary to human and divine good.
 - (d) Subjects and letter of the law.
 - (e) Its immutability:
 - (1) Custom and law.
 - (2) Dispensation.
5. Divine positive law of the Old Testament:
 - (a) In general:
 - (1) Its purpose, origin and subjects.
 - (2) Its precepts: moral, ceremonial and judicial.
 - (3) Its promises and threats.
 - (b) In particular: moral precepts and natural law.
6. Divine positive law of the New Testament:
 - (a) In itself.
 - (b) In comparison with the Old Law.
 - (c) Its contents:
 - (1) External acts.
 - (2) Internal acts.
 - (3) Counsels.

Conclusion:

1. The beginnings of law.
2. The progress of law.
3. The ends of law.

CHAPTER XIX SIGNPOSTS OF HAPPINESS (Q. 95-108)

We have come a long way in our investigation of human happiness. Perhaps the last few miles will seem hard and long, as they usually do; but a glance over our shoulder at the long, long road already covered will give us new vigour for the last effort of these final chapters. So far we have seen just two things: the goal or end of man in whose attainment happiness consists; and the means or steps by which man can reach that goal -- his own human actions. In fact we have not quite seen all of his human actions. We have analyzed these actions in themselves, looked at their intrinsic principles the passions and the habits, both good and bad, which we have called sins and virtues. There still remain to be examined the two extrinsic principles of human actions: law by which we are instructed and grace by which we are helped. We have seen something of Natural Moral Law, above all its intrinsic character; in this chapter we will examine that law which is extrinsic to man. In the final chapter of Thomistic exposition we will study grace.

For years people have been standing before the cages in the zoo and remarking of this or that animal; "How very human it is." Today the trend seems to be to invert that remark and say: "How very animal we are", and to take the remark so seriously as to end up by saying; "How exactly and wholly animal we are." Of course we are also animals. But people used to notice that while there were always signs on the cages

instructing us what we should or should not feed the animals, forbidding us to tease them or get too familiar with them, there were no directions at all telling the animals how they should treat us. All the signs face just one way -- towards a human mind.

Positive law and man: A privilege of his perfection.

That fact is significant of the gap that stretches between the spiritual and the material. We can place an animal under a physical necessity of following orders by cracking a whip or the equivalent of a whip; actually it follows not the orders but its own instinct driving it away from the evil or driving it to the good. Only when we reach the level of spirituality, where intellectual knowledge makes free choice possible, can there be a question of a necessity which is not physical but moral, a necessity that leaves the appetite free to obey or disobey. Only when we come to the spiritual level can there be any question of law and its obligation.

A necessity of his insufficiency

Law (of course we are speaking of moral law) belongs to us because we stand at the peak of creation, above the level of the brutes though touching on it. Yet at the same time law is a necessity for us because we are still engaged in the work of developing, perfecting ourselves; we are still on the road to ultimate perfection, to happiness, and we need the direction and instruction offered by law until such a time as we arrive at that goal. Positive law is a necessity for us because we stand on the lowest rung of the ladder of intellectuality. We must hobble down, on the crutches of rational thought, from the height of principles to the lower levels of conclusions; as we come down, the chances of falling, of taking the wrong road, increase as we get farther and farther from the clear bright atmosphere of the heights. Natural Moral Law with its principles is not enough for us, as it is for the angels; there are gaps to be filled in, further determinations to be made, because we do not rush in one magnificent plunge to all that a principle contains, but rather stumble slowly along, more puzzled, more confused as we get closer to the concrete details of action.

Division of positive law: Human and divine positive law **Their common ground -- essence of law**

The difference of the authority which fills in those gaps of the Natural Moral Law gives us the fundamental division of all positive law, for that authority is either human or divine. Positive law is either divine or human, but whether it comes directly from God or from lawfully constituted human authority, always it must answer to the essential notion of law: a dictate of practical reason for the common good, by him who has care of the community, and promulgated. In other words, both human and divine positive laws are laws in the strictest sense of the term. It is on this common ground of law that we shall examine both of them in this chapter.

Human positive law: Its utility.

A momentary consideration of what happened some years ago in Boston during a police strike or, more recently, what has happened in some Spanish cities when a mob usurped the power of the government, will immediately bring this discussion of the necessity and utility of human law down to the level of the vividly real. There are always some men who can appreciate no force but physical force. They can understand the threat of a jail sentence, a noose or an electric chair, but they have no regard for an obligation in conscience. The work of government is to give peace, to give its subjects a chance to lead individual lives of fuller and fuller perfection; and its proper act is law. These evil men must be curbed, for the others must have peace if the state is to have any reason for existence.

Actually the curbing of criminals by the force of law does more than guarantee peace to orderly citizens. A child often starts off in life brushing its teeth, practicing on the piano and eating spinach simply because there is no escape from these things. What it learned under duress, later on in life it does voluntarily, even eagerly. Not infrequently, the same thing is true of the lawbreaker. After all, what the law demands of the

criminal is most fully in accord with his nature, i.e. action for his end, movement towards instead of away from his goal; and what is natural to man has in itself a mighty appeal.

Still, granted the utility of law, there seems to be an alternative. Why could not the government select some wise, prudent men, equip them with means of transportation and turn them loose on the community with instructions to use their common sense and guide the citizens to that peace and life of virtue which are the ends of the state? Well, in the first place, it is not too easy to find enough wise, prudent men to judge every single case solely by their own wisdom. In fact it is quite impossible. On the other hand it is comparatively easy to gather the few prudent men necessary to frame laws to be universally applied to the community. Then, too, it is one thing to attempt the settlement of a case that has risen suddenly and must be disposed of here and now, and quite another leisurely to consider all possible angles with a view to solving future cases of one type. Even a judge would find it hard to mete out impartial justice solely on his own reasoning after a bad night's sleep, a week or two of poor fare) or on a day that leaves him hot, dusty, irritated. All in all, concludes St. Thomas, it is a good thing to leave few things to the judgment of men.

Its general characteristics: Rational -- derived from natural law

We simply must have human law if we are to move surely to the goal of reason. Of course, as we saw in the last chapter, if this human law is to be law at all it must be derived from the Natural Moral Law; in fact its whole purpose is to supplement that law, fill in its gaps, make further determinations of it. Over and above this fundamental character of human law, what are its other qualities? How can we recognize a real human law when we see one? What are its family characteristics?

In harmony with religion -- divine law

These characteristics have been recorded in some detail from the earliest days of Roman Law. Their very detail often leads to confusion though really there is no need of our being confused in this matter. If we are looking for the family characteristics of law, we have simply to look back to the family tree of law, to trace it back step by step through its progenitors -- the community, nature and God. This order we are trying to identify must have the qualities demanded from such a lineage. We can put this in another way by saying briefly that human law must be in harmony with religion, with discipline or order, and contribute to welfare; or, even more simply, it must be in harmony with divine law, with the Natural Moral Law, and be to the common good.

In harmony with discipline -- natural law

In reference to the first of these, the identification of law is absurdly easy. A human law which flatly contradicts divine law is no law at all because it cuts itself off from the first source of all law and aims at goals opposed to the goal of all law. From the point of view of nature, human law will be reasonable and the reasonable thing in the material of human law is the just thing. It will be within the powers of the subjects and fitting to the time, place and customs of the country for which it is framed. All that is no more than saying it will be reasonable from the side of the matter, the subject and the circumstances; a demand for harmony with man's nature is always a demand for the reasonable. An unreasonable human law has the same place in the family of laws as an unreasonable action of man has in the family of human acts; the legislator should feel the same way about it that the pipe-smoker feels about throwing his pipe out of the window and putting the match in his mouth. It is not something to be defended, insisted on or gloated over; but rather something to cause embarrassment, mild astonishment, confusion and even shame. It is out of its class.

Contributing to welfare -- common good

Serving the common good, a human law will serve the ends of necessity in acting for the removal of evil, the ends of utility in moving to the attainment of good, and the ends of caution in forestalling any injury from the law itself. In other words, it will be proportionate to human utility. Otherwise it will be as malicious in its own order as an Alpine guide with a homicidal mania.

Before going into the wide range of human law it might be well here to set to one side a type of law that, while human, is not framed by any government nor dependent on the sanction of any state. This law has been known for thousands of years as "the law of nations" (*jus gentium*). It is not international law, but rather a law common to all men; it is not natural law, for it is dependent upon a set of contingent facts, it does not spring immediately from man's nature. It is rather a determination of the Natural Moral Law made by human reason without the intervention of any institution whatever. An example of it is the necessity of private property. Starting from a principle of Natural Moral Law -- social life demands that in their use of external goods men avoid confusion, neglect and discord -- it comes upon the contingent fact that men, not as they could be or should be, but as they are, are not industrious, orderly and peaceful in their use of external goods commonly owned; and so concludes to the necessity of private property. A universal principle of Natural Moral Law, placed by human reason beside a universal but contingent fact, forces reason immediately to conclude to a dictate of "the law of nations".

Powers of human law: Universal, not particular

To get back to human positive law in its ordinary sense, I think most of us have felt, at one time or another, unsatisfied with law. The root of that dissatisfaction is that law never seems to fit the individual case perfectly. The man who has just purchased a ready-made suit, having once known the perfection of the tailor-made product, has a taste of much the same dissatisfaction. The manufacturer of the ready-made suit does not know, cannot know, all the individual eccentricities -- stoop-shoulders, hollow chests, short arms -- of everyone who will buy his suits. He strikes a fair average that enables any tailor to bring the suit down to individual requirements. The legislator also strikes an average so accurate that an ordinary judge can bring the law down to the individual case. It would be more pleasant if everyone could have tailor-made suits. But it would be an impossible situation if everyone could have tailor-made laws. Law must be universal, not particular. It is made for many persons, in fact for the whole community, for many different periods, for many different circumstances, for many different actions. In fact it is made for succeeding generations of citizens, it is intended to be perpetual and of course cannot be tailored to any one individual.

Not extending to all vices nor to all virtues

Up to this time the majority of citizens of any state have not been saints; probably they never will be. This fact gives us the clue to the proper interpretation of the universality of law. That universality does not mean that human law should prohibit all vices nor that it should command all virtues; it is framed for the whole community and should be suited to the ordinary condition of its subjects. Some vices it must forbid, certainly those that threaten the very survival of society; some virtues it must command, certainly those which either directly or indirectly can be ordained by human means to the common good. But its aim is not to make men saints but to give them peace and a chance to work out their own individual perfection, their individual sanctity. Sanctity will always remain an individual affair.

Obliging in conscience: Just laws

This does not mean, of course, that human law is divorced from morality. In fact its chief efficacy lies precisely in the moral obligation, an obligation in conscience, which it imposes. Indeed it must impose such an obligation to live up to the essential notion of law, to be law at all. As we saw in the preceding chapter, law as the command or dictate of practical reason necessarily implies an obligation, a connection of some necessity between the act commanded and the end for which that act is commanded. The same truth is brought out when we remember that human law is derived from Natural Moral Law, or that it is derived from Eternal Law; either way it is traced back to the essential order of things and ultimately to the mind of God as the supreme source of truth and law. From St. Thomas's point of view, a law that does not oblige in conscience is, strictly speaking, not a law.

The obligation of human law is of its very nature limited to laws that are really laws, that is, to just laws. Since obligation follows from the very essence of law, a statute lacking that legal essence has no basis for

obliging the citizens of a state. When is a law just? Well, really there is no other kind that deserves the name of law. Consequently a just law is one that answers to St. Thomas's definition of law as a dictate of reason for the common good by him who has care of the community.

Unjust laws -- contrary to human and divine good

In more detail, a just law is one that is framed for the common good by legitimate authority and which imposes burdens on the citizens in proportion both to the powers of the different citizens and the needs of the common good. This will perhaps be clearer if viewed from the other side. A law is unjust when it is contrary to human or divine good. Again, contrariety to the divine good is easy to see and immediately precludes any possibility of ever complying with the particular law. A law is contrary to human good because of its end, its author or its form; that is, because it is ordained to the cupidity or glory of the ruler instead of to the common good, because it exceeds the powers of the legislator, or because its distribution of burdens is unequal, not proportionate either to the citizens or to the common good. It is possible for such a law, contrary to human good, to oblige in conscience, not because of its innate character as law, but because of some accidental consequence of its disobedience, like scandal or rioting. More simply, even our disobedience as citizens must be ordained to the common good of the community.

Subjects and letter of the law

It has long been recognized that disrespect for law is a serious threat to government. What is not recognized today is that disrespect for law is a serious threat to freedom. If the citizen feels that his will is being coerced by just laws, then there is something the matter with his will. If he thinks that just laws are a threat to his liberty, he has forgotten what liberty is. His will, if it is good, should be moving towards precisely the ends of just laws; the whole purpose of just laws is to give the individual citizen an opportunity to exercise his liberty in the perfection of himself. A burglar or a murderer is right in thinking of law as a coercive power directed against his operations; it is and it should be. Even the stupidest of burglars would hardly make the mistake of basing his defence on a plea of justice and liberty. It is only the criminals who are subject to law in the sense of being coerced by law; the rest of the citizens are really free of law in this sense, for the demands of law are demands that are in accord with their wills.

Its immutability: Custom and law

While law and good will are in harmony, law has much greater stability about it than has the individual will. There is a comfort in stability which is not found in change. I remember once seeing a burly individual aggressively approach a swinging door. It struck me watching him that someone had done excellent work cleaning the glass panel of that door to give it such crystal clearness and transparency. As he reached the door he sketched out his arm to give it that insolent sort of shove which seems to expect a door to jump off its hinges and stand to one side at attention. He pushed right at the glass but there was no glass there; as he hung half in and half out the door, like a sack of flour thrown over a horse's back, I am sure he was disconcerted. We expect things to be as they are. Imagine someone enjoying a siesta under a shady tree only to have the tree turn around and bite or walk off and leave the sleeper under the sun's glare. There are things we expect to find always the same, things like God, nature and the goals of humanity. Because law has its roots in God and nature and its hopes in the goals of man, there is an immutable character to all law.

Not that law is absolutely unchangeable. It seems evident that the laws regulating the hitching of horses along Twenty-third Street in New York half a century ago would not be of much help in handling modern New York traffic. It is at least conceivable that a better system of traffic regulation will be devised in the future. Conditions can and do change, better laws can be framed; for these two reasons law can be changed.

But a change in law is something to be gone about slowly, cautiously, almost regretfully, for there is always a real loss in a change of law, a loss of the force of custom behind that law. Law is not to be changed every time something better comes up, but only on condition that the good effect obtained by the

change of law sufficiently compensates the common good for the loss incurred by the change of law. It is possible that, considered in the abstract, the English way of having traffic move on the left is superior to ours; but if the English "look right" were painted on all the streets tomorrow as warning that the superior system had been installed, half the pedestrians of New York would be dead by noontime.

Custom is a mighty force. It can obtain the full force of law, can abolish and interpret laws. After all, the right reason of a community can be as effectively declared by actions as by words. That basic source of the power of custom -- the declaration of right reason by the community -- brings out clearly the difference between the power of custom among different people. In a free people custom and consent of the people actually have more power than the ruler or his words, for the ruler's power is really only a vicarious power of the people. In a people who are not free, custom has the power of law in so far as its toleration is an implicit approval on the part of the ruler; and of course there must have been considerable toleration for a practice to develop the full strength of custom.

However, we will make a mistake if we think of custom and law as opponents glaring at each other across the ring. Often custom precedes law and law is really its crystallization. Usually custom is not against law but rather over and above it, supplying the deficiencies of law, or, in a case of real opposition, showing the uselessness of that law. If, as a matter of fact, the reason for the law still exists and it is therefore still useful for the common good, a contrary custom springing up does not conquer the law but is rather conquered by it; unless, of course, the custom is of such long standing that the law is *de facto* useless, because unenforceable in the face of the custom of the country. It is not an easy thing to change the customs of a people. Indeed it is so drastic a task that only the greatest necessity justifies the attempt, like a curfew or regulations on the showing of lights in time of war.

Dispensation

Running all through this discussion of law, its nature, its extent and obligation, there has been a fundamental consideration for the common good. Granted the legitimacy of the legislator, that will always be the prime consideration. So it is not surprising to find St. Thomas agreeing that when the letter of the law here and now would militate against the common good, the law is not to be followed, for that would be to act against the intention of the legislator. However, unless the emergency has arisen so suddenly and must be settled so quickly that recourse is impossible, the interpretation or absolution from the law in this particular case must be made by the legislator himself. Not only has he the power to declare in the name of the common good that this law does not bind in this case, he can when the common good does not suffer, dispense in a particular case from a law. It is quite possible that a law which in general works to the good of the people, in this particular case works a hardship on the individual; if there is good reason for the dispensation and the common good does not suffer, then he who framed the law can dispense from it.

Divine positive law of the Old Testament

So much for human positive law. When we come to the divine positive law, we find it clearly divided into the New and the Old Law, the preparation and the fulfilment, the imperfect and the perfect. The Old Law was exactly a preparation of one race for the coming of Christ; imperfect, like all preparations, doing the work of divine law in drawing men to the friendship of God, but not doing the whole work because sanctification, as St. Paul insisted, was not by the law but by faith in the coming Redeemer.

Its purpose, origin and subjects

While the New Law was given directly by the son of God Himself, the Old Law came to men through the ministry of angels and men, following the universal order of divine providence by which the inferiors are led to perfection by their superiors. Unlike the New Law, the Old Law was not given to all men nor for all men; it was given to a single race, the Jews, for their special sanctification. Nor was this a case of favouritism on the part of God. Favouritism implies an injury to justice, an overlooking of merit; and this

whole law was gratuitously given. Merit did not enter into the question. It was given to the Jews, for they above all other peoples needed sanctification, since it was from them that the Son of God was to be born. Consequently the Old Law, except in so far as it contained precepts of the Natural Moral Law, did not oblige any other people but the Jews themselves. It was, strictly speaking, their law, and theirs alone.

Its precepts: moral, ceremonial and judicial

The law governing a whole people has always been a complex affair. It has to be for so great a task. The Old Law was no exception to this general rule. If we glance hastily through the first five books of the Bible we will get something like the same sense of bewilderment that settles upon the layman who has wandered by mistake into the legal section of a modern library. The Old Law is not to be summed up in terms of the ten commandments; those commandments are only one part of the law, the moral part. Actually the law was divided into three classes of precepts: moral, ceremonial and judicial.

As a general description of these three we might say that the moral precepts were merely a restatement of the secondary precepts of the Natural Moral Law; the ceremonial precepts, proceeding from the Natural Moral Law's command to worship God, made further determinations as to the time, place and manner of this worship; the judicial precepts, proceeding from the natural precept of justice, made further determinations as to how this justice was to be observed among men.

Its promises and threats

All three types of precepts were enforced by temporal threats and temporal promises -- a long life, peace, many children, the blotting of the family name from the earth, and so on. This is just another mark of the imperfection of the Old Law. The perfection of man is the spurning of temporal things to cling to the spiritual; the imperfection, to desire the temporal in preference to the spiritual; the perversion, to desire the temporal above all others. The Old Law led men by the imperfect way, inducing them by temporal promises and threats to start the practice of virtue to the end that they might continue and perfect that practice for the ends of virtue itself, much as we might start a child on a good habit with a promise of toys, sure that long after the toys are forgotten the habit will endure.

In particular: moral precepts and natural law

Examining the moral precepts more closely we see many things commanded that are not immediately evident from the Natural Moral Law itself; a more accurate way of stating these precepts would be to say that they are all reducible to the ten commandments or to the secondary precepts of the Natural Moral Law. There is, for example, such a precept as that commanding reverence for the old -- a precept that, while following immediately from the Natural Moral Law as a conclusion from a principle, nevertheless demands wise consideration and study before its connection with the Natural Moral Law is seen. There are others which demanded divine instruction for the knowledge of their connection with the secondary precepts of Natural Moral Law, for example, the prohibition of sculpture to a people completely surrounded by the unnatural practice of idolatry. In these latter precepts the divine character of this positive law shines out clearly; human positive law proposes only those precepts that deal with justice, the divine goes beyond that to the material of other virtues, commanding under the obligation of precept those things without which the order of reason (not the social order) cannot be maintained, advocating under the admonishment of counsel those things that pertain to the perfection of reason and virtue.

In this treatise on the ten commandments, St. Thomas handles the Decalogue as a connoisseur would handle a very rare, very precious jewel. He turns it slowly in his hands, looking at it now from this angle, now from that; he holds it up to the light, puts it against rich, dark backgrounds, savouring its full beauty and exquisite perfection.

For example: of these ten commandments, three deal with God, seven with our neighbour; the first three against pride of life that would puff us up above God, two against the concupiscence of the flesh, defending the sanctity of marriage, the rest against the concupiscence of the eyes -- dealing with the things

of others. Or considering them from the viewpoint of social life with its two essentials of ruler and subjects, we find the first three commandments regulating harmonious relationship with the ruler by demanding fidelity, reverence and properly restrained familiarity; the other seven, regulating relations between fellow citizens, demand rendering of what is due to parents as having the supreme claim, and the avoiding of injury to all citizens in their persons or possessions by thought, word or work. Or, again, putting the ten commandments against the more sombre background of moral gravity, we find that the very order in which they are stated is the order of gravity -- most easily and immediately seen by men: first, the three commandments driving men's minds to God their goal, the three whose contraries are the gravest of evils; then the seven commandments dealing with our neighbour, first in reference to parents to whom we have greater obligation and, following this in quick logical order, the commands forbidding offence by deed, word or thought with most emphasis on offences in actual deed where a cloak of protection is thrown around life, the family and external possessions by the prohibition of murder, adultery and theft.

Before passing on to the New Law, it might be well here to note that, with the exception of the element of Natural Moral Law it contained, the Old Law ceased with Christ. St. Augustine, speaking of the ceremonial precepts, puts this pithily when he distinguishes three stages: the first before the passion of Christ in which these precepts were neither dead nor deadly; the second from the passion of Christ until the spreading of the gospel when they were dead but not deadly; the third, after the spread of the gospel, when they were both dead and deadly. The judicial precepts died with Christ also, but since in themselves they were not figurative or prophetic of the future coming of Christ, their observance after Christ did not contain that same element of propagation of error.

Divine positive law of the New Testament: In itself.

With Christ the Old Law died and the New Law was born; or, better, the Old Law was fulfilled by this New Law which was not merely a written law but a law written in the hearts of the faithful. It was necessary by word and writing to instruct men about the things to be believed and the things to be done, but over and above that was the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the followers of Christ. It was this internal element of the New Law which did what the Old Law could never do, justify men. This is indeed a divine law, divine in the depths of our nature which it touches, divine in its endurance to the end of time and divine in the wisdom of its coming which gave men plenty of time to realize how badly they needed the grace of God for the living of human life.

In comparison with the Old Law

The Old Law was really a teacher of fundamentals for children; the New, a teacher of perfection. So the multitude of commands necessary for children are done away with in the New Law. As far as exterior observances go, this New Law is much lighter, much easier; but because it is no longer for children, the internal demands it makes are much harder, as hard, indeed, as perfection. Or putting this in another way, the external work to be done is easier in the New Law, but the way in which it must be done is much harder, the way, namely, of charity.

Its contents: External acts

Yet for all the limitation of externals, the New Law is not sketchy and unsatisfactory in this regard. Evidently some external acts had to be commanded, specifically those whose contraries opposed the constitution of internal grace and its proper use. All else was left to the determination of superiors and individuals as befits a law of liberty. In other words, the New Law had to insist upon the sacraments and the moral precepts; and these two were sufficient, for by them, grace is established and properly used.

Internal acts

We find the same brief sufficiency and strong emphasis in the New Law's regulation of the internal life of man. St. Augustine says this is sufficiently shown forth in the Sermon on the Mount where our Lord

handled briefly man's own internal life, his relations with his neighbours and the manner of fulfilling both classes of works. For his own regulation man is ordered to avoid evil not merely in its external manifestations, but in his own thoughts and desires, even to avoid the occasions from which evil springs; and at the same time to do good not for human glory, not for human riches, but to the end that he might be perfect, might one day be with God. In his dealings with his neighbours even his judgments must not be rash nor smack of injustice. This New Law that is given to him is not merely to be heard, he is not merely to confess the faith, but he is to ask the divine help he needs, then very humbly and courageously set about the work of keeping the ten commandments.

Counsels

Over and above that which is strictly necessary for the successful living of life, for the bare attainment of the goal which will spell eternal happiness, there is the rich material of perfection which is the subject-matter of the counsels given by Christ. Man is in the middle between things of the spirit and things of the world. The more he holds to one, the more he must recede from the other. His calamitous failure consists in embracing temporal things and receding entirely from the spiritual; he meets the bare requirements of success by adhering to temporal things, using them, but always in view of the spiritual goal for which he was made; but he reaches that same goal more expeditiously, lives his life more fully, participates more heartily in that perfection of God by totally receding from temporal things. It is to this supreme peak of human perfection that the New Law points, not harshly, not threateningly, but with that gracious respect for the freedom of man shown by the counsels -- "*qui potest capere, capiat*".

Conclusion: The beginnings of law

Perhaps the best summary of these chapters on law could be made by pointing to the beginnings of law. Law takes its rise from the eternal mind of God Himself, from the imprint of that Eternal Law on and in nature itself, from the intrinsic principles of man's own nature. Always law has something of that stability of God and nature and human nature about it, always it has the force of a direction that comes from nature, transmuted into that delicately respectful moral force as the movement of God passes through the moral nature of man. As it progresses law comes closer and closer to individual lives, to individual actions, determining the sweepingly universal dictates of nature to fit the exact circumstances of everyday life. It comes down from the absolutely essential to the less necessary, to the fitting and finally, in that complete perfection of divine law, to the heroic details which make a man as perfect as he can well be in this life.

The progress of law

It was part of God's great tact and respect for human nature that made of Natural Moral Law an utterly intrinsic thing, that made man in a very real sense his own legislator. It was that same divine thoughtfulness and generosity which gave to human institutions a part in the government of the world, leaving to the state the further determinations of Natural Moral Law necessary for the living of human life. But because the whole direction of life which is law is so completely from God, it is not surprising that God should step in with explicit directions where the mind and institutions of men had fallen short or begun to fail. It is not surprising that God, Who had offered His only begotten Son for men, should specially prepare the people from whom that Son was to be born; not surprising that God, Whose whole purpose in framing law was to bring men to Himself, should take upon Himself the office of Lawgiver of positive law that men might reach Him more surely, more expeditiously, more perfectly.

The ends of law

God, nature, human nature -- these are the sources of law. Their ends are the ends of law. Law exists that it might guide men, not in any direction, not to any goal, but to the right goal, to the goal whose attainment means happiness for man. Eternal Law, Natural Moral Law, divine positive law, all aim directly at this goal of human life, For all are directly from God and God is the goal of life. Human positive law, because it is of man, approaches that goal more humbly, stopping somewhat short of the goal, feeling that it is treading on holy ground. It is satisfied to give to men peace and an opportunity to world their

individual way to that supreme goal of human life, to give them the means by which they can live "the life of virtue". Law is intimately linked up with human life. Man alone needs law, for man alone can fail. Man alone, of all the creatures on earth, can have law, for only man can succeed, for only man has for a goal attainable by his own actions, the eternal vision of God.

[«-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

[Chapter 20 --»](#)

CHAPTER XX -- HEIGHTS OF HAPPINESS
(Q. 109-114)

1. Meaning of human life:
 - (a) Key to human activity -- desire and happiness.
 - (b) The natural and happiness.
 - (c) The supernatural and happiness.
2. Grace and meaning of human life.
3. Grace considered in itself:
 - (a) Necessity of grace:
 - (1) For man without grace.
 - (2) For man in the state of grace.
 - (b) Nature of grace:
 - (1) A supernatural quality.
 - (2) In the essence of the soul.
 - (c) Division of grace:
 - (1) Given for the salvation of others.
 - (2) Given for personal sanctification:
 - a. Habitual.
 - b. Actual: sufficient and efficacious.
4. Causes of grace:
 - (a) God's part in grace.
 - (b) Man's part in grace.
5. Effects of grace:
 - (a) Justification:
 - (1) Nature.
 - (2) Production.
 - (3) Excellence.
 - (b) Merit:
 - (1) Nature and existence.
 - (2) Principle and conditions of merit.
 - (3) Manner.
 - (4) Objects:
 - a. First grace for self and others.
 - b. Increase of grace.
 - c. Final perseverance.
 - d. Temporal goods.

Conclusion:

1. Grace and the natural world.
 2. Grace and the natural man.
 3. Grace and human action.
 4. Grace and human happiness.
- Appendix: Revealed doctrine pertaining to grace.**

CHAPTER XX
HEIGHTS OF HAPPINESS
(Q. 109-114)

The little boy who is just tasting the first delicious morsels of independence, his curls gone, wearing a real shirt with his own tie and a pair of trousers with a real belt, looks down the long dreams of youth to great goals, great ends, to the time when he will be a man. The old man with death's door almost within reach of his fingers, turns his head and looks back regretfully, dreamingly, smilingly, at the beginnings of life, to the days when he was a boy. It is the natural thing to do, for if there are to be any beginnings of human life, of human action, there must be a goal, an end; and if we are to understand the end we must look back to the beginning.

In the beginning of this book we considered the end, the goal of human life. Now approaching the end of this volume, to understand it all we must look to the beginning, which is also the end. At the start of this long study we saw that the key to the ceaseless activity of men and women was desire. Because the object of desire is attainable but not yet attained, we act; and in that action, progressing toward the object of desire, we have a foretaste of the happiness that the attainment of that object of desire will bring. All men act for one thing -- to obtain the object of desire, to be happy.

Meaning of human life: Key to human activity -- desire and happiness

Human life is accurately stated as a search for happiness. But because the objects men have desired have so seldom brought them happiness, it has become the attitude of our age to emphasize the quest and shudder at the thought of attaining the goal. Men are happy in a way while the hunt for happiness is going on. When they stand with the quarry at bay, with sensible pleasure, riches, power or fame in their hands, then there is not happiness but disillusionment, disgust, despair at such an ending to human life, to human action. Really today the friend of the neo-pagan is he who wishes him not success but failure, for success is the end of the quest and only in the quest is happiness found. The reason for this is that the quest has been limited to the world around or beneath man, to the world within man, the world of his body or his soul, but never extended to the world above man, to the infinite world of divine perfection. However great the goods of these worlds of nature, they are puny substitutes to an intellect thirsting for supreme truth, to an appetite that only the universal good will ever satisfy.

The natural and happiness; the supernatural and happiness

In the beginning of this study we determined the goal which alone would bring men happiness, a goal no less than the eternal vision of God Himself. It is an impossible goal if we look only at the powers of man's nature, as San Francisco is out of the range of our ears if we forget the radio or the telephone which makes it possible to hear a voice across the continent. Without help we cannot possibly hear someone speaking so far away; without help man cannot possibly attain the one goal that will give him happiness. And the help by which God is brought within range of the hands of men, the help by which the actions of men can lift those same men up to the vision of God, is called grace -- the subject of our present chapter.

Grace and meaning of human life

As the bridge spanning the gap between the supernatural and the natural, grace is all-important to the individual man, for it is only by bridging this gap that happiness is possible. Grace should have an eminent place among the great Catholic truths. It has. Indeed just a glance at its relation to the great truths of our Faith is sufficient to bring out even more clearly its tremendous importance in human life. It was grace that was lost by original sin. Grace was the immediate fruit of the Incarnation and Redemption. It is the means of the justification of the sinner, the immediate fruit of the sacraments and the purpose of the whole sacramental system which continues the work of Christ in supplying the souls of men with this life-giving gift. The priesthood exists for the Mass and the sacraments and so for grace. Progress in grace is spiritual progress, perfection. With grace comes the whole supernatural equipment of virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost; with the loss of grace most of this equipment is lost. Mortal sin is the destruction of grace and the death of the soul. The subject of grace enters deeply into our Mariology, particularly today when Mary's position as co-Redemptrix and channel of all grace is being brought out more clearly. Grace is the means by which we live a divine life, yet the understanding of grace makes impossible the absurdities of pantheism; it is grace which lifts us to the heights of God, lets us live the life of God, yet leaves God God and man man.

There is no end to this. Yet St. Thomas treated this enormous subject adequately, scientifically, with profound beauty in just six questions of his *Summa Theologica*, one of the shortest of his tracts.

Grace considered in itself:

A man in perfect health has little thought for or appreciation of his splendid health. A short tour through a hospital will awaken him to his fortunate condition. So a statement of the importance of grace wins our agreement, but it does not drive that importance deep into our souls as does a momentary consideration of man's condition without grace. Physical sickness makes apparent the value of health; spiritual sickness makes vividly evident the necessity of grace.

Necessity of grace: For man without grace

Let us put to one side that purely hypothetical state of humanity -- the state of pure nature in which man would have had all that nature demands but would never have known anything of the supernatural or preternatural gifts. Our interest is with man as he is today and that means with man in the state of fallen nature, the state of man with the sickness of sin on his soul and his nature injured by being stripped of the preternatural gifts by which God had supplied the defects inherent in the very elements of which man is made. What is the condition of man in this state without grace?

What is such a man like? If we desire to know this man, or any man, the intelligent way to go about the investigation is not to ask what does he look like, how does he part his hair or what kind of a smile has he, but rather to get down to essentially human activities. What does he know? What does he aim at, what does he will? What can he do? If we can answer these questions we know a man thoroughly.

The answers to all these questions about a man in the state of fallen nature are extremely easy. Without grace in the sense of supernatural help, certainly he cannot know supernatural truth. A cat has no knowledge of mental hygiene and no one is in the least surprised; such things are above the nature of the cat. Much less can a man of his own natural powers know supernatural truths, for these are not only above his nature, they are above all nature. Since reason is the guide holding the hand of appetite and steering its blind steps, appetite stops at the wall of the supernatural along with its guide, reason. If a man cannot know supernatural things, of course he cannot aim at them, cannot desire them. Much less can he do any supernatural work, for his work contains no more than flows into it from the principles of all human work, the intellect and will.

All in all, fallen man without grace is much more helpless in the supernatural order than is the infant crying for the moon and refusing to be satisfied with anything less than the moon. Man cannot be satisfied with any goal less than the supernatural, yet, left to himself, he cannot even know of his supernatural goal; he can know only his own restless discontent. As we look into this more closely, the haplessness of man becomes more and more apparent. He cannot produce the smallest act meritorious of eternal life, for there is less proportion between his natural acts and eternal life than between the child's high-chair and the fiftieth story of a modern skyscraper. Without that supernatural help of God which is actual grace he cannot even prepare himself for the grace that will establish some proportion between his acts and eternal life, any more than the child not yet conceived can prepare itself for life.

While apparently very comforting, it would actually be disastrous if we could turn from this picture of our helplessness in the supernatural order to a picture of easy efficiency and perfection in the natural order. This latter is the picture our modern world is trying so hard to bring to life by breathing a steady flow of words upon it. But it remains a figment of our imagination. Even in the natural order of things we make a sorry job of human life without grace. Look what we do with the ten commandments. True enough there is no one of them that cannot be observed; but to observe all of them, taken collectively, is too much. That is a work for a healthy nature. Fallen nature is not healthy, it is sick with the sickness of sin, naked with the loss of the preternatural gift. A sick man cannot do the day's work measured out by an efficiency expert for a healthy man, nor can he eat the meal designed by the expert chef for a healthy appetite; no more can a sick nature keep the commandments that were carefully proportioned to a healthy nature. Granted that there is no mortal sin that cannot be avoided, that fallen man can avoid all mortal sins for a time -- this much is demanded by the very nature of sin -- still it is impossible for him to escape mortal sin for any length of time.

Look at the case dispassionately for a moment. This man is sick and his sickness has not been healed by grace. Consequently his will is not totally subject to God. We have within ourselves a parallel to this in the sense appetite which is not totally subject to reason. How long can we go without some movement of that sense appetite contrary to reason? The fact is that such a man's heart is not firmly fixed on God and where sudden action is demanded that action will be moulded by the end that is firmly fixed in his heart.

Without grace, then, even those precepts of the Natural Moral Law which are the ten commandments are going to be violated. And without grace fallen man in the state of mortal sin has slipped, or rather

plunged, into a smooth-sided well. He can do nothing to raise himself from the depths of sin if he remains unaided by the grace of God. What has he done by his sin? He has destroyed the splendid lustre of the soul, perverted the order of nature by averting his will from God, and incurred a debt of punishment by his offence against God. Auto-suggestion, will power, legislative action or scientific research can be of no aid to him here. That splendid lustre of the soul, the effect of the streaming light of human and divine reason, came to him by grace; only through grace can it be restored. It was by grace that he could turn his will to God, his supernatural goal; it is only by grace that he can now turn back to that same goal. It is God Who has been offended and Who is the judge of men, only God can do anything about the punishment due to sin.

For man in the state of grace

Turning from these gloomy wards of the spiritual hospital, we wonder how men can be so intent upon getting along without God and His grace. A turn about the ward of the convalescents, while decidedly more cheerful, only brings the importance of grace home to us more keenly. Here we have men with that same sick nature but partially healed by the grace that has removed sin from their souls, though they still bear the infirmities consequent on the loss of the gifts first given to human nature. In other words here we find ourselves. We are supernaturally alive by the habitual or sanctifying grace in our souls, we have all the infused virtues, so we know supernatural truths, we aim at the supernatural goal, we love God for Himself above all things. With no more than this, what do we act done supernaturally? The answer is: nothing at all.

Nature of grace: A supernatural quality

Habitual grace gives us life, the remote principle of action, but not action itself; it does not overcome the difficulties in the way of getting things done, it is not a licence freeing us from constant dependence on the first mover. It brings us into the world of the living, but if we are to get things done, if we are to take steps towards the goal of eternal happiness, we must have yet more grace -- the grace of action or actual grace. If we are to do good, if we are to avoid sin, if we are to persevere in the friendship of God to the end of life, then we must have actual supernatural help from God.

All this sounds difficult, perhaps even a little harsh, somehow a reflection on the dignity and independence of man. It seems so only because we know so little about man and so very little about God; or rather because the truths that we know so certainly have not been allowed to penetrate into the depths of our being where their full meaning would become an integral part of us. We could tell this whole story of man's utter dependence on God in the supernatural order by simply pointing to that same dependence in the natural order. Both could be summed up by saying that it is a contradiction in terms to suppose that man or any other creature can for a moment, in the least of his actions, escape from the causality of the first cause.

In the natural order we do not give life to ourselves; that life must be traced to the source of all life, to the source of all being, to the first cause. In the natural order we actually get things done, we eat meals, we take walks, we think and love. But we do not do any of these things alone. True enough they are our actions; but we are the secondary causes. Along with us, step by step, moves the first cause upon which not only the actions but our very ability to cause those actions depend at every instant. More simply, there is only one utterly independent being and that being is God. To escape from our dependence on Him means the annihilation of that action because from Him alone is everything of reality. That dependence on God is not a reflection on the dignity, the independence, the personal responsibility of man. Rather that dependence is the sole explanation of man's dignity, of his mastery over his own actions.

Exactly the same is true in the supernatural order. We do not give ourselves supernatural life; that life must come from the Author of all life. Our supernatural actions are not ours alone; we depend on God here as we do in the natural order. Grace is nothing more than the action of the first cause in the supernatural order, the help by which it is possible for men to be and to operate in the order that is proper

to God alone.

If we keep that parallel with the natural order in mind we have an exact notion of the nature of grace. We have already seen the natural dependence of man several times in the course of this work: in the first volume, in treating of the will of God, of the will of man and of the government of the world by God; in this volume in treating of the acts of the intellect and will. It is a fundamental dependence that in its simplest terms is an insistence on the self-evident truth that a realization of potentialities is not brought about by the unaided subject of that realization. Or, even more simply, a man does not give himself perfections which he does not possess.

Grace is that supernatural help by which it is possible for a man to realize his potentialities for life and action on a supernatural plane. If we look first at the grace which brings supernatural life to man, we see it most accurately in terms of God's love for us. There is a vast difference between human and divine love. With us it is a case of stumbling along until we find goodness to attract and hold our love; we are merely discoverers of the goodness we love, not its creators. With God, where outside of Himself can He find goodness that has not its source in Himself? His love must create the goodness which He loves. So in the natural order we find the effect of His divine love always a positive goodness; concretely the effect of that divine love is the individual nature of every creature existing with all that belongs to that creature. So in the supernatural order, that same divine love does not discover goodness, it produces it; first supernatural life, then all the supernatural equipment of virtues and helps which makes the fulfilment of that supernatural life possible. That supernatural life, the effect of divine love in the supernatural order, is grace; and that grace is not an outburst of poetry, a figment of imagination, an idle hope, but a reality, a positive good, a good as positive as life itself, for that is precisely what it is -- a participation of an infinite life.

In the essence of the soul

God, of course, is the only supernatural substance, the only substance that is above and totally beyond the natural order. Everything else supernatural belongs to what the philosophers call the class of "accidents". That is, grace does not walk the streets or loll in an easy chair; like colour in a child's cheeks, or a smile on a man's face, it cannot exist alone, it must exist in something else. It is an "accident" modifying, qualifying the very principle of life within us, the very essence of the soul; qualifying it to such an extent as to make that same soul the principle by which we move and live on the level of divinity. Unlike the virtues which enable us to operate on that level, grace gives the much more fundamental requirement of life itself. Grace is not a virtue, not to be confused with the virtues, but rather the foundation and source of the supernatural virtues much as the soul itself is the foundation and source of life, of our faculties, of our operations in the natural order.

That is the type of grace which we call habitual or sanctifying, the grace without which the soul is supernaturally dead. It is a very personal gift whose direct object is to bring life to this individual, to make this man holy and pleasing to God. Before continuing with this personal angle of grace, it might be well to point out, passingly, another class of graces given not primarily for the sanctification of the one receiving them but for the sanctification of others.

Division of grace: Given for the salvation of others

Rather than personal graces, these are apostolic in their character, effecting the things most necessary to apostolic activity: a full knowledge of divine things, a confirmation of this divine doctrine through deeds that only God can do or knowledge that only God could have, and finally a fitting proposal of these truths to others. Among such graces are the gifts of tongues, of prophecy, of miracles, and so on. In other words, the apostle as such is an instrument of God bringing salvation to others; if the greatness of his works tempts him to pride, a momentary consideration of the other instruments God has used in this work -- the high priest who prophesied in moving form the death of Christ and the talking ass of Balaam -- will bring home the realization that these works are God's works done through him not primarily because of his great

goodness but because of God's great love for souls.

Given for personal sanctification: Habitual

To get back to the personal angle of grace, it is evidently not sufficient that we exist. We have work to do, things to get done, steps to take, for in the supernatural as well as in the natural order it is equally true that we carve out our own destiny with the tools of our own human actions. In the natural order, the smooth motion of God is the cause not only of the note that pours from the throat of a bird, but also of the sweetness of that note, of the necessity with which it springs from the bird's instincts. The same divine motion is the cause of the note that pours from the human singer's throat, and at the same time is the cause of the sweetness of the note and the freedom with which it is produced. In a word, that divine motion is the cause of whatever reality there is in action. In the supernatural order the divine motion preparing us for action, moving us to action, producing the action with us, is called actual grace.

Actual: sufficient and efficacious

This divine movement which is actual grace is not to be understood in terms of extrinsic assistance, like an extra oarsman furnishing just enough more power to give the boat headway, or an extra horse whose help makes possible the pulling of a load too heavy for one alone. It is more far-reaching than that. It is an intrinsic movement in the order of first cause which, in its own order, is the cause of the action yet leaves our causality intact, indeed produces or makes possible our causality.

It is a movement, then, that flows into our very faculties and through our faculties into the effect, the actual action. If this divine movement gives us the proximate dispositions for action, bringing us to the point where action is immediately possible to us, it is called sufficient actual grace; it is the grace given to every man born into the world and the grace that is found at the root of every supernatural action. Over and above this, a distinct divine movement bringing about the realization of this proximate power of action, bridging the gap between the power to act and action itself, must be had for every supernatural action. That distinct divine movement is called efficacious actual grace. Both intrinsically affect the faculties themselves, both are complete and efficient in their own order -- the one in the order of potentiality, the other in the order of actuality -- both, like all divine motion properly affecting men, leave intact, indeed guarantee and cause, the ability and freedom of man to produce his own actions.

Perhaps this seems a little abstract; but with a moment's thought the practical consequences of these abstract truths assume tremendous importance. Thus it is immediately evident that grace is not something to be nonchalantly tossed away like a half-smoked cigarette when there is a full pack in our pocket. It is not something that can be ordered by telephone, purchased in a shop or imported at our commands; it is not to be found, stumbled over, grown in a garden or inherited. It is not the result of industry, a quick wit or ready speech. Rather it is something that can come from God alone -- it is a gift of God that once lost can be regained only by another outburst of generosity on the part of the divine Donor. Grace is supernatural; it exceeds the power of all nature, even the combined powers of everything in nature. It can come only from the Author of the natural and the supernatural.

Causes of grace: God's part in grace

Our part in grace is enough to set us towering above all other creatures in the world and yet is humble enough to keep us very close to God. We can prepare ourselves for habitual or sanctifying grace, we can increase that grace in our souls; we do both by our own actions, yet can do neither one nor the other without the help of actual grace, without the movement of God. In this case, as in every action of man, there are two sides to the story, two truths to be taken into account, two angles, both strictly accurate, both rigidly true, but neither able to be considered alone without distorting the truth. It is strictly true that we love, learn, talk, and so on; it is we who are doing these things, these are our actions, proceeding under our control, and for them we are wholly responsible. It is equally true that God causes our loving, our learning, our talking and the rest. If we look only at our part in all this, we are looking only at the activity of the secondary causes which is totally inexplicable considered in itself. If we look only at God's part in all this,

we are neglecting half the truth, even neglecting part of the truth of God's activity, namely the causality of the secondary causes and their freedom.

Man's part in grace

In the supernatural order we prepare ourselves for grace by our own actions proceeding from our free will, under our control. They are ours. But we are only seeing half the truth if we do not see that these actions are also God's, that behind our causality is the causality of the first cause, necessary for every instant of our causality. Looked at from our side, we prepare ourselves for grace; looked at from God's side, God prepares us for grace. Both sides are true. A statement of only one side, whichever it be, is only a half-truth with all the falseness of a half-truth.

Putting the same thing briefly, we can say that even in our preparation for sanctifying grace we are men and God is God. Because we are men and not God, every step of that preparation depends not only on our free will but on the divine supernatural movement that is actual grace. Bringing it down to the concrete, a man has committed mortal sin and so lost sanctifying grace; by his acts of sorrow for sin and of love for God, his determinations to make amends and seek forgiveness, he is preparing himself for sanctifying grace. But these very acts of preparation spring not only from the free will of the sinner but also from the supernatural movement of God which is actual grace.

We need grace badly, in fact our dependence on it is complete. That is saying no more than that our dependence on God is complete, a dependence that does not stop at the natural order but is equally true of the supernatural. Of course we cannot produce grace, in fact nothing in nature can. Grace must always remain a completely free gift of a generous God. The fact that the love of God for us has driven Him to incredible generosity which, coupled with the infinite merits of a God-man's death, has put grace practically at our convenience in no way changes the gratuitous character of this gift. True enough Christ established the sacraments as channels down which pour the graces His death has won for us, true enough we have only to stoop and drink, true enough it is easier to get grace now than it is to get bread or water; but the supreme truth behind all this is that only an extravagant divine love could have devised so precious a gift and only the uttermost limits of that divine extravagance could have put that gift within reach of the hand of the stuttering child, the doddering old man at the point of death, the rich and the poor, the learned and ignorant, the sick and the healthy.

Each can prepare himself for sanctifying grace, can increase that grace in his soul. To each God gives grace in proportion to the preparation made by the help of that divine movement. It is strictly true that to a man doing his best, doing what is in him, God does not deny grace; the very doing of his best is already an evidence of the rain of grace falling on the soil of his soul. As one's preparation is more intense, greater than another's, so is the sanctifying grace in the soul of one greater than the sanctifying grace in the soul of another, even though all sanctifying grace has the same great goal of sanctifying men, uniting them to God, bringing them to their goal.

The angle at which we hold our heads, the beatific look on our faces or the grave majesty of our steps is not proof of our possession of grace. Such things might be due to rheumatism, falling in love, or tight shoes. There is no proof of our possession of grace. Always we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Short of a special revelation of God we cannot be absolutely certain of having sanctifying grace. But we can be fairly sure from such signs as our refusal to give temporal things preference over divine things when a choice is necessary, from our not being conscious of mortal sin, from our joy in the things of God.

Effects of grace: Justification: Nature

When we come to the effects of grace within us we step into the field of drama. The fulfilment of the age-old dream of men, the dream of becoming like God, could not be otherwise than dramatic. Whether we look at this first effect of grace -- justification of the sinner -- as a soaring to divine heights, a turning to

the streaming light of divine wisdom, a revulsion from the ugliness of sin and a swift flight back to God, or as the declaration of peace and reconciliation between God and the rebel sinner, we have drama. It is the drama of impossible accomplishment plucking down the stars, the drama of sunrise conquering night, of escape from darkness and slavery into freedom and light, the drama of the prodigal son and his father's unquestioning pardon. The infusion of grace and the forgiveness of sin are two sides of the same picture, like the coming of light and the dispelling of darkness. It is a motion from sin and to God in which our free will plays an enormous part. Looked at from God's side there is the infusion of grace, the turning away from sin, the turning to God and finally the remission of sin; from our side there is the remission of sin, the turning away from sin, the turning to God and the infusion of grace. Actually it is one and the same motion looked at from different angles, a motion which takes place in an instant though its preparation may be fast or slow.

Production

However we look at it, the justification of man must always stand out as one of the greatest works of God. Indeed from the side of the thing actually done -- giving men a participation in the divine life of God -- it is the greatest work of God. It is, in a very real sense, even greater than the glorification of man in heaven, for there is much less proportion between the life of grace and the sinner to whom it is given than between the life of glory in heaven and the saint who has earned that glory. Even creation, the greatest work of God considering the manner in which it was accomplished, i.e. because it was a work produced from nothing, had as its final effect only the world of nature. Grace has as its effect the supernatural, exceeding the natural and any combination of the natural by the distance between the things that are proper to God and the things that are proper to His creatures.

Excellence

Yet this greatest work of God, this work which can be produced by God alone, which lifts men up to the heights of God fulfilling their wildest hopes, has by the mercy of God become so ordinary, so much the usual thing, the common way in which God's providence works, that it cannot be classed as a miraculous work. This is a tremendous truth. Raising the dead, curing the sick, giving sight to the blind -- all these are miracles and all are child's play in comparison with the forgiveness of sin. But they are extraordinary, outside the usual run of the providence of God. This, the greatest work, is become an ordinary thing which, please God, we shall never take for granted.

Merit: Nature and existence

The second effect of grace is hardly less astonishing, the effect of merit. By it we can actually earn the increase of grace and the reward of heaven by our own actions. By it we have a right in justice to the things of God. It is almost as though a father were solemnly to engage his five-year-old son as his secretary, putting his name on the payroll and each week give the boy wages with a completely serious face. But this is no game. This is solemn fact. Of course there can be no strict justice between God and ourselves, for strict justice demands equality; but there is a real Justice established by the ordination of God Himself by which our childish works through grace are turned into works which demand full payment from God. We work according to our nature extolled by grace, and God rewards us according to His nature. He goes even further and allows us to merit where we have not this claim in justice, where our claim is based only on friendship, on His generosity, on the fittingness of the request we make.

Principle and conditions of merit; manner

Whether we merit in justice (*ex condigno*) or from the generosity of God (*ex congruo*), the two elements of merit must always be present: the grace of God which is the principle of merit and our human actions, the actions proceeding under our control to our goals. This merited reward, in other words, is ours. Though we receive the principle by which we can merit from God as a starting-point, it must be our actions that complete the work of meriting, it is by our own tools that we carve out even our supernatural destiny. When we speak of grace here, it is of course sanctifying or habitual grace that we mean. The

sinner who has lost this grace, praying here and now by the help of actual grace, merits only in a very, very wide sense, a sense so wide as to mean that what is given to him will be entirely from the extravagant love of God.

First grace for self and others; increase of grace

Grace is the mysterious alchemy by which the base metal of our actions is turned into gold. With that gold, in our own right, we purchase the kingdom of heaven. We can merit eternal life in real justice. We can merit the end or goal of our supernatural life here on earth, but of course we cannot merit the beginning of that life any more than a man can give birth to himself, for that beginning is grace itself, the principle of merit. We might, by the help of actual grace, put in some claim on the mercy of God for this grace for ourselves; in possession of habitual grace, we can put a more serious claim on the friendship of God for this first beginning of grace for others. But our strict meriting, our meriting in justice, is done only for ourselves and we must have habitual grace before we can so merit.

Final perseverance; Temporal goods

If we can merit the end of supernatural life, of course we can merit the means to that end; that is, we can and do merit a constant increase in grace, charity and the virtues, we can and do merit temporal goods to the extent in which they are necessary to the task of saving our souls. But we cannot merit that special gift which is called final perseverance, a gift which extends from the beginning to the end of life, taking in the whole sweep of our activities from the first instant of grace to the culmination of grace in glory. It is something too big for any one act or any series of acts in the order of grace, for it embraces the whole of that order; something so big, in other words, that it must come wholly from the one Being Who is responsible for the whole of his order of grace, as He is for the whole of the order of nature.

Perhaps we can put all this more clearly by contrasting it again with natural things. Irrational creation does the will of God, but does not merit; the result of its necessary fulfilment of the natural physical law is its own perfection. Men without grace obeying the Natural Moral Law merit some reward, for their obedience was free, personal, their very own; but they do not merit supernatural reward by purely natural actions. Man in the state of grace fulfilling the will of God, because of the double principle of grace and free will merits eternal life with God and the means to that life by his own actions.

Conclusion: Grace and the natural world; Grace and the natural man

In the attempt to sum up this doctrine of grace briefly we can do no better than continue the contrast with nature. The smallest degree of grace is infinitely more precious than all the beauty, order and riches of nature, indeed than all of nature thrown together; it is a gift above nature, a gift belonging to the supernatural, exceeding by its very essence the whole of the natural order. Consequently it is a gift that can come only from God. It is the bridge by which man steps from the world of nature into the supernatural world; so it is a gift transforming the world of nature for man. In the light of this gift, it is much more evident to man that nature is his servant, his tool, not something to fall in love with, to attempt to be satisfied with, to which he is chained or dedicated. Nature is a stepping-stone into the realms of the divine.

Grace and human action

In the light of this gift all of human life, all of human action, takes on new meaning, tremendous significance. There is no poverty, drabness, failure, misery or despair in human existence that can compare with the poverty, drabness, failure, misery and despair of sin, for sin means the loss of grace. Anything short of sin is incapable of robbing human life of its high romance, its tense drama, its high hopes. With grace there is no insignificant human action; nothing can be insignificant that echoes in eternity. There is no unimportant human being. There is no meaningless human life.

Grace and human happiness

With grace there is no place for slavery, for irresponsibility, for brutish plunging into the sensible in an attempt to escape humanity. By grace man reaches his supreme dignity, a participation of the life of God; not a confusion with divinity, not a loss of his personal existence, personal activity, personal possibilities, but rather a full realization of all these that here and now gives a foretaste of that happiness which will be had fully when grace reaches its climax in glory, in the glory of the vision of God. This is the end which was the beginning and which is an eternal beginning, the beginning of a supreme act that never reaches its termination.

[«-- Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)[Appendix to Chapter 20 --»](#)

**APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XX
REVEALED DOCTRINE PERTAINING TO GRACE**

I

1. Man does not need grace to know natural truth.

Council of Vatican, Session III, chapter 2, canon I (Denziger, # 1806).

2. To know supernatural truth man needs grace.

II Council of Orange, canon 7 (Denz., # 180). Council of Vatican, Sess. III, chapter 2 (Denz., # 1786). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 3 (Denz., # 813).

3. Without grace there can be no work valid for salvation.

II Council of Orange, canon 7 (Denz., # 180). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 2 (Denz., # 812).

4. Without grace man cannot begin work for salvation.

II Council of Orange, canons 5 and 7 (Denz., # 178, 180);

5. Not all the works of the just are sins.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter II (Denz., # 804) and canon 31 (Denz., # 841).

6. Works are not always evil if they are done without perfect charity.

Council of Trent, Sess. XIV, canon 5 (Denz., # 915) and Sess. VI, canon 7 (Denz., # 817).

7. Not all the works of infidels are sins.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 7 (Denz., # 817).

II

1. Without grace man cannot keep any supernatural precept as to the substance of the work.

II Council of Mileve, canon 5 (Denz., # 105). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 2 (Denz., # 812).

2. Nor can man keep any natural precept according to the mode of charity without grace.

Council of Trent, *ibid.*, canon 3 (Denz., # 813). II Council of Orange, canons 6 and 7 (Denz., # 179, 180).

3. Without grace man cannot merit eternal life.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 2 (Denz., # 812).

4. Actual grace is necessary to attain habitual grace.

II Council of Orange, canons 3 and 6 (Denz., # 176, 179). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 5 (Denz., # 797) and canon 3 (Denz., # 813).

5. Man cannot rise from sin without grace.

II Council of Orange, canons 4 and 5 (Denz., # 177, 178). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 3 (Denz., # 813).

6. Man in the state of fallen nature, healed by habitual grace, can avoid single venial sins, but not all venial sins unless by special privilege.

II Council of Mileve, canon 6 (Denz., # 106). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 23 (Denz., # 833).

7. Man in this state, not healed by habitual grace, cannot long remain without mortal sin.

II Council of Mileve, canon 3 (Denz., # 103). Coelestine I, "Indiculus" (Denz., # 132).

III

1. Man needs actual grace to perform a supernaturally good work.

II Council of Orange, canon 9 (Denz., # 182). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 16 (Denz., # 809).

2. For final perseverance man needs a special divine help directing and protecting him against temptation.

II Council of Orange, Canon 10 (Denz., # 183). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canons 16 and 22 (Denz., # 826, 832).

3. Grace is something created and infused in the soul, inhering there by way of habit.

Council of Vienna (*contra errores Ioannes Olivi*) (Denz., # 483). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 11 (Denz., # 821).

4. God is the first and universal cause and His knowledge is universal and infallible, depending on no one or nothing else.

IV Lateran Council, chapter I (Denz., # 428). Vatican Council, Sess. III, chapter 1 (Denz., # 1782-1784).

5. The will of man is free in its action, even its supernatural action.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 5 (Denz., # 797, 798, 799) and canons 4, 5, 6 (Denz., # 814-816).

6. God is the only principal efficient cause of grace.

II Council of Orange, canons 7 and 20 (Denz., # 180, 193). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 7 (Denz., # 799).

IV

1. Some preparation is necessary for habitual grace.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canons 3 and 9 (Denz., # 813, 819).

2. Man prepares himself for grace by good movements of his free will.

Ibid., canons 4 and 9 (Denz., # 814, 819).

3. All the just are given grace sufficient to observe all precepts.

II Council of Orange, canon 25 (Denz., # 199,200). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter II (Denz., # 804).

4. To all sinners among the faithful, even obdurate and blinded, God gives grace truly sufficient for repentance and avoidance of new sins.

IV Lateran Council, chapter I (Denz., # 430). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canons 17 and 29 (Denz., # 827, 839).

5. Grace sufficient for salvation is given to all infidels, even negative infidels, according to time and place.

Propositions of Jansenists condemned by Alex. VIII, prop. 5 (Denz., # 1295). II Council of Orange, canons 23, 25 (Denz., # 196, 200). Coelestine I, "Indiculus" (Denz., # 139). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, canon 17 (Denz., # 827).

V

1. Sanctifying grace can be increased and is not equal in all.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 7 and canon 24 (Denz., # 799, 834)

2. Without a revelation, man cannot know certainly that he has grace.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 9 and canons 13, 14, 16 (Denz., # 802, 823, 824, 826).

3. Movement of free will is necessary for the justification of the sinner.

Ibid., chapter 6 and canon 4 (Denz., # 798, 814).

4. For justification of a sinner a movement of faith is required.

Ibid., chapter 6 (Denz., # 798).

5. For justification of a sinner movement of will against sin is necessary.

Ibid.

6. Remission of sin is to be enumerated among the things required for justification.

Ibid., chapter 7 (Denz., # 799).

VI

1. The just truly merit.

IV Lateran Council, chapter # (Denz., # 429). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 16 and canon 24 (Denz., # 809, 834).

2. The power of meriting is from the mercy of God and the merit of Christ.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 16 and canon 26 (Denz., # 809, 836).

3. Our merits give us a true right to reward.

II Council of Orange, canon 18 (Denz., # 191). Council of Trent, *ibid.*, canon 32 (Denz., # 842).

4. No one can merit for himself the first actual grace.

II Council of Orange, canons 3 and 5 (Denz., # 176, 178). Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 6 (Denz., # 798), chapter 5 (Denz., # 797).

5. No one can merit the first habitual grace *de condigno*.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chapter 16, chapter 8, canon 32 (Denz., # 809, 801, 842).

6. Man cannot merit reparation after a future fall.

Ibid., chapter 8 (Denz., # 801).

7. Man can merit an increase in grace and charity.

Ibid., canons 24 and 32 (Denz., # 834, 842).

8. Man can merit eternal life.

Ibid., chapter 16 and canon 32 (Denz., # 809, 842.)

[«-- Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. II](#)

A COMPANION TO THE SUMMA
VOLUME III -- THE FULLNESS OF LIFE
(Corresponding to the *Summa Theologica IIa IIae*)

Published in 1940

By

Walter Farrell

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CONTENTS

FORWARD

**CLICK Q. NUMBERS FOR
ONLINE ENGLISH SUMMA**

I. <u>FREEDOM FOR THE MIND</u>	(q. 1-9)
II. <u>FREEDOM FOR THE WILL</u>	(q. 10-16, 17-22)
III. <u>SHARING THE DIVINE LIFE</u>	(q. 23-26)
IV. <u>THE FULLNESS OF LOVE</u>	(q. 27-36)
V. <u>THE EMPTINESS OF STRIFE</u>	(q. 37-46)
VI. <u>THE FULLNESS OF ACTION</u>	(q. 47-56)
VII. <u>THE FULLNESS OF SOCIAL LIFE</u>	(q. 57-62)
VIII. <u>THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHY - I</u>	(q. 63-71)
IX. <u>THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHY - II</u>	(q. 72-80)
X. <u>THE FULLNESS OF RELIGION</u>	(q. 81-87)
XI. <u>THE BARRENNESS OF IRRELIGION</u>	(q. 88-100)
XII. <u>SOCIETY'S DEBTOR</u>	(q. 101-110)
XIII. <u>ROOTS OF RUDENESS</u>	(q. 111-122)
XIV. <u>THE FULLNESS OF COURAGE</u>	(q. 123-127)
XV. <u>GREATNESS OF SOUL</u>	(q. 128-140)
XVI. <u>THE HUMAN ANIMAL</u>	(q. 141-145)
XVII. <u>THE FREEDOM OF PURITY</u>	(q. 146-154)
XVIII. <u>THE FULLNESS OF TRUTH</u>	(q. 155-165)
XIX. <u>MODESTY AND MIRACLES</u>	(q. 166-170; 171-178)
XX. <u>THE FULLNESS OF LIFE</u>	(q. 179-89)

FOREWORD

A FRIENDLY critic's remark, "your delightfully unpredictable order of publication", indicates one necessary word of apology for this volume; its title demands another. For the apparent disorder in publication might be construed as one more evidence of the contagious character of twentieth century chaos; while the title might be seen as a compromising gesture towards a world terrified of death.

To remove all need for conjecture on the future order of publication, let it be said that the next volume of this work to appear, in somewhat less than a year's time, will be Volume I, corresponding to the **First Part** of the *Summa Theologica*. After a decent interval, the final

Volume III: IIa-IIae

FOREWORD

1. FAITH
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 1-9\)](#)
2. HOPE
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 10-16, 17-22\)](#)
3. LOVE
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 23-26\)](#)
4. FRUITS OF LOVE
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 27-36\)](#)
5. DISCORD
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 37-46\)](#)
6. PRUDENCE
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 47-56\)](#)
7. JUSTICE
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 57-62\)](#)
8. MURDER & THEFT
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 63-71\)](#)
9. PETTINESS
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 72-80\)](#)
10. RELIGION
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 81-87\)](#)
11. IRRELIGION
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 88-100\)](#)
12. PIETY, GRATITUDE, TRUTH
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 101-110\)](#)
13. SOCIAL VIRTUES & VICES
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 111-122\)](#)
14. FORTITUDE & COWARDICE
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 123-127\)](#)
15. MAGNANIMITY & HEROISM
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 128-140\)](#)
16. TEMPERANCE
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 141-145\)](#)
17. CHASTITY
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 146-154\)](#)
18. CONTINENCE & HUMILITY
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 155-165\)](#)

- 19. [MODESTY & CHARISMS](#)
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 166-170; 171-178\)](#)
 - 20. [STATES OF LIFE](#)
[\(IIa-IIae, q. 179-189\)](#)
-

volume, Volume IV, corresponding to the **Third Part** and the **Supplement** of the **Summa**, will complete what was designed as a layman's **Summa**. That will finish the author's labors; but it will only begin the task of the reader. For this whole work is not a book about the **Summa**, but the **Summa** itself reduced to popular language; and Thomas is not read in a day or a year, nor can we suffer an introduction to him shake hands and then dismiss him from our lives. If we make the happy mistake of so much as smiling at him, he moves bag and baggage into our minds, to become an increasingly more delightful intimate as the years move on.

Chesterton, in his Saint Thomas Aquinas, has explained both my order of publication and the title of this volume. "He (Thomas) did, with a most solid and colossal conviction, believe in Life; and in something like what Stevenson called the great theorem of the livableness of life....The medievals had put many restrictions, and some excessive restrictions, upon the universal human hunger and even fury for Life.... Never until modern thought began, did they really have to fight with men who desired to die. That horror had threatened them in Asiatic Albigensianism, but it never became normal to them -- until now." The whole second part of the *Summa*, covered by these two volumes, deals precisely with the living of human life, the invaluable meaning of that life, and the secrets of the fullest success in the living of it. This part was published first, had to be published first, because of that unholy, perverted eagerness of modern men to throw away their lives and to discard their humanity. This is St. Thomas' superb defense of the humanity of man. The remaining volumes of this work plumb the depths and scale the heights of the unutterable truths, the mysterious beginnings and glorious goals, that interpenetrate that human life with something of divinity, the truths that are the ultimate explanations of its incredible significance.

The contents of this volume, then, needs no apology; for Thomas needs no apology. As for its impossible aim of condensing the immense **Ila-IIae** into a volume of this size, not to speak of supplementing it from the other works of Thomas, -- well, Thomas himself spent a lifetime doing impossible things in an impossibly short space of time. For he understood well that if we completely succeed it is because we have aimed too low.

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[Back](#)[Chapter One -->](#)

CHAPTER I -- FREEDOM FOR THE MIND
(Q. 1-9)

1. Limitation and imperfection.
 2. The limitless freedom of faith, from its object:
 - (a) The object of faith -- the Supreme Truth.
 - (b) The authority of faith -- a guarantee.
 - (c) The obscurity of faith -- a promise.
 - (d) Faith fitted to human stature -- the creeds.
 3. The acts of a mind freed by faith:
 - (a) Internal act -- belief, a contrast to natural belief.
 - (1) Distinct from all other acts of the mind: knowledge, doubt, suspicion, opinion.
 - (2) The merit of belief.
 - (3) Necessity of belief:
 - a. Of implicit belief.
 - b. Of explicit belief.
 - (b) External act -- confession of faith.
 4. The habit of faith:
 - (a) Its definition.
 - (b) Its intellectuality.
 - (c) Living and dead faith.
 - (d) Its place among the virtues.
 - (e) Its certitude.
 5. The possessors of the freedom of faith:
 - (a) Slaves of disbelief: the damned, devils, heretics.
 - (b) Freemen of faith: angels, men, souls in Purgatory.
 6. Sole cause of faith, living or dead.
 7. Effects of faith: fear and purity.
 8. Gifts of the Holy Ghost perfecting faith:
 - (a) Understanding:
 - (1) Its relation to faith and distinction from other gifts.
 - (2) Its practicality.
 - (3) Possessors of understanding.
 - (4) Its beatitude and fruit.
 - (b) Knowledge -- its nature and beatitude.
- Conclusion:
1. Modern intellectual slavery:
 - (a) Modern notions of faith.
 - (b) Modern limitations of intellect:
 - (1) To the tangible.
 - (2) To the demonstrable.
 - (3) To the fictitious.
 2. Faith and intellect -- a perfection not a substitution.
 3. Freedom for the mind:
 - (a) The courage of faith.
 - (b) The fullness of faith.
 - (c) The practicality of faith.
 - (d) The future of faith.

CHAPTER I
FREEDOM FOR THE MIND
(Q. 1-9)

The spectacle of a wild bird beating out its life against the windows of a desolate house into which it has wandered awakens pity in us. This creature was made for long, swift, free flights. Yet this picture cannot compare with that of the misery of a man beating out his life against the prison walls of sense, or indeed with the innate tragedy of human nature which must always beat out its energy against the prison walls of the universe itself. It is true that while a dog chained up becomes irritable and eventually savage, a man might accept and even relish a narrow, confining room; accepting it as a challenge to be met by the power of his mind to wander outside its walls, outside the limits of time and space. He exults in the knowledge that nothing material can really confine him.

Limitation and imperfection.

Nevertheless in the human mind itself there is a limitation, a confinement. It can reach outside the day or the hour, it can reach back into the past or ahead into the future; it can reach up even to God. But only to God as the author of nature, only to a partial view of divinity. However long the labors of a man, however keen his intellect, however earnest his efforts, man must always come up short against the barriers of the natural universe. The nature of man does not surpass the powers of nature.

Man, left to himself, is essentially a prisoner; a prisoner of his own nature. At the same time that nature is crying out for freedom, crying out for fuller and fuller vision of the things that remain to be seen. The prison walls that limit his freedom can be penetrated by only one force. Those walls are the walls of nature; only the supernatural can tear them down, only an agent above nature can give man the vast freedom of infinity, of eternity, can permit him to grasp the things that are too bright for his eyes -- only God Himself through the gift known as the virtue of faith.

The limitless freedom of faith, from its object

It is essential that we see faith in the guise of a liberator, if we are to see it at all. To see it as a limitation, a suppression of, or a substitute for, man's intellect is to lose completely the essential notion of faith. Let us look at it this way: man has a journey to make: to take one step on this journey he must know his destination. To give that knowledge is the work of faith. It is the starting gun in the race of life; by faith man is set free to rush to the goal of faith, which is the goal of life. Since the goal is no less than the essence of God Himself, we can see immediately that faith sets a man free to rush beyond the uttermost limits of the universe.

The object of faith -- the Supreme Truth

Some men have described faith as an exaggerated optimism, a kind of super-confidence; but that was because they did not know the purpose of faith. Others have reduced faith to emotion; and that was because they did not know what faith was. Still others have cynically put under faith every bit of our rational knowledge of God; and that was because they did not know what man was. Faith is something bigger than all this. In fact it is so big we can walk by and never see it; it is not to be caught in the corner of the eye, it demands the whole of a man's eye, the whole of his mind. Its bigness can be appreciated only by concentrating on the goal to which it goes and the means by which it reaches that goal. Seen in this light it towers over us frighteningly, for it aims at supreme Truth and so at the supreme perfection of the intellect of man. How can we know the First Truth unless we be told by the one Being Who can know it, knowing Himself? Faith has rightly been called a theological, a divine virtue; it looks to the very essence of God Himself, and attains to its sublime object through the action of God Himself, through the supreme Truth's gracious stooping to tell us about Himself. It is saturated with divinity though it is made for man.

Because faith is so wrapped up in divinity, it brings to the human mind mystery piled on mystery. Nor is the element of mystery confined to the ineffable secrets of divinity which faith brings to man; the very revelation by which these secrets are made known is itself mysterious. It is the strong light which brings out in the dim sharpness of a silhouette the lineaments of the face of God. Of course this light does not need, indeed cannot have, another light by which it itself is seen; in other words, the very revelation itself is not only the means, it is also an object of faith. The divine message cannot be made known by natural means; its contents surpasses all of nature. Miracles may be worked by way of confirmation of it or as evidence of its credibility but it can be surely known only by faith itself.

Faith then is a giant cannon which hurls man out beyond the boundaries of the universe into the world of the infinite. It is not to be conceived of as something mild, sweetly enfeebling. Rather it must be thought of in terms of strength, of an explosion which has broken down the walls of the world, of a storming of nature by the hosts of heaven that man might be released from the limitations of his humanity. It grants to man the freedom by which he can surpass not only the limits of the present, of the past, of space, of material things, but even the limits of all nature. By it his mind walks into the limitlessness of God.

The attitude of the modern world to faith is as unreasonable, and in its own way as comic, as the attitude

of the man who dislikes only one thing about collars -- that they go around his neck. In the face of faith we feel an irritation at its darkness, its obscurity. Of course faith is obscure. The whole point of faith is precisely that it gives us a truth we cannot see of ourselves. Because we are using the eyes of God, in the darkness we can know the incredible truths that only God can see. To demand clear brightness in matters of faith and at the same time to expect to win to the freedom of faith is like wishing the sun would disappear forever from the heavens that we might the more comfortably enjoy the summer.

The young lady who attempts to enhance her charm by using baby-talk presents as distastefully incongruous a picture as a child swearing like a trooper. Adulthood and infancy are not thus intermingled. Yet it is something like this we insist on in demanding that we see the things of faith. When it comes to the inner life of God Himself, God is the teacher and we are the children gathered at His feet; we do not, cannot see the things of which He tells us, for vision is the work of the adult, even of our Father God. Our part is the part of children, to believe, not to see; until one day when we are supernaturally grown up, possessed of our own mansion in heaven.

The authority of faith -- a guarantee

There are some truths which a man may first believe and later see, truths that are within the reach of reason but which the circumstances of life do not allow to be scientifically investigated by everyone. Even such as these are guaranteed by the gracious authority of God. But the primary truths of faith, supernatural truths, are beyond the finger-tips of our minds.

In fact we make ourselves ridiculous when we mistake the reasons offered by saints or by theologians for proofs of such truths as the Trinity or the Incarnation. They are never proofs: persuasions perhaps, evidences that these truths are not impossible, facilitating the bending of our stubborn wills and petty intellects, but no more. The reason, the only reason, for our acceptance of supernatural truth is the authority of God Himself. It is always a solid, safe thing to accept truth from the Supreme Truth.

We are not only irritated at faith's darkness, we too often resent the very authority upon which faith rests. Behind this irritation there is a fear of error if a truth is not subjected to the judgment of our mind that is not unlike the uneasiness of a woman who is quite sure the house will not be cleaned properly unless she cleans it herself. Acceptance of truth on faith seems somehow to be a reflection on ourselves, to be an indignity to the nature of man. But the whole point of faith is that it gives us truths we cannot possibly reach of ourselves. If we do not take these truths on some one's authority we cannot have them at all; and we must have them for the living of life.

The obscurity of faith -- a promise

The obscurity of faith gives us a promise that here and now in this darkness we will hear of unutterable things, things that only God has a right to see. More than that, it is a promise that when this present darkness cowers and flies before an eternal sun, these incredible truths will remain for us to see with our own eyes. Indeed this obscurity is a beginning of a future life, the beginning of that vision of God which will reach its full clarity only when life is over and we have attained our goal. The authority to which we must submit is not an insult, it is a guarantee, a guarantee that trusting ourselves to God in this darkness, nothing of injury shall come to us. We shall not be misled, not be tricked; but rather we shall be shown the riches, the beauty, the goodness of divinity.

It is rare that a girl finds her prince charming in the lad who lives next door. Either he is a complete stranger, or he is so well known as to be taken for granted, which means that he is never seen at all. Somewhat the same thing is true of faith in the modern world. It may be taken for granted by those to whom it has been so freely given, or ignored by those to whom it is a stranger. But it demands a peculiar blindness to miss the charm of faith. There is obviously about faith the charm of tenderness, of whispered details between lovers as God shares the intimate secrets of His divine life with his friends. Even more touching perhaps is faith's charm of thoughtfulness. The Infinite Being stoops to the level of our childish

minds, putting into the short, simple, straightforward language of the creed the ineffable truths of His divinity in order that the simplest of the faithful might easily and securely hold to truths that surpass the highest of created minds.

Faith fitted to human stature -- the creeds

There is, in fact, a divine ingenuity about the formulation of the creed. What could be more divinely simple than the limitation of the creed to the end or goal of man -- God and the things of God -- and the way by which man reaches that goal -- the humanity of Christ and the things that pertain to that humanity? Yet that is precisely the make-up of the symbols of the faith. On God's side, faith has the unity of divinity itself. On our side the individual articles of faith are distinguished in order that what might represent a special difficulty for our belief might not in any way confuse us as to what is to be believed.

In this connection men too often make the mistake of seeing the Church as an imperious mother regulating the last details of the lives of her children long after they are well able to take care of themselves. It is true that ecclesiastical authority determines the form in which these articles of faith shall be proposed; but it is not ecclesiastical authority that reveals the truths which are to be believed. The Church tells us, not that these things are true, but that they are truly revealed. Their truth rests on God, and on God alone.

Faith's story is not a bit of gossip started by a whisper from God and bandied about down through the ages, becoming richer, more spicy with the telling, until finally it becomes a story so tall that it would astonish God Himself. It is not a primitive discovery of truth that has been enriched through the thought, the experiments, the imaginations of men. The Church has made no substantial increase in matters of faith. Let us put it this way. The articles of faith are the first principles of supernatural knowledge; every supernatural truth must be traced back to the first principles and is, in fact, contained in those first principles. Of these first principles, the absolutely first are the truths of God's existence as author of the supernatural and God's providence by which men are led to their end. Perhaps St. Gregory had it right when he said that those who were very close to Christ did not need so much explanation, so much explicit statement of those first principles. They saw in them all the other truths, much as the angels see all other truths in the first principles of natural thought.

But that is hardly so of the rest of us. From Adam to Christ the story of faith was slowly being told; after the death of John the Evangelist, faith was a story completely told. From then on it was a matter of repeating again and again an old, loved tale, savoring it, caressing it, allowing its perfume to permeate the remotest corners of our souls. All this involved no substantial increase, but it did demand what might be called an accidental increase; that is an unfolding, an uncovering of truths contained in these first truths. Or, in one word, a penetration of the truths that had been given us.

There have been, for example, explicit propositions of implicit truths such as the Immaculate Conception; scientific expositions of such truths as the Trinity -- through the distinction of nature and person; express propositions of truths formerly proposed only passingly, or by practice, or truths that had been called into doubt such as the validity of baptism by heretics.

Indeed it would have been most strange if there had been no such increase. The Church would have been a most unkind mother to ignore the threat of confusion to her children made by heresies when a clear definition would have protected them. Her love of truth could not ignore the opportunities offered for illustration and further exposition by the progress of philosophical and scientific thought. Surely the love and thoughtfulness of the Holy Ghost, the long investigations of theologians, the sincere and profound devotion of the faithful should not have failed to uncover more and more of the profound beauties, the hidden truths contained in these first principles of all supernatural truth.

The acts of a mind freed by faith

Internal act -- belief, a contrast to natural belief

Faith's object, the Supreme Truth, is reached by the act of faith, an act which is first internal -- belief --

and then external -- confession of that belief. In the order of human faith, the internal act is completed when the gullible victim believes the soothing story of the confidence man. The external act is the eager purchase of a gold brick. The comparison of human and supernatural faith is not without purpose. Human faith has considerable discredit attached to it, and rightly so. It is not a virtue perfecting the intellect of man; much more frequently it is a means of emptying his pockets or betraying his mind for it contains too many possibilities of error and mistake even when the human authority upon which it rests is most sincere. In history, for example, based as it is on human faith, we have uncovered serious mistakes which have endured for centuries. No such thing can happen in supernatural faith. It is an infallible source of truth; it rests not on the mind and veracity of man, but on the mind and the veracity of God.

Distinct from all other acts of the mind: knowledge, doubt, suspicion, opinion.

To describe the act of supernatural belief we could do no better than to define it as "the act of pondering with assent". It is, of course, paradoxical that our intellect should be restless, pondering, in the face of a truth, yet at the same time assent to that truth firmly. Actually this definition brings out the full nature of the act of faith. We do not suspect this truth, as a man might suspect the presence of burglars from the uneasiness of his dog; we are not doubting it; we have not merely an opinion of it, such as we might gather from the hasty accounts in a morning newspaper; we do not see it clearly, as we might the results of a scientific experiment. We believe it. And we thereby produce an act distinct from all other acts of the mind.

The merit of belief

Faith is like a jack-in-the-box: the spring is the intellect; the lid, holding down the spring, is the will. The intellect is straining against the obscurity of faith. With the weakening of the will, through moral degeneration, the power to hold down the intellect becomes less and less until finally, with sufficient weakening of the will, the spring pops out -- faith is lost. With the loss of faith man becomes a rebel against God, for the act of belief completes man's subjection to God, a subjection which perfects his will in its loving, the intellect in its belief. Indeed, that paradoxical pondering with assent is the secret of the great merit of faith for it means that every act of faith must come from our free will, not at all forced upon us by our intellect faced with indisputable evidence.

It is not intellectual progress, then, but moral decay which represents a threat to faith. The cardinal of the Catholic Church has learned much since, as a tot, he stumbled over his catechism. Undoubtedly now he can prove to his own satisfaction many of those preliminary truths he formerly accepted by faith. But obviously his intellectual progress has not equipped him to grapple with truths that are above all natural powers. Just as obviously his present abilities have done no injury to his faith. If you like, the extent of his faith has decreased but not its intensity; for now, as in the beginning of his rational life, the cardinal has that same deep respect for and ready acceptance of the authority of God. And it is this which provides the merit of faith.

Whatever his genius, this cardinal, all through life, will constantly face the thoughtfully humiliating gesture of God by which He assures men that spirit of humble inquiry which is the root of knowledge. It was kind of God to toss before our minds truths which those minds can never possibly absorb; to give us something to think about that no amount of thinking can possibly unravel. Now we shall be slow indeed to cherish any illusions about the supreme powers of our minds.

Necessity of belief

But all this was more than kind, it was necessary. It is only by such humble belief that we can possibly know of the supernatural end which constitutes our happiness, and it is only by knowing of it that we can take any steps towards it. Faith ordains us directly to God; and by that ordination both unites us to the rest of the universe and at the same time cuts us off distinctly from every other creature. Every creature in the universe is moved by a superior, ordered to an end above itself, though in achieving that end it is itself destroyed. Man alone has no immediate superior in the universe by whom and to whom he can be moved.

The plant can exist for the animal to feed upon it, the animal for man. Animals can be moved by men and elevated to the plane of man, sustaining him; they can even participate in the very reason of man by the training he gives them. But man is a solitary creature, a lonely sovereign in the universe. He is at the top, and the top is too often an empty, desolate place. For his movement, for his perfecting termination and ordination, for his final end, man must look to God Himself. And achieving that infinitely superior plane, he is not destroyed but perfected.

To our modern generation, one of the most annoying characteristics of faith is its absolute character. It permits of no compromise; you must take all of it or have none of it. How much nicer it would be if we could shop around among the wares of faith, accepting heaven but rejecting hell, embracing the Saviour and snubbing the Judge, sighing over love and ignoring justice. Just so a woman might stroll out in the early afternoon to buy asparagus but shudder at carrots and, perhaps, be insulted at the butcher's suggestion of stew for supper. It would be so much nicer -- if we weren't looking for faith! However pleased we might be with our selections, when the package was untied we would find any number of things there; but not faith. For faith accepts truths because of the infallible authority of the one revealing, not because of the palatability of those truths to jaded appetites. To reject any one truth is to reject the authority which offers all of these truths; to accuse God of having been fooled Himself, or of trying to fool us.

Of implicit belief

In matters of faith we cannot pick and choose; we must take all or nothing. Of course much may be taken implicitly; but some at least must be believed explicitly -- at the very least the existence of God our supernatural end, and His providence. It is the opinion of St. Thomas that the Trinity and Incarnation must also be explicitly believed, that they too are truths absolutely necessary for salvation. His reasoning is clear and compelling. Man must believe the truths without which he cannot reach his end. Since the Incarnate God is the way of salvation, the Incarnation surely must be believed; and to believe the Incarnation is to believe that the Son of God was conceived by the Virgin through the power of the Holy Ghost. In other words the proposition of the truth of the Incarnation necessarily involves the declaration of the truth of the Trinity. However, this opinion of St. Thomas is not a blanket condemnation of infidels as will be made evident in the next chapter. Other truths must, of course, be explicitly believed; but not because of their absolutely essential connection with our last end, rather because of the solemn nature of the assurance given that these truths are indeed revealed by God. Such, for example, are the articles of faith contained in the creed and the sacraments necessary for salvation.

Of explicit belief

No one expects an unlettered wash-woman to have the same explicit faith as has a bishop. Perhaps the woman has never heard of transubstantiation, though she knows with the sure knowledge of faith that she receives her Lord and her God in Holy Communion; but may God help the bishop if he has never heard of transubstantiation. In the orderly divine plane of the universe, inferior creatures are moved to their ends by their superiors. Nor is the divine order different in the world of men. High positions, rare gifts, are not merely assets or privileges; they are much more responsibilities, and in a sense debts in reference to those in inferior positions or of inferior gifts. In the ecclesiastical world, those in authority by their very office are obliged to have a much more explicit faith than their subjects that they might more surely guide those over whom they are placed. But of course every Catholic is obliged, by the very notion of faith, to believe, at least implicitly, absolutely every truth God has revealed. Anything less than this is a rejection of the basis on which every truth of faith rests.

External act -- confession of faith

We can ponder without grunting, we can assent without shouting hallelujah; for active belief is something entirely within us. The external expression of the act of belief is called confession of faith. In a negative sense we are all of us obliged to confess our faith always; i.e., there is never a time when it is licit to deny

the faith, for there is never a time when we may deny God and the truth of God. But in a positive sense confession of faith is quite another story.

The drunkard who solemnly recites the Hail Mary as he staggers down the street is doing himself no good, and is certainly doing the Church no good. He is surely not fulfilling a precept commanding him to confess his faith. A Catholic is not obliged to jump up in a meeting of Orangemen and shout out his Catholicity. Riot is not necessary for the confession of faith; common sense is. Some courage is necessary; cowardice is never wholly excusable. The simple norms by which our obligation to confess our faith can be determined are: the honor of God, and the good of our neighbor. We are obliged to confess our faith when our silence would do great injury to the honor of God or fail to win a great honor for God. As far as our neighbor is concerned, when our silence drives some one away from the faith or seriously holds back some person from approaching to that faith, we fail at a time when we should confess our faith. Or when a great spiritual advantage is lost to our neighbor by our failure to confess our faith if that advantage cannot be given effectively in any other way or any other time and place except here and now by our confession of faith, then we have failed not only our neighbor but we have failed God. Yet the obligation to confess the faith does not mean that we must walk up to a persecutor and demand that he shoot us. Indeed the Catholic in full flight from an enemy of the faith is confessing his faith though in a different fashion than his fellows who face a firing squad in defense of the faith. He flees precisely that he may not run the risk of failing to confess his faith; for surely there would be no need of flight if he were to disown the faith that is being persecuted.

Up to this point we have been dealing with faith as though we were tracing the trajectory of a heavy shell from the hole it has made, trying to determine the angle that we might come back to the big gun from which it was hurled. We began by examining the object of faith, the final goal which faith hits. From that goal we saw the long arch of the act of faith by which men come to that last goal. Now we come to the source, the gun from which that act of faith is projected. We have come to the habit of faith.

The habit of faith: Its definition

Thomas' definition of it, "a habit of mind by which eternal life is begun in us, making our intellect assent to unseen truths", is worthy of his metaphysician's mind and his poet's heart. However dark or obscure that beginning may be, faith is a beginning of that vision of Supreme Truth which will make up the essence of eternal life. Into those few words Thomas has packed the supernatural character of faith, its celestial beauty, and the work of intellect and will in the habit of faith. Let us look at these last two more closely.

Its intellectuality

In his insistence on faith as a "habit of mind", St. Thomas stresses the intellectual character of faith. It was almost a prophetic emphasis Thomas made, for about this very point revolve two of the most serious errors against faith since the time of St. Thomas. As an intellectual virtue -- a good operative habit -- faith perfects the intellect in order to its proper object of truth; indeed faith equips the intellect to know the Supreme Truth And this is in flat opposition to the sentimentalists and irrationalists from Feuerbach down who have made faith a matter of feeling or emotion. However great the perfection conferred on the intellect by faith, as a virtue it must always limp simply because it is an intellectual virtue. Its supernaturality does not excuse it from the common fault of intellectual virtues, i.e., the fault of limitation of perfection. Excellence in the science of chemistry does not make a man good, but rather makes him a good chemist; for these intellectual virtues, of their very nature, seek not the good of man, but the good of his intellect only. It was ignorance of this fundamental philosophical truth that was at the root of the exaggerated optimism of Luther and the reformers relative to Faith.

Living and dead faith

The fact remains that faith, of itself, must always stop short at its proper intellectual goal; giving a man knowledge of sublime truths, but no more. The elimination of this imperfection of faith must come from outside itself, from another virtue that will order it beyond its own proper object to the goal of the whole

man. It is in this way that faith is changed from a dead to a living faith, from faith unformed to formed faith, when charity, coming with sanctifying grace, orders it to the end of the will, the end of charity which is the goal of man.

In the sense that this further ordination does not come from faith itself, it is accidental to faith. But it is by no means unimportant to faith. Yet this accidental character of faith's perfection must not be forgotten; it means that God in His goodness, does not give the sinner a full foretaste of hell. While serious sin, other than infidelity, destroys grace, charity, and most of the infused virtues, it still leaves the foundation stone of supernatural life, the basis of hope -- a firm belief in the supreme Truth and the infallible authority of that supreme Truth telling us the details of His personal life.

Its place among the virtues

For faith is fundamental, and therefore first. Not of course in the sense of the winner of a six-day bicycle race being first. All the infused virtues are given simultaneously; but in the order in which we must think of these things, the theological virtues dealing with the end of man come before the moral virtues dealing with the means to the end and the end must be known (by faith) before it can be striven for (by hope) or embraced (by charity). There may, of course, be some accidental virtues preceding faith such as a kind of fortitude or humility to deal with the fundamental impediments to faith. Whether we are looking at the case of the Anglican minister who hesitates to embrace the faith because of the family dependent on him, or of the university professor who hesitates to sacrifice the self-sufficiency of his intellect to belief in the First Intellect, these fundamental impediments to which all others are reduced are always fear and pride.

The part of the will in faith, which is to bring about assent to unseen truths, far outweighs the part of the intellect. Normally one sick and one healthy parent generate a sickly child, one good and one bad football team produce a miserable game; it is expecting too much to demand that the effect be more perfect than the principles which produce it. But though faith proceeds from both intellect and will, its vigor depends little on the intellect, desperately on the will. After all the truths of faith do not depend on the acuity, vitality or energy of the human intellect; these truths are above all created intellect. But as the will is less strong, there is inevitably a loss to the strength and vigor of faith.

Its certitude

For all the restlessness of the intellect, the house of faith is a serene, peaceful home. Certainly there is in it none of the bickering always to be found in the mansions of art and prudence which deal only with contingent things. Indeed, in its cause, the certitude of faith exceeds even the certitude of the speculative virtues, knowledge, wisdom and understanding; it is, in fact, as much more certain as the intellect of God is more perfect than the intellect of man. It is true that subjectively we might feel more secure holding to the first principles seen by the intellect than to the truths believed by faith. But so too might a man feel much more sure that he has seen a ghost than that two and two are four, although certainly the simple sum of addition rests upon a much greater metaphysical certitude than does the wandering ghost. But faith is not a question of feeling, it is not a question of intellectual rest, it is not a question of stubborn adherence. It is a matter of complete, absolute infallibility that can come from only the one source, the First, Supreme Truth. Even the angelically operating intellectual gifts of the Holy Ghost must make their obeisance to faith as their superior, as the mistress they work to beautify and adorn.

The possessors of the freedom of faith: Slaves of disbelief: the damned, devils, heretics

The modern pagan business man shrugs off faith as contemptuously as a football star might shrug off the rubbers sent out to him on a rainy day by an over-solicitous coach. After all he is doing very well without faith; obviously he can get along without it. Let the women, children and weaklings have it. As a matter of fact the only man who does not need faith is a dead man; it is only in heaven or hell that there is no room for faith. What need have angels or the saints in heaven for faith when they are seeing God face to face? What need have devils for the foundation of hope, who are without hope? What right have the damned

souls of men to a supernatural gift where there is nothing of the supernatural but punishment? The devils may have their suspicions of opinions on matters of faith, the damned may have poignant memories of the acts of faith they have made in life; but the faith that gives infallible knowledge of the intimate details of the life of divinity -- no, there is none of that in hell.

What of those who have "lost the faith?" Their eyes remain the same color, their walk has the same aggressiveness, their smile the same attraction. But then we did not expect an exterior change. What if they had lost only one truth, say the truth of papal infallibility; do they not hold as firmly as ever to all the rest? Indeed they do not. So long as faith remains, nothing pertaining to faith can be denied; when anything of faith is lost, all is lost.

The heretic has been too often painted in heroic colors, as a strong man who stood up in defiance of the lightnings of ecclesiastical, and often civil, authority. Actually the heretic is a weakling. The faith is for the strong, for those who are willing to go all the way; there is no room here for mediocrity, for compromising. We must take all or take nothing. Faith demands a boldness, a storming of the walls of heaven with all bridges burnt behind us, a courage that must always make the weakling of the world shiver.

Sole cause of faith, living or dead

The heretic is a weakling, but a weakling who has suffered a tragic loss. How can he regain his faith? Faith is not to be bought or sold; it cannot be stolen, or wheedled out of some one. If Christ working miracles, preaching divinely wise sermons, making prophecies and fulfilling them, giving up His very life, left many astonished and struck with fear but only a few believing, it is clear that no external cause can bring us faith. Nothing within us can give us something above all nature. Faith must always remain a gift of God, a story told by the only One Who knows it. But -- and this is supremely important -- it is a gift offered to every man who comes into the world; withheld from a man only because he has placed an impediment to its reception. Once we have tossed the inestimable gift away through pride or sensuality, it is only the benevolence of God that can return the lost gift to us.

The child, who does not think about so serious a thing as health, dreams of meals that are made up of desserts. Men and women, who do not think about so serious a thing as living, dream of a life that consists only of sweetness, soft music and rest to the echo of applause and gently sympathetic understanding. But meals are never like that; neither is life. In the same vein, our modern men and women dream of God as a being of whom no one could ever be afraid, a gentle, stupid god who would allow men and women to ruin themselves and then admire them for the work they had done in destroying his masterpiece. You see they never really think about God, for God is not like that.

Effects of faith: fear and purity

One of the very first effects of faith is fear. It is hard to see how it could be otherwise. For one of the disconcerting things about faith is that it tells us not only of heaven but also of hell; it not only speaks of the true but it also warns of the false end of man; it insists, not only that God is worth having, but also that the loss of Him is the supreme tragedy. Really to know God means that we must know Him also as the judge of men, the punisher of evil; and we are afraid of His punishments. This is what the theologians call the "fear of a slave". Understand it is not that hypocritical fear that holds back a man's hands or feet from sin, leaving his heart free to embrace the evil action. It is rather a solid, honest, thoroughly understandable fear, a supernatural fear that is the product of unformed or dead faith.

When charity breathes the breath of life into faith, the fear engendered by faith is the fear of a loving child faced with the possibility of becoming separated from its parents; for by this live faith we not only know God, He is the most desirable thing in our life. As this "fear of a child", this reverential fear increases with the increase of charity, the fear of punishment decreases because the very grounds for fearing punishment -- the temptation to separate from that desirable good -- becomes less and less. In a word, we think less of self and more of God. An interesting corollary of this fear inspired by faith is that there is really more

hope for the salvation of those who frankly fight God than for those who are indifferent to Him; for this battle against divinity springs from fear, a fear that should lead to hope but which can be made to end in despair.

If we recognize the fact that the farther a man gets from mud the less likely he is to pick up mud on his clothing, or the further we remove gold from its alloys the purer it gets, we are in a fair way to see that purity is a second effect of faith. This purity is, of course, primarily intellectual purity, freedom from error; but it is at the same time the foundation and the goal of purity of the affections, moral purity. For moral purity is a means to an end, a step taken toward a goal; it is asking too much to demand it when there is no goal in sight. Moral impurity in a world that has pushed aside the intellect, denied the goal, or smiled at the possibility of approaching a Supreme Truth which would give infallible knowledge is not surprising, however pained the classroom philosopher may be by its appearance on his campus.

By the gift of faith we stand outside the walls of the natural world, free and thoroughly bewildered, We are as much puzzled by our freedom as we were resentful at our limitations. In a world that is native to God, we are immigrants, awkward, strange, ill at ease; for we are not gods. We need something more than faith to give us that flexibility, familiarity and suavity that belong to a citizen of this world; and that something more comes to us by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Gifts of the Holy Ghost perfecting faith: Understanding

In the natural order, when we see that turnips do not agree with us, we do more than assent to that truth; we penetrate it to some extent, it becomes a part of our equipment and enters into our judgments. We may take turnips again, but only because our passion for turnips has rushed us into action against our better judgment. Such a truth is natural to us. But the truths of faith are above us; assenting to them by faith, we do not penetrate them, have them enter into our judgments. Rather we handle them somewhat as a foreigner handles our language. But we must penetrate these truths, seize on them, experience them, intimately apply them in all our judgments, they must become a part of our point of view. This is the work of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, supplementing and perfecting faith.

Its relation to faith and distinction from other gifts

The first of these gifts, the gift of understanding, has for its special work precisely that penetration of faith. It goes beyond assent to a kind of probing of these truths, but in a way as different from our natural operation as an angel's mind is different from a man's. It makes the truths of faith connatural to us. We plunge into their depths with the speed of an angelic mind, probing them to their core; not with effort, slowly, step by step, stumbling from principle to conclusion, but intuitively, immediately, connaturally.

We get some notion of the work of this gift when we realize that its perfection is no less than a clear vision of the essence of God. It is then impossible to have the full perfection of the gift of understanding in this life. Indeed it is difficult to describe the effect of that share of the gift possible in this life. Perhaps we can say best that it deepens the darkness of faith. That is, it allows us to see intimately what this particular truth is by seeing what it is not and, consequently how far above anything natural, above all the capacities of our intellect, this truth is. The gift allows us to appreciate the sublimity of the truths that faith has given us.

Its practicality

Remember now, the gift of understanding is not an exotic thing reserved for the higher levels of sanctity. It is absolutely necessary for everyone if life is to be lived successfully. It is by no means a spiritual luxury, for it has that eminent practicality of the truths of faith themselves, the practicality of the fundamental rule of life and action. Our actions, all of them, must be steeped in divine truth, dyed with the divinity which is their end; otherwise they are disastrously against all we are living for. There are, of course, different grades of perfection of this gift of understanding; but at least the lowest grade must be had by everyone who is to win to the goal of life.

Possessors of understanding

This will be immediately clear when we understand this first or lowest grade is that which is sufficient for fulfilling our obligations, the grade of penetration of the truths of faith by which we resist all objections, all difficulties. Up a step higher, we are enabled to see more profoundly into the perfection of God and, by contrast, into the miseries of man; this is the grade of perfection of the gift necessary for the observance of the counsels of Christ. Finally the sublime grade of understanding in this life, the heroic grade, pertains to the mystical life and is a principle of infused contemplation. It is what the saints have tried to describe vaguely as a mystical marriage to the spouse of the soul; it is, somehow, an intimate knowledge of the presence of divinity.

Its beatitude and fruit

Earlier in this chapter we have said that moral purity while an effect of the intellectual purity of faith, was in a larger sense a beginning of an intellectual purity that ultimately will be the essential happiness of man. It is in the light of this truth that St. Thomas points out the beatitude, "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God," as corresponding to the sharply intellectual gift of understanding; cleanness of heart as the element of merit, vision of God as the reward. Indeed this growth to a greater and greater intellectual purity is stated in the very terms traditionally used to describe the progress of spiritual life -- the purgative, illuminative and unitive way; for it is by his intellect that man receives light and ultimately is united to God. The supreme effect, the ultimate ripe fruit of this gift of understanding is an eminent certitude which is, indeed. Common to the three intellectual gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom, for all work to the perfection of faith and faith itself is given to us that we might certainly know God.

Knowledge -- its nature and beatitude

We are released from the prison of the universe by faith. Understanding allows us to enter intimately into the divine world. The gift of knowledge enables us to see the world from which we have escaped in the light of the world to which faith has brought us. It is seen in a high degree of perfection in the life of St. Francis of Assisi where, obviously, its work was not assent, nor penetration, but judgment of created things in the light of divine truths. We might say that it makes the knowledge of faith a personal knowledge. By it we are enabled to see God in the dust, as the good thief saw a king in the criminal dying on a cross. Strictly speaking there is no beatitude corresponding to this gift for it deals with the created world which contains no final resting place for the soul of man; it is always a step, a means to beatitude, not a place of ultimately desirable things. However on its less practical side, speaking in our clumsy sense of practicality, it might be said that the beatitude, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," does correspond to the gift of knowledge.

A not uncommon error sees in this beatitude a justification of the whiners of the world. At the mere mention of "this vale of tears", the weepers heave a sigh that has about it the suspicious perfection of a publicity department, and indulge in another fit of tears of self-pity. The truth of the matter is that beatitude and self-pity are not even distant relations, however comforting self-pity may be. By valley of tears we really mean valley of mistakes. We have no grounds for tears that we are abused, misunderstood, suffer, have accidents happen to us; in fact we do not have nearly as much misfortune as we deserve for our ingratitude to God. Our real grounds for tears are to be found in our own mistakes, in the intimate knowledge of the damage we have done to ourselves by our inordinate affection for and use of creatures. On the other hand the knowledge of the good that has come to us from orderly affection for and use of creatures is a source of solid comfort.

To put all this more plainly, this gift of knowledge lights up the path by which we can avoid puritanism and at the same time escape the absurdities of plunging into the world of creatures. This gift, like all the gifts, not only leads us securely to God, its operation is evident in the heights of mystical life; in other words, this gift insists upon the advantages of an orderly affection for and use of creatures all along the

long road to God, indeed not only advantages, positive necessities of such an orderly affection.

Conclusion: Modern intellectual slavery

To say that the modern world has condemned itself to intellectual slavery, or to say that the modern world knows nothing of supernatural faith is really to say the same thing. We can approach this conclusion from either of two angles: either by looking at modern notions of faith, or at the actual limitations placed upon the intellect by the modern world.

Modern notions of faith

From the first point of view, it is clear that practically from the time of the Reformation faith has been relegated to the realm of the emotional. In our own times this tendency has reached what must be a climax when the neo-supernaturalists, the very champions of faith, reject intellect as a constant source of error; ethical intuitionists and aesthetic naturalists make faith an irrational thing in no way connected with the rational; while the philosophers rooted in the tradition of naturalism -- by far the greater part of vocal American philosophers -- chuckle cynically at all this and put faith aside as unworthy of man, particularly of a man of science accustomed to investigating evidence and arriving at logical conclusions.

Today faith is an hypothesis, a postulate, a mere wish or will to believe, perhaps an emotional affair that is entirely individual and personal. Certainly then our modern world will condemn the intellect, at the very least, to its own limitations, to the limitations of the world of creatures.

Modern limitations of intellect: To the tangible; to the demonstrable; to the fictitious

But viewing the modern position from the angle of the actual limitation placed upon the intellect by philosophers, we see the incredible picture of a man who not only insists upon his own confinement, he refuses to take advantage of the prison courtyard for his exercise, indeed refuses even to move in the narrow corridors between the cells. He insists that he be kept rigidly in his cell bound hand and foot on the grounds that there is nothing beyond his chains. This may sound incredible, but it is not nearly so incredible as our modern philosophers limiting the mind of man to tangible things, or going further and limiting the mind of man to those things that can be demonstrated, or even, in these latter days, limiting the intellect to the purely fictitious, as a purveyor of error for practical purposes. The future will have a hard time indeed if it is to surpass this as a climax of absurdity; for never in the history of the world has there been anything so impractical as error.

Faith and intellect -- a perfection not a substitution

All of this is intellectual slavery; all of it implies an abysmal ignorance of the very nature of supernatural faith. Faith is not an opponent of intellect, it is not a substitute for intellectual operations. It is a perfection of intellect. It carries the intellect far beyond anything it could reach of itself; surely it in no way makes intellectual activity useless, suspicious or positively vicious. Faith and natural intellect operate on different planes. Our minds can go just so far, as far as the limits of the universe; and that would seem to be far enough for many men. Faith allows us to go as far as the essence of God. The whole purpose of faith is to allow the intellect to step beyond itself, as the telephone allows our voice to stretch beyond itself, or the telescope extends the vision of our eyes. Yet no one considers a telephone or a telescope an insult to a man, nor a substitution for his voice or his eyes. Faith is not an enemy of the intellect, rather it is intellect's liberator.

Freedom for the mind: The courage of faith

Because it gives freedom, faith demands courage. It takes courage to see God not only as the ultimate reward to be gained, but also as a reward that may be eternally lost. It takes courage to see in every one of our actions a deliberate choice of eternity, of heaven or of hell; to kneel before the gentle Christ and tell Him with complete frankness how completely we have betrayed Him; to pick oneself up again and again

and again, with the grim determination to continue to pick oneself up, to continue to try no matter how often we may fail. It takes courage to be a man; it takes much greater courage to be a Christian man, a friend of Christ. It takes the kind of courage that carried Christ through the last moments on the Cross -- but beyond that to the morning of the resurrection.

The fullness of faith

The fullness of faith, comparable only to the limitless fullness of infinity, makes our natural life seem a narrow, dark, blind corridor. Faith opens up eternity itself to us and allows our spirit to stretch itself to the limits of its great possibilities. While giving us intimate details of divinity, it also gives the only solid ground of hope and of love, furnishing a measuring-rod for both.

The practicality of faith

And, considering the part that hope and love play in human life, faith is surely possessed of a practicality more than sufficient to satisfy the most practical-minded age. Only the dead can dispense with faith. To the sinner it gives a reason for hope and the means of attaining that hope; to the saint it gives the reason for love and the means to perfect that love. To the layman it is a short cut to necessary knowledge; to the religious it is the very basis of his life. To the successful it teaches moderation and corrects easily mistaken values; to the mediocre, the elimination of dullness, of drudgery in a divinely high romance; to failures in our human sense it gives happiness and a knowledge of the real difference between eternal and ephemeral success. To the laborer it gives consecration, courage, and an unshakeable basis of justice; to the employer it teaches the limitations of power, the deep roots of justice, the pettiness of the great things of this world. And so we might go on and on through men, women and children, the sick, the healthy, the young, the old, the apostle, the scholar, domestic society, political society and so on. The universal practicality of faith is bound up intimately with the absolutely universal practicality of the one and only goal of human life, plus the infallible authority of the word of God.

The future of faith

Perhaps the most inspiring thing to remember about faith is that it is only a beginning. It starts a life that goes on for all eternity. As such it carries with it in this world the joy that can be fully appreciated only by God and those to whom He has opened up the secrets of his divinity. There is an obscurity about faith now; there is an intellectual restlessness at its darkness; in it there is a rigid dependence on the moral strength of our human will. But, like every beginning, it is a promise. And the promise faith holds out to us is not one of increased obscurity, or even of decreased obscurity, but of brilliant light, the promise of the light of glory by which we shall see God as He is and in that vision attain the goal of human living which is the happiness of man.

Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III	Next
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CHAPTER II -- FREEDOM FOR THE WILL (Q. 10-22)

1. The symbol of slavery:
 - (a) External and internal liberty.
 - (b) Hope and internal liberty.
 2. Optimistic pessimism:
 - (a) The fact.
 - (b) The explanation
 - (1) Natural and supernatural hope.
 - (2) The basis of hope -- faith.
 3. Demolisher of hope's foundation -- infidelity.
 - (a) In general:
 - (1) Negative, positive and contrary infidelity.
 - (2) Malice and extent of the corruption of infidelity.
 - (b) In particular:
 - (1) Comparative malice of infidelity of pagans, Jews and heretics.
 - (2) Treatment of infidels:
 - a. In their persons:
 1. Disputation.
 2. Compulsion.
 - b. In their rites.
 - c. In their children.
 4. Further attacks on the foundation of hope:
 - (a) Blasphemy.
 - (b) Sins against the Holy Ghost.
 - (c) Spiritual blindness and sluggishness.
 5. The virtue of hope:
 - (a) The essence of hope, its object and subject.
 - (b) Place of hope among the virtues.
 6. The perfection of hope:
 - (a) The gift of fear.
 - (1) Varieties of fear.
 - (2) The gift of the Holy Ghost.
 - (b) Corresponding beatitude: Blessed are the poor in spirit.
 7. Annihilator of hope:
 - (a) Presumption.
 - (b) Despair.
- Conclusion
1. The enslaved will:
 - (a) Desire of the slave.
 - (b) Love of the slave.
 - (c) Despair of the slave.
 2. A Contrast: the cross and the throne.
 3. Hope and life:
 - (a) Hope and faith.
 - (b) Hope and action.
 - (c) Hope and love.
 - (d) Hope and courage.

CHAPTER II FREEDOM FOR THE WILL (Q. 10-22)

The symbol of slavery: External and internal liberty

THE cold shiver that runs up our spine as we pass the dull walls of a prison or hear the clank of chains in a ghost-story is our nature's recognition of accurate symbols of slavery. The walls and the chains are instruments of imprisonment. For, essentially, our notion of liberty is the ability to go somewhere; the capacity to choose a path to a goal and to take, or refuse to take, some steps along that path. The limitations of a man's physical ability to move about touch our spirit with the cold finger of fear, in spite of the fact that we know in our hearts that there are no walls, no chains which can restrain the mind and the heart of a man.

Hope and internal liberty

As long as the mind of man knows a goal, as long as his heart can soar on the wings of hope and love following the directions of his mind, a man is essentially free. He is still a man, he still has reason for living. There is no display of a dictator's power, no lash of a whip, no smile of scorn, indeed no power on earth which can stop the mind and the heart of a man from rushing to its goal. When you have seen the light of that goal die out of the face of a man, when you have seen him surrender hope of choosing a path to somewhere and of stepping along that path, when you have seen the death of hope, you have seen the death of man and the birth of a slave. This is true no matter how free a man may be to move about this physical world of ours; he is a slave, for his mind and his heart have no place to go.

Optimistic pessimism: The fact

This slave may be optimistic about his slavery. He may go at his living as enthusiastically as a dog digs for a nonexistent bone -- and with just as much grounds for his optimism. He may admit the existence of the goal but deny that he has any power to reach that goal, and so place himself in the position of a starving paralytic staring hopelessly at a full meal. Or he may whine to the universe that no adequate means of reaching the goal is offered to him and sulk like a movie fan in love with a star he will never see.

These are not amusing fictions; they are the possibilities held out to man by modern philosophy. These modern philosophers may sound bright, cheery, completely optimistic about man and the universe but nevertheless the invitation they issue is to absolute pessimism. The fact is that we cannot be free without hope; and a slave has no grounds for optimism. We must have hope, hope of getting to a place that is really worth while, that is, hope in a personal goal and the means to that goal.

The explanation: Natural and supernatural hope

There is an unconscious realization of this in the tribute we pay to hope, even on the natural scale. To us, it smacks of the heroic, of courage and magnanimity; there is a young beauty about it, a sense of strong endeavor and great accomplishment. The tragedy of this natural hope is that it is built upon so utterly frail a basis, like a financial empire reared upon baseless credit or the reputation of a man depending on the breath of a whisper. For this natural hope depends on human faith; that is to say, it rests on no more than a strong opinion. Hope must always rest on faith and, if it is a human hope, it must rest on human faith.

The basis of hope -- faith

St. Thomas compares supernatural hope to an anchor holding the soul firm. What is there in this life that can secure a soul? Can we think of the mind of man as secure when we see the learned men of the ages making mistakes as ridiculous as those of a school-boy? Who will say that the love of man gives us absolute security? Will we place our security in the feelings and sense of a man that change with every breath of wind? in a political organization? in a military power? will we even dare to place our security in nature itself knowing it is not a goal but merely a beginning? We cannot sink the anchor of our hope in the depths; paradoxically we must fix it to the heights, even to God Himself. That is what supernatural hope does. It gives us confidence of eternal life through the promises of help of Almighty God Himself. While there are no human-made bars that can imprison the mind of man, no jail that can hold his heart, the hope of that heart and mind can be demolished by the destruction of the foundation of hope; by taking away from man his faith in the existence of a God Who is faithful to His promises and powerful enough to help man win through to divinity itself.

Demolisher of hope's foundation -- infidelity Negative, positive and contrary infidelity

Infidelity -- the contrary of faith -- is, then, the greatest tragedy which can enter into human life for it blasts out the foundation of that hope which is the starting point of our activity. This infidelity may be that of the pagan who has never heard of the faith, or that of the man who, having heard of the faith,

persistently refuses it much as a man might refuse olives at dinner, without rancor. On the other hand it may be the militant infidelity which attacks the faith as an enemy of humanity. Remembering that faith is the basis of hope, it seems difficult to believe that there are those who thus fight the faith; but there are such men and women, and plenty of them. Objectively, at least, they commit a sin much greater than murder, adultery, theft or any of the sins against the moral virtues; their sin is directly against God, these others are only indirectly against Him. Indeed, their sin so completely separates man from God as to leave him, not only spiritually dead, but completely off the supernatural plane. Notice, however, that we say "objectively"; for no man can judge of the subjective guilt of another. Who can say that this infidel, viciously attacking all that the Church stands for, commits a graver sin than the backbiting housewife? That is known only to God.

Malice and extent of the corruption of infidelity

The "broad-minded" man, rejecting the faith politely and without rancor, commits the same sin; he too has that contempt for God so tragically exemplified by William James when he said, "The truth or falsehood of the theistic proofs makes little difference, for such a god is of no use to men." But if there could be such a thing as the purely negative infidelity of the pagan, it would involve no formal sin; sin, you know, does not happen by accident through no fault of our own. However Thomas rightly denies that such negative infidelity is possible. If a man does not place one of the fundamental impediments to faith -- pride or fear -- God will, if necessary, reveal to him directly what is to be believed or even, miraculously, send him a preacher to announce to him the good tidings of faith.

There is a fiction, current in intellectual circles today, to the effect that Christianity maintains man is totally corrupt, that all of his acts are sinful, even mortally sinful. If we identify Christianity with the religion of Luther and the reformers, this ceases to be fiction and becomes fact; but if we suppose this absurd statement is a corollary of the great sinfulness of infidelity we are calling for our fiction straight, with no slightest admixture of fact. Catholicism vehemently denies any such corruption in man, not only in Christian man but in any man. Of course an infidel can build a house, bake a good pie, give alms to the poor or sympathy and encouragement to one in suffering; all of these are certainly not sins. They are good works, possessed of real value. But supernaturally they are dead works. They are not coin of the realm of Christ precisely because of the infidelity and consequent lack of charity: they have no value for eternal life.

Fiction such as this, which springs from a lumping together of all that lays claim to the name Christian, is responsible for much of the indifference and even hostility to Christianity among men and women today, particularly among learned men and women. They know that men and women, whatever their faith, are not utterly vicious, not totally corrupt. Nowhere will they find a more wholehearted support of that knowledge than in the Church. In fact it can be taken as a general rule that in any attack on humanity, whether in the name of religion, politics, militarism or anything else, the Church will always be found on the side of the defense. And its defense of humanity will not be a gentle, timid disagreement, a polite remonstrance, nor a neutrality that stands aghast but does nothing. It will be a thundering condemnation such as was hurled against Luther, Calvin, Jansenius and Baius on this precise point.

Comparative malice of infidelity of pagans, Jews and heretics

Every type of infidelity rules out the possibility of faith in a man's mind and consequently destroys the basis of hope. It makes no difference whether the infidelity be that of the pagan who has never heard of faith, the Jew who has accepted it only in its pre-figures and prophecies, the heretic rejecting his faith, or the apostate turning his back on the truths that were once his. This is obvious in what Thomas considers the purely hypothetical case of the pagan's negative infidelity. In regard to the others, a distinction must be made between material and formal infidelity. By the first, a man holds fast to the formal reason of faith -- the authority of God revealing the truths of faith; what he rejects, he turns aside from precisely on the grounds that it is not revealed by God. By the second, formal infidelity, a man pits his mind against the mind of God and rejects this or that supernatural truth, or all supernatural truths, precisely as such. Or, to

put the same truth in another way, the material infidel's doubts fall on the declaration of the revealed character of certain truths; the formal infidel doubts the truths themselves.

In this connection it is well to remember that the testimony of the Church is not a formal motive of faith, but a condition of faith. The infallibility of the Church's declarations is itself a revealed truth and an object of faith. However, a revealed truth is not lost inculpably and accidentally. Material infidelity is understandable as a result of corrupt teaching or of no teaching at all, consequently in a second or third generation of heretics or, in simple souls, in a first generation following the teaching of its formally corrupt leaders. It is difficult to conceive of it in other circumstances.

In one sense these formal infidelities are all equal for all completely destroy faith, rejecting its formal reason -- the authority of God revealing these truths. But, from another angle, there is no equality among them, i.e., from the angle of the truths which are still accepted. Obviously the Jew has more of these truths than the pagan, and the heretic has more than the Jew; yet the order of malice is just the reverse. We might say that in the argument with God over the truths of faith, the heretic shouts out insults at the top of his voice; the Jew's is a conversational disagreement; while the pagan stands stubbornly silent, refusing to admit anything.

Treatment of infidels: In their persons: Disputation

It sounds strange to us today that between Catholics and infidels, whatever their type, some norm of action must be laid down. After all, Republicans and Democrats flare up at each other only once in four years, while Rotarians and Elks have no trouble avoiding ill feeling. Perhaps this impatience with religious quarrels comes from the idea that religion is not worth fighting about; or, more probably, it may be based on ignorance of the terribly destructive force of infidelity. In a Catholic such ignorance is hardly excusable. It is not only that his appreciation of the inestimable value of the faith should give him an insight into the tragedy of infidelity: there is also the glaring fact of the comparative zeal of the enemies of the faith and his own zeal. A thoughtful consideration of that fact gives us the key to the tremendous power for destruction in infidelity. The Catholic's zeal springs from love of neighbor and love of God; it is always a rather serene thing, for the false gods and false goals of others do not threaten the security of his own soul, of his own life. And this very serenity and security too often make it a mild, tepid thing. The infidel's zeal, on the contrary, is inspired by desperate, bitter self-defense. Supernatural faith itself, God, the final goal of life are all devastating accusations which strike at the roots of his philosophy, at the basis upon which he has built his life; in order to protect himself in his own eyes, he must destroy these things, or do his utmost to effect their destruction.

Something, then, must be done about infidelity. But what? What is Catholicism's mode of procedure in the face of infidelity? Well, the obvious thing that Catholics, at one time or another, must do with infidels is argue. Certainly it is going to be necessary to protect the faith of the simple faithful, to confute error and reply to accusations levelled against the faith. St. Dominic, and all his disputatious sons after him, recognized the necessity of argument for the return of the infidel to the faith; though not many can successfully emulate Dominic's example of arguing all night with a heretic. Boredom and conversion are poles apart and only a saint or a genius can preserve an all-night argument from boredom.

This arguing in favor of the faith is not to be confused with the fruit of an unpleasant disposition or a poor night's sleep. Not anyone who feels in the mood for argument is justified in arguing about the faith. It would seem that almost anyone can argue, any time, about a sporting event, politics or international policies with no appreciable effect on sport, politics or internationalism. But the same cannot be said of arguments about the faith. The fact that we have picked up a smattering of theology, know something of the difficulties against this or that truth of faith, does not give us a right to parade our knowledge before simple people who are perfectly content in their faith. Our Catholicism does not give us the right to stand up before any audience and take on any adversary in our defense of the faith, as a wrestler might challenge anyone in the audience to grapple with him. This is not a game. We shall probably do the faith much more good by keeping a discreet silence and letting it be known that we are not fitted for an

argument with this adversary, or under these circumstances, and insisting that it be done by one who is so equipped.

The right of disputation is questioned by no one in America today. Its limitations are dictated by common sense. But beyond that -- well the world used to tell us to be very tolerant. But that was some time ago. That was before the floods of vicious intolerance were let loose, not against error, but against truth. Today the world at large is a decidedly intolerant world; it is only of us that tolerance is still expected. Yet there is something to be said for intolerance of error; nothing for intolerance of truth.

The very word tolerance indicates that we are putting up with an evil. We do not tolerate a good; we embrace it, enthusiastically encourage it and do all in our power to promote it. But we do tolerate the noise of the little boy next door, the snorings in a Pullman, the eccentricities of a statesman, graft in public administration, and so on. We do not question the unpleasantness or positive evil of these things. Certainly we are not enthusiastic about them; we put up with them, and none too cheerfully, because that is all we can do without causing greater unpleasantness or greater evil. If it were otherwise we would be enjoying these things or cowardly about them; either way we would have little to be proud of. The Church in this matter has much to be proud of, and she is neither a gourmand of evil nor a coward.

The tolerance of infidels on the part of the Church is not, then, to be mistaken for approbation. Indeed even that tolerance, to be well understood, must be seen in its causes. It is quite impossible for the Church to force infidels to believe. Not only has she absolutely no jurisdiction over the Jew or the pagan, the very act of belief enjoys all the inviolability of an act of free will; no force on earth, in hell or in heaven can possibly force the free will of man. The Church has her hands full dealing with her own obstreperous brood; she has no time to attempt the impossible.

However she is a mother. She can and does force others to cease persecuting the faith, injuring it by their blasphemy, undermining the faith of the simple faithful by clever argumentation. In other words, she demands, forcefully if necessary, that the faith be left alone. The Church has the serious obligation, imposed by Christ Himself, to preach the gospel to all nations. Surely then she has the right to fulfill that obligation; and others have the obligation to respect that right of the Church.

Compulsion

There can never be question of forcing a man to believe, to accept the faith. But to force those who were baptized and who deserted the faith, to fulfill that which had been promised in faith's acceptance -- that is another story. It can be done, and historically it has been done, not only by spiritual penalties, but also by the much less serious corporal penances. It is this compulsion of heretics that goes against the grain of our modern world; let us look at it a little more closely.

In this case the Church is not a busybody slipping into a neighbor's house to spank children who are nothing to her but nuisances. These heretics are her own children; by baptism they entered the Church, and by that sacrament the Church has over them the same power it has over all the rest of its subjects. Moreover these heretics are committing moral suicide; they are doing tremendous, eternal damage to themselves and to others in blasting out the one foundation of hope, the faith. No one seriously questions the sensibleness of compulsion, even physical compulsion, against a man plotting the overthrow of a legally constituted and properly functioning government; against the man who undermines the health of the community by spreading a dangerous disease; or against the traitor in war who attempts to betray his country. The social and physical life of man are concrete, tangible goods. Perhaps this is the clue to the root of our difficulty: we cannot realize the enormity of the damage accomplished by the heretic because we value so slightly the spiritual life of men,

Let us put the same thing in terms of physical health. Let us suppose a man were to go from city to city deliberately spreading the germ of a fatal disease, What limitation would we place on the physical coercion which might be inflicted on him? Would there be any question in our minds but that these activities should be stopped no matter what the physical damage necessary to stop that campaign

immediately? Now look at heresy objectively, considering the seriousness of it in itself. Has the Church the right to protect its own and to warn the heretic by excommunicating him from all participation in sacramental life? Indeed, looked at objectively, the reasonableness even of the execution of that heretic to preserve the common good of the spiritual life is not hard to see. Actually the procedure of the Church has never been immediate execution; rather it has always been a slow, infinitely patient attempt to protect all of her children, the attacking heretic as well as the faithful ones. Her gestures were not those of exasperation, of frightened weakness, of ruthless power. Even in the middle ages, when the death penalty for heresy, while not universal, was not uncommonly inflicted by the state, the Church's corrections proceeded with that same slow, unruffled pace. The heretic was warned; then he was warned a second time; if he still held stubbornly to his error, the Church not hoping very stoutly for his conversion, provided for the salvation of others by excommunicating him. Finally, when all hope of his conversion was abandoned, the Church turned him over to the secular arm for the infliction of the death penalty; and she stood beside him to the very last, offering the divine forgiveness that would assure her wayward son of eternal life. Her love for her children, in other words, has never been a weak, timid, sentimental thing, too selfish to be severe; her sense of values was serene, absolute; she knew there was no answer to the question, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" -- surely the answer was not physical life.

In their rites

Today we accept this version of strong love with a cynical smile. The argument is that such a course of action violates the conscience of heretics who, very often, are in good faith. Yet our newspapers week after week, tell us of police thwarting attempted suicides, snatching people from ledges of high buildings, grabbing the poison from their hands, pumping out their stomachs, searching prisoners lest they conceal instruments of self-destruction. Do not the consciences of these people tell them that suicide is the thing for them to do? Of course; but their consciences are erroneous, they are wrong. So also is that of the heretic; just as men of sane conscience are obliged to correct and prevent the attempted suicides, so also is the Church. The hero who drags a woman from the river and forces her to continue to live, against her conscience, is not forcing her to commit sin. Sin is not in the material act, but in the will; and the will cannot be forced. In the same way, a heretic forced to conform to the rites of the faith is not forced to commit sin. Rather he is protected from pursuing a way of sin, a road away from the end of life, he is kept in a position to attain the supreme goal when and if he returns to spiritual sanity.

In their children

Another modern argument is drawn from the infringement on the liberty of infants who were baptized without having anything to say, at least intelligibly, about it. But after all liberty is a choice of means to an end. The Church, insisting that the child, baptized as an infant, live up to his faith, is insisting that a person under the jurisdiction of the Church hold fast to the means to the one end of life. That is not an interference with but a guarantee of the material of liberty.

Why should the child be obliged to what he did not personally promise? Well, why not? It was necessary at that time, i.e., the earliest possible moment, that the step be taken; the elevation of man to the supernatural plane upon which he must move is not something that can be put off. The child could not act of itself; so others acted for him on the presumption -- a most reasonable presumption -- that if the child knew the truth and were capable of action, this is what he would do. The crux of the whole question is, of course, that this act is one that cannot be taken back; it impresses the indelible character of baptism on the soul. The absurdity that children must be allowed to grow up like animals until such a time as they should choose their religion for themselves was formally condemned by the Council of Trent. There is still no exchange a man can make for his soul. We instill habits of personal hygiene, even though the child vociferously protests at the very sight of a bathtub or a tooth brush. Usually it is not the age of reason but his first girl that inspires a boy to wash behind his ears freely, industriously, without compulsion. Certainly the bathtub and tooth brush have done the child no injury. Perhaps some day our moderns will become convinced that there are things even more important than personal hygiene, such things for example as the supernatural habits that make possible the success of human living.

With a clear realization of the malice of infidelity in men, it is not difficult to understand why the Church, at one time or another, forbade Catholics to have business or social relations with infidels. The thing could not be done, of course, the other way around; the Church, you will remember, has no jurisdiction over the unbaptized. Nor was this prohibition of the Church a merely arbitrary procedure; a flight from the shadow of a ghost, as we can see faintly here in America today. It would be strange indeed if a corrupt but almost universal view on marriage in itself, divorce and remarriage, or on business, political and medical ethics had not had some effect on the simple Catholic living in such an atmosphere.

When we turn to a consideration of the Church's attitude towards the services of heretics and infidels, we must keep in mind that toleration is not approbation. That these church rites can be tolerated either because of some good in them or to avoid some greater evil is evident; indeed it may be obligatory to tolerate them. Even God Himself tolerates some evil; no human regime, even an ecclesiastical regime, can hope to effect a government more perfect than the divine.

To come down to particulars, the rites of the Jewish religion can be tolerated of themselves; there is always some good coming from them. In fact, they are a constant witness to the faith, for they give the testimony of the prefigures and of the prophets. The rites of pagans and heretics, on the contrary, have nothing in themselves to recommend their toleration: they are always a danger to the faith; at least materially they are sins. But there are strong reasons for toleration of these rites, for example: to avoid spiritual damage, either to the faithful or to the infidels themselves; to avoid riots and bloodshed; because any other mode of procedure would be a serious impediment to the eternal salvation of these infidels. Being tolerated, the infidels might gradually, little by little, turn to the faith. How essential this toleration is may be gathered from the fact of the great multitude of men who are infidels, and the memory that, in the eyes of God, the soul of just one man is well worth the last drop of blood, even of the God-man. This truth, so completely overlooked in any discussion of the tolerance of the Church, cannot be emphasized too strongly: the secret of the assured tolerance of Catholicism is not a continued lack of opportunity, but a divinely guaranteed appreciation of the value of the soul of man; the Church will be tolerant, persistently, patiently, to the very end, because of her divine love for the souls of those who know not Christ.

Perhaps all this could be said briefly by pointing out that just as faith does not enslave but rather frees the mind of man with a divine freedom, so does the guardian of the faith hold her place in the world not as the enemy of the freedom of man but the staunchest champion of that freedom. She will always be the object of attack, as will the faith, for freedom demands both courage and respect for others; and always in the world there will be cowards and tyrants. Nowhere does this championship of the rights of men appear more evident than in relation to the children of infidels.

In the mind of St. Thomas there was no doubt but that the rights of the parents were supreme. It was not merely that the baptism of infidel children against the wishes of their parents would do great damage to the faith, since these children normally have very little chance of being educated in that faith; it would be a serious injury to natural justice. Thomas is quite clear in asserting the foundation of his argument: the inviolability of the children of infidels rests on the natural right of the parent. The child, until he has the use of reason, until he is able to care for himself, is under the care, indeed a part of the parents. His salvation is the responsibility of the parents; nor do these parents lose their rights by contact with Divine law, which does not destroy but perfects the law of nature. Both the law of grace and the law of nature have come from the mind of the same supreme Lawgiver and work harmoniously to bring men back to that supreme Truth.

Further attacks on the foundation of hope: Blasphemy

The angry man who spouts blasphemies is not necessarily guilty of sin; ordinarily he is only the victim of a limited vocabulary. Though she is struggling for emphasis, not expletive, the vivacious young lady swaying on the subway strap and shouting the name of God above all the roar of the train is suffering from the same limitation. These two are not at all in the same class as the university professor who calmly

assures us that God is a symbol. His is a sin, but a dry, dusty, languid sin, with little heart in it. The complete blasphemer is seen in the atheist who viciously attacks the notion that God is good, that God is omnipotent, that He is the provider of His children in this world. Here we have the sin which stands at the peak of all the sins of infidelity, a sin which consists in verbally insulting God.

By it we attribute to God something which does not belong to Him, or deny Him something that is His divine prerogative. In its full stupidity it outstrips all sins against the moral virtues, even sins of despair and presumption against the virtue of hope; it gives place, reluctantly, only to that supreme sin which is hatred of God. When blasphemy proceeds from hatred of God itself, then blasphemy is the supreme sin.

However brief it be, however softly whispered, there is nothing small about the smallest of blasphemies; for just one, any one, destroys our union with God. In the human order an insulting word or a moment of infidelity does not necessarily destroy the love that binds a man and woman together; but then that love is a natural thing, with roots deep in nature. The love that binds us to God is not at all natural; its roots are not in nature. From our side it must always be a frail, engrafted thing; in cherishing our union with God we must tread fearfully, carefully with the fear and caution looking out, not towards God, but towards ourselves.

An eavesdropper at the keyhole of the gate of heaven would listen in vain for God and His friends to hurl insults. Blasphemy has no place in heaven, and no place among the friends of God on earth. Men do of course blaspheme. The devils too blaspheme, not with lips but with their affections. Once the damned souls in hell are reunited to their bodies the uproar in hell will really commence, and one of the constant activities in the social life of hell will be blasphemy. There is a terrible significance to this truth, for it indicates that there is no limit to the sins and wickedness of hell; in fact that very wickedness is a part of the punishment of hell. If nothing else would, this truth shows us that there is no Joy in sin for if there were, the devils could have none of it.

Sins against the Holy Ghost

To most of us there is more viciousness in the contempt of a snub than there is in the attack of open insult: the latter at least does us the honor of opposition. Some such subtle contempt is involved in the blasphemies which have come to be known as the sins against the Holy Ghost. Their cold hauteur is the ultimate in snobbery. They are the characteristic gestures of those who are too good for God; at least these sins always imply a contempt for God's goodness for they proceed, not from ignorance, not from weakness nor passion, but from deliberate malice, from a rejection of the protection offered to us against the choice of sin.

By these sins against the Holy Ghost, we slam the door of our mind against the brightness of God which drives out the darkness of sin. We prefer the dust, the dampness the dirt and cobwebs, the hidden ugliness of sin; an ugliness that is so revolting that, were it shown in bright light, it would be too much even for us. So we hurl shut the door of our mind against all consideration of the divine judgment, lest its justice and mercy hold us back from presumption and despair. We turn away from the consideration of the gifts of God, lest the knowledge of His truth halt our attacks on divine revelation at the very start. We refuse to consider the help of interior grace, that our enmity for the grace of others might be unrestrained. We refuse to look at sin honestly, lest its disorder and foulness should move us to amendment and penance. We blind ourselves to the pettiness of the apparent good of sin, that our obstinacy might be undisturbed.

Obviously such a sinner is really in a bad way. His sin has no excuse; it is a sin of malice. These sins directly exclude the very things which might bring us to our knees before the gentle Christ. Only the omnipotence of God makes it possible for these sins to be forgiven up until the very moment of death. But, as far as the sinner himself is concerned, he has already signed his own death warrant with a ghastly flourish.

The variety of these sins may be frightening: presumption, despair, attack on divine truth, envy of the grace of others, impenitence and obstinacy. But fortunately they are not starting points; rather they are

climaxes of evil. Human nature, ordinarily, does not reach any heights or depths in one jump. Normally it takes some little effort to be thoroughly bad. Usually the sinner starts with sins that have some excuse in ignorance or passion, that is with sins that leave at least a few tatters to cover his self-respect. It is only later that it is possible for him to abandon self-respect in his mad passion for sin, to plunge into the depths of contempt for the goodness of God.

Spiritual blindness and sluggishness

The virtue of faith, perfected by the gift of understanding, is the clear eye of a pilot spotting a landing field in the dusk; a landing field to which the heart rushes on the wings of hope. Blindness of the pilot means the end of hope and the crash of the flight of the heart; indeed, sleepiness, heaviness, sluggishness are almost as surely fatal. That is exactly the attack made on the gift of understanding by spiritual blindness and spiritual sluggishness. Both are sins against the Holy Ghost by attacking His gifts; and the attack is an odd, indirect thing. It consists in a voluntary non-consideration of spiritual goods. Understand in this case a man does not refuse to consider this or that particular aid to this or that particular action; he is attacking in a much more sweeping fashion, attacking the root principles, if you like, of the enlightenment of man.

He is blind to the things of the spirit because the world has got into his eyes; for this blindness is traceable primarily to lust, the sluggishness to gluttony. This is not to be misunderstood; it is not a matter of the rush of blood to the stomach after a heavy meal, crippling our thinking power. It is a question here of the concentration of our attention, of our hearts, upon these things of the flesh. The world is in our eyes; we will not see, and so we cannot see. Time only adds to our blindness until, after a while, we convince ourselves that we are not blind, that these things we cannot see no longer exist. Then indeed is hope definitely dead.

The virtue of hope: The essence of hope, its object and subject

The man whose hope is dead no longer confidently expects everlasting life and the means to attain it because of the omnipotence, mercy and fidelity of God. He no longer possesses that theological virtue of hope which makes a man look to God as to a good to be possessed, that makes a man stand awe-struck at the spectacle of divine omnipotence, determined by divine mercy and divine fidelity, making of his weak hands, of his stumbling feet, the instruments by which he constructs an eternal habitation inside the walls of heaven itself.

Moreover, there is little that anyone else can do for him. Just as no one can walk, or sleep, or digest for me, so no man can hope for me. The act of hope cannot be carried through by a substitute; it is an intimately personal thing, the act of the appetite of man desiring God. No man can hope for another unless somehow these two be one, unless they be cemented in that bond of unity which is the love of God. One Christian, united to others by charity, can hope for the ultimate happiness of these others with whom he is one, just as he can hope for himself; for in truth, these to whom he is united are other selves.

It is true that many a man has been brought to heaven by the prayers of a mother, a wife or a child. It is true that many a man may escape the trap of despair because of someone's great love for him and the help they give him. But that does not mean that we can hope *in* other men, except as they are instruments of God. No man, no woman, no prayer, no sacrifice can bring us to the possession of God; only the Omnipotent Himself can do that for us. Just as the authority of God is the solid basis of faith, so the omnipotence of God is the solid basis of hope; upon that foundation alone can man safely rear the high towers of his hopes.

Place of hope among the virtues

There is something youthful about hope; it puts a spring into our step, a lilt into our heart. To understand something of that eternal youthfulness of hope and the young eyes it puts into the faces of the saints, it is only necessary to compare it with the other theological virtues. Charity looks to God as to an end to be

serenely possessed; its outlook then is one of serene wisdom. Faith looks to God as a principle, a fountain from which pours truth; its eagerness is tempered by an abashed humility staring at unutterable truths. But hope looks to God as a principle, a beginning, a source of successful action; its eyes sweep youth's glorious world of long futures, of things, great things, still to be done.

Hope presupposes faith. It follows on the heels of faith as the heart follows in the steps of the mind, or hope springs from our will: and the will, the appetite of man, cannot, will not, plunge blindly about in the dark. It follows only so far as the intellect can lead; it takes only those steps that are possible because faith, knowledge, has gone before hacking out footholes. Hope comes from Faith; it leads to love, to charity. With the increase of charity there is also an increase of hope; of course we expect much more, and more confidently, from our friends. And charity means that God is our friend. The difference between the hope that walks arm and arm with charity and the hope that walks alone is the difference between the living and the dead. For charity is the soul of hope, as it is the soul of faith, as it is the soul of all the virtues. It alone gives them life.

When we say that the wish is father to the thought, we are flattering ourselves, If the alleged thought proceeds from emotion, rather than emotion proceeding from thought, the result is not thought at all. If it is anything, it is an emotional prejudice. In other words it is important to remember that hope is in the will of man, not in his intellect. Consequently hope is not a foundation of knowledge or conviction, much less can it be the foundation of all religion, as much modern Protestantism and modernism suppose.

It is true enough that there is a certitude in hope. After all, anything based solidly on God has certitude about it. But the certitude of the mercy and the omnipotence of God towards us, the certitude of the possibility of our happiness, is a certitude that comes from faith. Understand well that it is not a certitude which establishes the absolute success of our own life. It by no means assures us that now we need not give the matter of salvation a thought; that we are saved; that we have religion and now all that is necessary is to sit back and wait, smilingly, for the crown to be placed on our head, meanwhile, perhaps whiling away the time by tchick, tchicking at those who are not as holy as we are. That smugness is even a little too much for God to swallow. It is always certain that God is merciful and omnipotent, that beatitude is possible to us; but it is not certain in this life that we ourselves will acquire that eternal happiness. It may seem, from a superficial glance, that the Reformers were doing a sweet, kind thing in extending the certitude of hope to the lengths of a personal guarantee. As a matter of fact, their attempt was cloying, saccharine; it reduced the religious tribute we pay to God to a gust of emotionalism without foundation.

The perfection of hope: The gift of fear

Varieties of fear

The ordinary human being is an easy victim of drama. A brief sentence, a picture, a passing portrayal of emotion, even though none of these ring quite true, will close our throats, wet our eyes, bow down our hearts. We are fearfully impressed, not merely fearful, when we read an immortal poet's dramatic line, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here", as written over the gates of hell. The same thing might just as well have been written above the gates of heaven, for it is just as true that there is no hope in heaven, as it is that there is no hope in hell; though of course for a different reason. In heaven there is no need for hope because what was once hoped for is now possessed; but in hell there is no possibility of hope because that which was once hoped for can now never be possessed.

That chord of fear, struck in our hearts at the thought of abandoning all hope, is a reasonable thing. Yet even the greatest hope, in full stride to the accomplishment of high, hard things, must have some solid fear in its make-up. We make a serious mistake today in supposing that all fear is opposed to courage. It is not. There can be great courage present with extremely great fear. After all, we have seen that there is a fear produced by faith, and faith is possible only to one of great courage. Indeed the fearless man who has no fear of God, man or the devil, is undoubtedly a fool; there are many things of which we can, even must be, reasonably afraid. Certainly we must fear the Lord; not, you understand, as we fear death, disease or

accident; rather we fear Him as a judge, evaluating our actions and giving them their just due. Only a fool would not fear strict justice.

The gift of the Holy Ghost

But there is another sense of fear in which it is a sublime gift of the Holy Ghost. This fear is not a cowardly embracing of sin to escape temporal evil; it is not that honest, supernatural fear which is the effect of faith and which drives us from sin through the threat of punishment; rather it is the child's fear of separation from one who is desirable above all else. It is the fear that makes us easily moved by the breath of God towards God Himself by placing within us the first condition of easy mobility, that is, a complete, willing subjection to and reverence for God. It removes all sulkiness from our response to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. In a sense, it makes us grow up; though it is a child's fear, by it we are no longer children stamping the floor and pouting because we cannot have our own way. We grow up, we bow down before the supreme wisdom of God and, in ourselves, the beginnings of wisdom appear.

For fear is really the beginning of wisdom. It is not the first principle of wisdom; that privilege belongs to faith's first long view of the goal. But fear is the beginning of wisdom in the sense of being the first concept of wisdom from which wisdom itself begins to operate. Indirectly the fear produced by faith begins wisdom through its expulsion of attachment to sin; for such an attachment makes wise direction impossible. But directly wisdom is begun by the child's fear, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which implants in our souls the conditions necessary for all direction, for all regulation, for all progress towards God -- reverence and subjection.

You will have noticed that in this fear of God there was a double element: a fear of separation from our divine Friend, and a note of reverence and subjection to God. It is in that double sense that we fear the Lord in this life. As we approach more closely to God, we revere Him more deeply and are more thoroughly subject to Him; while the idea of being separated from Him, even for an instant, becomes more and more intolerable. When we reach the perfect union with God that is proper to heaven, the fear of separation disappears altogether; but our reverence and subjection reach their peak. In other words, in heaven our fear will be perfect because we will be fully grown up. Perhaps another way of saying this is that complete independence belongs to God alone. When we attempt to climb into the clothes of God, we look as pathetic as the child thrashing about in her mother's shoes, playing that she is grown up. Our perfection consists, not in greater independence, but in being perfectly subject to God and in giving Him the reverence due to the Creator from the creature.

Corresponding beatitude: Blessed are the poor in spirit

The highest reaches of the gift of fear, its supreme and ultimate acts, are those of poverty of spirit. This does not mean that such perfection is reserved for those who can present a union card; this gift can be, must be, had by all classes for it is necessary for salvation. For the rich as well as for the poor, the ultimate perfection of fear of the Lord is poverty; and it is strictly true that in this sense of poverty, the richest of men can be more poor than the most abandoned dweller in the slums. St. Augustine described poverty of spirit as "the emptying out of a proud, inflated spirit." The phrase gives us a picture of a pin-prick deflating a balloon. It really means that, with this perfect fear of the Lord, we no longer seek our greatness in any other but God. We no longer have to bolster the frail structure of our souls with riches and honors; we do not have to magnify ourselves by pride; we do not have to protect our weakness by a bulwark of external, temporal things. The very fact that we are so perfectly subject to God, that we have such deep reverence for Him, that we no longer seek outside of Him a source of greatness for ourselves -- this is the height of hope. It is this that frees the rich man from the tentacles of his riches, takes the bitterness out of the smile of poverty, and sends both rich and poor rushing on eager feet to the embrace of God.

Annihilator of hope: Presumption; Despair

Earlier in this chapter we have seen that infidelity indirectly destroys hope by blasting away its

foundations. Two other sins train their guns directly upon hope and destroy it by blowing it apart. These are presumption and despair; and both of them are the result of a mistake. Despair judges eternal happiness to be impossible. It decides that God denies pardon here and now to this penitent sinner; it looks at an impossible good and so it quits. Presumption fixes its eyes upon an irresistible personality -- the personality of the sinner himself. The presumptuous man decides that he is so important that God cannot condemn him; he will be given heaven without good works, pardon for his sins without any sorrow.

The one gives up the search for heaven; the other gives up the avoidance of hell. Both land the sinner in exactly the same place. Both are lesser sins than infidelity and hatred of God for, while all are directly against God, presumption and despair are less so. A moment's consideration will make this clear: infidelity opposes the supreme Truth: hatred of God opposes the supreme Good; but despair and presumption go against our supreme happiness, i.e., against God inasmuch as He is participated by us. Nevertheless these two sins, precisely because they have God for their object, are greater than any sins against any or all of the moral virtues.

If we compare the two we see that despair ranks above presumption in its gravity. It denies to God His perfection of mercy, a perfection which belongs to Him by His very nature; while presumption denies to Him things that pertain to God in reference to our actions, namely, His punishment and reward.

But make no mistake about this. Because despair and presumption rank third and fourth among all the sins man can commit, they are not to be dismissed lightly. Despair is, in fact, a sin of very, very serious danger. In a sense it is a climax of sin, a height of evil; in another sense it is the beginning of sin, and this is a horrible truth. The despairing man is stripped of everything that might have held him back from sin. Now he is a vicious, wild animal, cut loose from all curb on his madness. Indeed the presumptuous man is in much the same position. His insolent assurance of God's overlooking his sin strips him of all that might restrain his appetites. Both are high points of evil, normally reached after a long hard journey through sin; but both are the beginning of new horrors whose end can be seen only in a hell without end.

The despairing man is convinced that absolutely no means of remedy is of use to him; the presumptuous man is convinced that no means is necessary for him. How can they be helped? Only by the omnipotence of God, His relentless love and floods of His grace, can turn the life of the presumptuous or despairing man from failure to high success. But if man is so helpless in the grip of these sins at least he can, while still free of them, see clearly what brings them on and so protect himself from their extremely serious dangers. Despair is a lazy sin. It springs from spiritual sloth which runs away from spiritual good because it involves too much labor. It is bored with spiritual activity; things of God and the soul are distasteful to it. St. Thomas puts it briefly when he describes despair as "a sorrow of spirit casting us down." Dejection makes things look much harder, even as hard as the impossible. This particular dejection, springing principally from sins of the flesh, inverses the values of the spiritual and the carnal; the spiritual goods seem smaller and smaller, less and less worthwhile when seen in the light of the labor they demand and the easy richness of the goods of the flesh. Presumption, on the other hand, is an elation of spirit that exceeds all reason: it expects things which are impossible even to the ordinary power of God. Plainly it is the fruit of pride.

In its eyes the practice of virtue, the doing of penance are grubbing in the earth. This sort of thing is petty, venal work far beneath the presumptuous man. A person as important as he is in the eyes of God does not need such things. He is the perfect picture of the utterly fearless man; and so he is a perfect portrait of the utter fool.

The enslaved will: Desire of the slave

Infidelity, despair and presumption -- these are the chains and the grim walls that have succeeded in doing what nothing else in the world could do, for they have imprisoned the heart of man, they have destroyed hope. No matter how much the modern man talks of freedom, no matter what his championship of democracy, no matter how freely he walks the street, flies the skies or rushes over the ocean, he cannot get

away from that bondage within his own heart. He is a slave. His desire, his love are the desire and love of a slave. When he looks at the end of it all, as he must sometime, his despair is the despair of the slave; not of the physical slave, not of the political slave, not of the economic slave, but of the moral slave whose heart has no place to go.

Love of the slave

This is the hopeless man whose desires are limited to a few hours, a few months, a few years; to the things he can see and touch; to narrow limits: of natural life, of personal accomplishment, of human faith, of the security to be had in this present world. This is the hopeless man whose love has been limited as has his desire. It is the love of a machine, of an animal, or, at best, the love of a man. At its best it is doomed to frustration from the very start; it grows in perfection only to lose the thing it loved; it stops at the walls of the world, shrinks in horror from sickness, brings up short before the barrier of death. It is the love of the slave; the love of the hour that dare not look ahead because of what the future holds for it.

Despair of the slave

For to the heart that has no place to go, there is nothing open but despair. Nothing within the heart of man can satisfy that heart; nothing within the natural universe is worthy of the yearnings of that heart. It has no place to go; yet it was made to go to sublime places, even into the hearts of other men and other women, even into the heart of God. But now, without hope, it is chained down. On its short chain it becomes sullen, vicious, savage, consumed with a violent hate -- all of which are only the outer signs of inner despair.

A Contrast: the cross and the throne

It is an astonishing thing that, with all our love for liberty, we have not seen the innate liberty of a Man nailed to a cross as contrasted with the innate slavery of a man chained to a throne. The Man on the cross was there as the fulfillment of a long hope. He died in hope to give birth to hope. He was there because the human heart had wandered so far; because it still had so far it could go; because that road must be left open to all human hearts that were to come after His. The man on the throne of power today is there because of despair. He is not reigning in hope because his heart has so much further to go; it has already reached its goal. What road is he opening to the hearts of his followers but the narrow, short road he has already trod to its end? He holds out to men the prospect of merging themselves into a political machine; into a social process or into a cosmological process. But with all this power he cannot make one small hole in the walls of the world for the escape of the human heart.

Hope and life: faith, action, and love

Supernatural faith frees the mind of man. It breaks a breach in the walls of the world; through the breach, hope follows. Faith has freed man's mind; hope frees his heart. With heart and mind free, man has limitless things to do, limitless love to give and to take, limitless courage with which to do these things, with which to prove that love. Because that goal beyond the world is so clearly and surely before us, because it can be accomplished by our own acts, and we know this securely by reason of the omnipotence and mercy of God, we can take steps towards that goal, we can get something done. There is no moment of life, nor smallest action of life that cannot be bent toward that supreme task.

Hope and courage

Life is not a dull, plodding affair; life is not the fruitless labor of a slave. Life is the swift action of a free man rushing to an end worthy of his freedom. Because his heart is free by hope, man's love is not balked at death, not hindered by sickness; it is not even held back by the limits of the world. The hearts of other men and women are thrown open to him, not for a day, not for an hour, not for a month, not for years; but forever. And the heart of God is just as wide open and for just as long a time. Of course this free man can sacrifice in the name of love; of course he can face terrific difficulties driven on by that love; of course he

can fail and pick himself up again and again and again, and never be beaten. For always freedom and hope burn in his heart. This man can face the fearful things of hell because he can hope for the divine things of heaven.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER III -- SHARING THE DIVINE LIFE
(Q. 23-26)

1. The nature of friendship:
 - (a) Mutual benevolent love.
 - (b) On a common ground.
2. The friendship of men:
 - (a) Its strength.
 - (b) Its frailty
3. The friendship of God:
 - (a) Its benevolent love: affective and effective.
 - (b) Its common ground -- the life of God:
 - (1) Its strength -- a habit.
 - (2) Its excellence -- a virtue:
 - a. Its unity.
 - b. Its relations to other virtues:
 1. The supreme virtue.
 2. The condition for perfection in every virtue.
 3. The form of all the virtues.
4. Charity and the soul of man:
 - (a) Its object and origin.
 - (b) Its increase.
 - (c) Its boundless perfection.
 - (d) Its decrease and loss.
5. Love in the soul of man as wide as the love of God:
 - (a) Goods about us: neighbors, irrational creation.
 - (b) Ourselves.
 - (c) Evils about us: sinners, enemies.
 - (d) Good and evil above us angels, saints, devils.
6. Friendship's preferences:
 - (a) The place of God.
 - (b) The place of ourselves.
 - (c) The place of neighbor:
 - (1) Inequality.
 - (2) Double foundation: goodness and bonds of union.

Conclusion:

1. The norm of friendship -- generosity.
2. Friendship and the nature of man.
3. The limits of friendship.
4. Friends of God:
 - (a) Living the life of God.
 - (b) Loving with the love of God.
 - (c) Embrace as wide as the arms of God.
5. Charity and the modern world:
 - (a) Doctrines of hate.
 - (b) Doctrines of selfishness.
 - (c) The narrow love of men
 - (d) The death of love.

CHAPTER III
SHARING THE DIVINE LIFE
(Q. 23-26)

THE unquestionably accepted axiom, "friendship is rare," would be a terrible indictment of the human race, if it were true. But of course it is not. Friendship is not nearly so rare as is appreciation of it. These gloomy axioms furnish us with fine excuses when we run short of material for self-pity, especially at times when our mouth is watering for a dreary session with ourselves. Friendship is not rare among human beings because unselfishness is not rare among them; and unselfish love is the one fundamental for true friendship that might be come at with difficulty.

The nature of friendship

Surely the amateur burglar, striking up an acquaintance with an expert in his line, cannot be said to have true friendship. He hopes to get something out of it, at least some expertness in burglary. The girl who is an official fascinator, looking out for material comfort for the future, is certainly not a true friend of her

men friends. Neither of these is true friendship because neither of them is based on unselfish love.

Mutual benevolent love, on a common ground

Unselfish love means no more than the constant, effective desire to do good to another. Briefly, it means that we have identified ourselves with another; his will is our will so that his good is our good, his happiness our happiness. But unselfish love is not necessarily a guarantee of friendship, it is not the whole story. The charming girl student may feel ever so kindly towards her professor of Ancient History and still fail resoundingly whenever he has anything to do with her examinations. For friendship there must also be a common ground upon which two can walk; a requirement not at all difficult to meet. We have common ground enough with men and women about us: we also worry about bills at the first of the month, we too are thrilled at football games; we have our secret, unrealized hopes, our sorrows, sacrifices, little triumphs. In any one of these fields we can meet countless other men and women. The difficulty is, can we meet them unselfishly? Can we see in them our other selves? Can we attain to that mutual, benevolent, unselfish love on this common ground and so be assured of real friendship?

The friendship of men: Its strength

Friendship would certainly seem to be worth having. It means, at the very least, that through it we live, not one narrow life, rather we live two lives. A door is thrown open and we are admitted to regions that are proper to God alone, for by friendship we stroll into the soul of another. It offers us completion for our incomplete, lonely human hearts, a fulfillment that is sought by every man from the beginning of his existence. If friendship brought no more than this to a man, it might quite reasonably be foregone. An unlimited amount of cosmetics will not beautify an ugly face, it will merely hide its ugliness; nor will a football suit change the puny physique of a man. These additions are extrinsic to the face and the physique; and it is always true that only the intrinsic additions to man really perfect him. In other words the important thing about friendship is what it does to the individuals involved. It brings out the best in every man, rather paradoxically it is true, by making him forget himself. It opens up to him possibilities of sacrifice that he has formerly associated with heroism, with the sublime in the efforts of man. Understand, now, by friendship is meant all human love: whether between man and man, woman and woman, man and woman -- indeed all human love that escapes the taint of selfishness.

While friendship is a great comfort, it is not to be pictured in terms of dim lights, quiet corners and intimate whispers. Rather it scans wide horizons with deep wisdom and is a source of enormous strength. It shows us, for example, the stupidity of gloomy sacrifice; it tears away the veil of mystery from the cheerfulness, even eagerness, of love's embrace of hardships. Perhaps when we say that friendship is rare, we are really apologizing for ourselves, explaining that we are not strong. At least, as soon as we make self basic, we have begun to corrupt sacrifice and coddle cowardice; we have begun to tear out the foundations of friendship. More than that, we have begun to tear out something from the depths of the human heart; for men have always looked, perhaps at times only wistfully, to sacrifice as the fullest expression of a generous heart.

Its frailty

For all its strength, comfort, sublimity, human friendship has about it the frail delicacy of old lace. It is frail because its truth can never be clearly seen but must always be taken on faith, and because its task of surrender can never be fully accomplished. In a word, human friendship is never a rugged thing because of our inability to share our inner self. The closest we come to sharing the truth of friendship is in our clumsy symbols of it; perhaps the closest we come to accomplishing its task is in the physical generation of children. In neither case can we give ourselves utterly to another. Fundamentally, the reason is obvious: we cannot give ourselves away utterly because we do not belong completely to ourselves.

The friendship of God

Friendship's loss can be as unobtrusively quiet a thing as the death of a rose. It has none of the hard

durability of a virtue, for it is rather an outgrowth of virtue; it pre-supposes a goodness in us that others can love. This is an unflattering answer to the tight-lipped, bitter-faced individual's complaint that he has no friends; if he realized the full implication of that complaint, undoubtedly he would squeeze the fact into the narrow confines of his petty soul and bind it hand and foot. On the other hand, this truth explains the vitality and universality of God's love, stressing its distinction from human love. We must discover the good we love; God does not discover it, He creates it. We can, and do plant the flag of discovery and chant our *Te Deum* too soon; for us, friendship holds extreme possibilities of evil, as well as extreme possibilities of good, for we can make the mistake of throwing open the doors of our soul to a marauder.

To an honest human heart, the sublime experience of human love is a joyful humiliation. There is nothing contradictory in the office boy's lofty gesture as he tells the newsboy to keep the change, and the panicky haste with which he responds to his beloved's slightest wish. He is at the same time a lord and a slave. To him, as to everyone, love is humiliating because of his intimate knowledge of his own imperfection. We are ashamed because we fall so far short of the opinion our friends have of us. Yet we expand with an odd, exuberant joy. It seems so impossible that someone can value us so highly, can put us above everything else, even above themselves. That very joy and humiliation spur us on to heights we could never reach without love. In fact, unselfish human love is always a kind of miracle. It is as incredible to an honest mind as the works of God; yet there is a friendship much more incredible even than this supreme effort of the human heart -- the friendship with God which is called charity.

Its benevolent love: affective and effective

We would never have dared to use the word friendship in relation to God if He Himself had not done so first, if He had not come among us and lived familiarly with us. Now we are friends of God in the strictest sense of the word. There is between us and God a mutual, unselfish love. It is to be understood, however, that God does not putter about the wreckage of human nature looking for something of good to love, as an ambulance-chasing lawyer might scan an automobile crash in search of a client. God's love does not discover good, as ours does; it creates the good it loves. In other words, on God's side this friendship is effective, creative; He loves us that He might make us good. On our side, the friendship is not effective but affective; it confronts us with all that is desirable. We love Him because in Him we see, in its full perfection, all that we have seen merely mirrored, imaged, in the world about us, even in the world of men and women. It is not too difficult to see the unselfish love on both sides of this friendship between God and man.

Its common ground -- the life of God

What is much more difficult to see is the common ground upon which we can walk with God. It is not a matter of a super-highway. Plastic surgery will not make us look any more like God; nor can a Paris designer make a modern hat god-like. We cannot pull ourselves up to His level; nor could we -- nor would we want to if we could -- pull Him down to our level. But He can, and He does, lift us up to the level of Divinity. This is the incredible thing in the friendship of God: the common ground upon which that friendship strolls is the life of God Himself. Men and women are upraised to the point where they can, and do, live the life of God. And the medium by which that miracle of divine generosity is accomplished is His divine grace.

No lengthy argument is necessary to prove that this life of God within us is imperfect now. But none the less this divine life is a reality here and now; it will be perfected in us only in heaven. Here and now, far as we are from heaven, we know God as God knows Himself, for He has given us that intimate knowledge in telling us the truths of faith. We love Him as He loves Himself, because of His supreme goodness. We live on the divine plane; our acts, dimly like His, are of eternal significance within the family of God. This, then, is our friendship with God: a mutual, benevolent love, based on the mysterious common ground of divine life.

Its strength -- a habit

This friendship is not a half-hearted affair of suspicion and secrets withheld; it does not wait on a mood for intimacy. God shares His inner life with us and our souls are naked and open to His divine eye. There are no depths of affections which, because they cannot be done up in the clumsy wrappings of words, must depend for their expression on a pressure of the hand, a caressing glance, the quick welling of tears. Our souls are thrown open to God; God has thrown Himself open to us. More than that, the love of God has put something positive within that soul of ours, His is a creative love; and the creation of His Love within us is called the habit of charity.

In other words, this love of ours for God is not the empty echo of a ventriloquist's vanity. Our will does not put forth this love as a mere instrument responding helplessly to a musician's touch, even though the musician be a Divine Artist. We produce acts that are our very own; and, as we saw in the second volume of this work, our intellects and wills can produce acts only when those tremendous reservoirs of power have been tapped by the pipelines of habit, when they have been determined to a course of action by habit. It is the habit of charity which is the immediate principle, the determining factor, in our acts of love of God.

There is a profound significance in the fact that the effect of God's creative caress is a habit. This means that what is natural to God has now become second-nature for us; charity is connatural to a human heart. It is a strong, free, joyous thing. For habit, if it does anything, produces its acts ever more perfectly, more easily, more joyfully, more efficaciously. The brave man *enjoys* his courage; the temperate man *enjoys* his moderation. To put the same truth in another way, stingy, begrudging, laborious or even bitter charity is a mockery. Thomas says rightly: "There is no virtue, no habit, that has so much of an inclination to its own action as has charity. There is no habit that acts with so much joy." Fuller reasons for this will be given in the course of this chapter as it becomes more clear that charity is the supreme habit, that it is moved by no other but moves all others, in a word that it enjoys the fullest freedom.

Its excellence -- a virtue

It will, perhaps, be better to concentrate on this habit of charity within us in treating of divine friendship; after all, that is our side of this friendship and, as in all friendships, the one side which is under our control. As a good habit, charity is a virtue. In fact it is a kind of super-virtue; a giant that stands head and shoulders above the rest of the crowd. Its great strength is impatient of the limitations imposed on other virtues; to attempt to confine it to those rules would be like condemning Dante or Shakespeare to oblivion on grounds of punctuation. Temperance, for example, is a virtue insofar as it measures up to the rule of human reason which is the rule of human action; the same is true of justice and fortitude. But charity does not stop at the rule of human reason. It plunges beyond that to attain the rule which is behind the rule of human reason, the supreme rule of human action, the supreme guide to successful living -- God Himself. Charity can by no means be mistaken for a moral virtue for it does not even seek the good of reason. It is not faith, whose object is God as supremely credible; nor is it hope, whose object is God as attainable through the help of His omnipotence. Charity is a distinct, a special virtue whose object is God as the supremely Lovable Being.

Its unity

Charity moves through the world with a lover's smile on its face and a lover's gentleness in its hands. Strangely enough the world she sees is a lover's world, giving her back smile for smile. It is as though the simplicity of love's concentration gave all the world a simple unity that made it take on something of the splendor of divinity. Certain it is that everything with which our heart makes contact through charity glows with the lustrous beauty of divinity. For by charity we love everything and everyone because we love God.

Human love has a variety that charity totally lacks. We might love a wise man for the wisdom we might share, a good conversationalist for the entertainment he gives us, wife and children for their very selves; there is no such distinction in the love of charity. For charity, you see, is not a partial but a total love. It

has no end but the end of utter unselfishness, the end of the divine good; its common ground does not vary according to nationality, interests, relationship, but is always the same unvarying share in divine life. This is an extremely important truth which will be brought out more fully as this chapter unfolds: it will be sufficient to point out here that this means that love of neighbor is not the teetering chair upon which we stand precariously reaching for God. We do not reach God through our neighbor; rather we reach our neighbor through God. We love our neighbor because in some way he belongs to our Friend Who is God, or because he participates with us in that common ground by which we are friends of God, the common ground of divine life. There are no short cuts to altruism; we must go the long, triangular way around, through God to neighbor.

Its relations to other virtues: The supreme virtue

In the preceding volume of this work we saw that virtue was not a dull, routine thing, but the condition for all progress, the basis for extraordinary action, the groundwork for heroism. If this be true of all the virtues, the good habits, we can expect extraordinary things to be almost ordinary when we come to the habit of charity. For charity is the supreme principle of sublime human action in this life, it is the peak of all the virtues. Beside the achievements of charity, the accomplishments of intellectual and moral habits are the precocious drawings of a child contrasted with the work of a master. The intellectual and moral habits are clumsy, humble servants who know well that they are not equipped to serve the master directly; charity walks straight into the presence of God. The object of faith compares with that of charity as a photograph compares with the living presence of a friend; while hope's object, in a like comparison, is a medal from a king compared to a warm welcome into the royal family life. Charity seeks only God and loves Him for Himself.

There is an unconscious humor in the way we ordinarily phrase that truth: charity seeks *only* God. It is something like the shrewdness in Thomas' answer when, having submitted his manuscript on the Blessed Sacrament to the crucifix, the voice of the Lord asked him what reward he would have for writing so well of Him. Thomas said: "Nothing but Thee, O Lord." Nothing else! No partial reward, no image of the divinity; only the divinity itself would satisfy Thomas. That is what charity wants: only God; in other words, everything.

When a miser rushes into his burning house to save his money at the cost of his life, the bystanders may pity his foolishness; they will not admire him as a brave man. This is an exhibition of the virtue of fortitude. He is not practicing the virtue of temperance when he abstains because it costs money to buy drinks. These are not virtues; they have the wrong goal, they do not bring a man to his end. Yet we do sometimes make the mistake of thinking a man without charity can have perfect virtue.

The form of all the virtues

It simply cannot be done. Charity, in the order of virtue, is the breath of life. Without it, other virtues drag themselves along dispiritedly to a half-way mark, and then fall down exhausted. The other virtues without charity are like men who do not know God; they have a life of their own, but a disappointingly incomplete life. We might say that charity enables the virtues to lead double lives, just as grace enables us to lead two lives. The soul of man gives him natural life; but with no more than this, men must stop at the borders of nature. Grace, perfecting the soul, allows man to lead a divine life; in other words, it goes beyond the natural stopping place of the soul and pushes on to the ultimate goal of the vision of God. So the virtues direct a man to their own proper object, they live their own proper lives; charity comes along and pushes them far beyond that half-way place to the end of ends. Just as prudence is absolutely necessary if there are to be any virtues at all, so charity is necessary if there are to be any perfect virtues. Without prudence, there is no virtue; without charity there is no perfect virtue, but only that imperfect virtue that bogs down far short of God. That end of ends is proper only to charity.

Charity and the soul of man: Its object and origin

It might be well, here, to rule out the modern confusion of love with mere sentiment. Long, happy sighs, a

dazed expression, or copious tears shed at a movie may mean no more than a low, an exceedingly low I.Q. Love, if it be worthy of a human being, must have something rational in it; after all, it proceeds from man's rational appetite, his will. Yet charity is often far from reasonable. A cursory reading of the lives of the saints will impress us immediately with their divine madness, their attempts at impossible things, which nevertheless they accomplished. To say that charity is rational is like saying a mathematical genius is good at arithmetic. Reason is not the rule of charity as it is of the human virtues. Charity is regulated only by the wisdom of God Himself.

For charity exceeds all nature, aiming at God Himself; so, of course, it exceeds all reason. It is not to be explained by natural principles, nor by constantly placed human acts. True enough, God is the most lovable thing there is; but it is also true that God is the most knowable thing there is, and yet to us, He is the least known. So also He is the least loved. In our choice of things to love, we must furnish the angels with much material for kindly amusement. We are like children who much prefer toys to warm clothes as Christmas gifts. If the house were burning down, the child would be quite satisfied if he could grab all his toys and carry them to safety; certainly he would not shed tears over the loss of his galoshes. A child must be poured into warm clothes; charity must be poured into us. Nor is this gift necessarily given according to our natural capacity for love. A great lover is not necessarily a great saint; although a great saint is always a very great lover. Surely one of the secondary joys of heaven will be the discovery of the ranking stars in the game of love; imagine the buzz that will run through the heavenly ranks when Don Juan and Thomas Aquinas come up for a comparison of their averages! For charity, like all the theological virtues, is above nature. Our very preparation for it is itself a supernatural preparation; we can be very sure that curly hair, a flashing smile or soulful eyes have nothing whatever to do with the amount of charity we receive from God.

Its increase

However, this truth must be well understood. The fact that charity is not from nature, nor doled out in proportion to natural capacity for love, does not mean that there is nothing for us to do about it. A man cannot sit back and wait for something to happen, half-expecting, perhaps, that some morning he will wake up and, to the astonishment of his wife, suddenly be a saint. There is a great deal we can do about charity, for it is beyond all doubt true that charity can be increased. This means no more than that we can constantly come closer to God, for the approach to God is not by a lunge of the body, but by a lunge of the heart. Our life has rightly been called a "way"; it is a way to an end, to a goal, to God. We can always move towards that goal as long as we have life. We approach God by love, by charity.

More concretely, we can do in this thing of charity, what we can do in any friendship. The busy young man who is furious because his beloved is not waiting beside the telephone for his call, the young lady who pouts because her friend is not attentive enough or who scans every inch of a gift in search of a price tag will soon be looking for other partners. We know from experience how surely friendship can be killed by attempting to increase it through pressure, not upon ourselves, but upon the other party. Our love does not reform our friends, it re-forms us. At least the one thing we can do about friendship is to work on our side of it, to deepen the common ground, within ourselves, upon which that friendship is based. We get nowhere by insisting on thoughtfulness, attention, caresses; for all that comes from the other side, the side that is beyond our control.

In this divine friendship, the common ground is the divine life. We can increase that friendship in only one way: by deepening that common ground, by increasing the life of God within our soul. Certainly we cannot increase divine love, any more than we can increase human love, by a kind of promiscuity. It is useless to look around for more things to love by charity, for with the tiniest amount of charity all things that can be loved by charity, are so loved. If we except any of them, we have already destroyed charity. An increase in weight may make us bigger lovers, but not greater ones. We cannot search around eagerly for some new, improved kind of charity, there is no new kind. There is only one kind, the kind that loves God for Himself. We increase charity by digging it deeper into our souls; and in no other way.

To say that a man has become great through the years, does not mean that he has developed extraordinary muscles or increased his vegetative powers tremendously. It means that he has become more of a man. He has done more of the things that are proper to humanity: more thinking, deeper loving, more orderly action. Increase, in anything, must be judged according to the nature of that thing. So charity, which is a habit, must increase the way habits increase. It is the nature of every habit to be in a faculty; its increase, then, means that it is more deeply in that faculty, it is greater because it has penetrated more deeply into its subject. Or, very briefly the increase of charity can never be by extension; it is never quantitative but always a matter of intensity.

It has been said that in the spiritual life, to stand still is to go backward. You may be able to detect a bit of the brogue in that. Yet it is true if properly understood; that is, if we understand that the very dispositions for progress are themselves a kind of progress. The very use of a habit, any habit, is a disposition for a better use of that habit; but actually the habit will not increase until we have produced an act more intense than the habit itself. For example, if our habit of charity is, say, of the power of five, and for a period of a year we have produced only acts of the power of four, then during all that year we have not actually increased our charity. But we have, during all of that year, piled up dispositions for better acts of charity. Actual increase of charity is only by more intense acts; but dispositive increase is brought about by every one of our acts.

All this would be true of any habit. But of this supernatural habit of charity, it is also true that we can merit an increase. Let us put it this way: by every act of charity we merit eternal life; but that eternal life is given to us only at the proper time -- the moment of death. So, also, by every act of charity we merit an increase in the habit of charity; but that increase is to be given only at its proper time -- when we produce a more intense act of charity.

Its boundless perfection

When a father asks his little girl how much she loves her daddy, he is taking a loving revenge for all the unanswerable questions she has showered upon him; he knows the question is very difficult to answer. Later on in life, the answer will be so much easier. By then we know that the measure of love is sacrifice; but we never know any definite limit to the possibilities of the human heart for love. Yet there are limits. This is only a human heart and the object of its human love is only a human being, possessed of only a limited goodness, along with many defects and shortcomings. If we find it difficult to place a limit to human friendship, we find it impossible to place a limit to divine friendship. There is simply nothing to limit it but the human heart itself. God is always, eminently, infinitely desirable; the constant flood of His grace makes more and more intense acts of charity always possible to us. And even that finite heart, which must harbor all this love, increases its capacity for love by loving.

All this is not discouraging, in the sense that the work of loving is an impossible job, never to be finished; rather it is encouraging in the sense of assuring us that we shall never be satiated with divine love. It does not mean that we are condemned to failure, never reaching perfection in divine love. In one sense, that divine friendship, that charity, is always perfect -- in the sense that we always love God above all things because He Himself is so supremely good; in another sense, it is always imperfect, for certainly we can never love God as much as He deserves to be loved -- that would demand an infinite act. But there is another sense in which charity is progressively more and more perfect.

Obviously it is in heaven, not in this life, that we are free constantly to praise and love God without interruption. In this life, the best we can do is to refuse to trifle with His rivals. It may be our vocation to make a sweeping denunciation of all impediments to love, *actually* excluding, as religious do, even necessary things of life that we may be free for God. Or it may be that we can exclude these impediments only *habitually*, as do all the faithful when they place their hearts in God habitually so that they refuse to think or to will anything contrary to that divine love; that is, when they keep the Ten Commandments. From yet another angle, the angle of emphasis of the act of charity, the progressive perfection of charity is easily seen.

Almost every Christian is familiar with this division on the grounds of emphasis, a division often stated as the three grades of spiritual life: the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive way. St. Thomas phrases it more simply, calling it the state of the beginner, of one progressing and of the perfect. Perhaps all this can be made clear by an example. In our settlement of the West, the first pioneers went out with guns in their hands to explore the country, defending their lives every instant. They were followed by the settlers and the railroad builders, who still had their guns at hand ready to protect their lives every moment. Finally the farmers came, established their farms and lived in a degree of peace, but still under the necessity of protecting themselves. In the spiritual life, in the first stages of charity, our chief preoccupation is to protect ourselves from the enemy, sin. In the second stage, our interest is principally progress in charity, penetrating the country of God, but we are still in danger, constant danger. Finally, in the third stage, our principal task is an experience and enjoyment of God. Yet in all these stages, there must be a constant alertness to any incursion of sin. In more simple terms, we might say that the purgative state is our period of infancy, when we are in greatest danger of disease or death; the illuminative state is one of adolescence, where we are more fully developing our powers; finally, the unitive state is a state of spiritual adulthood.

Its decrease and loss

But not even an adult can, successfully, dispute the right of way with an express train, nor frown typhoid out of the room. However perfect our charity in this life it can always be lost. In fact, it can be lost in one crashing instant through a single mortal sin. These two, charity and mortal sin, are mutually exclusives: one is a total surrender to God; the other is a complete rebellion against God. One places God above all things, the other places man himself above all things; one is light, the other darkness. And sin is always possible to our human will as long as God is not seen face to face.

While this is always possible, it is not usual; in fact, it is quite extraordinary. Normally we do not pass from depths to heights, or heights to depths, in one jump; we are cautious even in our sins. Charity is ordinarily lost through a previous diminution of it. Not that we can cut down charity as we slice down a loaf of bread. We must wear charity down by shadow boxing it, for there is no means of getting at it directly. Like all love, this love too was made to last forever; an element of temporality, of caution, some means of escape is a frank statement of the absence of love. Charity itself cannot fail. Look at it closely: God cannot become less lovable; the flood of His grace will not desert us; this habit of charity is not a human habit; built up by human acts and to be torn down by human acts. It comes directly from God. There is absolutely no creative agency that can act upon it directly. This is a love that is secure. But it can be indirectly limited; that is, its increase can be stopped effectively in two ways. either by ceasing all acts of charity -- the fruit of boredom with God -- which means that we are not getting up any steam for that further, more intense act of charity which would increase the habit; or, secondly, by venial sin.

Mrs. O'Malley may send words of love from her lips while her eyes are twin vultures circling the church for signs of weakness in her prey. It is true that venial sin is not opposed to the *habit* of charity; but it is impossible for us, at the same time, to make an act of love and commit a venial sin. Venial sin is opposed to the *act* of charity. It effectively bars the increase of charity by disposing us to the opposite of charity, to mortal sin. An honest glance at any venial sin will make this clear. It caters to our depraved tastes, increasing them; it develops our love for temporal things, petty, secondary things in comparison with the divine friendship; and it gives us the habit of transgressing the law. We are like a child who, because he has escaped unscathed when he tossed a cup on the floor, decided it would be great fun to crash all the china in one quick tug at the table-cloth. We get used to breaking the law in smaller things; the bigger things seem much less big than formerly and we are much less careful of keeping them intact. We might call venial sin a kind of spiritual polygamy. At least it scatters the forces of our will, cutting down the intensity of our love for any one object and thus assuring us of no further progress in charity. At the same time it feeds our natural appetite in a disorderly fashion, a fashion whose normal climax is mortal sin.

5. Love in the soul of man as wide as the love of God: Goods about us: neighbors, irrational creation.

As the novel opens, Father Malachy (the miracle-worker) is sitting in a third-class railroad carriage meditating on the love of God, when suddenly two utterly unprepossessing persons come in and sit opposite him. Father Malachy's eyes closed with a snap that almost awoke an echo, as he reflected that if, loving God, he must love his neighbors, at least he did not have to love them with his eyes open. There is something in this, at least the truth that we do not love our neighbors supernaturally because of their personal charm. But it would be truer to say that charity turns an x-ray on our neighbors uncovering hidden goodness, rather than forcing us to love them blindly.

Not even a saint would attempt to deny that this individual has a face like a horse; nor pretend that a public enemy was a kindly, misunderstood boy. The point is that even if the horse-face never wins a beauty contest and the public enemy never gets to be president, both have a solid, unfailing claim to our love. We love them because they belong to God. We can, we must, find love for them no matter what they are, just as a husband, because he loves his wife, can find some love for her relatives. These neighbors belong to our Friend. Not only that, but as long as they are in this life, they possess, or can possess, that same common ground of divine life upon which our own friendship with God is based. Really, they are united to us in God. This is not to say that charity does not extend to all human loves that are not founded in sin. It does. But it consecrates them, lifts them up to higher ground. Christ did not demand the impossible in commanding us to love our neighbors; He asked that our love embrace them as belonging to God and as, at least potentially, friends of God and so our friends.

Charity, in other words, is not a sentimental hypocrite; nor is it a sob-sister, sick with the passion of pity. By it we do not weep over the discouragement, sickness or loneliness of our neighbors as though these were the supreme tragedies of life. The good we wish them by our mutually benevolent love is that good which belongs to charity -- a share in divine life. And we do what we can to make that wish effective.

Thomas, on the whole, was an easy-going man, not easily aroused; he was particularly considerate of the opinions of others. It comes as somewhat of a shock to hear him answer the question, "Can irrational creation be loved from charity, be a friend of man?", with an explosive "Ridiculous!" One wonders if medieval Paris, about eleven o'clock at night, had the equivalent of Park Avenue's disgusted servants and self-conscious dogs. It is, of course, ridiculous to expect benevolent love from a creature that is driven, that cannot give and take, that cannot surrender as love demands. Irrational creatures can be loved as belonging to our divine Friend.

Ourselves

Still the fact that irrational creatures can, in some way, be loved, makes it clear that there is little to which charity does not extend. Certainly we must love ourselves; fortunately this is not too difficult, no matter what ravages nature and the wear and tear of life have effected. Moreover we must love ourselves, from charity, second only to God. The objection that a man can hardly be united to himself, yet charity, as friendship, demands union, overlooks a profound truth. That truth is that union demands unity as its root; and we, ourselves, are the units of that union which is our friendship with God. The love by which we love ourselves is the form, the basis, of the friendship which we have for others.

This truth has been misconstrued by opponents of St. Thomas to mean that we must love ourselves even above God, because we are the unit of that friendship with God. True, we are a unit in that friendship, but not the primary or principal unit; we are a secondary unit, God is the primary. Of these two, God and ourselves, is built the bridge by which we cross the gap separating us from our neighbor. We cannot love ourselves more than God or we have destroyed even the unit of love of ourselves which is from charity. God comes first; but immediately after God, ourselves. Because of this love of ourselves through God -- as belonging to God and as His friend -- it is possible to give all our neighbors the same supernatural love.

Evils about us: sinners, enemies

It is a Manichean, not a Catholic, tenet that the body is to be hated. The scourgings of the saints were gone about with the same regret a parent has in spanking a beloved but unruly child. We must, from

charity, love our bodies; not for the part they play in sin, but as things of God, made by God, as being a part of us who belong to God, and as sharers in the winning of heaven and the enjoyment of its triumph. So also we must love sinners, not for their sins but for their nature, which belongs to God, and for the possibilities they have of sharing in divine friendship. We must love sinners, even though sinners most effectively hate themselves.

There is tragedy in that last phrase, a tragedy that is best expressed in a paradox: the sinner abandons God for love of himself, and reaches the goal of hatred of self; the just man abandons himself for love of God and reaches the goal of most perfect love of himself. Swinburne could write, naively, of "the raptures and roses of vice", only because he had got lost in a fog. We do not get raptures and roses from enemies and the sinner is a bitter enemy of himself.

As a concrete test of the love and hatred of men for themselves, let us apply the signs of friendship. A friend does not wish to absorb his friend, he wishes to preserve that loved personality in all its integrity. He wishes good to his friend; moreover, he wishes it effectively, he does something about it, actually tries to get that good done. He delights in the presence of his friend and with him is at peace, for they seek the same goal. The test works out perfectly when applied to the just man relative to himself. He does not wish to destroy his own excellence, rather he desires to preserve that rational part in all its integrity; he wishes good to his soul, to his supreme part, a real, lasting, a spiritual good. And he does something about this wish by his acts of virtue. He delights to enter into the house of his soul, because there he will find peace.

This does not mean that the just man sits down and hugs himself by the hour; but his very fight against sin has the universal appeal of a man's fight for his friends, with its connotations of mysterious communion, long calm evenings, pervading peace. Now let us look at the sinner. He does not wish to preserve the integrity, the interior life that should be his; his sin is a direct attack on it. He does not desire the spiritual goods that are alone goods of the rational part of man; quite the contrary, for he does all he can to destroy those goods. He gets no pleasure out of entering into himself; his life is an attempt to escape from himself. His moments of terror are the moments when he is forced within himself, for there he knows well he will find nothing but war. The unspeakable things that are championed today in the name of love are, actually, not the inspirations of love but of hate.

If the modern world thinks of it at all, it probably decides that Christ was not thinking of Chamberlain and Hitler when he commanded men to love their enemies; imagine demanding a flush of pleasure on Hitler's cheek, a joyful racing of his heart at the mere mention of the name of Chamberlain! But no one has made any such demand. Christ did not ask us to feel love, but to have love. Moreover he did not ask us to love these people as enemies. In fact, as enemies, they are sinners, they have acted unjustly towards us; if they have not and we still think they are enemies, we are being stupid about it. Really they are friends, doing us good though the momentary bitterness of the good has spoiled our appreciation of it.

We are asked to love them, first of all as men, and secondly as at least potentially participants in the friendship of God; in other words, as belonging to God and as His potential friends. We do not have to kiss them; but we do have to wish them the good of charity, their eternal salvation. The signs of friendship we show them are the signs proportionate to the inner love we are obliged to have for them. We must at least show them the general signs of good will that we show to all men; "darling," as a term of address, is certainly not obligatory; "skunk" is just as certainly forbidden. Under the stress of some particular necessity, we may be obliged to show the signs of friendship normally reserved to our particular friends -- an invitation to dinner when our enemy is starving, or at least a sandwich at the back door; or a friendly approach when we know our stiffness is furnishing him with further occasion for hating us.

Good and evil above us angels, saints, devils

We may be a little exuberant in our estimation of their earthly counterparts, but we do love angels; not only as creatures of God but as active participants in the friendship of God. We can love devils in somewhat the same way we love a friend's horse; their nature belongs to God, they are the creatures of our

divine Friend. But they can never be our friends, no matter how chummy we get with them. From our point of view, devils are not an unmixed evil; they are remarkably assiduous exercise-boys who keep countless men spiritually fit, offering them constant opportunities for the practice of virtue in resisting temptation.

We could sum up all of this doctrine on the object of charity by saying, briefly, that by charity we must love God, the Cause of this divine friendship. Then we must love those who directly participate in that friendship: first of all ourselves; then our neighbor, who is associated with us in that friendship, at least potentially; finally, our bodies, which have a share in that supreme happiness of union with God in heaven through a redundancy of the glory of the soul. All else is loved solely as belonging to our divine Friend.

Friendship's preferences: The place of God

This is all clear as long as we stick to general statements; but when we come down to particulars, it is another story. There is for example the perplexity of the man faced with choosing between the rescue of his wife and his mother in a shipwreck; or between the starvation of his wife and of his children. Who comes first? What to do? The question is not settled by the rescuer drowning himself, nor the husband allowing the whole family to starve.

Much of this difficulty is cleared up by a simple distinction. Perhaps the choice will not be made any easier, but it will certainly be made clearer if we remember that there are two kinds of love. The first is *appreciative love*, which corresponds to the objective goodness or loveliness. This is the love which falls under precept; it is an objective thing, for its object is not something subject to our will, but existing in the ontological order. We are commanded in the appreciative line, the line of evaluation, because it follows the objective goodness; this is nothing more than truth in love. The second might be called *intensive* or subjective love. You find it in full force in the heart of a mother of a worthless son, for it depends not on the objective value of the thing loved so much as its closeness to us. This love does not fall under precept.

As an illustration of the confusion of this distinction, I was once told by a young nun that she had not written home for nine months, because, as she explained, she had left all things for God. This was a concrete expression of her love of God above all things, even above her parents. As a matter of fact, by religious profession God is loved above all else *appreciatively*; it is perfectly normal to have a much more *intensive* love for parents than for God.

The place of ourselves

In fact we can push this further and say that it is the ordinary thing to have a more intensive love for grandchildren, or even for a chance acquaintance; but if it comes to an exclusive choice between anyone or anything and God, the choice must be in God's favor. He is the reason for loving all else. In Himself He is the most desirable, the most lovable Being. In this objective or appreciative order, we love God first, then ourselves, then our neighbor; in the concrete, this will at least mean that we can never put ourselves above God, and never commit the smallest sin (do ourselves the slightest spiritual damage) to further the good of our neighbor, even to save him from eternal damnation.

The place of neighbor: Inequality

In our love of neighbor there is, of course, variety; it would be a dull world indeed in which there were none of the ups and downs of love. We have, in fact, a double ground for our preferences, namely, our neighbor's closeness to God and his closeness to ourselves. Their proximity to God determines their objective lovability, as a basis of appreciative love; their proximity to us explains, in a dark manner, the mysterious variety of human tastes in love, as it furnishes the basis for intensive love.

Double foundation: goodness and bonds of union

A man's proximity to God is determined by his participation in divine perfections. And of all the bonds

which tie one man to another, St. Thomas selects, as the closest, the bond of blood. That is still a little too general to be genuinely informative. Determining it further, Thomas says that we should love parents more than sons, father more than mother, and parents more than a wife or a husband. Understand, all this is on the appreciative or objective side. Thomas is arguing from the one consideration of parents as parents. We love them as the principle or source of our being; as such their claim to love is most like God's own. Parents are the principles of our life, our sons are not; so we love our parents more objectively, but usually we love our sons more intensely, for sons are really a part of us. A father, as the active principle, is more the principle of generation than a mother; on this ground alone, he is to be loved more, though on countless other grounds the claim of the mother may be superior. On this same consideration -- of principle, or source of being -- parents are loved more objectively, a wife more intensely. This same line of argument is extended beyond the bonds of blood and justifiably so. Thus, for instance, we love a benefactor as a principle of a good that has come to us, but a beneficiary as a part of ourselves; consequently the benefactor is loved more objectively, a beneficiary more intensely. All this is not merely academic; it gives the solid basis of rational preference in those crucial moments when tragic preference must be made. Although, it is true, not many men are ever faced with the dilemma of deciding whether father, mother, wife, child or friend shall have the last crust that stands between them all and starvation.

Conclusion: The norm of friendship -- generosity.

We can, I believe, sum up this chapter briefly in terms of friendship. Friendship is a mutual benevolent love on a common ground, and has as its normal rule, unselfishness; or, in more simple terms, generosity. Our friendship is as deep as the identification of our will with the will of another; insofar as we see someone else as another self; insofar as we find our happiness in giving good to another, whatever the cost.

Friendship and the nature of man

From the beginning, it has not been good for man to be alone. Man has recognized himself as incomplete; he has sought other selves, and carried that search even to the heights, in seeking a divine Friend. We must share our lives with others because our hearts are so big; we must have the companionship of others because our hearts are so small and weak. Betrayal of a friend is a kind of suicide, with all of suicide's cowardice and despair. It is difficult for a man to live a whole human life without friends, because it is exceedingly difficult to any man to be sufficient unto himself.

The limits of friendship

Yet this yearning of man for friendship, for the completion offered by love, is doomed to disappointment when it is restricted to the purely human sphere. There is, after all, a limit to the generosity of men and women; a limit to what they can give; a limit to what, of themselves, they are able to share. There is a much greater limit to their capacity to do the good they wish for their friends; and perhaps an even greater limit to their capacity for instilling generosity in others. Even were we to overlook all these limitations, there is the terrific limitation of time on human love. For, left to itself, the love of men for men must end at death.

Friends of God: Living the life of God Embrace as wide as the arms of God

It was divinely fitting that this yearning of the human heart should be fulfilled by the only friendship capable of satisfying it. In that divine friendship, all the limitations of human friendship are done away with. There can be no question of the infinite generosity of God nor of His capacity for doing effectively the good He wills us. His is a creative love. There can be no question of His ability to share His inner self with us. We find the friends of God living the life of God, so much so that this divine life is the very basis of the friendship, the common ground upon which they walk arm and arm with God. We find them loving with the love of God, knowing God as He knows Himself. These friends of God have an embrace as wide

as the arms of God, so wide indeed as to include everything: neighbors, friends, enemies, sinners, even irrational creation.

Loving with the love of God

If the patois of friendship be sacrifice, these friends of God have a marvellous fluency. If sacrifice is the rule of thumb by which we judge the depth and value of friendship, its willingness to surrender, it is not surprising to come upon eager, joyful, unquestioning self-denial in the lives of the saints. There is no mystery in the complete surrender of men and women to the love of God; there is no mystery in the young hope, the unfailing joy, the intense living of the friends of God, whatever be the discouraging circumstances of poverty, suffering and death.

Charity and the modern world:

Doctrines of hate

Doctrines of selfishness

In the modern world, the friends of God are persons apart. They are in the world, but not of it; in fact, quite opposed to what it advocates. There is no echo in their hearts to the ringing appeals for hatred of men for men, class for class, race for race, and nation for nation. They know better than to believe when they are told that it is by hate that happiness is to be brought to the poor, that men are to be given opportunities to live full human lives, that the evils of the world are to be overcome. For behind all these doctrines of hate are the unholy hosts of selfishness. The man himself, or the class itself, or the nation itself has been made the supreme thing; and that means the death of sacrifice. It means the death of love, for it means that we are no longer able to see beyond ourselves, or beyond that limited sphere we have identified with ourselves -- beyond the class, the race, the nation. We have closed our hearts to everything else; moreover, we have closed our minds to everything else and so, forever, sealed our hearts in a tomb.

The narrow love of men

Even those who recoil in horror from the doctrine of hate and selfishness to champion a doctrine of humanism -- of love for men, development of the human race and the possibilities of human endeavor -- even these have done little to satisfy the heart of man. They have restricted the human heart to the narrow limits of human love, with all its limitations, above all with its pitiful gesture of despairing farewell at the door of death.

The death of love

These are not the things that satisfy the human heart. It was made for something much greater than all this. Consequently the human heart cannot stand by unmoved and watch love put to death, whether by hate, by selfishness, or by narrowness. Today the human heart is not standing by, in spite of the tremendous propaganda that attempts to lull it to stagnant inactivity and dull resignation. The human heart today is seeking, as it never sought before, that satisfaction, that fullness, that completion, which can come only with a friendship that is divine. In other words, the world of today is hungry for charity.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER IV -- SHARING THE DIVINE LIFE
(Q. 27-36)

1. The hearth and the heart:
 - (a) A full heart, a heart at home.
 - (b) The pilgrim and his homeland (*via et patria*).
 2. The expansiveness of love:
 - (a) Surrender, not conquest.
 - (b) Surrender to God:
 - (1) Immediate contact of love.
 - (2) The measure of love for God.
 - (c) Surrender to friends and enemies.
 3. The withering effect of hate:
 - (a) Hatred of God.
 - (b) Hatred of neighbor.
 - (c) The climax of evil.
 4. Love in the heart of man:
 - (a) Joy:
 - (1) An unappreciated possession.
 - (2) The sorrow of charity.
 - (3) Enemies of joy:
 - a. Spiritual sloth.
 - b. Envy:
 1. Foundations of envy.
 2. Roll-call of the envious.
 - (b) Peace:
 - (1) The peace of Christ and of the world.
 - (2) Peace and action.
 - (3) The common goal of men.
 - (c) Mercy.
 - (1) The nature of mercy.
 - (2) Roll call of the merciful.
 - (3) The excellence of mercy.
 5. Love in the world: mercy at work:
 - (a) Among the needy -- almsgiving:
 - (1) The works of mercy.
 - (2) The effects of almsgiving.
 - (3) Its circumstances.
 - (b) Among the erring -- fraternal correction.
- Conclusion:
1. Divine wisdom and Nazareth:
 - (a) While God is, the home endures.
 - (b) While home endures, God cannot be forgotten.
 - (c) With God and the home, the world of strangers is secure.
 2. The modern crisis:
 - (a) Shall the heart of man be full or empty love or hate?
 - (b) Centers of modern attack: God and the home.
 - (c) Some results of modern doctrines:
 - (1) Shrivelled hearts -- hate.
 - (2) Enveloping sorrow -- envy and sloth.
 - (3) Closed fist of selfishness.
 - (4) Crushing hammer of cruelty.
 - (5) Seduction rather than correction.
 3. The paradox of the human heart.

CHAPTER IV
THE FULLNESS OF LOVE
(Q. 27-36)

IT MIGHT be a good thing if every small child would, at least once during its too brief term as a child, stray from home and get lost. At least the child would enjoy the strange experience of being coaxed, amused, entertained and caressed in a police station; certainly the child would learn, as it could in no other way, how big a place home holds in its heart. Everyone takes such a child to his heart because, in some dim way, almost everyone knows what it means to lose home. The mysterious hold home has on the heart of man is so penetrating that if that hold is ever lost, something has been lost of the very nature of man; something of bitterness has entered in.

The hearth and the heart: A full heart, a heart at home

Yet that appeal of home is an intangible thing. Looking back, we can see that home does not necessarily call up vistas of plenty, comfort, wealth or culture. Home reaches more deeply into the soul than any of these things. It is the fulfillment of a hope; we might say that it is an ideal, which is at the same time a memory, a goal and a promise. It keeps before our eyes the wondrous vision of a human heart fulfilled. We look back to it with complete satisfaction; we ourselves naturally strive to establish a home in the world; we hope to see the promise perfectly fulfilled some time, even if that time is not until eternity.

The pilgrim and his homeland (*via et patria*)

Two pictures of home stand out in every Catholic's memory: the home of the Holy Family at Nazareth, devoid of material comfort; and the individual's own childhood home. Both fit perfectly our picture of home. Analyzing both, we come close to the roots of that tug of home on the heart. Call it peace, happiness, or an understanding mercy that made our little sorrows the sorrows of the family; or an open-handed hospitality that made home a source from which kindness went out. So that it seemed quite natural for us to bring our little friends home when they were tired, hungry or hurt. No doubt, in some way, all men have known, vaguely, that all these characteristics of home were the creations of the unceasing activity of unselfish love. What is in danger of being forgotten today is the exact nature of an act of love.

In our judgment of others, we make no mistake about this. We do not think the nasty, thoughtless boy who takes advantage of his mother at every turn, yet runs home sure of being petted and fawned upon, is the least bit better for the love he is receiving. Nor do we think the gangster-son of worthy parents is any less despicable for the trust and love given him by his parents; rather he is a great deal worse. We are quite sure that the mother who insists upon absorbing the whole life of her child, in the name of maternal love, is no mother at all.

The expansiveness of love: Surrender, not conquest

In all these judgments, we are insisting that the act of love is much more a matter of loving shall of being loved. Love does not so much make us a blotter, to sop up infinite caresses, as it does make a dynamo of us to produce untiring action. It is not a matter of getting, but of giving. It does not sit back, with a resigned sigh and suffer love; rather it steps out actively to prove love. For love is an operative habit, being a virtue; it exists to do, to work. Love is not so much a conquest as it is a surrender; a surrender that sets us free from the debasing slavery of selfishness. If we look in puzzlement at a woman drudging away at housework in a hovel, and wonder what she gets out of life, we are being hopelessly superficial. For we overlook the fact that she gets the principal thing love has to give: the opportunity to serve, to surrender, to prove love by sacrifice.

To fly from love, unless it is showering favors upon us, is to desert love and embrace selfishness. We preen ourselves before an audience, graciously allowing others to recognize our superior goodness; but we demand that they applaud by loving us. This is not love that we are seeking, but flatteries that echo our own stupid overestimation of ourselves. There is nothing of love's astonished humility in this. The so-called love that consists in a constant demand for attention is accurately classified if we remember that, to a dishonest mind, the fact of being loved is a source of unalloyed exultation; for, to such a mind, it is proof that success has been achieved in fooling someone, badly.

Surrender to God: Immediate contact of love

Not infrequently a chance breeze blows back the curtains from the windows of our soul, a passerby is given an unexpected glimpse of the depths of that soul, and friendship begins. Perhaps the immediate occasion is no more than a smile, a kind word, an understanding glance. In somewhat the same way, the favors of God or the high hopes He offers us, push back for an instant the veils that hide His face; we get an unexpected view of the depths of the richness of God. But the benevolence of a man, a woman, or even

of God, is not friendship. Friendship is a mutual thing; there can be none between us and God until we have surrendered to Him, made ourselves one with our divine Friend. With that beginning of divine friendship, wonders pour into our lives, and among the very first is an immediate contact with God; love lengthens our arms to reach to God Himself.

This immediate contact with the beloved is not peculiar to divine friendship. It is true of all love, for it is always true that the will begins where knowledge ends. Knowledge is the guide, going ahead to hack out the footholds upon which love can climb higher and higher. But knowledge is a self-contained thing; it brings things into ourselves, stripping them of their material garments at the door of our soul. Then love goes plunging out to the thing loved, as it is in itself -- whether it wear soiled overalls or royal robes. So charity, love of God, plunges out, not to God as He is known from the things of this world, not even as He might be ideally pictured by the greatest of human minds, but to God as He is in Himself.

The measure of love for God

On its human level, love finds, later of course and ruefully, that not infrequently it has plunged too enthusiastically. For if the measure of loveliness is the goodness of the beloved, obviously we can love beyond measure. Human beings do have their limits of goodness. But there is no such risk in divine friendship. There is no danger of going too far, if only because it is impossible for us to go far enough. There is no excess in this friendship, for our Friend is the rule and measure of all things, He is the reason for the desirability, the loveliness of every other thing. In fact, the more we love God, the better we love Him. Our external manifestations of our love for God may have to take dictation from prudence; but the love in our heart not only does not need, it cannot stand, careful, cautious calculation.

Surrender to friends and enemies

St. John was not putting it too strongly when he insisted that the man who said he loved God, yet did not love his neighbor, was a liar. For this surrender to God simply has not been made if we have not also surrendered to our neighbor, both to our friends and to our enemies. To the pagan world, love of enemies has always seemed a strange, even a weak thing. Perhaps because the pagan did not understand well that the greatest conquest man has to make is not of his enemies, but of himself. Love of enemies is not a weak, but a strong thing; indeed, from the human point of view it is a hard thing. Yet on the basis of divine friendship, it is an inevitable corollary of the solid basis of love of neighbor. If God is our Friend, then in the name of that friendship, we love all that belongs to God; in other words, everything that is.

An opposite extreme view of this love of enemies made men a little suspicious of love of friends; it was so easy, so natural that one reaching for the divine heights might be expected to sniff in disdain at something that was really much too easy. Actually, it is more meritorious to love a friend than it is to love an enemy, all else being equal; for an enemy, if he is truly such, is a sinner. On the contrary, the true friend is virtuous; he is then, by his virtue, closer to God, and by his love for us our friend is closer to us. In other words, our friends have two solid claims to our love; our enemies' case rests only on the fact that they are potential friends of God.

Yet love of enemies is a splendid, Christian thing. Its particular excellence comes from the fact that it is a striking sign of our love for God. Here there can be no doubt that we are loving men because of God; certainly their weakness, injustice, viciousness does not furnish the attraction. Here is one love for men that is above all suspicion; it is a test of the vitality of our love for God, proving to us and to Him that we are ready to do even difficult things in the name of that love. But the fact that these things are difficult does not make them better, for it is not difficulty but goodness that determines the worth of a thing.

In its smallest degree, this divine friendship is strong and generous; it pushes the heavy door of our heart open as wide as the heart of God. This wide open door is not natural to us; it is ever ready to swing shut. Perhaps it is closed softly, imperceptibly by indifference; or it may be slammed hard and bolted by hate. In either case we are imprisoned within the confines of our own heart.

The withering effect of hate: Hatred of God

It seems a tragic, and at the same time, a petty action for a man to lock himself up in his own heart, much more tragic and petty than a man's locking himself in his own house and pouting against the rest of the world. It seems almost impossible that a man should slam the door of his heart against the most desirable, lovable Being there is.

Indeed, this would be impossible if we could see God face to face; then we could not hate Him. But in this life we see Him only darkly through faith, or dimly in his effects in the world.

At the same time, we look about us and see clearly the sorrow that enters into our life, the labor that must go into our understanding, the punishment that must follow on our sins. And so we can hate God, much as a woman learns to hate her husband, not because of any evil in the man himself, but because of the disorderly way he throws his clothes about the room. We can hate God for sprinkling our lives with the seasoning of sorrow, for giving us the kind of mind that can uncover so few nuggets of truth and with such terrific difficulty, for judging our sins and punishing them. In these cases, we hate God for His effects in our lives, not for Himself; yet we should know, knowing God as we do, that even these bitter tasting effects are solid proof of His profoundly thoughtful love for us.

Hatred of neighbor

If we do succeed in hating God, our neighbor has little chance for our love. That the heavy odor of hate should pervade every corner of a godless world should be no surprise, for in such a world the one foundation that will most surely include all men in love has been denied. The hater of God has made his own life a godless world and so thrown open the sluice gates of hate.

Understand, now, that we are not expected to love a man for his stupidity, his theft of our car, his insults to our family or his contempt for our personal appearance. St. Augustine put the demands of love beautifully when he said: "If you hate well, then you love; whereas if you love badly, you hate." We should hate in our neighbor the things that are not God's, but rather against God; then we are really loving him, wishing the destruction of evil afflicting him and the approach to the Supreme Good. If we love him for the sins he makes possible to us, or for his own sins, then we are not loving him but hating him. In either case we are committing the gravest sin possible against our neighbor. But hate is a helpless thing. We could do much more damage to our neighbor by breaking his nose or ruining his business; our hate hurts no one but the person in whose defense it arises -- ourselves.

The climax of evil

Hatred of God is the climax of evil. All other mortal sins have some little saving element of humanity about them; a thief, for instance, turns away from God because of the particularly attractive loot, as a boy condemns himself to a spanking because he wants to play baseball beyond the dinner hour. But hate is diabolical. In common with all mortal sins, it turns away from God; but not for any other reason, not betrayed by some less worthy love. It directly spurns the divine goodness itself.

The humiliating thing about hate, whether of God or men, is that it always arises from self-pity. Its immediate source is sorrow for oneself, for it arises from envy. Maybe it is the good of our neighbor, or again it may be the good of God Himself, that weighs us down with sorrow. In both cases the hate that bubbles up is the helpless gesture of protest of a small ineffective, miserly soul; so great is the terror of losing its own closely guarded goods, that the very appearance of good in others is taken as a personal loss. The hater has so slight a hold on his own excellence that he cannot risk the presence of the slightest rival; he is, in fact, a man who has been busy lying to himself. By his very envy and hate he admits that he has realized his own nothingness and is terrified that the rest of the world will discover his own empty secret.

Love in the heart of man. Joy: An unappreciated possession

The circulation of pictures of dyspeptic looking saints was one of the master strokes of satanic propaganda. Certainly this contributed no little to the modern notion that saints are a sour, grumpy lot. Nothing could be further from the truth. The saints are always great lovers; and love floods our hearts with the sunshine of joy, particularly when that love is for a divine friend. Look at it objectively for a moment. This unselfish love has identified our will with the will of our Friend, His happiness is ours -- even as it is between human friends. From the first moment of this divine friendship, our Friend is always and intimately with us: as Lord and Creator to His creatures as the object of our knowledge and love, and by that extremely intimate presence by grace which enables us to live his very life. Then there is that triumphant joy in our Friends possession of the great good we wish Him; though He does not so much possess it, as He is it. Nothing can threaten His happiness, nothing can dim the joy of our friendship.

This is the pervading influence behind all Christian life: where there is charity, there is joy. And where there is joy, life can be lived intensely, merrily whether the instruments of its living be scrubbing brushes, palaces, failures or triumphs. Charity, you will remember, is the common heritage of every Christian in the state of grace, of everyone who is a friend of God. It is not only the saints who live merrily; but the humblest of men with the least degree of charity. We do not wait for the joy of this divine friendship to hit us with the same unmistakable emphasis as an attack of cramps; nor must that joy be put off until we have reached the heights of sanctity. It is not a matter of feeling, nor is it a matter of mystic heights; our joy is really full with the gift of divine grace.

If we put our minds to it, we can be gloomy even though we are in the state of grace. After all, a man might starve to death because he forgot the ten dollar bill he put in his watch-pocket months ago; we can frown on the world and ourselves, if we forget the joy that is ours. We can, if we like, allow the joy of charity to be overshadowed by disgust, sorrow at our spiritual negligence, or the misfortunes that enter our life. But if we do, if we forget our joy or allow it to be overshadowed, we are cheating ourselves; the joy is within us if we care to make the most of it. If we insist upon remaining unconscious of the goodness of God within us, of course we deprive ourselves of the radical joy that gives all Christian life its flavor. Consciousness is the minimum requirement for the enjoyment of any good; we can play dead if we like, but then we must not complain that we cannot enjoy the lilies heaped about the coffin.

The sorrow of charity

This does not mean that Christian life has the utterly carefree hilarity of an American Legion convention. This joy is deep bubbling up through every strata of life, but still it leaves room enough on the surface of life for a tart layer of sorrow. We can, for example, have real sorrow for the sins of others, or indeed for anything which works against the presence of God in ourselves or in others. Herein is found one side of the zeal and compassion of the saints for sinners; the other side being the realization of the tremendous boon the sinner deprives himself of by his sin. We can have deep sorrow for our own past sins, but chiefly as they represent a hindrance to our union with God here and now. We can be decidedly sorry at having taken the wrong train, catching pneumonia or scratching the fender of our new car. But none of these things should ever plug up the well-springs of joy that are in the depths of our souls.

This joy, coming from the bottom of our hearts, is full and deep; but in this life it can always be fuller, for we can always come closer to God. In heaven that joy is so full that, rather than being enclosed in our hearts, it wraps us about as a bright garment. It is odd that in spite of this solid truth, we have so seldom pictured God as infinitely joyous; that we should even have taken seriously the Puritan's gloomy, grumbling tyrant. The heavenly fountains of joy overflow our being, for they are commensurate to the infinite goodness of God; only God can drain the deep, cool cup of joy.

The world has always laughed indulgently at lovers' quarrels, realizing that the fuel of their fire is usually trifles that will soon burn themselves out. But unfortunately such quarrels are not always patched up; it is not always necessary to plant a bomb in order to break up a home. A snore is only a trifling thing, but to the victim of insomnia the rhythmic ebb and flow of conjugal snores may completely drown love. In fact, we could make this more general and say that, frequently, human love is broken up precisely because of

trifles. When that love concentrates on irritations, defect, sorrow in the life of love, then love is not only cheating itself of the joy that belongs to it, it is preparing the way for the destruction of that love.

The same is true of divine Friendship. When we concentrate on the sorrows, misery and misfortunes of life we are doing much more than cheating ourselves of love's joy; we are preparing for a flight from that divine friendship, for a horror of divine things, for the time when the flesh shall completely prevail over the spirit. Then in place of friendship's eager joy and its rush to the loved one, there will come that sorrowful boredom and irritation that prepare the way for hate.

Enemies of joy: Spiritual sloth

The human heart simply must have joy. If the joy is not forthcoming from our divine friendship, we shall cast about for more agreeable companionship and that means in a realm other than that of the spirit. Our unconsciousness of the good that is ours in this divine friendship practically assures us of a decreasing knowledge of the divine good. The overshadowing of this joy of divine friendship then begins to make possible a positive contempt for the goods of God by a concentration on the evils that affect us. More briefly, we are learning more and more about the attractions of the flesh, and less and less about the joys of the spirit.

The condition towards which we are thus drifting is called spiritual sloth. This capital sin of sloth is not mere laziness. It is not the irritation felt at getting up for Mass on a bitterly cold morning; it is not the reluctance to fasting in Lent, or the embarrassment involved in confessing our sins; nor yet is it the vague sigh that heaves its way to the surface at the mention of the general difficulties of Christian life. It is much more fundamental than that.

It might be called a kind of bored tediousness, a torpor of the mind that moves us to neglect the things of the spirit and to wallow in the warm ooze of the flesh. St. Thomas described it as, "a sorrow which weighs down the spirit of a man, impeding him from operation." It is a strange, perverted sorrow, dank with evil; for it finds the very goodness of God a sorrowful, evil thing and it holds man back from the one thing important in his life -- that action that will lead him to life's goal. Even when this sloth is occasioned by a real evil, a sorrow springing from one's own sin but going to the exaggerated lengths of paralyzing a man, its effects are just as disastrous as the sorrow and tediousness in the face of divine good.

In itself, sloth may be either venial or mortal, according to the degree of distaste within us for spiritual goods. But in its possibilities it is utterly tragic. It is a capital sin, with the capital sins usual family of unlovely daughters. Sloth is at the same time an escape and a pursuit; an escape from God and a pursuit of the world. On the side of its flight from God, Thomas lists its daughters as, "desperation, pusillanimity, a stupor of the mind in the face of the precepts of God, and, finally, an indignation against and a detestation of spiritual things". This last is easily recognized as a gesture of face-saving closely akin to a tramp's attitude towards work. On the side of sloth's pursuit of sensual pleasures, St. Thomas, under the general title of, "a wandering mind", groups such daughters of sloth as: importunity of mind -- the faculty of thinking of the wrong thing at any time -- , curiosity, verbosity, a restlessness of body indicative of the restlessness of mind, and finally instability. The insight of a saint recognized feverish restlessness as a symptom of laziness.

In other words, we are not seeing spiritual laziness at all if we see it in terms of a rheumatic old negro letting the southern sun seep slowly into his bones. It is an escape; a desperate, panicky flight. There is in it the senseless taste of a man flying from what he knows cannot be escaped; and, at the same time, the weakling's attempt to drown his fright in gulps of sensual pleasure. In a word, sloth is the abandonment of the joy of God for the joy of the world.

Envy: Foundations of envy

There is another capital sin opposed to the joy of charity, namely, envy; and this too drives a man in panic to the embrace of unworthy goods. It too is a flight from sorrow, a perverted sorrow that has for its object,

not the good of God, but the good of neighbor. The sorrow we may feel on learning that an enemy has been made chief of police, at our lack of virtue, or at the good fortune of an unworthy man all have some basis in reason. Envy is none of these, for it is totally unreasonable. It is the vice of the man who is broken-hearted because some one exceeds him in good; this neighbor's excellence strikes his soul with the shattering force of a deep personal injury.

Roll-call of the envious

It is difficult to face envy honestly, for it is the sin of the defeated. It enters intimately into the mock horror at the doings of the "youth of our time", the hard luck story and the whinings of those who are never promoted because some one has a "grudge" against them. In other words it is a sin common among the old, the plodders and the unfortunate; among those, that is, who have been conquered by age, misfortune or lack of talent. Successful rivalry emphasizes their defeat, renews its bitterness; and they are unforgiving. Petty-minded men are easily envious, for to them all things look big; no matter what excellence a neighbor may have, in the eyes of the petty, he surpasses them by tremendous lengths. The ambitious, athirst for honor, look on the excellence of another as a direct attack on the praise they could normally expect; they too are easily envious.

An interesting angle of this sin of envy, of interest especially in view of the modern discussions of democracy, is given in Thomas' laconic statement: "No one but a fool is envious of someone or something that surpasses him infinitely." Only those just above us, within reach of our clawing hands, excite our envy. In a social organization, then, which puts all men on the same level, there must inevitably be rich material for envy; on the other hand, this gives a psychological explanation of the stability -- desirable or otherwise -- of civilizations which definitely excluded ambition from the greater part of society.

The unlovely daughters of envy are among the most thoroughly despised sins that gnaw at the foundations of human life. They work up to the crescendo of evil which is the destruction of the mansion of a man's life: from the sly start of a furtive whisper, through detraction, then to joy in the misfortune of another and sorrow at his good fortune, and finally to the climax of evil which is hate.

The envious man finds life intolerable. We were not made to live with sorrow; and envy is sorrow. We were made to live with joy. Christ accurately stated the whole purpose of His life when He said that He had come, "that our joy might be filled." His directions for fulfilling that joy, even though they insisted on the carrying of a cross, involved no contradiction; men and women are constantly discovering, as He meant them to, that under the cross there is some little taste of the beatific joy that was deep beneath Calvary's sufferings. The combination of the divine and human filled the world with paradoxes; Our Lord seemed to prefer to emphasize, rather than explain them. Being puzzled, men might seek to discover their meaning by living them. Christ, seeing the bewilderment in the Apostles, must have had something of the same divine playfulness in His eyes when he sent them into a hostile Roman world, all the odds against them, with the parting words: "My peace I give you."

Peace: The peace of Christ and of the world

Certainly the peace Christ gave the Apostles was not the peace sought by a weakling, a peace at any price. With this peace went persecution, mockery and ultimately death. These men were not to be coddled by a surface peace, as they were not to be sustained by a surface joy. In no sense did this peace make pacifists of them; they knew well there were many things worth the price of a fight, even of a fight to the death. But no fight could destroy the peace that had been given them. The peace of Christ is as deep as the soul of a man. On that point alone, it is startlingly different from the peace of the world; for only God can reach into the soul of a man and bury peace there so deeply that it will be inviolable to any other force but the will of man himself.

Peace and action

The life of a man who is peaceful with the peace of Christ, does not present the appearance of a stagnant

pond's slimy calm; it is much more apt to be a riotous, storm-tossed ocean, with calm, inscrutable depths. By the very nature of peace, such a life will be intensely active; for peace means the completely unified effort of appetites towards a common goal. It is energy streamlined to the utmost. From it follows peace, or rather concord, with other men and with God, again by a union of appetites towards the common end of all. We love our neighbors, not as rivals, but as we love ourselves; and we love both ourselves and neighbors because of God. We do not resent the attempt of other men to reach the same divine end; it can be shared without loss to ourselves. But we do hurl all the crushing power of unified effort against those who would hinder either our neighbors or ourselves from obtaining that goal. This very opposition is directed, not against our enemies, but against their hatred for themselves.

In other words, Christ furnished us with the one solid bond of union in giving us charity; His peace follows upon the identification of a man with his neighbors and with his God. The world has no such basis for peace. Its offer must always be a surface thing; it can only encourage a man to snatch at things and to try, desperately, to protect what other men most surely will attempt to take from him. To put it quite baldly: the peace of the world is really a peace that amounts to oblivion; it consists in attempting to forget what we do not have, and to be satisfied with that which can never satisfy the human heart.

Perhaps a moron enjoys having his teeth knocked out; but surely it is not a pleasure to which one can become addicted. Yet Chesterton once wrote of the Irish that, "all their wars are merry"; and the name "fighting Irish" is never used as a term of abuse. These things may be taken literally in the sense that there is something to fight for; something that is so well worth while that it can be fought for merrily, with a keen realization that nothing that may be lost in the fight can be compared with the thing that might be gained. But undoubtedly the person whose mouth waters over the prospect of a fight, just for the sake of the fight, is mentally deficient. As a matter of fact, no one loves a fight for its own sake. Even the bully is fighting for peace. For the purpose of every battle is to obtain something that, at the moment, is lacking, something that is considered necessary for the satisfaction of appetite, for perfection. The victim of an inferiority complex lording it over his fellows, the naturally quarrelsome man, the nation with a chip on its shoulder, are all confessing their own deficiencies. By the very fact of the quarrel they admit a serious defect, that something is yet necessary for their full well-being.

The common goal of men

On the contrary, the man of peace, far from being a frightened weakling, is a possessor of perfection. He has what he needs for his happiness; he is at peace because nothing, no one, can take that happiness from him. It is in this full sense of the word that Christ is the King of Peace. And this was no less true of Christ nailed to a cross, than it was true of Him in the sanctuary of Nazareth. It is true of his followers whether they stand before applauding crowds and grateful kings or whether they stand alone in an arena. They are possessed of the peace of Christ; a peace that will reach its full perfection, its full activity, its widest scope only when they are with Christ in heaven.

The man whom Christ has taught that love is giving, not getting; who has identified his will with the will of His friend, has deep joy, deep peace. He is one with God and one with men.

Mercy. The nature of mercy

The smile he gives the world is not the ghastly, soulless facial gesture of an indifferent stranger, signalling the mere absence of hostility. It is easy for him to rejoice with men; it is easy for him to be at peace with men; it is easy for him to suffer with men and, if possible, to do something about their suffering. For he is one with men. The efficacy of this union is nowhere more clear than in the virtue of mercy. It is only by seeing the misfortune of another as somehow our own, that we can be compassionate, can be driven to do something about this misfortune. In other words, for mercy as for charity, there must be some common ground upon which we and our neighbors meet.

Roll call of the merciful

A brother can, without difficulty, be compassionate to a sister; they are one in blood. An American in China finds it easy to have mercy on the misfortune of a fellow American. The old and the wise find mercy easy, for these misfortunes either have already come upon them or, in their wisdom, they see how quickly the same misfortune might visit them. The weak and the sick normally are quickly sympathetic by reason of their fellowship of misery. The same truth stands out more clearly when viewed from a negative point of view. The choleric, quarrelsome man is readily merciless. So, too, are those who are sure of their immunity from misfortune: those sure of power, of health, of happiness; the very proud. Indeed, even the man who is sure nothing worse can happen to him and the man stripped of all love are quite apt to be contemptuous of the misery of others. For all these people think only of themselves, breaking off the bond that would unite them to other men.

God is merciful to us, not because He is a fellow countryman, a blood relative, nor because He trembles at the threat of similar evils; but because He is our friend. In strict truth, our evils, our misfortunes are God's; we are one with Him, not by a physical bond, but by the bond of love.

The excellence of mercy

Mercy is an immediate effect of charity. But it must not be understood to flow from charity in the same way as joy and peace. These are acts; mercy is a virtue in its own right. It has its own work to get done; and that work is the moderation of the passion of mercy according to the rule of reason. Understanding this well, we have no difficulty in distinguishing mercy from sentimentality. It is possible to be angry at a judge because the murderer he has condemned has such gentle eyes. Our sympathy for the "poor, misunderstood boy" who has turned a machine-gun on the police may fill our eyes with tears. But all this is not the work of the virtue of mercy. Mercy, in this sense of passion, can be found in cats; as a virtue, mercy must proceed along rational lines to the goal of reason.

We might expect mercy to wear a doleful face because it is based on our ability to suffer with another. Actually it is a joyous, satisfying virtue. Even its counterfeits are likeable things. The criminal who murders people at night and operates soup-kitchens for the poor during the day, is actually enjoying the role of daytime dispenser of mercy. He is, in a sense, playing god. For it is only insofar as we are superior to others that we can be of help to them, supplying for their defects. Mercy is a God-like virtue; indeed it is a virtue proper to God, one of the chief means of manifesting the divine omnipotence. But in men, much as they may like to play the part of omnipotence, mercy is not the greatest of virtues; after all, men are not God.

A man does not reach his perfection in supplying the needs of others, but in subjecting himself to God. Only the Being Who has no superior manifests His perfection by supplying the needs of others. Yet among the moral virtues dealing with neighbor, mercy holds top rank, precisely because its act is the act of a superior. Justice must stand at attention when mercy passes by; after all, justice only gives another what is his due. Fortitude and temperance are orderlies of mercy; their work is to control a man's own passions, not to supply for the defects of others. It is true that God will have mercy and not sacrifice; but not in the sense that sacrifice is unnecessary, nor because God and men must take second place to mercy. But rather in the sense that after justice has been satisfied, then mercy puts forth its superior, God-like act. In itself, mercy is not at all the greatest of the moral virtues.

When St. Gregory said "love is not idle", he was saying that a peaceful home life cannot but make itself felt in the community, that a full heart cannot but overflow into the lives and hearts of others. Consequently, when the love of divine friendship fills a man's heart, he cannot sit basking in the sun of his own satisfaction, his hands idle, his mind wandering aimlessly up and down the formal garden of his own delights. If he does, then he is enthralled not by love, but by hypocrisy. This thing is not filling his heart; it is emptying it.

Stingy selfishness is an admission of an empty heart. Beneficence, generous love, is a statement of a heart full to overflowing. It was divine genius that so planned the lives of men as to make of human life a wharf

humming with the activity of constant imports and exports; a noisy exchange which all men must frequent. There is no man, however great, who is not in some way inferior to other men; and there is no man so lowly that he cannot help another, and so be superior to another. The spiritual isolationist makes a tragic mistake. For God has drawn us close to all other men by making us dependent on all others; i.e., by making us, in some sense, inferior to every other man and, at the same time, making us superior, in some sense, to every other man.

Love in the world: mercy at work

Understand, the beauty of this truth is not the theoretical beauty of an impractical plan seen in the engineer's office. If we step out of the office into the confusing roar of the construction job where men are building their lives, we see mercy at work -- the divine plan being slowly transformed into the tangible, enduring beauty of heavenly mansions. If we take the "works of mercy" of our catechism days as denoting whole classes of acts, rather than particular deeds, we are given a sharp, quick insight into the deficiencies every man may suffer.

Among the needy -- almsgiving

On the physical side there are, for example, such things as deficiencies in food, drink, clothing, housing; there will be more particular difficulties, of course, such as come from an intrinsic cause like sickness, or an extrinsic cause like captivity. Even after the living of life is over and done with, there is the neglect and dishonor of an unburied corpse. On the spiritual side, a man may be a spiritual beggar, desperately in need of the divine help we can get for him through prayer. He may be a spiritual infant whose defects of intellect we can supply by doctrine or counsel. He may be suffering from spiritual malnutrition with defects of appetite we can readily supply: such, for example, as sorrow awaiting our consolation. Perhaps he has lost his direction by sin and we can give him correction, or pardon when the sin was against us, or even toleration and patience. No man escapes all these defects; no man is incapable of supplying even one of these defects in his neighbor.

The works of mercy

Objectively and absolutely speaking, a spiritual work of mercy is far superior to a corporal one. But to a wretch shivering in Chicago's merciless winter wind, a treatise on the Trinity is a much lesser gift than the price of a drink, let us suppose, of coffee. Whatever the drink we supply, it will be a decidedly material thing; yet because it springs from charity, it has spiritual effects that wear well through all eternity -- grace, glory, perhaps even the prayer of the needy one for his benefactor.

The effects of almsgiving

It is true, of course, that almsgiving -- spiritual or corporal -- can proceed from the virtue of penance, or merely from a deep, human fellowship with the unfortunate. But it is equally true that charity cannot exist without almsgiving. At least there are times when these works of mercy are solemn precepts, when to ignore them would be to lose charity by violating the commands of God. Surely when we have more than enough for our state of life we cannot be satisfied with talking about love of neighbor while a man in desperate straits starves to death.

Its circumstances

Beyond such a situation, the giving of alms is a matter of counsel: something praiseworthy, pertaining to the perfection of charity. Obviously a man with just enough food to keep him from starvation is not obliged to give that food to another, even though the two are running a close race to starvation. Nor, normally speaking, are we to be surprised that a millionaire owns two suits of clothes. A man is not obliged to sacrifice what is necessary for his state in life to supply the ordinary needs of others. A case of extreme necessity is of course different; the sanctity of private property does not include the starvation of men nor the wreck of a commonwealth.

As a matter of fact, some states in life forbid almsgiving. We are unreasonable if we demand almsgiving from a thief; his obligation is not one of generosity but of restitution. A servant may be smilingly open-handed with the goods of his master in the name of mercy: but not with any justification. Our almsgiving must proceed from our own abundance, not from the abundance of others. It is well to remember that in our generous sharing of that abundance, the abundance is to be reckoned from our side; in other words, the purpose of almsgiving is not to establish a beggar in luxury, but to sustain the life or supply the needs of another. It is much better to give our alms to many poor than to establish one poor man in luxury: indeed, rather than doing him a favor, we may be corrupting our neighbor by the very luxury we so suddenly bestow on him.

Among the erring -- fraternal correction

An equally obvious gesture of a full heart is the correction of those who are making mistakes; though its distastefulness to our twentieth century palates makes its welcome into our own diet dubious and reluctant. In our materialistic reversal of the scale of values, we are profoundly impressed by physical misery, eager to help; but spiritual necessity leaves us cold. Of course we have excuses. We explain, what hardly needs explanation, that we are not saints; we have troubles enough with our own soul; moreover the personal life of another is none of our business. Behind all this, too, there is a healthy contempt for the busybody who is forever reforming others.

But the life of another is very much our business. By charity all men are one with us; their misfortunes are ours, their mistakes our own. Sanctity is not a prerequisite for correction of others; all that is necessary is sane judgment, for sin is, after all, a mistake in judgment. Indeed of all the people in the world who lack charity few have a clearer title to that defect than the busybody. The whole purpose of fraternal correction is not to aggravate, humiliate or impress a neighbor, but to help him. If what we have to say will not be helpful, then we cannot excuse our words on the grounds of fraternal correction. A superior, by reason of his office, may be obliged to make a correction and insist on it even when it represents real difficulties for the one corrected; but that is not true of those who have no such office.

The extent of our rationalization in this matter becomes apparent if we probe a little into the reasons for our hesitation. Is it love of this neighbor that pulls the reins so sharply on our galloping tongue? Is it because we know our words will do no good, will perhaps do damage, while kindly tolerance will be more effective than actual correction? Or are we holding back from fear: fear of the reception that will be given our correction, fear of what people will think, fear of appearing holier than another? If fear dictates our silence, we have only the slim comfort of the coward to support us in our silence. It is true that a bank robber is not in an ideal position to chide a pick-pocket on his evil ways; but even here it may happen that the correction offered by a sinner will carry greater weight. He speaks from the experience of misery brought into his life by that particular sin.

Conclusion: Divine wisdom and Nazareth:

While God is, the home endures;

While home endures, God cannot be forgotten

With God and the home, the world of strangers is secure

It was a stroke of divine wisdom that established that family circle at Nazareth, with Himself as the center, and insisted on the long quiet life of the Son of God in the midst of that family circle. That one picture of Nazareth brought sharply to men's eyes the promise that as long as God is, as long as the inner life of divinity continues, men will not be deprived of that image of eternal divine life which is the home of man. For God will see to it that men's hearts are filled with the only thing that can fill them -- unselfish love. On the other hand, that act of divine wisdom is a promise that as long as the home life of men endures, as long as men are given some taste of love, peace, joy, mercy and generous beneficence, they will continue to thirst for that which awaits them at the end of life; that as long as men have some taste of that joy which God has prepared for them, God Himself cannot be forgotten. It is a guarantee that with God and the home thoroughly established in the lives of men, the world of strangers is secure. For love is not idle, love

cannot stay at home; the full heart of man cannot contain itself, but must overflow into the lives of others.

The modern crisis: Shall the heart of man be full or empty: love or hate?

Centers of modern attack: God and the home

That one act of divine wisdom in Bethlehem, with its sequel in Nazareth, brings us to the core of modern difficulties. The question before men today is really: will the heart of man be full or empty? Will it harbor love or hate? It is not surprising that modern heresies attack God and the homes of men; these are the guarantees of the fullness of man's heart. Even where God is apparently left intact, the home is the object of serious, bitter and often subtle attack. But if love and joy and peace and mercy and beneficence are not to be found within the home life of man, if there is not to be about his home something of the permanency of heaven, then we can expect the hearts of men to be empty.

Some results of modern doctrines

In the concrete, this means that instead of expanding, overflowing hearts, we shall have shrivelled hearts, hearts engaged only on the dreary errands of selfishness and hate. Instead of the rich joy of life, we shall have the sorrow of envy and sloth. In place of the open hand of beneficent love, there will be the closed fist of selfishness; instead of love's eager mercy, the crushing hammer of cruelty. For spiritual correction of others will be substituted their spiritual seduction for selfish ends. Perhaps we could put all this in just one sentence by saying: instead of union, we shall have division, separation; instead of men being at one with one another and with God, each man will be for himself. Unfortunately no man is sufficient for himself; and he who thinks he is, has no one helping him, not even himself.

The paradox of the human heart

These are not theoretical conclusions, nor are they prophecies. Rather they are the facts of today, facts that are inevitable consequences of a doctrine of hate supplanting a doctrine of love. Our world should have known better than to adopt this doctrine of hate. Centuries of experience should have taught us that the human heart cannot be filled by grabbing at particular things and stuffing them into that heart. Rather experience should have taught us that the only way a human heart can possibly be filled is by emptying itself. Sacrifice is the only language love can speak, and love is the only means of filling the human heart.

It is all of a pattern, that the God Who came to bring us the fullest joy should have died on a cross and warned us to follow in His footsteps; that the God Who came to bring us peace -- Who was Himself the Prince of Peace -- should put us into a world of constant warfare; that the God Who has come to fill the human heart should demand, as the first condition of that fullness, that the human heart be constantly emptying itself.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER V --THE EMPTINESS OF STRIFE (Q. 37-46)

1. Desolation to the human heart:
 - (a) Not mere emptiness.
 - (b) But an invasion of reason's domain.
2. Disorder and desolation:
 - (a) God and His image: champions of order.
 - (b) Disorder a characteristic of hell.
 - (c) Disorder and peace.
3. Emptiness of heart and its origin.
4. Desolation by words.
5. Temporal desolation by works:
 - (a) Against the universal Church -- schism.
 - (b) Against nations -- war:
 - (1) Just and unjust wars.
 - (2) Clerics and war.
 - (3) Moral limits of intelligence corps.
 - (c) Against the commonwealth -- sedition:
 - (1) Defense of the common good.
 - (2) Justified rebellion.
 - (d) Against the individual:
 - (1) Duels.
 - (2) Quarrels.
6. Eternal desolation -- scandal:
 - (a) Its varieties.
 - (b) Its malice.
 - (c) The just man and scandal.
7. First principles of order:
 - (a) The double commandment of Christ:
 - (1) The end of all other commands.
 - (2) The words of the commandment.
 - (b) Wisdom:
 - (1) Its nature and extent.
 - (2) Its beatitude -- "Blessed are the peacemakers."
 - (3) The enemy of wisdom.

Conclusion:

1. Order and the modern world:
 - (a) An ordered emptiness.
 - (b) An idealization of emptiness.
2. A desolate world:
 - (a) Desolate hearts.
 - (b) Temporal desolation.
 - (c) Eternal desolation.
3. Wisdom of the Word.

CHAPTER V THE EMPTINESS OF STRIFE (Q 37~46)

Desolation to the human heart

A SPRING sky, empty of every cloud, can be a joyful sight. A city street late at night, undisturbed by the click of a single heel, can be as peaceful as a lullaby; yet the same street, totally empty at noon-time, speaks sinister threats of war or pestilence. There is a vast difference between mere emptiness and desolation, a difference that we sense immediately when we remember that there are some things that cannot be empty without being desolate. A village, for example, or a human heart, is never empty, though it may be deserted.

Not mere emptiness; but an invasion of reason's domain

In desolation, something is missing; there is more than negation, there is privation. Kilmer's "House with nobody in it" has the sharp, pinched misery of desolation about it; the dilapidated shacks of miners in a mountain country are another tabloid definition of desolation. A house was not built to have nobody in it;

nor is the house of the barely existing miner the sort of place a man inhabits if he has any choice in the matter. What is missing, in all these pictures of desolation, is *order*. In them something of reason has been destroyed; and with its destruction, something in man has been destroyed, for order is the fruit of his reason.

He has stamped his personality on the outer world by his imposition of order upon it; when that order has been destroyed, something of humanity is taken out of the world. Yet desolation is never wholly outside a man; it is also within him. So the human heart, made to contain so many things, cannot be empty without having something missing that should be there. It cannot be empty without being desolate, because it was not made to be empty.

Disorder and desolation:

God and His image: champions of order

That single human fact, so easily verified by looking into ourselves or about ourselves, is a microscope focused on a tremendous truth. Man has been designed after an infinite model. In the infinitely full life of God, there is no room for desolation; and that means there is no room for disorder. By His very nature, all the acts of God will have a perfection of order about them; indeed, such a perfection of order that it is often too great, too far-reaching for our comprehension. To question that order is to question the very nature of God. Man, the image of God will be a champion of order in his own imperfect way. A tornado, a hurtling automobile, a relentless enemy, or the upheaval of sin will all make a wreckage of his life because they desolate that order that is so much a part of him. This is so true that it seems obvious to us that order should be the first law of the eternal home to which we are going. And it seems just as obvious that chaotic disorder should be one of the most horrible things in hell.

Disorder a characteristic of hell

This does not mean that a badly cluttered desk, or a pile of unwashed dishes in the sink, is evidence of a satanic visitation. A sepulchral office, with every document neatly entombed in some drawer, might well seem a fitting likeness of hell to many a man. God can look after the towering essentials and at the same time see to the infinitesimal dust of the non-essentials; but man often has his hands full keeping the essentials straight. It is pleasant, of course, to have a secretary who knows essentials from details, and keeps a measure of order even in the details. But it is in an essential order and disorder that a man finds the difference between the chaos of madness and the happiness of sanity; there too will we find the difference between heaven and hell.

Disorder and peace

St. Augustine said all this when he defined peace as "the tranquillity of order." You will remember, from the last chapter, that peace is a kind of streamlined activity effected by complete order in the motive powers of a man. By this means might we see that man is not at war with his fellow men nor with himself; that he is not trying to run in two directions at the same time. In the natural order the disturbance of peace is visible in war, split personalities, nervous breakdowns, and in the divided heart that keeps the sinner always in misery yet never quite turning to God. In the supernatural order, the remorse from the horror of sin is a testimony of the human heart's yearning for God and, at the same time, of its devastating appetite for the opposite of God as embodied in mortal sin. This is the radical explanation of why a man must either attempt to forget heaven or fight valiantly against sin.

Emptiness of heart and its origin

Just as fullness of heart comes about through the union of wills by the friendship of charity, so emptiness of heart is the result of division, of the crashing hostility of appetites. As by charity we are one with God and men, by discord we are cut off from the divine will and from the wills of other men. It is a process of isolation. By discord we bar the entrance to our soul; those bars not only prohibit God and men from entering our soul, they prevent all exit from that soul. They imprison us within ourselves; and the human

heart was not made for solitary confinement. In such a cell the human heart is desolate.

It is conceivable that bitter political enemies may be fundamentally at peace; it is even possible that opposing generals in a war have this fundamental concord one with another. In fact, men can disagree on all but the essentials of human life and still be one with God and with other men. The possessors of peace do not form an association of "yes men," never disagreeing with one another. Peace is much more a matter of union of wills than of harmony of opinion. Of course if the difference of opinion has its roots in an error for which we are at fault, or in our stubbornness, then there is real discord present; because of envy, or because of our rapt admiration for our own excellence, we are giving way to that same desire to cut ourselves off from others, from God and men.

To be at peace with some men and at war with God is no virtue. It is something like forming a union for murderers. There is no absolutely universal bond cementing men together except that of charity. On the contrary, to be at war with men and at peace with God may, quite possibly, be virtuous; it means that we are not so much acting against others, as attacking their hatred for themselves. It is evident then, that if peace at any price means coming to terms with sin, it is utterly vicious.

Desolation by words

It is rare that man is content to keep his emptiness of heart a secret. When that inner discord breaks forth in words, we have the sin of contention. Obviously, this does not constitute a prohibition law against discussion. Not every dispute is a sin, even though someone must be at least partly wrong, even though some disputes are never settled. A very great many arguments are positively virtuous, such, for example, as those against attacks on God or men. The difference between contention and defense of the truth is the difference between a man who will not lose an argument because his envy or pride cannot admit defeat, and the man who cannot lose an argument because he has hold of truth.

Still, even in perfectly legitimate disputes, there are limits. Somehow we do not expect a nun to descend to altercation over a taxi-fare; though we would not be so much surprised if an excited cab-driver expressed himself forcibly. We are quite right, For discussion should be suited not only to the subject-matter, but also to the person engaged in the discussion. A bishop, for example, has not the same possibilities in rough and tumble argument as has, say, a top sergeant; in fact, the bishop has no business getting into that kind of argument. In other words, this act of virtue, like any other, must be placed in fitting circumstances, the very circumstances must be in accord with reason. When discussion, however worthy its end, does not keep within fitting limits, then, as St. Paul insisted, it "not only does no good; it does serious damage to those who are listening."

Temporal desolation by works:

The inner discord that isolates the heart of a man is like a disease eating its way from organ to organ, gradually disintegrating the whole body. For this discord can never stay within the heart of a man; it eats its way out, disintegrating the unity of man and attacking the institutions which bind men together. We might, quite aptly, compare a discordant will to an engine on an airplane as it breaks loose and smashes back into the cabin. Before, when it was one with the rest of the plane, it served the mighty purpose of rushing the plane and its passengers to their destination with swift, easy movement; now that it has broken loose from the unity of that plane, it becomes an instrument of destruction. So the will of man, broken loose from the order of God, becomes a smashing destroyer of the unity of men. It stops at nothing; nothing is too great, nothing too sacred for its devastating attack.

Against the universal Church -- schism

When this attack centers on the unity of the Church, schism is born into the world. Schism is a quarrelsome sin; its enemy, then, is peace. It does not attack the faith, as does heresy and infidelity; rather it concentrates on the unity achieved by charity; it cuts its victims off from the members of the Church and from the head of the Church. It is true that it is against a changeable, temporal thing like ecclesiastical

unity, rather than against the unchangeable First Truth; yet, because it reaches out to injure the spiritual good of the whole multitude of the faithful, it well merits a place near the top in the sins committed against our neighbor.

Against nations -- war

If our modern world had to choose between war and schism, it would emphatically vote for schism as the lesser evil. Even though its object is less sweeping and the damage it does is much less serious, the sin of discord breaking out in unjust war impresses us much more vividly than the sin of schism. Spiritual damage, after all, does not splatter the street with blood. We have reason enough, God knows, for being impressed with the evils of war; but no reason at all for reversing the order of spiritual and material values.

Just and unjust wars

It must be noticed, however, that the clash of armed forces which constitutes war is not in itself sinful. Sin enters when the war is unjust. There are today two odd extremes of opinion. The first glorifies war and admits no legal limitations to military activity. The other completely condemns war, refusing to admit any justification whatsoever for armed hostilities between nations.

Actually these conflicting opinions are twin sons of the same horrible mother; they have a common source in atheistic materialism. The fundamental principle of the glorifiers of war is: "might is right." Law, then, is the dictate of the bully. This amounts to a deification of brute strength, an inculcation of the philosophy of the bully; it leaves men much worse off than the animals, for it leaves men shorn of every principle of order and condemns them to the chaos of shifting power, with its inevitable results of constant desolation. The opposite extreme opinion has about it the softness of corruption and disintegration. Behind it is the conviction that the things destroyed by war are supreme in the scale of human values: property, health, luxury, money, even life itself.

Both opinions are evil from their very root; of the two, perhaps the absolute pacifist extreme is the most destructive of things distinctively human, for normally there is apt to be a healthy reaction on the part of the recipient of a bloody nose. As a matter of fact, acts of nations are as subject to moral law as are the acts of individuals; which is to say no more than that the acts of nations are just as human as acts of individuals. They are pointed to or away from a goal that does not vary; they are, then, right or wrong, leading to the goal or away from it. The power that may allow them to escape immediate punishment cannot make good out of evil. On the other hand, there are things worth fighting for, worth the loss of all the material world can offer, worth the loss of life itself. We cannot refuse to fight under any circumstances without admitting that there is nothing worthy of the efforts of a man above what he can reach in the world; what he can touch with his hands.

These modern opinions are not glittering novelties. Man has unconditionally condemned war before. The Manicheans were sure war was always a sin; Luther was convinced that to fight against the Turks would be to resist the will of God, impeding His punishments; while Erasmus, conceding that war might have been justified in the Old Law, maintained that in the New Law of love, it certainly is not. That war, under some circumstances, is justified is not a mere philosophical opinion; a Catholic is not free to embrace or reject it. It is a solemn doctrine of the Church; in fact, time and again through the ages, the Church, through Her councils and Supreme Pontiffs, has urged men to wage war.

Perhaps we could compress the basis for a just war into one word -- defense. The just cause for war is to repulse an attempted injury or to obtain satisfaction for an injury already done. In the first case, we have what is called a defensive war; in the second case, what is called an offensive war. In both cases we may have a just war, for in both cases action is taken in defense of rights.

Such defense is, of course, desperate, last-ditch defense. If we keep this in mind it will be clear that no private person has a right to declare war. A private person always has a higher court of appeal; he does not have to settle the matter with his own hands, he can go to the judges of the community and demand

satisfaction. But where the rights of states have been violated, there is no higher political court of appeal; and because there is no temporal power above the state, a recourse to arms is necessary.

To put it another way, a conscientious citizen may decide to devote some of his leisure moments to helping out the state; casting about for a helpful role, he decides to hang a few public enemies on his private gibbet. As a result, there is much indignation among the public enemies. For once, they are right. A man has no vindictive power within the nation itself; it is the work of the community to punish the enemies of the community. The same is true outside the limits of the nation; the private person has no more vindictive power against external enemies than he has against criminals within the nation. He is not the one delegated to care for and act for the community; he has no authority to convoke the whole community, as would be necessary in the case of war. All this belongs to authority, to him who has charge of the community.

But even here, in the case of the governor of a nation declaring war, it is not a matter of any particular person taking up the sword. The sword of defense is given to the soldier by the authorities; and it is given to the authorities themselves by their very office as community guardians. In each case, the sword is not taken up, rather it is thrust upon them. Even though the cause be just, the war is rendered unjust when the competent authority declaring it vitiates its justice by such evil intentions as cupidity, cruelty and the like. Nor is this surprising with a sufficiently evil intention a man can make the love he has for his mother or the support he gives his wife a vicious thing.

The brief, classic statement on the morality of war demands three conditions for war's justification. It must be declared by competent authority, it must be for a just cause, and it must be waged for a right intention. These three must be had simultaneously. War is not just merely because competent authority declares it; it is not just merely because it has a just cause; nor is war just merely because one's intention is very pure. When these conditions are present simultaneously, war is not sinful; it is an act of virtue, a defense of the common good.

Such wars were the crusades. Such a war might have been the war waged by Spain against the Moors. But it is not always easy to determine the justice or injustice of a particular war, not because the principles are not clear, but because the evidence is often so difficult to get at. In this case, as in every other case of judgment of a moral act, it is essential that we have the whole story, honestly told; but to break through the protective barrier of propaganda thrown around the evidence of modern wars is almost too much even for the tank-like minds with which nature has gifted historians.

Clerics and war

In a really just war, we are faced with a paradox of an act of virtue being positively forbidden to one class of men, i.e., to clerics. It is not nearly so hard to understand the paradox as it is to understand the leaders of a nation disregarding such a prohibition. After all, these men, by their very office, stand between men and God, bringing God to men and men to God. Contemplation, praise of God and prayers for men are integral details of their work of feeding men with divine food. The government that would force these men into battle must either consider such work relatively unimportant or it must look upon the roar of guns and the desperate clash of bayonets as offering no hindrance to contemplation. In either case, one might justifiably doubt its capacity for guiding the lives of men.

The reasons against clerics' participation in war go much deeper than all this. All the clerical orders within the Church are ordered to the supreme grade of the priesthood, whose work is to offer the sacrifice of Christ on the altar. It is not fitting that such a minister should shed the blood of other men; rather he should be prepared to shed his own blood for Christ, imitating the work that he performs each morning at the altar. He is another peacemaker. His life is dedicated to the salvation of souls, not to the destruction of bodies. So supreme is his office among all the offices offered to men, that not even such a just cause as the defense of the common good justifies his casting aside of the dignity, fittingness and stability of his office of continuing the work of the Prince of Peace.

This does not mean that, at the outbreak of war, all clerics are to be put in glass cases and hidden in bomb-proof cellars, along with the windows of the cathedral. The purpose of this prohibition on their active participation in war is not to protect clerics from hardships, privations and dangers. By the command of Christ, these things are their normal diet. They are expected to go into the hardships, privations and dangers of war much more gaily than other men, indeed without any of the implements of self-protection that bolster the courage of their fellows. The point is, their work must not be interrupted. They are to work for the salvation of souls, not for the destruction of life; so clerics should be found wherever men are found -- in front-line trenches, in the precarious privacy of no man's land, on sinking ships, in shattered cities. For men, wherever they are, must be given the same spiritual help, the same supernatural nourishment. Clerics not only may take part in war in this fashion; they are obliged to.

Moral limits of intelligence corps

Although we have talked incessantly about war for years, there is one final point about that ghastly business which has been consistently overlooked; that is, the moral regulation of the secret service or intelligence corps. Remembering that war is a moral act, waged by a moral agent, and therefore strictly limited by the precepts of moral law, it becomes evident that an act evil in itself is never permitted in the name of war. There is no cause that can justify a morally wrong act, for an end never justifies the means. A woman prostituting herself to obtain enemy secrets or an expert propagandist concocting an enormous lie to hide the secrets of his own country have merited the bitter names given to perpetrators of the same acts for any other purpose. Not that the moral code is a naive young lady whose notion of honesty is to tell all she knows; it is quite legitimate to allow an enemy to draw wrong inferences, to refuse to tell plans for defense or offense, or any part of those plans, to tell as much as we want to be known. But sin, be it very small or very big, remains what it is -- an ugly, inhuman blot -- whatever the purpose for which it is committed.

Behind the deceit and corruption that have so often marked modern diplomacy lies the foul political philosophy of Machiavelli, with its implication of the absolute supremacy of the state. Today that supremacy is no longer merely implied. The good of the state, as the first and only unchangeable moral principle, has been flatly stated. It has been officially declared, for instance, by the Soviet Party, that the ethical code is entirely subordinated to the service of the proletariat and its class war. In simpler language, in the service of the state or the party, anything goes.

Sane men must recoil in horror from such a conception of the state because it means that the state has taken the place of God. Men who are not particularly interested in God may stupidly think they could put up with such a substitution; but a moment's thought shows the implications for humanity itself. This state supremacy means that human life is stripped of all hope, man is chained down in despair; he is made a puppet of a state, without personal rights or personal goals, with nothing but impersonal service to support him in this life and oblivion promised as the reward of his labors.

Against the commonwealth -- sedition: defense of the common good

Not that full place must be denied to the rights of the state. Those rights are objective and must be respected. Rebels against a just government are criminals, guilty of mortal sin -- a sin directly against the common good of the community, committed from the very beginnings of their preparation for rebellion. This sin of sedition is not an aristocratic sin which demands capacities for leadership in its victim; it is a common thing, shared alike by ringleaders and camp-followers of rebellion. However vigorously they may protest their love of men, actually they rob men of a chance to make a success of human living.

Justified rebellion

There is no more staunch defender of the authority of the state than the Church. But the Church does not mistake the members of a Cabinet for the Seraphim who stand before the face of God. A government can be wrong; it can be tyrannous; it can be greedy and inimical to the common good. When it has become so

corrupt, the men who rise up against it are not rebels; they are heroic defenders of the common good. These men are not waging war on authority; the betrayal of their office by those in authority has already stripped them of whatever claim they had to rule others. Unless a rebellion would do more harm to the common good than this present tyranny, it is not only justified, it may even be obligatory.

For now the state is leaderless except for those whom nature, education and responsibility have equipped to take the place of the traitors to the common good. Nature does not so much take the crown from the former heads of the state, rather she snatches these heads from under their crown; nor does she leave the crown of authority suspended in mid-air. Those equipped by nature cease to be private persons; they are pushed forward by the solemn responsibility incurred by nature itself, to fill the gap created by men who, contrary to their office, preferred their own good to the good of the community.

Against the individual

Even in this case, it is still true that private persons cannot wage war. That principle is universal. Indeed, a private person cannot even wage a little personal war such as is involved in a quarrel or a duel.

Duels

A duel is really an elaborately planned murder. It is an attempt to give dignity and order to an act that is essentially chaotic. There is a solemn, "gentlemanly" agreement as to time, place, weapons; when always, the affair is haunted by the shadow of murder, the persistent danger of death to one or to both parties. It is not surprising that the condemnations of the Council of Trent against duelling are as bitter as deep seated disgust can make them. Under these condemnations are included, not only the participants, but those who allow it to take place within their territory, the seconds, the spectators, indeed, anyone who has anything to do with the official murder. Rulers who allow the duel are stripped of their jurisdiction, as well as excommunicated, all their goods proscribed, they incur perpetual infamy and are to be treated as murderers. The participant who dies as a result of the duel is forever deprived of ecclesiastical burial. Counsellors, advisers, spectators are excommunicated and are under perpetual infamy, and this notwithstanding any privilege or custom, even immemorial custom, to the contrary.

The Council has made it fairly clear that it considers the life of a man sacred. The transformation of a sow's ear into a silk purse is child's play compared to the task of pinching murder's ugly, deformed hulk into the delicate finery of dignity, honor, virtue. There are no grounds to justify the murder of a man.

Quarrels

Duelling and quarreling, for all their show of fire and flashing eyes, plod through the life of a man with all the dull stupidity of Markham's debased "Man With a Hoe." Both are products of anger; and there is no passion that more completely robs a man of his reason. The quarrelsome man may have some little excuse, on the grounds of passion, for his desire to hurt another and have him know he is hurt; yet the act is an unjust invasion of the rights of another; it is contrary to all reason, a stupid thing.

A duel proceeds from a much colder, more deliberate anger; so rarely is there any excuse about it at all. When we go a step further, to calm, deliberate, unjust injury of another, we have come to a savage thing, a product of hate. Its purpose is not so much to obtain satisfaction, as to inflict injury. A knife in the back or a burst of machine-gun fire from a dark alley is not so much the blind, smashing animality of anger, as the cold, diabolical finality of hate. The proverb that it takes two to make a quarrel can hardly be classified as profound; a man must be desperately lonely to quarrel with himself. But the implication that both parties to a quarrel are necessarily wrong is quite false. Certainly to defend oneself against unjust attack, such as is involved in quarreling, does not involve moral wrong; indeed, such defense may be positively obligatory in some cases.

This dreadful desolation we have been describing is easily appreciated. We know something of the loneliness of a Catholic heart which has wandered outside the unity of the Church. We have a vivid

realization of the ghastliness of a street spattered with bodies, a heap of brick and mortar that had once been a home, a man gasping out his life from the pistol shot of an enemy, or lying, a sodden, insensible, beaten thing, the victim of brutality. All these strike deeply into our hearts; they are human tragedies and we are very human. Then, too, there has been no lack of emphasis, in this last century, upon the value of the things destroyed by such desolation.

Eternal desolation -- scandal

Yet to eyes accustomed, as ours are, to the horizons of eternity, all this is not the most dreadful desolation that eats its way through the lives of men. There is yet another, which undoes the work of Christ, besmirches the supreme beauty in man and brings on eternal death. It was vivid to the eyes of Christ when He warned us that the man by whom scandal came to little ones would be better off if he had a millstone hung about his neck and were thrown into the sea. We can see how this is so. At least the little ones should be safe; at least they should be spared an introduction to the filthy paths of sin.

Unfortunately we make the mistake of limiting the words "little ones" to children, whereas, really, we are all children of God. The introduction of any of the children of God to the ways of sin, the accomplishment of the spiritual ruin of any friend of God, merits the terrible condemnation of Christ and will undoubtedly receive the punishments it deserves.

Its varieties

Our generation has been made shockingly familiar with the ruin of little ones. It is true that the despicable drug salesman who introduces marihuana to high school students is primarily interested, not in spiritual ruin, but in money. It is also true that the seducer for purposes of his own pleasure is primarily interested in himself, in the satisfaction of his own appetites. Nevertheless, both have effectively brought about the spiritual ruin of a child of God. They have, as a matter of fact, done much more damage than the moron who attacks a child of three or four.

Both of these men have been guilty of a serious mortal sin against charity; but as yet this is not that diabolical scandal whose chief aim is the spiritual ruin of another. The Communist, who throws adolescents together in the hope of destroying their moral life, the more easily to destroy their religious life, is in a class by himself. Trudging to the same school is the propagandist who attempts to root out all love and knowledge of God from the hearts of men. These are the works of the devil. Done by men, they are diabolical scandal. This is the supreme gesture of hate of fellow men.

Its malice

From this it is evident that, in the theological sense of the term, scandal is not a gossip passing on of the latest bit of unsavoury news. It involves spiritual ruin and it can be effectively committed even when the act, by which it is brought about, is not in itself sinful. The saintly man who interrupts his lecture on mortification to take a drink of water, has acted in complete innocence; the damage is done because he fails to notice that some wag had put the water in a gin bottle. The scandalizing act need not even be aimed at anyone at all. The gaily drunk young parents, staggering home after a party, are in no condition to aim at anything; yet their synthetic gaiety may well do spiritual injury to their children. In fact an act of positive virtue may bring about spiritual ruin to others; imagine the effect produced by a Greek priest touring Ireland in the company of his wife!

At this rate, it would seem that scandal is unavoidable. In a sense that is true; for there is no action which cannot be given an evil meaning by twisted minds. But that kind of scandal is pharisaical; we do not even try to avoid it, rather we give it the healthy contempt it deserves. The scandal that must be avoided (over and above the scandal flowing from sins) is that which comes from the appearance of evil about good or indifferent acts. This is the scandal of "the little ones", the innocent; and the little ones must be spared, even at the cost of serious inconvenience. Surely the soul of our neighbor is more important than any act we may place here and now, than any temporal thing we may possess. In fact, the very omission of a good

work for love of our neighbor, is itself a greater work than we could accomplish by going ahead with our original plan.

The just man and scandal

As a matter of fact, a just man ordinarily is not scandalized, because he will not wreck his divine friendship for any human consideration. Of course he does not scandalize others; not even by that scandal that comes from slight venial sins or carelessly done good acts. This man is not in the habit of doing things carelessly for God; he is in love with God, so he has an eye to all the things that belong to God, a very keen eye for the welfare of the friends of God, who are his neighbors.

First principles of order:

With essential order established in human life, there come fullness and peace. With essential disorder, human life is an empty, desolate, chaotic wreck.

The double commandment of Christ

It is above all necessary, then, that order come into our lives. Christ was not one to overlook the necessary things, particularly since He had so little time to teach us the truth. So when He was asked to select, out of all the commandments, the principal ones, His divinely wise answer was that there were just two. The first was: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength"; and the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The end of all other commands

In these words, Christ gave us the objective principle of order, the principle that places man in the proper relation to his goal; for the end of life is the object of charity -- union with God -- and if we are properly ordered to that goal, everything else falls into its proper place. In fact, His one command is, in itself, really enough; it contains all the others. But that there be no mistakes, Christ added: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The words of the commandment

The first commandment states the measure of love for God. We are to love God in the only way God can be loved; without measure. Christ advocates a complete surrender; but a surrender that is not defeat but victory. We are to give ourselves utterly to God: to strain towards Him with all of our will; to have our intellect subject to Him; to have our appetite operating according to Him; to have our external acts obey God. In other words, all principles of activity within us are to be focused, not scattered; to operate in unity, harmoniously and with an effectiveness that can be measured only by God Himself.

As a result of our surrender to God, we have a holy, just and true love For our neighbor. It is holy, for it is for God's sake; it is just, For it wishes him only good, refusing to condescend either to his evil will or to our own evil desires; it is true love, for it is not a matter of getting but of giving. These fundamental commands of Christ are not impossible ideals held out to superior beings; they are commands of which the minimum requirements are met in the observance of the Ten Commandments.

Wisdom: Its nature and extent

These are the objective principles of order. Within us, the principle of order is charity, perfected by the gift of the Holy Ghost which is wisdom. The scientist can be very learned, but at the same time very stupid; his science does not give him wisdom, for it is not interested in the last things of life. On the contrary, the philosopher must be wise or cease to be a philosopher; he must know the goal, though it be only the unsatisfactory natural goal, or admit he knows no philosophy, since philosophy's one interest is in last causes. In other words, it is only by seeing the goal that we can know where our steps are leading us;

it is only by seeing the last thing, that we can understand the first. A wise man is one who has the serene judgment given by a knowledge of the meaning of life.

In the supernatural order, the last things are divine things. To contemplate divine things, and by them read the meaning of the divine and the human order, is the work of the gift of wisdom.

This is the third of that trio of intellectual gifts which fit our mind to wander in the halls of the house of God. As we have already seen, the gift of understanding allows us to penetrate the divine truth; then the gift of knowledge enables us to see the world of creatures in the light of the world of God. The gift of wisdom allows us to contemplate this new world, and see both it and the old world through the serene eyes of God.

The enemy of wisdom

Its roots are deep in charity. By it the end is connatural to us, we judge it as a chaste man judges of chastity, or an honest man of honesty; that is, not clumsily, not laboriously working out an answer, but by a sharp, instantaneous insight into truth. Obviously the work of wisdom is not something to be explained on natural grounds; it must come from that push of the Holy Ghost to a mind well prepared by the gift of wisdom to receive the movement of God. Yet this wisdom is not a rare, exotic flower. It is one of those extraordinary things that have, by the grace of God, become more ordinary than the common things of life. Everyone in the state of grace has it; and retains it for as long as that state of grace endures. Or, to put it another way, to every friend of God, identified by friendship with the divine Friend, the supreme end (God Himself) is connatural. Mortal sin, then, excluding this divine friendship, knocks out the basis of the connaturality with the end which is at the bottom of wisdom. That is to say, mortal sin is an evidence of stupidity; an egregious error about the goal of men.

Wisdom is not limited to that minimum degree which assures us of avoidance of the essential stupidity forbidden by the Ten Commandments. Wisdom can abound, must abound with the increase of charity. It may exist to the degree that enables us to manifest these divine things to others; or even further, to the degree necessary to order and direct others by these divine truths. As that wisdom increases, the cup of life has an altogether different taste; labor gives way to rest, bitterness to sweetness for now we are not turned away from God but one with Him.

As a matter of fact, we must have some kind of wisdom if we are to act at all, because we must have some kind of end. In the light of that end all things will be seen. It may be an earthly wisdom, coming from an earthly end, which gives a man the viewpoint of a mole, burrowing in the things of earth. Or a man may place his end in the goods of the body, gain an animal wisdom and so see the world through the eyes of a pig. Or, finally, he may place his end in his own excellence; the result is a diabolical wisdom, which instead of giving man an outlook, confines all his sight to an insight, the same colossal vanity that blinded Lucifer, the greatest of the angels.

All of these false wisdoms are really stupidity. They are a thick-headedness that misses the whole meaning of life, the whole possibility of man; a stupidity that comes from immersing the senses of man in the earthly things that completely absorb his soul. Naturally its chief source is to be found in sins of the flesh; sins of luxury are a jealous mistress who demands every instant of a man's time, every moment of his thought, every beat of his heart.

Its beatitude -- "Blessed are the peacemakers"

The inevitable result of stupidity is disorder, chaos. Or, more concretely, it must bring forth a distaste for things of the soul, a hatred of God and, ultimately, desperation. The contrary climax of wisdom is stated in the beatitude corresponding to that gift: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Charity gives us peace; but it is by wisdom that we are able to make peace. Augustine, you will remember, defined peace as the tranquillity of order; wisdom alone has the wide outlook of God that makes plain to the eyes of man the meaning of all that life includes, the relation of one part to another and

of all parts to the whole. Here we come closer to the imitation of Christ; and our reward is named with becoming beauty when it is said that the peacemakers shall be called the sons of God. That Incarnate Wisdom, the Son of God, first brought peace to men of good-will.

Order and the modern world

The world, to which that Incarnate Wisdom brought the principles of order, and so of peace, was a world where order was rampant and yet there was no order. The disciplined order of the Roman legions has become legendary. The administration of Roman justice, the means of communication, the unity of language, in fact everything about the Roman Empire marked the high point of the human effort to be self-sufficient. And, as Chesterton has said, "that effort was a failure and men realized it was a failure."

All the world was at peace; yet in that world, no man had peace. Men's hearts were desolate. The world was empty. Philosophy had tried to fill that emptiness; so had military power, sensual indulgence and a frigid asceticism. But all had succeeded only in giving order to emptiness. What was missing was the reason for everything else that is, and without it nothing had reason. It was time for God to come.

An ordered emptiness

Our world today is a world ordered to its last detail; it is another high point in the human endeavor to be self-sufficient, and we are achieving the same results. We are busily ordering emptiness. We insist on the most perfect order in non-essentials. Everything can be weighed and measured, must be weighed and measured: our food, our clothes, our sleep, our pleasure, our personal habits, our education, our emotional and intellectual and physical life, our houses, our cities, our children, our navies and armies. There is no scale that escapes our passion for order.

An idealization of emptiness

We have gone the Roman world one better. We have not only ordered emptiness, we have idealized it; we have insisted that there be no goal, and so that there be no order. We have deified essential disorder, essential desolation. It is not love of God that we advocate, but indifference or contempt for Him. It is not love, but hatred of neighbor that is our watchword. We will not have wisdom but only learning.

A desolate world We are just beginning to feel the cold chill of desolation, the chill of empty, haunted hearts, isolated, locked within themselves. We are puckering our mouths against the bitterness of enmity; of schism, of war, of quarreling, even of duelling, though we have thrown away the rapiers. Scandal has become a part of our educational scheme, though we are still shocked at the ruin it causes.

Wisdom of the Word

It is time for God to come among men; for men to open the door to God, even though there be but little room in the human inn. For only God can bring us fullness and peace. It is time for men to listen to the echo of the words of divine wisdom in their hearts, and to know that these two words of the Word of God are inseparable: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, with thy whole soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." "My peace I give unto you." It is the kingdom of God that must be sought first.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER VI -- THE FULLNESS OF ACTION (Q. 47-56)

1. Fullness of action and maturity:
 - (a) The activity of men.
 - (b) Stages of human activity.
2. Marks of maturity in action:
 - (a) Current expressions of maturity.
 - (b) Men's evaluation of maturity in action.
3. Cause of mature action -- prudence:
 - (a) Reason and appetite in prudence.
 - (b) Work of prudence as a good habit:
 - (1) The work of a virtue.
 - (2) Its relations to other virtues.
 - (c) The acts of prudence:
 - (1) Principal and secondary acts: command, counsel, judgment.
 - (2) Conditions of perfect prudence:
the integral parts of prudence.
 - (d) Prudence in the individual:
 - (1) In sinners.
 - (2) In just men.
4. Origin and decay of prudence.
5. Species of maturity:
 - (a) In the state.
 - (b) In military organization.
 - (c) In the home.
6. Complete maturity: the gift of counsel.
7. Types of immaturity:
 - (a) Imprudence (precipitation, thoughtlessness, inconstancy).
 - (b) Negligence.
 - (c) Carnal prudence (craftiness, guile, fraud).
 - (d) Worry.

Conclusion:

1. The condition for fullness of action -- maturity.
2. Second childhood of a world:
 - (a) Modern attempts to attain maturity of action:
 - (1) Mass education.
 - (2) Psychological theories.
 - (3) Democracy.
 - (4) Totalitarian political practice.
 - (b) Modern philosophical and political attacks on maturity.
3. The desperately young who will not grow up.
4. The eternally young who are always mature.

CHAPTER VI THE FULLNESS OF ACTION (Q 47-56)

Fullness of action and maturity

HUMAN activity is a mirror which gives back accurate images of men. Among the pictures presented to us by it are two unappealing extremes. One is the image of the dreamer, which, somehow, suggests nurseries, perambulators and guardians; for such a one is never found alone, someone must take care of him. The other is the image of the "go-getter", who impresses us often as a victim of glands, sometimes as a champion of trifles, and always as a nuisance.

The activity of men

Somewhere between these two is an image that is close to our hearts. It is linked somehow with freedom; it seems to be the fruit of freedom of mind and freedom of heart. Yet freedom of action is not the whole story, or even the most important part of the story, of that ideal which is so close to our hearts. Certainly the wealthy libertine, to whom riches and complete lack of moral restraint give utter license of action, arouses no writhings of the green-eyed monster within us. We do not particularly want license of action.

No one feels hurt at being forbidden to shout or sing in a Pullman car at midnight. If law prohibits a nudist promenade on Broadway we do not consider that the fullness of our action has been impeded, at least not that fullness of action which is the goal of humanity.

Stages of human activity

And, really, this fullness is a goal. It is a goal to which we approach, step by step, through all of a lifetime. Today we feel no regret that we cannot lie abed all day, like an infant, ceaselessly gurgling. We admire the ceaseless activity of a child; but we have little desire to throw dignity to the winds and rush about expending the same amount of energy on just such childish ends. We can smile understandingly at the great dreams of youth, and at its self-conscious, clumsy gestures towards the realization of those dreams. But that is not what we want. We may sigh a little over lost youth, but not too seriously; we have no more real desire to slip back to our sophomore days than we have to crawl back into our mother's womb. These steps are only stages in our growth to fullness of action. Man's discontent and sense of guilt at not having lived up to his possibilities, at not having continued to grow, give us a negative picture of what this fullness of action should be.

Marks of maturity in action: Current expressions of maturity

If we were to try to put this fullness of action in one word, we would have to say "human action", or "mature action." It is an action that should have about it something of the maturity of God. The action we demand of a man should not be the unconscious activity of a tree in a high wind, the narrow efficiency of the brute, nor the childish indirection of the infant. It should be responsible, effective, goal-gaining. In a word, we demand an action proper to the image of God: an action proceeding from intellect and will, as God's actions proceed, deliberately, and to ends worthy of such an agent as a man.

This distinctive flavor of human action is to be tasted in such words as independence, sovereignty, full control; yes, even in the word "humanity." It finds practical expression and validation in such things as freedom, responsibility, self-respect, self-control, power, shame and remorse, orderly action in the economic, military and political spheres; perhaps above all in sacrifice. This fullness is truly wisdom in action; certainly it is truth in action. It is, at the same time, a confession and a boast: a confession of our need of order in life, and a boast of our power to introduce that order into our actions.

If, in our actions, we are to have this note of maturity which is order, we must have something of the long vision of God. We must have vision, if not of the eternal hills, at least of the footprints of the past, the bustle of the present and the dim outlines of the future. For a definite mark of that order in action is a provision for the future.

Men's evaluation of maturity in action

That we need vision for orderly action is a significant truth. It means we must soar past the blind efficiency of irrational creation, past the fixed gaze of sense knowledge which never goes beyond the present. We must exceed the limits of time and space. Actually this vision sets man apart from the rest of the universe and brings him very close to God. Man can, somehow, set himself aside from the bustle of life and be a spectator of the whole game of life, even of his own life. He is a provider for himself and for others; in some sense he is a master of his own thinking, of his own action, somehow he directs himself. All this is contained in man's possession of vision: more concretely it means that for this fullness of maturity in action, we must have a perfection of intellect; for it is only through intellect that we can see beyond the limits of the present. This perfection of intellect is called the virtue of prudence.

Cause of mature action -- prudence

Not any intellectual perfection will do. Many an actress, putting on her make-up, has plotted out the glowing path of her rising star; many a Sunday quarterback has won a game without getting out of bed. Unfortunately none of this ever got out of the pretty head of the actress, or the sleepy head of the

alumnus. Both of these were purely speculative. Here it is not a question of speculating but of acting, of getting things done.

Human action, in this light, is busy with the means to an end, with the attaining of a goal. It is not enough merely to know; we must apply what we know; consequently we must know that to which we are applying the truths, as well as the truths we are to apply. In other words, we must know, not only the universal, but also the particular, the contingent.

When we overlook this truth, we bring about the fatal divorce of speculative from practical intellect. Alone, the speculative intellect precludes all action but the noiseless grinding of the dreamer's dreams; alone, the practical intellect gives us action, but the disorderly, feverish action of the "go-getter." We may take a little of the strain off our spine by holding our chin in our hands as we ponder universal truths; but we will not get much done. It is not enough to sit and think; nor is it enough to rush out doing anything and everything that occurs to us.

Reason and appetite in prudence

Universal truths are extremely practical, for they are the soul of action. But to have them replace action in our lives is like assigning ghosts to stoke the furnace. The external activities of men are the body of action; to entertain that body without its soul is as ghoulish and inane as grouping corpses at a wedding feast. Here it is a question of human action: and such action is truth at work in the singular. It demands a combination of the speculative and the practical; more than that, it means a combination of the intellect and the will, for it is an effective application of truth, and all effectiveness, all movement, must ultimately be traced back to the will.

Work of prudence as a good habit: The work of a virtue

For the moment it is sufficient that we notice that this perfection of intellect, by the good habit of prudence, has about it none of the danger of lopsidedness inherent in mere intellectual development. This latter may make a man a good mathematician, philosopher, carpenter and so on, yet leave him a vicious man. Prudence perfects the whole man, not just a part of him. In other words, while the other intellectual virtues demand the moral virtues for their fulfillment, prudence is, in a very real sense, itself a moral virtue.

Its relations to other virtues

In technical language, prudence is formally or essentially an intellectual virtue, because it perfects our faculty of intellect; but materially, or simply, it is a moral virtue, because the material with which it deals - our human acts - is moral material. But all technical language is a snob, speaking only to technicians; to put the same truth in more democratic terms, the work of prudence is to direct the actions of man to an end, to a proper end, with the obvious implication of a right end to which those actions can be directed, that is, with the obvious implication of moral perfection.

Perhaps this unique position of prudence can be made more clear by a momentary comparison with the other virtues. Prudence does not try to crash the board meeting of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, the speculative virtues which deal with high, necessary, universal truths; it stays in the outer office, chatting with the stenographer about humble, contingent human acts. Art, the other practical virtue, is busy with houses and boats and medicine and masterpieces, with things to be made; while prudence is occupied with loving and suffering and hoping and trying, with things to be done. Prudence is distinct from the moral virtues as the intellect is distinct from appetite. It is set off sharply from the theological virtues as God is set off from the feeble deeds of man; for, while the object of the theological virtues is God Himself, the object of prudence is human action.

Yet, while standing out so distinctly from all the other virtues, paradoxically prudence runs through them all, particularly through all the moral virtues. In somewhat the same way the soul of man is sharply distinct

from all his members, yet it is in every part of a man or that part is dead. So, too, charity stands out from all other virtues in the supernatural order; yet it is the life and the soul, the living principle of them all.

In the moral field, prudence builds up from nature as a thinker builds up from the naturally known first principles of thought. The starting point and foundation of everything must come from nature. A philosopher who decides to toss away the natural first principles of thought and construct his own set of first principles, commits intellectual suicide. He is in the absurd position of a man who decided to start life over again without the original dependence on his mother. Both are whimsical declarations of independence; fortunately for both men, the task they set themselves cannot be accomplished. Nature is not to be denied. It remains the starting point and foundation in the world of thought, of action and of being, however we may feel about it.

The starting point in the moral or practical order is the ends of the moral virtues. In the preceding volume of this work, we showed that in human action the end is always the beginning. We must start off with a goal in mind or we wander aimlessly. And the field of human action is the field of moral action. Understand, prudence does not create this moral starting point. Just as the intellectual virtue of knowledge applies the first principles of speculative thought to arrive at conclusions, so prudence applies the first principles, or ends, of the practical order to arrive at action.

To be more explicit, the ends of the moral virtues are the happy medium of reason. That is neither a pledge of mediocrity nor an excuse for cowardice; rather it is the trade-mark of humanity. Reason is the rule to which human action must measure up; the happy medium is had when there is neither excess nor defect from that rule. Nature gives its none too gentle push toward that medium of reason by the natural inclinations of the appetite, which are the seeds of the moral virtues. How and through what means man can, in the concrete, attain that medium in action pertains to prudence. That is, prudence in the concrete finds the medium, for it is only by a right disposition of the means to the end that the medium in action is to be found. That is precisely the work of prudence: rightly to order the means to the end.

Perhaps we can put this more graphically by saying that no matter how strong the drive of a particular appetite, or a habit of that appetite, without prudence that drive is as disastrous as the speed of a running man who is totally blind. No matter how great the knowledge of the end or goal may be, if the drive of appetite is not there, if it has been destroyed by bad habits, education, and so on, prudence is as helplessly grounded as an aviator without a plane. No matter how healthy and well balanced our natural appetites may be, they do not suffice in us as they do in the beasts. Prudence, the work of reason, is essential because of the infinite variety of means uncovered by human knowledge and the independence of human freedom.

Prudence is the ideal housewife of a man's inner mansion; it is the virtue that gets things done the way they should be done. It is a virtue which gives us fullness of action. In common with all the virtues all the habits, it is a principle of action; specifically it is the channel down which flow the powers of the practical intellect into the sea of action.

The acts of prudence:

Principal and secondary acts: command, counsel, judgment

If we remember this effective character of prudence, the discovery of its principal act is absurdly simple. The acts of prudence will be the acts of the practical reason doing things; so of course the principal act of prudence will be the act by which we actually get results. Let us suppose that the thing we are about to do is to go to a theatre. That involves, first of all, a scanning of the lists of plays actually in town; we are taking counsel. Then a selection of the best show would be necessary; we have made up our minds, passed a judgment. Finally would come the act of command, or precept, by which we get the tickets and go to the theatre. If we stop at the act of counsel, we have obtained some information but no entertainment; if our mental stamina carries us only as far as the act of judgment, we have material for argument but still no entertainment. It is only by the last act, the act of command, that we actually obtain rest for our soul in the

make-believe world of the theatre.

This act of command or precept, then, is an application of the fruits of counsel and of judgment. It is the act closest to the end of practical reason, that is, closest to action. It is the principal act of prudence. That this is so will be evident if we look at the question from another angle. Let us say that an artist, with his tongue in his cheek (he must be successful to be so free with his tongue), decides to paint the moon as a square. He is poking fun at the art critics. though ne may win a prize; but he has committed much less of an artistic sin than the student artist who. trying desperately to paint the moon as it is, actually produces a square moon. We may smile with the first artist, sure he can do much better; we must agonize with the second's pitiful efforts. But the man who deliberately swallows poison, knowing full well it will kill him, is guilty of a sin against prudence; whereas the man who swallows poison unwittingly is guilty of no sin at all. The perfection of prudence, in other words, unlike the perfection of art, does not consist in excellence of judgment but in excellence of command. It is not a matter of knowing the rules, but of getting things done.

It may be well here to summarize the detailed analysis of the act of command, which was given in the preceding volume. Taking it apart, we find it has three elements: an element of ordering, of announcement or intimation, and of motion; the first two belong to the intellect, the last to the will. It can be briefly described as effective direction. St. Thomas, placing this act as the principal act of prudence, shows us that Providence, law, government are all acts of prudence, for they are all acts of command: that is, they are all essentially acts of reason, not of will. From this one article of St. Thomas, locating command as an act of prudence, the exact nature of Providence, law and government can be deduced; from the profound analysis of this act of command, the purpose, limitation, extension and obligation of Providence, law and government, can all be clearly and profoundly discovered. This is a significant truth, as we say in some detail in Volume II, for it removes government and law from the field of mere caprice, distinguishes them clearly from mere power or mere will of the ruler, and places them squarely where they belong -- under the protecting wings of reason.

Through all these three acts of prudence there runs a double note of quick ingenuity and healthy doubt. The more prudent man is not the cautious man who spends three months considering every angle of a problem, in the hope of getting a guarantee of absolute certitude for his solution. Rather the man who considers the pertinent possibilities, makes a decisive choice and swings into action is much more prudent, though he is not denying the elements of incertitude in his choice. We simply cannot have the certitude of metaphysics or mathematics in things human. We cannot know that a banker is trustworthy or a salesman is truthful in the same absolute way that we know two and two are four. That very incertitude gives us an alertness that quickens our faculties, enabling us to peer quickly into all the possibilities, and at the same time to keep ourselves on the watch against mistakes. Certainly prudence must have that note of eager alertness about it; it is not the virtue of a dull, plodding, ineffective man. It belongs to the man who is getting things done, who applies the results of counsel and judgment quickly. For the whole purpose of counsel and judgment is precisely to prepare the way for the supreme act of command, with its effective results.

For the most part, our superfluous anxiety is caused by a search for the impossible, a demand for absolute certitude in human affairs. It simply cannot be had. Aristotle gave expression to the resentment of men and women, tortured by anxiety, against the serene confidence of the really prudent man, when he said that a magnanimous man is lazy and idle. Of course he is not lazy and idle at all; he merely appears so to us, who are so busy worrying about the things that should be worried about, distrusting those who should not be distrusted. The magnanimous man escapes the excessive fear and distrust of others that drives lesser men into a panic of conferences, advice-taking, fence-straddling and nervous breakdowns.

When the edict went out from Caesar that all the world was to be enrolled, Joseph and Mary were presented with a problem for prudence. They had something to get done; they had to make that long, four-day trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled. So they set about making their plans. What went into those historic plans which culminated in the birth of God?

First of all, they must have gone over their memories of the annual trips to Jerusalem for the Passover; that would refresh their knowledge of the route and its difficulties, and of the means necessary to make the journey safely. They would have called on their knowledge of the political conditions of the time, the caravan departures, Mary's own physical condition, and so on. Even without being asked, the town veterans of the road would volunteer advice, plenty of it; Mary and Joseph were, after all, very young. With true wisdom, they showed themselves neither proud nor contemptuous, but humbly docile in the face of this advice of their elders. They themselves would have to take care of the inevitable emergencies which no one could foresee. Mary, of course, would bring along swaddling clothes, because she knew her time was near; but it would be necessary for Joseph to fall back upon his native ingenuity to make the swift decision that would consecrate forever the manger of a stable as the birthplace of God. They were ready then to put all these things together and reason out their procedure. That their reasoning was well done is evidenced by the safe arrival of Mary in Bethlehem, in spite of the rigor of the season, of the delicacy of her condition, of the poverty which forced them to travel in such humble state.

They were ready to reason out their procedure; that is, they were ready to make their plans, actually to order the means to the goal of Bethlehem; and that reasoning took foresight. They would need circumspection that they might overlook no circumstance of the journey: the cold of the mountains, the possibility of exposure during the brisk nights, excessive fatigue and so on. As far as possible they would provide for the avoiding of obstacles; for example, they would take care not to attempt a journey through that dangerous country alone, rather waiting, cautiously, to travel along with the group going south for a similar purpose.

Conditions of perfect prudence: the integral parts of prudence

All of these acts go into every work of prudence, however quickly it may seem to spring into being; for these are the necessary conditions for perfection of prudence. Let us run over them again briefly: there is memory of the past and understanding of the present, which covers knowledge already had; then there is the acquisition of new knowledge, either by the experience and teaching of others accepted through docility, or, when time does not permit recourse to others, by our own ingenuity, our own alert shrewdness. Indeed this last is necessary too when we encounter a circumstance so singular as to have escaped the experience of all others. Finally, all these elements are put together as the material for reasoning out a plan of procedure. At that stage, we are ready for the preceptive part of prudence: for foresight, circumspection and caution, i.e., for actual ordering to the end, for attention to circumstances and for the avoidance of obstacles as far as is possible.

St. Thomas puts this in another way when he points out that the highest thing in man is his reason, and the lowest thing in man is the exercise of action by means of the body. In the work of prudence, then, we descend a precipitous hill. We can come crashing down from top to bottom recklessly, without a stop; at the very least, we shall not escape splinters. Or we can pick our way down, carefully, in an orderly, intelligent fashion. If we make the descent humanly, that is, intelligently, the steps we shall take will be: memory for the past, understanding for the present, an alert eagerness or shrewdness for the future; then reasoning or comparing of these elements of past, present and future; finally, there will be docility in learning from others, for of course, no man is sufficiently clever to know all things himself, nor does his experience cover every possible circumstance. We are then on level ground, ready to order things effectively to the end, attending to all circumstances and possible impediments.

This question in the *Summa* on the conditions for the perfection of prudence is worthy of long study. Invaluable passages are strewn all through it, as though his very generosity had tired a rich man's arm and in a final gesture of beneficent impatience he had turned the purse upside down. There is, for example, a course in memory training worthy of a modern psychologist packed into the cramped confines of an answer to an objection. Among others, we might mention Thomas' indication of the happy medium between contempt for the wisdom and experience of others, a result of pride in our own abilities, and the fawning dependence on others that leaves us helpless before emergencies -- the sort of thing that leaves a man calling for his mother at the age of eighty. Again, there is his pertinent insistence that the certitude of

reason comes from the intellect, while the necessity of reasoning comes from the defect of intellect in man; a remark that might have saved Bergson, and the world, many a headache. Naturally, a man as bold and decisive as Thomas would point out the limits of caution, and do it well. All of these things would repay a much lengthier study.

Prudence in the individual: In sinners Prudence must be in every man if he is to act maturely. But, such is our jealousy of human characteristics, that even in our immature acts we must cling to some shadow of prudence, some semblance of maturity, though it make our acts as comically incongruous as a bearded infant. The prudent burglar goes through the motions of prudence, but he points those motions to a wrong end, like a star football player making a brilliant run to the wrong goal. That is not prudence, for it is not getting something done; rather it is undoing something.

Again, the irreligious business man, who spends every hour of the day making his business a success, is using a kind of prudence; he is going to a true goal, but not to a very important goal. He has no justification for indignant recriminations at the desertion of his wife; he has left her long ago for his business. Nor has he any right to cry out injustice when he is told: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Of course, the man who merely makes up his mind but never gets anything done has no business rushing to the front when a call is sent out for prudent men.

In fact, the false prudence of the burglar and the imperfect prudence of the irreligious business man can be present only in the wicked; both neglect the real business of life. The imperfect prudence of the dreamer can be in either good or bad men; but the perfect prudence which enables a man to get the necessary things of life done can be had only by those in the state of grace. It is a virtue which perfects the whole man. We are speaking here, of course, of the infused or supernatural virtue of prudence which, as a concomitant of sanctifying grace, is to be found even in children who are not yet able to use it.

In just men

This alone indicates the gap between natural or acquired and supernatural or infused prudence. Natural prudence is a human structure, built up slowly through the years by our acts; it must be torn down, brick by brick, with the same tools. Normally we expect to find it in the old: but we are not too optimistic in our search for it in the young. For the young are much more apt to have their reason impeded by the heedless elbowing of passion; moreover they have none of that long experience, age's compensation for the ashes of youth's fire, to fall back on.

Origin and decay of prudence

From this, it is clear that no man can lay the blame of his imprudence on nature; no man passes all of a lifetime searching as helplessly for prudence as an American in Paris searches for the right railroad station. Nature gives us a definite push towards prudence, not only in the natural inclination to the good of reason, but also by the naturally known first principles from which prudence must proceed. It may be that a hot-headed or full-blooded man finds it much easier to be rash than to be prudent; he can blame some of the difficulty of prudence on nature, but if he has coddled his rashness, he must blame himself for the brat's impudence.

In other words, our temperament has not the finality of a death sentence about it; rather it is the challenging note of a bugle call to battle. Nature gives the push, puts no insurmountable barrier in the way, but the perfection of this or any other virtue is ours to attain by the simple expedient of exercise.

The destruction of prudence is no less in our power than is its perfection. We can go about its destruction subtly, by poisoning it with acts of its opposite, imprudence. Or, if we prefer violent means, we can shoot its prospective parents at the altar. You will remember the double element of reason and will inherent in prudence: the element of reason can be effectively excluded either indirectly by impeding reason's control through passion or directly through forgetfulness or ignorance; in either case we leave the will blinded,

even if we do not steadily sap its strength or give it the perverted outlook of malice.

Species of maturity

It is a mistake to picture prudence as utterly personal, like the part in a man's hair. Prudence orders the means to the end of man; and that end includes the good of the family and the good of the community, as well as the good of the individual. For each of these goals of man there is a corresponding type of prudence: personal or monastic, economic or domestic, and political or ruling prudence. But in a larger sense these three cannot be separated. After all, the individual good includes, and in a certain sense is included by, the common good. As a subject, man is a part of society to whom the common good is preferable to personal good; but man, as an individual, possessed of an immortal soul, has a good so far superior to the common good that this latter is itself the means to that supremely personal end.

It is not mere pique at the impossibility of sleep that makes the neighbors call the police when a man is beating his wife. An attack on the family is an attack both on the individual and on the state, for the individual is naturally a part of the family and the family is naturally a part of the state, while every individual, as a subject, is directly a part of the state. Consequently, in his practice of self-control, a man is exercising a part of the rule of the state; more than that, he is engaged in constant practice for that regulation and direction of others, which is necessarily involved in the office of those who have care of the state.

A man who works for the common good is not tossing a coin to a strange beggar from sheer generosity. Without this common good, a man cannot have his own proper good. This truth is fairly evident from the fact that man has a natural inclination to live in society; for nature does not pay much attention to frills, it concentrates on the essentials without which man cannot live. This is a fundamental explanation of the withering effect selfishness has on the very roots of human life. It is a violation of the fundamentals, both natural and supernatural; for both of these rules of human life -- reason and love, prudence and charity -- are given to man in view of his own fullest development.

At any rate, where there is a special object of direction or government, there is a special type of prudence. It may be the prudence which rules the life of the individual within himself, the prudence which rules the family, the prudence which assures the internal peace of the state or, finally, the prudence which offers protection against external enemies. This last, military prudence, contrary to the absolute pacifist's notion, is not an unnatural, inhuman thing; rather it is a careful copy by human reason of nature's design. Even animals that cannot smile were given teeth; and the teeth serve as well for munching on enemies as for munching on the tastiest food the pet shop can offer. Nature has given not only an appetite for good, but also an appetite against difficulty, an emergency appetite that finds its object precisely in those things that threaten to destroy or corrupt the good that is the individual's perfection.

Complete maturity: the gift of counsel

It takes a man a long time to grow up. In fact, he does not really reach full maturity until he reaches God. His mind and heart do not reach out with the strong, full gesture of maturity until they reach out for God; nor are his actions fully worthy of his manhood until they exceed it, moving toward the supernatural goal under the direction of the supreme Governor with something of the swift ease of angelic efficiency. We have called these dispositions, which make a man readily moved by God, the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It is eminently fitting that there be one such perfection of movement for the virtue which moves man to his action, the virtue of prudence. It is, in other words, essential that the smooth, easy movement of divinity should flow into those stumbling efforts by which alone we can come to God -- our own human acts.

The gift that perfects the virtue of prudence, bringing man to his fullest maturity, is called the gift of counsel. But do not be misled by the name; it is not to be thought of in terms of a board meeting and endless argument. Like all the gifts, counsel proceeds in a manner that can be described by only one word -- angelic. It is not a step by step consideration, a weighing of possibilities, but an instantaneous, breath-taking application of supernatural knowledge to individual supernatural work. It is much more practical

than a pair of overalls, yet it has the delicate strong beauty of flashing steel.

At the peak of the acts of counsel will of course be acts dealing with the direction of the things most useful to the goal of life, for, like prudence, counsel is essentially practical. It is highly significant then, that the beatitude corresponding to the gift of counsel should be: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." In other words, the acts most useful to the successful living which is the goal of prudence are merciful acts; when we can suffer with others, we have begun to live.

We might expect, since counsel is in the practical intellect and is busy getting things done, that there would be no place for this gift in heaven; surely there, with the main task of life done, there will be nothing left for counsel to attend to. Nevertheless counsel does remain in heaven, at least in a special double sense. That is, we do not forget what we have learned in this life about getting things done, and there are many things to be attended to even in heaven. In fact here and now we spend a great part of our life sending the angels and saints scurrying about heaven running our errands -- finding health, jobs, happiness and forgiveness for us. It is true, of course, that counsel is not busy about the last goal; nor is there any of that uncertainty and healthy doubt about heavenly prudence and counsel. Rather there is an instantaneous transition to the knowledge of what is to be done and how it is to be done.

All through this second part of the *Summa* St. Thomas proceeds on a homely principle as refreshing and uncompromising as the earthy common sense of a farmer. He argues that a man who knows a road well has no difficulty knowing when he has left that road. The thing is so utterly obvious that it smothers all disagreement instantly. And yet, we too often proceed on the assumption that a knowledge of the road is not so very important if we can only know a great deal about the blind alleys and crooked, wandering paths that get us nowhere. Thomas would argue that a man who knows the width and depth and beauty of purity needs no illustrated booklet of the complexities of impurity to keep himself clean. Or, on a wider scale, a good knowledge of a virtue is the best knowledge of the sins against that virtue, for virtue is the highroad to heaven.

Types of immaturity:

Imprudence (precipitation, thoughtlessness, inconstancy)

In this matter of prudence, for example, we find as many sins as there are conditions and species of prudence. Roughly, all of these sins are reducible to: imprudence, negligence, carnal prudence, craftiness and unreasonable worry. The first, imprudence, is obviously directly against prudence, that is, it is an abandonment of the rule of reason; it crashes down from the heights of reason to the depths of action without any of the intervening steps. It will, then, have none of the perfection of prudence about it. Wherever it is found -- in the individual, the home, the state, the army -- it may include precipitation as against counsel; thoughtlessness as against judgment; inconstancy as against precept or command; and negligence as against the prompt execution of that command. As a result of its rashness and precipitation, imprudence will be incautious and will lack circumspection; as a result of its thoughtlessness it will be deficient in docility, memory and reason; and as a result of its inconstancy and negligence, it will have little of foresight or reasoning.

All this sounds as highly complex in the order of imperfection as prudence's own complexity in the order of perfection. Really, it should be so; after all, it is not the beggar but the millionaire who can be robbed of a million dollars. And all of these sins are brought about principally -- but not exclusively -- by sins of luxury. As a matter of fact, anything which can absorb the soul in sensible things can give rise to these sins of imprudence.

Negligence

The negligent man wanders through life in a rosy daze of naive trustfulness. His sin is opposed to the note of alertness, of healthy doubt which we have said was universal in all acts of prudence. Still other men fall in love with the daughters of the illegitimate branch of the prudence family. They win to an earthly, an

animal or a diabolical prudence, according as the goal whose color lights up their lives is the world, their own senses or their own excellence. But in all these cases, the goal is so completely the wrong goal that it draws them in the direction opposite to the flow of rational life.

Carnal prudence (craftiness. guile, fraud)

Where the sin falls, not on the end, but on the means, we have the sin of craftiness, with its execution through fraud and deceit. The very names have a slimy sound that awakens a revulsion in a man enjoying no more than the remnants of moral health. The furtiveness of cowardice and the slyness of trickery have not yet won favor in the eyes of men, in spite of much talk about worthy ends, good intentions, relative values. Even in the moral order, perfume is a poor substitute for soap and water.

Worry

Perhaps one of the most human of the sins against prudence is that of excessive worry. Because prudence does deal with human ends, human actions and human circumstances there must always be a note of uncertainty about it; there is always reason for healthy doubt, some reasonable anxiety and a great alertness. We should have some little anxiety for future things, some concern for temporal things; but if we go to the excess of worry, we are not only being unreasonable, we are falling into a trap that Christ went out of His way to protect us against. You will remember that He pointed out the things that divine goodness has given us without any worry on our part, such as our body and soul; He called our attention, too, to the help God gives the animals and plants, the goods proper to their nature. Certainly He will not treat us less kindly than He does irrational creation. He went deeper and insisted that it was the ignorance of the Gentiles in spiritual matters that was behind their gnawing concern about temporal things and their mocking scepticism of things spiritual. With us, possessed of the knowledge and love of God, the spiritual things must be first.

Conclusion: The condition for fullness of action -- maturity

Perhaps we can sum this chapter up best by saying that the condition for fullness of action is maturity, a maturity that comes only by the virtue of prudence. In the physical order, we would be astonished to see an infant swinging a sledge hammer or directing a bank. We do not expect a child to produce the works of a man, to have the endurance or intelligence of an adult. That last point is all-important: a man works perfectly only when he works intelligently, and he works with full intelligence only when he is working by prudence.

Men have always sought fullness of action, which is no more than saying that men do not relish being morons; men have always wanted to grow up. Like everything else in the world, men have always sought their fullest perfection; and the men of our age are no exception to the men of all other ages. In fact we have sought maturity of action rather desperately.

Modern attempts to attain maturity of action

We have resorted to mass education as a means of opening more and more goals to human action. We have championed the political theories of democracy in the hope that men might have greater opportunities for action. We have advanced psychological theories as a means of freeing the motive power of man from all checks. Finally, our age has been swept by totalitarian political practices calculated, and rightly so, to remove the check of an absolute standard of action, allowing men a devastating adaptability to times and circumstances.

But really all of these attempts have been somewhat lopsided; they have looked at everything but the central figure -- man and his humanity. No one of them has been aimed at moral fullness, that is at human fullness. Two, education and democracy, have been extrinsic; that is, they have added nothing to a man himself, indeed have neglected man himself, in their concentration on the things outside of man. The other two are indeed intrinsic, the psychological and totalitarian attempts, but they have not added anything to

man, not developed anything within him, rather they have taken something of his humanity away from him.

Modern philosophical and political attacks on maturity

It would seem as though our desperate striving for fullness of action is, in reality, a desperate struggle to destroy maturity of action. Let us look at it this way: full maturity of action comes from the effective direction of our action to a worthy, personal goal. Today we talk of motion without direction, or direction without motion, direction and motion to wrong ends, direction and motion to good ends by bad means, or even of no motion at all. It would seem almost as if we were trying desperately to dodge the right answer to the problem of full action. Look at these attempts, or attacks, on fullness of action in the concrete. Behavioristic and animal psychologists have denied our self-direction; pragmatists and organistic philosophers have made a strange friendship in denying not only direction, but the things to be directed, the very truth of direction. The emotional philosophers, of the aesthetic, romantic and neo-supernaturalistic schools, attack reason itself, the one directive faculty. Then there is naturalism, in all its weird, irrational forms, denying a personal goal, in this respect taking its place staunchly alongside of humanitarianism and totalitarianism -- all of which, in a real sense, destroy the whole reason for direction by destroying the goal of the individual.

The desperately young who will not grow up

Certainly we are not growing more mature in our action; we are not attaining a greater fullness of action, in spite of the mechanical and scientific helps that have been evolved to lengthen the faculties of man. Perhaps we are forgetting that human fullness of action is moral fullness of action. At any rate, we seem to be trying desperately to stay young; we have adopted the cult of youth, not only in the physical order, but in the intellectual and moral order. It is as though we insisted on clinging to the gurglings of an infant, the constant activity of a child busy with childish ends, or the large dreams of youth, along with youth's clumsy gestures and self-conscious effrontery.

The eternally young who are always mature

There is a human side to all this, for youth has always been a desirable thing. Age creeps upon us with a definite threat of destruction; and that, perhaps, is the whole explanation of our terribly young world, a world that is so young it is in its second childhood. For if the men of that world cannot see beyond the limits of the material, then, in their eyes age is a thing of horror, a relentless enemy that irrevocably wipes the individual human being from the world of reality. But if our eyes are lifted up beyond the barriers of nature to the limitless stretches of eternity, then maturity is not something to be feared, but to be worked for earnestly. For then it is not a destruction of youth, but a promise of eternal youth; it is not a concomitant of corruption and disintegration, but rather it is a fundamental condition for eternal life.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER VII -- THE FULLNESS OF SOCIAL LIFE (Q. 57-62)

1. Social life's link to humanity:
 - (a) A perfection and a necessity of humanity alone.
 - (b) The fundamental social question: the question of right.
 - (c) Sole social answers: affirmation and denial.
 2. The rights of man:
 - (a) Triple sense of "right": interrelations of these senses.
 - (b) Origin of all rights.
 - (c) Division of natural rights.
 3. The social virtue -- justice:
 - (a) The sole virtue dealing with right.
 - (b) Justice as a habit.
 - (c) Justice as a virtue:
 - (1) Its nature and subject.
 - (2) General or legal justice.
 - (3) Particular justice:
 - a. Its material.
 - b. The medium it seeks.
 - c. Its act and eminence.
 4. The anti-social vice -- injustice.
 5. The act of justice -- judgment:
 - (a) Its nature.
 - (b) Its conditions.
 6. Species of particular justice:
 - (a) Distributive justice.
 - (b) Commutative justice.
 7. The act of commutative justice -- restitution.
- Conclusion:
1. The purpose of social life.
 2. Only norm of fullness of social life.
 3. Fundamentals of all fullness in social life -- truth:
 - (a) The truth of man.
 - (b) The truth of society.
 - (c) The truth of fullness.
 - (d) The truth of justice.

CHAPTER VII THE FULLNESS OF SOCIAL LIFE (Q. 57-62)

THESE last few centuries have seen a growing emphasis on the "social life" of the animals. We read so much today of mother apes, bees in the skilled worker class, soldiers of the termites and so on that it takes very little imagination to picture a gray haired ape sitting at the front window, knitting in quiet dignity; a bee trying to dodge payment of union dues; or a West Point for termites. There is talk of monogamy among chinchillas, though we have not reached the point of speaking of divorce courts for cats. Really all this is a mixture of poetry and embarrassment. It is a poetic statement of the constant, orderly pursuance of a goal by the animals; and it is an embarrassment that men continue to be so snobbishly different from all other animals. This class consciousness of men is decidedly disconcerting when the learned world has worked so hard to show him as nothing more than an animal. We would seem to be faced with the necessity either of lifting up the other animals or of dragging down this animal which is man.

Social life's link to humanity: A perfection and a necessity of humanity alone.

Social life, actually, is a brusque, uncompromising statement of the distinct difference between man and the animal world. Irrational animals have no need of judicial machinery, trade unions or columns on etiquette; man does need these things. Human life cannot go on where the social structure has broken down: a flood will not only do away with the traffic officers, it will release gangs of looters; civil war, a police strike, rampant gangsterism all suspend normal life because all attack law and order. Until they are crushed, everything else must be put aside.

It is not merely a matter of animals not needing this social structure, as a man does not need a bib at table. This is not a mark of superiority but of inferiority; the animals cannot have social life, while man can. We could put this in one word by saying the difference lies in this: the animals are distinctly predictable, while men are quite unpredictable. There is only one path which leads to the goal of the animals; they must trudge along that path necessarily, naturally. The different paths by which man can reach this goal seem to be limited only by his ingenuity; we find, for instance, vastly different social structures built up by men of different ages, or even by men of the same age in different nations. Indeed within the same social structure, we have a wide variety of paths by which men find their way home.

It is because man can live such a full and varied life that he is so dependent on the help of others. that he can never be completely self-sufficient; because men are not tied down to one necessary path to the goal, it is possible for men to crash into each other like stars gone wild. Men must have some order, other than the merely physical, to govern their mutual relations precisely because of the great potentialities inherent in their nature.

Perhaps we can put this necessity and ability for social life in the one statement, that man is a driver, not one who is driven. Each man can stand off from the world, or step down into the world and use any part of it; yet no man is absolute master. In other words, the roots of social necessity and the perfection of social organization lie in the mastery of man, which is, at the same time, his perfection and his need as distinct from the narrow self-sufficiency of the irrational world.

The fundamental social question: the question of right **Sole social answers: affirmation and denial**

The fundamental social question, then, will always turn about this mastery, this dominion, this right of man. And it is a question that cannot be dodged, that admits of no compromising answer: the only answer possible is a flat yes, or a flat no. That is we must either affirm and defend the rights of man on the sole grounds of his humanity; or we must deny and attack the notion of man possessing rights by reason of his humanity. This denial may take the form of anarchy -- a denial of all rights whatsoever -- and thus solve the social question by denying it. It may restrict all rights to members of a party, and give us Communism's answer to the social question; it may give some rights to man, but solely as the generous gift of a benevolent state, and then we have the totalitarian answer; it may deny rights to all but those who enjoy power, which is the answer of the slave state to the fundamental social question. All four of these answers are denials of the rights of man on the grounds of his humanity. All of them deny the fact that man is a person, that he has liberties, that he can choose the path to his personal goal, that he has dominion over his acts and over things. In a word, they deny that man is a master.

Obviously an understanding of dominion or right, then, is essential to any treatment of social life. Fortunately an understanding of the word "right" is made easy by our common usage of the word. When a man is paid back the ten dollars he lent a friend, he may be surprised but he has no reason for gratitude. He is not expected to pin a medal on his extraordinary borrower; he has received no more than his right. We speak of a man having a right to a living wage or to an inheritance, even though, as a matter of fact, he is not getting a living wage or is being cheated of his inheritance. Again, and this is particularly true of the Latin form of the word (jus), the word "right" is used in the sense of law as, for example, in the Codex Juris Canonici -- The Code of Canon Law. We confirm this usage whenever our rights are questioned, by an immediate appeal to some law.

The rights of man: Triple sense of "right": interrelations of these senses

These examples are concrete statements of the triple sense of "right." First the objective right, which is a thing as tangible as a basket of groceries, the solid walls of a house or the gay sunshine of a spring day. The second is the subjective or moral right, the moral faculty of doing, having or omitting something; it is by this that we lay claim to the objective right. Finally, the third is law as we understand it today.

Origin of all rights

These three senses of right are not disparate somewhat like different species of flowers or types of birds. They are as intimately dependent as members of the same family tree. Passing from the objective right through the subjective right to law we are on the same trail that leads from a speck of dust to the Creator of the world; we are ascending from effect to cause, to the origin of right. In reverse order, from law through subjective right to objective right, we proceed from cause to effect. Objective right depends on subjective right, and subjective right depends on law. These three, in other words, are always correlative: ten dollars is not due to a man unless he has some moral right to it; and if he has a moral claim to it, that claim must be traced back to some law, natural or positive.

In spite of our familiarity with rights, it may come as a surprise to us to learn that they are children of law. We have the notion that such invaluable friends as rights could be no relation to law, with its constant imposition of obligations upon us. Our modern emphasis has been to insist upon right, to the disregard of law and of obligation; these latter are medieval, irritating, out-of-date and prudish. But the emphasis does not change the facts: right and obligation are twin children of law.

Certainly there can be no right without a corresponding obligation. To say that I have a right to walk down Madison Avenue is meaningless if other men have not the obligation to permit me to make that amusing promenade. It is absurd to say I have a right to the privacy of my own home, and in the same breath to deny that other men have the obligation to respect the privacy I cherish so. The very existence of a moral right in one man is a statement of a mortal obligation in others to respect that right. This is an obvious relationship of right and obligation. There is a more fundamental tie between them that is too often overlooked. Perhaps it could be stated by saying that obligation is the elder twin; at least the very reason for a right is to furnish a man with an opportunity to fulfill an obligation. If there are no obligations, there is no reason for rights. We cannot separate right and obligation any more than we can slice Siamese twins apart; both are fed from the same blood stream of law, for law, after all, is no more than the dictate of right reason guiding a man to the necessary means to be used for successful living. Because those means are necessary, they carry with them an obligation; consequently man has a right to the use of those means.

Perhaps this will be clearer if we notice that, when we speak of objective right, we speak of a thing belonging to or being due to a man. That means that this thing has been selected, set apart from the universe, and stamped with the stamp of dominion, of ownership, of right. There are only two dies that can produce that distinctive mark: nature and some will. So reverence is the right of parents by the very nature of their office; reverence may be thrown out the window, stolen, lost but the mark on it is not to be done away with by tearing out the fly-leaf. It is the ineradicable stamp of nature. On the other hand, a lesser, but no less authentic, stamp can be made by the determination of a public or a private will; it may, in other words, be produced by way of positive law -- human or divine -- or by way of private law, i.e., by contract. Understand now, that when we speak of determination by will we are speaking of deliberate will in the sense in which it is law; that is, in the sense of a dictate of right reason.

It would be accurate to picture the lesser die, which is positive law and contract, as a smaller, sharper, finer tool used only to bring out in detail the rough outlines of nature's stamp. From our treatment of positive law in the preceding volume, it is clear that positive law is merely a determination of the indeterminate principles of natural law. Consequently no right can be conferred by positive laws that are contrary to natural law; just as a human mind cannot create the note of necessity that is at the root of obligation, neither can it destroy that necessity. Mercy-killing is not less horrible for being permitted by civil authorities or juries; nor is prayer less lovely for being prohibited by a dictator's decrees.

Division of natural rights

Rights may, then, be either hardy plants with roots sunk deep in the inexhaustible earth of nature, or they may be frail, delicate flowers depending for life on the handful of soil in a window-box. For the two great divisions of rights follow upon the two great divisions of law; rights may be the immutable, utterly inviolable fruit of the unchangeable natural law, or they may be positive rights conferred by positive law

and suffering the same variety, from age to age and people to people, as their generator. In between these two there are a few rights conferred by the "law of nations" (*jus gentium*). We went into this thoroughly enough in the preceding volume to allow us to pass over it now rather hurriedly, merely noting that it is a bridge between the natural and the positive law: distinct from the natural law as depending, not only on nature itself, but also upon some universal contingent fact; distinct from positive law as being framed directly and immediately by reason itself, without any intervening institution. These rights, as determinations of natural law rather than natural law itself, are not strictly natural rights, though they have the force of nature about them.

There is an interesting point, in this discussion of natural rights, that is too often misunderstood or totally overlooked. Thomas insists that in the domestic group there can be no such thing as strict rights. He is not, by any means, championing wife-beating, poor cooking or malnutrition of children. His point is that compared to the solicitude essential in this domestic group, justice is a shabby thing. It is true that in this group, human beings have intimate relations one to another: husband to wife, parents to children, master to servant. But, strictly speaking, the relationship is not to another, but to oneself: there is no clear cleavage between these different members of the domestic group we cannot speak here of something being due to "another", for they are all, in a sense, one.

As individuals, of course, all of these people have their strict rights; but as members of the domestic group, they are part one of another, with common rather than individual rights. Herein lies the striking difference between the subordination of unity of order in the domestic group from the Catholic point of view, and the individualism and chaos of the modern position. The subordination insisted on in the family is not one of injustice, tyranny or inferiority; in fact mistreatment of a member of this domestic group is as unnatural and disgusting as self-mutilation. The superior or head of the family, in his care for the family, is not a judge doing out justice. In other words, we cannot speak of a man being just to his family any more shall we can talk of his being just to his hands or his feet. In fact this unity of the family is the natural approach to that identification on common ground of the supernatural virtue of charity.

The social virtue -- justice

The domestic relations of a man pertain much more to his personal life than to his social life. The latter is a matter of things, of actions outside the man himself, of communication with those distinct from himself. And to live this social life man needs special perfection. We have seen more thoroughly in the preceding volume that the tremendous powerhouse of the intellect is put to work by feeder-lines of intellectual habit. The powerful resources of sense appetite are put to work by the moral habits which regulate the passions. So also the one faculty by which man can reach out into the lives of others -- his will -- is perfected for social life by a habit; and that habit is the habit of justice.

The sole virtue dealing with right

The mind of man is regulated by the intellectual habits; the passions of man by the moral habits. But both of these are matters of the internal life of a man; with no more than this, he would be isolated, turned in upon himself. The habit of justice regulates the external acts and things by which a man comes into contact with others. It is, then, the only *social* virtue. Justice not only wears a blindfold, her face is entirely covered with a grim mask when we picture her as a ruthless avenger. The picture is distorted, for justice is not only the social virtue, it is a sociable virtue; to be seen rightly, it must be seen as smiling, habitually good tempered, considerate of others, not mingling with the world in a sour, dutiful fashion, but positively enjoying contact with men and women. That is why we define justice as a habit by which a man, with constant and perpetual will, gives everyone what is his due.

Justice as a habit

The definition contains three characteristics of justice that allow us to see justice as she is, exposing the grotesque propaganda that insisted she was a harriidan nagging at the joys of men. As a habit justice has about it the smoothness, ease, perfect action and stability of nature itself; and it is this stability of habit

which is the immediate basis of the stability of social life. As a constant and perpetual will, justice escapes the charge of unpredictable moodiness. Here, in constancy, we have the peculiar difficulty of virtue. It is not difficult to be just once in a while, to pay back a loan now and then, return one or two of the books we have borrowed, give an employee a just wage at Christmas time. The difficulty comes in perpetually aiming at that goal of justice; but society is not preserved by an occasional just action, for men do not live together only at Christmas. Looking to another, justice releases a man from the isolation of the concentration camp of self.

Justice as a virtue: Its nature and subject

This last point is extremely important. Justice is a neighborly virtue, inseparable from our neighbor. It is unemployed on a desert island, rushed to death in the market place. When we speak of a person doing justice to his head, his heart, or his hands, we are speaking in metaphors; for the moment we are considering a man's head, heart and hands as existing apart from himself, forming a neighborly group, buying and selling, entertaining and marrying. Actually to postulate justice without reference to another would be like speaking words that had been carefully stripped of meaning. If justice gives another his due, it implies equality; it means giving a man exactly what is his, in strict equality. Equality is a statement of a comparison between two subjects, not of one subject to itself; this latter is identity, not equality.

Justice is inseparable from our neighbor; and it is the only one of the virtues in the natural order that is so linked to others. Just as right is the fundamental social question, so justice is the fundamental natural cement binding men together in society. It is the sole natural means by which right can be guaranteed, the sole means by which men can live together in one unit of society. This truth has been much misunderstood by modern thinkers. The modern mind may be inclined to be irritated at the precepts and prohibitions of the moral order; yet those precepts and prohibitions are, for the most part, the commands of justice. They are not arbitrary infringements of human liberty and dignity, comparable to the harsh orders of a peevish parent. They are the fundamental requirements for human social life. To attack justice is to attack the very foundation of society; it is to build a barrier between man and man, isolating individuals within the impenetrable walls of their own souls.

Justice is no more than a practical recognition of other men as persons, as possessors of rights. As a good habit, and so a virtue, we say rightly that justice makes both men and the actions of men good; that is, it makes both men and actions conform to the rule of reason. But the practice of justice, in its baldest statement, means that we refrain from doing damage to another. There is something a little ridiculous in a man's puffing out his chest, elated at himself for having let others alone; and there is something very horrible about the infrequency with which that boast can be made. The outbreak of racketeering is not something totally inexplicable today; it is essentially a denial of the fact that we do not deserve payment for merely letting others alone, for merely refraining from damaging them. The racketeer insists on payment for leaving men in possession of their rights. Our age's scepticism of the absolute foundations of justice is itself a distinct veering toward the viewpoint of the racketeer, a questioning of the sacred personality of our neighbor.

A dishonest lawyer usually knows very well what is the just thing, at least the successfully dishonest lawyer does. That knowledge enables him to thwart justice; it does not make him an honest man. That easily verified fact brings out the profound importance of accurately locating justice. It is not in the intellect of man, as our tricky lawyer proves by his action. It is not a matter of speculation but of action; it must be located, then, in the root-source of all action, namely in the appetite. Moreover it is to be found only in the rational appetite or the will of man, because it looks to another, a thing impossible to sense appetite with its complete concentration on the immediate, particular, personal good. This is important. To make emotion, a rigidly personal utility, or the blind development of a universal organism the basis of human action is to destroy the basis of justice and so of social life. The anti-intellectualistic and anti-metaphysical philosophies can escape anti-social conclusions only by scuttling logic; in themselves, they are philosophies of selfishness, for they render a man incapable of reaching out to a consideration of another.

To be just, a man must look beyond himself; yet looking beyond himself he may be amazed, for every man he sees will be a twin: an individual and a part of a community. Some men have been so irritated at what they considered the bleared vision of justice, with its effect of double-exposure, that they decided to deny the evidence and maintain either that men were no more than individuals, or that they were no more than part of a community. However, the facts are not destroyed by shaking one's head; our contact with men as individuals must be ruled by one kind of justice -- particular justice; with men as parts of a community, we are ruled by another, general justice.

General or legal justice

It is to be understood, of course, that this general justice is not general in the sense of a general statement or a general panic, as something running all through and found in all the virtues. Its generality comes from the generality of its object, which is the common good. Its work, a decidedly extensive work, is to give the community what is due to it. So, just as charity can and does order all acts of all virtues to the supernatural end of man, so legal or general justice orders all the acts of all the virtues of man to his social end, the common good.

From this point of view it is evident that general justice has more to do than patrol a beat. It reaches up to the intellectual virtues in such laws as those fixing the minimum intellectual requirements for citizenship. Indeed it may extend even to the exterior effects and acts of the theological virtues when, as in some of the Swiss Cantons, a religious procession is also a civic function regulated by general justice.

Normally it will not be necessary for a citizen to set aside one day of the week for concentrated fretting about legal justice. The state puts its demands clearly and forcefully; and the fair-minded citizen normally agrees to these fair demands of the state. The not-so-fair-minded citizen's disagreement is promptly taken care of by the state itself. However, not all times measure up to the rule of normalcy and when the state demands more than is just, there is no question of legal justice involved. Rather the question is one of tyranny and tyranny's resistance; for the mere fact that it is the state which makes the demand is not necessarily a guarantee of the justice of that demand.

Particular justice: Its material.

Over and above legal justice, there is a justice that enters intimately into the numberless contacts of our everyday life. If the sceptic doubts the possibility of justice squeezing its way into a crowded subway train, he has only to try jerking someone from a seat onto the floor in order to obtain a seat for himself. Just as fortitude and temperance order a man to his own proper good, and legal justice orders man to the common good, so particular justice orders a man to the individual good of his neighbor. As a social, or neighborly, virtue, its material is precisely the means we have of communicating with others, external things and actions as they coordinate the life of one man with that of another. It deals, in other words, in those things by which men's lives are pulled together or driven apart.

The significance of this determination of the material of particular justice can hardly be over-estimated. On the social side, it makes evident the profound truth that, however dutiful we may be to the state, we cannot ignore man, the individual, if social life is to continue. A community in which all citizens paid their taxes promptly and spent their spare time at each other's throat could hardly lay claim to the unity, peace and harmony that are essential to social life. Individual injustice has furnished the ideal condition for the spread of communism; it is the force behind looting and gangsterism; it was the permanent condition of our early frontier days. Obviously if this injustice becomes universal, men cannot live together, though their houses touch one another. In other words, particular justice is absolutely necessary for social life, however much we disregard it theoretically today. A strong police force or a well-trained army is no adequate substitute for it; a society lacking this essential ingredient has within itself the elements of disintegration.

On the personal side the absence of particular justice cuts a man off from the lives of his fellows, puts

barriers around his own life that are much more effective than the walls of any prison. A pick-pocket may enjoy dense crowds, but not for the fellowship they give him; and an habitual liar leads as lonely a life as an habitual thief. Indeed, this particular injustice is corrosive of the character of its owner. It means that something is rotten in the will of this man; and, since the will is the source of all he does that corruption necessarily creeps into all his acts, making them crippled, ugly, deformed.

When an employer is anguished each week at the sight of the pay-roll scattering into the pockets of his employees, he may be doing no injustice to his employees, but he is not a just man; he does not enjoy his justice. It is true that justice deals with externals, operations or things, and is not primarily concerned with joy and sorrow. Nevertheless, particular justice is not a cold, poker-faced, inhuman virtue. No human virtue can possibly be that. St. Thomas rightly insists that, "The man who does not joy in his justice is not really a just man;" for every virtue, like every habit, carries with it its own joy, at least the joy of smooth, easy, natural action.

However, it is well to insist upon justice's exclusive concern with externals, for then we see clearly the impossibility of effective reform from the outside. Justice may prevent or punish the murder caused by hate; but it cannot touch the hate. It may prevent or punish the theft that springs from greed; but it cannot take a step after the greed itself. When there is a constant stream of such unjust actions, proceeding from inner corruption, it becomes less and less possible for justice to be enforced. In other words, the abandonment of a stable, absolute morality, is in itself a guarantee of injustice and, eventually, of social disintegration. This is one of the discouraging differences between the modern pagan and the pagan of antiquity; it is only in our time that it became the fashion to deny a goal, and so an absolute rule, to life and consequently to destroy the foundations of that inner morality without which justice is a practical impossibility.

The medium it seeks

A man might drink a pint of wine before breakfast and be thumpingly intemperate; whereas he could drink the same pint of wine with his dinner and be a temperate man. But if his thirst is for other people's jewelry, it makes no difference whether he quenches it before breakfast or after dinner. For while justice, in common with all the moral virtues, seeks a medium between excess and defect of the rule of reason, unlike all the other moral virtues, the coincides with the medium of objective reality. In justice, that is, the question is always one of equality, or measuring up to something outside.

No man can frown the smile from the face of a summer day. These outside things are not changed by any subjective dispositions of ours. No matter how much of a nervous release it may be for a man to commit murder, no matter how innocently he deprives a laborer of his wages, no matter what pleasure it may give him or how much good it may do the state to choke a crooner -- these things remain unjust. It is always a question, in this matter, of what is due to another; only on that consideration may we judge the justice of a thing.

Its act and eminence

An act of justice seems a simple, unsophisticated thing when we describe it as simply letting others alone. Even when we dismember it, the table is not cluttered up with its parts: it is merely an act placed in the proper material of justice -- external things and operations -- and in the proper mode of justice, i.e. rightly or equally. Yet the just man receives a solemn tribute of respect, as though in his justice we had recognized an outstanding merit, much as a soldier might respect a Legion of Honor ribbon or a Congressional Medal. This respect is more than a sigh of relief because the justice of another is a bulwark to our own rights: justice deserves that respect for it is the outstanding moral virtue. Considered subjectively, this superiority is clear, for justice does not perfect the sense appetite of man which is tied down to the world of sense; this is the work of fortitude and temperance. Justice concentrates on the rational appetite of man which can go out to others, even to God. From the side of its object, justice does not do the limitedly personal work of controlling man's passion, but rather it escapes the personal in its

concern for the good of another or for the good of the community.

Perhaps the more profound reason behind our respect for the just man is to be found in the stamp of humanity justice puts on the activity of man. A man's life is successful only in so far as his life and actions measure up to the rule of reason. Fortitude and temperance do no more than conserve the good of reason, preventing the passions from exceeding it; justice injects rationality into the external acts and things of a man's life. In paying tribute to the just man, we recognize an individual whose humanity stands out in all of his actions, all his dealings with his fellow men. For much the same reason the hypocrisy of the back-biter fills us with disgust; here is a man who has taken reason out of his life with his fellows, here is an unjust man.

The anti-social vice -- injustice

In a word, the unjust man, in his external actions, ceases to be a man; and so ceases to be a social being. He has embraced the anti-social vice of injustice; he has no valid complaint against the ostracism with which society punishes him. In his heart he carries a contempt for the common good and a contempt for the good of his fellow men; perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he is the victim of his ostracism of society. Another way of saying the same thing would be to say that the unjust man thinks only of himself; even though he be a contemptible sneak-thief, he fancies himself a conqueror who recognizes no rights in other men, for he scorns all obligations to respect those rights.

In reality he is no conqueror but a stupid suicide. In denying his obligations to respect the rights of others, he cancels out, as far as is possible for him, his own claim to rights; for it is a man's obligations which are the basic claims to rights. This unjust man is an enemy of himself, an enemy of others, and an enemy of society; an enemy more deadly than a plague or a hostile army, for he is boring secretly from within, gnawing at the pillars of the social structure and breeding others of his kind by his every act of injustice.

Injustice is stupid, it is dangerous from a social point of view, in grave matter it is deadly to the unjust man, for it is a mortal sin. Of course a blow struck in quick, unreasoning anger or short-change given by a flustered clerk will hardly topple the towers of society and will certainly not put a man in the state of mortal sin. An unjust act that, as a result of passion or accident, pops up its head to startle everyone concerned is not the offspring of injustice; the coolly deliberate depriving of another of his due which is both the fruit of injustice and its seed, is not surprising to the man who has produced it. Indeed, as a rule, he has worked hard at it and may even take a perverse pride in it.

A man cannot enter this vicious anti-social state by falling through a trap-door or listening to the glib story of a stranger. He must be willing; while, if he wants to make a good job of it, his victim must be decidedly unwilling. A wealthy man who owns so many automobiles that he does not mind losing one or two, has made it impossible for the automobile thief to do him an injustice.

Perhaps one of the deadliest things that can happen to society is to have confusion arise about the distinction between just and unjust things. The good intentions of champions of suicide, euthanasia, industrial laissez-faire and birth control may be an inspiring thing; but the damage they do to society is not lessened by their sweet simplicity. It is essential for the individual and society that man's acts be just; consequently it is most important that a man recognize a just from an unjust thing when he sees the two side by side.

In this human field, as in the other moral fields, virtue gives a man a taste of the swift security of angelic knowledge. The chaste man intuitively recognizes the slightest taint of impurity; the coward cannot hide his cowardice from the piercing mind of the brave man. In the same way, the just man, quickly, surely, instinctively unveils all trace of injustice. In other words, the moral virtues make a man so familiar with the end of these virtues, that he can make no mistake about the friendship or enmity a particular means bears to that end. This is the constant help given to knowledge by virtue; the negative help which, removes impediments to intellectual operation, and the positive help which comes from familiarity with the material of the particular virtue in question.

The act of justice -- judgment

But moral virtue is not the whole story. Rather it is the obscure, profound, indirect part of the story that seldom finds its way into print. In this matter of justice, the virtue of justice disposes a man to judge justly; but it does not don the judicial robes, sit on the bench and pronounce the judgment. Judgment is an act of intellect, while justice is a matter of the will; the actual judging must be done by an intellectual virtue, namely the virtue of prudence.

No one has the right to wander through the hours of the day scattering judgments with the same abandon with which he makes comments on the weather. Licit judgment must be both just and prudent. That is, judgment is not the angry weapon of pique, the sly weapon of envy, the merciless bludgeon of malice nor the panicky blow of self-defense; it must proceed from the inclination of justice, of giving every man his due. Moreover it is not to be made of the airy stuff of guess-work, nor the eerie stuff of telepathic reading of motives that can be known only to God; solid evidence must go into its make-up, for it must proceed prudently. When it is a matter of public judgment, over and above justice and prudence, authority is necessary, for public judgment has coercive power.

This does not mean that the warning, "judge not", is to be taken with absolute universality. Judgment is not only licit at times, it may even be necessary and strictly obligatory. The prohibition is against imprudence and injustice in judgment; that is, the warning is levelled against the perverse judgment of the unjust man, the temerarious judgment of the fool and the insolent judgment of the usurper of public power.

As a matter of fact, we make judgments of the actions of others, and of our own, every day of our lives. When the judgments are unjust or perverse, we have no difficulty recognizing the fact. We hate ourselves for thinking our friend, the undertaker, is looking for business when he visits us in a hospital. A judgment of this sort is a blow at our own self-respect; we have done something unworthy of our humanity, stripping an action of ours of its reasonable character. Oddly enough, because we have done something unworthy of our humanity, we become more and more angry at the person we have judged, more and more stubborn in the judgment itself.

A much more subtly dangerous type of judgment is that from mere suspicion. It starts off as a vague, even silly idea; but it haunts our mind, repeating its unsavory melody over and over, like a tune that hums itself in spite of our irritated rejection of it. The temptation is to look at this judgment a little longer each time it recurs; each time it becomes stronger, until finally it seems to rest on solid evidence. Perhaps it is helped on by the very human desire to be first with a bit of information; the ambition of the keyholer, the eavesdropper and the pseudo-prophet.

Because there is so much adolescent vanity in it, a consideration of the sources of judgment from suspicion is no mean help to avoiding it. There are three unflattering sources of this judgment; by making it, a man has given good grounds for his own conviction on one of these three counts. A gangster is much more suspicious than a saint, for the evil man finds it easy to believe evil of others. We can run off suspicious judgments effortlessly and by the score when the object of those judgments is a person for whom we have contempt or hatred, or of whom we are envious. Finally, we find it much easier to make these judgments as we grow old. In fact such judgments are themselves signs of old age; they are the distinctive badge of one made cynical by experience, of one who has been disappointed so often in his hopes and expectations of men that now he is rather prepared for disappointment than eager to recognize truth. That he is evil, petty, or sourly growing old -- not even the sprightly newspaper columnist whose suspicious judgments are a part of the breakfast menu can buckle up his vanity with such sagging stays as this.

Whatever the soil that nourishes it, judgment from mere suspicion is always a sin, for it is always an injustice. It may be slight in its beginnings when we begin to doubt the goodness of another; usually this is not fully deliberate. It becomes a mortal sin in its very nature if, without sufficient evidence, we take the

evil of another for certain, or flatly against justice when, from mere suspicion and by a solemn judgment, we proceed to the actual condemnation of that person. Of course, to be serious, the matter of judgment must be serious: suspecting the high school girl of using her mother's lip-stick need not disturb our sleep; but judging that it was the mayor who committed the murder in the City Hall is quite another matter. For, concretely, that alone is grave matter which, considering the person judged and the evil of which we convict him, does serious injury to his honor, good name or the opinion others have of him.

We have a real obligation in justice to give others the benefit of the doubt. When you hear your neighbor coming in at five o'clock in the morning it would be much more prudent and just on your part to decide that he was working a night shift, than to accuse him of sowing wild oats. In other words, when the thing in question is doubtful, to proceed to judgment without manifest indication of evil is imprudent; moreover it is unjust for it is contemptuous of the man we are judging.

It may be objected that we will make many more mistakes in our judgment of men by following this line than we would if, cynically, we refused to give anyone the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps that is true, although it can be seriously questioned. But even if it were true, it is much better to make many mistakes giving others the benefit of the doubt, than to make a few mistakes suspecting everyone. In the first case, in spite of mistakes, no harm is done either to the one we have judged kindly or to ourselves. We must get over the idea that we can judge men as we judge horses. A horse-trader is rightly suspicious of the qualities of every horse he sees; for his prime consideration is one of intellectual accuracy. Not even the feelings of the horse will be hurt by the cynical dealer. In judging men, it is not so highly important that every detail of our factual knowledge be accurate; gossip is entertaining, but it does not contribute to the intellectual perfection of a human being. It is highly important that we do no man a serious injury; yet if we judge a man to be evil when he is not, we have done him a serious injury, we have violated his right to our good opinion, we have, in a real sense, robbed him. On the other hand, if, mistakenly, we judge him to be good, no injury is done either to the one judged or to ourselves.

Species of particular justice: Distributive justice; Commutative justice.

It should be clear, in our day of tardy social legislation, that the individual's rights can be respected or violated, not only by his fellow citizens, but also by the state; that the state as well as the fellow citizen can owe debts to the individual. This obvious fact is a concrete statement of the classic division of particular justice into distributive and commutative justice. We can put all three types of justice -- legal, distributive and commutative -- in order by simply remembering that justice is a social virtue and society is a whole of which the parts are the individual citizens. The relation of the parts to the whole is regulated by legal justice; the relation of the whole to its parts is the care of distributive justice; while commutative justice controls the relations of part to part, of man to man.

Both commutative and distributive justice are varieties of particular justice; but they are varieties, not alternates, and their differences are decidedly important. No one seriously expects a poor man to carry the same burden of taxes as the rich man; yet we know well that the borrowed fifty dollars cannot be shaved down to twenty-five just because our creditor happens to be rich. Perhaps the average man has never put the thing in such frigid words, but he knows that the equality demanded by commutative justice is absolute or arithmetical, while the equality demanded by distributive justice is proportional or geometrical. The basis of this proportion is the share the individual has in the whole of which he is a part; so, for instance, in an aristocracy it will be a matter of power or perfection, in an oligarchy the basis will be wealth, in a democracy it will be freedom.

Distributive and commutative justice play in the same park and on the same-team; their remote material is the common material of all justice, i.e. things, persons, actions. But they cannot trade positions with any but disastrous results. For proximately, distributive justice is directive of the distribution of honors, burdens and so on of society; it is the habit behind the distribution of medals and income tax blanks. While commutative justice directs all the exchanges possible between individual men.

The last sentence can be read quickly; but do not be deceived by its brevity. The actual field of commutative justice makes the fencing of it a long, hard task. In later chapters we shall attempt an organized expedition into that vast territory; now, as a slight indication of what will be found there, we may note that commutative justice covers all the involuntary exchanges brought about either secretly by fraud or openly by violence, such as theft, murder and so on; within its territory also are all the voluntary exchanges such as gifts, sales, purchases, rentals, and so on. But perhaps the most important thing to notice at the moment is the strict equality demanded by commutative justice. At least such a consideration focuses attention on the futility of injustice by pointing to that outstanding act of commutative justice which is called restitution.

The act of commutative justice -- restitution

The fact that a car has wandered into our garage overnight does not make that car ours. A gas attendant who has innocently given gas and change for a twenty dollar bill the kidnapers offer from the ransom money has no right to pass it on to some one else or to deduct his own losses from it. We may have no more than the satisfaction of our spite to show for having burned down a neighbor's house, but we are obliged to compensate him for his loss. To put the matter more plainly, criminal appropriation and unjust damage oblige to restitution in the strict sense of the word; that is even though here and now we have nothing of our neighbor's goods, even though a fellow craftsman has turned the trick on us and picked our loot from an inside pocket, we must still make good the loss. But even where no crime is involved, the mere possession of goods of another immediately involves the necessity of returning those goods to their owner; in this last case, of course, the obligation holds only so long as the things are in our possession.

In other words, we must give every man what is his, strictly, equally. A thing cries out for its owner as a dog cries out for its master. Title to ownership is not lost, like small change, by doing somersaults; it must be renounced or it continues to endure. As long as it endures, no rival title can be established.

Conclusion: The purpose of social life

As we saw in the preceding volume, the norm of the plenitude or fullness of social life is the fullness of individual life within a society. For the purpose of society is to fulfill the natural needs of man; it exists that man's individual life might be fuller, that it might offer greater opportunities for living the life of virtue, for the attainment of individual perfection. Indeed, the ultimate end of the state -- peace and the life of virtue -- is itself a means to the further end of the individual, the perfection of his immortal soul. Society, then, is to be measured and evaluated by the opportunities it gives a man for living his individual life more fully, by the help it offers him to perfect himself.

Obviously the fullness of social life has a double aspect. One is negative, insofar as society at least takes nothing away from the individual; this means no more than that society observes the natural justice demanded by natural law itself. It respects the natural rights of man. The other, positive, aspect is summed up in the rights society confers upon a man by its positive law, i.e., the further guarantee of help it offers a man for the fulfillment of his natural potentialities.

It is no more possible to deny the preponderance of the individual for the sake of society than it is to shoot off a man's face to make more room for his nose. A denial of the supremacy of the individual is, basically, a denial of social life. A humanitarianism which insists upon the race rather than the individual, a communistic insistence on a party, a nazi insistence on the nation, the abolition of the rights of the individual by organicist and mechanistic philosophies -- all of these are logically unjust and inevitably anti-social. They attack the individual in the name of society, and in so doing they attack society itself, and destroy it.

Only norm of fullness of social life

Fullness of social life is possible only when the rights of man are granted on the grounds of his humanity. However generously they are granted on other grounds -- as a gift of the state, as a concession to power,

as a temporary expedient -- the fullness of social life is not only limited, it is destroyed. There is only one answer to the social question; a positive answer -- the defense of the rights of man on the grounds of his humanity. All other answers are negative; they are answers that dissolve society but leave the social question unsolved.

**Fundamentals of all fullness in social life -- truth;
of man, of society, of fullness, of justice**

We might sum this up in one word by saying that the fundamentals of all fullness of social life are comprehended in one word: truth. For a full social life, the truth of man's humanity must be admitted; i.e. the inalienable, natural rights flowing from the mastery of man, his liberty and eternal destiny, must be the foundation upon which society exists and for which it exists. The truth of society itself must be recognised: it must be seen, not as a goal, not as a god, not as an end of all things, but rather as an instrument designed for the fullness of man's life. The truth of fullness itself must be seen: that is, we must know that man's fullness is not an economic fullness, not a sensual fullness, not an intellectual fullness alone, but a human fullness, a full development of man as man.

All of this is no more than a recognition of the truth of justice. For full social life we must give every man what is his due, we must tell the truth in our actions. We must give man what is his, we must give society what is its own, we must give fullness the recognition of its true nature. Or, in just one sentence, fullness of social life is accomplished by truthfulness: emptiness of social life or even the destruction of society is accomplished by living a lie, by denying the nature of man and the nature of society. These two, man and society, are inseparable. The one springs from the other; but unless we recognize man as the source of society, rather than society as the source of man, we are working for the destruction of both man and the society he establishes.

Back	A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III	Next
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**CHAPTER VIII -- THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHY I
(Q. 63-71)**

1. Violence in society:
 - (a) The violence of defense -- a gesture for peace.
 - (b) The violence of attack -- the brutality of madness.
2. Social insanity:
 - (a) Its origins.
 - (b) A denial of the fundamental character of society.
3. Personal victims of social madness:
 - (a) By murder:
 - (1) Killing in general.
 - (2) Public and private execution of criminals.
 - (3) Suicide.
 - (4) Killing of the innocent.
 - (5) Killing of aggressors.
 - (b) By mutilation,
 - (c) By beating.
 - (d) By imprisonment.
4. Social insanity's attack on property:
 - (a) Liceity and necessity of private property.
 - (b) Secret attack on property -- theft.
 - (c) Open attack on property -- rapine.
5. Social insanity's attack on the instruments of justice:
 - (a) Favoritism.
 - (b) Injustice in the courts:
 - (1) Injustice of a judge.
 - (2) Unjust accusation.
 - (3) Injustice in the accused.
 - (4) Injustice in witnesses.
 - (5) Injustice in lawyers.

Conclusion:

1. Social sanity and human life.
2. Social sanity and human dignity.
3. Social sanity and private property.
4. Social sanity and human freedom.
5. Social sanity and the instruments of social life.

**CHAPTER VIII
THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHY I
(Q 63-71)**

PICTURES, like persons, remain strangers if we see them in the sad, false light of solitude. Compared with the full, human richness it displays when flanked, say, by the mystery of a da Vinci and the delicate beauty of a Fra Angelico, a Titian in solitary grandeur is reserved, even sullen and pouting. We cannot always gather such a company on the same wall; but we have a mental gallery that can be arranged and rearranged at our pleasure. It would be impossible, for instance, to hang side by side, in the same exhibit, the astounding picture of an angry Christ violently driving the money-changers from the temple and the pitiful picture of a modern racketeer mercilessly heating a small storekeeper for not paying "for protection." But arranged in such significant contrast in our mental gallery, they tell a story that could be told as graphically by no other means.

Violence in society: The violence of defense -- a gesture for peace.

The story they tell is the story of the distinction between sanity and madness in the relations of man to man. The one is a violence of defense in an attempt to safeguard the right. The other is a violence of attack whose theme is one of disregard of man's needs and man's rights. The one does the work of society, respecting and guarding man's rights, attempting to fulfill his needs; it is an insistence on man's mastery, on man's dominion, on the end of society. The other is the attack of a mad animal. The violence it portrays is the violence of a lunatic, without reason, destroying both the wielder of violence and his victim. Indeed its very attack on the rights of others is an attack on the basis of the attacker's own rights, for it is a denial of his obligations. He is petitioning for isolation, snarling a scornful denial of the human character of his

own nature.

The violence of attack -- the brutality of madness

These may sound like angry, exaggerated words in which to describe justice. They are not angry words. Anger's mightiest bellows die away to an inaudible whisper before the mutinous protests of wrists and back evoked by a typewriter's tyrannous commandeering of the hours of the day. Nor are they exaggerated words. Let us look at the facts a moment, at the roots of injustice. There is a common note in the gangster's brutality, the bully's gloating superiority, the hard ruthlessness of a man in power. That note is a note of contempt for the victims of injustice. And the basis of that contempt? Certainly it cannot be on the grounds of humanity; even these men recognize that their victims are just as human as they are themselves. That contempt is always based on some extrinsic, accidental consideration as silly as the superiority a man feels looking down at the world from the back of a horse. The gangster is flooded with synthetic courage when he has a gun in his hand or dope in his arm; the bully's stout heart is fed on the fear of his victim; the powerful man can look with scorn on the rest of men because he has wealth to abuse, claims membership in a special nation, a particular party, or because he has a representative position in a state -- all of which give him an opportunity to oppress others.

A denial of the fundamental character of society

Could anything be madder than this? To deny one's own mastery, to cast off one's own sole claim to self-respect, and with this denial to destroy the basis upon which society tests, then, lest there be any doubt of the matter, to confirm these denials by the destruction of others -- reason can find no ground for this sort of thing. Its correlative is no less mad, i.e., the construction of our house of pride on the frail foundations of power or the means to oppress others; the foundations of man's life are not to be destroyed by a half-hour of seasickness or an attack of indigestion. What this really amounts to is a self-condemnation to a life of narrow, withered, inhuman horizons. It is a man's denial of humanity to man.

Social insanity

It is not exaggeration, but charitable understatement, to describe injustice as social insanity. In fact it is a little too kind, for we feel pity for madmen. Sometimes this social insanity takes a homicidal form; there pity must surely stop, for then it has the ruthless violence and sly cunning peculiar to the insane with all the cool deliberation of a man in full command of his faculties. But pity has not stopped. Rather it has gone the lengths of discarding with contempt the sacredness of human life and of seeing in murder the innocence of a guileless child, the courage of a martyr, the sweet smile of a compassionate friend. In such terms do we think of abortion, suicide, euthanasia, and so on. But we shall come back to these things later. For the moment, let us set the record straight by examining the nature of killing in itself.

Killing in general

It must be understood that it is not life, but *human life* that is sacred. This is important if we are to escape the menace of the double mistake induced by current philosophies of materialism. It may not be so strange that materialism should mistake the bottom rung of the ladder for the top; but it is pitiful that the illusion should be so complete as to enable it to break its neck by falling off the bottom rung. This double mistake comes from a denial of any specific difference between man and the animals. Obviously, if no animal life is sacred, then there is nothing sacred about the life of a man; or, proceeding in the other direction, if man's life is sacred, then all life is sacred. These are the two extremes of brutal contempt for, and sentimental mooning over, all living things.

The latter mistake is now very, very old. It was not young when it furnished the material for some of the earliest of heresies; and that was long ago. It was refuted back in the very beginnings of the Church by the simple truth of the profession of the Apostles; they were fishermen and it was as true then as it is now, that a man cannot fish for years without killing a fish, or at least hoping to kill a fish. If we are to insist that a fish has a right to its life, then we must insist that a fish has the same mastery of his life as has a man; it is

only on the grounds of mastery, of dominion, that we can possibly conceive of right. It is his liberty, responsibility, his ability to use things that lies at the root of man's possession of rights.

Just as indubitably as man has rights, irrational creation has no rights. It is no sin to use a creature for the end intended by nature. Throughout all of nature the inferior creature exists For the superior; the grass is not violated by the cow, rather it fulfills the end for which it was made.

This is not by any means a license for brutality; a man cannot use animals in any way that pleases him. Accidentally the killing, or even the abuse, of an animal can be sinful. Accidentally! That is, by such actions a man violates the rule of reason; he is doing a senseless, disgusting thing. He is not using animals for the ends of nature, i.e., for the good of man, he is wantonly, viciously abusing a creature of God. The thing is, in itself, a convincing sign of viciousness. As a violation of reason it is a positive contribution to an increase in disorderly appetite. There is no reasonable basis for cruelty to animals; not because the animals have rights, but because there can never be a justifiable basis for a violation of reason, for a senseless action.

The question of the justice or injustice of killing enters in only where there is a question of a right to life; that is, in the human field where alone it is possible for right to exist. Within that field, the obvious place where human right to life can be questioned is in the case of the criminal, the sinner; for, as Thomas says, "The sinner is much worse than a wild animal. and does much more damage." By his sin, he discards his human dignity as an unpleasant garment, makes himself a slave to sin, and puts himself in the class of irrational creation.

Public and private execution of criminals

But it is not on these grounds that St. Thomas will allow the execution of criminals. Rather it is on social grounds. The criminal is a corrupt member of the social body, to be cut off for the health of the whole as a gangrenous foot of a diabetic is amputated to save his whole body. Nor does this make the criminal a kind of martyr for the common good; he is an enemy of society whose attack is repulsed even at the cost of his life.

It would be a strange society, indeed, in which a man, sure of his own justice, could stroll out after dinner and shoot down a few sinners. The nicest thing about such a society would be that it would soon simmer down to just one man -- the best shot. As a matter of fact, there is no open season on criminals. A Ku Klux Klan or a Vigilantes committee, executing justice independent of authority, has no justification; no individual, or group of individuals, has a right to execute a criminal, even though he is beyond all doubt guilty. Execution is a social remedy for a social disease; it is an act in defense of society and so proper to him who acts for the whole of society. Moreover this very defense of society works an injury to the integrity of society in causing the death of one of society's members. On both counts, of authority and injury to society, it exceeds the powers of any private person.

By this right of self-defense, public power is not at all put in the position of fanatical reformers who maintain that right is tight, and must be done regardless of consequences. As a matter of fact, consequences may make right very wrong indeed. Public power is not a blood-hound, existing to track down all sinners; its execution of the criminal is for the common good, for the safeguarding of the health of the whole. The ideal to which public authority looks is the patient wisdom of the divine regime, which often lets the cockle grow, lest tearing it up the wheat also be uprooted.

Suicide

Unfortunately patience seldom wrings cheers from the crowd. It is not too easy for men to see the stout heart that beats in the man who endures; in fact paganism went so far in the other direction as to see the supreme example of a stout heart in the man who quits, the suicide. The alleged heroism of the suicide has become a kind of dogma that only the irreverent challenge. Of course the spy kills himself to protect the secrets of his country; the military traitor is presented with a pistol, locked in a room, to do "the honorable

thing"; the drunken husband is expected to take himself off in favor of the worthy, patient lover of his wife. Apparently it has not occurred to us that the spy might simply keep his mouth shut, the traitor repent the betrayal of his country and take his punishment, and the drunkard give up drinking.

The sane clarity of the Christian view refuses to become confused in such a fog of sentiment. We cannot mistake softness and cowardice for the strong virtue of fortitude. Suicide is the act of a man who admits utter defeat, of a man in despair, of a coward, of one who is afraid to face life. In a way, it is a species of sneak-thievery. No man is lord of his life; he merely has the administration of that life. The destruction of that life on his own responsibility is an injustice to the Lord of life, to God; it is an injustice to the community, of which the suicide is a part; and it is gravely against his serious obligation of charity towards himself.

The champions of suicide allege reasons that drip altruism: remorse, failure disgracing his family, fear of sin, or violation of body. This poor man's family needed the help of his insurance; this other recognized himself as a general nuisance and simply rid the community of that nuisance. Of course none of these is valid; it is never permissible to do murder that good might come; that the particular murder is cowardly neither justifies nor ennobles it.

Direct suicide must always stand condemned as evil, for human life is a sacred thing; but even human life is not so precious that it may not be lost in the fight for more precious things. Even where the immediate goals sought are not so exceedingly precious, compared to life, if they are sufficiently grave and honest, life may be risked for them. A man may sacrifice his life in warding off failure, a woman may resist to the death or attempt to walk along a ledge fifty stories above the street to escape criminal attack. The chances may be a thousand to one in favor of her crashing to death, for not every woman has had circus training; but she is entirely justified. The difference from suicide, in these cases, lies in the fact that here death is a by-product, it is not the goal of the act. Where the end is honest and the reason sufficiently grave, such by-products can be justified.

Throughout all this discussion, the central and fundamental truth, has been the sacredness of human life. It is an important truth in an age where the brutality of materialism is throwing off more and more of its disguise every day. So sacred is human life that no public authority, no private person, can for any reason directly kill an innocent man.

Killing of the innocent

There is a profound significance in the fact that this fundamental truth is so seriously challenged today; challenged, you understand, not in a class-room or a letter to the editor, but in the concrete actions of governments and men. Such a challenge is the execution of hostages as a means of holding off an enemy, or the killing of an innocent but influential person whose death has been demanded by the military authority of the enemy: all this in the name of the common good. On the personal side there is the mercy killing calculated to relieve a man of his suffering; the painless killing of the hopelessly wounded, of the old, the misfit, the insane, social nuisances. The argument even includes an unborn child that the mother's life be saved. All this is murder. The smooth, somniferous length of the words we use to describe it -- liquidation, euthanasia, mercy-killing, solicitude for suffering mothers -- does not destroy the ugliness of murder.

Murder is its hideous, loathsome self no matter what name we give it. Society can kill in self-defense. But surely the man who violates no rights is not attacking society, nor is he an unjust aggressor threatening the life or property of any individual citizen. He is innocent and his life is sacred.

Killing of aggressors

We have seen earlier in this chapter that it would be a strange society where every self-justified man could execute anyone who did not measure up to his idea of goodness; a strange society that could not endure. It would also be a strange society in which all men followed the gentle Christ's example and

invitation to turn the other cheek to an aggressor; a strange society, but one that could endure and with such peace, harmony and happiness as to crowd the outer fences of the universe with astonished angels, anxious to see for themselves. However, Christ's invitation was to the very strong; few men are as strong as that, strong enough to be perfect. Nor does Christ demand the heroic from non-heroic men; all citizens do not have to turn the other cheek. They may defend their rights, even to the extent of killing the attacker of those rights.

This is another case of death being a by-product of a legitimate act -- the defense of one's rights. If the intention is good, i.e., not the death of the aggressor but the defense of right, and if there is a sufficiently grave reason the killing of an aggressor is justifiable. Among reasons sufficiently grave for such an action, we might mention defense of one's life, of physical integrity against mutilation, of property, and so on.

But the act must be one of actual defense of protection of rights that are being violated. We have no right to ambush a burglar and shoot him down because we have heard he is going to rob us the day after tomorrow. Nor can we put a bullet in his back a week after he has successfully looted our home. It would be unjust caution that would move a woman to poison a man she suspects of having dishonorable intentions. As a matter of fact, when a blow on the head of the attacker will protect our rights, we have no right to fire a cannon ball at him; for this act must be not only actual defense, but defense only, i.e., no more force must be used than is necessary for our protection.

It is to be insisted on that the question of self-defense hinges upon violated rights, not on the guilt or innocence of the one violating those rights. The term "unjust aggressor" is not a description of the state of a man's soul but a statement of the objective character of what he is doing. He may be a lunatic incapable of sin; but he is still an unjust aggressor for the thing he does is unjust, even though by reason of his incapacity, it is not done unjustly. In other words, as we pointed out in the preceding chapter, the medium of justice is an utterly objective thing.

Of course this does not justify the strange reasoning that finds the unborn child an unjust aggressor against its mother because it too, like the lunatic, is innocent of all crime. At least that is the only common bond between the two, their innocence; certainly the child is violating no rights. It is fairly obvious that while every one has a right to life, there are superior duties before which this right must give way; the right to life is indeed a sacred thing, but not so supreme a thing as to justify the scuttling of every other consideration, for physical life is by no means the ultimate value in the human or moral order.

Mutilation

With that limitation of force well in mind, we can insist that it is not only man's life that is sacred; his whole being is sacred. The power that can, in self-defense, proceed against so sacred a thing as his life, can also take action on a lesser scale against its attackers. If society can kill a man for a crime -- and it can -- then obviously it can mutilate him for the same cause; it can pluck out his eye, cut off his ear, or even sterilize him. But all these must be punishments; that is, they must be inflicted by public authority, for the common good and *only* for a crime. To sterilize the feeble-minded or the poor is an example of that social insanity which is injustice. These men are innocent of all crime. Yet there is a terrifying indication of how close we are to insanity in the fact that a law for the sterilization of the feeble-minded actually exists on the books of the majority of our States.

The thing is a violation of the fundamental rights of man, of the fundamental sacredness of his being, of rights which the man himself cannot relinquish. Even if the victim be willing, such mutilation cannot be committed; a doctor performing an operation to sterilize an innocent man, whether at the behest of the man himself, other individuals, or a nation, is violating justice; he inflicts an injury on the individual and on society. This right, of a specific nature, cannot be denied, for a man cannot deny his own nature. The amputation of an arm or a leg to save a man's life is, of course, an altogether different thing; it does no hurt to society and actually saves the individual. But it is worth noting that, however poor a thing the leg or arm may be, if the owner of it wants to keep it no one has any right to take it away from him. There is

an implicit recognition of this truth in the hospital practice of insisting upon an explicit permission to proceed with an operation; and an implicit denial in the much publicized cases of a state or city government stepping in to order an operation on a child over the protests of its parents.

Beating

The bodily injury involved in execution and mutilation, implying as it does an injury to society, can be inflicted only by the state, and then by way of punishment. It is not a power that a governor can give away like passes to the theatre; it cannot, for example, be extended to fathers in relation to their children, or to masters in relation to their servants. However, the limitations of execution and mutilation do not reach to the corporal punishment involved in such a thing as a spanking; for this latter does not affect the integrity of the body, but only the sense of pain.

There have been many brutal cases recently of moronic parents beating children to the point of positive mutilation. This is madness; and it rightly arouses intense and immediate indignation. But within proper limits, the pain of such a thing as a spanking can be inflicted on subjects by way of punishment, not only by the state, but also by parents and masters; for children are subject to their parents, servants are subject to their masters. Understand, however, the question here is not one of the advisability of spanking in general, advanced as a challenge to modern psychology; but rather it is a question of the justice of corporal punishment. St. Paul himself admitted there were spankings and spankings, when he warned parents against punishments that would break the spirit of their children. St. Thomas puts the question of the value of spanking to one side; he had had a strong-minded mother. He limits himself to the question of justice; and it is important to notice that he solves the question on the basis of authority, and on that basis alone. It is only by reason of their authority over their children that parents have a right to punish them.

Almost everyone (with the possible exception of the parents) will agree that the sticky-fingered child who climbs into strangers' laps on a train could well stand a little punishment. According to St. Thomas, the proper procedure in such a case would be to approach the respective parent and present the case in some such words as these: "Madam, will you please give me permission to give Agnes the spanking of her life?" or "Mr. Jones, would you mind if I gave your pretty child a few clouts on the ear?" In other words, the stranger has no jurisdiction over these children, so he cannot punish them.

As a matter of fact, we cannot even lock a child up to give the neighborhood a few hours of peace; for incarceration affects the corporal goods of man as do mutilating and beating. True, it does not, necessarily, injure the integrity of the body, nor inflict pain; but it does limit man's movement and the use of his body. There is, however, an interesting difference between incarceration and the other forms of bodily punishment, a difference that was brought out clearly by the police of Paris a few years ago.

Imprisonment

At that time Communistic agitation was running high in Paris and May first was rapidly approaching. At the last moment, some high police official hit upon a simple solution: he would prevent trouble on May first by the effective expedient of putting all known Communists in jail on April thirtieth. The plan was carried out with complete success; Paris, on May first was as sleepily peaceful as a summer day in Avignon, for not a single Communist was out of jail in all of Paris. In this case incarceration was used, not as a punishment for a crime already committed, but as a precaution against possible, even probable future disturbance of the peace to the detriment of the common good. Evidently the state cannot cut out a man's tongue for fear of what he may say against the government; nor can it kill a man who may some day lead a rebellion. But it has, with no violation of justice, imprisoned men for forty-eight hours for fear of their starting a riot. The difference is that this imprisonment was not inflicted by the power of the state to punish a crime, but by the exercise of the state's rights to command the external acts of a citizen, and consequently to prohibit them, at least for a time, in order to the common good.

Social insanity's attack on property

Over and above the personal natural rights a man has to his life and the integrity of his body, he has other rights essential to his individual and social life. One of these is under particularly heavy fire today: the right to private property. The attack is theoretical and complete on one side in its demand for complete state ownership; on the other it is concrete and terribly effective, rendering more and more men propertyless, indeed even going so far as to wipe out the very desire for property, as happens when the direction of taxation is such as to render private property a burden rather than a help.

Now if it is true that man has a natural right to property, such attacks threaten the foundations of society, as do the other attacks on man's natural rights. What is this particular right and where did it come from?

Licety and necessity of private property

We have it on the authority of faith that man's right to possess things as his own comes from nature itself. Let us look into that more closely from the philosophical side. Perhaps we can understand it better if we keep in mind that there are two branches of the family of natural rights: one in the direct line from natural law, the other in the collateral line. The first is made up of positive demands of nature; the second follows from nature immediately with no other intermediary than reason itself recognizing a universal fact and concluding from the fact and a direct command of natural law. This may sound decidedly complex; but then the process of boiling water, simple as it is, looks frightening in the form of an analysis. What all this complexity means in this particular case is not difficult to grasp. Natural law does not positively command that all things be possessed in common, just as it does not command nudism; nor does it command that all things be privately owned, just as it does not command that all men wear clothes. But reason immediately concludes from the contingent facts of the world and a direct principle of the natural law, that private property is necessary for man, somewhat as it concludes that clothes are necessary for man. In other words, the right to private property is a natural right of this second, or collateral class, a right conferred by the *jus gentium*, the "law of nations."

Considering man strictly as an individual, it is clear that natural law demands directly and positively that he conserve his own life. This command is not only for today but also for tomorrow; it not only touches the present, it reaches out to the future. A man will grow old, get sick, be hurt in accidents, and if he is to conserve his life these things must be provided for; because he has the obligation to conserve his life, he has the right to the means necessary for that conservation. The fact, however, is that for men in general -- not for this or that individual, this or that small community, but for men in general -- private property, even capital or productive property, is an absolute necessity for the fulfillment of this obligation of self-preservation.

It is rare indeed that a man's concern for the present and the future is lessened by marriage. It still remains to be proved that two can live as cheaply as one; when it becomes a question of six, or eight, or ten eking out an existence, the proof becomes correspondingly difficult. As head of a family, a man must provide for his wife and his children in the future as well as in the present. If he can be sure of their food, clothes, shelter, and so on only as long as he is able to swing a pick-axe ten hours a day, obviously he cannot fulfill his obligations as head of the family.

Under the same conditions, he will have little time for Aristotle, the opera, or meditation. He may not want to attack culture as lustily as all this; but he has a direct obligation from natural law to perfect his mind, his will, his body, to perfect himself as a man. For progress in knowledge, virtue, health, the fact is that some private property is necessary, because some independence is necessary. As head of a family, he has the same obligations towards the perfection of his children. With the full force of natural law, then, man has the right to private property.

From the social point of view, this right is no less clear. Man has a direct obligation from natural law to live in society. Along with this direct command of natural law, there is the evident impossibility of life in society without private property; and, as a consequence, the conclusion of reason to the absolute necessity of private property, a command of the *jus gentium*.

Today the impossibility of social life without private property is not readily admitted; though it is difficult to understand why this should be so. The immediate end of the state is such internal and external peace as will give men the opportunity of working out their individual perfection, a peace that is obtained by the official and orderly guarantee of the necessities of life, by harmonious regulation of the civil life of the citizens and by protection from external enemies. All this is by direct command of the natural law. One who thinks all this can be done by holding all property in common must have spent his life in solitary confinement; certainly he is possessed of an incredibly naive ignorance of men.

Men, taken not as they should be but as they are, are distinctly disinclined to labor for what does not pertain to them; they show no ability to move as a mob to widely different, constructive ends; and they do quarrel constantly over their *de facto* possessions here and now. Universalize those conditions and you have made social life impossible.

There can be little question, in the face of the facts, of the difference between the efficiency and solicitude a man gives to the care of his own things and the indifference he betrays in his care of what belongs to the community, or to no one at all. The pet cat and his cousin, the alley cat, lead vastly different lives; public parks, at least in America, are untidy hoydens while private gardens haven't a seam crooked or a hair out of place. Private bank accounts received a much greater share of worry from the citizens than the Federal budget. These are facts.

It is asking too much to hope for quiet order in a community if, for instance, everyone has the right to a dentist's office and his dental tools; if a man has no more right to his bank today than to his neighbor's farm tomorrow; or if every man is to supply his needs in any way and in any place that pleases him. Again, peace is impossible where everything belongs to everybody and nothing to an individual. For men, as they are, will not agree with sweet serenity on the use of these common goods at this particular time. If the family clothes are held in common, an interesting situation arises when two sisters begin their long preparations for the same party; fortunately the affair is private. In the face of facts like these, universal facts, along with the necessity man has of living in society, there is a positive obligation to divide property into personal possessions.

To put all this briefly: the possession of private property is licit (i.e., not forbidden) directly by the natural law itself; but the necessity for private property is directly commanded by the *jus gentium*, that is, a direct principle of natural law, side by side with universal contingent facts, forces human reason to this intermediate conclusion. Men, as they are, simply cannot live, as individuals or as social beings, without private property.

Secret attack on property -- theft

An attack on this right to private property is an attack on society. The large theoretical attack of philosophers, propagandists and social theorists is, as a matter of fact, much more deadly than the concrete attack made by a pickpocket in extracting a man's wallet from his pocket. The first is a general attack aimed at society as such; the second is a particular attack aimed at one citizen, and only through him at the peace of society. Of course if all men turn to picking pockets for a livelihood, not even shortening of the working day will save society from destruction.

Now that we have been introduced to a pickpocket it might be well to get better acquainted. He has his points; at least, in some sense, he is a thoughtful, flattering fellow. He leaves his victim in blissful ignorance of his loss, at least for the moment. And he pays his victim the flattering compliment of fear. To appreciate these good points, we must look at a burglar. The pickpocket is a sneak-thief; but the burglar uses force to gather in his loot. In; other words, the burglar cares nothing for even the momentary happiness of his victim and has a thorough contempt for the victim's power of resistance; he has arrogated to himself something that belongs only to the state, that is, coercive power. All in all, the burglar is a very unpleasant fellow.

In treating of this matter of theft, we must deal with the puzzling case of the theft which is really not a theft. All Catholic theologians admit that a man, to maintain his life, can legitimately take the goods that are held by another. Of course this right is strictly limited. It must be a question of extreme necessity, and a man must take only enough to relieve his extreme necessity, not enough to keep him in luxury the rest of his life. Moreover, he must not reduce the individual from whom he takes these things, to the same extreme necessity from which he extracts himself. This is really not theft at all; this man has not taken what belongs to another, he has merely taken what belongs to him.

The confusion of the case is cleared up if we remember that the root of man's right to things of the world lies in his ability to use things; and that is, at the same time, the limitation of his right. Things have not been delivered over to him absolutely; nature has given them as a means to be used in attaining his goal. God alone has absolute dominion. Man, then, has a natural right to the use of creatures beneath him as a means to his goal; that this or that particular thing belongs to this man for his particular use is dependent on the determination of positive civil law. The extreme necessity of one man brings about a clash, or rather an apparent clash, between a positive right and a natural right; of course the natural right wins in such a battle, for the positive right simply disappears. No positive law can oppose, destroy or uproot the natural law.

Social insanity's attack on the instruments of justice: Favoritism

When social insanity invades the government itself, the citizen is in a desperate way. He is in the position of a man who set out to buy a police dog to protect his home, and returns leading a wolf on a leash. The government exists to protect the rights of the citizen and to minister to his needs; when, instead, it violates those rights, it leaves its helpless victim naked and wounded by the roadside, the victim of organized injustice.

It may seem touchingly human for a president to name an attorney general because he likes the man's smile or to exempt his political friends from the boredom of paying taxes. Actually such a thing is decidedly inhuman for it is a violation of distributive justice; it is an obvious attack on the rights of citizens, an attack that goes by the name of favoritism. The state, through its officials, is obliged to distribute honors, burdens, rewards and helps on grounds of strict justice.

In such cases, corruption has crept into government; and corruption is rarely a static, localized thing. It spreads quickly, silently, with devastating effect, from executive positions into the legislature. Here it will take such forms as legislation favoring or penalizing one class or one section of a country; in other words, it will be legislation working for particular, selfish ends against the common good. No society can stand up long under such mad attacks. But the most devastating damage is done by the corruption of social insanity when it eats its way into the judiciary and the judicial processes. After all executives are changed from time to time; many laws are written on the books and do no more than gather dust; but the judicial processes are continuous, immediately effective, concrete. These processes are the digestive apparatus of society; that process of elimination and assimilation must be completely dependable or society is in a bad way very quickly.

Injustice in the courts: Injustice of a judge

A corrupt judiciary leaves a slimy trail of bitterness, anger and despair; and must eventually result in private execution of justice. A judge does the tremendously important work of putting the law to work. He is a public, not a private person; he exercises coercive power on citizens and, by his decisions, gives what St. Thomas calls "private law", i.e., a concrete judgment with the full force of law. Our interest in a law may easily be detached, unbiased, academic; but a judgment will bring us roaring to our feet, as philosophizing drops like a forgotten book from our lap.

The fact that he is a public person does not mean that the judge has no private life; but it does mean that in his judgments he must not act as a private person. His private knowledge of the sanctity of Miss Jones cannot be used to save her from the electric chair when the evidence shows she poisoned the barber for

ruining her hair. His decisions must be based on his public knowledge; that is, on the knowledge he has from the law, from the witnesses, from the instruments of the trial. He may insist on a stricter examination of the evidence, because of his private knowledge of the guilt or innocence of this particular person; but it must be on the evidence that he decides his case. He can, and indeed he should, feel very sorry for the culprit; and this latter may be positively extravagant in his promises to be good in the future. But here an injury has been done to another citizen, and to society; the law that demands punishment is the voice of society, it is not the private product of this particular judge. He is no more than the instrument of justice.

The judge occupies a precarious position, delicately balanced. He is not an accuser, nor is he a defender; he is the impartial figure of strict justice; a position extraordinarily difficult for any man to maintain. It is true that in criminal cases he should favor the one who is accused; but this is by reason of his very impartiality, for a man remains innocent of crime until he is proved guilty, he has a strict right to his good name, to his liberty, and so on. These rights must not be taken from him until he is proved, with a moral certitude, to have forfeited them by definite crime. In a civil case the matter is a little different; here he judges according to the greatest probability, but again this is no more than maintaining his attitude of strict justice.

It takes little imagination to see what damage can be done to society by the ignorance, prejudice, cowardice, greed or ambition of a judge. His work is difficult and dangerous. For the victim of unjust judgment there is one instrument of defense in the knowledge that a certainly unjust judgment does not bind him in conscience. But that weapon is so small, so frail, so pitifully individual, the more so since it is coupled with the knowledge that even such a judgment must be abided by if there is any danger of scandal or disturbance of the public peace. In other words, this man is forced back upon the meagre resources of individual action, whereas he should be enjoying the rich benefits of social action; he is obliged by his conscience to think always in reference to the common good, whereas this fanatic who has judged him is limited by no other thought than his own selfish interests.

Of course the judge does not have to bear the whole brunt of injustice in the judicial process. Our own times have made it fairly clear that others can corrupt justice in spite of an honest judge; in fact anyone connected with the judicial process -- accuser, witnesses, lawyers -- can be the means of introducing the note of social insanity into this social act that should be so eminently sane. Let us glance at these other members of the troupe which performs in the courtroom.

Unjust accusation

It is not necessary to call out the national guard every time you see a boy stealing an apple. Most modern laws make provision for formal accusation by public officials whose office was created for this particular purpose. But a private person may have a serious obligation of denouncing a crime: of counterfeiting, for example, which threatens the common good; or when it is a matter of averting grave damage to an individual, as when the uproar next door indicates that murder is about to be done. In other words by doing nothing more than putting an extra bolt on the door a private person may be guilty of injustice; he makes a more thorough job of it by accusing another of crime falsely, by covering up crime in collusion with the defendant, by losing evidence, admitting invalid arguments, false testimony of witnesses and so on, or even by getting chicken-hearted at the last moment and withdrawing from a case that should be prosecuted.

Injustice in the accused

The citizen is carrying his civic virtue pretty far when he goes to the length of setting blood-hounds on his own trail; no man is obliged to accuse himself. Indeed, among the peoples of our western civilization it is universally agreed that the accused man does not have to confess his guilt, if he is under no obligation in this regard, of course no force can be used to obtain such a confession. The reason is fairly evident. Secrets are not the proper matter for public judgment, which deals properly with external acts; and if this man's confession is necessary for conviction, certainly his crime is a secret thing. Then too a man must be

considered innocent until he is proved guilty, for he has a right to his good name.

Both of these grounds were defended by St. Thomas, but in his time there were circumstances which obliged a man to confess his guilt. If, for instance, he had already lost his good name by some crime, there was no danger of injury to his name. If express indications made his guilt apparent, or if that guilt were already half proved, Thomas held that in all these cases a refusal to confess guilt was a sin. The thing is important for it lies behind the medieval use of torture as an instrument of trial. It was only in these cases, where refusal to confess was sinful, that torture could be used; it was argued, that in these cases there was no violation of man's rights in demanding that he admit his crime.

An accused man has a right to every legitimate means of defense. Courtrooms frown on name-calling as undignified and, as a matter of fact, it is a decidedly ineffective defense. But name-calling in the modern way of destroying the character of witnesses by false accusation, goes far beyond a violation of etiquette; the thing is vicious, unjust, an absolutely illegitimate means of defense. Once a just judgment has been passed there is no longer any question of legal defense for the condemned man. He cannot argue that he has slugged the guard or shot the judge in self-defense; such resistance constitutes an attack upon the community. He must undergo his sentence. But that does not mean that he has to inflict the penalty on himself; he does not have to pay his own car-fare to prison, he does not have to keep himself in jail. That is the work of society; if the opportunity to escape from jail offers itself, the prisoner is not violating justice in taking his leave without consulting the warden.

The unjustly condemned man is in a different situation. If his unjust sentence is the result of defective form in the trial or through lack of evidence, he can defend himself, even with violence, against the officers of the state. He is the victim of unjust attack; he is not obliged to submit to that attack unless, in a particular case, there are extrinsic reasons that make it necessary for him to sacrifice his own private goods, such, for instance, as the danger of serious damage to the common good.

Injustice in witnesses

The comely witness who lies with the grace and facility of long practice, may not have influenced the jury so much by her testimony. Nevertheless her glib falsehoods have all been charged with a triple spiritual death for her own soul. The witness chair has no value as an alibi for a lie; and since testimony is now seldom given without an oath, it forms an excellent perch for the vulture of perjury. The lying witness then commits a triple sin: of perjury, of lying and of injustice.

Obviously this business of acting as witness is serious. In fact it is a business that most of us would gladly escape. Just when are we obliged, in spite of our distaste, to occupy that uncomfortable chair? Well, the obligation is one of charity when our testimony, as private persons, is necessary to avoid damage to our neighbor or to the common good. It will be one of commutative justice if our office entails such testimony; a burly detective, for instance, cannot become kittenish at the thought of facing all those strange faces. It can be one of legal justice when our testimony is demanded by a legitimate judge.

Even if we are obliged to testify, we need not empty out our minds as we would an old purse, turning it inside out. There are some things about which testimony simply cannot be given. The district attorney who would hammer away at the priest, trying to uncover something that was told in confession, is wasting his time. The priest knows these things, not as a man, but as a minister of God; the knowledge is God's and the priest cannot use it. Ordinarily the things learned by doctors, lawyers and so on in their professional capacities cannot be the matter of testimony; these are natural secrets, and it was with this understanding that they were told to these professional men.

However these professional secrets have nothing like the inviolability of the seal of confession. Sometimes they may be revealed; and sometimes they must be revealed. A doctor, who knows that a mid-wife is constantly procuring abortion, would be obliged to offer testimony to that effect in order to avoid grave evil to the common good; indeed, even where it is not a question of the common good, but of serious damage to an individual, or to the doctor himself, he is not bound to hide these natural secrets.

Secrets are only a small part of the things that need not be testified to. Much of the confusion in this matter comes from the fact that often only a sickly ray of the sun of common sense can fight its way through the dust of a legal library. While it may pain the attorney, it seems obvious that a witness does not have to do himself grave damage by giving testimony, nor give testimony to the injury of a close relative; a father, for example, can refuse to testify against a son. Obviously we do not have to testify at the command of a judge who has no jurisdiction, nor reply to a judge or a lawyer asking questions not pertinent to the trial in hand. It also seems nothing more than common sense that the detective who has tapped a private phone line or the bored postmistress who has steamed open letters should not be obliged to testify in these matters, for both have obtained their knowledge by injuring others. The milkman who, on his early morning rounds, has seen a drunken man kill another, can legitimately avoid giving testimony if there is no danger of damage to a third party; for here too, there is no serious question of protecting the common good or vindicating justice, for the drunken man was obviously irresponsible.

Perhaps it would be well to sum all this up. If a man is not summoned by the judge, he is nevertheless obliged to give testimony to save a man from unjust execution, from serious penalty, from the loss of his good name, or from serious damage; a just proportion always being observed between the damage he is trying to avert and the damage he himself will incur. If this testimony is not demanded by a legitimate superior, then a man is obliged in charity to do what he can to bring out the truth; but if his testimony will contribute to the condemnation and consequent execution of another rather than to saving him, then no one is obliged to offer testimony, though that testimony can be required in justice by a superior.

Injustice in lawyers

St. Thomas knew enough about lawyers to be sure they were as weak as other men. They too might become negligent and handle a case carelessly, might let a professional secret slip, use some unjust means to escape from a dangerous situation, or prolong a case to swell the fee. All these are distinctly possible injustices; but they are also distinctly obvious. Thomas neglects them to concentrate on the fundamental injustices that have a much more direct effect on society.

Thus he insists that a lawyer may not knowingly defend an unjust civil case; if he does, he is not only carrying the burglar's tools, he is instructing him in the use of them. He may start in innocently enough, thinking the case is just, and later discover that it is, as a matter of fact, unjust; but his original innocence does not give him a license for robbery. True he is not obliged to help the opponent, nor to reveal the secrets manifested to him professionally; but he is obliged to give up his part in the case or to induce his client to withdraw the case. In other words, there is no limitation to the prohibition of partaking in an unjust civil case.

In a just civil case, the lawyer's defense of justice cannot be waged unjustly; he has no permission to lie. But of course he does not have to tell all he knows, in fact he would be doing an injustice if he did not prudently withhold the things that would impede his case. In criminal cases a lawyer may defend the accused man even when that man is certainly guilty; the guilt must still be juridically proved. On the other hand, a prosecuting attorney is guilty and bound to restitution when he wins the condemnation of an innocent person culpably; indeed he is unjust when he pursues a trial after learning of the innocence of the accused, or after gravely doubting his guilt. Nor can he dodge the charge of injustice when he injures society by his lackadaisical exercise of his office.

This has been an unpleasant chapter. We might say it had some of the unpleasantness of hell about it; both hell and this chapter are crowded with sins and for all their gaiety, there is nothing more depressingly unpleasant than an empty-faced crowd of sins. Perhaps that is another clue to the unpleasantness of this chapter -- the fact that the eyes of sin are always so terribly blank, so completely unseeing; the lights have gone out behind these windows of the soul and they tell only the fearful message of darkness.

The same unnamed dread of unreasoning blindness is behind the horror that grips a visitor to an insane

asylum. An insane man is one who is terribly blind and does not realize it; he is a man who acts against his very humanity. Sometimes it is the less violent insanity of sin; or again the openly violent insanity of mania. In both cases it is the surrender of control, of the foundation of the humanity of man's actions; the insane man attacks himself. The man who is socially insane, living in society and depending on that society as every man must, attacks the foundation, the reason for the existence of that society.

This social insanity goes by the very ordinary name of injustice; and it consists in attacks on the rights of man. For it is precisely because of the mastery of man, because of his possession of rights, that society is possible and is necessary.

Social sanity and human life; and human dignity

Social sanity looks upon the rights of man not as rivals to be destroyed, but as a solid foundation to be carefully preserved. To it the life of man is sacred, above all human power: a thing to be challenged only in self-defense against the criminal, who has already forfeited his right to life. Nor is social sanity deceived by high-sounding terms or pseudo-scientific theories; euthanasia, mercy-killing, justified abortion, sterilization may catch the fancy of the unthinking for a day or an hour. But not very stable castles can be built on air; and the solid rock of social structures is the sacredness of man's life, the integrity of his body, his inviolable dignity as a sovereign being. Eugenics or social inferiority are not seasons for a violation of these things; they are excuses for the inexcusable.

A society that has begun to lose this reverence for man's personal life is a society that has become feeble-minded. When blood purges, murder, and mutilation become the order of the day, or even a part of legal procedure, society has gone mad; it is attacking itself. It no longer functions as a society.

Social sanity and private property

A disrespect for or lack of interest in man's right to private property is a serious threat, because social life cannot exist without private property. Like other natural rights, this one too is at the basis of society; it is, in fact, the concrete guarantee of another fundamental right, the right of human freedom. When a state has begun to look upon human individuals, not as persons, but as things, as slaves, as instruments of social perfection, then that society has gone mad. Social sanity insists that the state exists that men's lives be fuller, not that the state be gorged with the bodies and souls of men.

Social sanity and human freedom; and the instruments of social life In all these cases, society is openly acting as the enemy of its members; it is feeding on its own body. Nor is the attack less mad when it adopts the disguise of friendship in government favoritism. Rather it is more dangerous because somewhat more subtle; but it is none the less a betrayal of the citizen by his government. The dastardly betrayal is complete when a government becomes corrupt in the very acts which were meant to protect the rights of man and minister to his needs, the very instruments of government and justice. The citizen is being stabbed in the back by a friend who has gone insane.

Social sanity holds fast to a knowledge of both man and society; it does not surrender the principle of social control, because it does not give up its knowledge of man. And, in the last analysis, it is man who is the measure of society, as well as its foundation and its goal. The defense of social sanity, then, will not be brought about in any other way than a last-ditch, desperate defense of the humanity of man.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER IX -- THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHY II
(Q. 72-80)

1. Universal contempt for pettiness
 - (a) The fact.
 - (b) its foundations -- the nature of man.
 - (c) Pettiness and society.
 2. Pettiness and anarchy.
 3. Petty injustice in word:
 - (a) Limitations of pettiness.
 - (b) Insult.
 - (c) Detraction
 - (1) Thomistic and modern definitions
 - (2) its nature
 - (3) its comparative malice.
 - (d) Whispering.
 - (e) Derision.
 - (f) Cursing.
 4. Petty injustice in act:
 - (a) In buying and selling:
 - (1) Unjust price.
 - (2) Defective goods.
 - (3) Business as such.
 - (b) Usury.
 5. A contrast -- the wide embrace of justice:
 - (a) Nature of the potential parts of justice
 - (b) Their number and name: religion, piety, observance, truth, gratitude, vindication, friendship, liberality.
- Conclusion:
1. Two mistakes on petty injustice:
 - (a) Too small to matter.
 - (b) Too big for anything else to matter.
 2. The conditions of life with others -- strength and largeness of soul:
 - (a) Life of friendship:
 - (1) With God.
 - (2) With men.
 - (b) Domestic life.
 - (c) Social life.
 3. Full essence of anarchy.

CHAPTER IX
THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHY II
(Q. 72-80)

Universal contempt for pettiness

THE normal response of the human soul to pettiness is a kind of nausea. Pettiness in human nature is as revolting as squalor in a hospital or laughter at a funeral. These two, humanity and pettiness, do not belong together; when we see them so we are scornful, contemptuous, even angry. We shrug off the victim of self-pity impatiently; the misery of the miser moves us to anger rather than pity. And we can fully understand the indignation of the Scots at Sir Harry Lauder's constant quips about their penurious caution.

If taken at all seriously, such an accusation is far from comic. We do not have to hold our sides to keep from bursting with laughter when we see a husband or wife ready to scurry out of marriage at the first wave of misfortune; the victim of envy or jealousy must make a long, long search for sympathy; and the executive who counts the carbon sheets in the stenographer's desk need have no illusions about the stenographer's opinion of him.

Its foundations -- the nature of man

The fact is that man is too big to enjoy pettiness. Bigness is a part of the very make-up of man. By the design of infinite wisdom, he was made to bring all things into his mind and to carry his heart out to all

things not to spend his time grubbing in the little plot of his own being. He was born, not to plunge into the swirling waters of the world and drown himself, but to stand aside from the world, even from himself, as the one spectator of the material universe. He was made for infinite variety. He was given the mastery of the universe, all other things being the tools by which he carves out an eternal destiny. He was made to give himself utterly to another, rather than to attempt to gather all things in the pitiful compass of his own hands.

On the other hand, smallness is a part of the irrational world, for that world is fenced in, determined to one narrow path. No creature in that world has an interest, a knowledge, an ability outside of itself; it is a world incapable of using the rest of the world as its instrument, incapable of surrendering itself to anyone or anything. It is a small world in spite of its size, its power, its beauty and its ruthlessness. Man's nature has set him apart from this small world and given him something of the infinity of God. His actions, since he is made in the image of God, should be godlike; one of the divine characteristics that must stand out in the acts of a man, if he is to retain the respect of his fellows, is that of largeness, of wide horizons and far off goals. Indeed this characteristic is a condition for the maintenance of self-respect, for deep in his heart every man is revolted at pettiness, even though the pettiness be his own.

Pettiness and society

The fundamental notions of society are really an insistence upon this greatness of man; nor is this surprising, since society is such an exclusively human thing, a thing which only men need and only men can have. There is, in the very notion of society, an open admission of our need for help; a big thing to come from a man. For society exists that man might live the full life of which he is capable, living with others, but incapable, living alone. At the same time, society is a statement of a willingness to give help to others, to pool capacities in order that all might live a more perfect human life. From both angles, pettiness is always an injury, and sometimes a serious threat, to the very notion of society. To admit the need of help and, at the same time, be willing to help others is the work of a creature who can get outside himself: he can stand aside from himself and see his own insufficiency: and he can see the world through the eyes of another, focusing his own vision to an impartial, even a sympathetic view.

Petty injustice is a deliberate campaign of injury, not of help. No matter how great an injury it may do, it is still petty in itself; it is an admission of defeat, of pique, of envy or jealousy. Violence, in general, is the work of a small soul unable to compete with the talents of another: the violence of petty injustice is the work of a craven soul, of a soul not only too small to compete with the talents of others, but even too small to risk the slightest injury or misfortune to itself in its very campaign of injustice to others.

We might say that this petty injustice takes two forms, apparently contrary, according to the particular angle at which a man looks at himself. In one case it puts up a pretense of pride, claiming its own self-sufficiency because a man is unable to stand outside himself and see himself truly; it is the result of a vision, so short that it never quite reaches to a man's own limitations. On the other hand, this petty violence may set up a constant wail for help, when a man looks at the world and is shocked, aggrieved that the rest of the world can see anything but him, that other men do not spend their time and energy thinking of him. This small soul is quite blind to the rights (let alone the needs) of others but cannot understand why the world should be so blindly cruel as to neglect him for an instant.

Pettiness and anarchy

It may seem a long jump from pettiness to anarchy. Nor does the gap look smaller when we remember that anarchy, etymologically, means "without a head." It calls up the dismal picture of jungle law let loose in a civilized community whose government, or head, has been cut off, the incongruous picture of a man thrashing about like a recently beheaded chicken, or the horrifying picture of a man who has lost control of himself, who has lost his head and has become a beast of prey. No, it still seems a long way from pettiness to anarchy; but bring the thing close to human life and the distance disappears.

We live in an age where the shambles of domestic groups are taken as much for granted as a shell hole in

no-man's-land. This destruction is laid to cruelty, desertion, infidelity, the third angle of the triangle and so on. Perhaps, in a majority of cases, these alleged grounds are true. But does anyone seriously believe that the course of home life was running smoothly, peacefully, with love ruling supreme, sacrifice constant and generosity the ordinary thing, when one morning husband and wife awoke to discover that lightning had hit their home and cruelty, desertion and the rest were pouring through the hole in the roof?

It is conceivable that a home be broken up suddenly; but normally these big things that destroy a home can be traced back to the constant annoyance of very small things. A man, wrapped up in his business, forgets that his wife and children are human and need some attention, some thought. A wife, now that the excitement of the hunt is over allows her natural slovenliness to assert itself as she appears at the breakfast table disheveled, unkempt, in a state that adds nothing to the tastiness of the cold toast. The husband may spend most of his time at home pitying himself: the wife may be addicted to tears; or either side may cultivate its will power by the constant nagging of the born reformer. They are little things but by their constancy the big things come about. It is well to know the tremendous danger of these small things well too, to realize that they are the fruits of a small soul, the products of thoughtlessness, of selfishness, of discontent and self-pity. But they are at the root of domestic anarchy.

Considering the place the family must hold in society, this alone would be enough to establish the connection between pettiness and social anarchy. However, the direct connection is close enough in the purely social sphere. A revolution is not the work of a moment but the result of years. Society prepares for a revolution slowly, as steam is built up in a locomotive but this steam is applied to terribly destructive purposes when its inevitable explosion rips society to shreds.

Limitations of pettiness

It must be noted that the word pettiness, as descriptive of the type of injustice with which we shall deal in this chapter, must not be taken for a moral evaluation of this injustice. It expresses the contempt of men for this injustice; it is not a statement of its insignificance. It can be exceedingly grave; and its very gravity does not diminish but rather increases the well-earned contempt given it by men.

There is, for instance, the whole group of sins we include under the term "sins of the tongue;" the sins that we confess as uncharitable in a tone that says we know they were not particularly noble, but they are only offenses against charity; and who could blame us for a lack of love for these people? Our attitude is an implicit ignorance of the fact that we are violating justice by these sins we have not merely spoken "unkindly", we have spoken unjustly, for we have refused others the rights that are theirs. We miss the obvious fact that Christ, commanding the kind word, or at least the kind silence, merely demanded that we refrain from molesting others, that for love of Him we leave others alone.

Insult

There are times when we can work up a kind of pride in these sins. when we boldly insult or revile a man, tell him to his face that he is a thief; taunt him with his deafness; upbraid him for his stupidity, his poverty, or with reminders of the favors we have done him--we claim a double justification. The things we said were true, and they were not said behind a man's back but to his face. As a matter of fact, is there a justification for the wounds left in a human heart, for the shame and embarrassment of another, for the loss of his good name with others, or even for our refusal to give the respect to which this image of God has a just claim? All of these sins are direct attacks on the honor and respect due to our neighbor. If our intention has been to dishonor him or refuse him respect, the sins are no less mortal than are theft and burglary, understanding, of remorse, that they can become venial when the matter of our insults is less grave.

We need not be surprised if, at one time or another, our insults explode in our face. Some people just will not take insults, while others will take just so many as a matter of fact, they do not have to submit to such reviling, any more than a man has to stand by meekly while his watch is stolen or his children kidnapped.

He is within his rights in resisting an unjust aggressor and it may be the best thing in the world for a novice at the dangerous game of insulting others to discover that it is not always an easy avocation. If our resistance to insult has that fraternally charitable end of discouraging a too facile tongue, it is not only justified, it is praiseworthy. A man in authority, who must maintain that authority, or a man whose loss of honor would result in grave spiritual loss to others, is not only permitted, he may be obliged to resist insults. In both these cases the motive was not so much defense of one's own rights but the protection of the good of others normally we can be much more sure of these stainless motives in protecting the honor of another, than we can in rushing to our own defense.

To see these sins as examples of boldness and courage is to blindfold ourselves as we approach a mirror. We are really afraid to look at them closely; if we do we must see them as truly petty. They are an adult version of the little-boy trick of calling names: a gesture of helplessness, of impotent anger, of contempt. If we turn these sins to let strong light fall on their faces, we shall immediately recognize them as the offspring of stupidity they are the product of a mind paralyzed by anger, rushing madly to the handiest means of venting its passion upon another. Pride, of course, helpfully prepares us for sins of the tongue by keeping us well supplied with contempt for others in the admiration we have for ourselves. But it is really the stupid blindness of anger that usually turns loose the flood of insults.

Although insulting words cut deep, they are superficial wounds compared to the gashes made by the words of a backbiter. An insult is an attack on the respect or honor due a person, i.e., on the external testimony of a neighbor's character. The backbiter digs deeper to attack the very reason for honor: he attacks the reputation or good name of a neighbor. This is a sly, deadly sin, this backbiting, and always committed secretly. It is a cowardly knife-thrust in the back, giving its victim no chance for self-defense: indeed, it is quite the ordinary thing for a victim of backbiting to be unaware of the attack until his good name is entirely gone.

Detraction Thomistic and modern definitions

Modern theologians distinguish between true and false backbiting, calling the first detraction, and the second, calumny. But St. Thomas, seeing both as frequenters of the dark alleys of secrecy and assassins of reputations, makes no distinction. As the thing actually works out, backbiting is rarely limited to the truth, at least by the time it reaches its most deadly stage. I recall a case of backbiting that is an excellent illustration of this fact. A disgruntled mother was stopped by a cheery neighbor as she came out of Mass, just at the unfortunate moment when her mind was considerably disturbed by thoughts of her own somewhat meanly dispositioned daughter. The neighbor remarked happily on the attractiveness and popularity of one of the parish girls passing by. In a fit of spite, the disappointed mother remarked acidly: "Well, there are some things much more important than popularity." The remark was absolutely true and hopelessly banal: it could be whispered in the most innocent ears or shouted from the highest pulpits. But it was the starting point of a chain of remarks that practically made an outcast of the innocent victim for at each repetition, more details were added as to what was more important than popularity and much more embroidery was painstakingly added to the original inference that this girl lacked these very important things.

Falsehood, the fitting accomplice of sly secrecy, permeates backbiting as the odor of decay permeates a swamp. It is true that we can ruin a good name by secretly telling unsavory truths, revealing secrets and so on. But we can also make a boy's theft of a piece of candy sound like a bank robbery by a careful inattention to detail. We can declare ourselves actual witnesses of a murderous attack with an automobile when all we have seen is a friendly gesture of help to a stalled motorist on a cold morning. This sort of thing may demand some creative imagination and a good deal of craftsmanship: perhaps that is why there is something of an artist's pride in the completed masterpiece. But it takes no genius and very little practice to accomplish backbiting without bringing our neighbor's sins into the matter at all: by brazenly denying his good points, maliciously guarding a silence on those good points or stopping the whole conversation cold by a frigid trickle of praise that drops from our lips with the slow reluctance of a drop of water from an icicle.

Sometimes an injury to another's name is necessary, as in the doctor's warning against an engagement to a person suffering from a contagious disease; in these cases there is no question of sin. Very frequently the empty-headedness of the prattler saves him from serious sin, for even sin demands some thought. In fact, there is a saving element in most of these sins of the tongue; they are so often slips, words that escape from our mouths so quickly that we cannot even grab the tail of the disastrous sentence. This is not something of which we can be proud, but at least it often indicates a complete lack of malice

Its comparative malice

Yet once the thing is done, injuries to reputation remain unjust, and seriously so, even though there was no malice on our part. Not so serious, perhaps, as murder destroying the life of a man, or adultery attacking his family and the very beginning of life but among the sins aimed against the external goods of man, detraction holds a top place. It is, for example, much worse than theft, for it robs a man of a much more valuable and personal thing than his wallet; but like theft, insults and backbiting demand restitution. They demand that we return to another the most precious of temporal things, a thing nearly impossible of returning -- a good name.

Whispering

A gossip, to be at her (or his) best, really needs cooperation. There is no more complete example of futile effort than a pair of gossips whose alternating silences are not the relaxed, docile attention of a listener, but the tense, eager, unheeding preparation of one waiting to go on the air. It is at least possible that gossip would decline sharply if the quota of listening could be curtailed. But of course there will always be some excellent listeners; nor do they have all the excitement of malicious gossip with none of the sin. The listener whose ears actually rise up at the first breath of gossip gives full consent to the talk and joins in the sin; so too does the person who could and should stop such unjust remarks. But the timid person, the negligent one, or the man who is ashamed to appear in the role of defender of a reputation is normally guilty only of venial sin.

One of the most serious, and certainly one of the most contemptible forms of gossip is what St. Thomas calls "whispering," and what may be called, somewhat vaguely, tale-bearing. It is a complete campaign whose chief objective is the destruction of friendship. In the eyes of Thomas, this was more serious than insult, detraction or calumny: for it is much more important to us that we be loved than that we be honored, while a friend is much more precious than a reputation. Men can live without honor, without a good name, but not without friends; for no man is sufficient unto himself.

Derision

In sharp contrast to the magnitude of whispering stands the pettiest of the sins of the tongue, the sin of mockery or derision. Do not be deceived by its air of jollity or its disguise of humor; it is a petty, vicious snob that considers the rights of others as so many coins to buy laughs. It is the sarcastic weapon of the negative wit. Insult and backbiting strip a man of the external rewards of virtue, honor and a good name, much as a bandit might strip a man of his clothes. Mockery saunters lightly into the house of the soul to rob a man of his intrinsic goods, his peace and self-respect. Its aim is to shame a man, to shatter him publicly that others might make sport of his shame. Christ was a victim of it when the taunts from Calvary echoed back from the walls of Jerusalem; nor has the satanic art been lost through the ages. Its modern masterpieces are government executed Jew-baitings.

The other sins of the tongue treat man's faults and weaknesses, whether real or fictional, with some degree of seriousness. Mockery makes sport of them, thus adding a stinging note of contempt. If the subject matter of our costly joke is only slight, then the sin may be venial; but if our contempt for our neighbor is so great that his sin and misfortunes strike us as merely material for a joke, then our sin is mortal, greater indeed than its fellow public performer -- insult -- for it contains more of contempt.

Mockery is an agile sin that runs up the ladder of gravity with a light-hearted step; it is rarely content to stop short of the top, for it has a reputation for wit to maintain and the strain of the upkeep is terrific. It becomes steadily more grave as its victims have greater claim to reverence. Thus to mock a virtuous man and his virtues is more serious than mockery of a sinner, because virtue is man's fundamental claim to honor and a good name. In a society where this is widespread, a man may be seen at his sins, but he has to be caught at his virtues; he will keep them secret, or abandon them, for human nature has no relish for mockery. Mockery of parents is a step up the ladder; it is so revolting a robbery of the reverence due them that it is always a shock to spectators. Only in a depraved society does a laughing slash across the face of a parent win a laugh. We reach the heights of this sin when its victim is God; surely when the divine claim to reverence is the butt of jokes, reverence is dead in the world and with it goes all pretence at respect for the dignity of man.

Cursing

This same proportional upswing of gravity is found in the sin of cursing, taking cursing, not in the vague, general sense of nasty or irreverent language, but strictly as the expression of evil to another by way of wish or command. As men have greater claim to our reverence and our love, we do them a greater injustice by cursing them.

As a matter of fact, all men have at least a minimum claim on our love and reverence; so no slightest degree of evil wished to men, precisely under the aspect of evil, is harmless. Obviously it is against charity; and its execution is patently against justice. But notice that the evil must be willed under the aspect of evil. A judge, damning a man to prison, is not guilty of cursing; nor is the citizen who wishes for the speedy capture and execution of a notorious public enemy, that the peace of society might be preserved. The old Irish mother gives effective expression to her impatience when she exclaims: "I wish the Lord had his soul!" But she is not cursing; rather she is seeing even her tormentors through the eyes of that divinely wise love that has worn smooth the hills of Ireland by its long, steady regard.

Cursing directed against God is blasphemy; against the irrational world it is a waste of breath, for good or evil have no place where necessity is king; against the devil, it is an attempt to gild the lily. More often than not, cursing is no more than a safety-valve blowing off the steam of impatience and anger that have proved too much for a limited vocabulary.

Petty injustice in act: In buying and selling

Some time ago *The Saturday Evening Post* came out with a cover that brought a chuckle from the nation. It pictured a tiny, meek, sweet-looking old lady looking across a swinging scale, at a butcher who looked as all good butchers should but rarely do. He was fat, good-natured and ruddy, as though he had frequently sampled his own products, all of them, and found them good. He was weighing a piece of meat, resting his hand, meanwhile, gracefully and unobtrusively on the edge of the scale. Both the butcher and his customer had their eyes fixed on the figures of the scale; the butcher with a look of astonishment and the sweet old lady with a smile of serene peace, for underneath the scale her index finger was more than offsetting the weight of the butcher's hand.

This sort of thing never happened; but we feel, somehow, that if it did happen we could enjoy it thoroughly. Our vicarious and fictional satisfaction focuses attention on petty injustice in one of its commonest forms, cheating, particularly cheating in the contract between buyer and seller. Perhaps it is because the average man is such a constant and gullible victim of the cheat that the "besting" of a swindler evokes such enthusiastic approval.

Unblushing fraud in buying and selling is clearly unjust and is properly and immediately condemned. After all this contract is a mutual thing, designed for the good of both parties; men are right in hotly resenting its open violation. But there are many less patent injustices that are not so heavily frowned on, that are even approved by constant practice. It is, for instance, petty injustice to charge forty dollars for a ticket to a football game -- yes, even for that game! The value of the ticket is by no means equal to the

price demanded; the equality of justice has been disturbed and must be restored by repairing the damage suffered by the buyer.

Unjust price

It is argued, of course, that the ticket is worth that amount to the buyer here and now; he needs the ticket and cannot get it anywhere else. That sounds very plausible; but whose need is it? If it already belongs to the buyer, surely he cannot be charged for it, it cannot be sold to him. The seller cannot sell what is not his own; he can charge for the thing he is delivering to the buyer, but he cannot charge for the need under which the buyer labors. The case is altogether different if a man insists on buying my rubbers in the midst of a rainstorm. I am justified in adding to the price of the rubbers the price of a cold in the head which I shall suffer by the sale of the rubbers. I am not charging the buyer for his need, but for the damage that will come to me as a result of the sale.

A woman who sells a pet parrot worth five dollars for the price of ten, may be acting justly, charging the buyer for the damage done to her affections and the consequent loneliness of her life. A baseball magnate who would sell his franchise just before a world series is right in asking a higher price, charging to the buyer the loss of gain which was involved in the sale. In all these cases, the seller is charging for something that is intimately his; not for the need of the buyer.

Defective goods

When we discover that the gold-fish we bought at a fire sale looks something like a smoked herring, we should not feel surprised or indignant. That is why we got it so cheap. Obviously the intrinsic worth of a thing is lessened by its defects; as the worth goes down, so must the price, for the price is primarily the measure of the intrinsic value of a thing. But there are some defects that rule out the question of any price at all. The confidence man who sells glass for a diamond offers material with a *specific* defect; the grocer who gives short weights puts a defect of *quantity* in the matter of the sale: the horse-trader who sells a blind horse as sound, sells a horse who suffers from a defect of *quality*. But all three agree in selling something that does not exist; they are all bound to restitution, for they have in their possession something that is not theirs, the money for which they have not given value.

The same holds true of a buyer who, by some strange accident, buys a real diamond at a ten-cent store for the usual dime; or who gets too much change from a cab-driver. In these cases the defect is not in the goods; it is on the other side of the contract, a defect in price. Of course restitution is strictly obligatory. It may happen that the seller of poor goods does so innocently; the butcher, for example, who sells corrupt meat thinking it is good has committed no sin, no deliberate injustice. Yet the thing is unjust; he has money that does not belong to him and it must be returned to its rightful owner.

The advance of science might easily confuse the issue here. Science has been able to produce a substitute that looks like butter, acts like butter and produces the effects of butter; then too there is the abundance of synthetic fruit flavors dispensed at soda fountains, flavors of such delicacy as to move chemists to choose the poetic name of "ester" for them. St. Thomas and the men of his time gave no thought to synthetic butter nor synthetic fruit flavors; but they gave much thought to synthetic gold and silver. St. Thomas' answer on the matter of the alchemist's gold and silver, an answer of common sense, still stands for any synthetic product. If science produces real butter, as it has produced real sugars and real alcohols, the product can be sold as real: the synthetic or natural character of its origin is unimportant, it has no interest in a pedigree or a coat-of-arms. What is important is that it have all the qualities of natural butter: that is, that it really be butter, not a substitute for butter.

Let us take the case of a business man with a stock of defective goods on hand. What will he do with them? In a responsible firm, the ordinary thing would be to sell the goods as defective and at a lower price, not only from considerations of justice, but as a protection for the reputation of the firm. But what if this particular business man has no established name to protect, and the defects in the goods are hidden,

i.e., they can be detected only by an expert: strict defects for instance as flaws in a diamond or faults in the barrel of a pistol? It is clear that he cannot demand the price he would for a perfect product. Is it enough for him to cut down the price and to say nothing? Hardly. The drop in price will take care of any damage that might otherwise have come to the buyer in the sale itself; but it will not take care of the gun later exploding in the buyer's face, nor of the explosion of wrath from his fiancée who happens to be a jeweler's daughter.

Lowering the price to a proportionate level is sufficient when the defects are evident, when they should be seen easily and quickly by an ordinary purchaser. Hidden defects, however, must be revealed. In fact there are times when even manifest defects must be explicitly pointed out; but this is quite accidental, a matter of protecting a particularly simple-minded buyer, such as the man who might have drowned on the lot he had just purchased if he had not been warned of the tide.

Business as such

We come now to an article of the *Summa* that is a ringing challenge to the modern world, for it is an article that questions the unquestionable. It demands that business itself give the password that will identify it as belonging to the army of acts properly human, the password of morality. How moral is business? How legitimate is trade for the sake of profit? Business is business, but does it need no other references than it can furnish for itself, can it stand on its own feet? Thomas' questions are a challenge, a challenge that comes as a surprise and brings a surprise with it; for business does not answer these questions too brilliantly.

To get at the heart of the question it is necessary to distinguish between trade for the necessities of life and trade for the sake of gain. Trade of the first type is undeniably praiseworthy in itself as serving the very ends of nature. This trade does not belong in the hands of private individuals but rather to those in charge of the domestic or social groups, to housekeepers and to governments; in other words, it is the proper act of those responsible for the necessities of life.

Trading for gain, which is business strictly so-called, i.e., buying for the sake of selling at a profit, has the type of face that is automatically cast in gangster roles. When business comes to the house of human acts, it must have its hat in hand, references ready, and perhaps even the company of a police officer to prove that it is not nearly so tough as it looks; as a matter of fact, it is not evil. But it has an air of baseness about it. It is ordered to earthly profit, is often accompanied by sins of speech and injustice, and frequently put to work to serve cupidity. To put the objections in plain language, let it be said that business has for its end the making of money; and this is a mere means, a mere tool for a man. Unless it is ordered further, to some such virtuous and necessary ends as to support a family, to the public good, to help the poor and so on, it has no justification in human affairs. When it is ordered to these further ends, it is no longer an end in itself but rather it is the price a man exacts for his labor.

Usury

Usually these extrinsic ends are the ends of the business man and because of them the ordinary profit of business can be justified; but there is one profit that defies justification, that is always and everywhere wrong, and that is the profit of the usurer. For quite a while after the break-up of Christian unity, the question of usury was soft-pedaled, receiving nothing like the constant attention it had during the middle and later middle ages. One might have suspected that the unclean thing had disappeared from the face of the earth; but of course it had not. Today more and more is being written on it, more and more questions being asked about it, serious, dangerous questions; for usury today is being pointed out by men who do not speak lightly as the power that makes modern wars possible, modern depressions universal and calamitous, and as the most serious threat to capitalistic civilization which it attacks in the disguise of credit.

At any rate, wherever usury is found it is wrong; and its evil is manifest. It is absurdly simple to understand that to charge a man twice for the same thing is always unjust; yet that is precisely what usury does, it sells the same thing twice. The trick is possible only when the thing sold or loaned is consumed in

its very first use, things like wine or sandwiches, or money. When we demand, over and above the return of the original sum of money loaned, an added amount for the use of the money, our act is the same as selling a man a glass of wine and then charging him for the privilege of drinking it.

If we keep this simple statement of usury in mind, it will not be difficult to understand the absolutely necessary distinction between usury and legitimate interest. The latter is charged, not for the mere use of the money as in usury, but on some extrinsic title; this doctrine of interest is not something new to Catholic theologians, there has been no softening of the condemnations of usury, for there has never been a question of the legitimacy of a charge on grounds extrinsic to the money itself. Among such extrinsic grounds for legitimate interest we might mention: positive damage caused to the creditor by making the loan; a special danger to the capital loaned, which justifies a man demanding payment for his risk; the cessation of profit proximately hoped for: or the legal premium (necessarily small) allowed to facilitate exchange.

These two, usury and legitimate interest must not be confused: nor must usury be allowed to masquerade as legitimate interest. For the one, usury, is evil and forbidden; the other is indifferent or even good and certainly permitted. The evil of the one is clear to reason and positively declared by the Church the other is permitted by all the theologians. The difference between the two seems, quite clearly, to be the difference between a loan's intrinsic and extrinsic title to a larger return. Thus, for instance, a loan for productive purposes has a certain claim to a larger return, that is to a share in the profits but by the same token a consequent loss should also be shared. On the other hand, a loan for unproductive purposes certainly seems to have no such title to a larger return. A demand for a larger return because of delayed payment does not seem unreasonable, for it is in the nature of a fine, where the original contract has not been kept, or because of increased loss as a result of the longer term of the loan. Stockholders who are really partners in a business are not guilty of injustice when they receive a dividend, for they share in the losses as well as in the gains of a business.

A contrast -- the wide embrace of justice: Nature of the potential parts of justice

We are not used to such a concentration on the anti-social vice of injustice: consequently the result of these last two chapters is a somewhat embarrassed discomfiture not unlike that of a student nurse at her first operation or a young priest's first call to a nasty accident. This is one of the difficulties faced by officials who must deal with injustice constantly. The anti-social character of the thing creates such a stifling, unwholesomely artificial atmosphere that these officials face a double danger: they may be increasingly uncomfortable in that atmosphere, irritated with an irritation that gradually rises to a climax of disgust, brutality and ruthless condemnation of the perpetrators of injustice or, acclimating themselves to that atmosphere, they may become as anti-social as those with whom they are dealing.

Perhaps a realization of this is at the bottom of St. Thomas' method of treating the virtues and the vices together, never dallying very long at any one vice; but rather giving us, side by side with that vice, the perfect respite had by examining a virtue. Here, coming to the end of this first treatise on justice itself and its opposite vice, he throws open the door to let in a gust of fresh air and to reveal to us the wide, inspiring country which comes under the sovereignty of justice.

Their number and name

You will probably have noticed, in our earlier treatment of justice, the three outstanding characteristics of that virtue: its regard for others, its note of equality and its note of debt. All the members of the family of justice bear prominently stamped on their very nature one absolutely universal family trait: all of these lesser virtues that come under justice deal with another. They are in some sense social, rather than personal, virtues. A glance at these virtues introduces us to the sources of the harmony, unity, smoothness and efficiency, the joy that has entered human life through man's existence in society. All these lesser parts of justice will fall short of that absolutely essential social virtue itself. Some will lack the note of equality; others that of debt. But all have essentially the happy end of bringing man to a fuller life by

giving him an integral part in a social body.

We shall see them all in detail, one by one. For the present we must be satisfied merely to name them. These potential parts of justice are: religion, piety, observance, truth, gratitude, vindication, friendship and liberality.

Two mistakes on petty injustice: Too small to matter

By way of summary of this chapter, we might point out that there are two mistakes to be noticed in this matter of petty injustice: one of under-estimation and the other of over-estimation. To those with a good grasp of the serious and important things of life, with a scale of values accurately balanced, the pettiness of this injustice is quite clear: but its very clarity may move them to dismiss these things as trifling, as they concentrate on the bigger, more important things. In this same vein, a man might shrink in horror from beating his wife, but have no qualms whatever of being niggardly with her; while as far as the stability of marriage and the peace of the home is concerned, this niggardliness may do more damage than an annual beating. These things are small; but precisely because they are so small, they can accumulate almost unnoticed until they are an overwhelming force, until they have undermined the structure of society. Then we are astonished at the catastrophe and, belatedly, search for a cause, a big cause, a cause as momentous as the damage that has been done. It will be a very human thing if we pick the wrong cause, or finding nothing proportionate, if we create a cause to satisfy our minds, while we go on blithely indulging in the petty injustice that is behind it all.

Too big for anything else to matter

The other mistake, not uncommon in our day, is made by those who have lost or inverted their scale of values. There are men and women today to whom lying, cheating, petty thievery, backbiting, mockery and so on are so revolting as to be unthinkable as a personal vice. Yet these same people are not seriously perturbed by such things as abortion, euthanasia, suicide. They strain at the gnat, while the camel slides down as easily as a sip of wine.

The conditions of life with others -- strength and largeness of soul Life of friendship with God and men

Both these mistakes are socially, as well as individually fatal. The absolute condition for our life with others is one of justice. There is no place in social life for either violence or pettiness. Certainly life with others seems to demand a strength and largeness of soul. There are no stingy saints; for life with God demands surrender, not concessions. In human friendship no selfish friends are true friends: selfishness knows only one loyalty. In domestic life, there is no marriage for long on a basis of self-defense, whether that defense be thrown up before a career, a "developing personality", freedom or such trifles as convenience, taste, relaxation or shape. And in society there is no social life for long without regard for others, without justice. For generosity, for surrender, for unselfishness, for justice it is demanded that we have the strength and largeness of soul to get out of ourselves, to give ourselves, to forget our point of view in seeing the world through the eyes of others, even through the eyes of God. We must not only see with the eyes of others, we must work for their good as well as for our own.

Domestic life

In the last chapter we saw the basic attack on man's rights in the great injustices, in the social insanity directed at the rights of man's person, his life, his integrity, his dignity, his freedom, against his property. In this chapter we have been examining the small, nagging attacks in the home of society; the kind of attack that completely usurps peace and harmony and eventually destroys society as nagging eventually destroys the home. This petty injustice is the injustice of a shrew of society. While it is effective in exploding peace, harmony and cooperation, it is yet so small as hardly to merit our notice let alone our determined opposition. Its pettiness, in other words, is one of its greatest dangers.

Full essence of anarchy

Consequently this petty injustice plays almost as important a part as violent injustice in bringing about the destruction of society, in accomplishing anarchy, in depriving man of his social head. These petty injustices are the contributions of the small souls, the sneak-thieves of society; violent injustices are the contributions of the pirates of society. Both work for the same end: the destruction of the social structure by denying in act and in word the rights of man, refusing him his fundamental rights on the one solid ground on which he can lay claim to them, on the ground of his humanity. Both work to the same end of self destruction, destroying their own rights by denying their own obligations which are at the root of those rights. Both work for an isolation, a solitary confinement of man they commit social suicide, but, unfortunately, social suicide is not a crime that can be committed alone. Those who destroy society pull it down upon their own heads, but it also comes down on the heads of all the thousands of innocent men and women who have been big enough and brave enough to make the adventure of life in society.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa - Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER X -- THE FULLNESS OF RELIGION
(Q. 81-87)

1. Subjection and order.
 2. Fullness of subjection
 - (a) involuntary subjection -- slavery.
 - (b) Voluntary subjection:
 - (1) To an inferior -- degradation.
 - (2) To a superior -- perfection.
 3. The subjection of religion:
 - (a) Grounds of resistance to this subjection.
 - (b) Justice of this subjection.
 4. The virtue of subjection -- religion:
 - (a) Its origins.
 - (b) Its nature and aims.
 - (c) Internal and external religion.
 - (d) Religion and "sanctity."
 5. The act of subjection -- devotion:
 - (a) Meaning of devotion.
 - (b) Its cause.
 - (c) Its effects.
 6. The voice of subjection -- prayer:
 - (a) Practicality of prayer.
 - (b) Prayers to God and to the saints.
 - (c) The perfect prayer.
 - (d) Subjects of prayer.
 - (e) Mode of prayer.
 - (f) Effects of prayer.
 7. Gestures of subjection
 - (a) Adoration.
 - (b) Sacrifice.
 8. Offerings of subjection:
 - (a) Oblations and first fruits.
 - (b) Tithes.
- Conclusion:
1. Condition for citizenship in the universe -- subjection:
 - (a) Of necessity.
 - (b) Of justice.
 2. Fullness of cosmic social life.
 3. Personal effects of religion.

CHAPTER X
THE FULLNESS OF RELIGION
(Q. 81-87)

IN ONE sense it might be said that the past few chapters of this book, insisting upon the necessity of justice, have labored the obvious. At least it is entirely obvious that for any common life men need peace; when they cannot find it at home they search for it in the neighborhood tavern or the distractions of a night-club -- a difference dictated not by taste but by finances; when they cannot find it in society, they flee from that society or destroy it. And a fundamental, though not sufficient, condition for peace is justice. St. Augustine's definition of peace as the "tranquillity of order" has made it forever clear that for common life men must have order, since they must have peace.

As a matter of fact, order is at the same time the fruit of intelligence and the first law of intelligence. When we have come upon a trace of order we can pocket our magnifying glass and light up our pipe with serene superiority; we have hit upon a clue of the first order, we know by this footprint of order that some intelligence has passed by this way. It is the one absolutely infallible sign of intelligence at work. The anthropologist, grubbing about in the ruins of lost civilizations with his peculiar zeal for the past and disregard of the present, hails as indisputable evidence of the presence of man a stone impressed with the note of order, a stone shaped as a tool. He even becomes excited about his discovery.

On the other hand, wherever we see intelligence working we can be sure that order will be stamped on its

work. However inept the workman, precisely because he is a human craftsman his work will have a note of order, for to work at all he must work with some degree of intelligence. Indeed, so true is this that men insist upon some mockery of order in that most disorderly of human acts, a sin.

Subjection and order

But order, the first fruit of intelligence and the first law of intelligence, comes high; the inevitable price that must be paid for it is subjection. On no other terms can it be had. No compromise can be made, no haggling will bring down the price, no substitute will do; if there is to be order, then there must be subjection. The order of the universe is the result of the working out of physical laws, itself an evidence of the interlocking subjection of creatures, one serving the other. It would be taking too much for granted, no doubt, to see in earthquakes, tornadoes, floods and blizzards the loud guffaws of physical nature at the naivete of the young people's neat division of spheres of influence and their solemn-eyed agreement to work out matrimony on a fifty-fifty basis. But at least physical nature has reason to guffaw. In the domestic group husband and wife are not rival rulers or cautious partners making sure of their share of the spoils; nor are they enemies attacking each other's independence. If they are any of these things, the order of the domestic group has ceased to exist, peace is on its way out and the marriage is destroyed before it has begun. The same is true of society, for if citizens are not subject to the government, i.e., if there is not the essential subjection demanded by order, then the social group has ceased to exist.

It is particularly unfortunate that today we think of subjection with a sigh of commiseration or regret; it is a price to be paid, but regretfully, with no more pretense of gaiety than we show to the installment collector. It seems to denote a loss of something integral to the dignity, the efficiency, the self-respect of man. It is an affront to our ideal of "being our own boss."

Fullness of subjection: involuntary subjection -- slavery.

Perhaps our resentment to the notion of subjection is due to some confusion of ideas. It is true, for instance, that a complete slave -- one who is being used by a master for the master's profit -- pays a high price of subjection for the order of the society in which he lives, too high a price. But that is because in his case the subjection is not a means to order but a violation of it. The slave has as much right to resentment as would a cow which has been bitten by a blade of grass it stooped to eat. A man's subjection, by his very nature, should be a moral subjection, a bowing to moral force, a subjection that leaves him free to lord it over the physical order; whereas here we have physical force subjecting this lord of the physical universe. It is tyranny and injustice, rather than orderly subjection.

Voluntary subjection: To an inferior -- degradation

It is also true that the libertine or the drunkard pays a high price of subjection. It is true that the city which is practically ruled by gangsters has also paid an enormous price of subjection. In both these cases the price paid has ended all struggle, giving an outward semblance of peace; but there is no inner peace, either in the individual or in the society. Rather this is the degradation of cowardly surrender; it is not order but chaos.

In our thinking we have too often lumped tyranny, degradation and true subjection together. It is a fatal error that tends to drive a man either to despair or to isolation. It is a mistake that should not have been made; a moment's thought indicates that subjection means to put something beneath another; the crucial thing is not to put the higher beneath the lower.

To a superior -- perfection

In other words, true subjection means that things are put precisely where they belong; by it creatures respond to the order of the divine plan of creation. When things are in their proper place, we have peace, progress, stability, the order that all nature seeks; in a word, we have perfection. The subject angels stand out as perfect in contrast to the rebellious devils; the just man in contrast to the murderer; the peaceful

citizen in contrast to the anarchist. In each of these cases the more perfect is the more subject. In the physical order, the least cell, properly subject and working in harmony with the rest of the body, is certainly more perfect than the cancerous cell which has turned dictator and subjected all others to its own growth. In the scholastic order, a science that has run wild and subjected philosophy to itself has gone far to destroy both itself and philosophy.

We can put this in another way by insisting that there is only one utterly independent Being, because there is only one First Cause. Anyone or anything else that attempts to play God makes a laughing-stock of itself, even though the audience be sympathetic. Everything else has a place in the harmony of the universe, a right place; that is, a place with something above it and something below it. Everything in the universe has an order to everything else, and that means subjection to higher things and the domination of lower things.

In the human order, however, we tend to resist this self-evident truth; perhaps because it is also self-evident that man is a master. We are apt to push that latter truth still further and make man the absolute master, a master of masters with no one above him and everything beneath him. This picture of man is as fetching as a flattering smile to an old man; but in reality it has none of the beauty of truth; it is in itself a lie, with all the ugliness and distortion of a twisted word.

The subjection of religion: Grounds of resistance to this subjection

But it is a lie that it is not too hard to understand, knowing human nature. If a man confuses subjection with tyranny and degradation it is not unreasonable of him to rebel against the thought of resigning himself to a regime of tyranny or degradation. Or again, in a world where man is so evidently master it is not too hard for an unthinking man to believe that he needs no help, that he is entirely self-sufficient. Nor is it hard, for a man who has others do his detailed thinking for him, to overlook the importance of subjection in his constant concentration on the importance of his mastery of others. It is, then, entirely understandable -- though dreadfully unfortunate -- that our age should look upon the virtue of religion, which is essentially a virtue of subjection, as a little distasteful, at best unimportant and entirely subjective, at worst a weakling's knuckling under to superior power.

Justice of this subjection

In the course of this chapter we shall see that subjection to God, the work of religion, is not a matter of sacrificing our self-respect, but of establishing it: it does not knock the hat off our heads and whip us to our knees as the tyrant passes, rather it moves us to bow our heads in a gracious recognition that can be given only by a master to the Master of all. It is not a subjective affair, a matter of taste; it is not a favor done to God. It is the recognition, in action, of an evident truth; it is an act of strict justice, giving God what belongs to Him. If the language is not too strong, we might say that religion does the honest thing, refusing to take from God what belongs to Him; it is a refusal to steal even from God. At least it is certainly true that the neglect or violation of religion brings with it all the chaotic effects of the anti-social vice of injustice.

We have a hint here of a truth that is astonishing to modern minds. For some time anthropologists have been examining moral codes in their relation to religion and religious things. At times they have apparently found moral codes that have no relation to religion and have no religious sanction enforcing them. Often, of course, these apparent discoveries have been corrected; for, as the anthropologist knows well, the primitives are no more eager to talk to strangers about their most sacred things than we are ourselves. But at other times continued investigation has failed to show a connection between morality and religion.

The point here is that such a discovery of a morality distinct from religion is quite possible. Religion is not the product of authority nor the radical explanation of morality, at least not on the natural plane. It flows from man's nature and is itself a command of natural law, not the foundation of natural law. A community with morality, a moral code, but devoid of religion, would be a community where the natural law was

operating but not perfectly, where one of the commands of natural law had dropped out of sight.

If we look at religion in this way, unadorned, in the simple garments of fundamental truth, it is not hard to understand the hold its beauty has taken on the heart of man. For this is not the glamor of a moment or the attraction of a pose; but the full, free, graceful beauty of nature at its best.

The virtue of subjection -- religion

Religion sees God as man's first and last principle, as the source of all that man is and the goal to which all his desires and actions go; and religion pays the tribute of respect and subjection to the infinite perfection of the First Cause, to the infinite goodness of the Last End. The human heart revolves around these two great centers as planets around a sun. Man has to have a beginning, he must have a goal: a goal and a beginning far above himself. Religion is a tribute to the truth of things as they are.

The beauty and solemnity of religion are no more than the rich trappings in which men have clothed the honor and respect given to the Beginning and End of all things. To expect words to express these things is to impose a burden too heavy for the strongest and richest of words; it is no wonder men have not been content to stop with words. But even the best man has to offer, the beauty of words and the grace of action, the most exuberant ritual and pontifical robing are no more than clumsy instruments by which the unutterable things of a man's heart are added to the beauty of divine creation. At the same time they are instruments by which yet more unutterable things are awakened in the heart of a man. Yet however high the heart soar above its sublimest expression, it still pays inadequate tribute to the excellence of the God-head.

Its origins

Men, of course, realized this insufficiency from the beginning. They did their best to overcome it by consecrating to religion some acts whose very nature is expressive of the highest reverence because they are so completely acts of subjection: the acts of adoration, of sacrifice and of devotion. And because they felt so keenly the inadequacy of even these sublime acts, men bent all of their minds, their imaginations, their energy to a yet greater refinement of the splendor of these acts. Man's life is permeated with religion because it is shot through and through with its beginning and its goal; man's life is saturated with religion because it is replete with God.

In a word, religion is a thing of justice, giving God what is His due as first and last cause. The payment is not adequate, for God is always infinite and we are always finite; but we pay that debt as far as we are able. The debt is a joyful one. Its payment does not take something from a man, rather it perfects the debtor in proportion to the payment of the debt. God's claims are not the claims of a usurer, pressing a man down further and further into the slavery of helplessness. His claims are like the claims of love, bringing out the best in a man, lifting him out of himself, putting even superior things in his power.

Its nature and aims

You will notice that the object of religion is not God Himself but the debt owed to God; that is, it is not a theological but a moral virtue. It has to do with another, no less another than God; and it has to do with the payment of a debt, with the actions of man. In other words it is a part of justice, a virtue perfecting the will of man in order that he might give to God what is His due. It is, indeed, the highest of the moral virtues, because, of them all, it comes closest to what is best in man's life -- his end or goal, God.

The coins of religion which we jingle in our pocket as we go to pay our debt to God, have two sides; on the one is the protestation of reverence for the excellence of God, on the other the subjection of the creature who is man. We cannot split the coin to hand over the reverence and retain the subjection; if we try it we mutilate the coin, not only making it worthless but subjecting ourselves to punishment. We cannot have one side of a coin without the other; they are two sides of the same thing. More concretely, we cannot worship God without subjecting ourselves.

That means that we cannot worship God without perfecting ourselves, for the subjection of religion is the subjection to a superior. It puts man in his right place in the universe; not too high, not too low, but just where he belongs. It is not the subjection of a slave to tyranny, nor of a weakling to degradation; it is the subjection of perfection, the foundation of order and the source of peace, stability and progress in human life.

The peculiar advantage of good books is not that they challenge our stubbornness, nor that they furnish us with material to lord it over lesser men; though they have served both purposes. Rather they are severe masters in whose company a man can grow, can perfect himself; they are towering mountains into which we can fly from the deadly flat landscape of discussions on the weather or rehashes of newspaper accounts. They are higher places; superior to the level of our minds and consequently a means of perfection. When we have learned all the book can teach us, we have reached its level and must look to something higher if our perfection is to continue. The rule is universal; it is not by contact with inferiors but by subjection to superiors that men and things reach their perfection. The mongrel pet of the lowliest of men improves from even such a contact with such a reason.

Internal and external religion

It is strictly true then that every act of religion is ordered to the perfection of man as well as to the worship of God, for every act of religion subjects man to the one superior to whom he owes subjection. Obviously the man suffering from St. Vitus dance is not rebelling against God by his queer antics in Church. The external acts of religion are decidedly secondary, though tremendously important; but it is the internal act that is at the heart of religion, for man is subject to God by his mind and his heart. The intellect and will of man, again as the superiors, take the body by the hand and lead it through its carefully rehearsed curtsy, in harmony with the universal law of divine Providence that the inferior reach its end through the ministrations of the superior. The hypocrite, who runs through the external motions of religion because it is good business or fine exercise, is not performing religious acts at all; these are dead, ghastly things. Their soul, the internal acts of intellect and will, is missing.

In other words, the immediate purpose of external acts of religion is to serve as a sign of the internal acts and as a means to arouse those internal acts of religion. We know what the agony in Christ's mind did to His body in the Garden of Gethsemane; we know what the solemn tones of a funeral march will do to a gay laugh or a happy thought. The body and soul of man are much too closely united to escape a constant reaction of one upon the other. It is inevitable that the internal subjection to God in man express itself in external acts. If the external acts of religion are sincerely performed, they must have an arousing effect on the internal faculties of a man. It is hard to feel self-sufficient kneeling down, but easy to acknowledge dependence; it is not easy to wipe the thought of Christ from our minds as we make the sign of the cross, but very easy to see His suffering face. It makes a tremendous difference within the heart of a man whether he folds his hands in a toy Gothic arch or clenches them into murderous fists.

In fact the external acts of religion have made so much of an impression on men that some insisted that religion be confined to external acts. This idea is carried to its logical conclusion in "religious revivals" where a process of mechanical hypnotism is used to overwhelm the intellect and will of man by his external acts; the result is to reduce religion to an orgy of animal reaction. Other men, who saw clearly the supremacy of the internal acts of religion, insisted that they were the only religious acts; all externals were to be promptly done away with and we were to serve God in spirit alone. That was the strangely inhuman doctrine of the early reformers, a doctrine condemned from the earliest days of the Church.

Both mistakes were made because men forgot, or were displeased with, the fact that they were men. Perhaps this was only a part of that general discontent that moves a man to envy a boy, a blonde to envy a brunette and vice versa; at least it is a decided contrariness for a man to insist upon mere animality, or pure angelism, and refuse to consider the outstanding reality of his own humanity. We are men, not angels, not animals; we know much more of the chill of a dying fire than of the chill of failing charity; the vividness of the color red makes a much stronger impression upon us than the light of divine truth; but we

cannot be satisfied to shiver by a dying fire or stand paralyzed by the attraction of the color red. We are a combination of the material and the spiritual; our progress to God must start from the material, the sensible, but it cannot stop there.

The quick prayer we dash off on a cold night before we leap into bed or the creaking genuflection we execute on a rainy fall morning are not done for God in the sense that breakfast is cooked for the children. God is full of glory; we can give Him nothing. This humanly flavored and shortened honor that we give God is given for our sake, that we might find out perfection.

Religion and "sanctity."

There is a general recognition of this great truth in the attitude of men to the things and persons consecrated to religion. Churches, tabernacles, vessels of the divine service, vestments, priests and nuns all, because of their dedication to divine worship, are sacred. In the eyes of men these things are holy. We insist they are holy places, sacred vessels, consecrated virgins and so on; by dedication to the payment of the race's debt of religion to God, they have taken on a personal perfection.

There is a modern confession of a tragic loss of this great truth in the violation of these sacred things. It is not only the brutality that inevitably accompanies the violation of churches, the degradation of the sacred vessels and the attacks upon priests and nuns that make them such shocking things. They are attacks, not only on God, but on the highest goal of men, the goal of perfection; and they are more easily forgiven by God than they are by men. They are a blaring note of disorder and chaos ringing through the human world, a note of uncompromising hatred that fills the souls of men with terror; but they also awaken a desperate resistance in the name, not only of God, but of our very humanity.

Not all religious men are holy, but certainly all holy men are religious. And the unholy religious men are unholy precisely because they are so devastatingly irreligious in their private lives. The application of the mind to God implied in religion has sanctity's air of fresh cleanliness about it, a cleanliness that comes from avoiding the muck beneath man and scaling the heights above him. It is the cheerful cleanliness of Alpine snow; not the frosting on a cake, but the striking garment that covers but does not conceal the massive strength and stability beneath it. A man cannot fix himself to the immovable Mover, the first and last Principle of life, without himself partaking of that divine solidity.

Both sanctity and religion order men's minds and acts to God; but sanctity is a much more universal thing. Religion is a humble maid, busy with the household duties of a servant in God's house of the universe, giving the Master His rightful service. Sanctity involves a total surrender far surpassing mere service, a surrender which can be dictated only by generous love.

The act of subjection -- devotion: Meaning of devotion.

As a virtue, a good habit, religion has its proper acts. Its first and fundamental act, the act of devotion, has been more grossly misunderstood and calumniated in our own times than has religion itself. We often speak of devotion in connection with religion as though it were something slightly sticky, sentimental, embarrassing because slightly overdone like a laugh that is too loud or a tear that is too ready. Actually we come much closer to the real sense of the word when we use it in connection with activities other than religious: the devotion of a man to his work, of an officer to an army, of a statesman to a state, or, in more intimate surroundings, of a wife to a sick husband.

In all these usages, devotion means the will to do readily what concerns the object of that devotion -- the work, the state, the army or the sick husband. Devotion here has the aura of consecration and the bustle of promptness about it. The same is true of devotion in religion; it is the will to do readily what concerns the service, the worship, of God. If, in our heartless scientific fashion, we try to isolate the wife's devotion to put it under a microscope, we find that we have set ourselves too difficult a task. That devotion is always wrapped up in something else, like taking the husband's temperature, feeding, consoling or cheering him. That is the way of devotion; it always wraps itself around other things. It becomes, in a word, the mode of

other acts. So we say a man prays devoutly, hears Mass devoutly, and so on; he does not turn out pages of devotion and clip them together to be sent to a publisher.

In both the secular and the religious order of things devotion is fundamental and universal. That of the wife springs from her love and at the same time builds up, feeds that love. This may be true also in religion; devotion may flow from the deep spring of charity. But even without the forceful backing of charity, devotion is the first, the universal act of religion. Just as intelligence is the mode of all human action, or strength the mode of an elephant's action, or silliness the mode of an idiot's action, so devotion must be the mode of all religious actions. If there is no ready willingness upon which to draw there can be no acts of religion; its very first act has not yet been produced.

Its cause

Devotion, then, is important. If we couple this importance with the fact that the cause of devotion, from our side, is meditation and contemplation, we see something of the wisdom of spiritual writers' insistence on regular, daily meditation. At the same time we are brought to a shocking realization of the danger involved in our modern neglect of meditation for the layman. It may sound harsh, but it is unequivocally true, that his danger is the danger attached to being too busy to think of God. The thought of God and the love that follows it are precisely what meditation and contemplation mean. That thought of God is the cause of devotion must be obvious when we remember that devotion is an act of the will (proceeding from religion, a virtue of the will) and consequently must be preceded by an act of the intellect. In this matter too the heart cannot run before the head.

Just what thought causes this devotion? What mysteries pondered over by our minds can give us that ready willingness to do what concerns the worship of God? St. Thomas points out two great classes of truth which are immediate causes of devotion; one positive, the other negative. On the positive side there are the beauties of divine goodness in itself and in its benefits to us; on the negative side, our side, there are the defects and insufficiencies that drive home our need of God and uproot the great impediment to devotion which is presumption. God made it easier for us by sending His Son. To our stumbling minds and fickle hearts the tangible world has an immediate and powerful appeal; ready to our hand we have the humanity of Christ with its infinite material for our prayerful consideration. We cannot think very often of Christ without seeing the magnificence of His divinity bursting through into His human acts, filling us with awe, love and loyalty to the Son of Mary. Nor can we follow His tired feet through Palestine without becoming acutely conscious of the insufficiencies, the defects of our nature.

Its effects

The goodness of God and the defects of man are so obvious that we can easily take them for granted. Yet that is a fatal thing to do: for it means that for all practical purposes we take them as unimportant, as deserving of little attention. More concretely, it means that we deprive ourselves of much joy, cheating ourselves of the primary effect of devotion; the joy awakened by humble visions of God's goodness and our high hopes, of service that answers the heart's deepest wishes to repay something of the magnificent divine benefits and to reach for high perfection. We are not yet in heaven, so with this joy of devotion there is a dash of tears to wash our eyes clear for the long vistas of eternity, tears that this goodness is not yet ours, while these defects are so truly our own. Yet the very tears are themselves a joy for the promises they emphasize.

The voice of subjection -- prayer

Some of the most beautiful pictures that haunt the hearts of men are pictures of prayer. There is, for instance, the picture of Christ praying in tears at the grave of Lazarus, the man He loved; or Christ lonely in the shadows of Gethsemane, praying the longer for His agony. There is the picture of Mary interrupted at her prayer by the angel announcing to her that she is to be the Mother of God. More personal pictures of prayer are scattered through our lives. Memory shows us prayer brightening the beginnings of life as we stumbled through those first prayers, terribly serious, anxious eyes on the loved face that would mirror the

perfection of the lesson and lovingly distort it. We see prayers sweetening the end of life in the old woman's weary fingers thumbing her rosary. Again and again all through our lives, prayer is a shrill bugle call marking the crises.

Men of our time have not missed the beauty of the face of prayer; but that beauty has often blinded men to the solid character behind that beautiful face. Prayer has been embraced as emotional, and rejected as too purely emotional; it has been praised as a kind of super-poetry, and rejected as nothing but poetry. It has been called a weakness, a cowardice, something unworthy of God and man; a case of God playing favorites, or of men trying to load the dice with which they play the game of life.

But prayer is none of these things. Surely its beauty is not a shallow, superficial thing but the profound beauty of justice and truth. In no other religious act, short of devotion, does man more thoroughly subject himself to God; that is, in no other act does man so strictly tell the truth about himself as in prayer. Every prayer (using the term now as Thomas does in its restricted sense of petition, exclusive of meditation and contemplation) is a statement of our needs; and the very multiplication of our requests is an emphasizing of the fact that it is God Who is the source of all good. Every prayer is a step closer to God, for how can we ask if we do not approach Him at least with the steps of our mind? Precisely because it is by raising our minds to God that we pray, in prayer we offer God the supreme service, a service not of external things, not of corporal things, but of the highest good we have-our mind.

Practicality of prayer

It is important that we stress the intellectual essence of prayer. We do not ask things with our appetites; prayer is not primarily emotional because it is primarily a request. Prayer is an act of practical intellect, a step towards getting something done; inevitably it is practical people, not dreamers, who busy themselves with prayer -- women, children and saints as opposed to university professors and artists. Prayer is practical in the same tangible way as is scattering fertilizer on a field in early spring. This is not evidence of cowardice or weakness in the farmer; rather it is evidence of intelligence, and of some not inconsiderable resources. So prayer is not to be considered in terms of fawning on God, of coaxing Him to play favorites, of wheedling Him into a reluctant change of mind. We are closer to the truth when we see prayer taking a place beside the lightning stroke, the blow of a strong man, or the sweep of an artist's brush. It, too, is a secondary cause. Just as these others do not change Providence but rather fulfill it, so also does prayer; for Providence not only disposes what effects shall follow in the world, but also from what causes these effects shall follow. Prayer is among those things that have been knighted, admitted to the noble order of causes to share something of the causality of God. Our prayer fulfills the condition laid down by divine wisdom for the production of this particular effect.

All this could be put briefly in the one truth that prayer does not change God but it does change men. It lengthens the arms of a man to enable him to reach out beyond time, space, through the portal of death even into the fields of the future. If we add to all this the tremendous power for the suppliant's own good that is given to his prayer by Christ's blood shed upon Calvary, we see the supreme practicality of prayer.

Prayers to God and to the saints

Since religion is nothing more than man's acknowledgment of his dependence upon God, a substitute god will not do; a man simply cannot make a religion of his business, his family, his race or his nation for none of these things are his first cause or his final goal. If he tries it he is cutting the heart out of his life and inserting a synthetic substitute, blithely expecting life to go on as full-blooded as ever. Naturally then prayer, as an act of religion, is to God; as a petition every prayer is a prayer to God, for after all our prayers must be ordered ultimately to grace and glory, two gifts that can come only from the divine treasury.

Here the reformers stopped, recoiling in horror from prayer to the saints. As a matter of fact so do we recoil from praying to the saints as we pray to God. But we remember that Peter asked his question at the

Last Supper through the beloved disciple who leaned on the breast of the Master; we too ask things of God through our friends who are one with us in charity and one with God in the vision of His divine essence. We do not expect the saints to *do* but to *ask* for us.

Of course we pray to the saints; they love us for giving them a chance to express their love in being our messengers, and we love them for the patient ears and willing feet they lend us. Imagine Catholic life without the millions of prayers that have been said to Our Lady! One of the nice things about getting to heaven before the end of the world would be the enjoyment of the quiet chuckles of the saints as our childish requests come in. Every day the Christmas lists of the very small children of God are pouring in; it would be a grumpy saint indeed who could keep his face straight as he scanned the items: lots of snow for Thanksgiving, a warm sun next week for grandma's visit (she gets rheumatism so), a little dulling for the edge of my tongue, something to be done about my husband's grouches, and don't let Johnny fail again in his examination.

There must be quite a similarity to the child's Christmas list for we can licitly pray for whatever we can licitly desire; that would include all the good things of the world that do not hold us back from God. In a sense, we are turned loose in a toyland with limitless funds! We can, indeed we should, pray not only for ourselves but for others; for all those, in fact, whom we should love, even for our enemies. Prayer is the perfection of beneficence, not its weakest gesture. We make the mistake of thinking ourselves helpless, sighing that we can only pray; if the case gets really desperate we might enlist the help of the nuns. As a matter of fact, prayer is the biggest thing we can do, for prayer is one act of ours that is stripped of limitations. It shares immediately in the omnipotence of God.

During their short life with Christ the apostles made many foolish requests. They asked if they might sit on His right hand in His kingdom; if they might call down fire upon the city that did not receive them; they asked for information on the limits of forgiveness, whether it was seven times; and when they saw the sick man, they asked to be told the secret cause of his illness who had sinned, he or his parents. But all these foolish questions were compensated for by that one childishly simple demand they made of Infinite Wisdom: "Lord, teach us to pray."

The perfect prayer

As a result of that request and the graciousness of the Son of Mary we have the absolutely perfect prayer. It is a prayer of utter simplicity, familiar to every Catholic child yet inexhaustible to the deepest minds. It is the prayer we know as the "Our Father."

We pray to God, not that we might change His will, bending Him this way or that, but that we might cooperate in His causality and that we might awaken in ourselves a confidence in Him. That confidence is awakened particularly by our consideration of His love for us; so we begin with words most heavily laden with love -- "Our Father." Our confidence is strengthened by a consideration of His excellence; so we continue "Who art in heaven." To pray perfectly we must not only ask for things that can rightly be desired, but also in the order in which they should be desired, putting first things first. Our first desire rightly falls on the end; so we say with Christ: "Hallowed be Thy name," wishing God glory, and "Thy kingdom come," asking that we may share that glory, attain that end.

Next come the means to the end: first the direct means, then those that remove impediments to the end. Looking to the first we say: "Thy will be done," for we merit heaven by obedience; "give us this day our daily bread," that is, both the corporal and spiritual help necessary to the work of merit. As for the second, well, there are just three things that might block our road to heaven: sin, temptation to which we succumb, and the penalties brought on human nature by the sin of our first parents. And so we pray: "forgive us our trespasses," that is, remove the impediment of sin that bars us from heaven; "lead us not into temptation," not that we might escape temptation but that we may not succumb to it; "deliver us from evil," that is, from the sicknesses, misfortunes, fatigue and bitterness that have come into life by original sin.

Subjects of prayer

Even without this perfect prayer dictated by God Himself, the Catholic tot saying her brief evening prayers before tumbling into bed reaches heights to which the rest of the universe can make no pretense. For prayer is an act of reason; it involves knowledge of the relation of means to end, the long vision of Providence outstripping time and space. Only a being possessed of intellect and dependent on a superior can possibly pray. God has, or rather is, intelligence; but there is no one to whom He can pray, indeed, no possible need of His praying. The brutes have a generous mead of dependence, but they have no reason; while the damned have intelligence and a superior but their motive power, the will, is so fixed in evil by their deliberate choice of a wrong final end that they are paralyzed as far as prayer is concerned. Only men, angels, the saints in purgatory and heaven can enjoy the sublime privilege and effective causality of prayer. We shall have time enough later on to investigate the prayers of heaven. On earth the prayers of men are public or private, with this great difference: public prayer must always be vocal. It is said in the name of the whole people; and since it is by word that men communicate, it is by word that the whole people can know that this communal debt to God is being paid. In private prayer the vocal element is a help rather than a necessity. It is a means to arouse internal devotion as well as a psychological consequence of intense inner fervor; and it is always a pleasing gesture of the completeness of our subjection to God, the subjection of our body as well as of our soul.

Mode of prayer

Vocal prayer cannot, of course, be merely a lip exercise, an indication of dramatic possibilities, or sheer unintelligent mumbling and still claim title to the name prayer. But how much of our mind must be put into prayer? Or, putting the same question in another form, how much damage is done to prayer by involuntary distractions? Certainly they do not affect the merit of the prayer; that is taken care of by the first intention with which we started the prayer. Nor do they detract from the effectiveness, the powers of entreaty, of the prayer. The one effect of prayer they do lessen or even destroy is the spiritual refreshment and consolation which normally come from prayer. In other words, we cheat ourselves when we do nothing about these distractions, cheat ourselves of a consolation and refreshment that might easily be ours. On the other hand, we cheat ourselves yet more if we give up prayer in disgust because of these distractions. The essential fruits of prayer, merit and impetration, are still within our grasp; this consolation, like devotion, comes from meditation, that is from thought and, for that, attention is essential.

It was Christ's command that we pray always; but evidently a waitress who pours prayers into a patron's ear as she pours coffee into his cup can easily be a nuisance. We simply cannot always be praying; there are other things that have to get done, things that occupy all of our minds. What we can do, and what Christ demanded, is to keep our prayer continual in its cause. At the root of prayer, since prayer must be ordered to grace and glory, there is the warm flame of love seeping into the very bones of every action, the desire of charity; that must never fail.

St. Thomas agrees that if five minutes of vocal prayer makes us growl at the children and abuse our wife, we should have stopped at four minutes. External prayer is precisely to arouse internal fervor, not to ruin our disposition or wreck our homes. And what is true of the individual and his external prayers holds also for public prayers and the devotion of the whole community; public prayers are not designed to embitter the community or induce a communal pain in the back, but rather to increase the fervor of the whole people.

Effects of prayer

Our evaluation of our prayers is too often faulty. Because, in spite of our prayers, it did rain on Sunday, we decide the prayers were useless; and that means that we are overlooking one of the most valuable effects of prayer, the effect of merit. No prayer said in the state of grace, that is, proceeding from charity, is useless. It is an act of virtue, the virtue of religion, proceeding from charity and accompanied by humility and faith; the faith that God can give us this request and the humility implicit in our recognition of the need of His help. And there is no act of virtue, thanks to the suffering of Christ and the power of

charity, that does not merit grace and glory. Prayer may give us spiritual refreshment, it can and frequently does give us the particular good for which we pray; but it always gives us the most important thing in life, a title to glory, to the goal of life.

It is strictly true then that no prayer is left unanswered. But in another sense, prayer is infallible. The prayer of the man in the state of grace always obtains what it seeks if the just man asks piously and perseveringly for the things necessary for his own salvation. That absolute statement admits of no exception; but it does demand explanation.

Obviously if he is to have a claim in justice to the thing he seeks, the man must be just, that is he must have grace which is the principle of merit in strict justice. He asks for himself because, while he can remove impediments from his own soul, he cannot plunge an arm into his neighbor's soul and pull up impediments by the handful. No matter what his influence in heaven, his prayers will not get him things that are adverse to his own salvation; he may ask for a serpent and, while he may get bread, he most certainly has not a chance of getting the serpent. Indeed even indifferent things, since they can be abused by man and contribute to his perdition, may or may not be obtained; his request must be for necessary things if it is to have the note of infallibility. He cannot shout at God like an officer to his orderly; he must ask piously, that is, from the necessary virtues of charity, religion, humility and faith. Nor can he deliver an ultimatum, giving God a last chance to grant his request; he must ask perseveringly.

Christ Himself guaranteed the efficacy of this prayer when He said: "Ask and you shall receive." But notice that Our Lord did not say "within twenty-four hours;" a man obtains what he prays for at precisely the time when he should receive it. The effect of this efficacious prayer said here and now may not be felt by us, or given to us, for twenty or thirty years. There is a time, not hidden from the wisdom of God, when it will be best for us to receive that favor; that is the time when the goodness of God will see to its safe delivery.

All this is not a denial of the effects of a just man's prayers for someone else; it is merely a statement of the conditions essential for infallible prayer. A man praying for others can merit even the things necessary for salvation for that person; but his merit is not in strict justice but rather by the benevolent friendship he enjoys with God.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the confirmed sinner prefers to sit to one side and watch other at prayer is a kind of spiritual anemia. Sin does make us puny; above all it robs us of much of our power of prayer. A sinner, by his prayers, cannot merit grace or glory for himself or others either on grounds of friendship or of strict justice: He has neither the principle of strict merit (grace) nor of friendship (charity). Beyond all doubt the prayer of the sinner which proceeds from his very crime, like the prayer of the assassin that he find his victim quickly and get home to his family, is not heard by the mercy of God. Now and then the things so desperately sought by the sinner are given him by God by way of punishment; for there is no more serious punishment in this life than to be delivered up to sinful desires. But God does, from His extreme mercy, very often grant the prayer of the sinner which humbly, piously, perseveringly seeks a good thing.

However the sinner is not bound hand and foot and thrown into exterior darkness; not yet at least. In thinking of the sinner's prayers we must never forget the causality of prayer in a concentration on its merit. The fact that a sinner cannot merit does not mean that his prayer is useless; his prayer too is a fulfillment of divine Providence, a placing of a disposition necessary for the effects decreed by Providence. Without his prayer these effects will never be produced; so that the prayer of the worst of sinners is never a futile gesture, rather it is always a powerful cause,

Gestures of subjection: Adoration

As we come to the next of religion's acts, the act of adoration, it is necessary to insist again that religion pays its debts to God and to none other than God. For just as Catholic prayer has been badly misunderstood, so also has Catholic adoration. In recent centuries, at least, there has been no more

constant calumny against the Church than that it adores Mary and the saints. The indignation aroused in those to whom this appeared true was understandable; but the strange intellectual twilight that gave an appearance of truth to such a charge is hard to understand, even harder to excuse. The accusation has its roots in an ignorance both of Catholicism and of adoration.

The generic sense of the Latin word *adoratio* (adoration) is to give honor because of excellence or perfection; its specific sense varies according to the excellences it honors: thus the honor given to divine excellence is *latria*, the honor given the excellence of Mary is *hyperdulia*, the honor given to the excellence of the saints is called *dulia*. But in English only the first specific sense of the word "adoration" has been preserved, that is we speak of adoration only in connection with the honor given to divine excellence, with *latria*. The whole miserable accusation, then, has come about through reading the English word into the Latin texts. Certainly no Catholic sees the infinite excellences of divinity in the Maid of Nazareth; to her and the saints we pay an honor which in English is called *veneration*. God alone do we adore, principally with an internal adoration of heart and mind, secondarily with an external adoration, which is a means of increasing or a result of that inner adoration.

Obviously we can give that adoration, internal or external, anywhere. We do not have to go to church to adore God; but for the fittingness of the thing, we have places set aside for external adoration, consecrated places whose very consecration is calculated to arouse in us the inner acts of religion. Then too, this consecration is itself a mark of respect for the holy things that take place within the walls of the consecrated place,

In this chapter we have seen devotion, prayer and adoration as acts that of their very nature do the work of religion, that is, they protest the excellence of God and the subjection of man. We come now to the last of these properly religious acts, the act of sacrifice.

Sacrifice

The striking universality of sacrifice in the history of men of all races and of all times naturally leads us to seek its source deep in the nature of man. The search is not a long or complicated one. Natural reason will not tell man that he is perfect, entirely self-sufficient, self-explanatory, in need of no help and no direction. That type of myth is received for the perversion affected by effete civilization. Natural reason, with the frankness to be expected from nature, says quite plainly that man has and needs a superior and that, in accord with the rest of nature, he must give that superior a proper subjection and honor; but, like all else in the universe, he must do this in a way proper to his human nature.

That is exactly what man does in sacrifice, for the expression by a sensible sign of the honor and subjection due the Supreme Being is in entire accord with man's natural practice of freighting sensible words with spiritual significance, making of them miniatures of his own happy blend of the spiritual and the material. To put the thing in more exact terminology we may define sacrifice as the offering, by a legitimate minister, of a sensible thing through its change or immolation, to God alone in testimony of His supreme dominion. It is a gesture made only to God for it is an expression of that inner immolation of soul that is man's principal sacrifice and that can be offered only to God. God's supreme dominion is sensibly expressed by the immolation or change of the victim; and the sacrifice is offered by a legitimate minister because it is a public act, therefore an act to be placed by an official representing the community itself.

St. Thomas beautifully describes this legitimate minister of the New Law when he calls him "the mediator between God and the people." The priest brings divine truth, the sacraments, Christ Himself, in other words, the things of God to the people; he brings the things of the people -- prayers, sacrifices, offerings and so on -- to God. His, in a word, is the work of Christ; he is another Christ.

Offerings of subjection: Oblations and first fruits

The offerings or oblations of the people, then, pass through his hands on their way to God, to the Church, to the poor. Perhaps the offerings are to be consumed as in sacrifice, or to endure as in chalices, vestments

and so on; they may be for the support of the Church, the priests themselves, or the poor. But whatever their form and immediate purpose, they pass through this clearing house where things divine and human are exchanged.

In the Old Law specific offerings were laid out in the law itself; it was not whim, but a precept cognizant of her poverty that moved Mary to offer two turtle-doves as the price of redemption for her Redeemer Son. In the New Law, under which we live, the offerings are determined by the need of the Church and the custom of the country. In this country, for instance, the offertory collection taken up each Sunday at Mass is the continuation of the custom in the early Church of offering the precise materials for the Holy Sacrifice. These offerings, while voluntary, are also obligatory; after all the externals of worship are obligatory and they are not furnished by legerdemain or a constant series of miracles.

Sacrifice is one type of offering, Another is that of first fruits. In the Old Law this was literally the offering of the first fruits of the earth, in recognition of the divine benevolence which gave those fruits. In the New Law it is regulated, again, by the custom of the country; and the practice has a deep hold on the hearts of Catholics. So much so that even in an industrial civilization, where the very words "first fruits" have a bucolic sound, Catholics will be found making some offering, for instance, from their first week's salary at a new job; it is as though they saw, even in the unappealing atmosphere of a smoky factory, the always startling blossom of a first fruit of divine benevolence.

Tithes

Quite distinct from sacrifice and first fruits is the offering known as tithes. They are not directly given to God but are for the support of the priest. They are of natural obligation, since sacrifice itself is a matter of natural law and a legitimate minister is necessary if there is to be sacrifice offered. The legitimate minister of religion does, in the religious order, what the policeman, the fireman or the government officials do in the civil order. It would be unreasonable of us to expect the fireman, between fires, to procure a tin cup and squat beside the blind man on the corner, begging for enough to keep himself alive. He should not have to hold a cup; his hands should be free to take care of fires and thus protect the community. The priest should have his hands free for spiritual matters, and should have them full tending to those matters; he does not have an interval between fires. He should not be forced to busy himself with temporal things, even such essential things as the very necessities of life; his time is too precious and the matter with which he deals is much too important to men for it to be squandered on anything of lesser worth.

Condition for citizenship in the universe -- subjection of necessity.

The fundamental truth at the basis of this whole chapter has been that the condition for citizenship in the universe is subjection. There is nothing in this world that exists for itself; the one universal characteristic of all created things is their interlocking union with everything else in the universe. No individual exists alone; no species exists alone; no planet exists alone: nothing exists in the world for itself alone. Everything reaches its fullest perfection in its relation to that which is above it, in its external end; a lower species is ordered to a higher species, all species to the universe and the universe to God Himself. In all this maze of variety of life and creatures, we find a persistent note of order; and that order is impossible without subjection.

Subjection of justice

For the rest of the world beneath man, that subjection is a matter of physical law; it admits of no rebellion, leaves room for no merit, allows for no mistake. But that cannot be so for man; it would make him a freak in the universe, the one creature in the world not governed according to its proper nature. For man's nature is a moral nature; his subjection cannot be physical but moral, that is, he must give a subjection of justice for citizenship in the universe. Man is not a freak: he belongs in the universe, fits in there harmoniously. Yet he would be no less a freak if he were in no way subject than he would be if his subjection were to be dictated by physical laws. The complete absence of subjection would make him a lonely, isolated creature, insufficient in himself yet having no superior to whom he could appeal for help; at the same time he would

be an insult to the universe, for his place at the peak of that universe would be a statement of its incompleteness, a mockery of the mirrored perfection it shows, a grotesque goal for the striving of the cosmic forces of the universe.

Fullness of cosmic social life

Man is a master: but he is a master living under authority. He can say to some things "do this" and they do it; "go this way" and they go this way: for he too has things under him. He also has something above him; he himself must obey a superior authority if he is to escape the dreary picture of loneliness at the peak of the barren mountains of the universe. Like all the rest of nature, he is made for perfection; and that perfection is to be attained only through subjection to a superior. It is by that subjection that he becomes a law-abiding member of the universe; and his cosmic life can become full only when, with the rest of nature, he subjects himself to his first and last principle. In his case, since it must be moral to be in harmony with his nature, his subjection is accomplished by a recognition of the rights of God; and thereby he establishes a social life with God.

Personal effects of religion

It is by this social life that man obtains help and support for his deficiencies, that his arms are lengthened to reach out to the ends of the universe and beyond. Alone in the universe, man stands a pitiful, bedraggled figure; but taking his proper place in the social life of that universe, he is indeed an image of God.

He establishes social peace with God by his practice of religion, giving to God the things that belong to Him; and by that fact he establishes his own claim to rights, recognizing his own obligations. His life has a solidity and security about it, such as comes from all social life, but much more profound. He is released from the despair and anxiety as to the origin and meaning of life, for he looks steadily at the beginning of all life and at its end. The personal effects of religion, effects with which we ourselves are thoroughly familiar, are parallel to the effects of individual life in a political group. However, it is necessary to notice here that all that has been said about religion in this chapter is common to all religion in the merely natural order. The supernatural religion of Christ has added notes over and above those of natural religion; it is, after all, supernatural. But besides those distinctly supernatural notes -- supernatural helps, supernatural instruments, supernatural goals -- the religion of Christ has brought men an inviolable peace as a support for and understanding of suffering, the wide sweep of charity, the courage of humility and the spirit of poverty or scorn for immersion in the material world.

But even in the natural order, religion gives man, personally, a serenity, a strength and a consolation that come from diving a social life instead of an isolated individual life. It gives him help and at the same time the ability to help others. It gives him courage in defeat; it gives wisdom as a result of his long view from beginning to end; it gives him mercy in the knowledge of his own need for mercy; and it gives him a much keener sense of justice in his constant payment of his debt of justice to the source of all right. In a word, religion puts man in his right place in the universe.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. III	Next
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CHAPTER XI -- THE BARRENNESS OF IRRELIGION (Q. 88-100)

(OUTLINE)

1. The barren human heart and the full human heart.
 2. Minimum fullness of religion -- a subjection of justice.
 3. The perfection of fullness and the perfection of subjection:
 - (a) Of will -- vows:
 - (1) Their nature.
 - (2) Their utility.
 - (3) Their matter.
 - (b) Of word -- oaths:
 - (1) Their nature and liceity.
 - (2) Their triple condition
 - (3) Their obligation.
 - (c) Of power -- adjuration.
 4. Language of the full heart -- praise and song.
 5. Barrenness in human life -- irreligion.
 6. The barrenness of superstition:
 - (a) In the worship of the true God.
 - (b) In the worship of false god -- a subjection of degradation:
 - (1) Idolatry.
 - (2) Divination.
 - (3) Observances.
 7. Barrenness of religious doubt and presumption: tempting God.
 8. Barrenness of contempt:
 - (a) Perjury.
 - (b) Sacrilege.
 - (c) Simony.
 9. The barrenness of atheism.
- Conclusion:
1. Twentieth century barrenness:
 - (a) A negative statement -- modern evaluation of religion.
 - (b) A positive statement -- twentieth century subjection:
 - (1) Of intellect to falsehood -- rejection of a First Cause.
 - (2) Of life to modern idols.
 2. A test of perfection -- the crises of life (birth, manhood, marriage, sickness, death).
 3. The price of perfection.

CHAPTER XI --THE BARRENNESS OF IRRELIGION (Q. 88-100)

IN these days of travel by air it is possible to see miles of farms in one glance. Even though the soil of those farms be exactly the same, it is rare to see any two of absolutely equal perfection; and it is not at all rare to come upon startling contrasts of diligence and negligence side by side. One farm will be neat, rich, well cared for and prosperous; while its neighbor is a wild, unkempt, down at the heel failure. The thing should not be surprising; it is, after all, just one illustration of the constant individual variety among men. If their domains were as naked to the eye, we would see the same differences, the same startling contrasts in the kitchens of housewives, the offices of business men, the books of bankers and the purses of women.

The barren human heart and the full human heart

If human hearts could be as easily scanned, the view would be no different. Every human being starts life with the rich soil of the human heart, that is, with no more than tremendous possibilities, like a plot of ground that has no claim to be called a garden other than the possibilities of its soil. It remains for the individual to determine whether that heart shall produce all the beauties of which it is capable, or whether its growth will be no more than scrubby, scattered vegetation. The individual determines whether his heart will be full or barren; whether or not it will attain the perfection for which it exists.

Minimum fullness of religion -- a subjection of justice

In our last chapter we saw that the price of perfection was subjection to a superior; in the human order, subjection to the divine Superior Who is the first cause and the last end. Religion, the virtue which pays that tribute of honor and subjection, does no more than fulfill the demands of justice; yet in that minimum tribute to God lies man's fundamental order, peace, stability and progress. It did not take extraordinary powers of intellect for men to conclude that, if this minimum subjection did so much for the perfection of man, still further subjection would mean still further perfection. And then the tremendous truth, the secret of sanctity, became clear to the mind of man: perfection is in perfect proportion to man's subjection to his first and last cause. But to go beyond the demands of justice, beyond the demands of nature and the supernatural law-giver, man is forced to resort to a promise. Man can order, at least to some little extent, the actions of others in his behalf without a promise: he can command inferiors; he can pray to superiors. But for what he will do for others man must order, must oblige himself; he must impose an obligation on himself and that he can do only by a promise. Such promises, made to God, are called vows.

The perfection of fullness and the perfection of subjection: Of will -- vows

Of course there are many promises that are not vows. The first fervor of Lent may rush us hastily into promises of abstaining from candy or cigarettes, promises to hear Mass daily and so on. These are certainly not vows; they are good resolutions, proposals of sacrifices we are going to try to make, and none too optimistically at that. A vow is a much more serious matter. It is a promise by which we intend to oblige ourselves, to oblige ourselves under sin.

It was this notion of added obligation that made the vows so distasteful to Luther and the Reformers. To them vows were harmful, pernicious, immoral because, by reason of this added obligation, they injured human liberty; they fenced in the activity of man even more closely than did the law. These early Reformers saw clearly that the vows were chains binding a man; what they did not see was that the vows were golden chains, forged by the deliberate will of man, and worn joyfully as a divine trinket. The paradox of chains worn that man might be more free was utterly beyond them because they had lost sight of the fundamental truth that there can be no greater perfection for man than in binding himself to God; that there is no greater freedom than in being subject to a superior; in other words, that man reaches his greatest stature in bowing down in the name of religion.

Their nature

The vows do bind a man, and they bind him to God. Their violation is a sin of faithlessness against One Who has the greatest claim on our loyalty. The vows bind a man to God because they are promises to Him; and by this very fact they are acts of religion by which a man subjects himself to God.

The modern world's view of religious vows is comprehensively expressed in a great sigh of pity. They involve so much sacrifice! How much these men and women are giving up by their religious vows! And if people pity us long enough, there is danger that we shall begin to pity ourselves. This view of the vows has never been the Catholic view. To us the religious has been knighted by God, he has received a divine accolade. If the modern view does begin to color the Catholic view, it is because we have, disastrously, begun to absorb an outlook on life that is totally foreign to the doctrine of Christ. But such a view cannot be the Catholic view, not only because of its opposition to Christ, but because of the fact that it is always the result of muddled thinking or of no thinking at all.

Their utility

After all, what we give to God is not like the food we give to the tramp at the back-door; it is not something we lose and God gains. It is not useful to God; but rather everything given to God is useful to us. This is the other side of the coin of religion: on one side we have the honor and reverence to God; on the other, inseparably and inevitably, we have the supreme utility to men. And this again is the vast difference between promises made to men and promises made to God.

When one of our fellows approaches us to the tune of, "will you do something for me?", we know we are in for it. When God comes asking our promise we can take our treasures out of the strong-box and repack them more tightly to make room for the added treasure that is coming to us as a result of our promise to God. In more concrete terms, the obvious result, for us, of any vow whatsoever, is to give our will a solidity, a firmness in precisely the things it is best for us to do; the things that contribute most to our perfection.

A vow confers a kind of consecration. It fixes our will firmly to good as the oil on a priest's hands fixes those hands to the body of God. It dedicates, not merely the stroke of a brush, the breath of a prayer, or the strong, firm step of a man, but the very faculties by which these acts are produced. It is not a thing of a moment, an enthusiastic cheer which leaves only an echo; it is an enduring, penetrating consecration far superior to the dedication of a medieval knight to holy warfare. A vow has a magic touch that makes a king out of a beggar; for the vows reach out to the whole field of man's activity, and whatever they touch they drape in the gold cloth of religion.

Their matter

A consecrated act is more praiseworthy than its fellow which proceeds from the good intention of a moment. For this reason it is a higher thing to do a good act from a vow, because the vow consecrates to God the act and the faculty from which it came. To God, mind you; for unless it is directed to God it is not an act of religion, and so cannot be a vow. A promise made to commit a murder or a theft obviously cannot be offered to God; indeed, even the good things we promise to the saints and Our Lady, unless we understand them to be further directed to God, are not vows but mere promises. But everything that is good and voluntary can be promised to God, can put on the royal robes of religion furnished by a vow.

A cautious man might decide to keep even his small change, and yet make a pretense of generosity by making tomorrow's sunrise or the beating of his heart the subject matter of his vows. But God is not to be fooled. We must give Him what is at our disposal; our gift must be voluntary. And even among those voluntary things, we cannot sacrifice a greater good in order to vow a lesser one; for a vow is really a deeper inclination of the subjection of religion. In other words, a vow is a gracious gesture to God; it must be most pleasing to Him and most freely given by us.

On God's side there is no end to graciousness. We run to the protections of divinity like chicks to the mysteriously dark safety of the hen's wings. By vows we bring to God our stumbling wills to stiffen them up, inviting Him into the intimacy of our souls. By oaths we ask Him to come into our external life with others, to bolster up our means of communication with men by giving our words a ring of absolute certitude.

Of word -- oaths: Their nature and liceity

A philosopher who, in a fit of piety, took an oath to the certitude of first principles would make a fool of himself. An oath calls upon God to witness the truth of what we are saying; it is to be used then only when witness is necessary, when we are dealing with things not necessarily true. Our oath-taking is always a matter of contingent affairs. Experience has shown that men do lie; again, experience has shown us the definite limitations of our minds. We cannot know the future, the secrets of human hearts; nor can we even know absent things with absolute certitude. Still we must talk about these things, deal with them, on a secure basis. So we call in the help of One Who cannot deceive, from Whom nothing is hidden, and Who cannot be deceived.

By its very nature an oath contains a gesture of reverence to God; on that score alone it pertains to religion. Yet that one tenuous claim gives it a part in the consecration of religion and makes unnecessary oath-taking illicit. Reverence is not the fruit of light-headedness or carelessness, nor is the danger of perjury a fit companion for the holy band of religious acts. The fact that we run so quickly and easily to God for the help we need does not mean that we take that help lightly. The awfulness of divine majesty forbids our tumbling into that presence in an angry uproar to have the King of Kings settle all our childish

affairs. We go about this particular act of religion with caution born of the reverence due to God; our prayers may be an unceasing cascade falling in ever-changing beauty from our lips, but our oaths must be the last desperate S.O.S.

That is, after all, the precise purpose of an oath, to rescue us from the defects that lead one man to disbelieve another. It is no more desired in itself than the captain's call for help with the ship sinking beneath his feet; it is only the necessity of our defects that make it at all desirable. Children, then, are forbidden to take oaths because, lacking the use of reason, they cannot give due reverence to God; those who have already perjured themselves are barred from further oaths because, again, there is the serious danger of lack of reverence for God. Moreover, says St. Thomas, ecclesiastics ordinarily should not take oaths; not because of the danger of irreverence, but because of the implied distrust. Ordinarily their words will not need confirmation. However, in some necessity, in a question of great utility or for the confirmation of some spiritual good, they too may take oaths. Thomas, with his deep reverence for divinity, frowns on oath-taking on great feast-days, especially when these oaths have to do with temporal things; but even here, his common sense would not permit him to put up an insurmountable barrier. If there is some grave necessity, the oath may be taken whatever the day.

Their triple condition

Even where there is no danger of irreverence or inutility, there are three essential conditions to be fulfilled for the liceity of an oath. It must not be taken carelessly, as we might toss off a remark about the weather; it must be taken with judgment. It must be done justly, that is, not in confirmation of some future, evil deed. And it must be taken with truth.

Their obligation

Men have been right in considering oath-taking as serious business. It is serious and it carries with it a heavy obligation. That obligation is first of all to truth, falling either on the act of swearing itself (in the matter of past or present things), or on the thing sworn to (in the case of future things). Thus, if a beggar has sworn to produce a million dollars within a week, his oath has lacked judgment; obviously he stands no chance of consummating the future act which he has confirmed by his oath. If a millionaire swears to produce a million dollars in the same length of time and within that week loses all his money, evidently he is not obliged to produce the million dollars, not held to make come true what he has sworn to. If a political candidate has sworn to murder his rival, he is not only not obliged to make that oath come true, he is absolutely forbidden to do so. When we call on God to help us, we cannot treat Him as a scullery maid, a simpleton or a devil; we must always treat Him as God. It is precisely that aura of divinity that has given an oath its sacred character.

Of power -- adjuration

A man who walks with God goes much farther than the man who walks alone. That is true, not only of the man himself, but of all of his actions: of his sacrifice, his love, his bravery, even his power. It is evident that a man can firmly order his own dealings with others by promises; when those promises are linked with divinity they have the solemn sacredness of oaths and vows. It is equally evident that a man can order his dealings with others -- superiors or subjects -- by prayers and by commands. If either of these are linked to divinity or some holy thing, they too take on an added drive, the drive of adjuration.

With respect to inferiors or subjects, adjuration means an added obligation; to equals, an added inducement; to superiors, an added plea. It is really a stepping-up of the power of man through the subjection of that power to the things of God. By that super-charged power, the acts of man surge out of the limits of the human field into the wide fields of nature and into the halls of hell. By adjuration, i.e., by the power of the divine name, men can compel the devils themselves, resisting their attacks and safeguarding men. It is true that trees or mountains do not jump to attention at the command of a man; they are deaf to his puny voice. Nevertheless a fish did bring Peter the tax money, a mountain did move

for Gregory and the birds came to listen to the sermons of Francis. For the irrational world does respond to this divine power in the hands of men; adjuration's added plea to God can induce the touch of the Master to which these irrational things respond directly, as the arrow responds to the touch of the archer.

Great power is too often unsettling to men; the faintest promise of a power greater than that of other men is too often enough to coax a man into ridiculous and tragic mistakes. Such a mistake has been the appeal to the devil for help and knowledge, a gesture of friendship and dependence that is always both a degradation and a tyranny. The long wisdom of experience gathered by the Church, as well as the divine wisdom granted to her for the guidance of men, point out that the devil is a very good person to avoid. When we send out our invitations, we make very sure there is no chance of them being delivered by mistake to a Satanic address; for this wisdom has seeped deeply into Catholic hearts, making them avoid what even looks like a friendly smile toward the devil. In fact, even when our hostility is evident, when we are advancing to the attack openly by publicly compelling him to obey, we must carefully follow the rigid restrictions laid down by the Church. We cannot play with the devil, he plays too roughly for us; we cannot be broad-minded about him, he is too clever for us; we cannot be friendly toward him for he hates us. What we must do, in all common sense, is keep as far away from him as possible.

Language of the full heart -- praise and song

In the last chapter, and so far in this chapter, we have fixed our gaze steadily on the double work of religion: the work of honoring God and perfecting man. Now it is a fact that we cannot fill the human heart and expect a man to keep still about it. He will whistle, hum, sing, shout, or, at the very least, he will talk. He may talk as unceasingly as a young father, making a lovable nuisance of himself; but he will talk.

Psychologically speaking, then, religion must have a language; it must have an outlet for the fullness of heart it brings to man. It is true that, looking at the First Cause and Last End of all things, seeing the ineffable, totally incomprehensible goodness and beauty of that Supreme Being, man is at a loss for words; and he must always be. Such a spectacle paralyzes speech; it is too much for the human mind. But the world about us, or the world within us, gives us that divine beauty diluted to a point where we can drink it in; and then inevitably we must at least talk. We must publish the praises of this supreme goodness and this supreme beauty.

In the world of men, every spoken word is in the nature of a revelation. It puts aside the veil of our hearts and allows men, angels and devils to peer into the sanctuary that only God and ourselves enter freely. Every man in the world has something to tell others, some reason for speech, even though he does not add to the wisdom of the world; for he has something that no one else can know in any other way but by his words. He has a heart of his own. Our speech with God and with men have totally different ends. Our praise of God is not to be likened to the slap on the back and the word of commendation given the office boy by way of spurring him on. Our praise of God is to give expression to the fullness within us; to awaken yet greater inner devotion and to stir the sluggish hearts of others to something of the same intensity. It is distinctly not for the benefit of God.

If song or chant accomplishes these ends, it is most useful in the praise of God; and so men have found it, for almost universally song or chant has been associated with the worship of God. There is the obvious danger of making a theatre of the church, using a song, not for worship, but for show, amusement, pleasure. Such songs are distractions; they defeat the ends of religion, not lifting men's hearts to God but rather binding them to earth.

Barrenness in human life -- irreligion

The picture of human life insisted on by religion is one of light, of order, of peace; a full-hearted exultation. Religion insists on man's perfection because it insists that man take his proper place in the universe. The rich soil of the human heart is cultivated to its utmost by religion; it is metamorphosed into a luxuriously beautiful garden. On the contrary, irreligion and superstition work on other principles and to other goals. Fundamentally, they put man in the wrong place in the universe; instantly the harmony of the

universe and of man's life is disrupted by a flat, tasteless note -- the note of disorder. By them the rich possibilities of human life are perverted, stunted or even destroyed. Even the richest soil can stand just so much abuse. Our growing American deserts are vague images of the rank growth of neglect or the weary stretches of sterile landscape that are spreading in the hearts of men and women today, like a fire licking its hungry way across a dry prairie. The human heart cannot be full if it is not subject. It can be wholly empty if it is subject to the wrong thing; and that is precisely the work of superstition and irreligion, to release man from subjection that he might be sold into degradation and tyranny.

The barrenness of superstition: In the worship of the true God

It is a mistake to suppose that superstition deals only with false gods and their mysterious powers. Just as a man can speak words of love with hate in his heart or be overwhelmed with sorrow while he maintains the smile on his face, so he can be superstitiously irreverent in the very gestures of religion made to the true God. I have seen a renegade, who had not been inside a church for twenty years, kneel down outside a church and piously touch his forehead to the sidewalk twenty times. He was, of course, flatly and openly superstitious; his religion was an exclusive concentration on externals, insisting that these are the essentials of divine worship. The results of these superstitions are usually weird, though not often as weird as the antics of the Holy Rollers; they are sometimes comic, as is the lusty bellowing of a burglar at his annual camp meeting: but they are always disastrous, for defect in the worship of God is inseparable from defect in the perfection of man.

In the worship of false god -- a subjection of degradation: Idolatry

Principally, however, superstition is engaged in paying divine honors to false gods. Our history is a torn, tattered book with most of the first pages missing; but the comparatively short span covered by what pages still remain shows us a variety of false gods that is a diabolic burlesque of divine attributes. Every creature is a footprint of God and God is not far from anyone of us, but rather intimately within us; and men have made the grotesque mistake of saluting the footprint as the Person who made that print. They have found gods in the plant world, in the animal world, in the human world, in the diabolic world -- yes even in that fragile artificial world produced by the skillful hands of men.

To look back over the barren wastes of that superstition is even more disheartening, more terrifying than to search the ruins of a city for the victims of war. It helps little to realize that behind this desolation was the hate of the devil, with its cynical eagerness to work wonders through the idols of men; for we know well what a great part man's own ignorance and disordered appetites played in substituting the superficial beauty or power of the creature for the supreme beauty and power of the Creator. The children born of idolatry were worthy of such parents as ignorance and disordered affection murder, mutilation, sex perversions have all been put forth in the name of reverence and honor for divinity. In fact, St. Thomas says, there is no type of sin that idolatry does not induce or give occasion for.

Divination.

Men blundering about in this murk of sin, degradation and tyranny were uneasy, terribly uneasy. In lieu of the Catholic's trust in the providence of a heavenly Father, with its assurance of help and infinitely wise guidance, these victims of superstition had only the bitter bread of fear as sustenance for the future. They were tempted to resolve their fears by forging yet heavier chains by calling in the demons through the practice of divination. Sometimes this invocation of evil spirits was explicit, a total surrender to evil; at others, the devils were implicitly invoked in the study of the disposition or movement of other creatures for the prediction of future contingent things, a practice that made the flight of birds or the drift of clouds momentous things in the life of a man. Or again, this implicit invocation was contained in some action seriously put forth as a means of discovering the occult.

In twentieth century America we have all types of superstition still flourishing. The devil is invoked explicitly in the trance of a medium; implicitly in the astrologer's charts and study of the movements of

stars or in the deadly serious practices of drawing lots, casting dice and so on as a means of determining future things. All of these are superstition, for all attribute to creatures what belongs to God alone, namely, a knowledge of future things which cannot be known in their causes. As in the time of Christ, men today are seeking signs, signs that are certainly not given by God; signs that can have significance only if they are the work of the demon.

If we take into account the limitations of diabolic knowledge, and the goal of diabolic hate, all this is evidently a silly, fruitless business. The mind and will of man is a sanctuary to be entered freely by God and man himself, but inviolable to the devil. Moreover, the devil is ceaselessly active, not because of his love for men but because of his hatred for God and everything that belongs to God, particularly for the friends of God. How naive we are to expect favors from an enemy who cannot possibly forget! That things wonderful to our weak minds are sometimes made known through these means only makes the practice that much more dangerous; for then we are disposed to believe these predictions when they do deal with things that can be known only to God or when our enemy, the devil, deliberately lies. We simply cannot afford to associate with the devil, depending on our own powers; we are out of our class intellectually and we shall always be fooled.

The devil might, were he so disposed, make a better job of forecasting the weather than does the official weather forecaster; with his superior intellect, he should be a keener student of natural causes. But very few of the superstitious besiege satanic headquarters with desperate demands for weather charts. The fundamental fault that runs through all divination is an examination of things, not as causes, but as signs. It is not an attempt to gauge the natural powers of these things and their consequent effects; that is an intelligent procedure and divination is far from intelligent.

Observances

As if divination were not irrational enough, men went a step further in demanding that signs work as causes and produce effects to which they had no relation. Muttered formulas, esoteric scrawls, tokens such as a rabbit's foot or a lion's tooth were expected to produce knowledge or health, or to unveil the future. Much of this superstitious practice -- which Thomas calls "observances", and which also goes by the name of magic -- has come down to our time and is actually taken seriously by men and women of this scientific age. Its very irrationality makes it difficult to understand how it could persist; perhaps because attacking the irrational by reason is so much like spearing a dream with a pitchfork. Evidently a rabbit's foot does very good work in its own line -- the transportation of a rabbit. But if it should win a horse race, it is going entirely outside the sphere outlined by nature for the foot of a rabbit; it is not producing this effect through any natural ability or natural power. Rather this effect must be traced to coincidence or to something far above the power of a rabbit, that is, to the power of the devil himself.

No one who has known the agony of tired ankles expects a rabbit's foot to carry the weight of a stallion very far. Since they do believe in the magic power of this token, the very magic upon which they depend is no less than an agreement or contract entered into with the demon; a dangerous, devastating and futile contract for a man. Such a contract might bring some results; for instance, the devil might do something by way of help through his superior knowledge if he were lovingly seeking the good of man -- which he is not. But certainly the devil can no more pour knowledge into a man's mind or unveil the future than can a squalling infant. Only God has entry into the mind of man, and only to God is the future present.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, a clear distinction must be made between the futile dependence on mere signs and the use of medals, relics and so on, by the Church. In the latter case these signs are used from confidence in God or the saints, not for the signs themselves. When we make novenas, the nine first Fridays, tridua, or say five or fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, we are not playing a numbers game; we do not expect extraordinary results from the number nine, three, five or fifteen. We hope for these results from God and the saints to whom these things are directed; the number itself is a test and proof of our sincerity, our perseverance, or sometimes it is itself a charmingly significant gesture of reverence to a divine mystery.

A journey through the barren country of superstition is disagreeable. It leaves a sense of uncleanness, of foul darkness, of unhealthy mystery like that which comes as one stands by the Dead Sea in the short twilight, that is no more than a muttered threat which precedes the blow of night, and looks at the bare, tortured rocks that surround that lifeless sink. But at least superstition insists that reverence is due to a superior, even though it makes a bad job of reverence or a poor choice of a superior. Where the reverence given by religion in the name of justice is denied to God we have the sin of irreligion.

Barrenness of religious doubt and presumption: tempting God

The first of these sins was exemplified, time and again, by the atheist Ingersoll when he pulled out his watch and dared God, if He could, to strike him dead within five minutes. In the same unholy spirit the soldiers blindfolded Christ, struck Him and demanded that He prophesy who it was that struck Him. These men were putting God to the test; they were doubting the divine qualities of God, for we do not test that of which we are certain. These were explicit temptations of God, acts of open irreverence; normally, God in His mercy ignores these petty annoyances of men, giving them a little more time to puncture the balloon of their pride.

The devil tried to coax Christ into another sin of irreligion, when he suggested that Christ throw Himself down from the heights of the temple in the assurance that God would protect Him. The evil one was playing on our human tendency to exaggerate our own importance, the smiling face we turn to presumptuous thoughts. But, you will remember, Christ did no plunging; He came down from the temple as men should come down, step by step. Paul did not jump off the wall of Damascus expecting God to lower him slowly, safely, even gracefully to the ground; he was let down in a basket, presumably by a couple of very strong men. There is, then, absolutely no justification for the expectations of the student who prays hard to pass an examination but does not bother to study. We are not being pious, rather we are tempting God, when we expect a few ejaculations to take the place of a regard for traffic lights.

In these cases men spurn the ordinary, secondary causes by which things are normally accomplished and, without necessity or utility, they throw themselves directly upon divine action. They put God to the test through presumption; the failure in the examination and the broken bones are rightly put down to the individual. It is strictly true that God helps those who help themselves. Our very ability to help ourselves is one of the great human prerogatives, a participation in the causality of God Himself that marks us off from the world of driven things. In these sins, there is contained just as much, or more, contempt for man and man's powers as there is doubt of God.

Barrenness of contempt: Perjury

We go a long step beyond doubt and flagrantly violate God's rights when, instead of the humble gesture of reverence, we give Him the gnarl of contempt implied in every act of perjury. The perjurer takes it for granted that either God does not know the truth or that He is ready to connive with evil and confirm a lie. The perjurer, then, is not only a liar, he is an irreligious liar who tries to involve God in the mesh of his falsehood. He is a social threat; he not only perverts the means by which men communicate with each other, he undermines the solid support men depend on for certitude and security in the crucial moments of society's existence. He makes a desert not only of his own life but, to the best of his ability, of the lives of those with whom he lives: his own life by the contempt he gives to God; the lives of his fellows by corrupting the society in which they live.

Sacrilege

Less directly but no less certainly contemptuous of God is a sin that is becoming a commonplace in the twentieth century -- the sin of sacrilege. It is a cowardly, helpless thing, like beating the maids of a man's household through timid hatred of the master himself. Sacrilege attacks holy things, the things that have taken on a divine character by their dedication to God. The particular sacrilege may be accomplished by injuring, insulting or outraging persons dedicated to God, as has happened so frequently in the history of

nuns. It may be a somewhat lesser sacrilege of violating holy places, such as the use of a church for a stable; it may be the desecration of holy things such as vestments, chalices, images of the saints. But the peak of sacrilege is reached when a man uses the very implements by which divine life is possible to him, as tools to dig his way into hell; when he violates the Sacraments, particularly the Sacrament of Christ's own body. The sacrileges which involve physical violence bear the common mark of contempt and spite; they have all the mean destructiveness of helpless anger. God is not destroyed; his religion goes on; nuns continue to scorn the world; nothing is consumed but the rebel who tried to throw a thunderbolt at God.

Simony

Sacrilege is a brutish, clumsy, violent lout compared to the sleekly urbane deadliness of simony. It goes about its work quietly; it does not bomb a church, it corrodes it with the relentless stealth of rust feasting on steel. Simony not only destroys religion in its victim, it throws the filthy cloak of greed around the virgin beauty of holy things, making them repulsive to men. Its barrenness is eventually a sterility of a whole community.

The value of spiritual things cannot be measured in material terms; for the spiritual is always infinitely above the world of matter. Yet simony puts these things up for sale and haggles over their price with all the callousness of a white-slaver. Greed blinds a man to such an extent that he can see nothing, not even the things of God, except in terms of money. In a very true sense the perpetrator of simony is a thief; he sells what he does not own but of which he is merely the minister. He is flatly violating the instruction of His master, "freely have you received, freely give;" instead he jingles the thirty pieces of silver and goes gaily about the business of hanging himself.

The barrenness of atheism

In St. Thomas' treatment of injustice done to God by sins against religion he makes no mention of atheism. As often happens in St. Thomas, what he does not say is as important as what he says; in this case the very omission has profound significance. On the face of it, there is a direct opposition between religion and atheism. One gives reverence and subjection to the first and last Cause, while the other denies and ignores a first and last Cause. But look a little deeper and you will see that Thomas' omission of atheism was due to his hard common sense, the common sense that kept him from chasing figments of the imagination when there were things to get done.

As a matter of fact, there cannot be atheism. Man may vociferously deny that he had any first cause, though his very existence reveals the falseness of his claim; but he cannot even deny that he has a last cause, a final end, without paralyzing action and reducing it to the spasmodic twitchings of madness. Man must go somewhere, for his life is a motion and every act is a step toward a goal. Man's goal is his god -- an odd god, perhaps, represented by the figures on a bank statement, the sweetness of pleasure, the exhilaration of power, the oblivion of a party, a state, a nation, or even man's own puny self -- whatever it is that the modern atheist aims at, to that thing he pays the tribute of religion. That is his false god; more hideous, more ludicrous, more pathetic, more calamitous than the ugly idol of a savage.

Twentieth century barrenness: A negative statement -- modern evaluation of religion

The abstract too often leaves us cold. But there is no need of keeping to the abstract in treating of the barrenness of irreligion. A glance at modern opinions of the nature of religion will give us a quick and accurate view of the barren spaces within the human souls of this twentieth century; a vivid, concrete summary of this chapter.

According to some men today religion was born of ignorance, consists in the worship of the mysterious as superior, and is destined to disappear with the advent of knowledge. That is, religion is unworthy of an intelligent man; or, at best, it is an object of amiable toleration because of the practical good it may accomplish among unlearned and simple souls. To other men, religion is a manifestation of fear, cowardice, a desire for escape. It is a perpetuation of the protections of childhood and flight from the

realities of life; it pushes a solution of the questions of life farther and farther away, even into a distant, future life. In a word, religion is unworthy of a brave man. Still others see religion as a sop for failure, an excuse for lack of accomplishment and drive, the opiate of the downtrodden keeping them satisfied with the unsatisfying things of life. A thing, that is, unworthy of a successful man.

Or, again, religion is described as an emotional outburst, satisfying the side of man's nature that escapes knowledge. It is a matter of feeling, of religious sense, of religious experience. Consequently it is as varied and independent as the emotions of each individual; it is strictly personal. At the other extreme is the school which today looks upon religion as a substitute for intellect or a rival of it. Religious intuition reaches the truth which reason falsifies. Ultimately this means that man is not a rational but a purely emotional animal; his guide is not his reason but his feeling, even though that feeling be called religious.

A positive statement -- twentieth century subjection: Of intellect to falsehood -- rejection of a First Cause

All this has been a negative statement of modern barrenness. The positive statement is no more encouraging, a statement that is readily had by examining that to which men subject themselves today. There is an almost universal denial of a first cause among contemporary American philosophers; translated, that means that man has subjected his intellect, not to God, but to the falsehood of a self-explanatory world, to a falsehood that the existence of the smallest of things effectively refutes.

Subjection of life to modern idols

If we look at the whole life of man, rather than at his intellect alone, we see that the men of our century have linked arms with the men of all ages in subjecting themselves to something; and they have embraced almost everything that has been offered by the ages in the way of a false god. We too have our modern idols, modern only in that they wear twentieth-century clothes: wealth, success, political prestige, party or race supremacy, even pure selfishness. There have been some men in every age who subjected themselves to false gods in pursuing false goals; which is to say, that in every age some men have subjected themselves to things beneath them and consequently have condemned themselves to degradation and tyranny. Our age is no exception.

A test of perfection -- the crises of life (birth, manhood, marriage, sickness, death)

If it is true that barrenness is spreading in the human heart of today, that is, if it is true that man's perfection consists in his subjection to the true God whereas men of today are subjecting themselves to false gods, then this lack of perfection should show up in the lives of modern men. But does it? Well the natural place to look for an exhibition of perfection or a manifestation of its defects would be in the crises of human life. How do we meet those crises? Do we meet them strongly, as an evidence of perfection; or do we meet them with weakness, cowardice, surrender?

There is no need to develop this thought. Let us just mention the modern attitude toward such crises of human life as its inception. Are we meeting the crises of birth or exhausting ingenuity in trying to escape it? How about the crisis of manhood, when an individual comes to an age which demands that he face his own responsibilities, where he is his own master with his own rights and his own obligations? Are we admitting those obligations, embracing those responsibilities or are we trying to flee from them even at the cost of denying our humanity? And the crisis of marriage -- are we meeting it squarely or are we leaving doors open, like cautious burglars, that we may escape from it at any moment? Do we face the crisis of sickness or do we hide it away in institutions, pushing it out of our minds while we rush into a whirl of pleasure to drown its least hint? The crisis of death? What is it to us today except the ultimate in despair, the end of all things; not to be met, but to be avoided as far as possible, as long as possible, at any cost -- indeed to be escaped by denying life itself in asserting that only change exists.

The price of perfection

Paradoxical as it may seem, it remains true that man is perfect in exact proportion to the subjection he gives his superiors, to that subjection given the Supreme Being Who is the first cause and last end of every creature. This truth is buried so deeply in man's heart that, however much he may reject God, he will still insist upon subjecting himself to something, to someone, because of that profound realization that only in subjection can he come to perfection. Religion, we have seen, is a matter of strict justice; it merely gives God His due. And we cannot give God anything without perfecting ourselves. There are two sides to the coin of religion: on one side is the worship of God; on the other, the perfection of man. The two are inseparable. As the worship of God is neglected the perfection of man decays; as man perfects himself, so also must he perfect the worship of God. There is no other recipe for perfection than that of subjection, for it is always true that he that will lose his life will save it, and he that will save his life will lose it. It is only by giving that life utterly to God that it becomes solidly our own.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XII -- SOCIETY'S DEBTOR (Q. 100-110)

1. Social debts as links to a principle.
 2. Social debt as obligations to one's self:
 - (a) As a member of society.
 - (b) As dependent from a principle.
 3. Subjection to principles a condition of perfection.
 4. Subjection to the first principle -- religion.
 5. Subjection to secondary principles:
 - (a) To parents and country -- piety.
 - (b) To superiors -- observance.
 - (c) To superior persons -- dulia.
 - (d) To benefactors -- gratitude.
 6. The virtues of subjection to secondary principles:
 - (a) Gratitude.
 - (b) Obedience
 - (1) Its natural origin.
 - (2) Its excellence.
 - (3) Its extension:
 - a. Obedience to God.
 - b. Obedience to man.
 7. Society's bad debts; philosophy of punishment:
 - (a) Revenge by society.
 - (b) Revenge by the individual.
 8. The unceasing social debt -- truth.
- Conclusion:
1. The importance of beginnings:
 - (a) The grain of truth in process philosophies.
 - (b) Double error of modern views:
 - (1) Unending process.
 - (2) Burdensome past.
 2. The penalty of separation from principles -- physical or moral annihilation.
 3. The perfect subject.

CHAPTER XII -- SOCIETY'S DEBTOR (Q. 100-101)

WITHIN recent years the unsolved problems of an industrial civilization have focused men's minds on a partial truth. Individuals in our own country, and especially the organized groups in our nation, have become acutely conscious of the truth that society owes them certain debts; along with this has come a deeper and deeper appreciation of the great resources of modern society. This double knowledge has resulted in the correction of some long-standing abuses: but it has also been turned to peculiarly dangerous ends. Individuals and organized groups have become engaged in endless bickering as sordid as a family quarrel over the will of a dying parent. Each tries to get from society what belongs to him; but as time goes on and the quarrel gets more bitter, greed gets in its sly whisper and it becomes much more a matter of getting all that can be had rather than of getting what is justly due. Indeed, it seems to have gone to the utterly selfish depths of attempting to get so much that no one else can get anything.

There is a peculiar fittingness in the comparison of this state of things to the ruthless haggling of a family over the will of a dying parent. In such a case the parent is pretty well forgotten; the only important thing about him is his eagerly anticipated death. When that happy event takes place the individuals of the family will be enriched. Now, as a matter of fact, when the groups or individuals within a society concentrate on what society owes them and fight to get all that can possibly be had from society, that society is in grave danger of death; of death by violence. There is an equal sordidness in the family quarrel and the social quarrel; but the latter is more than sordid, it is terribly dangerous. The society, like the dying parent, lies neglected and forgotten on its death-bed; but the death of society will not enrich the social groups, it will destroy them.

Social debts as links to a principle

Society is, after all, a union of men. It is not stronger than the links that bind its members together; and

those binding links are the individual citizen's debts to society. Where those debts are forgotten, neglected or denied, society is dissolving; it has become a tool for the aggrandizement of the individual or the group, rather than an instrument for the common good. An acknowledgment of the individual's debts to society is a statement of his dependence on the group, and therefore of the strong tie that binds men together in that common life. On the contrary, a denial of those debts is a boast of sufficiency, an implicit denial of dependence on society or of any serious need of a common social life. The truth, however, is that no man is sufficient unto himself. He never lives alone; he is linked to other men as to a cause or to an effect, he is linked to the whole society as to his principle of social life, of education, of direction, of government.

It is unfortunate that today we use the word debt in the sense of the obligation imposed by a usurer. In its truer sense a debt is no more than a statement of the rights of others; it is an insistence on the minimum of justice. In case of social debts, the word means more than that man owes something to society; it means that in owing something to society, man owes something to himself. His payment of his debt to society is a payment made to himself; a repudiation of that social debt is a repudiation of a debt to one's self. For a man cannot rob society without at the same time robbing himself, just as a man cannot shoot himself without injury to every part of his body; every cell in that body must contribute to the toll exacted by nature for the repair of the injury. And man, you will remember, is a part of society, a member of the social organism.

Social debt as obligations to one's self: As a member of society.

The man who cheats society is in the disastrously absurd position of an Alpine climber who cuts the rope from which he dangles by way of proving his rugged individualism. If we could picture a musical note, in a fit of independence, turning viciously on the throat of the singer and cutting it, we would have a fairly exact insight into the full significance of injustice to society. For a man is always dependent; he is always hanging from something, swinging towards something. His position in society is like the position of the trapeze artist as he swings through space from one support to another. Neither is in a position to indulge in snobbery or assertions of complete self-sufficiency.

A man cannot hang in space any more than a trapeze artist can sit on air and defy the crowd's impatient demand for the completion of his act. Man must have something above him and something below him. He must have a beginning and he must have an end. It is precisely in holding to that position, below his superior and above his inferior, that man takes his rightful place in the universe; the maintenance of that proper place in the universe is the absolute condition for human order, human peace, human stability and human progress.

In the past few chapters we have looked at man's dependence in relation to his first cause and final goal. We have seen that the virtue regulating that dependence, recognizing it, glorying in it, is religion. And religion, it became apparent, was not a matter of personal taste, of caprice or indignity to man; but a matter of strict justice, of being honest with God. From the human side, we saw this subjection to a first and last principle as a fullness of life for man; its denial or perversion, as barrenness, imperfection, sterility in human life.

In this chapter we shall examine some of the other principles, some of the other beginnings of man and his relation to them; for man has other beginnings. There are other persons, other things under God from which man depends and to which he must be subject, Nor is this so surprising in view of the power, generosity and thoughtfulness of God. He is not a blustering dictator nor a tyrannously timid superior afraid to share his power, knowing that he cannot stand a rival. Rather because He is such a perfect Beginning, He can and does share His divine prerogatives so prodigally with His creatures, even that prerogative of principality with regard to the master creature, man. The phrase "image of God" is not an empty figure nor a bit of poetic fancy; it is a profound truth. Men are made in the image of God not only in their very essence, but in their actions as well as in their goals. Man does have other beginnings from which he depends as he depends from God, either because of the benefits he has received from them or because of their superiority, their excellence in his regard.

As dependent from a principle

A dependable norm for judgment of the relative dependence of man upon the creatures of God is this: a man is dependent upon these secondary causes in exact proportion to their share in the principality of God. That is, the dependence is to be measured by the degree in which these creatures are the principle, the beginning, of man's life, his nourishment, and of his direction to a goal.

God comes first on all counts. Under God, as so many easily graduated steps by which His children can race up to the heights of the divine, there are, first of all, parents who are immediate principles of life, nourishment and direction. The native country (*patria*), the fatherland is in some sense a beginning of his life, a principle of his direction to the goal, of his education as a social being. Then there are the superiors of that society as principles of direction to a goal through the instrumentality of law; in a lesser way, the way of example, there are those virtuous men and women who also lead a man to his goal. Finally there are benefactors who, while not principles of the common goods, as are the superiors of society, are undoubtedly principles of particular goods for this particular individual.

It is as though God, in His tolerant understanding of the vagaries of the human mind, saw how easily we could be distracted, even entranced by the baubles of life to the point of overlooking the Supreme Being in whom we live and move and have our being. In the rush of life, man might easily forget or push to one side the thought of the infinite presence of God and His all-powerful causality; so all along the way our feet must tread, God put this variety of highly colored markers sure to catch the fancy of our childish eyes and bring our minds back, again and again through life, to the first Beginning and the last End.

Subjection to principles a condition of perfection.

We are debtors of God as the supreme principle, first and last, and by paying our debt of religion we perfect ourselves. After God, we are debtors to our parents and to our country as to the chief sharers in the principality of God. Again this is a debt of strict justice. Its payment involves no more than honesty; and that debt is paid, to our perfection, by the virtue of piety.

Subjection to the first principle -- religion

These two virtues, religion and piety, are not rival creditors clamoring for their share of the slim assets of a bankrupt man. They are intimately a part, one of another. Just as religion fits under justice, so piety fits under religion; as religion is a part of justice, so piety is a part of religion. But it is much more a part of religion than religion is a part of justice; in fact, religion includes piety as the United States includes Illinois or as the human soul includes within itself the powers of a plant and an animal soul. In the concrete this means that true religion is not a shrewish, jealous wife frowning down a man's patriotic devotion; it cannot interfere with man's duties to his parents or to his country. On the contrary, it is the surest guarantee of parental reverence and of patriotic sacrifice, for by piety we acknowledge a subjection that is only a feeble sharing of the subjection to God; in religion we admit the far greater debt which is the foundation and source of the claim of parents and country upon our reverence and upon our subjection. Religion is the sun, piety the moon of our life of subjection.

Subjection to secondary principles: To parents and country -- piety

To carry the comparison to its concrete conclusion, we may say that parents hold the same place in relation to their children that God holds to creatures. Parents play the part of God, not only in the minds of their children but in actual reality. Under God, they are principles or beginnings as God is the Principle or Beginning. This truth is not difficult of realization in its actuality, especially for a mother or father. It is impossible to look with love's eyes at an infant and not see its utter helplessness. It depends entirely on the parents' thoughtfulness, generosity, willingness to sacrifice -- a dependence that extends not only to the broad essentials of life but to the smallest detail of personal action and personal necessity. The infant in his mother's arms presents a picture, perfect in its way, of our relationship to God.

But of course the relation is two-sided. If the parent plays the part of God as the principle of the child, the parent also bears something of the divine responsibility to that child; not only in the few instants of infancy, of childhood and of adolescence, but for the whole life of the child. They do not cease to be parents because their son has had his first shave. So it becomes the normal and accepted duty of a father to exchange the long hours of the years, the tissues of his body, the blood of his heart for a heritage to sustain his children throughout all of a lifetime. Not infrequently the love and labor that were spent so generously prove a greater heirloom than piles of gold.

Normally our patience towards, and understanding of, other people's children is distinctly limited, our irritation a ready and reasonable thing. But with regard to our own we have something of divine generosity, divine understanding, divine patience; and like the divine, these things escape reason's weight and measure. We may be puzzled at the mother's ecstasy over this child, so patently inferior to our own; how does she ever put up with the noise, the thoughtlessness, the impudence of that brat? While from the front porch across the way, other people are asking the same questions about us. So also might we easily wonder how God ever puts up with us.

A superficial glance at married life today might lead us to suspect that men and women have missed the sublime truth that a parent plays the part of God in relation to his child. As a matter of fact, they have not missed that truth today; rather they are staring fixedly at that truth, but only at the frightening side of it. It is the obligations of parenthood, rather than its privileges, that have caught the modern eye; we see nothing but the terrifying fact that the child, in all justice, makes somewhat the same demands on its parents that a creature does on its God. It takes courage to face that fact, indeed, it takes something of divine courage. And our age is not a notably courageous age.

On the other hand, the child's relation to his parents is like the creature's relation to his God. The untrammelled development of a child's personality is not sufficient reason for its impudence and reckless disobedience. The child owes reverence and honor to his parents for somewhat the same reason that a creature owes reverence and honor to his God; both are principles, sources, beginnings of life and of direction to a goal. Nothing in the world will ever change this truth; the parents will always be parents, the children always children. Understand, this is a matter of justice, not of love. Love for one's parents can be pretty well wiped out by parental wickedness; but absolutely nothing in the world can wipe out the fact of parenthood. Their just claims to honor and reverence stand forever.

It would be utterly preposterous for a mother, in the name of the equality of all men, to rebel against the one-sidedness of nursing and to demand that the child take on half the burden; on Monday, Wednesday and Friday let the child do the nursing, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday would be the mother's shift, while on Sunday both could go hungry. Normally it is the child who should receive help, care and sustenance. Still it would be a monstrous caricature of reverence that would make a son rush through his dinner in order piously to assist at his mother's death from starvation. In other words, the parents, though they share in the principality of God, are not God. We never have to help God; but our parents are human, they can need help and that help must be given. It is an extrinsic, accidental obligation of sonship; but none the less a real obligation that extends to all blood relatives in exact proportion to their share in the common bond that unites parent and child.

In its own way a man's country holds the same place in relation to the individual and his fellow-citizens as God holds in relation to His creatures. This, however, is not to be taken in the exaggerated sense of an unadulterated nationalism such as prompts an American newspaper to carry on its editorial page the motto: "My country, may it always be right; but my country, right or wrong!" After all, a man's country is not his God; it shares in some way in the principality of God, but it is not divine. It is not true, as Communism openly maintains, that a crime is justified if it is committed from patriotic motives, for the good of the party. Whether it be done in the name of parents or of country, a crime is always against God; and it is only by reason of their share in things divine that country and parents have a claim on our reverence, on our loyalty, on our subjection.

The very reason for giving reverence to our parents and country is precisely because they share in divine principality; consequently it is absurd to advance that shared principality as a reason for abandoning the divine principality, for not paying God the debt of religion. If our parents are evil they still remain our parents with a claim on our reverence and help; but not at the cost of our soul. If they are a serious danger to our souls, we must leave them; and give them help and reverence from a spot that does not endanger the rights of God and our obligations to our own soul.

On the other hand, Christ was justly indignant at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in making religion an excuse for neglecting the duty to parents. An only daughter is not being at all religious when she blithely leaves poverty stricken parents to starve that she might enter the convent. The obligations to God and to parents do not clash; they have one and the same source, the one includes the other. If in the name of one we neglect the other, we can be very sure that we have completely failed in both.

To superiors -- observance

The complicated group of superiors to whom a man is subject can be seen in their fundamental unity if we picture them as intimately interdependent units of an electrical system. God is the generating unit, the dynamo of principality; from Him the line passes through one transmitting station after another, each of which cuts down the power to fit the particular purposes for which it exists, each receiving a lighter charge of the power from the transmitting station just above it. The station below that of parents and country is made up of the superiors of the state. The virtue by which we are subject to them is called "observance" and it stands in the same relation to piety (the virtue of subjection to parents and country) as piety does to religion. These superiors, in other words, have the same relation to parents that parents have to God; the superiors participate something proper to parents, as parents participate something proper to God.

The President in relation to the citizens of the United States, a general in relation to his soldiers, a mayor in relation to the citizens of his city, are all principles of limited direction, of government, of common goods. The obvious implication of this statement of observance is one of fatherly providence on the part of superiors; their citizens are not tools, cogs in a machine or a mere rabble to be used for the benefit of the superiors, they are children with a just claim to fatherly thoughtfulness, protection and help.

These superiors cannot supplant the parents without committing suicide any more than the parents can destroy God and retain their claims to reverence and honor. The transmitting station cannot cut itself off from the generating station and its dynamo and still expect to supply power. We are much more closely united to our parents, more dependent on them than we can ever be on the state. To them our union is substantial, from them we receive such substantial things as life itself, education, nourishment and so on. Theirs is the principality which is but shared by the state superiors.

The superiors, then, are not brow-beaters nor slave-masters. They are not to be looked on by citizens as enemies, suppressors of liberty, or poachers on the domain of individuality; rather the citizen must see them somewhat as a child sees its parent or a man sees his God. But it must always be remembered that these superiors are not God. Not infrequently they will not even be good men. We give them reverence and subjection, not as God, not even as men, but as superiors. By reason of their official position we give them honor: by reason of the coercive power they exercise we give them fear; by reason of their directive office we give them obedience; and by reason of the labor they expend for the common good, we pay taxes for their support.

To superior persons -- dulia

The next transmitting station that cuts down the divine power of principality is the virtue of "dulia". It regulates the honor given on grounds other than religious, blood relationship or official capacity; for the protestation of excellence which is called honor is due to all superiors, whatever their claim to superiority, precisely because they are superiors. The name of this virtue is taken from the honor due to a master from his slave. It is a derivation of profound significance when we understand that in absolutely every man there is something superior; in a sense, then, every man is a slave to all other men.

Understand, we do not have to distort our imagination in this search for superiority nor to be hypocritical about it. It would be absurd to pretend that we are in breathless admiration by the small talk of a barber, We need only stick to the truth. If there is any good in a man (and of course there always is) there is a basis for honoring him. As that good increases, that is, as the man comes closer to his goal, to his God, the reason for honor increases proportionately; so we pay great honor to the saints and the greatest honor given to creatures is given to the saint of saints, Our Blessed Lady.

Yet we find the saints paying honor to sinners. Catherine of Siena stepped out of a crowd and marched arm in arm down the street with a man condemned to the gallows, ascended the gallows with him and stayed by his side until his death. The same sort of thing is found again and again in the lives of the saints; after all, they were doing no more than following the example of their Master. You remember the grave courtesy Christ gave the woman taken in adultery, the tender persistence by which He won over the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. It would seem certain that it is not necessary for a man to be better than we are to merit our honor; surely it is not necessary that he be better in every way, or even in any way. In some way or another he is better than some men.

This does not amount to a kind of auto-hypnotism by which we peer at the world through the eyes of Pollyanna. It is true that it is far from the vague, distorted view given by eyes which are clouded and heavy with experience of evil; but what it really is, is the clear, true outlook that comes through seeing the world with the eyes of Christ, through the eyes that discovered the fearless teachers of the world among the ignorant fishermen on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

To benefactors -- gratitude

We pay honor to all men. We give subjection to our superiors as principles of our being and direction, as principles of the common goods that come to us. The principles of particular goods are our benefactors and to them we give gratitude. There is a sharp and highly significant distinction between our debts to superiors in general and our debts to benefactors. The former look us squarely in the eye with justice's impassive, impartial face; the latter give us gratitude's open smile, half dare, half invitation, all graciousness. To spurn the first is an injury to our creditors; to dismiss the second is to hurt ourselves. Debts to superiors are statements of the necessity for the equality of things; debts of gratitude are statements of the necessity for the equality of wills. Our benefactors are a step up the ladder of perfection; by gratitude we measure up to that advance, by ingratitude we step down one grade below our own level.

A benefactor has no claim in strict justice to our thanks. As a matter of fact, beneficence has about it something of the satisfaction of mercy; it too, allows a man to play God, distributing his goods to those who have less or nothing at all, even when the goods he so freely gives are no more tangible than smiles. A benefactor really has a substantial return on his action from the moment he gives his gift, independent of any return of thanks on our part. He has had the joy of acting like God. In fact, the smallest act of gratitude on our part immediately puts our benefactor in debt and starts an endless exchange of gifts. So the Magi came bringing gifts to the new-born Infant; and ever since that time the same divine Infant has been giving Himself wholly to men. Simon the Cyrenian helped carry the cross of Christ; from that day forward every man has been helped in the carrying of his cross by the Savior, Who was not too proud to accept the help of a mere man.

The virtues of subjection to secondary principles: Gratitude.

If we give it a moment's thought we easily understand that the obligation of gratitude must be interminable. It arises from a gift freely given; it can be paid, not by a return equal to the original gift -- that way we balance justice, paying a loan - - but by a gift from us, a gift as freely and as spontaneously given. Gratitude's return, in other words, must exceed all claims to justice, just as did the original gift; automatically, then, it sets up the game debt of gratitude in the benefactor. To put the matter more profoundly, we might say that we are images of God even in our actions; as all of creation, which is an act

of God, fights its way back to God, to every effect of ours, every one of our acts, is perfect insofar as it finds its way back to us. Inevitably, those acts do find their way back, either by way of revenge or of gratitude. If they do not, that act has been imperfect, as imperfect as would be a work of God that did not seek God. In other words, it would have all the imperfection to be found only in that one creature in the universe that does not come back to God -- a man who has sinned.

Christ gave gratitude's prescription when He said, "Freely have you received, freely give." He started the endless exchange of gifts in giving Himself to Mary as her first Christmas present; all of her life with Him was a loving rivalry of greater and greater gifts. Indeed the lives of all of her children have been just such an endless Christmas, with none of the fears of the spectre of January bills and February housecleaning of the gifts Christmas has brought to us.

For, as a matter of fact, there is no one so poor he cannot pay a debt of gratitude. cannot give a greater gift in exchange for what he has received. There is no man so low he cannot put the mightiest in his debt. Christ was not exaggerating when he pointed out the poor widow dropping her mite in the treasury as the one who had given more than all others; for the norm by which gifts are judged is not the pocketbook but the heart. In gratitude's return, likewise, it is not the gift but the will of the giver that overpays the debt; not the thing said, nor the thing done, but the pulse of the heart of the grateful one writing the check that satisfies this debt. And there is no power on earth that can stamp "insufficient funds" across the face of such a check.

Whether or not it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is certainly a great deal easier; for the reception of a favor is itself a confession of need. It is for this reason that the proud, self-sufficient man finds it so difficult to receive favors; and for the same reason, the first and most difficult act of gratitude is a benign acceptance of a favor. This whole matter of beneficence and gratitude is one of the heart and not of the hand. Just as we can judge the heart of the receiver by the graciousness by which he takes the gift, so the heart of the giver is betrayed in the gestures with which he gives the gift. A blackmailer rightly doubts the freedom and affection behind the check his victim surrenders for there is none of the inevitable joy and prompt eagerness inseparable from affection visible in the presentation of this "gift."

There are two significant conclusions forced upon us by this consideration of beneficence and gratitude. The first is that a sinner's debt of gratitude for his penance far outstrips that of the saint for his sanctity. The unquestioning surrender and intense apostolicity of Magdalen and Paul are entirely understandable, for they received a greater gift in a double sense: they had less claim on the gift of grace that was given them, and consequently the gift itself was given ever so much more freely. It is true that the saint receives the greater gift objectively; but subjectively the minimum of grace coming to the sinner is like a dime given to a destitute man as compared with a hundred dollars coming to a millionaire. The second conclusion, a rather startling one to our age, is that a prompt return of a favor is more often a sign of ingratitude than of gratitude. There is little of the easy, graceful stride about our rush to return a favor at the earliest possible moment; we feel ourselves forced. And that is the wrong point of view. Really, it is an attempt to escape a debt that should be a joyful burden, delightedly borne; it is a debt, not of justice but of love and love should not be hard to put up with.

Even though ingratitude is usually a venial sin unless it oversteps the boundaries of justice, it is a contemptible thing. The absolute contempt which men have for the sin of ingratitude has been compressed into one explosive word: traitor! Judas has remained the most unsavory character of history because he is the supreme ingrate, the betrayer of a divine friend. Other sins that awaken the disgust and contempt of men are despised not only in others but also in ourselves; our contempt for perversion, bestiality or murder, in other words, is not merely speculative, it is practical for we bend the utmost of our efforts to excluding these things from our own lives. But for some dark reason, the same is not true of ingratitude; that our disgust for it remains largely speculative is evident from the rarity of gratitude and the frequency of ingratitude.

This may seem a large statement. But run through the scale of ingratitude, making sure each note is true.

The least sin of ingratitude consists in not resuming a favor, a grade of ingratitude that reaches its peak when we return evil for the good we have received: when we have gone up a step in ingratitude we pretend that no favor has been done us, a condition that reaches its high point in the scorning of a favor; finally the climax of ingratitude is a non-recognition of a favor done to us and its crescendo crashes about our deaf ears when we consider the favor a positive injury. Run over that scale again, listen carefully and see how many of the notes find an echo in our own hearts in our relations with God. How many of the favors of God do we take for granted; how many do we fail to recognize as favors; how many do we positively resent as injustices, punishments, curses? Yes, ingratitude is far from rare however despicable it may be; and no doubt it will remain so, for only a humble man can be grateful and for humility we must have the courage to see ourselves as we really are. But the very contempt for ingratitude is a splendid thing, a ringing assurance of the sound common sense of human nature in its rejection of the stupidities of pride.

Obedience: Its natural origin It is only to benefactors that unpaid debts escape the anarchy of injustice. To all other principles we subject ourselves in justice and one of the universal acts by which we put that subjection into action is by our obedience. Yet the very word revolts our jaded appetites as emphatically as the mention of pork to a sea-sick man. The objections to the very notion pour from our lips with a violence and rapidity that reveals a deep-seated resentment: one man is as good as another, the ignobility of taking orders, the servility of being at the beck and call of a man, the irresponsibility of having someone else do our thinking, the spinelessness of being unable to make up our own minds. How fine they all sound to an independent spirit; and how utterly absurd they are! We have hardly reached the point where it is necessary, as a proof of strength, independence, equality and all the rest, to invade another man's home and beat his wife; it is not degrading for us to respect these rights of a man, nor is it degrading to respect any of his other rights.

From a purely natural point of view obedience is an absolute condition for harmony with the rest of the universe. All of nature follows the same rule of divine providence, namely, that inferiors are led to their goals by superiors. Men are not only equals, they are also unequals; so much so, in fact, that even in the untainted air of Eden's peace there would have been political organization if Adam had never sinned. It is men, not God, who insist on doing violence to human nature. Men have superiors and they move to their ends as all nature moves to its end, not in violation of their nature but in harmony with their humanity; that is, not physically but morally, by a precept whose answer is obedience. Obedience, in other words, is nothing more or less than a moral virtue by which we obey the precept of our superiors from the intention of satisfying that precept. It is the virtue by which, in harmony with all nature, we are moved to our goal in a manner fitting the high estate of our humanity.

Its excellence

Granted that obedience is not in the same high class as faith, hope and charity which have God Himself for their object, or even that it is not the supreme moral virtue, for certainly religion comes much closer to God. Still, among the moral virtues which involve a rejection of temporal things in order that a man might bow down to God, obedience stands at the very top. By it man offers that which is most truly his own, his free will; he does what no other creature in the physical world can do, he makes the surrender which is in itself a conquest of self and of perfection.

In the cosmic order, then, obedience saves man from becoming the one freak in the universe. In the social order, which is after all the natural order for man, obedience is absolutely indispensable. No matter how natty its uniforms, how modern its equipment, how numerous its members, a police force that meets with the combined opposition of all the citizens will be utterly destroyed. Men cannot be ruled successfully for any length of time by an army, a secret police, or a mob of gangsters; but only by obedience. We can put this in one short sentence by pointing out that obedience is justice, and justice is absolutely essential for the social and cosmic life of man.

The superior's precept and the subject's obedience have about them the quiet beauty of a peaceful

countryside under a spring sun, the smooth freedom of the long, sure stride of a man. But it is not hard to introduce the brazen clash of disorder or the grotesque antics of anarchy. All the smooth grace and freedom is gone from the motion of a man when the hands decide to do the work of the feet. It is unfortunate that this grotesqueness is seen to its full only by the spectators. An industrial captain who, flushed with success in the manufacture of motor cars, decides to regulate the diet of his employees never quite sees what a fool he makes of himself. Obedience, you see, is a respecter of rights; the limits of the rights of the superior automatically mark off the limits of the demands he may make on his subjects.

Its extension: Obedience to God; Obedience to man

It is beautifully fitting, and absolutely necessary, that man give universal obedience to God as the supreme superior; naturally all movement is subjected to the divine First Mover. But no man is a universal superior, nor is he a universal mover. The obedience we give to any man is limited to the bounds of the subjection we owe him. The feelings of a prince should not be hurt when his subjects ignore the commands he has given in contradiction to the natural law. A governor decreeing a limitation on the number of children his subjects shall have has stepped outside of his field, he is a drum-major playing Napoleon; for, in the things that pertain to man's very being, all men are equal. Human superiors have, as their proper field, the disposition of human actions and human things but strictly within the limits of the power they enjoy.

Society's bad debts; philosophy of punishment: Revenge by society

Even when the command is within the limits of the superior's power, it does happen, and always has happened, that there are social cheats. The action taken by society against these men who refuse to honor their social debts is punishment. It is an unpleasant subject; indeed, if it were not we would have gone far along the road of degradation, as far as enjoying the pain and suffering of others. But we must not mistake its unpleasantness for an argument against punishment. The mistake is a common one today when men argue seriously in favor of coddling a prisoner like a sick child or of abolishing punishment altogether because it is such a messy, disagreeable thing.

Such arguments do not proceed from a love of humanity but from a flabbiness that shrinks from facing the facts. They overlook the fact that non-payment of social debts really means serious injury to members of the society. To speak of this punishment as the vengeance of the state runs the risk of emphasizing the element of injury to the criminal to the complete neglect of the element of healing the wounds of society and protecting the rights of others; and it is these latter which are the primary objects of this vengeance of the state. Unquestionably revenge or punishment is wrong if it proceeds from hate; for then it intends the evil primarily, and gloats on the injury it does to the criminal. But when its sources are charity and justice, as they normally are, punishment is a virtue. It intends such goods as the correction of the criminal, the restraint of his crimes and consequent peace to others, the preservation of justice or the honor of God.

Punishment is not something that may be excused but always demands apology; it can be positively obligatory; it is the state's gesture of defense against internal enemies, as war is its defense against external enemies. If the punishment of the state sometimes seems harsh, we have only to try our sweetest smile the next time we meet a thug to see how far it gets us. He does not respond to a homily on virtue, a paternal slap on the back as emphasis of honeyed advice; the tools of his craft are a club, a gun, a blackjack. This is the language in which he makes himself understood and the language which immediately brings a glimmer of intelligence to his predatory eyes. He understands a threat to or loss of things by which he places great store: his life, his health, his integrity, his liberty, his possessions, even though at the lower levels of crime, he may not take exile or defamation too seriously.

Not long ago the newspapers reported the case of a judge who discharged a prisoner from the charge of manslaughter as a result of drunken driving. The judge argued that there could be no punishment where there was no guilt and this man was so blindly drunk he could not see to commit a crime. The judge was, of course, roundly denounced in editorials the country over; but indignation does not answer an argument. There was something in the judge's argument, but not nearly enough, as is the way with half-truths; they

are always too meagre a fare to keep the intellect from staggering into error from sheer weakness. It is true that vindictive punishment must not be inflicted unless there is guilt; but medicinal punishment can very well be inflicted in the absence of guilt, though never in the absence of a cause. Perhaps five or ten years in prison is strong medicine; but there is no doubt that it would impress the condemned man with some personal evils of drunken driving, it might even open his eyes to the enormity of the risks to which he exposes his fellow-citizens, surely it will be a salutary warning to others who find the exhilaration of speed only half the fun of driving. Certainly the thing should be punished, for, if it is not, only citizens with the reflexes of jack-rabbits will survive. Surely, these are causes sufficient for medicinal punishment.

Perhaps the judge had in mind the divine Governor Who never punishes except in cases of positive guilt. But if he did, then he overlooked the fact that this Supreme Governor inflicts spiritual punishments; and since the spiritual goods which these deprive a man of cannot be ordered to further ends, obviously they cannot be used as a medicine to ward off other evils. We do not decapitate a man to cure his tooth-ache; nor does God deprive him of the supreme goods to which he can aspire for any lesser end.

Revenge by the individual

It must always be remembered that this matter of punishment is the affair of public authority. A private citizen may defend himself against an attack, even defend himself with considerable vigor; but once the attack is over and done with, the matter is out of his hands. He cannot stalk his attacker, biding his time and pouncing at an unexpected moment; the most he can do by way of revenge is to cite his attacker to public authorities, i.e., he can start his vindication but he may never finish it. The reason is obvious. All punishment involves coercive power because it involves some injury to society in the injury it inflicts on one of society's members; and coercive power belongs only to God and the human superiors who share the principality of God in relation to the common good. In any case, the individual is rarely obliged to seek revenge; it is not so much justice as decency and charity that will move him to take revenge through the state for an injury done to him.

The unceasing social debt -- truth

Social debts are debts to one's self. Nowhere is this more clear than in the social debt paid by the virtue of veracity. It would be enough to prove the point if we merely noticed the scorn and distrust given the two-faced individual or the liar as contrasted with the honor and trust that decorates the life of the straightforward, truthful man. But these are external things. Within his very self the liar finds quickly how badly he has cheated himself by his lies as it becomes more and more difficult for him to be what he is, to face the world as it is, to meet life as it is. A lie, you see, is an easy escape, a pleasant substitute for accomplishment and struggle; once we become familiar with that emergency exit our hand reaches for its knob at every hint of danger or labor. The liar buries himself in a false world as sweetly and gently as a man might smother himself in a feather bed.

Christ gave a succinctly profound account of Himself when He said: "I am the truth." Dominic set high goals for himself and his Order when he adopted that single word for his motto: *Veritas*, the truth. For truth and reality are not really different. Christ, as God, was indeed and is the Supreme Reality and so the Supreme Truth; Dominic seeking truth was seeking the world of reality and the God of reality. A false world is like a false step; rather than advancing a man, it throws him down with a jar that hammers at every bone in his body and utterly ruins his disposition. In the same way -- not doing what it should do -- a false word lets a man down hard; it tangles up the line of communication from man to man which is so essential to human life. Imagine the turmoil in the petty details of society if bus conductors, ticket agents and traffic policemen answered all questions with artistically fluent lies; indignation would be a timid word for the outburst of the explorer in search of Brooklyn who was deposited in the Bronx. Men simply cannot live together if they can never be sure they are in contact with one another; and it is by word that they reach each other's mind.

At times, this obligation to tell the truth is one of strict justice, as, for instance, in answer to a legitimate

question by a legitimate superior. But over and above that strict right, men have a claim in sheer decency, certainly in charity, to be spared deception. However, being truthful is not a matter of pulling the bung from our minds and letting all of our knowledge run out. When a wife asks her husband "How do I look?" she is not seeking a diagnosis; prudence will teach him, eventually at least, to restrict his comments to a few large and fairly obvious objectives. When mere politeness moves you to ask after the health of an acquaintance, you stand aghast as he rattles off a long list of his symptoms; this sort of thing is not necessary for social life. Words should measure up to the concept in our minds as things measure up to the concept in God's mind; then both the things and the words are true. It is not impertinent to notice that not all the concepts of God's mind have been expressed in the world of reality. We must tell the truth, yes, but when, where and how it should be told.

The tremendously impossible stories of Baron Munchausen were certainly not lies. They were so evidently and jokingly false that they could never have been meant to deceive; and formally speaking, a lie is the will to say a false thing. Whether or not others are successfully deceived pertains to the perfection of a lie rather than to its nature as a perversion of the gift of speech. The student who knows his matter backwards and gives it that way to his examiners is not guilty of a lie; the manifest hyperbole of a political orator nominating a "favorite son", or the demure secretary's "Mr. Smith is not in" obviously fool no one. They were not meant to fool anyone; the words have a generally accepted meaning, they are polite forms that even the "favorite son" or the traveling salesman do not fail to understand.

Where the formal will to tell a false thing is present there is always a sin, the sin of lying, never justifiable, never excusable. We can no more excuse a boy for the lie he tells to escape a spanking than we can a man who lies to ruin the character of a rival. The second lie is more serious because it enters the field of justice and takes on the added gravity of an offense to another's rights; but strictly as lies, both are inexcusable. Lies are not sour when they hurt another and sweet when they "do no damage"; they are wrong because they pervert the gift of speech. As a matter of fact they always do damage, social damage, which can never be properly estimated. The life of the party who wrings a laugh from a sullen crowd by his plausible lies is none the less a liar albeit an agreeable one. There are not white lies, not even spotted lies; all lies are black with the blackness of sin.

If a girl looking for work as a stenographer is asked whether she has had experience and answers "yes," mentally concluding the sentence, "in washing dishes", she has completely fooled her prospective employer -- for the moment at least. But she might as well have saved herself the effort of mentally re-washing the dishes. She has indulged in a mental restriction which the theologians call "pure", though an odd kind of purity it is, for it leaves the lie intact. There is absolutely no way in which that restriction can be detected by any one else; no way in which the concept in her mind can be seen from her words. It has been just a plain lie. The legitimate mental restriction, a restriction in the wide sense, is found in the poor, worn-out phrase, "Mr. Smith is not in;" only a moron could mistake the meaning. And such a restriction may, under some circumstances, be allowed. So also may ambiguity or equivocation, for we are not obliged to tell all that we know all the time; here we are not telling falsehood, but rather we refrain from improperly telling the truth.

Perhaps the best estimate of the value of truth is to be found in the effect truth has upon man. Devotion to falsehood produces the social outcast and the sinner. Devotion to truth in the intellectual world produces a philosopher; in the social world, it produces a gentleman; in the supernatural world, it produces a saint. In language dear to our times we might say that a lie is a kind of verbal perversion that prevents the conception of knowledge in the minds of our neighbors and thwarts the delivery of our own concepts; it is at the same time a verbal birth control and a verbal abortion.

The importance of beginnings: The grain of truth in process philosophies

A summary of this chapter must begin with the truth that man is never through beginning. That he finishes one step in life merely means that he is ready to take another. If any stage of his life is not a beginning of something else, the man has failed; he has been misled into a blind alley, not led on to higher things and,

ultimately, to the Highest Thing. Even when he reaches the end of his life, man comes to the beginning of an eternal life and an eternal act, a beginning that never ends. A man is never really separated from his beginnings; he is always starting things, and all of the things, all the way back in his life, hang together as intimately as the links of a chain.

Double error of modern views: Unending process This truth has been grasped by modern process philosophies. This is what gives an air of plausibility to their theorizing, this thin thread by which they dangle precariously from the world of reality. Their mistake is in thinking that there is nothing but a beginning in man's life; that life and the world is nothing but a process that does not really begin and never ends, but just flows on. In their eyes, man's life is a bridge that is never quite crossed, an endless treadmill whose only goal is exhaustion. As a result, these philosophies present man's intellect with a tremendous lie; there must be a goal if there is to be any activity, and so there must be not only a beginning, but also a progress to the end which is the reason for the beginning.

Burdensome past

The second error in these modern philosophies inevitably links up with the first, namely, that all of the past is to be disowned, tossed aside as a man discards his boyhood and forgets it. And this is held to be true, not only for an age, for one generation, but also for the individual in all the fields in which he moves: religious, philosophical, economic or social. Each individual, each age, each nation starts afresh. That, thank God, is never true. We do not have to shoot our ancestors to prove that we are alive. The loudness of progress in human life, the uncovering of truth, the approach to God, is not something to be handled in a moment, in a lifetime, a generation or an age. It is a slow, laborious, dangerous climb where every foothold dug by our predecessors is invaluable. The past is not a burdensome load we carry on our shoulders; rather it is the springboard from which we plunge into the future.

The penalty of separation from principles -- physical or moral annihilation

Man cannot separate himself from his beginnings without disastrous results. They are an intimate part of him; action against them is a kind of mutilation. If he attempts a moral separation from his first Principle, God, he embraces an eternal hell; a physical separation from the same Principle, if it were possible, would mean instant annihilation. A proportionate note of disaster rings through the world as the result of the blow that separates us from any of our beginnings, our principles; and the disaster will be in exact proportion to the principality which the particular beginning enjoys.

The waifs' physical separation from parents awakens an immediate response of pity for their misery; they have lost something out of their lives, a precious, indispensable thing. Behind all our irritation there is pity, too, for impudent, disobedient, irreverent children; they also have lost something and lost it forever. Something has been cut out of their lives because they have cut themselves off from a beginning; they have suffered a kind of annihilation and condemned themselves either to a hell of memory or a duplication of the same scorn, insolence and disobedience from their own children. Their life has been dulled, sickened, dwarfed at its start for they have lost subjection and sacrifice, both indispensable to the living of human life.

A man, who has cut himself off from his country, has lost a part of himself, for he is a part of society; indeed, we might say that, as a social being, he has cut himself off from the greater part of himself. He is now a stranger to whom no place is home; he is a stranger everywhere and so is everywhere alone. A man who cuts himself off from his social superiors denies moral force and issues an invitation to physical force. He is a rebel, not only against society, against his fellows, but also against himself. The cynic who refuses the subjection of honor and reverence to men on the score of their virtue condemns himself to blindness; he deprives himself of constant inspiration and anchors himself forever in the sluggish waters of smug mediocrity. The ingrate, refusing to meet the debt of gratitude, scurries to cover from the constant shower of gifts that gratitude and beneficence set up, that constant increase of love, the fullness of a man's life, which comes from beneficent acts of others and their gracious return,

The perfect subject

Man can be perfect; in fact, he was made to be perfect. All of his nature was designed to that end. But his perfection is not to be obtained in any utterly self-sufficient sense; he cannot pull up his roots and still expect to grow. He is not alone in the universe: he came from somewhere; he is going somewhere. He has something above him and something below him; something behind him and something before him. And it is only in maintaining that proper position in the universe that a man can find grounds for order, stability, peace, progress and ultimately, perfection. There is a perfection of man, but a perfection that is in perfect proportion to a man's subjection. The perfect man can best be defined as the perfect subject, a truth that was once, not insignificantly, put in the agonized words of the Saviour's prayer of perfection: "Not my will, but Thine be done."

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XIII -- ROOTS OF RUDENESS (Q. 111-122)

1. Unity and social life.
 2. Separation from the unity of social life -- exile:
 - (a) Physical exile.
 - (b) Moral exile.
 3. Social exile by defect of truth:
 - (a) Simulation and hypocrisy.
 - (b) Ostentation:
 - (1) Boasting.
 - (2) Disparagement ("irony").
 4. Social exile by defect of friendliness (affability):
 - (a) The nature of friendliness:
 - (b) Social effeminacy -- flattery.
 - (c) Social savagery -- truculence ("quarreling").
 - (d) Common origin of social effeminacy and savagery -- contempt.
 5. Social exile by defect of liberality:
 - (a) The nature of liberality.
 - (b) Social niggardliness -- avarice.
 - (c) Social extravagance -- prodigality.
 6. Perfection of the social instinct -- the gift of piety:
 - (a) The nature of this gift.
 - (b) Its distinction from religion, filial fear and the virtue of piety.
 - (c) Its extension to all men.
 7. Minimum demands for social unity -- the Ten Commandments:
 - (a) General character of the Decalogue -- precepts of justice.
 - (b) Particular character of the Decalogue:
 - (1) Precepts of religion.
 - (2) Precepts of piety.
 - (3) Precepts of commutative justice:
 - a. Against injury to persons.
 - b. Against injury to family.
 - c. Against injury by word and thought.
 - (c) Equity and the Decalogue.
- Conclusion:
1. Virtue and society:
 - (a) General necessity of virtue in society.
 - (b) Particular necessity:
 - (1) For protection of others and perfection of one's self: justice, religion, piety, observance, dulia.
 - (2) For intimacy of community life: gratitude, truth, friendliness.
 - (3) For perfection of community life: gift of piety.
 2. The Church versus a godless society:
 - (a) The enemy and the friend.
 - (b) Solver of difficulties.
 - (c) Protector of fundamentals.
 - (d) Champion of culture.

CHAPTER XIII -- ROOTS OF RUDENESS (Q. 111-122)

A MASTERPIECE, a cathedral or a cottage has a personality of its own. It is lovely, proud, simple, eagerly alive or coldly reticent. All are, in a sense, living even if the life by which they live is the life of their creator. They are solidly units; and by that very unity they are the closest imitation of that substantial unity which is so characteristic of life. We marvel at them because we marvel at life, and will never have done marvelling at it. In both we are marvelling at an effect of intelligence deeper than a distinct order, an effect achieved by that order which intelligence alone can produce -- the effect of unity. The artist steps back from his easel and sees that his work is good; into his dead materials he has breathed as much life as it is given man to give to things, the breath of order and unity. He is in his own way a creator and we honor him for his high achievement.

Unity and social life

Certainly intimate union is a universal characteristic of life. When that unity begins to break up we have disease; when that unity is completely dissolved, we have death. And this will be true, not only of the dissolution of the union of soul and body, but of the dissolution of the union between the body and any of its parts. Social life implies an organic unity that is essential to all life; we describe society as an organism whose members are men and women. Pursuing the figure, we measure the vigor of social life by the unity existing between the parts of that social body. Society is healthy, diseased or dying in proportion to the unity of its members.

When one part of the social body is cut off, though the whole body retain its full vigor of life, we have the parallel of amputation. It is injurious to the whole in proportion to the importance of the part that has been amputated; the impeachment of a president, for instance, will be much more harmful than the execution of a gangster, just as it will make a great difference to a man whether he loses a finger or both legs. But in all cases the amputation is absolutely fatal to the member that is severed from the body. In this chapter we shall consider the relation of that separation from the social body, precisely as it affects the individual member who is separated from society.

Separation from the unity of social life -- exile: Physical exile.

A social separation is not called amputation, though it could aptly be so called; it is known as exile. Ordinarily we understand that term in a physical sense as calling up the haunting loneliness of "a man without a country." The difficulties of this physical exile are vividly presented to us whenever we enter a Greek candy store or approach an Italian fruit stand. The exile may be voluntary, but the blue sky of Athens and the warm sun of Naples are not to be lightly brushed from a man's mind; nor are the memories of easy, leisurely comradeship, the wild words of argument so quickly forgotten by everyone in preparation for the next discussion. These men will continue to dream their dreams of home as they stand shivering on a New York corner or caught in the clammy embrace of a London fog.

Perhaps the difficulties are more evident when we consider an American expatriate in France, not, you understand, a tourist jumping from place to place but always on his way home, but a man who takes up permanent residence there. Nicodemus long ago was rightly incredulous at the thought of a man being born again; the thing is impossible physically. Spiritually it can be done through the omnipotence of God; socially it is possible to some degree and always with much labor and tears.

That is really what social exile in a physical sense means, i.e., that a man must be born again as a member of another social body. To some degree it is always a failure. A man's own country is one of his principles, of his beginnings; it is a part of his very self; to be cut off from that country means that a part of a man's very self has been cut out. Our country and our attitude towards it are bred in our bones and in our blood. Away from it we must always remain a stranger, both in our own eyes and in the eyes of others. It is not merely the difficulty of language, of a mode of thought, of national customs; it is deeper than all that, for it is the difficulty of being grafted on a new principle very much too late in life.

Moral exile

For all of its difficulty, the physical exile is hardly to be compared to moral exile. The physical involves a separation that can be measured in miles and it allows some sort of rebirth in another social unit, however partial and unsatisfying such a birth may be. But the moral exile involves a distance, not from society, but from men, a distance not to be measured in miles but in loneliness, rebellion and despair. It is always an absolute and universal exile from every society, for men are the integrating units of every society. By it a man is marooned on a desert island; or rather, he carries his own deserted island strapped to his shoulders, that is the only ground he can stand on for any length of time and from it he perpetually scans utterly empty horizons. He is always alone. Moreover, the pain and fears and labors that go into this exile are much more severe than their parallels in physical exile; for our desire for union with other men is much deeper than our bones, deeper than our blood, deeper than our love for country. It is as deep as the depth of the nature of man.

This moral exile consists in a separation from men; its cause, then, is anything that cuts us off from men. It is a deep-seated loneliness accomplished on one side by driving men from us by injustice, on the other by withdrawing ourselves from men by sins against truth. In this latter case we hide behind a falsehood which has built a wall between ourselves and other men, forbidding all contact; when the falsehood is discovered, men withdraw from us in repulsion. But the discovery of the falsehood is not a necessary ingredient of the bitter draught of moral exile; whether or not men see the wall behind which we have hidden ourselves, we know it is there and we know it cannot be climbed from the outside.

Social exile by defect of truth: Simulation and hypocrisy

In the last chapter our efforts were concentrated on the verbal lie and its poisonous effects. In this chapter we are engaged primarily in dealing with the lie in fact, the factual lie which is called "simulation." We see the appearance of it in the smile of a guest at his hostess' flat joke. It exists on a mild scale in the attempted, but rarely achieved, nonchalance of a girl whose suitcase has sprung open in a crowded railroad station; as a matter of fact, most of the bystanders do get some little inkling of her confusion.

Understand, now, this is not a condemnation of that attempted nonchalance. Just as in words we do not have to tell all we know, so in acts we do not have to manifest all that is within us. It is not necessary that every murderer slink through the world glowering at people; nor is every empty-headed person obliged to cultivate an ever more vacant stare. But if the acts we do place signify things that are not within us, we are shams, pretending, lying to the world.

There are acts that are not meant to fool anyone, just as there are words not to be understood in their literal sense. A dash of lip-stick, even skillfully applied, does not fool the owner of the lips, and does not fool anyone else; it is merely a bit of decoration and is recognized as such by civilized peoples, though a savage might reasonably be puzzled about it. No one interprets a mechanical smile of greeting as a sign of hilarious joy. In fact, our lives are filled with acts that have the air of pretense but which deceive no one. The bustle of a loafing business man or the whistle of a frightened boy are expressions of a hope or an ideal, rather than an attempt to lie to the world. Because they are easily seen through, they do not separate us from men; often they draw us closer to others in their manifestation of a bond which appeals to every human heart, the bond of human weakness. We recognize in these people something of ourselves, for we, too, have felt the confusing sting of that same weakness.

The naively innocent approach of a swindler is obviously in a different class from these things. It is definitely the sin of simulation, a lie told to the world, a lie for which both the swindler and his victim must pay. The pious airs of the hypocrite who has no other end in view than to appear holy is also simulation; he too is a swindler. In both cases the individuals withdraw from men, so far, in fact, as to take on the external appearance of totally different persons, completely obliterating themselves from social contact.

The hypocrite plagiarizes the personality of the one person men most respect, that of a just man; and this is one of the fundamental reasons for the distaste and distrust men have for hypocrites. These spiritual swindlers are guilty of cheap cheating; their smooth approach obtains the price of respect that men mean to pay to real justice, to real holiness. Moreover, this cheating is a cowardly attack on the really just man, for it puts him under the burden of proving his justice in order to escape the suspicion of hypocrisy that men cautiously advance before tendering their respect. Sometimes hypocrisy is an escape from reality, from the not inconsiderable difficulties inherent in the attainment and maintenance of justice. The hypocrite lives in a child's world of pretense with none of the child's candor. The child knows and admits that he is only pretending, playing a game; but the hypocrite is so deadly in earnest that sometimes he almost succeeds in fooling himself.

Ostentation: Boasting

This pitiful romancing which is simulation does not always proceed along horizontal lines; at least the

personal boaster builds his act straight up. He must stand head and shoulders above others even though his pedestal be of the fragile stuff of dreams. Strictly speaking, the man who regales his company with his truly great deeds is a bore, not a boaster; he tells the truth, though with imprudent excess. The real boaster is a liar. He climbs up the ladder of fiction rather than stoop to the menial labor of building a ladder of hard deeds. If his boasts are successful men never know the real man concealed behind the boasts; if they are unsuccessful, men do not want to know the real man. In either case he has effectively exiled himself from men. St. Thomas says that often boasting is not indulged in to injure others, for the sake of a job, or for profit, but merely out of vanity; as such it is reducible to a jocose lie. That is profoundly true; and most often the joke is on the boaster.

It is fairly easy to deal with a known boaster; all we need do is listen, sprinkling our silence with appropriate exclamations - "Oh", "Ah", "How wonderful", and so on. It is a much more serious social problem to deal with the belittler. This is no place for day-dreaming; in a moment of distraction we may make the disastrous mistake of agreeing with a dinner companion who says "I haven't a brain in my head," or with the university professor who asks, in a purely rhetorical fashion, "Wasn't that a silly thing to do?"

Disparagement ("irony")

The boaster stretches the truth out of all recognition; the belittler shrinks it. If the latter is actually fishing for compliments in running down his own good points, he really has the same goal as a boaster; indeed, he might be called a subtle or indirect boaster. When, however, he minimizes his good points or lays claim to fictional bad points as a means of avoiding offense to others, he bends over backwards in his attempt to be agreeable; he gives men a distorted view of himself comparable to a candid camera's view of a contortionist caught at an unfortunate moment of his rehearsal. In either case he keeps his real self secret from his fellows; he cuts himself off from men.

When he is actually telling the truth about his failures, not mentioning his successes, he is not really belittling himself because he is not telling a lie. Thus, for instance, a successful author might tell his audience of beginners the now humorous history of his rejected manuscripts with no mention of his successful ones; and he is doing no more than giving them the courage to face the defeats and disappointments that will undoubtedly come their way before success stands at their door shouting for admittance.

We understand this and admire the man's kindness and thoughtfulness to those budding authors. What is much more difficult for us to understand is the case of the saints' open estimation of themselves as serious sinners, even as the worst of sinners. It is important to remember that the saints were not lying; they were not, therefore, belittling themselves, they were telling the truth. Our difficulty in understanding this arises from the fact that we do not know sin as the saints know it, nor do we know God as intimately, as experimentally, as appreciatively as do the saints. Knowing God so well they could understand to the full the seriousness of any offense against that divine goodness. Moreover, they knew themselves as they could not know others. Not even a saint is in a position to give accurate judgment of the actions of others because not even a saint can edge his way past the gates of a man's intellect and will. No matter what this other man has done, a saint cannot know certainly (short of a revelation from God) that this man is more seriously culpable than was the saint in his small sin; for the saint knows himself from the inside out. They were not hypocrites, not liars, the saints; they told the truth, the highly significant truth that the smallest of sins is sufficient reason for a lifetime of regret.

Hypocrisy, boasting and belittling are all distinct sins against the truth; they are all means by which a man exiles himself from the men and women with whom he lives in society. However, their distinction represents no bar to the human ingenuity of the sinner; he can contrive to pack all three sins into one and the same act. Thus a man, who would deliberately parade himself in old clothes to indicate great spiritual perfection and humility, would be guilty of hypocrisy in claiming the perfection he had not yet attained; he would be boasting by the very flapping of his rags; and he would be belittling his social position by the age and raggedness of the clothes he wore. This was the sort of thing that so angered the Lord and won his

scathing denunciation of the Pharisees' parade of emaciation and sorrow as heralds of their great fasting.

Social exile by defect of friendliness (affability)

It seems evident, then, that a man cannot live in society without truth. But it is equally true that he cannot live in society without pleasure. His very nature, as a social animal, demands not only that he live with others, but that he live pleasantly with them, that he be united intimately with them in a common life. It is extremely difficult to live a common life where the members of the community are not on speaking terms, or where it is perhaps better that they are not on speaking terms.

This might almost be established as a norm for the judgment of social perfection; at least as the society becomes more perfect, the relations between its members are more and more pleasant. Thus in a community of nuns, where the bond of union is supernatural and each member is striving for a heroic degree of sanctity, the time of recreation sounds like nothing so much as a children's party at its height: none of that gloomy or sullen emphasis on what has been surrendered, but rather an hilarious gaiety that awakens a smiling envy in anyone privileged to eavesdrop on its echoes.

The nature of friendliness

The virtue, regulating this decent agreeableness in our social relations with other men, is friendliness or affability. As a part of justice it deals with externals, with the signs of courtesy and amiability. It does not demand internal love for others; that is charity's work. But it does demand that we treat others decently, pleasantly, agreeably.

Friendliness does not demand that every man be a jester of society; friendliness, in fact, does not deal in jokes but in serious, everyday relations. After all, we can stand only so many jokes; certainly not a gluttonous diet of them all day, every day. Yet friendliness is not a barrier to a joke; on the contrary, it is a distinct barrier to a perpetual listening to the jokes of others, a mere passivity in social relations that contributes nothing but takes all that others give. Where this virtue of friendliness is weakening, social relations will fade to such desperate measures as a dinning radio, a perpetual movie, enough drink for oblivion and a headache, or even to a game of solitaire.

Affability or friendliness can go too far, either to the position of the "yes men" of society who, in their desire for peace at any price in their social relations, refuse to hurt anyone's feelings for any reason; or to the degenerating length of flattery. Both are evidences of softness, of flabbiness; the first affects the "yes man" himself; the second saps vitality from those with whom the flatterer lives.

Social effeminacy -- flattery

Flattery can be extremely serious, as when it is aimed at a libertine's conquest, designed to prepare a man for a swindle as we fatten a pig for the killing, or when it is an occasion for sin. But even at its lightest, its obsequiousness is a disgusting thing. It is a foul, enervating cultivation of human weakness, hurrying on the disintegration of the individuals at whom it is aimed. To a healthy appetite flattery has the taste of too much whipped cream or too much of the poetry of Keats: too sweet, too sensual.

The real opinions of the flatterer are never known. He has cut the links that might have bound him to men and so to the social unit, the links by which we normally communicate with men. Instead he has chosen to use men as tools, humoring them, toying with them, playing on their weaknesses, and all the while laughing at them behind their backs.

Social savagery -- truculence ("quarreling")

The flatterer is simply too agreeable for any social good; he sins by exceeding the measure of friendliness. At the other extreme is the man who sins by a serious defect of friendliness, the man who can best be described as a social savage. He is not only indifferent to the hurt feelings of another, he actually seeks

new ways to be unpleasant; it might be said that the one achievement that gives his sardonic soul pleasure is another's embarrassment or pain. He relishes his reputation of having a sharp tongue, of being a master of invective, of being able to cast such subtly sarcastic darts that the victim is socially dead before he realizes he has been struck. Sometimes we describe him, helplessly, as a difficult person. But he is really a savage. Perhaps he does not physically torture his victim, burn him at the stake, rush off with his victim's scalp or make a stealthy attack upon him at dawn. But he does do all that is the social equivalent of just these things. Many a victim has felt scalped after the attack of one of these social savages; and many a matron, striding victoriously away from an engagement of this kind, certainly gives the impression of having her victim's scalp dangling from her belt even though, with proper dignity, she suppresses her victorious war-whoop. We may be maligning the savages in making a comparison between their physical attack and the social attack of social savages. Normally the savage has some reason for his attack, frequently it was a revenge for serious injustice; but these savages of civilization need no excuse to let loose the terrors of their attack.

It is not difficult to visualize the damage done by the social savage to his victims, particularly with painful memories rendering such invaluable assistance. Yet the damage he does to himself is even more devastating. He immerses himself in that personal provincialism that we call uncouthness; he builds a wall about himself, driving men savagely away from all contact with him and imposing upon himself an isolation that becomes increasingly bitter with the passing years.

Common origin of social effeminacy and savagery -- contempt

Like the flatterer, the social savage nurses a contempt for others; specifically, a contempt for their feelings which are not to be compared with his own satisfaction. But even so, his contempt for men is a lesser thing than that indulged in by the flatterer; at least the social savage pays us the compliment of social violence a much more satisfying thing than the secret snigger of the flatterer at the fool who swallows his flattery.

Social exile by defect of liberality

The truthful man and the friendly man give themselves to the social life. The liberal man gives a much lesser gift -- his goods -- but with a similar result of tying men closer to himself, making himself a more intimate participator of the unity of men in the social organism. Taken strictly, liberality is a regulator of the love, desire and pleasure in money and the things money can buy. More remotely, but much more evidently to others, liberality deals with the possessions of a man; in concrete terms, the liberal man uses riches well. The corollary of that statement of the nature of liberality is that the liberal man uses men well, never placing riches above them; his every act is an implicit compliment to his own humanity and the humanity of others, fully justifying the opinion that he is a man of refreshingly sound common sense whose scale of values leaves no doubt but what it is the man who tosses the coin, not the coin the man. As a result the liberal man never lacks friends. And they are real friends, friends who in their turn, when their means allow, show an equal or even a superior liberality. Indeed, often the shock of personal contact with liberality will awaken a man to the real value of his own humanity and of the humanity of those around him.

The nature of liberality

Liberality is not the greatest of the virtues. It may be one of the least, for it deals with the least of the goods of man. But it is a rough, homely, common sense virtue of tremendous social importance, an importance that is seen best, perhaps, in the sins against liberality.

Social extravagance -- prodigality

There is, for instance, the sin of extravagance, the sin of the man who carries liberality to an excess. He throws money away and, of course, a host of followers gather around him like buzzards around a dead body; yet, paradoxically, the very number of his followers only emphasizes his exile. Soon the extravagant

man is forced to think of everyone in terms of a "loan"; his evaluation of humanity goes down steadily and receives a confirmation in the fact that when his money is gone so also are his friends. Even if his money holds out and his "friends" never leave him out of their sight, he gets no closer to men but rather farther away; for he gets little from his friends but the flatterer's contempt for a fool.

On the other hand, the greedy man is even more emphatically severed from men. At least the extravagant, the prodigal man puts men and women in their right place -- far above money. The greedy man puts money above absolutely everything else; even, sometimes above himself, to the point of starving himself in order to amass money. His contempt for humanity is countered by his fellows through their contempt for his greed; the miser goes into a voluntary exile as effectively as if he had locked himself up in a cell and dropped the key down a drain pipe.

Social niggardliness -- avarice

Avarice, the sin of the greedy man, may seem only a slight sin in its direct opposition to liberality; liberality is, after all, not one of the greatest of the virtues, so avarice cannot be one of the greatest of the vices. But avarice so easily steps over the boundaries of justice that it is no trick at all to catch it poaching on the rights of others. There is great danger in its inherent gravity; but that danger is as nothing compared to the danger involved in avarice precisely as a capital sin. Here it is the father of a family; we must reckon not only with the sin itself but with all its dangerously ugly offspring.

In fact, in another place, St. Thomas has called avarice one of the roots of all sins, giving it a place just below pride. As a capital sin it proudly presents its children to the world: betrayal of friends, cheating, deceit, perjury, restlessness, violence, hard-heartedness. Understand that these are not the enumerations of an orator trying to frighten his audience away from avarice. These sins are logically, inevitably connected with the sin of avarice. The greedy man is head over heels in love with money; he will hold desperately to the conquest he has made and be on fire for still more of money's caresses. Of course he will go too far in holding to what money he has; and he will go too far in trying to get more. He will be restless and worried about his present treasure, prepared to go to any violent lengths to acquire more; ready even to deceive men, cheat them, and confirm his cheating and deception by calling God to witness. In his eyes, all these things are paltry compared to the beauty of money. Since he has placed money so high in his scale of values, he will not hesitate to sacrifice men for its sake, even those who are closest to him; even one who is the Son of God, if there are thirty pieces of silver to be had for the betrayal.

We have now seen all the equipment for and the dangers to social life. It is time to look back over it all for a composite view, lest we overemphasize a detail and mar the whole picture. Perhaps it would be better to look up rather than look back, for the unifying power of the social order is the shadow of God hovering over it all, softening the light and tempering the heat of divine power. You will remember that we said religion looked to God as to the First Beginning and the Last End; that piety looked to parents and to country as participating the principality of God; while observance looked to superiors as participating the principality of parents. In other words, we have seen that the relation of parent to child is as the relation of God to His creatures; the relation of superiors to their citizens as the relation of parents to children.

The benign paternity of God smiles on the whole social structure. Every unit of it is a mirroring of the divine Fatherhood, a ray of that source of light, dimmer as we get farther and farther away, but immediately dependent on that single source of brightness. It is because of the principality of God that parents have a claim to reverence from their children; it is because of the principality of parents and country that superiors have a claim to obedience and reverence from their subjects.

Perfection of the social instinct -- the gift of piety

The perfection of social life is seen in the concept of paternity. The perfection of our payment of social debts, social obligations, is seen in the reverence and honor given to God, our common Father. To look at God as our Father is an appealing thing and yet it is a difficult thing. It is appealing because it touches the deepest chords in our nature. We are His children more truly than we are the children of our own parents;

we owe Him a deeper, more perpetual debt; to Him we come with our smallest troubles, our smallest joys, at every critical moment in our life, and, with even more familiarity, in those moments that are not at all critical. But it is a difficult thing because it is not easy to be familiar with God. For that we need help, help, in fact, of a member of the family of God; the help of God Himself, God the Holy Ghost. We need both a divine push and a responsiveness to that push such as is offered by the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and this particular responsiveness for social perfection is given to us as the gift of piety.

The nature of this gift

The gift of piety makes us easily and promptly responsive to the movements of the Holy Ghost. It inspires us to look upon and to reverence God as our Father, as the Father of all men, as the benign Father of all humanity. The operation of this gift is more or less taken for granted by the Catholic; familiarity with God seems natural to him who has been addressing God as Father since he was first able to lisp a prayer. He has been a member of the household of divinity for so long that it almost seems too ordinary a thing to single out for special consideration; but it is no ordinary thing to belong to the family of God. That family relationship which is the bond of our union is more penetrating than the bond of common blood; it is as deep as our dependence on God. The gift of piety in action, then, gives us a model for our reverence to parents and superiors for, in a lesser way than God, they too are our principles, our beginnings.

Its distinction from religion, filial fear and the virtue of piety

It must be clearly understood that the gift of piety is not the virtue of religion; this latter bows to the first principle and the last goal, by its subjection paying a debt of justice. Nor is it the virtue of piety by which we give reverence to our carnal parents; rather the gift of piety looks to the very source of parenthood. It is by no means to be confused with that fear which is a reverent awe of divine majesty. Rather this is a child's response to a loving Father Who is God.

Its extension to all men

The gift of piety represents the climax of social fitness. It is a statement of the sublime heights to which a man can climb in his social life, a height reached not by tearing down but by looking up. It is social manhood, with all the full strength and vigor of adult age. We have come a long way to this full social manhood from its feeble beginnings of social infancy; for there it was a question of just the minimum strength and vigor necessary for life itself. Or, to abandon metaphorical terms, we have come a long way from the minimum demands of justice, which were the absolute essentials of social life, to this peak of social fitness which is the gift of piety. Nevertheless it is essential that we have a very clear idea of those bare essentials of social life, those demands of babyhood; for they remain the essentials of any stage of social life.

Minimum demands for social unity -- the Ten Commandments

The minimum demands of social fitness are stated in the Ten Commandments. It is most fitting that those commands should have been underscored by the finger of God; for without them we cannot hope for life either in the kingdom of man or in the kingdom of God. Like all things essential -- like breathing, seeing, digesting -- these precepts of justice have an air of easy naturalness about them. They all deal with justice and justice is the most evident of our obligations. If a man's horizons are limited to his own mirror he might, by a peculiar blindness, see himself as self-sufficient, completely in command, with obligations only to himself. But as soon as he steps out into the world of men, these illusions are shattered; other men will not let him make the mistake of thinking they do not count, they will insist that he see that he has obligations to others, that he is not the lord of all men but rather the companion of all men. These precepts have their easy air not merely because they flow immediately from the first principles of natural law, but also because their obligation is so easily seen and so readily agreed to by man.

General character of the Decalogue -- precepts of justice; Particular character of the Decalogue

All of the Ten Commandments are really commands of justice; they demand only that we respect the rights of others, that we refrain from injury to another. Naturally enough, the supreme rights of God are protected first: the first two commandments removing the injuries or impediments of superstition and irreligion; the third, with the impediments removed, gets us down to an actual payment of our debt of religion. In the fourth commandment, the rights of parents, country and superiors are protected; and finally, in the others, the rights of men as men have their sacred character written on them by the hand of God, rights that embrace the personal, the domestic and the proprietary fields. And the protection given is absolute, against all injury, whether by thought, word or deed,

It is to be understood, of course, that these commandments are not licenses to do anything that they do not mention; adultery is by no means an exhaustive statement of the sins against purity. Rather these commandments are general or root terms, statements that include all sins against justice. We are not asked to stretch our imaginations to cover all impurity with the blanket prohibition of adultery; that particular sin is mentioned because it is the most obvious violation of justice in the line of impurity. Thus, also, the inclusion of all superiors under the fourth commandment is not a matter of reading things into the orders of God; reverence to parents is simply the most obvious of the obligations of reverence, that which will be most easily seen and readily agreed to by men. In other words, the Ten Commandments are the least statement of the secondary principles of the natural law in their most obvious application. Their form is merely another example of God stooping graciously to our level, making as easy and obvious as possible the path by which we shall find our way home to Him.

Equity and the Decalogue

There is one particularly noteworthy characteristic of this law which makes a fitting conclusion to St. Thomas' tract on justice. In human law our obedience can never be absolute; sometimes it would be evil to follow the letter of the law, against justice and against the common good. After all, human legislators are not omniscient; they do the best they can, striking an average and legislating for what usually happens. In individual cases, which of course they cannot foresee much less legislate for, something special is needed to preserve justice; some special virtue which will really protect the lawgiver's intention of meting out justice. It is not an attack on the majesty of law but a defense of the honesty of both law and legislator to insist on the special virtue of equity to protect justice in the individual case.

Now the peculiar characteristic of this divine law is that no equity is needed. Indeed no equity is possible; this law deals with what happens, not in most cases, but in absolutely all cases. It flows from the roots of nature itself and the greatest injustice that could be done to the individual would be to enable him to pass out of the limits of this law. God did not overlook anything, there was no individual case which He did not foresee or could not legislate for; for God, you see, is not a human legislator. This law commands the essential; it is not affected by circumstances, by this or that age, this or that economic development. It is the law for all men, in all times, under all circumstances. Perhaps all this is said very simply when we insist that the virtue of equity is the superior rule of human action and there is no higher rule of human action than the law of God; or, still more simply, God is God and man is man even in the business of legislation.

Conclusion: Virtue and society: General necessity of virtue in society

Let us try to sum up, not only what has been done in this chapter, but in the past few chapters on justice. Let us take one last glance at the social life of man. In the preceding volume of this work we spoke of virtues, identifying them as good, operative habits, as the habits which were the immediate principles of good actions. Now it is precisely by action that men come into contact one with another; it is by this that men are linked together, and it is by good actions that men are bound together in one social unit. Why? Because it is only for good actions that men need help to struggle on to perfection. No man needs help to fail, to commit sin, to degrade himself; but he does need help for fuller life, for the development possible

through social life. The virtuous man, then, is the best citizen; he is linked most closely to other citizens and, at the same time, he offers most to that common life of society.

Particular necessity

This may have the hollow ring of a pompous platitude; but let us look at it more closely in the light of what we have seen in these last few chapters. For a fuller perfection for ourselves and for the guarantee and protection of the rights of others, i.e., for social life, the very least requirements are justice, religion, piety, observance and dulia. To go up a step higher to more perfect social life, we must have gratitude, truth, friendliness, liberality. Finally, for the complete perfection of social life, the gift of the Holy Ghost which is piety is necessary. All of these are habits; all are good, operative habits. In other words, all of them are virtues; and in proportion as they are more perfectly possessed, the individual becomes so much more of an asset to society.

According as a society is made up more fully of virtuous men, men possessed not only of the virtues demanded for the minimum of social life, but also those which make for the perfection of social life, that society is more perfect. Virtue is not something that can exist in society without hurting anyone's feelings or impeding the flow of traffic; it is something that must exist if society is to exist. It is by virtue that men are tied one to another; and it is in that linking of man to man that society has its essential origin.

The Church versus a godless society: The enemy and the friend

This will, I think, make clear the real issues involved in the modern battle which is becoming more and more an open fight, the battle between the Church and godless groups. This consideration of virtuous society certainly seems to show that on the outcome of this battle hangs the fate of society itself. There is considerable confusion in men's minds today as to which is the friend, and which is the enemy of society, the champions of godliness or the champions of sanctity; but the issue is clear and the answer simple when we understand the relation of virtue to society. Any group that abandons virtue, that condemns it, that does its utmost to root it out, is beyond doubt society's bitterest enemy. Any group that cultivates virtue, that insists upon its practice as the uppermost concern in the life of a man, is by that token alone the most valuable friend that human society can have.

Solver of difficulties

Indeed, we are doing the Church an injustice if we stop at the insistence that she is the friend of society. We are not saying nearly enough when we go further and maintain that, because of her exhaustive knowledge of and championship of virtue, particularly of the virtue of justice, she has the answer to the problems of society. The Church is more than a friend, more than a solver of difficulties; she is the protector of the absolute fundamentals of social life. Not, you understand, of the absolutely essential virtue of justice alone; but of the very integrators of society -- of the family upon which it is modeled and from which it proceeds. There is still one step to take: the Church is the protector of the very humanity of man, without which anything human, society included, is utterly inconceivable.

Protector of fundamentals

In this chapter we spoke of the social savage and noticed his provincial character of uncouthness; he has cut himself off from men and that separation has made itself evident in his very uncouthness. Culture is one of the products to be expected of social life; as a part of social life, it should be brought about by precisely those things that are most conducive to the perfection of social life. As the social life improves so the deeper and greater should be the culture it produces. Yet, if we ask what are the things that are most conducive to the perfection of society, our only answer can be, the virtues: justice, religion, piety, observance, gratitude, truth, friendliness, liberality and the gift of piety. Culture and the virtues, then, are not to be separated.

Champion of culture

The significance of this truth can hardly be overestimated. Obviously it means that culture is not something to be found in the books that have been read, the plays that have been seen, the languages that have been mastered or the tastes that have been acquired. All of these are more or less superficial indications of an intense social life, past or present; but they are superficial and they are merely indications. They can be, and in fact have been, cut off from the deep roots and living sources of social perfection from which, originally, they spring. It is possible to have an entirely artificial culture, an inherited culture, for instance, which has no relation to the age in which a man lives. But of course such a culture is decadent.

It is a far cry from that living culture which explains the French peasant's contagious pleasure and proud welcome of a stranger to his evening repast of bread, wine and cheese or the protective strength in which the voyager is enveloped as the Irish peasant, with one and the same gesture, throws open the door of his cottage and the door of his heart. An artificial culture is separated from the life of a society and is as ghastly a thing as theatrical make-up seen in bright sunlight. Just as the perfection of social life is rooted in the perfection of virtue. so also the truest culture is something that need not be coaxed along in a kind of social hot-house. It is the inescapable product of a man, a virtuous man, living in society.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XIV -- THE FULLNESS OF COURAGE (Q. 123-127)

1. The oldest of the virtues:
 - (a) The word "fortitude" in antiquity.
 - (b) Double significance of the testimony of antiquity.
 2. The great impediment to human living -- cowardice.
 3. True and false courage.
 4. The object of courage:
 - (a) Fear and daring.
 - (b) Dangers of death.
 - (c) Other dangers.
 5. The acts of courage:
 - (a) To sustain and attack.
 - (b) The joy and sorrow of the act of courage!
 - (c) A norm of courage -- emergencies.
 6. Instruments of courage:
 - (a) Tranquillity.
 - (b) Anger and desire.
 7. The place of courage among the virtues.
 8. The courage of martyrs:
 - (a) The nature of martyrdom.
 - (b) The virtues behind martyrdom.
 - (c) Perfection of the courage of martyrdom.
 - (d) Causes of martyrdom.
 9. The breakdown of courage:
 - (a) Cowardice.
 - (b) Fearlessness and its causes.
 - (c) Daring.
- Conclusion:
1. Progressive need of courage:
 - (a) for human life.
 - (b) for Catholic life.
 2. The tragedy of fearlessness
 3. The course of cowardice:
 - (a) Factual cowardice.
 - (b) Factual and philosophic cowardice.
 4. The moderns and the martyrs.

CHAPTER XIV -- THE FULLNESS OF COURAGE (Q. 123-127)

DREAMING has played its constant part in the life of men from the very beginning. For the most part it has always been considered a luxury to be saved for the odd moments of life. The man who spent most or all of his time in dreams was decidedly an exception; he was a man apart, sometimes looked upon kindly, sometimes not so kindly. And it is a not inconsiderable compliment to the non-dreamers among men that so few of the dreamers have starved to death.

Much of human progress has been due to the long dreams of far-seeing men -- translated into action by the non-dreamers -- but for the most part men have concentrated much more on the present than on the future, there have always been more laborers than seers, more realists than idealists. In a way this was an inevitable corollary of the recognition of the fact that there is always considerable difficulty in the business of living humanly. At times men have exaggerated that difficulty to such a degree as to drive themselves to despair; but from the beginning men saw the fundamental necessity of facing life's difficulty. They saw clearly the need of something within a man that would ward off the threat to the humanity of man's life and actions, for they were keenly aware of the positive existence of such threats.

The oldest of the virtues: The word "fortitude" in antiquity

The depth of this universal conviction is seen from the fact that the particular virtue by which man wards off such threats -- the virtue of fortitude or courage -- has given its name to all the virtues. The Latin and Greek words for "virtue" also mean fortitude or strength; in fact, going a little deeper, we find that the

word itself is sprung from the same root from which, in both Latin and Greek, we derive the word man. It would seem that there was a kind of identification of manhood with courage. When we push the etymological investigation a little further and discover that from these same roots came the words for robustness, virility and even the name of the god of war, there can be no doubt that the men of antiquity believed that humanity and strength were inescapably linked.

Double significance of the testimony of antiquity

In this sense the virtue of fortitude or courage is the oldest of the virtues. It was one of the virtues immediately recognized as such by all men; and that recognition has left its permanent mark both upon the life of man and the human accounts of virtue. All this discussion of words and their roots is not merely academic; it is a testimony to two fundamental truths of human life, i.e., that courage is necessary for human life, human action and human responsibility, and that cowardice is a denial or an escape from humanity.

The great impediment to human living -- cowardice

In other words, it has been clearly seen and frankly admitted by all, from the very beginning, that a man must make the conquest of fear before he can begin to live. He must sustain that conquest of fear as long as he hopes to continue to live humanly. For he is surrounded, indeed, penetrated with dangers; if he shrinks from those dangers, he is forever paralyzed. The dangers will not be dissolved by his cowardly attempts to escape them.

Even a poet cannot lie long on the bosom of mother nature. The picture of nature as a kindly mother and man as easily masterful are fictions of the French Encyclopedists concocted from the dreams by which they tried to escape the gutters of Paris. Nature is not the type of friend to be chosen for a stroll along a dark, quiet street; at least not until she has been searched for weapons. She is a constant threat to man. In winter he may freeze to death, in summer he may be felled by sunstroke; in the fall or spring wet weather may bring on pneumonia. Hail, snow, lightning, floods are not friendly gestures to man or his works; the wild beasts that inhabit the face of the earth are not rollicking pets, growling and grimacing to amuse man. Even in his own nature man will find what is perhaps the most serious of all threats: the threat of the foulness of degradation, of slavery, of despair if the animal side of his complex nature gets the upper hand.

Human life is no adventure for a coward; either cowardice must go or the humanity of man's life must go. Because men have always rightly prized that by which they are men, their very humanity, courage has always been given recognition and honor from all men of all times. It is of the brave man that it is so constantly said: "There is a man." We find it easy to understand this because it is easy for us to understand the great love we have for our own humanity. We cannot hate people because they too can love, can will, can understand, can fail; these are all distinctly human things that serve as bonds tying us closely to all our fellow-men. We may be jealous of a brave man, but we cannot hate his bravery: rather it is as entirely natural for us to give spontaneous expression to our respect for courage, so natural, indeed, that often anything remotely resembling true human courage has received the applause of men.

True and false courage

If we stand breathless and safe on a sidewalk watching a structural steel worker, forty stories up, stroll around on the beams of a skeleton building, or sit in a ringside seat and watch the professional boxer advance undaunted in the face of what, to us, would be serious danger, we are letting our applause trickle over the edge of the full glass to fall wasted. These men are not so much brave as experienced; these things are no longer dangerous for them. Certainly the cashier who laughs in the face of a bandit under the impression that it is all a joke is stupid not brave.

The mere facing of danger does not make a man brave. In a fit of anger a man may plunge headlong into danger; but he is not brave, he is inhuman, he has allowed his passion to take control of his action. The

attraction of money, the search for pleasure, the horror of pain, of disgrace may all cast a man in an heroic role for a moment. But it is only a role and only for a moment. When the footlights are out and the curtain is down, the appearance of courage is wiped off with the make-up; for none of these enable a man to face the task of living humanly. A false mustache does not fool nature. To face nature, the dangers that nature offers to human living, the threats that humanity itself offers to the life of man, it is necessary to have courage that is authentic.

And that authentic courage is the moral virtue which makes a man prompt to undergo the dangers and support the labors of human life according to the demands of human reason, not according to the demands of ignorance, passion, mistaken enthusiasm or a diabolic slavery. It is important that we insist on that note of reason in fortitude, the note fundamental to all virtue; for insistence on the reasonable control and regulation of courage accurately outlines the part of fortitude in human life.

After all, the perfection of man consists in the good of reason, in following the rule of reason; that is, his perfection consists in living humanly. The essential rectification of reason itself is accomplished by the intellectual virtues, particularly by the intellectual virtue of prudence; the establishment of reason's order in the outside world of human things and human actions is the work of justice. There still remains the establishment of that order of reason in the inside world, the world within a man himself; and that is done by removing the impediments ordered to reason by the passions: first by the impediments offered by way of repulsion which are handled by fortitude; then the impediments offered by way of enticement or allurement, which are the proper material of temperance. The first takes care of the irascible or emergency appetite; the second, of the concupiscible or mild appetite.

The object of courage: Fear and daring

Fortitude, then, is a kind of bodyguard of reason. If its frowns do not scatter the threats to reason, it resorts to blows. Anything that might overthrow the sovereignty of reason by repelling a man from the road down which reason says he must go is a proper target for the thunderbolts of fortitude. That is, fortitude deals with the dangers and labors of human life; or, more strictly, with the passions of fear and daring aroused by these dangers and labors. For, after all, danger and labor do not necessarily drive a man from the road of reason; a man can get to love his labor or to relish danger and so find in the two no particular obstacle to reason's sovereignty. It is when they are feared or when they arouse a reckless daring that there is talk of reason's abdication; and it is then that fortitude must come to grips with reason's enemies to insure the reasonable character of a man's life.

Dangers of death

The work of fortitude or courage, then, is to limit fear and restrain daring. In fact, we can limit the principal object of fortitude by a simple appeal to experience. The man who can lift fifty pounds can lift five, the musician who can play Bach will hardly find great difficulty in the simple finger exercises of a beginner; so a man who can face the supreme dangers of life will hardly shrink from life's petty threats. That is why fortitude's primary object is to prepare man to face the greatest dangers of life; not that it sits back waiting for the supreme danger to show itself, but, equipped for the main force of the enemy, it makes short shift of his advance patrols. In a word, the object of courage is to prepare a man to face death, for death is the most terrible of all corporal evils, destroying as it does all corporal goods.

Other dangers

There is a great significance in the fact that if we are to be brave we must face death itself. For by this it is plain that, since death is the greatest thing we have to fear, our life is by no means a thing of terror; all that we have to fear is corporal perils. Considering the high goal and splendid possibilities of man, it is a petty thing that threatens human life, a mere corporal evil. Yet, because the corporal is an integral part of man's very nature, even this danger is not a petty thing to a man.

However, it is not lack of fortitude that pulls the covers over our head at a loud peal of thunder or the

stealthy tread of a burglar at night. It is not cowardice that snaps shut the unfinished detective story and sends a man scuttling off to bed when a window shade all unexpectedly runs up with a bang at midnight. These things can happen to the most idle of men; whereas Christian courage has its work cut out for it precisely in the pursuit of good; it strengthens man to face the dangers and impediments that may hold him back from the attainment of good.

Every virtue, as a good habit, drives on to its own particular good; in fact, every virtue is unsatisfied with any but the highest good in its own line. No virtue staggers through life in a middle-aged weariness whose illusion is disillusionment and to which compromise is a way of life; virtue is not to be satisfied with a partial or half-hearted control of reason in its own line. It insists upon a whole and complete subordination to the commands of reason. Fortitude is no exception; it trains its guns on the higher dangers that are connected with the pursuits of the higher good. In his attempt to express this thought and summarize the principal objects of Christian courage, St. Thomas hit upon a happy phrase. He says the object of fortitude is to enable a man to face death in a public or private war; that is, in defense of the high human good which is the common good, or in pursuit of the divine good of virtue.

Not that we need a bullet-proof vest for the practice of chastity; virtue does not hold out the same extreme and constant threat of death as is to be found in the attack of an infantry company on a machine-gun nest. Nevertheless, the practice of virtue is really a first-class war, a war that endures the length of a lifetime. Indeed, among a people hostile to Christian ideals, or in a time of positive persecution, the practice of virtue may involve greater and more constant risks than a private faces in a physical war. At any rate, fortitude is always necessary for a man because a man is always at war. There is no Maginot Line in which he can take his secure comfort. He is always engaged in his private, inner war of facing down the threats and labors which make up so much of his living and which, rightly handled, form the stepping-stones by which he climbs to divine heights.

In an almost infinite series just below the threat to the common good and to the divine good of virtue, are ranged the whole gamut of grave evils that make human life such an adventure and that threaten again and again to swamp the heart of a man with a tidal wave of fear. Precisely as difficulties, these evils are handled by the corresponding virtues. Thus abstinence from overindulgence in drink, with all the difficulty it involves, is taken care of by the virtue of temperance. But as sources of fear, these evils are the proper material of fortitude. Because a whisky bottle does not roar like a lion, let no one think the drunkard is not afraid of drink, terribly afraid; in his fight he needs much more than the help that temperance can give him, he needs the solid strength of courage. In a very real sense, courage plays its part in the practice of every virtue, for every virtue has its difficulty and every difficulty can be a source of fear to man.

The acts of courage: To sustain and attack

Of the two passions, fear and reckless daring, with which courage must deal, by far the most difficult is fear. It is much more fundamental, more vehement, more completely opposed to the whole vital motion of human life. Fortitude and reckless daring have something of the external resemblance of twins; the one is too boisterous, always looking for trouble, a bit of a swaggering tough, but it is a much simpler task to tone down the boisterousness than to stiffen up the collapsing backbone of a man stricken with fear. It is not nearly so laborious to let off steam as it is to build up. Consequently the principal and most difficult act of courage deals with the passion of fear. That principal and most difficult act is to stand firmly in the face of danger in spite of fear, to sustain the danger and difficulty. An actual attack on difficulties is really a much easier, a secondary act of fortitude.

This is hardly the common estimation of courage. The smashing attack of a cavalry charge has a stronger appeal to our imagination than a man's dogged refusal to quit; yet if we look at the matter closely, we are forced to admit that we have been captivated by the vividness and swift movement of the dramatic rather than by the solid worth of courage. The truth of the matter is that it is much harder to stand up before an enemy who is admittedly stronger, to hold on knowing that defense is the limit of our powers, than it is to lash out in a joyous conviction of strength, ourselves becoming the attackers. The attacker, you see, has his

difficulties still before him, they are future rather than imminent; and it is much more difficult to face present difficulties than future ones. It is more difficult, though far less dramatic, to cling to resistance in the face of a beating while the weary hours, days and years stagger on, than in one swift movement to smash against an enemy.

The joy and sorrow of the act of courage!

Perhaps some of the inaccurate estimates of courage are due, in some measure, to the semblance of defeat in merely sustaining danger. Undoubtedly there is an appearance of inferiority, of bruising physical defeat, of hopelessness where all we can do is just hold on; all of these things are, indeed, present in the act of courage which is sustaining, but we are blind indeed if we do not see, shining through these ragged garments, the beauty of the courage that refuses to relinquish the good. As a matter of fact, we do, and not infrequently, see through that fog of defeat to the splendor of the victory being won by courage. We do not think for a moment that the courage of a bully is to be compared to that of his much smaller victim who refuses to be bullied, though he cannot help being beaten; however inferior he may be in skill and strength, we refuse to admit that the prize-fighter who goes down again and again and refuses to stay down, refuses to admit defeat, is in any way inferior to that of his conqueror.

We may admire the fighter's courage but we certainly do not envy his pains and aches when the fight is over and done with. There is always a sad side to the act of courage. There is physical pain involved; a tremendous sweep of the passion of sorrow; there is even spiritual sorrow in the will. In Christ's long agony His body was racked from head to toe with physical pain; He Himself said that His soul was sorrowful even unto death; and at that last moment, sorrow invaded even His spiritual faculties and brought forth that desolate question: "Why hast Thou abandoned me?" Courage is not all a matter of parades, bright uniforms, applause for the returning heroes and modest disclaimers; it involves sorrow, sorrow in plenty. But it also has its joy.

The sustaining of labors and dangers will never rival a cigarette as an after-breakfast pleasure; it does not bring a physical pleasure that will cancel out its physical pain, nor does it offer a breakwater against the wave of sorrow which comes from the sense appetite. But it does bring a spiritual joy that more than cancels out the intellectual sorrow, the sorrow of the will. It brings a joy of manhood, even of supermanhood; the joy of acting for ends worthy of a man and even above men, i.e., for the ends of fortitude and of charity. Indeed, in the operation of the supernatural or infused virtue of courage, it has happened, not rarely, that this spiritual joy has been so great as to make a man insensible to all else, even to terrible physical pain. Many of the martyrs slipped through the door of death as a child slips through the door of sleep, with the quiet radiance of a smile, while their executioners were gripped by horror. It was Judas who despaired, not Christ; it was the Roman jailors who wept, not Cecilia; it was Thomas More who ascended the scaffold laughing and joking, not his executioner.

But this is extraordinary. Most of us must face our danger, our labors in the conviction that there will be pain and sorrow connected with them, pain and sorrow, perhaps, that will shake the very foundations of our soul. But whatever it be, that pain and sorrow is as nothing compared with the joy of following in the footsteps of a Master Who was neither a coward nor a fool; Who was, besides being God, also a man.

In the preceding volume, treating of the passions, we spoke of the man who, in a rush of thoughtless anger, flares up to a fighting fever and is willing to face any enemy; but then, just as quickly, he cools off, is willing, indeed, anxious to quit after the first blow has been struck. He has suddenly discovered that there are other angles to this business of fighting, angles not at all pleasant. Opposed to this type of fighter was the slow starter, the doggedly persevering man whose actions were ruled by reason; he has thought things out carefully before, has foreseen the danger and in spite of it, gone ahead. That is the difference between the passion of daring and the virtue of courage.

A norm of courage -- emergencies

For fortitude or courage is a virtue, and like all the moral virtues it is ruled by reason. If given a choice it

would prefer to have a little time to think and prepare for the dangers it is about to face. Yet an emergency, which gives no time for thought, is one of the best test of courage. Given time enough, even men without the virtue of courage might possibly fortify their souls against danger; but in the split second given for action in an emergency, our nature and that second nature we have built in through habit come instantly to the surface. A hero is not made on the instant that he leaps to rescue a child from an onrushing truck. He is made in the long, slow years before, while courage was being grafted on his very nature through the formation of habit.

The naturally timid man, who must have a wage increase to support his family, acts with deliberate fortitude when he paces the outer office and calls up all the reasons he has for anger and resentment at his present salary. When there is a little time to prepare, a brave man quite deliberately selects the tools for his action. If attack be called for, he will wield such an elusive instrument as moderate anger which, of its very nature, rises to attack an enemy. It may be he will have to go deeper and call on the passion of sorrow as a means of arousing anger, or, with true diplomacy, call in the quietly powerful force of desire to emphasize the good which defeat would have him surrender. He is not being cowardly; he is a strategist coolly making sure of his supplies and ammunition before launching an attack.

Instruments of courage: Tranquillity

For anger, sorrow and desire are helps for the lesser act of courage which is attack. No passion offers any help to the more difficult act of holding on in the face of fear and danger; that is a product of reason alone. To hold to good in spite of danger demands a tranquil soul, a calm willingness to face loss, even to seek loss rather than run; and no passion is a help to tranquillity. It is not by passion that a man weighs his chances and his choices; it is not by passion that his choice falls upon the goodness of his reason, his humanity, his God, a choice that turns an undaunted face to whatever loss, whatever pain, whatever sorrow may be necessary to hold on to the one thing that counts. No one has yet been able to give an answer to that one question of Christ: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul, or what return shall a man make for his soul?" There is no answer. There is no choice for a brave man. His courage consists precisely in acknowledging that fact and refusing to tell himself there is a choice in spite of the unceasing flow of sophistries suggested by cowardice.

Difficulties and dangers are the air courage breathes, the food on which it is nourished. If we were to identify difficulty with virtue (a frequent enough mistake), then fortitude would stand at the top and charity at the bottom; for there is nothing more difficult than courage and nothing more joyous than charity. But difficulty is not the norm of excellence in virtue; rather, that norm is the good at which a particular virtue aims. On this ground fortitude must take a lower place. Its work is the humble work of a pre-cursor, preparing the way of other virtues, levelling the hills and filling the valleys; removing the impediments that hinder the smooth, swift action of other virtues.

The place of courage among the virtues

Of course fortitude is far beneath the divine virtues of faith, hope and charity whose object is God Himself. Even in the order of the moral virtues, fortitude ranks beneath prudence, which has the order of reason essentially, and justice, which produces that order in the external world. Fortitude has not the order of reason, nor does it produce that order in the world; rather, it protects or conserves it. It is a bodyguard of order. But because it does protect reason against the more serious threats, it ranks above temperance. Temperance, too, guards reason; not against fear and danger, but against the soft blandishments of pleasure.

Still we must not think that, because fortitude sits towards the end of the table, that it is not a member of the family of virtue but merely a faithful old slave, tolerated and loved in an aloofly superior fashion. It, too, is a cardinal virtue, along with prudence, justice and temperance; it, too, is a root virtue dealing with an outstanding material of human life, a virtue which has for its characteristic note an element which is absolutely universal in human living. Dangers and difficulties are not affairs that enter into only some few

lives; nor is firmness a thing which can be missing from the life of any man. This is the solid foundation of antiquity's judgment on the importance of courage; for courage must run through all of our lives, all of our acts.

The courage of martyrs: The nature of martyrdom

A more graphic appreciation of the importance of fortitude and its great power can be quickly had by a moment's thought on its supreme act. As that highest act of courage is finished, the gates of heaven swing wide and a brave man, who has produced that supreme act, that singular testimony to Christian truth which we call martyrdom, in one step passes from earth to heaven. No martyr sneaks into heaven like a thief; there is no martyr who stumbles into heaven as though he had been hurled along by a hurricane of prayer. There is no hesitation or dallying along the way for the martyr, that he might shine up just a little more for a fitting entry into the city of God. Rather the martyr sweeps into heaven like a conqueror coming home. That is precisely what he is. He has lost his life in order to find it; he has made the difficult choice of death in preference to desertion of the faith or of virtue. He has conquered death like his Master; and often he has a penitent slipping into heaven in the wake of his royal welcome, for many a martyr has brought his executioner to heaven.

Every martyr goes straight to heaven. That is a tremendous effect to be produced by any virtue, in fact, the supreme effect of all the virtues. How can it be produced by this humble precursor of the virtues? The temperate man does not walk straight from death into life because he has refrained from taking enough drink to keep him from walking straight in any direction. The humble cannot slip by purgatory by waving their humility as a kind of passport. Nor does the penitent's regret necessarily entitle him to an instant embrace by the King of glory. Christ Himself gave the answer to the difficulty when He said: "Greater love than this no man hath, that he give up his life for his friend." That is the real secret. Courage has not worked alone in martyrdom but with the mighty impulse of charity, of friendship. Consequently it has carried far beyond the ordinary ends of courage to the end of charity, to God Himself.

The virtues behind martyrdom

A devil's advocate has no case against a martyr. Such a man is certainly a man of virtue. He has stood firm in truth and justice, which is the very essence of virtue. He has held to the good of reason in its proper object, which is truth, and in its proper effects in the appetite of man, that is, justice or sanctity. He is a brave man, for he has stood against the great evil of death in a private war for the divine good of virtue. He is a man of faith, for he has witnessed to that faith even at the cost of his life; and he is a man of charity, for the norm of friendship is sacrifice and he has made the supreme sacrifice.

Perfection of the courage of martyrdom

The lukewarm religious who, in an attack of self-pity, sighs resignedly of the "living martyrdom" of religious life is babbling nonsense. Living martyrdom is as hopeless a contradiction as a self-pitying religious. A man must die to be a martyr; death is of the very essence of martyrdom, for martyrdom consists precisely in spurning all corporal goods to testify to the faith. After all, a man might give up his goods, his friends, suffer pain, all as a means to securing his life; or he might sincerely think himself willing to make the supreme sacrifice until he hears the whizz of the headsman's swinging axe. Indeed, a man might actually be willing to make that sacrifice; but the fact is that he has not passed the supreme test until he has actually died. He cannot be a witness because his surrender of all for the truth of the faith is not evident to the world.

The virgin who dies in defense of her purity is a martyr; so also is the priest who loses his life by administering the sacraments during a plague. For while it is true that most of the canonized martyrs have died in persecutions of the faith, and so in defense of the faith strictly so called, many others have died for the faith in the sense of the Christian life. It is not merely the refusal to deny the faith in words, but also the refusal to deny it in acts that is the cause of martyrdom. The work of any virtue can be the cause of martyrdom if, as is always the case of a man in the state of grace, the work of that virtue is referred to

God by charity.

Causes of martyrdom

The Catholic in Russia or Germany today who loses his life because he refuses to give up his Catholicity or any act demanded by that Catholicity, is truly a martyr; in fact he would be so even though the political authorities were acting against Christianity for purely political reasons. This man would die precisely because he was a Christian. Such men have voluntarily suffered death in the sense of preferring Catholicity to the preservation of their life.

The fact that a man is running full speed away from the enemies of the faith and is killed by a bullet in the back does not deny him the palm of martyrdom. In spite of his desperate effort to escape, the sacrifice of his life was a voluntary one; in fact, the reason for his very flight was his staunch refusal to give up the faith. However we cannot make a martyr out of the man who is killed in his sleep or of the drunkard who is garroted as he lies in the gutter. Neither of these men were capable of sacrifice. The Holy Innocents are the solitary exception; they were martyrs although they were incapable of a voluntary acceptance of death by their own wills.

Socrates, dying for truth, or a criminal who could save himself by a lie but refuses to, could not claim a martyr's crown. They might be called martyrs of natural virtue; but certainly they are not martyrs of Christ, nor have they a claim to martyrdom's reward. The same is true of the Christian who values his faith highly, so highly that he does undergo death rather than apostatize; but not highly enough to surrender the concubine with whom he has lived for years. There is something fine about this unswerving firmness of the human will; but not that supernatural fineness that gives a man in an instant the splendid beauty that could come to him only through a long period of suffering in purgatory. There is something fine about these things because there is something brave about them. These men have been courageous with a natural courage; but natural courage does not win us the supernatural rewards of heaven, precisely because it is only natural.

A soldier who dies in defense of his country, that is, in the practice of the virtue of observance, might well be a martyr; but he is not evidently so, for it is not evident that the practice of this particular virtue was referred to God. The Crusaders against Islam were certainly fighting for the faith, though their efforts were much more concentrated on shedding other men's blood for Christ rather than their own. In view of the dangers and difficulties they deliberately faced, we cannot deny that they were brave men; many thousands of them undoubtedly were martyrs, but it is also quite possible that many, many other thousands were not.

However, martyrs are found not only in arenas, armies, persecutions; they are to be readily found in much less publicized activities. An obvious example of our own day is that of the Christian mother who will not countenance the destruction of her unborn child as a means of preserving her own life. Or, again, there is the Catholic wife who refuses, in defense of justice and purity, to stoop to perversions of nature, even though such things might ward off a serious threat to her life.

An American magazine recently published the results of a scientific canvass of American women as to their attitude towards birth control and their reasons for their attitude. Among reasons offered in defense of the practice were economic considerations, the fear of giving birth to defectives, the desire to give better education to their children, the refusal to have children until they could be better taken care of, and so on. The significant thing about this list of causes is that it contains no mention of personal fear -- the fear of pain, of loss of beauty, of death. The reasons not alleged are even more significant than those that are given.

The breakdown of courage: Cowardice

They give a modern picture of a very old thing. The martyr stood in the arena before thousands and his courage left the bitterest of his enemies in a kind of awe. The coward hides his cowardice and leaves even himself ashamed. The brave man is a conqueror; the coward is conquered by fear. The coward slinks

away, without engaging in battle, to a defeat that robs him of a chance to lead a human life; he capitulates before the obstacles that must be removed before the march of life can get under way. Moreover, he knows he has been defeated. He knows that the contempt of men for his cowardice is but a vague hint compared to the roar of disapproval that must come from his inner self. He is in perpetual hiding, even perpetual hiding from himself.

Fearlessness and its causes

It is not, of course, wrong to feel fear. A good ghost story should cause goose flesh and shivers; a mysterious noise at night might well make our knees knock and our teeth chatter. There are things that should be feared, things like snakes, broken legs and tornadoes; but we should fear those things reasonably, not suffering damnation in an attempt to escape snakes. For if, feeling fear as every man does, we allow that fear to take command of our action, then we are cowards.

If we have no fear at all, something is lacking in us. We may be freaks. We may be too thick-headed to appreciate the danger, so stupidly puffed up as to think nothing can hurt us, or so devoid of love that we do not care what is taken from us. In any case we are not more human, but distinctly less so for our fearlessness. We have no cause for pride or boasting; rather, we have something to be ashamed of, something that must, at all costs, be kept from the children.

Daring

Only a superficial examination can mistake rash boldness for bravery. There is as much difference between the recklessly daring and brave men as there is between the brave and the cowardly. Both the coward and the reckless one have allowed reason to crumble before the onslaught of passion; one makes a man run away, while the other makes a man rush to attack. But both prevent a man from being human here and now. Both have cut off human living at one of its starting points.

Progressive need of courage: for human life and for Catholic life

Summing up this chapter, we can say that it takes courage to be human. It takes even more courage to be Catholic. And it takes still more courage to reach those sublime heights of Catholicism which are called sanctity. Or, to put it another way, courage is necessary for the practice of virtue. As a man becomes more and more virtuous he faces more and more difficulties and so needs more and more courage. Man needs courage to face human life, for human life cannot be lived without virtue, without good habits, without reason being in command. By Catholic life a man steps above the limits of mere humanity; he must not only be human now, thoroughly human, he must be divinely human; his ends are no longer the ends of mere man but the ends of God. Courage, in a word, is not a momentary stop at the important way stations of life's beginning and its end; it is a virtue that is progressively more necessary as life advances, as life becomes more full, more successful.

The tragedy of fearlessness

The tragedy of fearlessness lies in its inability to see the necessity for any courage because of an inability to see any difficulties, any dangers, anything that needs to be feared. The fearless man is really a little worse off than the coward. The coward, at least, realizes the need of courage along with his realization of his own lack of it; the fearless man not only lacks courage, he does not realize his deficiency, and would not trouble his head about it if he did.

The course of cowardice: Factual cowardice

Fortitude, then, is progressively more necessary as we approach the heights of human life. There is progress in cowardice, too, but it is a burrowing into the depths rather than a scaling of heights. Its first stage might be called factual cowardice, the cowardice involved in fear, sin, irresponsibility, but coupled with the admission that all of these things are wrong, irrational. It is the cowardice of the Catholic

succumbing to sin, but admitting that he is committing a sin.

Factual and philosophic cowardice

The next step down may take some considerable time for it involves a denial that fear, sin, irresponsibility, are wrong, irrational, cowardly. Sometimes this is merely a case of rationalization, of excusing ourselves even to ourselves; though we never quite succeed in completely convincing even ourselves. In our own day another step has been taken to a philosophical denial of the principles that make these things wrong, of the principles that make courage itself necessary; and that means, ultimately, a denial of the principles that make human life possible.

It is no longer a shock to hear the spiritual character of man's soul denied; his free will and his consequent possibility of sin are constant subject matter for denials, as also are eternal life, eternal rewards, eternal punishment. Plumbing still deeper into individual life, the significance and responsibility of human action itself is called into question; it is made an animal act or a mechanical reaction, but is not allowed to remain the action of a human being. Finally the individual human life itself is embroiled in a mass movement of some kind or another, that robs it of any importance, of any significance, of any hope.

We can actually trace those steps of cowardice historically. The pre-Reformation abuses were evidences of factual cowardice; next came the Reformation denial of theological truths and the modern denial of philosophical truths; the third and final step was taken in the modern mass ideology that has completely swallowed the individual.

The moderns and the martyrs

These steps of cowardice are so many stages in man's flight from his humanity. Actually the coward can never escape. Both the moderns and the martyrs are in the same arena of human life; and the modern coward has no more chance to escape from human life than the martyr had to escape from the lions. The obvious difference between human life and the lions of the arena is that the lions would devour the martyrs whether they ran or not, whereas human life devours only those who attempt to run from it. There is an odd paradox here: we cannot run away from human life because we are human, and yet, precisely in attempting to run away from human life we cease to be human, we become cowards. The martyrs were much more careful of the supreme act of fortitude. They were the supremely brave men of our race; they continue to be a graphic statement of the human need to face issues, even when those issues are roaring lions.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XV -- GREATNESS OF SOUL (Q. 128-140)

1. General attitude towards the heroic:
 - (a) Admiration.
 - (b) No serious desire to imitate.
 - (c) No dismay at lack of this desire.
2. Defect of this attitude:
 - (a) Defective basis of it.
 - (b) Catholic's knowledge of this defect:
 - (1) Evidence in face of sanctity.
 - (2) Element of heroic in all life.
 - (3) Element of heroic in all courage (Integral parts of fortitude).
5. Heroism in greatness:
 - (a) Greatness of soul -- magnanimity:
 - (1) Its nature.
 - (2) Its instruments.
 - (3) Its opposites:
 - a. By excess:
 1. Presumption.
 2. Ambition.
 3. Vainglory:
 - a) A capital sin.
 - b) Its "daughters."
 - b. By defect -- pusillanimity
 - (b) Greatness in work -- magnificence:
 - (1) Its nature and extent.
 - (2) Its opposites:
 - a. Meanness (parvificentia).
 - b. Waste (consumptio).
 4. Heroism in labors and dangers:
 - (a) Patience.
 - (b) Perseverance:
 - (1) Its nature and limitations.
 - (2) Its opposites:
 - a. Softness (effeminacy).
 - b. Pertinacity.
 5. Heights of heroism -- the gift of fortitude.

Conclusion:

 1. Heroism and hero worship:
 - (a) Difference between reaching for and looking at the stars.
 - (b) Decline of heroism -- stars for a few only:
 - (1) Vicarious heroism -- hero worship.
 - (2) Abandonment of the heroic.
 2. Heroism and human life.
 3. Heroism and modern life.

CHAPTER XV -- GREATNESS OF SOUL (Q. 128-140)

General attitude towards the heroic: Admiration

A FEW years ago Colonel Lindbergh returned from his triumphant flight over the Atlantic to a spontaneous public reception in New York. It seemed that the whole city turned out, eager to express its admiration for the daring of this lone aviator; the admiration was enthusiastic, even hysterical. Absolutely everyone had a splendid time, except, perhaps, Lindbergh. When the crowds finally scattered to their homes, they had no envy in their hearts, no grumbling dissatisfaction on their lips that it was Lindbergh and not themselves who was the hero. Apparently everyone was satisfied that Lindbergh should have the glory, the medals, the place in history.

No serious desire to imitate

For the most part, that is the attitude of the average man towards the heroic. He does not envy a hero, has no earnest desire for the heroic himself, except by way of a relaxing dream. The family butcher around the

corner may enjoy reading the life of Napoleon or following the progress of a modern war; but he has no serious desire to be a great military leader himself. After all, there is no secret ruthlessness within him, he has no desire to kill people; the monotony, discipline and rigidity of army life do not make his mouth water; he has no desire to wander over the face of the earth. Rather he is quite satisfied with his humble business, with the peace, kindness and quiet of home life.

And in that he is much like the rest of men. When the hard working lawyer relaxes with a detective story at the end of a grinding day, he does not seriously look forward to the day when he himself will be unearthing clues. He has no taste for man-hunts, no affinity for criminals, no relish for the constant threat of a bullet in the back. So it is with all the rest. The daring aviator, the racing automobile driver, the animal trainer and all-around daredevil -- we can enjoy their exploits. We are thrilled by them, admire them, but as for personally imitating them -- ah no.

No dismay at lack of this desire

We have no more desire for that than we have to be suddenly turned into an angel. Moreover, we show no more dismay at our lack of desire than we do at our reluctance to rise promptly on a cold morning, or our cowardice in the face of a cold tub before breakfast. In fact, we can laugh a little about all this. It is a weakness we have in common with practically all men, the ordinary attitude of ordinary men; not something we have to be ashamed of. Heroism is something for the exceptional, the rare man. Heroes are few and far between; as for the rest of us, well, we simply trudge along our mediocre way.

Yet there is something wrong with this point of view. In our last chapter we saw that courage was essential for the living of human life; and that courage could not exist without its primary object -- the facing of the danger of death. Everyone, then, not only can but must have the courage to face death itself. In other words, everyone must have something of the heroic in him.

Defect of this attitude: Defective basis of it

This modern attitude towards the heroic is incomplete, half-baked, something like a half-considered opinion. And its incomplete character is due to the modern identification of the heroic with the venturesome. In other words, we have identified the heroic with the lesser, the easier act of courage, namely, the act of attack. Men do not particularly like to attack, either other men or things; the crunching bones in an adversary's face under the blow of a fist is not music to the ears of the man who struck the blow, if he is normal. Attack is an emergency measure with considerable distaste attached to it, even if it is easier; people do not enjoy rushing down a fire escape in their night clothes, even though they do it readily as the easiest way to meet the emergency of fire. So men show no dismay at their reluctance to engage in this emergency action which we have called heroic.

Catholic's knowledge of this defect: Evidence in face of sanctity

But there is another act of courage, the act of sustaining dangers and difficulties, of holding on. The Catholic, above all others, is familiar with this other side of courage; he knows well that this other is the principal, the chief act of courage and that it enters into the field of the heroic. He is constantly faced with this type of heroism and he gives it an honor and respect which he accords to no other courage. He is, in a word, familiar with the saints and their sanctity. In the depths of his heart he realizes that courage cannot go beyond this; this is heroism that touches the sublime.

Yet a man cannot merely cheer as sanctity goes by and, when the parade is over, go home well satisfied with himself. True, there is not a universal eagerness among Catholics to imitate sanctity; but it is also true that the Catholic cannot be too complacent about his lack of imitation of the saints. He knows that, through the grace of God, this heroism is in his power, that it is his persistent clinging to things that do him no good or to trifles that holds him back from reaching these sublime heights. Sanctity inevitably awakens shame and compunction in the bystander, not merely satisfied admiration. Frequently it begins a movement of personal reform; yet often it stirs up a violent hatred that is directed much more at sanctity's

implied rebuke to the sinner than at the saint himself.

Element of heroic in all life

For heroism is not to be identified with venturesome attack but with courage. It is to be found plentifully in daily living. Since courage cannot be separated from living, neither can heroism; indeed, its very height will not be in the secondary but in the primary act of courage, not in the act of attack but in the act of sustaining, of holding on.

Element of heroic in all courage (Integral parts of fortitude)

Strictly speaking, heroism is nothing more than high courage. It is found chiefly in the supreme act of courage, that is, in facing the dangers of death; and those dangers can be met either by sustaining or attacking them. In either case there are some necessary acts without which the act of high courage itself cannot possibly be produced. For attack, a man must be straining for the stars. That is, in his heart he must have great hopes for great things, hopes so great for things so great that all else sinks into insignificance; so great, indeed, that they give a greatness to his own soul (magnanimity). Moreover there must be a magnificence to his action corresponding to the soul's greatness; the execution must be as splendid as the inspiration. For the act of sustaining a man must have a wall of patience built around his soul, a wall that tosses back the waves of the tremendous seas of sorrow that rush at his soul to leave it a wretched, broken thing; it is a wall that must not weaken, must not break, must not allow the smallest leak. Then, too, he must have a bulwark of perseverance to withstand the ceaseless continuity of sorrow's pounding on his soul day after day, month after month, year after year.

If these four -- magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance -- are restricted to meeting the dangers of death they are not virtues, but rather integral parts of the virtue of courage. They are acts that must run along side by side with the acts of courage if that act is not to fail.

In lesser dangers and lesser difficulties, each of these four is a separate virtue. Let us look at it this way: if we consider each difficulty, each danger, as a fragment blasted from the rock of the supreme danger and difficulty which is death, then in handling every one of these fragments we find some of the gold of heroism in the shape of magnanimity, magnificence, patience or perseverance.

Or, looking at it in a different way, we could consider each difficulty, each danger, as a preparation for the supreme danger. Each particular difficulty, each particular danger pours some of the concrete of heroism into the foundations of the soul; it builds in these four habits that eventually make the ultimate heroism a kind of second nature to us. This truth is not hard to check. A girl who has pampered herself for years, naturally finds it practically impossible to make the sacrifices demanded by married life; in a very short time she seeks escape through the emergency exit of divorce. Or, again, the sham battle of mortification makes the real battle against temptation somewhat of a routine matter for which we are well prepared; on the contrary, the tremendous penances of Martin Luther, taken in long separated gulps, were positive detriments instead of being helps to the real battle. Human nature does not become anything all of a sudden. We were made to live in time; and it is in time that we build up our characters.

Heroism in greatness: Greatness of soul -- magnanimity

The first of these fragments of heroism, magnanimity, implies a great heart, a heart enlarged, reaching out to great things, to things that are difficult, precisely because of their greatness. Just as courage moderates fear and daring to the end of courageous action, so magnanimity, looking to a great work, moderates the expectations of honor. These expectations must not be too great, lest in a kind of despair we begin to be satisfied with petty things, counting their honor as great; nor yet must they be too small, for then a man will also refuse to undertake great things, considering them petty, not worth while, as does the cynic to whom all honor is more or less of a joke.

Its nature

The magnanimous man is not a publicity hound with his nose turned to the wind to catch any slightest scent of honor. His interest is in great works, works worthy of honor. His virtue of magnanimity moderates the hope of future honors and the joy of present honors by way of guaranteeing the accomplishment of the great works which are its proper object. Of course the magnanimous man has a real regard for honor; as a matter of fact, a man with no regard for honor will do the most despicable things with a kind of gusto, with the strange pride of a gangster kicking an insensible victim or a seducer wrecking the home of his friend. But because he seeks the works and not the honor, the magnanimous man is not upset when due honor is not given him; nor is he impressed by too much honor, for he is far from a fool. He is not crushed by dishonoring attacks. He is above honor and dishonor, though he is dealing constantly with honor; for he knows that the due reward of virtue can come only from God.

Let us put this from the point of view of magnanimity, as a protector of reason's command. The serious threat to the command of reason does not come so much from the intrinsic nature of man's own passions; they were made to be subject to reason. Rather it comes from the extreme desirability of external things, especially from the attractions of money and honor. Of the two, the attraction of honor is by far the greater, since, as a witness to virtue, it is so close to that supreme value in human life. Unquestionably there is something of the supreme about honor, its blood is royal. It is given to God and to the best of men; to avoid its contrary men have sacrificed all else. It is, then, a thing for which men are going to reach desperately; but a thing about which mistakes are so easily made that a virtue regulative of the appetite for honor is absolutely essential. We need a virtue governing our expectations of this witness of virtue from men.

Even to our loving eyes, the contours of our soul may have a closer resemblance to the flat monotony of the western plains than to the New York sky-line. Yet greatness of soul runs through all of life, all of virtue, all of our works. Wherever there is an aspect of greatness, there magnanimity must be at work. Perhaps it is only such a relative greatness as our Lenten fast as compared to the asceticism of a saint; nevertheless it is true greatness for us who have such a vague, nodding acquaintance with hair shirts. In a word, there is greatness in every human life, even the smallest and meanest of human lives,

This relative and hardly discernible greatness allows us to escape what absolute greatness never avoids -- the sharp, hard thrusts of the gossips' chatter. The magnanimous man is called a "glory-hunter"; he does aim at big things and they do bring glory. "He moves so slowly", and that is true, for he is looking at great things and they are not many; it is only the trafficker in trifles who is a hustler, a "go-getter." "He is lazy, even his voice is slow and heavy"; again there is some truth in this, for the magnanimous man is mixing only in great things, arguing only about great things; and great things are not only rare, they are not the sort that have to be bickered about. These are the things that grab hold of the very heart of a man or they do not touch him at all. "He is unsociable", because there is no need for him to parade his own excellence. "He is impractical", because he is not producing many results but only big results. "He is hard", because he is not a whiner, because he is above external things and not to be overcome by them. Sometimes he is too truthful because he has none of the fear that makes a timid man lie. In other words, he has time to live, to think, to act, because he is not overwhelmed with a mass of trifles; his eyes are on big things and everything else is unimportant to him.

Fortitude and magnanimity go well together; the one is the head of the family of courage, the other a favorite son. As they walk down the street together, heads will be turned to follow their progress: both are strapping fellows, strong, resolute. The one is the grim, tenacious fighter, strong against evil; the other, in its young strength in the pursuit of good, is not so much involved with security against evil as with the robust confidence that is stimulated rather than downcast by the very magnitude of the task it sets itself.

Its instruments

The greatness of its works, taking greatness in its absolute meaning, demands that magnanimity make use of wealth as an indispensable instrument. Great works erected by dreams come tumbling down at the trumpet blast of the alarm clock; wishing produces its wonders only in fairy tales; in the hard world of

reality it takes money to produce great works. In other words, wealth is an instrument of this virtue; but it must be clearly understood that it is only an instrument. It is not an integral part of the virtue, nor is it a necessary condition for the interior, and principal, acts of the virtue, the acts which actually expand a man's own soul.

Its opposites by excess: Presumption

An evidence of this limitation of wealth in magnanimity is seen in the fact that wealth often proves an obstacle to the virtue, sending a man hurtling after petty things under the impression that they are big. It frequently induces a kind of blindness to the really great things that leaves its victim as pitiable a figure as a physically blind man in the midst of Broadway traffic. He may mistake riches themselves for greatness and wave his bank book as sufficient proof of his right to admittance everywhere and under every condition. In his blindness he may think the top rung of the social ladder is the peak of human achievement; the isolation of snobbery, the sweep of ruthless power, or even the very clothes with which he covers his nakedness, may seem to him goals worthy of a great soul. Yet by all these things, he condemns himself in the eyes of God and men as possessing a small soul. He makes a burlesque even of presumption; and presumption itself is no more than a mockery of magnanimity. He has merited not honor, but contempt, for he has abided by greatness as it is judged by fools.

Hardly less pitiable is the sin of presumption itself. We are saddened rather than angered by the powerful dictator's decision to design a whole city, the great industrialist's attempt to bring peace to the world personally and in short order, or the monk's efforts to improve on the doctrine of Christ. All these men have taken on works that were too big for them; they have been guilty of presumption, not as it is a sin against the Holy Ghost, but as it is opposed to magnanimity. No matter how small the scale on which the presumption exists, it is always a distressing thing to witness. Its victim is out of his depth. He is in a constant state of panic; in a fever of fear, jealousy, overwhelmed in hurried, desperate work. Ultimately he is a bitterly disappointed, if not a broken man. It is significant that it is impossible for a man to aim too high in the life of supernatural virtue. Here it is not a question of establishing a proportion between our capacities and the work we try to do; from the beginning there has been no proportion. Yet there is always proportion, a proportion that comes not from us but from the omnipotent, infallible help of Almighty God.

Ambition

Presumption aims too high; ambition does not aim too high, but it does aim at the wrong target. It speaks the language of magnanimity with all the peculiar inversions of a foreigner; it works out the problems of greatness like a dishonest child who gets all the solutions from the back of the book with none of the argumentation by which those solutions were reached. For ambition aims, not at great works, but rather at the honor they bring; it embraces the conclusions of greatness and snubs the labors of the works themselves.

Of course it makes a man as helplessly vulnerable as a spoiled child. If he is not given his proper place at a banquet, he pouts in sullen silence or roars in anger; yet he is delighted if a head-waiter mistakes him for a visiting dignitary and gives him honors to which he has no claim. He gulps down honors with the uncouthness of a glutton; even the honors of God. To him the works are always unimportant; he lives on an airy diet of honor like the mythical honeymooners who lived on love alone. He must inevitably discover that it would have been much better to stop long enough to take a few bites of the solid sandwich of the works themselves. As a matter of fact, he has less and less interest in, or effort towards, meriting the honors upon which his life so desperately depends. He is like an athlete hoping for great victories, yet doing nothing about getting into condition, even going without food.

The ambitious man does not feel towards his honor as the saint feels towards his sanctity, satisfied to have it unknown to the world. He is no shrinking violet; he is not embarrassed by the plaudits of men, he gloats over them, for he seeks not only honor but honor's effect which is glory. The more dazzlingly his light shines before men, the more pleased he is; he wants desperately to make a name for himself, though he is

not particularly interested in laying the foundations which would justify that name.

Vainglory: A capital sin

It is not wrong, of course to have glory, or even to desire it. But vain-glory is something else. The latter has furnished a living for those creative artists who manufacture coats-of-arms for non-existent family trees; but economic reasons will not suffice to excuse the cultivation of vainglory. It hardly needs cultivation at any time; it springs up in the oddest places and settles down comfortably for a long stay, as much at home in the murderer's pride in his crime as in the physician's joy in the great name he has among the patients of his insane asylum. Its future is secure, its home safe, in the heart of the man who makes glory his god.

All this may sound a little extreme. But in our daily lives we do seek honor for non-existent works and purely fictional virtues. We accept honors for things as unworthy of honor as brigandage in the business world, lying in the political world, successive polygamy in the domestic world, and godless broad-mindedness in the individual world of our own soul. Indeed, honor will be accepted from people who are utterly incapable of giving it, even from fools.

When we do these things, we make a fatal mistake. Perhaps, in itself, the sin of vain-glory does not exceed a venial sin; it may, of course, be mortal if we glory in material that is mortally sinful or make glory our god. But what is more far-reaching in its tragic consequences is that this sin with which we have become enamoured, is a capital sin.

Ordinarily we lump this sin with pride in our enumeration of the capital sins; but, theologically, pride is a concentration on one's own excellence, whereas vain-glory is a concentration on the manifestation of that excellence. It might be called a sally of pride from behind its fortifications into the world of men. Certainly it is a stiff-necked pride that will not surrender an inch; as it elbows through the world of men it dispenses, with equal prodigality, blows and yawns, for in its negative activity it is a ruthless fighter while in its positive form it is the greatest of bores.

Its "daughters."

To the vain-glorious man, disobedience is a factual manifestation of his excellence; discord proves the superiority of his will; quarrelling is by way of showing he will have the last word; while stubbornness is his idea of superiority of intellect. With the last opponent shouted down, the way is clear for vain-glory's positive action: for boasting, hypocrisy, the eccentricities of singularity by which it hopes to stand out from the crowd. Vain-glory, like presumption and ambition, dare not saunter through the town undisguised; men have not yet reached the stage of honoring any of these things unless they parade as magnanimity. They do have an air of greatness about them; though, in them, there is much more of air than of greatness; they are the sins of windbags but they may fool us until they are punctured.

Its opposites by defect -- pusillanimity

No such mistake can be made about pusillanimity. Its victim can never be mistaken for the possessor of a great soul; by the very fact of his sin he is defeated, for in the face of greatness he collapses. His pettiness of soul may be the result of an under-estimation of his own power or of an over-estimation of the greatness of the work that faces him. Whatever the cause, whether intellectual or emotional, the pusillanimous man is a pitiable figure as he stands paralyzed, mentally wringing his hands. Such a man was the servant of the gospel story who buried his lord's talent in the ground through fear of his master's harshness. In a milder form it is seen frequently in men possessed of all the gifts -- clever intellect, kind heart, good personality, splendid health -- but who slip through life as unobtrusively ineffective as a figure in a dream. Pusillanimity wraps its feeble fingers around the life of the procrastinator, particularly the procrastinator in a position of authority, the man who can never quite bring himself out of the agony of his indecision.

Watching the small-souled man writhe in the agony of his fear, we pity him. We must, indeed, be extremely careful that contempt does not enter our thoughts; for it is easy to be contemptuous of so unnatural a thing. Man's soul is not small, it is big; made for tremendous things. Everything in nature moves to the act of which it is capable; this man shrinks from the very thing of which he is capable. Man naturally seeks good, he does not run away from it. Pusillanimity has the pallor of an anemic perversion in contrast to the ruddy, open face of nature.

It is interesting to run through the lives of the apostles with an eye to their greatness or smallness of soul. Those of whom details are recorded all had their moments, at least, of greatness. Nathaniel, recognized as the guileless Israelite, immediately made his gesture of subjection and his recognition of the divinity of Christ. The two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John, left their nets, their ships, their fathers without a backward glance, to follow Christ. Matthew, without a word, rose up from his tax-gatherer's booth at the word of the Master. Peter again and again showed promise of greatness, though his weakness prevented the execution of his works from coming up to their inspiration. Perhaps Thomas' contrasting decisiveness was one of the reasons Christ could be so easy on his tardiness and his hard-headedness; you remember, when Christ decided to return to Judea for the sake of his dead friend, Lazarus, even though his life had been threatened there, Thomas, in an almost matter-of-fact heroism said: "Let us go also and die with him."

There is great significance in this. Moments of pettiness come to nearly everyone. Some men can go all through life without a single moment of greatness. But one flash of the splendor of greatness is a promise that justifies an unlimited investment of confidence. The apostles were to be leaders of men, indeed, leaders of the universe back to Christ and to God. Obviously, there is nothing more impossible than to work under a pusillanimous leader, watching helplessly while things go to pieces through his indecision. It was, then, essential that the apostles have greatness of soul or at least a promise of it. If we could speak on the purely human level we might well wonder how many anxious days and nights Christ spent watching for some little promise of greatness from the soul of Judas, the traitor.

Greatness in work -- magnificence: Its nature and extent

Greatness of soul is absolutely necessary if we are to get great things done. It is also necessary if we are to get great things made: but in this respect, greatness of soul is a distinct virtue, the virtue of magnificence. It is the virtue of the builder, the virtue that has produced the cathedrals, masterpieces, even celebrations of great pomp. For the most part it is not a personal affair. As a general rule there is little call for magnificence about our own person or in the details of our daily lives, diaries are usually a bore and full length mirrors are mortifications as well as decorations. Now and then we are magnificent in a personal way -- in things that happen once in a lifetime, like a marriage celebration, or with what we expect to last a lifetime, as in the construction of a home. But usually magnificence spends itself on the things of the community or the things of God.

To accomplish great things, we must lay out great sums of money. Magnificence, dealing with those expenditures, also deals with love of money, as does liberality; but the latter handles the small change of life, magnificence carries the check-book. It is, then, obviously, impossible for a fifteen-dollar-a-week stenographer to undertake works that demand huge expenditures; yet she can be magnificent, at least in the sense of the inner, and more important, acts of the virtue of magnificence, just as a man can be stingy with nothing to be stingy about. But even in the sense of external magnificence, this girl putting forth what to her is a tremendous amount of money, has a solid claim to the title of magnificent, even though that magnificence is relative and not absolute. Paradoxically it is much easier for the poor to be magnificent than for the rich, for five dollars can be spent in five minutes whereas it takes time and considerable thought to dispose wisely of a million dollars; and, as a matter of fact, the poor are much more frequently magnificent than the rich.

Its opposites: Meanness (*parvificentia*)

At one extreme from magnificence is the vice the English Dominicans translate as "meanness." It is a particularly venomous kind of stinginess that attempts to make great things without spending the money demanded by their greatness. As the illiberal man pays out money slowly and painfully, so the stingy man, using stinginess in this special sense, parts with his money as though he were saying a final farewell to a friend. He has, indeed, more reason for his reluctance; no matter how he pares down the expenses, the costs will run into huge amounts. It is this vice in action that has brought such bitter complaints from American labor on the score of unjust wages; where it shows up in inferior material or workmanship, it makes huge concrete piers dissolve like sugar to the astonishment of the citizens who were not in on the deal, or a highly modern overpass in a great city collapse under no heavier a weight than the silence of the night.

Waste (*consumptio*)

At the other extreme is a vice that might be called "waste", what St. Thomas calls "consumption." It also disregards the proportion between the dignity of the work and the money paid for it; it is quite willing to pay out money that would build a skyscraper in the actual erection of a birdhouse. In both meanness and waste the norm or medium of reason is violated. By the first the sinner usually injures others as well as himself, as, for instance, by lowering wages below a living scale, using inferior material, skimping on the actual details of the plans, and so on. By the second, the sinner usually injures only himself, unless, and this is not too rare in American life, it is the community money which is being spent. In this latter case, we describe this sin in one short word that has an ugly sound: graft.

Magnanimity and magnificence are the dust of the lesser heroism that is scattered through life. Both are kin to that act of courage which is attack, for they deal with a good which does not repel but rather attracts men. There is something of a rush about both of these virtues. But there is a greater side to heroic courage, the side that consists of enduring in spite of dangers and difficulties. The dust of this heroism is scattered through life much more prodigally and it goes by the names of patience and perseverance.

Heroism in labors and dangers: Patience

These two do not wear the fine raiment of magnanimity and magnificence. They are not nearly so attractive at first sight and they are easily under-estimated; it is not hard to miss the splendid heroism of a man if he is lying in the dust. Yet something of the splendor of this courage was caught in Christ's simple exhortation: "Possess your souls in patience;" its full brilliance bursts upon us when we remember that no one can follow the path of virtue long without patience, and the path of virtue is the path of heroism. Patience, after all, deals with the sorrows of life; it holds the soul upright under the crushing blows of this sorrow. The extent of sorrow in life is an indication of the extent and necessity of patience. Only so can a man possess his soul; for possession implies quiet ownership, calm dominion, and it is patience which quiets the uproar of the passions and vices. Patience not only forbids unjust revenge, as does justice; it not only bars hate, as does charity; or anger, as does meekness. It even excludes the undue sorrow that is the root of all these sins. Patience is one of the humble, workaday virtues; but it is, in a real sense, the root and guardian of all virtues, not causing them but removing the impediments to their operation. Do away with patience and the gates are open for a flood of discontent and sin, for sorrow will still find its way into human life.

It is not patience that enables a prisoner to endure indignities calmly that he might later on have a better opportunity for revenge against the guard. Patience endures evil, not to commit evil, but rather that evil may not be committed. It finds its place in our daily lives in such crises as the separation from friends, the death of loved ones, sickness, slander and misfortune.

The natural question is, just what can patience do in the face of these things? Well, if we have it on its lowest level, we can at least endure these things without telling the neighbors about it. On a higher level, we bear with these things without telling ourselves about it over and over again in the kind of whining self-pity that sours human life. On its highest level, patience enables us to endure sorrows with positive

joy.

That is a hard thing? Yes, it is. In the natural order it is nearly impossible, done only in view of some much greater natural good; although long experience may give us a kind of hopeless resignation from the realization that impatience does not help but rather increases sorrow. In the supernatural order, God's patience with our own weaknesses, forgetfulness and ingratitude, is a constant example before our eyes; we can never draw a curtain over the spectacle of Calvary's divine patience; and the sublime patience of the saints is not something we are ever in a hurry to forget. Then, too, the realization of its power to satisfy for our sins, its significance for heaven, and closer friendship with Christ, through its power of merit, is a constant spur to our patience. In a word, supernatural patience can be a joyous thing; but even supernaturally it is never an easy thing.

We resent an inhuman harshness and brute stolidity that leave a man insensible to sorrow. And we are right in our resentment. Man should be touched by sorrow, by his own sorrow and the sorrow of his fellows; the man who is not so touched is vicious with the vice of insensibility. On the contrary, if sorrow affects us so deeply that we withdraw from good in order to escape it, then we, too, are vicious; we are guilty of the sin of impatience. This sin crowds many of our days with its trifling manifestations; we may not be at all embarrassed by it, even a little vain about such evidence of a strong mind and will. The truth of the matter is that impatience has nothing whatever of strength in it, but much, very much, of a terrible weakness; it is a confession of our inability to stand up before the rush of sorrow, even trifling sorrow. It stamps us as the vanquished mourning our defeat.

Perseverance: Its nature and limitations

Patience runs all through life because sorrow runs all through life; and, because our human life is measured in time, the courage of perseverance must color every work, every day, every life. Perhaps it is because we are made for eternity that we find it so hard to face the difficulty of time; whatever the reason, we do find duration itself a great difficulty. We do not hesitate to give our dinner to a hungry man; yet we find it extremely difficult to give up a small part of that meal for the forty days of Lent. We do not mind a day's work; but the same work day after day is an altogether different thing. It is easy to give a moment's kindness, but not a lifetime of kindness. For real lengths of time are a serious obstacle to human living.

Perseverance is a dogged, unswerving, unbeatable courage whose beauty and grace are often hidden in the weary stumbling of its walk and the gray fatigue of its face. No military bands greet perseverance; no trumpets salute it, no parades are staged in its honor, no decorations publicly conferred. There is not even the human help of racing blood that comes in facing open attack. Perseverance knows only the dull, relentless thud of the moments of time and the fighting heart holding fast to the necessity of fighting through to the end.

But not even this heroic courage is sufficient to cover the whole span of a lifetime, not even when it is the result of the supernatural virtue of perseverance. We went into this question in more detail in the preceding volume; here it is enough to recall that for this endurance we need a special gift of God, the gift of final perseverance. A gift, that is, which meets not this or that work, not this or that span of time, but the whole long sweep of a man's life from birth until the moment of death.

Its opposites: Softness (effeminacy)

It is the defect of this courage of perseverance that is the distinctive mark of effeminacy. It is not the muscles or the gait of a man that stamps him as effeminate, but his inability to carry through. In fact, a more expressive word for this condition would be a literal translation of the Latin term, i.e., softness; it means yielding easily to the lightest touch. This man is not giving way before terrifying fear, he does not surrender to the strong rush of pleasure, he crumbles before the almost negative touch of sorrow at the lack of pleasure. He is incapable of facing the long span of the difficult and the laborious because he cannot go so long without coddling.

Pertinacity

At the other extreme is the hard, stubborn, pertinacious man. He does not know when to yield; or knowing, refuses to give way. He does stand up before difficulties and we often give him a mistaken admiration for the beating he can take; but the admiration is mistaken. For usually it is pride making him hold on, a pride that springs from a secret fear of being considered an inferior, or perhaps an unreasonable joy at winning through these difficulties. Actually, stubbornness exceeds the limit of perseverance by excess, as effeminacy does by defect; both are unreasonable, inhuman. Life does not consist in taking a beating, looking like a conqueror, or stamping on difficulties; it consists in following reason's rule to reason's goal.

Heights of heroism -- the gift of fortitude

But even with all this splendid equipment of courage, it is altogether above human nature that a man win through to every end. conquer every danger and be bolstered up by a confidence that excludes even the small tugs of fear at his heart, and this not only in great works but in the small, arduous tasks of everyday life. There is a crown of courage that alone makes such heroism as this possible to man; that is the gift of fortitude, a gift of the Holy Ghost by which a man wins through to the end of ends, the final end which is God Himself.

Undoubtedly the pagans did have courage. Nor is this surprising in view of the fact that every man must have some courage to avoid collapse in the face of life. But it is only the infused, supernatural virtues of fortitude, magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance which make heroes out of every man; that demand that every man be courageous in the work of living.

In our day some strange things have been done to the concept of the heroic, and with some weird results. The cult of success, progress or accomplishment has won a fairly universal favor, with a consequent identification of heroism with the courage of attack. Some of the weird outgrowths of this have been to give us the absolute dictator and the soldier of fortune. The thing was inevitable because the norm of our judgment has been the norm of success. It might easily be that the man we admire is a successful lunatic, but still he is successful and so is a hero to his people. In the name of progress we must snub everything that is old; there can be nothing solid worth holding on to because everything is changing, going forward in the name of progress. Consequently patience and perseverance have been classed as the defects of weaklings or failures, of those who are not in the march of time toward success.

Heroism and hero worship: Difference between reaching for and looking at the stars

One serious result of this has been to split men into two uneven groups. One is the very small group that may reach for the stars; the other is the tremendous majority who are forbidden to reach for the stars. In other words, we have left the average man with no stars for which he can reach, we have taken the heroic entirely out of his life, even out of his hope. Because stars are for the extraordinary, the rare heroes, ordinary life has become a dull, drab thing; and human nature is not satisfied with dullness or drabness, not with the glory of eternity haunting its dreams. So we have resorted to that vicarious heroism which is hero-worship. We let someone else take care of our heroism for us; in our admiration and applause for their great acts, we satisfy the yearning of our hearts for the great things for which we were made.

Abandonment of the heroic

Radically that means that the ordinary man of our century has become resigned to the loss of the heroic, or at least, he has been forced to a frank abandonment of the heroic. He does not like it. If work and difficulty, family life and virtue are dull, drab things they will automatically become things to be escaped from, not sources of inspiration; to them man will stoop only under considerable duress, a physical duress that is the instrument of slavery.

Decline of heroism -- stars for a few only: Vicarious heroism -- hero worship

The fact is that human life cannot go along humanly without heroism; nor can the human heart endure without heroism entering intimately into its actions and its goals. It cannot be satisfied with vicarious heroism, mere hero-worship. For courage is as necessary for the living of human life as air, or food, or drink; not only the courage of the venturesome, but also that principal courage that holds on, even when holding on is the best a man can do. Christ did not take the heroic out of the average man's life; He frankly insisted that that life was permeated with the heroic. Works and labors, difficulties and perils are not drab necessities but constant inspirations, constant sources of greatness, constant tests of tremendous courage.

Heroism and human life; heroism and modern life

The men of our day need heroism in their lives not one bit less than did the men of Christ's day. Thus, today we see the instant appeal of such a dogma as that proposed by Communism which gives the man in the street a part in the things that he considers heroic. It is an attempt to re-establish a star in the firmament of the worker and the attempt has had considerable success, even though this star is utterly worthless to the individual worker himself. At least it is a star and he can reach for it. In the Christian life, there can be no individual the firmament of whose life is not filled with stars. There cannot be a day in that life in which he is not only permitted, he is obliged to reach for the stars. His whole life is an adventure of incredible courage toward incredible goals and fought with weapons of incredible strength.

The Christian can admire heroism. He can pay it the tribute of respect, which comes naturally from the human heart confronted with great courage. But much more than that, he himself can be a hero; indeed, he must be a hero. And so it is that the tribute he pays to heroism is one much more deep, more understanding, more heartfelt. It is the tribute of one hero to another, even though that tribute is the tribute that the Christian sinner gives to the sinless Christ.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. III	Next
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CHAPTER XVI -- THE HUMAN ANIMAL (Q. 141-145)

1. Prerequisites of mastery:
 - (a) Something to be mastered.
 - (b) Something that can be mastered.
 2. Modern protestations of slavery:
 - (a) Puritanism.
 - (b) Pagan psychologies.
 3. Catholic protestations of mastery:
 - (a) Vindications of history.
 - (b) Vindications of facts.
 - (c) The balance of reason.
 4. The virtue of mastery -- temperance:
 - (a) Its position as a virtue.
 - (b) Its objects.
 5. Conditions for the integrity of mastery:
 - (a) Love of the beauty of temperance -- "honesty."
 - (b) Recoil from the disgrace of baseness -- shamefacedness.
 6. Double defect of mastery:
 - (a) By deficiency -- insensibility:
 - (1) Distinction from self-denial.
 - (2) Opposition to nature.
 - (b) By excess -- intemperance:
 - (1) Its puerility.
 - (2) Its gravity compared to cowardice.
 - (3) Degree of disgracefulness.
 7. Species of mastery:
 - (a) In works conserving the individual: abstinence and sobriety.
 - (b) In works conserving the species: chastity and purity.
 8. Virtues connected with the virtue of mastery:
 - (a) Continency.
 - (b) Clemency.
 - (c) Modesty.
- Conclusion:
1. Implications of the denial of mastery:
 - (a) For the truth of human nature.
 - (b) For the maturity of human nature.
 - (c) For the dignity of human nature.
 - (d) For the beauty of human nature.
 2. The difficult condition of mastery -- battle.
 3. The champion of man as man.

CHAPTER XVI -- THE HUMAN ANIMAL (Q. 141-145)

IT WAS not mistaken strategy that moved the devil to offer Eve the prospect of becoming like God. His appeal was to nothing less than complete dominion, perfect mastery; and the appeal of mastery to our nature is constant and profound, precisely because man was made to be a master. The prospect of mastery immediately sets man afire because his nature responds to the goal for which it was created, so powerfully, indeed, that age after age man rises again and again to the bait of false mastery.

Prerequisites of mastery: Something to be mastered

The push of nature towards the goal of man is not sufficient to accomplish the fact of mastery. If he is to be master, man must at least know what mastery means. He must realize that perfect physical development, sharp intellectual gifts, a balance of powers are in themselves insufficient to make him a master. Put this splendid creature on a desert island and it is impossible for him to be a master for the simple reason that there is nothing to master. On the other hand, let an absent-minded bank teller, deceived by the familiar bars, wander into a lion's cage and he, too, is faced with an impossibility of mastery, though for a different reason. In the first case there was nothing to master; in the second, the thing could not be mastered by this man.

Mastery, if it means anything, means to bring something or someone under our command. Unlike God we do not create our subjects; we must subdue them. That which is to be mastered must be presupposed to our action; granted the subject matter of opposition, there must be a capacity for mastering it if man is to be master.

Something that can be mastered

It may seem that we are laboring an obvious point here; but the point has been and is being missed, as happens so often with the obvious. It is a fact that man can be and must be a master if he is to remain a man. He is possessed of a complex nature whose elements will not live on equal terms; one or the other will take charge. The spirit pulls against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit now as in the days of Paul, indeed, as in all days since the expulsion of man from the garden of Eden. Here in America, we are officially dedicated to the ideal of freedom, which, if it be not meaningless, is a dedication to mastery. We refuse to entertain the idea of man subjecting himself to his equal or to his inferior. It is a political insistence flowing from Christianity's supremely valuable contribution to Western philosophy, the concept of personality, of individual dignity and responsibility. The same concept is at the rock-bottom of Christian ethics; without it, these ethics have no meaning.

Modern protestations of slavery: Puritanism.

Yet, in spite of our political insistence on the concept of freedom, we have again and again denied freedom, for we have denied mastery. In the early days we denied freedom by denying the possibility of mastery, refusing to admit that there was something that could be mastered. The Puritans' rigid gloom was well justified, granting their principles: if man is utterly corrupt and an utterly helpless tool of a viciously unjust divinity, how can he be otherwise than sunk in gloom? The slave does not gloat over the chains that tie him down like a dog. What is there to fight about if there is no chance for mastery; what is the ground for rejoicing when there is no possibility of triumph? It is the hopeless slavery of a man who is beaten before he can strike a blow. The one thing he can do is resign himself to his fate, admitting his slavery, his lack of mastery.

Pagan psychologies

In our modern days slavery is no less thoroughly championed, though on different grounds. Our modern contention is that a man cannot be a master because there is nothing for him to subdue. The modern slave-dealer insists that man is entirely one-sided, he is merely an animal; the one course open to him, then, is to give that animality its fullest development, its fullest play. If that be true, then we can no more be masters than can a cat or a worm.

The important point of all this is that none of it is true. Man is by his very nature free, he can fight and win. Man has a soul as well as a body; there is something to fight and subdue. This very truth makes the hell of slavery, to which the moderns have delivered men, just so much more bitter. Eventually the victims of this betrayal of humanity will realize that they could have been masters; later on, when the guilt wears off passion and leaves its dull baseness plain, they will see the extent of the swindle that has been perpetrated, a realization that is almost enough to destroy all hope. For then they will see that they have indeed sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, and that the pottage itself has spoiled. It has always been true that the stars are clearly visible from the depths; that it is the saint or the great sinner who has the real view of the splendor of God. So also it is the man who is sunk into the depths of slavery who can appreciate to the full the possible mastery which he has forfeited.

Catholic protestations of mastery: Vindications of history

There is an amusing angle to this constant denial of mastery in American history, an angle that seriously calls into question our boasted sense of humor. To appreciate it, you must remember that during that short span of our history Catholics have held fast to unchanging ethical and dogmatic truths; the Catholic position on purity, justice, lying, the sacredness of contracts is exactly the same today as it was when

judges wore wigs. In Colonial days the Catholics were considered a corrupt people. They were fast, loose, immoral; to them any means were justified by the end, even murder and lying. They were not people with whom one could do business safely, for by their very principles, their contracts with Protestants were not binding. They were the children of the harlot of Babylon, unfit companions for God-fearing men, enemies of the Christian state, to be denied every share in community life. Today Catholics are considered hopelessly rigid, prudish, medieval. They demand altogether too much of human nature, even the impossible. They have never caught the full significance of the sacred catchword "business is business;" they are the enemies of pleasure, of full, free, joyous living. They try to fit every age into an ethical pattern of two thousand years ago instead of keeping up with the times by molding their ethics to the customs of an age.

Vindications of facts

Odd, isn't it? Still more odd, when it is realized that the accusers have always been the one hundred percent Americans of their time. Yet all the Catholic has done is to hold fast to essential, even obvious, truths. He has steadily maintained that man is man, has an intellect, a will, a spiritual soul, and that man alone is possessed of these priceless gifts. In the eyes of the Catholic, it is these things that distinguish a man from all else in the universe; these things can be, must be in the forefront of his life, his action, his thought if he is to be truly human. In a word, the Catholic's crime has been to maintain that a man is a human being; not merely a helpless pawn, not merely an animal but a human animal who is master of his destiny.

Man has a body; he may have to apologize for the shape it is in, but not for the fact itself. There is nothing evil about it; it is part and parcel of him. But that body destroys itself when it takes charge of man's life. Man has something to subdue -- his lower nature; moreover he can subdue it. He is free precisely because he is man: and the principal work of his life is the maintenance of that mastery which is essential to the humanity of his life.

Man is not evil, he is not utterly corrupt and helpless because of his corruption. Nor have men nothing to subdue; men are not merely animals, as the moderns would have it. There is joy in life, great joy; but it is not merely animal joy. In spite of the uncouth mouthings of the monk who was so terrified at his own weakness, in spite of the intellectual blasphemies of an arrant theologian of gloom, in spite of the unscientific dreams of pseudo-scientific philosophers and pseudo-philosophic scientists, man continues to be man. He can never escape from his humanity.

The city of Washington is honeycombed with slanting streets -- the Avenues. They are a boon to taxi-drivers, shortening distances (there are no meters) and relieving all boredom as they converge en masse in circles. They are also, I am told, evidence of very intelligent planning. For the ordinary driver or the stranger in Washington, they are a source of that amazement that is induced by a sleight-of-hand trick. For instance, you start out for a walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. Of course you take the north side of the street to get a better view of the buildings; and suddenly the Avenue is gone from under your feet and you find yourself in the oddest places, perhaps gaping at the display of a second-hand furniture emporium. I have been witness to the complete befuddlement of a driver who found himself still on the same slanting street but going in a direction opposite to that in which he had started, with no reasonable explanation of the marvel. It has often struck me that these Avenues are graphic representations of the path of reason. It is so very easy to wander off that path and find oneself in the oddest errors. A Washingtonian, as the years bring him wisdom, learns to keep alert on these slanting streets; so also a reasonable man eventually learns that he can never cease his alertness if he is to keep to the path of reason.

The balance of reason

Reason demands a delicate balance between extremes. It is the peace-maker of human nature, so it is always a target for shafts from both sides, both extremes. Father Cormier, a saintly Dominican Master-General, once held a visitation in Rome. A visitation, for those unfamiliar with that democratic procedure,

represents the opportunity given to every individual in a convent to express his mind on how things are running, how things should be run and what things should be stopped from running. In the course of this visitation, the Master-General heard that the procurator should be removed because the food was abominable, there was not enough of it and the members of the community were practically starved. He also heard that the procurator should be removed because the table was too rich, they were living like kings, the spirit of monastic observance was being undermined by his catering to positive gluttony. When the procurator came in, the Master-General outlined the double complaint; in answer to the procurator's puzzled question as to what he should do, Father Cormier said: "Continue, continue. When you are attacked from both ends, you are probably not inclining too much to either one or the other."

It is not only easy to embrace an extreme, there is a guarantee of assurance about it. There will always be applause for the extremist no matter which extreme he embraces; and there will always be a double opposition in store for the man who rejects both extremes. Moreover the medium of reason seems often an uncolorful, ordinary manner of procedure. Actually to embrace either extreme means a lack of balance. As an indication of how profound an impression is made on our minds by the garish colors of extremes, there is the fact that we introduce something of these extremes even in our thinking about the moderate refusal of extremes. Certainly there is a lack of balance in our general thinking about temperance. The very word calls to mind the fanatical reformer or tavern brawls. But whether we speak of temperance in the sense of teetotalism or of sottishness, we always think of temperance in terms of drink alone.

The virtue of mastery -- temperance

That is quite unjust to temperance. This virtue of mastery has for a field of battle all of the pleasures whose allure may draw man off the course of reason. It is not to be conceived of in terms of a puritanical enemy of pleasure; nor is it to be greeted by the sigh of a man arising from a Lenten breakfast. It is not the enemy of sense pleasures in their human limitations; it is their enemy only in their bestial excesses. It is a virtue. That is, it is a good habit proclaiming present and past mastery of reason, protecting, as well as predicting, the humanity of future actions.

Temperance does not attack sense pleasures; rather it guarantees them. It imposes the norm of reason on the mild or concupiscible appetite of man; it guarantees that the goal of man, the good of reason, will not suffer interference from sense appetite in its own search for sense good. In a word, it protects that happy medium of reason which is the absolutely essential condition for peace and progress in human life. Its goal is not repression or inhibition; it does not frown down all that is attractive in life. Rather it insists on the full freedom that can be given only by control, the control of reason.

Temperance does not speak so softly as to be unheard; nor does it shout so loud that it deafens its listeners. By its very nature, it is moderate; perhaps that is why it goes unnoticed in a crowd and can so easily be taken for granted. Its note of moderation runs through all of human action, all of human passion because the note of reason must run through all of these things. In this sense, temperance is not a special virtue, but a condition of all virtue. In the same sense fortitude's firmness, justice's rectitude, and prudence's rationality are notes of all human actions precisely because they are human, reasonable; for these things are the notes of reason.

: Its position as a virtue

But, taken more strictly, temperance is a special virtue: it has its own proper work to do. We can see this quite easily by comparing it with the work of the other virtues. Justice establishes the order of reason in external things; within the world of man, the interior world, the order of reason is not established by the strictly moral virtues, it is conserved. And it must be conserved not only against all that might drive a man from reason, through fear or recklessness (the work of fortitude), but also against what might coax a man away from reason, i.e., from the pleasures that are moderated by the virtue of temperance. In a word, fortitude and temperance protect the mastery of man's reason against the impediments offered by his double sense appetite. Those which arise from his irascible or emergency appetite are taken care of by

courage; those from the concupiscible or mild appetite are handled by temperance.

The passions can be compared quite closely to the sled-dogs of Arctic travel. These dogs are powerful, indispensable for man's travel, with great staying power and a marvellous capacity for work; but let them get out of control, and they are vicious enemies more seriously threatening the life of man than the freezing cold and heavy snows which, normally, they enable him to escape. The passions, too, are powerful things, indispensable for man's travel to his goal. They have tremendous staying power and great capacity for work. But let them get out of control, and they are the most vicious enemies a man can have, threatening not only his life, but his very humanity. The difference is that the passions are at home in harness; that is where they belong, they are human passions, designed of their very nature to obey reason.

Temperance works to moderate the passions of the concupiscible appetite; but indirectly it also moderates the emergency appetite, and from this double moderation proceeds the moderation of human acts. In a real sense, then, the conserving action of temperance is a radical thing. You will remember, in the preceding volume, it was pointed out that emergency passion depends on and arises from mild or concupiscible passion; so that a man who had no love whatsoever could not hope, be reckless or angry. In handling the prior passions, temperance makes no little contribution to the regulation of the consequent passions of the emergency appetite.

The point is important, particularly in view of many of our modern reform methods. We are attempting the hopeless when we disregard the prior passions and try to cope with their consequences. There is an inherent contradiction in our policy of championing the necessity of unrestricted natural appetite in academic circles, while we put policemen on corners and laws on the books to thwart the consequences of such "naturalness". To spoil a child, thereby cultivating uncontrolled concupiscible passion in it, and at the same time to be furious, embarrassed or puzzled at the outbreaks of temper, fear or despair, is to wonder why the roof falls down when we tear out the foundations.

Its objects

If we wish to state the objects of temperance concretely, we could say that it deals directly with the passions seeking or enjoying sensible good, i.e., the passions of love, desire and joy; by way of consequence, it deals indirectly with sorrow at the absence of these goods. Its remote material, the forest upon which it draws for the lumber of its house, is the use of things that are necessary for the conservation of nature; the planed lumber which goes into the home of temperance is the love, desire and pleasure which come from the use of those things so necessary to nature; while the completed mansion is moderate love, desire and pleasure in those necessary things.

A precise notion of the object of temperance can be had by a glance over our shoulder at fortitude. Fortitude looks primarily at the supreme danger of death, because every virtue aims at the highest perfection of its faculty; if a man can face the danger of death, of course he can face lesser dangers. In the same way, temperance aims at the moderation of the supreme pleasure; the man who can keep the supreme pleasures in hand can, without difficulty, control the lesser pleasures.

Really there is no room for argument as to which are the greatest of sense pleasures. Nature has treated us as children, taking no chance on our mistaking the less important for the more important. Just as a child can accurately judge the preference of the parent by the reward or threat attached to this or that particular work, so we can judge the intentions of nature by the reward or threat attached to this or that particular act. Sense pleasures are the rewards of nature attached to the things that nature particularly wants done; as an act is more intimately connected with an end principally intended by nature, its attached pleasure is greater. Consequently, the acts connected with nature's two great ends of conservation of the species and of the individual carry with them the greatest of sense pleasures. Because the species is much more directly intended by nature throughout the physical world, it is precisely in the acts conservative of the species that the supreme sense pleasure is found.

St. Thomas summarizes all this briefly when he says that temperance, principally and properly, moderates

the pleasures of the sense of touch; secondarily it moderates all lesser pleasures insofar as they have reference to this fundamental pleasure of touch. But notice that he insists it is moderation, not destruction, of pleasure which is accomplished by temperance. An oversight of this distinction is at the bottom of a very common mistake. Thus, it is insisted, with an ominous seriousness, that none of these things are to be done for the pleasure of doing them, we are not, for example to eat for the pleasure of eating. So with the best of intentions a person starts to eat for the glory of God or for nourishment; he has been very careful, locked all the doors and windows, posted his guards -- but there stands pleasure in the very midst of his good intentions, grinning its carefree grin. Of course pleasure comes in. There is a sense of pleasure necessarily and naturally connected with the very use of the necessities of life. Temperance does not touch that pleasure; it cannot touch it. Temperance does not blast out any part of our nature; it does not ask that we keep a few drops of castor oil on our tongue all the time to counteract the natural pleasure of eating. It insists on moderation in those things that add to the essential pleasure, that make that natural use a still greater source of pleasure.

As a matter of fact, to place any one of these acts merely for the acts themselves, solely for the pleasure of it, is psychologically an extremely difficult thing for the ordinary individual. It is when we are very hungry that food tastes particularly good; the pleasure is meted out by nature in proportion to the demand of nature for this particular act. It is a long job to accomplish the perversion that would enable us to eat for the joy of eating. It demands that we twist nature badly; the effort and time necessary for that well-accomplished perversion will leave us no doubt of its evil. But until we have that assurance of perversion the pleasure of these natural acts does not represent any considerable material for worrying purposes.

If we remember that temperance is not a destroyer of pleasure we shall soon see that it is not a repellent, worrisome thing. It is by no means a constant source of irritation designed to keep us constantly unhappy. Rather, it has an air of tranquil beauty about it, like the beauty of a calm sea, a Swiss valley farm seen from a mountain top, or a child's face immediately after a bath. Christ's calming of the storm at sea was more than a gesture of protection and comfort for the apostles; it was a miniature of temperance executed by a divine hand.

The material of temperance can most readily and most thoroughly disturb the tranquillity of the soul of a man. These things are so close to the fibres of a man's being that any disorder in them is a fundamental disorder for the whole man. They, above all other things, can besmirch the beauty of a man's soul, for they are the least in man and drag him down to the lowest level, like the basest of metals mingling with the purity of gold. They represent the common link between man and the animal world; they can easily become heavy enough to drag man down to the level of his fellow animals.

**Conditions for the integrity of mastery:
Love of the beauty of temperance -- "honesty"**

But temperance is a source of beauty in a more positive way. A human nose is a thing of beauty if there is not too much of it; the very essence of beauty is proportion, a rich, brilliant order. Temperance has as its striking note precisely the note of moderation, of order, of proportion. Moreover, it is a brilliant order; it is the order of reason shining through the lowest things in man, giving them a consecration, a halo, a striking elevation like that given a speck of dust caught in a ray of sunlight. It is true that temperance is not the greatest of the virtues; but it is one of the most lovable. It does not reach out directly to the high, divine things, nor to the great goods of the whole community of men. It does not face the tremendous dangers and difficulties as does courage; it is not even the most useful in the lives of other men. The fact is that temperance is an intensely personal virtue, as beauty is an intensely personal thing. It walks through life as humbly busy as a housewife; every minute of every day it has work to do keeping the house of a man's soul in order.

Yet, it is a constant inspiration to other men, as beauty always is. It is a refreshing touch of the breath of God's order, like the gust of a cool breeze on a summer day. It is a tranquil prophecy of a beauty awaiting us, or a reminder of beauties that have been carelessly mislaid, beauties that can be won, or re-won, by

everyone. There is, therefore, no great mystery in Christ's choice of his most beloved disciple; there is no real psychological puzzle in the humble fascination that kept Magdalen so very close to Mary the Virgin. Beauty has always been loved by men who were made for order, even by the greatest of men -- the man Who also was God.

Recoil from the disgrace of baseness -- shamefacedness

A keen appreciation of this beauty of temperance is quite essential for the perfection of the acts of temperance. To be truly temperate a man must have, first of all, a love of the beauty of temperance, a love that Thomas calls "honesty." In a larger sense honest or honorable does not express an idea different than that of virtue; indeed, it is not different from the humanly beautiful, the humanly useful, or the humanly delightful. But in this special sense, in which Thomas uses the word, honesty looks directly at the beauty of temperance and falls in love with it. His keen appreciation of that beauty makes a man recoil from the disgrace, the baseness of intemperance; it gives him what Thomas calls "shamefacedness." This is the thing that makes the memories of a sinner so bitter; that, in its preparatory state, makes the steps of the saint so very careful. It is this saving sense of shame that makes the knowledge of our evil by those close to us so very painful; they know us so well, their judgment of us is so accurate that our shame is almost a constant thing.

We are made for beauty, even for divine beauty. We are in love with beauty even when we have destroyed it in ourselves. When that beauty is wiped out of the life of a man, he has lost a priceless treasure; when the sense of loss of the beauty is completely gone from the heart of a man, he has gone far along the road towards surrendering his humanity. He has cut off one last link binding him to the moderation of reason that must be the keynote of human life.

Temperance, however, is not an empty-headed beauty, highly decorative but socially intolerable. As we get to know her better, we find a solid common-sense and a profundity that distracts even from her beauty. One of the great slanders against her common sense persistently arises from the practice of mortification. It is no doubt astonishing to an outsider to hear that mortification is not a condemnation of sense pleasure but a recognition of its intrinsic worth and desirability. Our Lenten penances do not come about because we look on these pleasures as somehow suspect or even possibly evil; it is precisely because we insist upon their innate honesty that these penances have such a particular significance.

Double defect of mastery: By deficiency -- insensibility Distinction from self-denial

The condemnation of sense pleasure as evil was the slimy error of the Manicheans which Dominic stamped on as vigorously as a man would stamp on a snake. The Puritans' repulsion to any expression of the mild or concupiscible passions came from the same unclean error. The athlete in training is not inhuman because he limits his social engagements; the invalid recovering from typhoid fever is not condemning food when he abstains from corned-beef and cabbage in spite of his great hunger. Why then should the penitent be suspect of inhumanity when, for greater health of soul, he denies himself something on the physical plane? This is not a kind of angelism that attempts to deny the physical in man; it is a surrender of something good in itself for higher ends. Indeed it is nothing more than that profound common sense which dictates an entirely different diet for the nun dedicated to contemplation and the brawny bricklayer whose contemplation fights with the fatigue of his body for a place in his life.

Opposition to nature

The condemnation of pleasure as evil belongs to the unwholesome vice that Thomas calls "insensibility." It is the vice of people who shudder at natural pleasures as somehow uncouth and demeaning. The shudder is, of course, directed against nature itself and the ends of nature: but nature refuses to be embarrassed by the snub. As a matter of fact, such an attitude has no claim whatever to the superior airs it flaunts; there is nothing of piety or religion about it, its calm acceptance of men's respect is a sheer swindle. It is rather an object of pity, or even of contempt.

By excess -- intemperance: Its puerility

At the other extreme is the puerile sin of intemperance, a blind plunge into the dark depths of the pleasures of taste and touch. It is puerile. Not that it is common among children -- quite the contrary; but it makes children of men who should long since have ceased to be children. The appetites of the intemperate are themselves spoiled children, paying no attention to the commands of reason; and as a consequence these men miss the sublime order and beauty of temperance. Their appetites are given their own way, become more and more imperious, more and more insistent on their own immediate objects to the disregard and ruin of all else. The corrective measures for these unruly appetites are the same as corrective measures for unruly children, i.e., coercion. For being resisted, the appetite is corrected, brought under the moderation of reason. Where that coercion is not applied, the house of the intemperate man's soul is comparable to a house full of children where the parents have lost absolutely all authority; or, more tragically, it is like a country devastated by civil war.

Its gravity compared to cowardice

Intemperance is an immature sin but it is not an insignificant sin. Objectively it is graver than cowardice, the defect of courage. The coward, after all, has much more excuse than the intemperate man; he is escaping from the serious dangers of death, so at least he is trying to conserve his life -- surely a much more necessary thing than the satisfaction of the desire for pleasure. The prospect of pleasure does not paralyze a man's mind as does great fear. There is, too, an element of regret in cowardice, a regret that increases with the increase of fear; but the intemperate man becomes more breathlessly willing as his passion approaches a white heat. Granted that in the abstract there is much more distaste attached to the objects of intemperance than to those of cowardice; but in the concrete the opposite is true, for the increase in willingness is automatically a decrease in distaste. And it is worth while remembering that human actions are never in the abstract, always in the concrete.

The odds are always in favor of the intemperate man. He can always and easily find a remedy. As a matter of fact, he has constant practice in his battle against these impediments to the control of reason, and he can enter that battle with none of the tremors that danger inspires, for there is no danger involved. On the other hand, the poor coward comes face to face with the danger of death all of a sudden; that is, he has had no practice sessions, and the exercise of courage here and now, in these circumstances, will be decidedly dangerous.

Degree of disgracefulness

However, intemperance is not the greatest of sins. In fact, it is not at all the one distinctive mark that separates the sheep from the goats; while mortally sinful, it is of the lesser type of mortal sin, for in it there is less of that formal aversion to God that is the determinant of gravity and which is so pronounced in the spiritual sins of pride and envy. You might say that the intemperate man approaches even his sins shamefacedly. And no wonder. These sins do have the greatest infamy and shame attached to them. It is a shame so great as to be, in a sense, contagious; a temperate man, forced to watch a glutton gorge himself, gets up from the table feeling a little sick, a pure man forced into even momentary contact with a libertine feels himself a little besmirched. This, you understand, is no justification for the hypocrite gathering up his skirts as he carefully circles around the penitent sinner. The question here is not of contact with penitents but of contact with sin; and it is one of the marvels of grace and self-denial that shines out so brightly from the lives of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd that they can be so obviously unbesmirched who, for the love of their Master and in spite of their own great love of purity, spend all of a lifetime in contact with the leprosy of uncleanness.

From what we have seen of the beauty of temperance, it is not hard to understand something of the ugliness of the sins of intemperance. These sins befoul a man for they are directly opposed to the proportion, the moderation which allows reason to shine through the things common to man and brutes,

glorifying them with the glory of humanity. These sins shut off that transforming light of reason and plunge man into a world of darkness, of monstrous distortion and of unholy delights that ultimately destroy him. Of course a man can get hardened to such a world for a while. He can get used to such a darkness to the extent of blinding himself to all light; he can so accustom himself to uncleanness as to overlook the slime that clings to him. But all this is only for a time; eventually, perhaps too late, something of his pitiable condition will dawn upon his drugged mind. Then only the all- powerful grace of God will save him from despair. Meanwhile the objective baseness and disgrace is rather increased than decreased by his careless acceptance of them.

All that we have said in this chapter has been an exposition of the virtue of mastery and its opposite, the virtue of temperance and the vice of intemperance. In the next few chapters we shall go into the different species of the virtue and the connected virtues one by one and in considerable detail. In this chapter I should like to mention these other virtues, more by way of mapping out the immediately future study than by way of exposition of these virtues. In other words, this brief mention will be an attempt, in a rough, general way, to familiarize us with the country we are about to explore; and, at the same time, it will give us a glimpse of the perfection of the order of St. Thomas' procedure.

Species of mastery: In works conserving the individual: abstinence and sobriety
In works conserving the species: chastity and purity

The different species of temperance cover the pleasures that draw men away from reason, particularly the greatest of these sense pleasures. Thus the pleasures attached to the natural works by which the individual is conserved are the material of abstinence and sobriety: the one moderating the pleasures of food, the other those of drink. The pleasures attached to works conservative of the species are taken care of by chastity and purity; the one taking care of the substance of these acts, the other of the surrounding circumstances.

Continency, clemency, modesty

The virtues connected with temperance -- as friendship, gratitude, and so on are connected with justice -- moderate the internal and external movements of the soul towards some good. Thus for the movements of the will obsessed by passion there is the virtue of continency; for the movements of the sense appetite against things, there is clemency; towards things modesty. Modesty itself is of several kinds: modesty of soul or humility; modesty of body; and, finally, modesty in externals. In the next few chapters we shall investigate each of these virtues and in so doing we shall see more of the deeper beauty of the virtue of temperance.

By way of summary of this chapter it is well to notice that however mastery is denied to man -- whether by a denial of the possibility or of the material of mastery -- the results are inevitably the results of intemperance. If a man believes it is hopeless to fight, he will surrender; and surrender here means acceptance of slavery to the sense appetite. If he is convinced there is nothing to fight against, that he should embrace the sense appetite without restraint, then every last barrier to the free play of those passions is removed. In each case the result is the result of intemperance, with all of its ugliness, all of its degrading implications for human nature.

Implications of the denial of mastery: For the truth of human nature

And these implications are definitely degrading. Actual intemperance itself means that for all practical purposes, a man is only half a man; that half of him which is animal. The reasons alleged as justification of intemperance broadcast the same unflattering lie: in one case insisting that man is totally corrupt; in the other that he is not a man at all. Thus intemperance, both in theory and in practice, is an open confession of the inhumanity of man.

For the maturity of human nature

There is always an implication of immaturity in sins of intemperance; an insistence that a man pay as little attention to reason as an adolescent pays to the wisdom of experience; a contention that man has no more possibility of putting order in his life than has a child as yet incapable of reasoning. Intemperance argues, in other words, that human nature cannot take care of itself, cannot induce order, proportion, moderation in its own house.

For the dignity of human nature For the beauty of human nature

And that is no less than a denial to human nature of the one solid ground it has for dignity and self-respect; for it is a denial to man of the command of his own life. The human individual is thus robbed of that personal responsibility, that personal control, that personal reward or punishment that is wrapped up with the inherent dignity of human personality; of course he is denied the possibilities of human beauty. Obviously it is impossible for such a man to let the light of reason break through his animal nature to give it a consecrated halo, which is its right as a sharer in the domain of reason; and which reason itself has as a reflection of the light of divine reason, divine wisdom.

The difficult condition of mastery -- battle

There are reasons for a man's surrender of his mastery and his return to slavery. Perhaps one of the most outstanding of those reasons is the difficult condition attached to the victory of temperance, that is, the condition of battle. It is a peculiarly difficult battle, for its end is not to destroy an enemy, or break the power of an opponent; rather it is to keep intact all the power and energy of the opposition and put it to work under control. It demands a fight, a severe fight, a constant fight; and, too frequently, it means many and many a failure. A man can escape the fight either by joining the opposition or by abandoning all hope; either way he surrenders the prize that makes the fight worth while, the prize of mastery. Perhaps another, somewhat less tangible, reason for man's surrender of his human ideals is the very darkness of the world of intemperance; the lens of our eye will not register this beauty in the darkness and we have no infra-red camera of spiritual discernment to reveal it to us. Indeed, we have become so blind to beauty that even physical beauty must be hacked to pieces by a tape-measure before we dare to give it its palm.

The champion of man as man

The Church today, as in the Colonial days, as indeed in all days, is the champion of temperance. In one age she was mocked as the slatternly mother of looseness, of ungodliness, of frivolity and pleasure; in another age she is mocked as the narrow, sour-faced advocate of conservatism, rigidity, prudishness, angelism. As a matter of fact she is none of these things. She is the champion of the humanity of man. She insists now, as she always has, that man is a rational animal, that is, he is a human animal. He has a body as well as a soul; both integral parts of his composite nature. He has a body, but it is a human body; therefore, by its very nature, it is to be subject to the rule of all things human, to reason. Today, as in all days, she insists on the note of beauty in human life and action which is moderation, because in this age, as in every age, she insists on the characteristic note of reason in the living of human life. She stands by the fundamental truth, that the human animal is a master. She will continue to urge men to fight for that mastery, to refuse to give it up whatever the sacrifice demanded for its maintenance, because she knows that a man cannot cease to be a master without at the same time ceasing to be a man.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

**CHAPTER XVII -- THE FREEDOM OF PURITY
(Q. 146-154)**

1. Modern concern about chastity:
 - (a) Its basis.
 - (b) Its motives.
 - (c) Its implications.
2. Roots of freedom:
 - (a) Proximate and remote sources.
 - (b) Its reason,
 - (c) Internal and external.
3. The garrison protecting freedom:
 - (a) From the abuse of food -- abstinence:
 - (1) Its nature.
 - (2) Its act -- fasting
 - a. Purposes.
 - b. Naturalness.
 - c. Allotted times.
 - (3) Its opposite -- gluttony
 - a. Its modes.
 - b. Intrinsic gravity.
 - c. Its daughters: unseemly joy, scurrility, physical uncleanness, loquaciousness, dullness of mind.
 - (b) From the abuse of drink -- sobriety:
 - (1) Its nature.
 - (2) Its opposite -- drunkenness.
 - (c) From the abuse of sex -- chastity:
 - (1) Prudishness versus modesty in words.
 - (2) Considerations for accurate knowledge of Catholic position on sex.
 - (3) The consecration of matrimony.
 - (4) The excellence of virginity.
 - (5) The excuses for lust.

Conclusion:

1. Impossible dreams of a slave world:
 - (a) Moderation without a norm.
 - (b) Humanity without purity.
2. Human ends and slave ideology.
3. A generation betrayed:
 - (a) The modern pagan and purity.
 - (b) The Catholic and purity.
4. Freedom and slavery.

CHAPTER XVII -- THE FREEDOM OF PURITY (Q. 146-154)

THERE have been many good men and women in America who have lived their lives in cheerful innocence of the conditions by which they were surrounded. When they heard booming attacks upon a new paganism or ringing accusations of an abandonment of Christian ethics, they smiled; "excited Jeremiahs," they said, "terrified at the recurrence of very human evils which no age has escaped." They felt satisfied, mellow and very wise; for to the pure all things are pure, especially if the pure are a little on the slow side. But within these past few years the complacency has been supplanted by a horrified disbelief; these cheerfully innocent people have received a bad shock.

Modern concern about chastity: Its basis.

They are in the position of the Austrian shopkeeper who smiled at the thought of his country ever disappearing from the map of the world; and then, one morning he looked out his window to see company after company of German soldiers trampling on the kindly old heart of his beloved Vienna. Recently these cheerfully innocent people stepped out of their homes one fine morning and were promptly buried under an avalanche of facts. Studies reported the progress of unchastity and the diseases connected with unchastity: odd defenses of chastity appeared written in a tone that indicated chastity was definitely in need of defense. Inquiries had been made on the subject scientifically, very scientifically: college girls and boys had been interviewed, figures were tabulated, the opinion of women of all classes had been obtained on birth control and marriage; statistics had been gathered on the sale of sex-stimulating drugs to children

and the manufacture and sale of contraceptives. One great magazine proved that this latest industry is now one of the great American industries and one of the greatest of rackets; it named names and went unchallenged.

After the first terrible shock of facing the facts, the naively innocent person cast about for some encouragement; and promptly found it. In this progressive twentieth century, it was a good thing to shelve Paul's warning that these things should not so much as be mentioned among Christians. After all, an aroused public opinion has tremendous force. With the aid of that public opinion, the church will now get somewhere in its fight for purity. Everything is going to be all right; now it is not so much a question of arousing the public to the need of purity as it is of furnishing that aroused public with leadership to the goals of purity.

Its motives

A little more profound consideration of all this talk about chastity and unchastity would have uncovered two worrisome facts. First of all no one seems to have anything very cheering to say about the present state of affairs. The reports which have been made can certainly cause no joy in heaven; and there can be little reason for their causing joy on earth. Of course there is no one who believes that these reports and statistics tell the whole story; rather they are a delicate insinuation of the corruption which has taken place in American morals. The story of unchastity is never easily come at, particularly for national publication

The second disillusioning fact is that, in all this uproar about chastity, the concern has been almost exclusively with the threat to the body and material happiness, not with the threat to the soul and eternal happiness. For the most part the considerations have been purely animal, the worry has whirled about a purely physical sun. In other words, there has been no real concern about chastity but simply the same, old, jittery concern about health that always haunts the mind of a man to whom death is oblivion.

Its implications

Because the desire behind all this is not to be pure but rather to be healthy, we find no distinctly human -- that is no distinctly moral -- reason alleged in favor of chastity. The force behind the whole campaign is stark fear. It was not mere coincidence that a national campaign against venereal diseases synchronized with the excited discussion of unchastity. The coward is faced with an unpleasant choice: he must take chastity or physical misfortune. Neither is attractive; he might have to down the first as a preventive dose, but he reaches for it with the resigned lassitude of an invalid taking bitter medicine. Under these circumstances he will, of course, try every escape offered by mechanical and medical ingenuity before he takes the desperate step of embracing chastity. Chastity will be practised reluctantly and violated cautiously; and this is, I suppose, something of that lukewarmness that nauseated Christ Himself.

The implication is unescapable. We have missed the significance of purity for human life. Perhaps there is no more damning indictment of our age than that tragic oversight. As if in confirmation of the truth of the indictment, many of our intellectual leaders look upon chastity, particularly pre-marital chastity, as a thing against which nature protests vigorously in the form of natural punishments, abnormalities that border upon insanity, and seriously threaten the sanity of man. Purity is an attempt to thwart the natural, to trick it, confine it in an artificial frame. Catholics make a medieval hullabaloo about what is, at its worst, a human peccadillo.

Roots of freedom: Proximate and remote sources

We have missed the intimate interrelation between purity and humanity. In some mysterious way we have overlooked the obvious fact that since human life is a reasonable life and human activity is a rational activity, of course human passion is passion under reason. The name of this supreme passion under reason is purity. The attack on purity is an attack on the domain of reason; its defense in the name of purely physical considerations is itself an attack on the humanity and freedom of man.

Its reason

The world of reason is a world where freedom holds sway and where physical force is helpless; it is a moral world. Because a man has a spiritual soul and thus an intellect and will stretching out to the infinite reaches of the universal good, there is no particular good that can overwhelm his appetite. He can take a particular good, or he can leave it alone; because he can see its goodness or, on second glance, he can see what of goodness it lacks. On the long shopping tour that makes up his life, he does not have to take what he can get for the pittance sense appetite gives him to spend; his wallet is choking and he has unlimited resources to call on. He is completely master of his shopping for only one thing exhausts his resources, that is, God Himself.

Internal and external

The key to the whole situation is spirituality. The proximate sources of man's freedom are his soul, his intellect and his will; behind them stands the sole possible Author of spiritual substance, the infinitely powerful God. Because a man is spiritual he has liberty; because he is spiritual that liberty has eternal significance. That is, the use or the abuse of liberty is for eternity, for the spiritual, as incorruptible, exists for eternal ends.

A man's will or intellect cannot be handcuffed. As long as he remains a spiritual being with reason in control, he can never be enslaved. He possesses an internal liberty much more important than any external, civic freedom; an emperor, after all, can be a slave to himself, while a slave can be completely master of himself, can be most free. External liberty is as perilous a thing as a heart worn on one's sleeve; it can be lost, whereas internal liberty can only be surrendered. No force, intrigue, trickery can take it away from us. And this is precisely the liberty over which purity maintains such a jealous guard.

It is unfortunate that men and women today are inclined to look upon the fight for purity as a little abstract and academic. Like so many moral questions, it apparently has no immediate pertinence to individual life. A man instantly and vigorously resists an attack on his property, his children, his wife; but an attack on virtue is different. Here he considers himself off to one side, a spectator not greatly interested in the winner of the argument. The thing is important, for these questions have a profound personal significance for every individual. The drastic consequences of modern attacks on the spiritual soul, the intellect and the will of man, the bitter attacks on God, are much more serious than any physical attack on a man himself, his family or his property. This attack on the realm of the spiritual is not so much a matter of beating a man to the ground as of disemboweling him.

Surely what threatens the spiritual and rational in a man threatens his freedom, for it is precisely upon that spiritual foundation that he builds his claim to freedom. When the body, the sense appetite, and the world of the present take precedence over the soul, the will and the world of eternity, man is no longer free. He is a slave; that is, he is no longer a man.

In this material of temperance there are three serious threats to the sovereignty of man's reason, The threats are extremely serious because the material is so extremely necessary that nature attaches to it the greatest sense rewards, lest its primary ends be overlooked or neglected. To take care of the possible sorties against his reason from this material, man is equipped with a garrison of virtues specially equipped for this kind of enemy and this type of warfare. There are only three in that garrison -- abstinence, sobriety and chastity -- but their fighting qualities more than make up for their numbers.

Still these three are not enemies of man's nature, not even of his sensitive nature. They can be rightly understood only when they are seen as guardians and protectors of man and his nature. Their presence in a man has exactly the effect of a well-disciplined garrison in a stronghold of restless subjects. They prevent mob-rule within a man and turn the violently restless energies of his passions to the common good of the man himself. Understand, this is not a question of using these subjects as a tyrannous master might use slaves merely for his own end. Reason is not working against the passions; it allows, indeed, insists upon their attainment of their own proper ends. Those proper ends of the passions, with their rich contributions

to the welfare of the whole man, are defeated and trampled underfoot by the rioting of the mob of undisciplined passions.

The garrison protecting freedom: From the abuse of food -- abstinence; Its nature

If it were a virtue merely to abstain from food, then by implication, the taking of food would be sinful. It is this sort of absurdity that is somehow wrapped up in the defense and attack of the modern negative "protectors" of liberty. A man can and does refuse food; perhaps because he has no appetite or is starving himself to death. Neither case involves a question of abstinence; the whole point of the virtue is the note of reason it insists upon in the use of food. The man who gives up coffee as a penance, even though it makes life miserable for his family, is not an abstinent man; neither is the ascetical tyro who stays up night after night praying only to fall asleep over his work during the day. These things are unreasonable so they cannot be virtuous. The virtue of abstinence is in operation only when the bounds of reason are carefully observed; its precise work is to restrain man's use of food to reasonable limits.

Its act -- fasting; Purposes

Abstinence holds a man back from abusing food. Fasting, an act of abstinence, goes a step further and holds a man back from what might very well be eaten without any abuse whatever. Again we must insist that this is not a condemnation of food. Eating enough certainly cannot be anything but a cause of joy, except perhaps to a grateful beggar to whom the experience is astonishing in its novelty. To refuse to eat what is no more than enough, if it is to be virtuous must be reasonable; and it can be reasonable only because it is aimed at ends higher than its immediate purposes.

If I have a healthy appetite for a bit of steak, an entirely reasonable amount in entirely reasonable circumstances, yet I refuse to eat it, then I have some explaining to do. If the refusal was for no reason whatever it would be an act of insanity; if it proceeded from a conviction that food itself is evil and to be avoided, then it would be vicious; but if it is for some higher end, like training the soul or satisfying for sins, it might well be virtuous.

We get a realistically concrete view of the higher ends of fasting by looking back to the first week of any Lent. After a few days of highly successful mortification, we have a definite sense of satisfaction, of pride in ourselves, of highly human accomplishment. You see, we have been fully in control. That is the really solid basis of that sense of satisfaction and superiority over our old selves. We are being supereminently human and we know it. We are experiencing something of the joy of being human.

To recognize those high ends in detail no more is necessary than to see them. By fasting we let our appetites know beyond any doubt that reason is the head of this household; and by that very fact, we give our appetites invaluable practice in subjection. This practice is important, for it is always important for a man to be rational, to have his reason in control. Going up a step higher, fasting is clearly a kind of restitution. Every sin is a stolen pleasure, for every sin is at least an overindulgence of will; fasting restores a legitimate pleasure, thus both satisfying for the debt of sin and impressing us with the true nature of sin. We cannot fast very long and not realize that no one ever gets anything out of sin, not even a pickpocket or a bank robber; everything that apparently comes out of it must be given back, even though that restitution take all of an eternity.

Looking at fasting on a still higher plane, it is not hard to see in it a disposition to contemplation. In the old public school schedule, a singing class was held immediately after lunch. The schedule was good, however bad the singing might be; for surely it would not be as bad as the thinking turned out on a full stomach. Whatever the physical background may be, psychologically it is sure that full satisfaction of the appetite for food makes the mind dull; it is apt to act like a puppy, crawl off to some warm corner and go to sleep. Thus monastic fasts are not idle gestures of melancholy or of distaste for the pleasures of sense. The primary business of monastic life is always contemplation, and fasting is an excellent disposition for it. The evening meal in a Dominican House of Studies is usually light; from September to Easter it is

extraordinarily light. It is not coincidence that the most fruitful periods of study are the morning (after a positively feather-weight breakfast) and the evening or, as far as that goes, the rest of the night. There may be elements of discomfort; but, after all, a monastery does not exist for comfort but for contemplation. The very discomfort becomes eminently reasonable as a means to the higher ends of truth.

Naturalness

From all this it might be erroneously gathered that fasting was the product of Christian asceticism. Nothing is further from the truth. The value of fasting as a means of satisfying for sin, controlling and elevating the mind has always been common knowledge among men; so much so that fasting was a common practice even among primitive peoples, so common as to justify Thomas' statement -- long before anthropology elbowed its way into the halls of science -- that fasting is a command of the natural law precisely for these three reasons.

The natural law did not, of course, tell an Iroquois that he must fast on Friday, nor the African pygmy that he must observe the Ember Days; it said nothing to the Eskimo about Lent. The actual times for fasting are positive law's determinations of the indeterminate general precept of natural law.

This explains the universal character of the Church's insistence on fasting. It does, of course, recognize special impediments, such as exist in children, working men and beggars. But even here, the dispensation from the fast does not mean an excuse from mortification; otherwise it would hardly be a privilege, a favor done for an individual, rather it would be a tragic deprivation. St. Basil could not understand why anyone could not fast: the guest-list of the rich was incomplete without fasting, it was an old table-companion of the poor, to women it was as natural as breathing, to children it was like water to a young plant, while as for the old, why the long years had made it second nature to them.

Allotted times

With the purposes of fasting well understood, the fast days appointed by the Church take on new beauty. Surely there is no more fitting time to satisfy for our sins and prepare our minds for the consideration of eternal things than in the days that prepare us for Christ's death and resurrection; how can we better appreciate the great saints' entry into heaven, the full meaning of the great feasts, than by preparing our minds to appreciate the splendid goals they hold before our eyes? But it is not enough to lift ourselves to the plane of the angels now and then; that is where we belong all of our lives. To bring this truth home, we are made to fast in each of the four seasons of the year and for three days as a symbol of the three months that make up the divisions of the year: we call those days Ember Days. During those days priests are ordained and all the major orders given; a fitting time in which to prepare ourselves to celebrate the birthdays of these other Christs.

Its opposite -- gluttony; Its modes

The delicate fineness achieved by fasting is quickly perceived by a contrast with the effects of gluttony. It is much the same contrast as that between the perfectly conditioned dancer and the man who has let himself go to seed. On one side there are clean, hard muscles, moving rhythmically under perfect control with a grace that is almost fluid, the grace in motion that a woman so often possesses in repose. On the other side there is the puffy flabbiness, the disintegration, the softness of a man many years older than his age.

It is to be understood that gluttony is not merely a matter of pleasure in food nor of quantity; rather it is a desire for food or an enjoyment of it that surpasses the bounds of reason. If we think of gluttony only in terms of quantity, we might well echo Augustine's delightfully human confession: "Who is it, Lord, that does not eat a little more than necessary?" Gluttony must be thought of, not in terms of quantity, but in terms of reason. As a matter of fact, it can be committed -- a sin of desire -- on a desert island with no food to be had, or at a breakfast table buoyant under the airy weight of two pieces of toast. It may be accomplished by the man who goes at his food too ardently or by the kitchen nuisance, the nibbler, who

simply cannot wait for his food. The varieties of gluttony are really extraordinary: the gourmand, for instance, who gravely superintends every step of his food's preparation; the dainty one to whom an undisguised piece of beef would be obscenity; the man who eats by the dollar sign, subsisting on a diet equivalent roughly to caviar and champagne. The real epicurean, sinning by a wholesale perversion on the side of quantity, is at present somewhat rare; at least there is little trace in modern records of architects designing a vomitorium as the logical companion of a dining-room.

Intrinsic gravity

In itself, gluttony is usually a venial sin. It is only when we make food our goal to the extent of turning our backs on God for it that it becomes a mortal sin. Certainly the man who would deliberately eat himself to death for the pleasure of his food has carried this sin to its extreme. This inherent lightness of the sin of gluttony may be puzzling by reason of its very close parallelism to contraception. Both are against nature in exactly the same way: by perversion of a faculty, using for an end that which is meant by nature as a means, deliberately frustrating (in the case of the epicureans) the end to which those means are ordained. The difference between the two is that gluttony does not impede the primary physical end of nature -- the preservation of the species; nor does it, usually, seriously impede the secondary physical end of nature, the conservation of the individual's own life. The sins against nature are not grievous simply because they are against nature; their gravity is in exact proportion to the impediment they place to the attainment of the ends of nature.

Its daughters: unseemly joy, scurrility, physical uncleanness, loquaciousness, dullness of mind

From this we might conclude that gluttony is a disgusting rather than a serious sin. It is disgusting; but it is also terribly dangerous. It is a capital sin and a list of its unlovely daughters explains a great deal of our disgust with it and all of its perils. Gluttony brings the animal in man so emphatically to the forefront as to give the impression that the mastery of reason had been done away with. Reason is drugged, heavy-eyed, sluggish, as contrasted with its alert vitality in the mortified man. With reason asleep or so nearly asleep, the rest of man runs wild: there is unseemly and riotous joy in the appetite, a loquaciousness in speech and a scurrility of action -- all more or less out of control. The crowning touch of distastefulness, made proverbial in the spotted vest, is a physical uncleanness that goes unnoticed by the glutton.

From the abuse of drink -- sobriety: Its nature

Overindulgence in food deprives a man of his mastery stealthily, little by little and day by day. But overindulgence in intoxicating drink has none of this cowardly finesse about it; it hits a man over the head and throws him helpless in a gutter. It represents a very special threat to reason and so must be mastered by a very special virtue, the virtue of sobriety. Sobriety and teetotalism are not synonymous terms; as a matter of fact, sobriety is not interested in total abstinence. Its interest is in the note of reason, the note of freedom and mastery that must shine forth from a man's use of intoxicating liquors.

Its opposite -- drunkenness

St. Thomas thought that this virtue was particularly necessary in youths, in women, in the old and in those who hold positions of honor. We confirm this contention again and again by our varying attitudes towards drunkards; to us, a drunken high school boy, a drunken mother or a drunken governor are all much more shocking sights than a drunken sailor. Why did St. Thomas pick out these particular classes and why are we so instinctively in agreement with him? Well, obviously, the old and those in authority should be those in whom reason is particularly flourishing; in youths and women, sobriety is more necessary because of the added inclination to concupiscence -- in youths by reason of their very exuberance, in women (says St. Thomas) because they are so apt to let their heart rule their head.

This does not mean that a husband can get drunk with impunity while his wife commits the same act only under penalty of sin. Deliberate drunkenness is a mortal sin in anyone. It involves the deliberate loss of the use of reason for the sheer love of the drink. That is, drunkenness is a deliberately immoderate use, an

unreasonable use, of intoxicating liquor with serious results to the mastery of man.

From the abuse of sex -- chastity: Prudishness versus modesty in words

For the rest of this chapter I shall do what has not been done in any other part of this work and what shall not be done again in the two volumes that will complete it. I shall depart from the order and the actual material of St. Thomas. I believe the reasons I have for this procedure prove clearly that it is the wiser thing to do.

St. Thomas was the angel of the schools, relieved miraculously from all temptations against purity from the days of his young manhood; yet he could and did have a profound knowledge of impurity. In the course of his Summa he wrote a scientifically exhaustive treatise on purity and impurity designed especially for physicians of souls. Certainly Thomas with his angelic purity, saw the deep wisdom of Paul's admonition against discussing these things, indeed, against even mentioning them; but he understood it with this very reasonable condition: that is, these things are not to be mentioned among Christians unless it is necessary and in precisely the way that such mention is necessary.

Yet in spite of the fact that Thomas observed the admonition of Paul and at the same time wrote a thoroughly scientific treatise on the subject, I am abandoning the order and the material of that treatise. I am quite sure I am not being prudish about this thing. Prudishness refuses to talk about these things for one of two reasons: either because it can think of nothing that can be said (an implicit condemnation of sex as evil) or because it can think of nothing that dare be said. In the first case, it shrinks from an unutterable evil; in the second it admits the evil but does no shrinking whatever, at least in private. Now Catholic doctrine is not prudish. It has much to say about sex, all of it good, much of it extremely beautiful; but what it has to say is said in the proper place.

Considerations for accurate knowledge of Catholic position on sex

The Church does give a detailed treatment to these subjects, but not from a lecture platform or in a book for general consumption. This is a matter for personal direction, or for a small group whose needs can be accurately and personally gauged. In this chapter, then, I shall not say all the Church has to say about sex; I shall give only the general truths, the foundations of the Catholic attitude toward sex, with no details and no illustrations. The rest of this chapter then, will not be a shock but a revelation of the beauty of the Catholic position; unless my exposition is very bad indeed.

The Catholic position on sex has frequently been misunderstood because men and women have been content to contrast the Church's high esteem of virginity with its unrelenting, unconditional condemnation of lust. Both of these are facts; but the important thing is the reason behind these facts. All slander to the contrary, neither of these facts constitute a condemnation of sex, nor are they the product of an aversion to sex.

The consecration of matrimony

There is much less likelihood of mistaking the Catholic attitude if we consider the Catholic view of matrimony and the purposes of virginity as the means of arriving at the beauty of the Catholic doctrine. These two considerations emphasize the character of the Church as continuing the life of Christ. Its viewpoint is also divinely human; it, too, lifts men up to divine heights yet fights every encroachment on the humanity of man. The Church is a most human mother, not condemning food, drink, or any aspect or manifestation of man's human love.

It is from the nature of love that the human character of sex is alone intelligible. From the work of the preceding volume and of this volume we should be thoroughly familiar with the notion of love. All benevolent love, all love of friendship, is defined as wishing good to another. In its last analysis it is no less than an attempt to identify the wills of the two friends; as far as is possible, we are one with our friend, his good is our good, his evil, our evil. In the case of high human love, men and women labor all

their lives to make that love clear, to show that they have really and completely identified themselves with those they love. It is this desire to express the genuine character of love that is the force behind all sacrifice, all dedication, all surrender in love.

It is not surprising that when the Church, or Christ Himself, was seeking a fitting expression for the highest things a man can reach; both Christ and the Church should come back again and again to the same figure: the nun's vows which dedicate her life to God make her the spouse of Christ; at Holy Communion the Catholic receives the bridegroom of his soul; the saint, scaling the last peak of heroic sanctity, is said to be mystically married to Christ; the Church itself is the spouse of Christ. This seems to be the only figure that even approximates these sublime things. Why? The reason is because matrimony and the acts proper to matrimony are the highest physical expressions of human love. We must always take love on faith. We try to make that love evident by clumsy words, by a kiss, and embrace; but only in heaven can we be sure of the mutual character of that love, for only in heaven shall we be privileged to see the very souls of others in the essence of God. Until such a time, we must build our lives on the signs of love.

Sex in human life has two outstanding purposes. One is the expression of love. It is something uniquely human, for only human passion can carry a message and has a message to carry; only human passion can have a meaning given it by the individual. It is a messenger; if its message is not authentic, it ceases to be human. It exists for a purpose and must never be considered apart from that purpose; with that purpose in mind, it can never be identified with anything else but the high holiness of human love. The second purpose, also uniquely human, gives human beings a share in the greatest work of God, a share in the procreation of the completely spiritual, the immortal soul that comes from God and goes to Him, the soul that was purchased by the blood of God and is destined to eternal citizenship in heaven.

When the Church insists that the marriage contract is a matter of strict justice, she is not replacing love by a heartless commercialism; she is merely insisting on a guarantee of the absolute minimum necessary for love. Surely the man who refuses the demands of justice to another cannot pretend to be wishing this other good. Marriage, then, is a consecration. Everything about it has the air of the sacred, everything. It is not something to be tolerated, to be smirked at, to be nonchalantly handled. The celebration of a marriage is always a fitting place for the presence of Christ, even when the provisions for that celebration are so inadequate as to demand a miracle to supplement them. It is divinely fitting that marriage should be a sacrament, one of those channels down which gushes the grace that is the life of the soul; for it is beautifully fitting that the highest expression of human love should be a means of that grace, by which it is possible for us to share in divine love.

Naturally the Catholic is indignant at the psychologists who see no difference between these human physical acts and the physical acts of the animals. Naturally he is disgusted with the brazen champions of license and selfish perversion; he does not look upon these people as slightly imprudent juveniles who have dragged dusty skeletons out of a dark closet; they are vandals, desecrators of most sacred things. Of course sex is a serious threat; but only because it is so necessary to nature that it carries with it the supreme sense pleasure. Its possible threat is not a reason for surrendering to it or for discarding it; but for protecting it with a virtue, the virtue of chastity. With that protection, sex becomes, not a threat to human life, but a means to eternal life.

The excellence of virginity

It is only with all this in mind that we can understand the Church's attitude towards virginity. Virginity, as such, has nothing desirable about it: it might be a vicious fruit of the vice of insensibility; among the Jews it was a source of shame to a woman, and rightly so in view of each woman's hope of mothering the Messiah. It has its special value in Christian thought, not for what it is but for what it aims at, not as an end but as a means. As has been said so often in this work, man's goods can be summed up under three headings: external goods, goods of the body and goods of the soul. External goods are ordained to the body; the goods of the body are ordered to the soul; and the goods of the soul are ordered to God. To abstain from external goods for the sake of the body is reasonable; to abstain from corporal things for the

good of the soul is eminently reasonable. It is because of this higher spiritual end that virginity has its privileged place in Christian thought.

Virginity has the same relation to purity that magnificence has to liberality; it carries the bank roll, purity handles the small change. For virginity is not the sun render of illegal pleasure for divine good; it is a gay discarding of perfectly legitimate pleasure for a more perfect and more direct surrender to God. Sacred as matrimony is, virginity is its superior. Here we approach the heroic; here the human is put aside for the divine, the body for the soul. Christ, choosing a virgin mother, taking a virgin disciple for His closest friend, or Paul championing virginity was not an enemy of love. Rather they recognized the truth so many ages have missed: the Christian virgin is head over heels in love. So true is this that the sacrifice of human love, this utter dedication to the divine, is demanded as the only adequate expression of the virgin's love. The difference between the love of the virgin and the love of the wife is that the virgin rushes directly and immediately into the arms of God, while the wife goes to Him through the holy, natural, and beautifully graduated steps of human love.

For all its bright' young beauty, virginity is not the greatest of virtues. It reaches the heights of chastity, but those are not the supreme heights of virtue. Even among the virtues whose work is to sacrifice, virginity must take a low place: the martyr gives up his life, the religious gives up his will, the virgin merely surrenders the legitimate pleasures of the physical side of man.

The excuses for lust

Man heartily dislikes to have his sins wandering about the house of his soul naked, he must clothe them, even though the best he can offer is the shabby garments of sophistry. He is, after all, a rational animal to the very roots of his being; he may give up reason, but he cannot altogether do away with the appearance of reason even in his sins. As a result, every age has alleged its reasons for lust; though of course there are no reasons. In our own day, the variety of excuses is positively bewildering. There is, for instance, the psychological excuse that chastity injures a man, makes him neurotic in its fight against nature. The sophistry proceeds from an identification of human and animal nature. For the control of man's passion is not an unnatural thing, even for those passions; as an integral part of man's nature, they are fulfilled only in their obedience to the rule of man's nature, to reason.

A little more subtle is the personality excuse. It argues that sex experience is necessary for a full development of personality, for an emotional richness that can be had in no other way. And this in contradiction to history: in spite of the splendor of Dominic's apostolate, the beauty and depth of Thomas' poems, the sweeping accomplishments of the tender maid of Sienna. When, please, should emotional richness be reached for? At ten' or twelve, or sixteen, or thirty, or ninety? Why then? Less convincing (if possible) is the "wild-oats" excuse; early unchastity is necessary for later stability in chastity, though even modern psychologists have a great deal to say in direct contradiction, in their investigations of habit formation.

Then there is the supposedly unanswerable excuse of impossibility, the excuse that rests on facts, the sweepingly insulting excuse that judges all men and all women from subjective evidence. It is an insult to human nature when it argues from natural powers; it is an insult to God when it does not admit the effectiveness of His omnipotent help. Perhaps the climax of irrationality is reached in the spineless plea that personal impurity does no damage to anyone else. As a matter of fact its damage is widespread; not only does it damage the individual, but all those with whom he comes into contact by his sin, his future family, his wife, the society in which he lives, the soul of the individual and all the souls he will drag to hell along with himself. There is still one more excuse: the Christian standard of purity, we are told, is out of date, it is a relic of a medieval ethical system. The argument is based on the absurd proposition that human nature comes out in a different model from age to age; that its ends are not the same, that the steps by which it reaches those ends are not the same, and that the powers within a man by which he takes those steps are different from age to age.

A defense of impurity simply will not stand rational criticism from the point of view of experience, of history, of psychology, or of principle. Men and women of today realize this, at least vaguely. For, in spite of all the modern talk in defense of intemperance, in the concrete they are disgusted with those who carried these modern principles to their logical conclusion: the glutton, the drunkard, the libertine. These are the wrecks of humanity. Men and women today may be willing to smile at the rocks upon which they have been wrecked; but they have little sympathy or understanding, certainly no love, for the hulks of men these principles produce and abandon.

Impossible dreams of a slave world: Moderation without a norm

It would seem that our modern world is cherishing an impossible dream. There is, regardless of the principles, a demand for moderation because of the disgust and distaste for the ultimate excess dictated by the principles. But it is a moderation to be dictated by the individual and by social appearances; ultimately such a moderation is reducible either to satiety or to what the community will tolerate. For if there be no standard objective of the individual, the limit can be set only by this individual's appetite or the appetite of his fellows; that is, by a satiety which becomes constantly harder to achieve.

Humanity without purity

These moderns expect to achieve moderation without a norm; they expect a man to be human without being pure, for they shrink in horror from the excesses of impurity, thereby emphasizing their demands for humanity in the actions and life of a man. Yet the control of reason, the control of virtue, by which alone such purity can be achieved, is lightly dismissed or violently ejected.

Allegedly, this modern campaign is based on a protective affection for men, aimed against the absurdity of taking peccadilloes seriously, or the tragedy of thwarting nature by artificial limitations. Actually it has come about through a depreciation of personal human ends. An individual must have personal ends if he is to live a personal life; and if he has such ends, he will face conflicts in attaining them. Moderation, purity, humanity, all imply severe conflicts; the lack of them means the absence of conflict through abject surrender. The modern conflict is rather a mass conflict; we are seeking mass ends rather than individual ends. This gives us the comforting anonymity of a crowd and the coward's strength in the violence of a mob; but it also condemns us to personal oblivion, to being lost in the crowd. If we renounce the responsibility of personal, individual conflict, we must also renounce personal, individual ends.

Human ends and slave ideology

The underlying tragedy of this situation awakes real pity in any thinking observer. For the men and women of our day who are championing or practicing unchastity have not, for the most part, come to that state by any long process of neglect, corruption and self-indulgence. It is something that has been imposed upon them from above. They have not come to this condition of themselves; they have been led into it. This generation is a generation that has been betrayed, betrayed by its intellectual leaders, its teachers and its writers, those whose solemn responsibility it is to lead men, not into the depths of slavery, but to the heights of human freedom.

The modern pagan and purity; The Catholic and purity

This fact is one that must be seen by the Catholic; and it immediately abolishes any excuse he might have, or think he has, for joining the mass movement away from purity. The Catholic has not been betrayed. His leaders have insisted now, as always, upon the essentials of purity, its absolute necessity for human life. He has not been trapped, or coaxed, or threatened into a sacrifice of his humanity; rather every force has been brought to bear to make him realize more and more keenly the place of purity in human life. The modern pagan may have some excuse for his disregard for purity; in fact, it seems to me quite possible that many of them may escape a great deal of moral responsibility. But for a Catholic, there is no escape from these facts of life and his responsibility toward them.

Freedom and slavery

To the Catholic it has always been apparent that a man, to remain a man, must be free in the all-important sense of internal freedom. He may be beaten to earth by the might of a dictator; he might be sold into bondage by the greed of a usurer; but no force in heaven or on earth can throw his intellect and will into chains. The Catholic has known, and knows today, that there is no more serious threat to that internal freedom, that sovereignty by which the humanity of man is guaranteed, than the threat involved in the appeal of unreasonable pleasures. So the Catholic has known, and knows today, that purity and the demands of purity are not an infringement on his freedom, not a high fence enclosing his actions in a narrow, sterile field; rather they are the solid protectors, the solid guarantees of the freedom man must have, if he is to be a man.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

**CHAPTER XVIII -- THE FULLNESS OF TRUTH
(Q. 155-165)**

1. Conquest and peace:
 - (a) Incomplete conquest.
 - (b) Complete conquest:
 - (1) To destruction of subjects.
 - (2) To salvation of subjects.
2. The conquest of temperance:
 - (a) Incomplete.
 - (b) Complete.
3. The second line of defense -- continence:
 - (a) Its nature and work.
 - (b) Its opposite -- incontinence:
 - (1) Its subject.
 - (2) Its comparative gravity.
4. Completion of the conquest of temperance:
 - (a) By restraint of anger and its act:
 - (1) Clemency and meekness.
 - (2) Their opposites:
 - a. Anger:
 - 1) Licit and illicit anger.
 - 2) The species of anger.
 - 3) "Daughters" of anger: indignation, swelling of mind, blasphemy, contumely, quarrelling.
 - b. Cruelty.
 - (b) By moderation of lesser pleasures -- modesty:
 - (1) Its nature.
 - (2) Its species.
 5. Humility's conquest:
 - (a) Its nature as a virtue.
 - (b) Its object and effect.
 - (c) Its place among the virtues.
 - (d) Its opposite -- pride:
 - (1) Nature and subject of pride.
 - (2) Its varieties.
 - (3) Its gravity and relation to other sins.
 - (4) The first sin of pride -- original sin:
 - a. Its nature.
 - b. Its penalties.

Conclusion:

 1. The abundant life and truth:
 - (a) Fruits of living a lie.
 - (b) Dangers of living a half-truth.
 2. Inhuman world is a world of fiction.
 3. The "mild" virtues and human life:
 - (a) The world and the "mild" virtues.
 - (b) Christ and the "mild" virtues.

**CHAPTER XVIII -- THE FULLNESS OF TRUTH
(Q. 155-165)**

FOR complete peace, complete conquest is necessary; for if peace is to be had there must be complete mastery. For us of the twentieth century, there is no reason for the question of peace and disorder, conquest and defeat, to remain on the purely speculative level; we live in an age where war is never declared, yet where war never stops. Of all men in history, we have only to look about us to get a complete picture of peace and its opposite; our notion of the nature of conquest does not depend on subjective scrutiny or hypothetical procedure. The thing is presented in such graphic form as to make its impression ineradicable.

Conquest and peace: Incomplete conquest

It is not because of any particularly brilliant analysis on our part that we see clearly that conquest can be incomplete for two reasons. The most casual observer can see that the Japanese conquest of China and, some time ago, the English conquest of Ireland were both frustrated in their completeness by an enduring

hostility of the subject people; a condition in startling contrast to the quiet and order of a recently conquered Spain. On the other hand, with little imagination and even less historical knowledge, we easily understand the tragic incompleteness of a conquest that has been limited to the possession of the enemy's strongholds. In either case, the quiet of night and the very innocence of the smallest village are but aids to a stalking terror and a haunting fear. In place of peace there is the sinister silence of an unsavory district late at night; death is coiled tense in the shadows, ready to strike at any moment.

Complete conquest: To destruction of subjects

Unquestionably, if mastery remains in question, terror rules the land. Yet not every complete conquest gives peace; its gift may be the bitterly final blow of death. With an essentially hostile people facing an invading army, conquest must remain incomplete as long as any of these people remain alive; complete conquest can be had only at the terrible price of a total destruction of a whole people. Certainly such a thing is not to be described as peace. In other words, peace can be had by complete conquest, only when the attack is not upon a people but upon the enemies of a people; then only does completion of a conquest bring the saving tranquillity of peace's order to a whole nation.

Temperance is essentially a conqueror; it aims at the conquest of the disorderly passions within the kingdom of a man's soul. No other conquest of that kingdom can ever be complete, short of destruction of the man, because it is only this conquering army with which man's full nature is in sympathy. To every other he remains stubbornly irreconcilable, for he was made for the orderly proportion of reason. Only the complete conquest of temperance can bring him peace. If some other conqueror, say anger, or lust, or fear, or sorrow, invades the domain of reason, sweeping away all opposition, it has not yet fully conquered; it cannot control this essentially hostile subject. Behind the conqueror's lines there will be the gnawings of conscience, lonely unhappiness, fear of the quiet moments of solitude, a rending and tearing of the soul of a man that threatens his very sanity.

The conquest of temperance: Incomplete

Quiet can be had by such a conqueror only on condition of the total destruction of reason in man, a conquest that brings not peace but death. Fortunately, this is a conquest that is never quite accomplished; even in hell, man's nature protests against the tyranny of the conqueror, though there be no hope of ever overthrowing him, even with all eternity for the sedition. The conquest of temperance, then, is man's one hope of peace within his own kingdom.

Complete

But that conquest must also be complete. Temperance fights the enemies of man; it has the whole of man's nature in sympathy with it. There is no danger of trouble behind its lines; it has no need to station large garrisons to hold down a rebellious populace. It can concentrate on the armed opposition, massing all its forces at the front with an easy mind. But if it operates only against the out-standing citadels of the enemy, leaving marauding bands free to roam the country spreading terror and death, surely it cannot bring peace. Rather, its great conquests are made a mockery by the disorder, confusion and sudden terror that plagues the very subjects it has come to save.

To put all this in plain language, we saw in the last chapter that the principal citadels of intemperance were stormed by the virtues of abstinence, sobriety and chastity. They openly attack the serious threats to the sovereignty of reason, which are inordinate pleasures of food, drink and sex; by the conquest of these things, they break the backbone of the enemy's resistance. But this is not enough.

They are the main body of temperance. They bear the brunt of the attack and they do it well; but if the conquest is to be complete and bring peace, there are still the mopping-up operations to be gone through. The flanks of the main army must be protected; the lines of communication guaranteed against guerrillas; and the people at home must be allowed to live the quiet, industrious, humble life that is essential for the continuance of the fight. All of this is accomplished by the potential parts of temperance.

Before launching on a lengthy investigation of the mopping-up operations of these virtues, we must look at a constant precaution that is absolutely necessary for the protection of the main army; that is, the strong second line of defense against vicious counter attacks of the enemy. Experience is more than a sufficient witness to the possibility of inordinate passion; and that means that experience vouches for the possibility of temperance being overwhelmed by the rush of passion. Indeed, unless temperance is momentarily overcome, there can be no such thing as passionate desire for unlawful pleasure.

The second line of defense -- continence: Its nature and work

The actual presence of such passion does not mean that man has already suffered the defeat of sin. Whatever the character of the passion, it remains merely a movement of sense appetite until it wins deliberate consent; only by deliberate surrender on the part of reason can sin be incurred. The point is extremely important; for ignorance of it has been the swamp land from which hordes of worries have descended upon men, pricking and buzzing, inexhaustibly replaceable by still others of the pests. No matter how long a passion may last, how violent it may be, what effects it may produce, how unclean or guilty it may make a man feel, it is not sinful until it is embraced. Or, to go back to the original metaphor, passion is never sinful until the second line of reason's defense has crumbled, until the continence of the will has broken down.

Continence here is taken, not in the sense of virginity or chastity as it is frequently taken in English, but in its own special sense: a firmness of will holding to the stronghold of reason, regardless of the violence of the attack of passion. Its material is the material of temperance, i.e., those passions which entice man from the path of reason, particularly the strongest of those passions -- the passions for food, drink and sex. But, in another sense, its material is different. It deals only with the passions that have run wild; while temperance deals with these passions in themselves. The work of temperance is to keep passion from running wild, whereas continence faces the fact of a violent uproar and confusion that has already trampled temperance underfoot.

Perhaps a clearer notion of the work of continence can be obtained by looking closely at the act of the will which is election. That act is like a village belle with two suitors -- the reason and the sense appetite. When the village belle turns up her nose at the threats, bullyings and coaxings of the latter and graciously gives her hand and her heart to the former, we have continence effectively at work. On the contrary, when sense-appetite sweeps her off her feet by its cave-man tactics, incontinence has carried the day.

The continent man is a sick man who has found an excellent doctor to keep him on his feet, while the temperate man is so healthy he has no need of a doctor. His virtuous good health frees him from the crushing setbacks of passion's counter attack on virtue; he simply does not have inordinate passion. However, we must not consider continence a rather unimportant substitute called on now and then to fill up the space normally occupied by temperance's column. If we remember the frequency of passion's attack in some men by the very season of their physical make-up and call to mind the constancy of the stimulus to passion, we get some little idea of the importance of continence. Obviously not everyone can be barricaded behind the protective walls of a monastery; nor can anyone seriously propose blinders and ear muffs as a kind of monastic substitute for laymen. Continence guarantees man humanity in his life and his actions in spite of the physical temperament that is his, in spite of the tremendous temptations that will batter against his senses. Understand, continence does not do away with passion, or with the effects of passion; but it does hold to reason and to virtue.

Its opposite -- incontinence: Its subject

From these same considerations, it is dear that incontinence is a tragic thing. It is a fact of human life that the occasions and temptations to these sins do appear with fair frequency. Moreover, these movements of passion are going to continue, whether we like it or not. To an incontinent man, that means he is going to face the defeat of sin again and again. The forces of reason are going to be conquered in him, the note of humanity plucked from his actions. He has no second line of defense, so that the very appearance of

disorderly passion is practically a guarantee of sin.

Its comparative gravity

Incontinence, though it is a deliberate choice of the will, has not the malicious gravity of intemperance. The incontinent man is not a keen-eyed searcher for sin. Rather he blunders into it, and then, when passion has subsided, nothing can hold him back from throwing himself at the feet of Christ, overwhelmed with horror and shame at what he has done. On the other hand, the surrender of incontinence is a more craven thing than the capitulation to anger. The things it embraces are much more base than the offerings of anger. The passions to which the incontinent man succumbs do not operate violently and openly, clubbing a man down; rather they slink to the attack with a certain secrecy and subtlety, on tip-toe as much for flight as for attack. But in their actual operation there is little of regret and much of pleasure; whereas anger is always in mourning.

It is true that incontinence does not represent as much difficulty in its reformation as does intemperance, for intemperance is a matter of habit, while incontinence is a matter of passion. The latter is a momentary lapse rather than a solid fortification built up against reason itself. But it is a difficult and discouraging sin with which to deal. When its victim comes shamefaced and penitent, asking another chance, it is not enough to point out the evil of his act; he has a bitter and complete knowledge of that already. He needs the internal strength of grace against this passion; and he needs the external help of correction and advice to learn where and how he can begin to resist passion. For each setback given to passion weakens it, impressing upon the sense appetite a note of difficulty, even of impossibility, that decreases the hope of gratification which is its constant spur.

It is extremely important that the incontinent man submit his difficulties to someone for correction and advice. There is, after all, a right and a wrong way to fight passion; a rightness and wrongness that must frequently be judged in the individual case. It may, and frequently does, happen that the individual actually increases, fortifies and deepens passion by the very method he has chosen to fight it. A direct, frontal attack on passion is an almost natural response to its impertinence; yet a direct attack is frequently a disastrous mistake. It serves too often to concentrate our attention more profoundly on the objects of passion, feeding it, puffing it up by giving it a totally undeserved importance and emphasis. Moreover, it saps our powers of resistance by the constant haunting worry or panicky fear which it almost necessarily engenders. The incontinent man needs both internal and external help. It is tragic, then, for him to limit his call for assistance to purely internal help until his enemies have attained such proportions as to necessitate a long, discouraging, drawn-out battle.

Completion of the conquest of temperance: By restraint of anger and its act

But let us get back to the mopping-up operations. Here we are promptly brought into contact with two virtues that were close to the heart of Christ, and very far from the heart of a pagan world. You remember the bitter eagerness of the apostles to call down fire from heaven on the cities that did not receive them; and the clemency of the answer of Christ: "And turning, He rebuked them, saying: You know not of what Spirit you are: the Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save." You will remember, too, the brutality of the Pharisees in their desire to punish the woman taken in adultery. Christ's verdict in that case -- "Neither do I condemn thee. Go in peace and sin no more" -- has echoed in the hearts of sinners ever since.

Again, Christ never tired of asserting His meekness. He was proud of the fact that He was "meek and humble of heart." To a pagan world, as to our world, this was a confession of weakness. No one takes the meek man seriously, least of all the modern world. Actually, Christ's description of Himself as a meek man was a simple statement of great strength. The meek man, seen rightly, is a fearless rider of a wild steed which he has so subdued that it swerves to his lightest touch. For the work of meekness is to restrain anger within the bounds of reason; in that note of restraint, meekness finds its common bond with temperance.

Clemency and meekness

The meek man is truly a conqueror; he has subdued the wildest of the passions of man, the passion that strikes most suddenly and most devastatingly. This is not a task for a timid rabbit of a man, but for a man who could withstand the power of the Roman world and the prestige of the princes of his people. The pagan world had no use for meekness, just as our world today has little use for it. Imagine, if you can, a Hitler smiling in gratified vanity at the aide who has just called him meek! You see, the pagan world is so very unsure of itself it simply must make blatant gestures of power, supremacy and fearlessness; otherwise, someone might suspect the truth of its fundamental powerlessness. Christ could be meek because He was so thoroughly a master.

The companion virtue of meekness -- clemency -- moderating the punishment inflicted by anger, is even more thoroughly misunderstood by the modern world. It has been scornfully confused with sentimentality or sympathetically opposed to severity. Now certainly clemency is not sentimentality. Christ was clement; but He was not shaken with great, gushing sobs over the poor, misunderstood hypocrites. He condemned them. In other word,, Christ did not allow his feelings to take command over reason. And clemency, like all the moral virtues, imposes the order of reason, it does not oppose it. Consequently it is not opposed to severity, for both severity and clemency are according to reason. The severe man is not unreasonable; he is inflexible in the infliction of the punishment that reason declares should be inflicted. Clemency diminishes the punishment when reason declares that such punishment should be diminished. In other words, it is not the reasonable element in punishment that clemency opposes; rather that reasonable element finds unflinching support in clemency as well as in severity.

Clemency is the fruit of a certain refinement of soul in the literal sense of the word; that is, in the sense of a steady elimination of impurities, often enough by the extreme method of fire, until eventually the crystalline purity oi the best in man stands out in undisputed supremacy. It implies a wholesomeness of affection that abhors wanton injury to another. So it is quick to detect when a man has satisfied reason's demand for punishment, rushing to release the sinner; for all along it has loved the man, even while consenting to his punishment. Of course it is not to be understood by the provincial uncouthness of soul that has no particular interest in others, much less sympathy for their suffering. Perhaps as great a note of triumphant reason as the mildness of clemency is the justice of it, the justice that insists on proper punishment, in spite of its deep feeling for others. It must always be a stranger to a pagan world which has enthroned selfishness.

Their opposites -- Anger: Licit and illicit anger

Both clemency and meekness have to do with anger; the latter restraining the passion of anger itself, while the former moderates anger's act of punishment or revenge. But it must be remembered that anger, like all the passions, is not evil in itself. Some men can be splendidly angry, as Christ was at the pettiness that quibbled at healing a man's infirmity on the Sabbath day; there are times when our failure to be angry is a weakly vicious thing, when we hold back the punishment because our love is not strong enough to be just, a sickly, diluted love unworthy of a man. Considered objectively, anger's act of punishment can be seen as a gesture of self-defense, or of defense of a loved one with whom we are one. It is only when it gets out of control, when it is not defense but attack, or when its defect leaves a man supinely defenseless that anger becomes a traitor to man and delivers him up to the mob rule of sense.

Normally we are a little too mild in our judgment of anger. Perhaps it is not so much our fault. It is a human mistake to overestimate the beauty of a plain girl when she has been so lucky as to discover an incredibly ugly companion; naturally, when we see anger in contrast to the hideousness of the other sins that injure our neighbors, we too are fooled.

It is certainly true that anger has none of the vicious desire to hurt that is proper to hate. It is not as childishly petty as is envy with its willingness to sacrifice another to satisfy its desires for glory. As a rule, anger has an air of respectability as astounding as the clean-shaven face of a tramp. At least it always

proceeds from an unjust injury and acts in the name of justice, seeking a balance of the justice that has been disturbed. But for the violence, the speed of its attack, anger gives way to no other sin.

The species of anger

To get some idea of its unfortunate personal and social effects, we have only to look around us. There are such victims of anger, for instance, as the sharp, quick-tempered people, violently angry at trifling pretexts, people who give themselves no peace and have the rest of the family on tip-toe with their fingers crossed hoping to avoid a storm. Then there is the bitter man, who hugs to his breast the injury which is behind anger; he croons to it, rocking it back and forth in his mind day after day; a gloomy person with a ready reason for sorrow and self-pity. He exudes ill humor and becomes a nuisance to himself. Finally there are those stern, unforgiving people who hold a grudge forever -- proudly. Their thoughts are focused, not so much on the injury they have suffered, as on the revenge they mean to enjoy; they will not rest until they have "got back" at their enemies. It is the kind of anger which splits families as an aerial bomb splits a house. Sometimes it produces the somewhat comic result of people living in the same house, sitting at the same table, like so many plants that have reached a certain resemblance to humanity but not to the extent of sharing in the gift of speech; so they go on vegetating, but saying not a word to each other.

Over and above this personal and social disagreeableness of anger there is its extreme danger. It is a capital sin. When it moves in we can expect the rest of the family anytime. It may not look so bad itself when it signs the lease; but wait until the daughters arrive. One glance at them shows us sufficient grounds for constant civil war in the house of any man.

"Daughters" of anger: indignation, swelling of mind, blasphemy, contumely, quarrelling

The eldest daughter, born before anger had reached full maturity, is a burning indignation. By it we put people, especially those who have injured us, in their proper place, as an irritated parent sets an obstreperous child in its high-chair -- joltingly. The place we choose is, you may be sure, a very lowly place; and it gets lower at every opportunity. A very satisfying sort of anger, that yet is never satisfied. The second daughter is a crowd in herself; at least when she enters a man's mind there is room for little else, her baggage is so huge and so stuffed with schemes for revenge. The angry man uses every idle instant to concoct these terrible things for an enemy; indeed, the unholy ambitions invade his very sleep. St. Thomas describes this state accurately as a swelling of the mind; it is just that. Eventually it bursts into wild, disordered confusion of speech -- the product of a man who is positively stuttering with anger. It goes farther and breaks out into injurious speech, either against God in the form of blasphemy, or against men in the form of contumely. It reaches its peak when it expresses itself in actions, not mere words; the thing that Thomas packs into the one word "quarreling," but which reaches out to all the injuries which it is possible for us to inflict upon one with whom we are angry.

Cruelty

Inordinate anger is opposed to meekness as weakness is opposed to strength. When the act of anger, punishment, escapes the control of reason it is the opposite of clemency; and the opposition here is that of justice to injustice. The contrast of cruelty and clemency is a contrast of a rough, primitive rawness and finished smoothness of careful craftsmanship. Where the one is eager to mitigate punishment reasonably, the other is unreasonably eager to sharpen the punishment.

Even cruelty clings to a shred of rationality; that is, it does not punish without some vague reason. When this last bit of reason's bright garment is torn off, it gives up all claim to decency and stands forth naked as savagery. Then it no longer looks for guilt as the basis of punishment; rather it looks to the perverted pleasure to be got from the torture of other men. It is a bestial thing, this savagery, revolting to the soul of man, as is all bestiality masquerading in human form. Perhaps one of the most terrible of anger's natural punishments is inflicted upon a man when after anger has died down, he is brought face to face with the damage he has done in his passion.

By moderation of lesser pleasures -- modesty: Its nature.

In completing the conquest of temperance, clemency and meekness have the difficult assignment of moderating the wildest of the passions. Modesty has no such difficult work; but that does not mean it is unimportant. In fact, one of the reasons for our underestimation of modesty is precisely because it has an air of mediocrity about it. It really deals in the small change of moderation; its very material is mediocre, for its work is to keep in check the lesser pleasures that enter into a man's life. These latter are not in a position to overwhelm reason; rather they are constant and vicious irritations, like ragged bands of guerrillas that are not at all particular as to which side they prey on. They can, given latitude enough, lay a man's life in waste; always, they can prepare for the collapse of the defense against the immediately serious threats inherent in the greater pleasures.

Its species

In our last chapter we noticed the different species of modesty: modesty of soul, of mind, of body, and modesty in externals. In this chapter we shall begin our detailed examination of these different kinds of modesty, but shall limit ourselves to the very first -- that modesty of soul which is called humility.

Humility's conquest: Its nature as a virtue

It is another much misunderstood and unappreciated virtue. We sometimes confuse it with a laughing protestation in denial of excellence, a denial that must itself be protested according to the rules of the game. I remember the bitter taste this odd humility left in the mouth of a New York taxi-driver on one of the rare occasions when he ventured out of the safe haven of the city. After working a half-hour under a hot sun on a dusty road, changing a tire for an immaculate, but helpless, young lady, he straightened up in triumph and was effusively thanked. He shrugged, smiling, and said: "It was nothing at all. Glad to do it." Perhaps figuring he was an expert in such matters, the girl took him at his own evaluation and offered him a dime. One wonders why more heroic rescuer. are not manhandled by the people they both save and insult, shrugging off the rescue as "nothing at all; think nothing of it." There is no difficulty in seeing that this sort of thing is not humility; for obviously it is not the truth.

Neither is humility a kind of hypocrisy that beats its breast and blunders into things because of its shyly downcast eyes. Yet we find it hard to be sure of this false humility because the really clever hypocrite is not easily discovered; at least, it show. up one of the causes for the disrespect men have for humility, for men rightly condemn hypocrisy as a cowardly device. Then, too, humility has an abject look in modern eyes, for it does imply a recognition of one's limitations; and the pagan world does not dare admit limitations in its attempt to be wholly self-sufficient.

Its object and effect

Humility, in actual fact, is not a self-condemnation to obscure stagnation unworthy of a man. It is not an enemy of magnanimity's straining for the stars; rather it is a necessary companion to greatness of soul. Let us look at it this way. In every great work there are two elements: one of great goodness which is mightily attractive; the other of great difficulty which is mightily repulsive. That part of courage which is magnanimity holds the soul of a man firm that it might not recoil before the great difficulty and give up the work. Humility holds the soul back, lest, captivated by the goodness of the work, a man be fooled into attempting the impossible. Both keep man's efforts within the field of reason; both insist on man's measuring up to his capacities. The one insists that he must not fall short of those capacities; the other keeps him from overshooting the mark. Certainly there is nothing of defeatism here.

Its place among the virtues

Humility, then, moderates our appetite for excellence, it does not destroy that appetite; its work is to keep our hope reasonable. It has been said again and again for ages, that humility is truth. And that is true; but not so true that it can be left just like that and not be misunderstood. The crime reporter who thinks he is

another Shakespeare may not be insane, but he is certainly not humble. There is an element of truth necessary for humility; at least a man must recognize his limitations if he is to keep his hope from aiming too high. But humility is not an intellectual virtue; its place is in the appetite of man, a faculty that searches for the good rather than the true. Truth is rather the rule of humility than humility itself; the two are so intimately connected that there is no danger whatever of humility blushing furiously at the detection of its lies. It does not tell lies but lives the truth.

This explains much of the puzzling self-contempt in the lives of the saints. Humility is characteristically marked by subjection. Because a man recognizes his own limitations and deficiencies, he is able to see the perfections of other men and of God. You might say that humility recognizes the truth of man's humanity and so sees the perfection of God's divinity. Every man is a mixture of the divine and the human in the sense that in every man there are the things that are God's, namely, perfections; and in every man there are things that are his very own, i.e., defects and deficiencies. Humility has an eagle eye for both divinity and humanity; it is not to be confused and blinded by any blending of the two. So that if we consider what has come from ourselves, each of us not only can but should be subject to what there is of God in every other man; in that sense, and in that sense alone, humility makes a man subject to every other man, even a saint to a sinner.

To reverse the process, and subject what is of God in us to what is of man in another, would be irreverent, perhaps blasphemous. Or even to place side by side the purely human things in ourselves and others, or the purely divine things, and still insist upon a universal subjection would be stupidity, not humility. The fact is that some have greater gifts from God than others, that some have less defects than others. Humility does not counsel stupidity, much less does it allow the living of a lie.

One of the early calumnies against the Christian religion, that it was a religion of slaves and weaklings, was due as much to this emphasis on humility as it was to the historical character of the early converts. Yet Christ did not come to make men slaves, to send them grovelling in the dust; His own summation of His mission was that men "might have life and have it more abundantly", that their "joy might be full." Nor did the early Christians misunderstand His aims when they insisted on humility, for one of the explicit lessons He gave was "learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart." The question is not so much a matter of attempting reconciliation between irreconcilables -- the subjection of humility and the full, joyous abundance of life; it is rather a matter of understanding that one cannot be had without the other. Humility, as a matter of fact, places the very first condition of progress towards a full life, the condition of subjection. Showing a man his limitations, keeping his hope within the bounds of his abilities, humility keeps a man in his proper place; and this not in a particular respect, but universally. Consequently it cuts out at the roots the great obstacles to happiness, the obstacles that consist in putting ourselves above all others, in seeking our own excellence, caught up as a sleepwalker by his dream to wander blindly out of our proper world. That obstacle goes by the name of pride.

Just as in society it is the law-abiding citizen, that is, the citizen subject to authority, who is in a position to make the most of and to contribute most heavily to the common life, so also in the world of reason it is the man who is subject who gets most out of and puts most into the life of reason. Indeed, humility gives us that invaluable subjection, not only socially but universally. The virtue is absolutely fundamental, for it removes a fundamental obstacle. Granted that it is not a virtue by which we run to God, still without it the other virtues would have to be expert hurdlers to get anywhere. From another point of view, humility is a guarantee of a right sense of values. It is a calm, clear-sighted virtue, not to be seduced by the tempting prospect of earthly greatness at the cost of spiritual greatness; there is about it a great deal of that hard-headed common sense that comes from living close to the soil, close to the world of things as they are. And humility does give us this spiritual common-sense, enabling us to see and to act towards things as they are.

Its opposite -- pride: Nature and subject of pride

The humble man has his feet solidly on the ground. He lives in a world of reality, while the proud man

lives in a world of fantastic fiction. Yet in our time it is the proud who are called realists, the humble who are called dreamers. On the very face of it, our evaluation is wrong; pride seeks impossible things -- hardly the objective of a realist. Situated in the first principle of motion in man, in his will, pride drives him to impossible goals that utterly surpass his powers. Whatever the proud man handles must be draped in the flimsy glory of fiction; even though he has nothing at all, he must boast of things as though they were really his. What he has, he ascribes to his own excellence and his own activity -- the perfect author of the success story; or if, grudgingly, he admits God as the author of these perfections, it is to be understood that God could not very well do anything else but give these gifts to him, considering his outstanding character.

The proud man must be outstanding; he is a hopeless victim of a spiritual claustrophobia. He must be conspicuously singular in his excellence; so he must despise the accomplishments of others, so petty in comparison with his own. He is a swaggering little boy playing out his dream, swelling with the importance of his deeds of conquest and, eventually, so lost in his dream world that he cannot bear a return to the world of reality. He cannot be himself, for that self is so very small in so big a world.

Its varieties

As humility makes a man universally subject, so pride makes a man universally rebellious. A superior with a proud subject on his hands can resign himself to sleepless nights; there is no point in thinking up arguments, such a subject does not proceed on reasons; cajoling, threatening, bribing are all useless. For the thing resented is the very relation of subject and superior; the only place the proud man occupies with some peace is the superior's chair, and that at the cost of peace to the rest of the community. You see, his rebellion is a sweeping thing that makes no exception; indeed, at its worst, it makes no exception even for the sovereignty of God.

Its gravity and relation to other sins

In itself, it is a mortal sin; in fact one of the gravest of sins, for it excels in that aversion from God that is the formal malice of sin. It is, of its very nature, a rebellion and it is rebellion that makes the gravity of sin. In a very real sense it is the first of all sins, the queen and mother of all moral ugliness. Not for nothing does it wear a veil over its face even in the privacy of a man's own soul. We do it an injustice when we call it a capital sin; it is at the root of absolutely every sin, for pride is the undiluted essence of rebellion, shared in some measure by every sin.

The first sin of pride -- original sin: Its nature

Even in the point of time, pride is first. It was the sin that destroyed the original perfection of man. It has not changed a bit since; then, as now, it was that same insistence on supremacy, on outreaching one's self, on complete self-sufficiency. Of course Adam did not expect to set himself up as a divine equal of God; he was wiser than his sons who made that absurd mistake. But he did mean to be self-sufficient, to be under no one; in a word, to be more than a man. It was a fantastic fiction; but it is still a best seller in every corner of the world.

Its penalties

Looking at the person of Adam and his excellence as head of the race, we might say his sin of pride was more serious than that of Eve; but then there is a great deal to be said for Adam. After all, he did not succumb to the smooth lies of the serpent, but to the sweet cajolings of his wife. He did not coax anyone else into sin (there was no one else, as a matter of fact); perhaps his love for Eve had something to do with his sin, a muddled notion that it would be better to sin with her than to remain virtuous without her -- a dilemma that no one had proposed to him. At any rate he reaped the prompt fruits of his rebellion against God in the rebellion of his own flesh against his spirit; and this was the start of that long war between the flesh and the spirit which will continue until the death of the last man. Along with that rebellion of sin came death, liability to injury, cold, hunger, sickness and all the rest of the ills of man; and gone was that

magnificent sovereignty over the physical world that had made the first man so truly the lord of the world.

We may sum up this chapter by insisting that man wins peace only by being true to himself: that is, by holding to the regime of reason in all of life, and so also in the field of pleasure and of sorrow. It is not sufficient to hold to the necessary moderation in the greatest of joys; the least must also be kept in check. To maintain that the conquest is over when the greater aims of temperance are roughly attained, though the lesser aims are neglected, is a lie that is peculiarly dangerous because it appears so innocuous. As a matter of fact, it is a half-truth that distorts the life of a man, swelling some very human inclinations to inhumanly dominant proportions, shrivelling others no less human to a pitiable, even contemptible condition.

The abundant life and truth: Fruits of living a lie; dangers of living a half-truth

There is no abundance to a lie, whether that lie is told in words or in actions. It has sprung up without roots in reality and it lives on stolen air and stolen light: it must be poisonous if it is to assure itself of continued life, for all truth is its enemy. Obviously we can expect no rational fruits from so irrational a thing as a lie. That our expectations have not been too pessimistic can be seen, even though we have no taste for history, no love for labor, no time for reading beyond the morning newspapers. Where else does the contempt for meekness, for clemency, for modesty and humility come but from this half-truth? We have almost forgotten that these are human things, necessary things, even indispensable things. They call up pictures of timidity, sentimentality or prudishness; while anger, cruelty and pride, though perhaps reprehensible, are certainly manly. The half-truth has made us miss the whole truth, that is, all of the truth: for it is the first group -- meekness, clemency and all the rest -- that are truly manly; it is the second group -- anger, cruelty and pride -- that are unworthy of a man.

Inhuman world is a world of fiction

These virtues are not popular in a pagan world both because the pagan world is so terribly unsure of itself that it must always broadcast its assurance, and because the pagan is always so unutterably alone. Being alone, the pagan must stand on top or be trampled. He must live in a world of fiction because the truth of his own limitations makes his world too hopeless for the continuance of human life. His world must be an immodest world for it must be a liar's world; it cannot see the truth, or seeing it, cannot bear its too bright face. For the proportion and moderation of reason always carry with them the inevitable connotation of subjection; they present man with that profound paradox: conquest can come only by subjection.

The world and the "mild" virtues; Christ and the "mild" virtues

It would be true to say that our world has a contempt for these milder virtues because our world has come far from Christ; but it would also be true to say that our world has developed a contempt for these mild virtues because our world has come so far from human life. Human life is a life of reason. If that life and action is to be human, reason must be the master in command; and reason cannot be in command as long as these marauding bands of guerrillas are left free to prey upon the peace and security of the kingdom of man. Reason's conquest must be complete or a man will be haunted by stalking terror and imminent death; and it is precisely these milder virtues -- clemency, meekness, modesty and humility -- that make possible the completion of the conquest of temperance. Christ insisted, in word and action, on these milder virtues because He came to bring us peace, a fuller, a more abundant life. He was not condoning, much less urging, softness or sentimentality and timidity, the evasion of all conflict. He knew what temperance demanded for complete conquest, what courage, honesty and sincerity must go into it; for He knew well what was in man. It is perhaps because this perfect Man, Who was also God, knew man so well, that He could insist that man never has reason for pride in that which escapes the control of his reason.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XIX -- MODESTY AND MIRACLES (Q. 166-178)

1. The Miracle of modesty:
 - (a) Modesty and sophistication:
 - (1) The innocence of modesty.
 - (2) The wisdom of modesty.
 - (b) Personal graciousness by modesty.
 2. The material of modesty.
 3. Modesty of mind -- studiousness:
 - (a) Its nature.
 - (b) Its opposites -- curiosity and negligence:
 - (1) Knowledge and sin.
 - (2) Knowledge and the occasion of sin.
 4. Modesty of body:
 - (a) Of bodily movement:
 - (1) In serious action.
 - (2) In recreation -- eutrapelia:
 - a. The purpose of play.
 - b. Sin in play:
 - 1) By excess.
 - 2) By defect.
 - (b) Of dress:
 - (1) Virtue in dress.
 - (2) Sin in dress:
 - a. By offense against custom.
 - b. By excess and defect in affection for dress.
 - (3) The apparel of women.
 5. Apostolic graces -- the boundlessness of work:
 - (a) Apostolic grace of mind alone -- prophecy.
 - (b) Apostolic grace of mind and emotion -- rapture.
 - (c) Apostolic grace of speech -- the gift of tongues and speech.
 - (d) Apostolic grace of operation -- the gift of miracles.
- Conclusion:
1. Modern immodesty.
 - (a) Extreme of immaturity.
 - (b) Extreme of senescence.
 2. The fruits of immodesty.
 3. Modesty, miracles and achievement.

CHAPTER XIX -- MODESTY AND MIRACLES (Q. 166-178)

THE modern contrast of modesty to sophistication is the contrast of a blushing, clumsy, country boy to the worldly-wise debutante incapable of embarrassment. Sympathy may be all with the country boy; but envy and admiration are for the debutante. When the two, sophistication and modesty, meet there is a tolerantly amused smile for modesty, as though it were a passing phase in life with its attractive sides, like missing front teeth or marble playing; sweet, innocent ignorance that will not, alas, endure for long!

The Miracle of modesty: Modesty and sophistication:

Actually there is much more than amusement and tolerance in that smile of the sophisticate. Modesty is a kind of miracle to the sophisticate; it does to the heart what a miracle does to the eyes and to the mind. It focuses the heart, startlingly, on things long dreamed of, a focus that makes the rest of the world disappear for just an instant. The smile for modesty has a touch of remembrance in it, of regret, of envy, and even a little of inspiration. In the face of modesty, the human heart goes a little home-sick. Sophistication's greeting to modesty is a tribute; for modesty is a realization and a statement of what men would like to be, because that is what men were meant to be.

The innocence of modesty

In a sense, modesty is innocent. Its goals are the clean, windswept goals of virtue, goals whose reflection

gives a calm, clear quiet to a face. It is innocent in the sense that it does not seek dark corners, secret rendezvous, it does not start with guilt at discovery or blush with shame in remembrance. But it is not ignorant. Rather, it is very wise, very learned in human things. It is saturated with rationality: contact with it is as refreshing as the deep, eager breaths of sea-air by a man coming from the heat of an inland city. It gives us a sense of freshness, of cleanness, as though we had just been scrubbed inside and out.

The wisdom of modesty

Its real characteristic, however, is rational balance. It is not lop-sided as is the sophisticate, the play-boy, the libertine, and, sometimes, the scholar.

All modesty has the quietly satisfying qualities that we associate with the atmosphere of home. Its joys do not intrude themselves violently on our attention; they penetrate us comfortably as the warmth of a fire on a raw evening. Modesty works unobtrusively for a happiness that is almost unnoticed until it is gone; like lost innocence, or the unheard noises of summer whose absence make a winter day so deathly still.

Personal graciousness by modesty

It is extremely difficult to describe the part of modesty in human life; that part is so elusive, intangible, yet so solidly real. Perhaps we could call it "personal graciousness." The air of it has been caught in Chesterton's melodious phrase: "as on a stairway go in grace." It has the serene beauty of unhurried movement, the mysterious penetration of a deep chord of an organ. It becomes almost tangible in the face of a saintly old priest, or the eager unselfishness of a very young nun. Perhaps all this may seem much too figurative to be of great help; but, as a matter of fact, we realize the difficulty in everyday life and, in trying to describe the possessor of modesty, we fall back on such utterly simple statements as "wholesome", or, with very special emphasis, we say "he is good."

The material of modesty

Perhaps the root of the difficulty is that the pleasures with which modesty deals are really an undercurrent in our lives. The pleasure of reasonable hope, of knowledge, of sincerity, of affability, of play and of dress are all a background without which life would be an empty, barren thing. But they are only a background; they are not the principal figures in the finished tapestry of life.

Modesty of mind -- studiousness: Its nature

Obviously some regulation is necessary for our appetite for knowledge, for here there are two natural inclinations, either of which may well pull a man off the road of reason. Long before he can rattle the change in his pockets, a man starts to ask "why"; he has a natural inclination to truth. But just as truly he has an inclination to avoid the labor inevitably bound up with that vehement inclination of mind which is the one road to knowledge; study is hard, hard work. As a very humble testimony to the truth of these statements we have such institutions as truant officers and report cards.

Still there are some things which a man must know; at least in their regard, his distaste for labor must be moderated. There are other things that man should not try to know by his own powers, so the inclination to knowledge must also be reasonably directed. Both of these ends are achieved by the quiet operation of the virtue of studiousness, steering a man safely past the stagnation of stupid negligence and the restless uneasiness of curiosity.

A doctor is seriously obliged to know something of surgery before he throws open his beautifully equipped operating rooms to defenseless patients; a priest must know moral theology before he opens the confessional slide; and a wife should know something of the fundamentals of cookery before she serves up the products of her art. In other words, if his distaste for the labors of study escapes the control of reason, with the result that man is ignorant of what his state in life obliges him to know, he may be guilty of sin. Indeed, the sin may easily become mortal if the missing knowledge is of serious obligation. Normally, the

civil authorities insist upon adequate knowledge where ignorance will have serious social effects; except perhaps in the matter of cooking. But curiosity is not taken very seriously.

It is true that, in itself, there can be nothing wrong with knowledge. It is one of the highest works of man; evil in connection with it is quite accidental, as in the man who sins by pride in his knowledge or uses it as a means to further his sinning. But the appetite or desire for knowledge can be, and frequently is, evil. That is, it can become curiosity.

Its opposites -- curiosity and negligence

The man, whose zeal for knowledge is merely a tool of pride, can lay no claim to the rewards of virtue. On a less spectacular, and certainly more futile, scale, curiosity shows itself in the mother of ten children who spends hours learning the intricacies of bridge, leaving the children with the impression that they are orphans. This sort of thing particularly disgusted St. Jerome; he voiced his disgust in no uncertain terms in his complaint against priests who were putting aside the gospels and the prophets to read plays and to sing songs.

Knowledge and sin

In both these cases the necessary studies have been neglected for the study of that which certainly is less useful, often only possibly useful. The thing is unreasonable; but still it is not quite so unreasonable as the attempt to know a truth above our powers. Thus a philosopher might madly attempt to comprehend infinity by natural reason; or a man with no mathematical ability might give himself a headache studying Einstein's theory of relativity.

Men do not particularly care for headaches as intellectual rewards, even when they are overreaching themselves in the field of knowledge. To contrive the one and avoid the other they have sometimes allowed curiosity to take another and more dangerous form; namely, that of superstition by which, under the guise of knowledge, they sit at the feet of diabolic masters. This is the curiosity of the ouija-board and the seance room that gives man a preview of hell and starts God on His way out of a man's life.

Curiosity did not really kill the cat. It died from some other cause, for curiosity is a human ailment, the exclusive property of the being who can abuse his faculties. It is a distinctly human affair and it can exist in almost any walk of human life. The ubiquitous little sister, the pest of the household, who does not miss a thing about the house, not for any particular reason, but just because she has to know, is not so far removed from the scholar whose knowledge is rigidly divorced from God and is an end in itself. Both are curious; and the scholar is very much more dangerously curious than the child.

Knowledge and the occasion of sin

Neither the corner loafer, who subjects every passing woman to his critical scrutiny, nor the old lady in her rocking chair on the front porch tabulating every activity of the people across the street, do themselves any good. Rather they are setting the stage for the prompt appearance of sin; they also are curious, and dangerously curious. In fact, we can see too much for our own good, particularly when we meander about the universe like a woman who saunters through a department store "just looking."

It was with this in mind that Chrysostom, and Thomas much later, warned against the danger of indiscriminate theatre-going. Their argument was that we shall have trouble enough avoiding temptation under any circumstances; at the very least, idle curiosity will furnish us with just so much more material for trouble. In going to the wrong kind of play, or going to all plays indiscriminately and with unreasonable frequency, we indulge an idle curiosity in finding out things that would never have entered the course of our ordinary life. We are feeding ourselves with materials for trouble.

Modesty of body: Of bodily movement in serious action

Of course the family across the street and the woman who has just passed the corner do not imagine that they move in a world of the blind. They know their external movements are not somehow mysteriously invisible; nor do they take offense at others for looking at them. They realize, at least dimly, that their external movement serves the double purpose of mirroring their inner life and of putting them in social contact with others. These aspects of external movement are taken for granted. But it follows from this that these externals, too, must have their share in the beauty of moderation that reason's rule gives to the things of a man. From the social angle, this beauty of moderation is effected by affability or friendliness; from the personal angle, by veracity or sincerity, always with an eye to the particular person and the particular circumstances. The effusively silly greeting of a none too bright high school girl would be a little astonishing coming from a bishop; yet we do not expect the bishop to wear his pontifical robes in swimming. We demand that a man be reasonable in his external actions; but he need not carry dignity to the point of absurdity.

However, we do make a constant mistake in this matter on the basis of veracity or sincerity. We feel rather proud of ourselves for following the deceptive maxim "be yourself", more classically stated as "to yourself be true." But the maxim is a little too easy; it tucks the excuse of temperament into our vest pocket to be readily presented as sufficient explanation of almost any eccentricity. It is good to be true to one's self; but that should not mean that there is nothing to be done about the peculiar individual one happens to be at this particular stage in life. We are not always as God made us; "sometimes we are a great deal worse." Thomas insists that there should be an element of the studied in our voice, our laugh, our walk, our conversation. The nuns presiding over a girls' school, insisting that there is a correct way to sit, to walk, a cultured modulation of voice, and so on, are not necessarily snobbishly rigid formalists. Rather they maintain that even in these things we have a right to expect the beauty of moderation that is our privilege as reasonable beings. It does not follow that a man's actions should have that theatrical deliberation that shrieks for a spotlight; but it does follow that into those actions should go an earnest weeding out of defects, a campaign of elimination which makes for personal graciousness and which is nothing more than an insistence on the beauty of reason's order breaking through all of a man's life, even through the externals of that life.

In recreation -- eutrapelia

Perhaps nowhere in all his works does the humanity of St. Thomas appear more clearly than in his defense of the universal sway of reason, a sovereignty that he argues must extend itself even to the play of men. Here in this tract on modesty St. Thomas gives his philosophy of fun. He has compressed it into three articles; an extremely brief treatment that is yet a noble human document, worthy of the tribute of familiarity from any age.

The purpose of play

It seemed obvious to the greatest scholar of the most scholarly century that fun is necessary to human life. When a man has pushed a wheel-barrow all day, his body is tired. If he is to do the same thing the next day, he must do something about the bodily fatigue; he must give his body some rest. Exactly the same thing is true of the soul. Even though there are no such things as spiritual wheel-barrow, there is a weariness of soul that is exactly proportionate to the intensity of a man's mental efforts. It is true that speculative work causes a greater soul-weariness than does practical thinking; but the latter, precisely as thinking, has the same, though a lesser, wearying effect. In other words, man's mental powers, like his physical powers, are definitely limited. When a man reaches, or goes beyond, those limits, he becomes tired -- tired both mentally and physically, for in the labors of the soul the body must also work. If he expects to continue that mental work, he must give his soul a rest: and the rest of the soul is called play or fun, that is, words or action in which we seek nothing but physical or animal pleasures.

It is a very human thing, when we are loaded down with work and we see another stepping out lilyingly for a good time, to feel very virtuous in our condemnation of such frivolous waste of time. There are so many serious things in life, so much to be done that it is childish and silly to fritter away precious time in

amusement. To combat that notion St. Thomas records the story of St. John the Evangelist. Just such a serious-minded person caught St. John one day playing a game with his disciples. The saint was roundly rebuked for activities so unworthy of an apostle. Instead of arguing the point (people as serious as this will argue forever), St. John picked up a bow, handed it to his reformer and asked him to shoot an arrow at a target. The man did. St. John asked him to shoot again and again. Finally he asked what would happen if arrows were shot indefinitely from that bow. His critic, in some irritation at so obvious a question, answered that of course it would break. St. John said that exactly the same thing would happen to a man; unless he gives his soul a rest, he too will break.

The whole idea of amusement is really an application of the orator's technique to individual human life. Cicero gave the counsel, entirely approved by Thomas later, that when an orator talks over-long, when he notices his audience getting restive, he should say something novel or, in keeping with the circumstances, something ridiculous. In other words, the orator must give his audience a let-down, a rest, a break from the mental effort of following his argument. Amusement gives a man a let-down, an interruption of the mental effort of thinking.

The very purpose of fun, then, indicates its need for regulation. Fun should clearly interrupt the labors of the soul, but not upset rational balance, not induce hysteria or stupor; it is meant for a rest. It cannot turn about obscenity or crime without defeating its own ends; these things do not give quiet but torment to the soul. The general term human activity is a description of man's play as well as his work; even in his play there must be the human note of fittingness to persons, places and time. We are right in our judgment of the man who relaxes by shouting operatic scales at three o'clock in the morning. He is not only lacking in a sense of humor, he is beyond question lacking in the virtue which regulates fun, the virtue of eutrapelia; for surely such relaxation is not rational.

Sin in play: By excess

It is to be well noticed that the whole purpose of play is to rest the soul. It presupposes work and looks forward to more work. In the absence of that mental activity which makes play necessary, amusement becomes a terrible bore, as distasteful as a steady diet of spinach or six months in bed. Even too much of it in one dose destroys the sparkling relish of it. Of course the retired business man promptly lies down and dies; he has nothing to do but rest. While rest is fine as a recuperation from work or a preparation for work, rest for the sake of rest is really a killing thing.

The wit whose humor is discourteous, scandalous or obscene is clearly not practicing virtue, any more than the man whose relaxation consists in murder or theft. Obviously amusement is not always virtuous. These things cannot be excused on any grounds, let alone on the flimsy grounds of fatigue. In fact, the possibilities of sin in play are considerably varied. Thus, for instance, fun can become such a fever in a man as to destroy all else, inducing a man to sacrifice his family, his work, even his God for such trifles as a horse race, a golf or a poker game. Then it is a vicious thing with none of reason's beauty about it.

In a less ugly, but more undignified manner, we can sin in play by a disregard of reason in the circumstances of our amusement. The things that are done may be just clean fun, and highly amusing; but somehow we do not expect a President to sneak into a dark alley at night to shoot dice, or a portly matron to skip rope by the hour in front of the parochial school.

For most of us, the work of the virtue of eutrapelia is to restrain fun from getting out of bounds rather than to coax us into taking some relaxation. In other words, a man is much more liable to sin by excessive play than by lack of all recreation. After all, a little fun goes a long way. Recreation is a seasoning of human life; a little touch of it is sometimes exactly what is needed to give a tang to a flat day. But we cannot live on recreation any more than we can on seasoning; and too much fun can spoil a human life as completely as too much seasoning spoils a meal.

By defect

Yet fun is so necessary to human life that the total lack of it is unreasonable and vicious. The wet blanket at a party is a burden to himself and to others; he takes no pleasure himself and cramps the pleasure of others. In fact (and the phrase is that of Thomas), the man, who never says anything ridiculous and is a nuisance to those who are joking, is vicious. He is not to be complimented for his serious frame of mind but to be condemned for his lack of reason.

Modesty of dress: Virtue in dress

A recent biography of Phillip II of Spain gives a little incident indicative of the wide, sympathetic understanding of the Spanish people. Towards the end of his reign, the king decided to determine by law the amusements of his people, their titles of address, even their very clothes. Instead of rising up in anger against the tyranny, the people smiled at one another and said: "His majesty is growing old." While there was solid reason for resentment, there was also solid reason for sympathetic love; he had long been a just, thoughtful, hard-working monarch. While it is true that civil legislation must remain general, since no government can descend to the intimate details of personal life without becoming ridiculous, the same is not at all true of the legislation of reason, of the moral law. We cannot smile tolerantly and say that reason is growing old because our conscience descends to the smallest details of life. Reason must descend to such details, for even the details must be reasonable, that is, they must be human. Even here, in these small details, we shall find virtue and vice, reason or unreasonableness.

Naturally reason takes in such a detail as dress. And that very statement is a declaration that virtue plays a part in dress. Indeed, this is clear from the innate dignity of man, as well as from the natural inclination of his sense appetites to disregard reason. If that were not enough to convince a man, there is concrete confirmation in the prompt action of the police against the man who goes to certain excesses in dress.

This moderation in dress is the task of that virtue of honesty of which we spoke in an earlier chapter. Then we noticed its necessity for an appreciation of the beauty of temperance. It seems particularly fitting that the virtue which is appreciative of beauty should have the details of human dress under its wings. In other words, the regulation of dress is not in the name of shame alone; but also in the name of dignity and of beauty. Here our modern judgment is correct.

Sin in dress: By offense against custom

The appearance of a man in full dress on a South Sea island might be just as shocking as the appearance of a South Sea islander on Fifth Avenue in a costume of leaves, a very few leaves. In either case, the costume would be as out of place as a sour note in a symphony orchestra. Such a man simply would not harmonize with the whole of which he is a part; and we can sin in dress by open violation of custom. This, you understand, is not a condemnation of variety in dress; for the very variety may be a part of custom and custom is something to be respected.

The business of legislating details of dress is extremely tricky; St. Thomas, with the profound wisdom that was his peculiar excellence, was much too wise to attempt it. He gives no measurements, names no high or low limit, hands down no pattern. What he does do is to give us general principles which form the basis of the reasonable in dress.

By excess and defect in affection for dress

The woman with a gown long out of style is not a willing sinner against custom, whatever her nonchalance; and no secret police are necessary to insure the prompt discarding of straw hats on the day appointed by custom. For most of us there is little temptation to sin in dress by opposing custom. We are much more likely to offend by vainglory, a silly sort of offense that proceeds on the presumption that our very clothes give us a title to esteem. A man can, of course, sin by the inordinate sensual pleasure he gets from clothes; by his overzeal for personal comfort in dress; or finally by sheer foppishness. These are, respectively, violations of the virtues of humility, of contentment (that is, satisfaction with the suitable) and of simplicity. At the other extreme, is the sin in dress by sloppiness or raggedness; a condition that is a

product either of effeminate neglect or of a thirst for attention as strong as that evidenced by the fop.

The apparel of women

All of this general doctrine on clothes will also hold for women's apparel; but over and above these principles, some special consideration is necessary for women's clothes because, says St. Thomas, they may serve as a means to arouse the lust of men. Actually, St. Thomas' article on women's clothes is a defense of reasonable fashion, in contrast to the devastating condemnations of the Fathers. The Fathers were often orators, thundering against the abuses of their time; St. Thomas was a theologian, considering things in a calm, clear, objective light. He spoke quietly and with the strict accuracy of a theologian.

It might well be wondered what a friar of the thirteenth century could have to say about women's clothes that would be of any interest to the twentieth century. Well, no one can say that St. Thomas did not have his eyes open; there was little of Europe and life in the thirteenth century that he missed on his slow journeys by foot up and down the land; he moved freely in the greatest courts of his day. What his own eyes did not show him of woman's dress he could well learn from the thundering of the Fathers against the corruptions of a decadent Roman Empire. Not even the twentieth century sophisticate could tell the ladies of that era very much.

St. Thomas saw it as reasonable for a woman to adorn herself with an eye to men if she had a husband, if she wished to have a husband, or if she merely had an open mind on the subject. But a woman who had no husband, did not want a husband and did not mean to have one, or whose state in life forbade marriage, had no business aiming her dress at men. But of course the thing happened. If it was to arouse the interests of men, then her sin was mortal or venial according as she seriously intended to arouse lust, or merely acted from frivolity, vanity or ostentation. In other words, St. Thomas understands the Fathers as forbidding, not moderate, reasonable adornment, but the excesses of sinful, immodest and unreasonable ornamentation.

Some of the Fathers inveighed against the defacing of God's work by yellow paint, black powder, rouge and dye. There must have been some ghastly make-ups in those days. St. Augustine considered the accomplishment of a paler or rosier complexion by means of paint as a lying counterfeit.

Thomas approached such a touchy subject cautiously and humanly. He admits that St. Augustine has something in his contention of counterfeit, presupposing of course the optimistic intention to deceive by an extraordinary painting job. But even so, painting one's face is not a mortal sin, unless it is done for seriously evil ends. But getting back to the counterfeit idea, St. Thomas notices that it is one thing to counterfeit beauty and quite another -- and a lawful -- thing to hide a disfigurement. It is a very neat distinction which suggests that accuracy would demand a change in the name of those shops that in our age are called "beauty parlors."

This completes the tract on the virtues. It finishes the long statement of the principles of the fullness of human life; not only of human life, but of that divinely human life in its incredible abundance, reaching out to divinity and eternity, the abundant life that Christ came to bring us. The virtues, natural and supernatural, are the instruments of personal perfection; they make life personally successful. In a word, they make a man good.

Apostolic graces -- the boundlessness of work

Horizons such as these would seem wide enough; but they are not wide enough for God. From time to time He gives men more startling glimpses of His divine power and generosity through the graces that are ordered, not principally to personal sanctity, but to the sanctity of others; the apostolic graces. They do not make the individual good, but they do make him a powerful instrument for the salvation of others, executing the divine plan as the brush materializes the dreams of the artist. Here all the limitations to human operations seem to be done away with; here the true boundlessness of work is hinted at, for here it is God that is working more than man.

Apostolic grace of mind alone -- prophecy

Thus the apostolic grace of prophecy allows a man to know infallibly and to predict with certainty what is unknowable itself to anyone but God, that is, such future contingent things as the free acts of man. Natural gifts are of no help here; there is no preparation or disposition possible, not even the state of grace. This can be done only by supernatural light from God Himself. Man is God's instrument pure and simple.

The prophet may realize his instrumentality or he may be ignorant of it. Prophetic knowledge may come to him in sleep, when he is awake, in ecstasy or without his realizing it at all. This is not something personal but something apostolic, something for the salvation of others. Sometimes such prophetic knowledge is given by a physical apparition, at others by phantasms of the imagination; or, in a higher form, as a purely intellectual vision. But it will always be a passing thing, like a note struck from a violin. It is a shaft of divine lightning striking the mind of man, easily seen by all, a certain sign of divine revelation and a confirmation of divine truth. There is a note of human stubbornness and of divine generosity here that must not be missed. It is our hesitancy and our weakness that make such confirmations of prophecy necessary; it is God's generosity that makes such things possible. Generosity is exactly the right word; for it demands a divinely generous heart to give these unutterable truths and then, when they have been so graciously given, to coax us into accepting them.

Apostolic grace of mind and emotion -- rapture

The apostolic state of rapture is a kind of divine violence that plucks a man out of himself, as St. Paul was snatched to the seventh heaven. It is a divine flight as contrasted to the slow crawl to divine things naturally characteristic to man. Here man is abstracted from the sensible world, from the senses, from the imagination; it is as though for a moment he was only a mind, to which the divine secrets are laid bare, and a will enthralled by the joys to those secrets.

This rapture is not to be confused with physical afflictions such as catalepsy or with diabolic possession; it is not the trance of emotion, the overpowering movement of sense love or wild passion. It is a divine scorning of human limitations of the depths of knowledge and a divine outpouring of divine joy. It is primarily intellectual and altogether supernatural; in rapture, mere men, with St. Paul, see the things that are not given to the tongue of man to speak, things which flood the human heart with an overpowering joy that disrupts all normal channels of communication. Rapture is a species of prophecy with the same divine mark of infallible knowledge of inscrutable things.

Apostolic grace of speech -- the gift of tongues and speech

The men whom Christ sent to convert the world were poor, ignorant, powerless; yet they were sent as teachers of men. That they might get a hearing wherever they went, that they might be able to instruct, that their work might not suffer that fatal slowing down or falsification that comes through the use of interpreters, it was most fitting that God give them the gift that so startled the audiences of the first apostles -- the gift of tongues. By it the apostles spoke and understood the languages of all peoples; an incredible thing in the eyes of men, but child's play to the Author of all speech and the Reader of all hearts.

When, in the wisdom of God, it became necessary to speed up the apostolic work of the Church, this gift has been given, though usually in a form different from that of Peter's first recorded address. In this second form, the preacher speaks his own language but is understood by men of all languages; he understands all men, but understands them in his own language. It is as though a divine translator was busy on the word as it travelled from the mouth of the speaker to the ear of the auditor. It was in this form that the gift of tongues played such a prominent part in the life of St. Louis Bertrand, the missionary of South America; it surpassed all calculation in the life of St. Vincent Ferrer to whom this gift was apparently as much a personal characteristic as the shape of his nose. It is always a startling gift, designed not only to bring truth but also to overcome the obstacle of incredulity by its very unusualness.

This gift of tongues was not given as a curious exhibition; it was to be coupled with the gift of speech to attain the ends of divine oratory. The Holy Ghost used the tongue of man to win hearts; men were not only to hear these truths but to love them, to embrace them, to live them. This gift of speech furnished a divine oratorical fire that made a holocaust of the hearts of men.

Apostolic grace of operation -- the gift of miracles

In order that absolutely nothing might be lacking to win men to happiness, the burning words of divine oratory were given the unanswerable confirmation of miracles. And here we have another example of the divine thoughtfulness stooping to human nature. It is natural to man to come to the truth through sensible effects; just as in the natural order he comes to a knowledge of God through natural effects, so in the supernatural order he is led by the hand into the divine presence through unquestionably supernatural effects which yet can be perceived by the senses. There is no question but that here man is a mere instrument of divinity; indeed, in confirmation of a divine truth, God may make use of an enemy, thus showing even more clearly the unlimited sway of divine power. If, however, the miracle is worked in confirmation of the sanctity of the miracle-worker, it can be done only by a saint; obviously a miracle is not worked in confirmation of a lie.

These apostolic graces show us just such a combination of divine power and divine thoughtfulness as permeated the life of Christ. They open our eyes to the infinite pains God takes to bring us home, the depths to which He will stoop to accommodate man's nature. Yet looking at the apostles through whom the graces worked, we are breathless at the sight of what a man can do under the power of God: his feeble mind, his wavering will, his stuttering tongue, his weak hands, even the shadow of his garment or the dust of his grave produces results proper only to God.

Modern immodesty: Extreme of immaturity; extreme of senescence

Perhaps we could best sum up this chapter by pointing out that modesty is not a matter of dressing in the dark but of living in the light, in the light of reason's moderation and beauty. Modesty turns the floodlight of reason on the internal and external activities of man; his word, his play, his dress, every detail of his life. From this point of view it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the twentieth century pagan world is an immodest world. We are, in fact, living in a world of paradoxical extremes: on one hand we see all the sign of immaturity -- giddiness, an unbalanced interest in sex, a restless rush of childish ignorance and activity, a world without poise, without serenity, without that personal graciousness that is the mark of reason; on the other hand, there are unmistakable signs of senescence -- the world is bowed down with hopeless burdens, a world that in its less giddy moments is inclined to be desperately serious, a world chained to knowledge for its own sake, a world as much inclined to shroud itself in blankets of respectability as it is to throw off all slightest pretense of respectability and go entirely animal.

The fruits of immodesty

To say that such a world is an immodest world is to say that it is a world without high hopes or a world doomed to the crash of despair because of its impossible hopes. It means that it is a world which neglects the knowledge it should have, throws away the possibility of having any knowledge, or puts itself in the absurd position of maintaining that its knowledge is supreme. As immodest, it is a world bereft of the affability, truthfulness and sincerity that go into the making of that serene poise and beauty established by the moderation and proportion of reason. An immodest world means a world that is either so serious that it can find no room for fun, or so giddy that it can see no reason for anything but fun and where eventually fun itself becomes labor. It means a world where the quiet beauty and joy of dress is submerged either in a gloomy ugliness that parades as respectability or an exhibitionism whose tailor is sex.

Modesty, miracles and achievement

But our human world, after all, is not the silly world of an adolescent nor the dark, disillusioned world of

a grumpy old man. Rather it is a world in which the brilliant spark of reason's order gives beauty, proportion and vitality to all the things that touch on a man's life. It is, briefly, a modest world; a world of vigorous youth and wise serenity that is a reflection of eternal horizons. Modesty, as a matter of fact, is not a matter of hiding. Rather all immodesty is a matter of obscure, narrow places that hide its innate ugliness; it does not, in fact, ever see the world for the world is much too wide for it. Modesty is not an impediment to labor or a phase of life from which we shall probably recover; but, like all the virtues, it is an indispensable condition for supreme labors and progress that end only at contact with the infinite. It is only in proportion to his loyalty to the commands of reason that a man can be said to have achieved.

In the natural order modesty completes virtue's natural equipment for the attainment of the fullness of human life. When modesty and its companion virtues are lifted to the supernatural order, they are the equipment for that incredible abundance of Christian life which was the purpose of God's coming amongst us. When we go a step further into the order of the apostolic graces, man's achievements outstrip the bounds of the ordinary both in the natural and supernatural order. It is significant that the supernatural does become ordinary: and that is a tremendous statement of the full play given to the works of man. He has such a wide scope for his powers that he accomplishes the supernatural almost as a matter of course; but under the apostolic graces, even that boundless field of the ordinary supernatural is too narrow. Here the achievements of man are astounding even for the supernatural order, for here he is the mere instrument of God. To search for any limitations is to attempt to trace the boundaries of the goodness and omnipotence of God.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. III](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XX -- THE FULLNESS LIFE (Q. 179-189)

1. Activity and practicality.
 2. Thought and human life:
 - (a) A human division of human life: active and contemplative.
 - (b) The norm of classification.
 3. The life of the thinker:
 - (a) Conditions of contemplation.
 - (b) The field of contemplation.
 - (c) Joys and duration of contemplation.
 4. The life of the worker:
 - (a) Conditions for successful work.
 - (b) Its limitations.
 - (c) A comparison of the active and contemplative life.
 5. States of life:
 - (a) Grounds for distinction:
 - (1) In general.
 - (2) Within the Church.
 - (b) Spiritual states of life.
 6. States of perfection:
 - (a) In general.
 - (b) In particular:
 - (1) The episcopal state.
 - (2) The religious state:
 - a. As a "state of perfection."
 - b. The essence of religion.
 - c. The three vows.
 - d. The labors and support of religious.
 7. The field of religious activity:
 - (a) Basis of differences.
 - (b) Active orders.
 - (e) Contemplative orders.
 - (d) Highest form of religious life -- union of active and contemplative.
 8. Entry into religious life.
- Conclusion:
1. The common goal -- fullness of life:
 - (a) Fullness of action.
 - (b) Fullness of achievement.
 2. Contemplation and modern life.
 3. Activity and modern life.
 4. Religious life as a norm of full life of an age:
 - (a) In itself.
 - (b) In the estimate of the age.

CHAPTER XX -- THE FULLNESS OF LIFE (Q. 179-189)

WE AMERICANS are an impatient nation. Perhaps it is because we are so close to our beginnings. Obviously a stockade against Indians could not be built with the leisurely love that went into the Cathedrals. There are so very many things that must be done in all beginnings, things that have to be done in a hurry; and we still smack of that quick, nervous hurry. At any rate, we have developed a philosophy which we are pleased to call pragmatic; a philosophy that is professedly practical, the central note of which is one of dynamic activity. It is a philosophy careless of principles and intensely interested in problems.

Activity and practicality

Of course the two, principles and problems, cannot be separated. Nor can activity exist alone. Activity as such can be the most impractical thing in the world, as impractical as twiddled thumbs. It is not the doing of things that is so very important, but the doing of right things; that is, the things that are worth doing because they lead a man to his end. If we forget this, our activity becomes as senseless as a flow of words devoid of meaning; for actions, like words, are important precisely because they have a meaning. To

neglect that meaning for love of the action is to destroy the action in itself, to remove from that action its humanity.

In a word, activity is practical insofar as it is human activity, activity with a goal worthy of a man. It is the humanity of that agent, man, that is in danger of being overlooked today; and it must not be overlooked under pain of madness.

The life of a plant is a matter of nutrition and generation; but the life of a man cannot be gauged in inches and offspring, for man is not a plant. The life of an animal consists of sensation and movement; but the life of a man is not a matter of speed or smell, because he is not merely an animal. Every living thing can be classified by that which is most proper to it. The proper, the important, thing about man is that he is a man, that is, a thinking animal. His distinctive notes are his thought and love, and the roots of that rational activity. It is on the basis of his thinking and his rational love that a man's life must be judged.

Thought and human life: active and contemplative

How far we have drifted from this obvious, and distinctly human, point of view can be seen in our attitude towards contemplation. It is always something esoteric, mysterious; in particular cases, it is of doubtful existence. There seems to be something indecent about its practice outside the halls of a cloister. Now, as a matter of fact, contemplation is an activity of the speculative intellect of man searching for truth; external activity is the fruit of the practical intellect of man. Since it is on the basis of his thought that a man's life must be summed up, this double activity is a complete division of human life: every man, living humanly, is either primarily a thinker or primarily a doer.

The norm of classification

Notice that word "primarily." Of course thinkers must answer alarm clocks, eat meals and put on overcoats; and doers are not automatons or clods with never a thought. This division is not a matter of exclusion, for exclusion of either contemplation or practical action is tragic for a man; in its most extreme terms, it means either starvation or insanity. The division is rather a statement of the principal intention of the individual man and consequently of his greatest pleasure. The man whose efforts are principally directed to getting things done is leading an active life; the man whose efforts are directed principally to the knowledge of truth is leading a contemplative life. Or, to put this on a very human basis, that which we prefer to do in the company of our friends is an indication of the nature of the human life we are living; for the norm of that division, that classification, is the principal intention and the principal pleasure of the individual agent.

It is possible for men to escape both the contemplative and the active life. That is, all of their efforts can be directed to some such thing as sense pleasure which is the life of the voluptuary, or to mere physical development, both being an escape from thought; but then their lives have ceased to be human. They have embraced an animal or plant mode of existence rather than attempt the difficult task of leading a human life.

The life of the thinker: Conditions of contemplation

It is a serious error to identify the contemplative with a dry, dusty, emotionless creature moving in a gray world of cold reason. We come much closer to the truth when we visualize the contemplative as a gallant lover reckless of the cost of his love. Surely the first condition of contemplation, as of every human action, is love. It may be only the love of knowledge, love like the philosopher's thirst for natural truth; or it may be a love not only of knowledge but also of the thing that is known, the burning love of God, for example, which drives men to search for a glimpse of His beauty in all the world. But always contemplation must begin in love, endure by love and result in love.

The love of the contemplative is a holy, clean, beautiful love. It must be; for holiness, cleanliness and beauty are conditions for contemplation. Or, in simpler language, the contemplative must possess the

moral virtues; there can be no contemplation where the vehemence of passion and the external tumult of the world keep the soul in an uproar. The moral virtues quiet the passions to a whisper and reduce the external tumult to a distant murmur that is almost like a lullaby, enhancing rather than disturbing the peace of the soul.

Chastity, above all the other moral virtues, makes a man apt for contemplation. It is true that the brilliant proportion and splendid clarity that go into the making of beauty are essentially things of the intellect; but they are participated by the moral virtues through their participation of reason's order, particularly by that virtue which restrains the passion most likely to upset reason's order and besmirch its splendor. Not that this impure man may not be more powerfully contemplative than this pure man; but the impure man would be an infinitely greater contemplative if the eyes of his soul were not irritated by the dust of the senses.

The field of contemplation

Contemplation is a swift, intuitive knowledge, an instantaneous plunge to the heart of truth. And we human beings are not intellectual plungers; we are more at home playing for pennies than risking all on one turn of the wheel. We must crawl from depths to heights, from heights to depths; unlike the angels, we approach gradually to the height of contemplation. First we must get principles of knowledge from others, either by listening, or reading, or appealing to God by prayer. Then we must deduce the truths from these principles by meditation, speculation, mulling over the things we have received, until, finally, we are ready for that insight into sublime truth; a view that strikes the soul like nothing so much as a sunrise seen from an Alpine height.

The nature of contemplation's reward depends upon the nature of the truth that is contemplation's object. The highest truth is the proper and final object of this highest act of man's mind; it is man's highest reward, the reward of heaven itself. Some day we shall have that vision perfectly, directly; but as yet we are not in heaven. Now we contemplate first the divine effects; they take us by the hand up to the contemplation of divinity itself. It is an imperfect contemplation; but a contemplation that is itself a beginning of heaven.

Thus, from the greatness and excellence of the works of God we are lifted up to an imperfect view of the divine majesty, omnipotence, and wisdom. The consideration of divine judgment opens up the vistas of divine justice; the consideration of His benefits and promises lifts the veil hiding the divine kindness and mercy, and sends us to our knees in praise and gratitude.

These then are the conditions of contemplation: love, the moral virtues, the intellectual acts leading up to contemplation and finally, contemplation itself. True, our contemplation must stop short of the vision of God; short of that rare apostolic grace of rapture, no man in this life sees the face of God. Nevertheless, that vision is the climax, the fitting perfection of our present contemplation.

This hurried view of the conditions of contemplation is more than sufficient to bring home to us the degree to which our age has surrendered its human birthright. Indeed, if we consider no more than two of these conditions -- the moral virtues and the consideration of divine effects and divine truths -- there remains little doubt of the completeness of the surrender by the pagan world of high, human goals. For in a world where virtue is tossed out or respected only as a social instrument, in a world which shunts aside divine causality as unscientific and ignorant, there is no possibility of contemplation; and that means that half, the more important half, of a man's life has been amputated.

As Catholics, we cannot stand aside pitying the modern world from our secure eminence; for these same considerations of the conditions for contemplation make plain a glaring weakness of American Catholic life. It is true that we have the moral virtues and insist upon their practice; it is true that we love God and we do consider, at least from time to time, divine effects and divine truths. Certainly we do not question God's part in the creation and maintenance of the world. But how about that intermediate process, that series of intellectual acts -- listening, reading, praying, meditating, pondering the divine truths that we

might come to the climax of contemplation? Fairly recently in England there has been a determined movement to encourage meditation, spiritual reading and eventually contemplation by laymen. The attempt itself, the effort necessary to put it in motion, is a confession of the great need for such a movement and therefore of the great defect it supplied; here in America the movement has not even been started. Our attitude is, perhaps, that contemplation, meditation, is something for monks and nuns; rather impossible for the layman. But is this true?

It would be much more to the point, instead of abstract speculation on the possibility or impossibility of meditation, to ask ourselves some pertinent questions. How much do we engage in reading that is calculated to give our minds and hearts the food for a consideration of divine things? How much listening do we do to discourses on this same material? How much praying for greater insight into these truths? How much mulling over do they get from us? With these questions answered we can logically approach the question of the possibility or impossibility of meditation for layfolk; and we do not have to go very far. The first priest we meet can testify from his own experience that meditation and contemplation are by no means impossible to layfolk.

Some years ago, in the course of a retreat, I was approached by a woman in tears. Every morning, after getting her husband off to work and her five children to school, she herself went to work in a factory; she was back to cook the noon meal, and she had to do the rest of the housework in the evening. The children were angels; the husband was kind. In fact everything was fine, except her prayers. In some completely mysterious fashion, she would find a half-hour during this crowded day to slip into Church; kneeling down, she started the Hail Mary, but she never got it finished. The thought of the goodness of God or His love would come to her mind -- and the half hour was gone. Her point was that this could not go on. After all, her prayers had to be said; what should she do about it? The answer was, of course, to do nothing about it but thank God; for there is no prayer that can compare with such as these.

This is not an isolated experience. And certainly it would seem to indicate that the standard excuse of being too busy for meditation is decidedly thin. If we find little of meditation, very little of contemplation in our lives, some of the immediate causes are not hard to locate: it is because we do not pray enough, we do not give our minds supernatural food to munch on, nor our hearts time for more than a hasty caress. We are too much absorbed by the hurried age in which we live, so busy gathering up knowledge that we starve our minds and our hearts.

Joys and duration of contemplation

Really this is not a matter of shirking an unpleasant duty; it is a matter of cheating ourselves of a joy that might easily be ours. Remember that contemplation is a beginning, a foretaste of heaven; even in this life its joy exceeds every other human delight. It is a spiritual joy and so it goes far beyond all carnal pleasure. Moreover, it is the highest act of man, the act most in harmony with his nature, accomplishing that for which he exists; and more and more delightfully as he develops the intellectual virtues of wisdom and knowledge that make contemplation easier. It is the secret of the scholar's long hours, the philosopher's relentless pursuit of truth; and, far above all these things, the secret of the saint's utter surrender, with its joy of contemplating supreme beauty, supreme love, of contemplating Him Whom we love above all else with a love exceeding all loves.

We do not slip into this joy as easily as we do into a family heritage. There is a bit of a brisk fight to attain it. A fight against the defects and limitations of our own mind, as for instance, against the irritation of reaching to the very edge of truth yet not quite grasping it, like having a word on the tip of our tongue but being unable to say it. It is, too, a fight against the heaviness of our body's bearing us down to lower things. But the very fight only makes the triumph the sweeter and the joy the greater.

Yet the necessity of a fight for this thing should not surprise us when we remember that it borders on the divine. It is, after all, the product of that frank likeness of the divine in us, our intellect and our will; like the divinity, contemplation too is spiritual, incorruptible, enduring. It deals with the incorruptible, the

eternal truth; there are no contraries to destroy it. Of course, such a thing as this is not to be had lightly. Yet it does not involve straining of muscles, cleverness of hands or quickness of feet. Of course we get tired working at it; but not as tired as a farmer or a bricklayer doing his work; and we are the more quickly ready to begin again until the time when there will be no call for interruption.

The Catholic attitude towards contemplation has always been one of reverence, while the pagan usually has stood before it puzzled and confused. And small wonder. To the Catholic, the contemplative is already busy at the work of heaven, occupied with the end and goal of all men. The contemplative brings God closer to the ordinary Catholic and so is a kind of visible intermediary who makes the step to God seem just that much shorter. They are God's favorites, these contemplatives; and because they are friends of ours, they are doing much of our work, throwing a cloak of protection about us, interceding against our own weakness.

Seen in its full significance, this Catholic attitude is nothing less than a recognition of the true values of the contemplative and active life; an acknowledgment of the eternal character of the one and the transient character of the other. This is what stamps Catholic culture with its own peculiar attitude towards active life. It is the radical cause of Catholic culture's refusal to get too excited about active life; of its easy (and to the pagan, shiftless) acceptance of active life and its vicissitudes. It is the thing that enables the Catholic to grin a little amusedly at his success and make his poverty a hot-house for the nurturing of the shoots of sanctity. For the Catholic knows that the active life does not last; it is a step in a journey. There are things to be done, milestones to be passed, sorrows to be borne, tasks to be accomplished, but all on the way to heaven. In that ultimate home, all activity will be ordered to contemplation and the enjoyment of that eternal truth; not to keeping body and soul together, paying taxes, building up a savings account.

The life of the worker: Conditions for successful work

At the moment, active life is no light thing. Living humanly is never a light thing. For the successful living of the active life, the moral virtues are essential, for it is by these that man gets things done. And to the man who maintains that these are easy it might be unkindly retorted: "Try it and see." Since prudence is directly ordered to the regulation of the moral virtues, it, too, directly pertains to the active life.

There is a serious commentary on the practicality of our modern American philosophy of action in the fact that the proportion of the perfection of prudence and the moral virtues is the proportion of our success in the living of an active life. Obviously, if these are the norms of our ability to live an active life, much of our pagan world has made really practical active living an impossibility for themselves; for prudence gets nowhere without goals to aim at, and there is no room for moral virtue where sense appetite stands alone as the unchallenged driving power of a man's life. Nor is an age that dodges personal responsibility in any sense practical; for the active life (which is practical life) is not a light thing, an easy thing to be faced by a coward. It is a human thing, worthy of the strong efforts of a stout human heart.

It is interesting to note that teaching, for all its airs and grave dignity, belongs next to ditch-digging, not next to contemplation. That is, considering not merely the truth conveyed, but rather the conveying of that truth to the student, teaching is a work of the active, not the contemplative life. It is a kind of intellectual hod-carrying; and, whether we greet the news with sorrow or with joy, it is a work which ceases with death. There are no school days in heaven, at least as far as human teachers are concerned.

However, this is no slur on teaching. It is frequently necessary for a man to live an active life; in fact, many times in the individual case, it is better for a man to live an active life, never, of course, excluding contemplation. Yet, considered objectively, there is no comparison between activity and contemplation; the contemplative life is far superior, a superiority that is spontaneously, intuitively recognized by the simplest of Catholics.

His family would have every right to their astonishment if the day-laborer of no education remarked, over the supper table, that contemplative life is more thoroughly in harmony with the intellectual nature of man as his highest act turning about his highest object. Nevertheless, that same man does grasp something of

the full freedom, the approach to divinity of the contemplative life. He recognizes in its serene continuity the beginning of eternity; he sees the reflection of its penetrating joy stamped on the face of the contemplative; he has nothing but admiration for its greater self-sufficiency, freeing man more and more from worldly things. He can agree with Christ that Mary has chosen the best part, a part not ordered to further ends but desirable in itself. He can almost feel the quiet and peace it gives in contrast to the bustling activity of his own life. Perhaps more clearly than anything else, he sees why Mary's part will not be taken away from her; that is, he sees that this is a beginning, a foretaste of heaven.

It may well be that some exhausted sweat-shop worker is here and now meriting much more than does this enclosed nun, by reason of the tired girl's more intense charity. But in itself, contemplation is more meritorious than the active life because it directly and immediately pertains to the love of God. Yet we find contemplatives actually praying for a cessation of divine favors that they might engage in active work. Thus Catherine de Ricci prayed for less of ecstasies that she might more efficiently handle her task of sub-prioress; but this is not a case of the contemplative returning to a better life. Rather it is a sharing of the fruits of contemplation with others, a return to activity in order to direct the active lives of others, to lead these others to the ultimate contemplation of heaven. For active life is really a preparation for contemplation as earth is a preparation for heaven.

Its limitations

Not that the effort and external activity of the active life is not an impediment to the contemplative life. It is. It needs no argument to make evident the fact that the stenographer pounding away at her machine or the electrical worker handling wires of high voltage cannot have their minds free for divine contemplation. On the other hand, the active life humanly lived, with the full perfection of the moral virtues and of prudence, is a positive aid to and preparation for contemplation by the peace and order it instills in the inner life of a man.

A comparison of the active and contemplative life

Are there natural contemplatives? people who are naturally made for contemplation, as there are people who simply cannot sit down and think? This is the old, old question of temperament. It is true that a natural purity and quiet of soul makes one apt for contemplation; it is also true that a naturally passionate nature, a natural drive to action, fits a man for active life. But what is done with these temperaments is quite a different question. Nature is never a sufficient explanation for the destiny of a man. If he is fitted by nature for living the active life well, that means that he is fitted by nature to prepare himself well and quickly for the contemplative life; with that preparation over, he will probably throw himself wholeheartedly into the contemplative life with all the generosity of his passionate nature. But many a person with a natural aptitude for contemplation is far from a contemplative. In other words, this matter of natural aptitude is rather a question of the amount of preparation necessary before embarking on the daring flight of the contemplative life.

States of life: Grounds for distinction in general

The division of active and contemplative is a division of human life on a basis of human activity, and that activity is exercised by men in different states of life. The very phrase "states of life" calls up pictures of the rich contrasted with the poor, the aristocracy as over against the peasantry, and so on. Actually, all such considerations are too external, too variable, to constitute a man in a state of life. We can see this more readily if we look at the roots of that expression "state of life". A better translation would be "stance of life". The phrase is taken from a comparison with the physical position of a man standing: he stands when he is erect and quiet, not when he is running, walking, lying down or jumping in a pool. And it is in this position, erect and quiet, that his members are properly disposed, in their natural position -- head above the feet, arms hanging down, and so on.

Thus a moral state or stance will be an erect and quiet or permanent position of man among his fellows. It

implies a certain immobility or quiet and a relation to the obligations affecting the person of a man, to his natural position: that is, according as he stands by himself or by another, according as he is under obligation to another or free from it.

On this basis there are two general stances or states of life: the state of freedom and the state of slavery. Both are permanent, both have a relation to the obligations affecting the person. The free man, not bound to another, stands erect by himself; the slave, bound to another, is erect only in being bound to another. Thus the religious is in a different state of life from the secular, for he is a slave to God; the just man is in a different state of life from a sinner, for sinners are slaves to sin.

Within the Church

Under these general states, there will be many more particular ones, according to particular labors and particular goals that men must busy themselves with. Take for example the Church. It reflects the grace of Christ as the universe reflects the perfection of God, demanding almost as great a variety as is to be found in the physical universe; for many facets are necessary for even an inadequate mirroring of that splendor. Then too, we cannot all be nuns or bishops or country pastors; the Church has a wide task to perform, a task not to be handled by a quick change artist or variously colored spot-lights. And this very variety results in a dignity and beauty of the order found within the Church. In other words, this variety of states of life is necessary in the Church for its perfection, its action and its beauty.

Spiritual states of life

It is in terms of perfection we speak when we distinguish the various states of spiritual life. In spiritual things there is a double slavery and a double liberty. There is the slavery of sin which is the state of the habitual sinner; and the slavery of justice, which is the state of the habitually just man. Then there is the freedom from sin, proper to the man who is not overcome by his inclination to sin; and the freedom from justice, which belongs to the man who sins regardless of his inclination to justice. Obviously, the slavery of sin and the freedom from justice go hand in hand and constitute a real state of spiritual slavery; while the freedom from sin and the slavery of justice go together and constitute a state of real spiritual freedom.

It does not take a profound analysis to notice a depressing parallelism here between the "new freedom" and one of these states. That "new freedom" is an exultation in the release from the fetters of justice; it is the youthful sinner's concentration on the freedom involved in the slavery of sin. Apparently it is only the long school of the years that teaches man that the fetters of sin grow steadily heavier, while the fetters of justice are lightened to the delicate weight of the bonds of love. There is a freedom in the discarding of ethical limitations, the freedom from justice that goes hand in hand with the slavery of sin.

Both states, of spiritual slavery and spiritual freedom, are achieved by human efforts. And that means that they are reached by that slow-motion peculiar to humanity; not all at once, but little by little, with a beginning, an advancement, and a final perfection. In the state of spiritual freedom these are called the state of the beginners, of those who are progressing and of the perfect; or, in more technical language, the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive state.

States of perfection: In general

Notice that all three are subdivisions of the state of spiritual freedom; in other words, the common note that binds all three together is the note of perfection, the note of charity. The point is important to offset the rumor, sponsored by slipshod thinking, to the effect that there is an imperfect charity like an imperfect factory product that can be had somewhat cheaper than the genuine thing. All charity is perfect in the sense that all charity prefers God above all else; there are not several kinds of charity, one good and others not so good. There is only one kind; but there are several degrees of that one kind. Men in all three of these states of spiritual perfection are spiritually free, i.e., they are united to God through charity; a truth that becomes obvious when we remember that these three states include all men in the state of grace.

It should not be hard to see that there are degrees of perfection. It is evident that we are not perfect as God is, loving Him infinitely as He loves Himself. The prosaic necessity of a night sleep is proof enough that we have not the prerogative of the blessed, of loving God to our full capacity and without interruption. There are, as a matter of fact, just two possibilities open to us. We can love God to the extent of avoiding sin; or we can go further and love Him to the extent of directing all our energies to love of Him by abandoning all else that might in any way hold us back from Him. The first is the state common to all the faithful keeping the Commandments; the second is the state common to those who have abandoned the world and entered religious life.

To put the matter in utterly simply language, perfection consists in keeping the Commandments. Christ spoke adequately, beautifully and with divine simplicity when He said: "If you love me, keep my commandments." The counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience are not a bypass to heaven, substitutes or alternates for the Commandments: they are instruments, dispositions for a more perfect observance of those Commandments. They do not set a man on a road different from that followed by the rest of the friends of Christ; they merely remove the obstacles from the common road, doing away with the slightest impediments to charity.

This makes clear a very necessary distinction. A rule of silence and bells that clang in the middle of the night are not essential for the observance of the Commandments; they can be kept in any condition of life, in any place, at any time. Consequently, in any condition of life we can be perfect. But the public embracing of the counsels, of the fixed, permanent way of life which we call religious, puts a man in the religious state or state of perfection. Notice that it does not make him perfect; rather it dedicates him to a whole-hearted pursuit of perfection that runs down its quarry only on the other side of death.

In particular: The episcopal state

As a matter of fact, this state of perfection is not the monopoly of religious; indeed, they have elbowed their way in, by their profession, to a condition that bishops take on by virtue of their office itself. It takes a brave man to accept a bishopric; for it takes a brave man to dedicate himself not only to his own perfection, but to the perfecting of others. His perfection must fill the cup of his own soul and overflow into the souls of others; his love must be a flaming fire, not only sufficient to warm the house of his own soul, but to set fire to the hearts of all of his people.

We are being decidedly petty when we think of a bishopric only in terms of the honor, the administrative planning, the wealth or the power that may go with it; we are forgetting the loneliness of it, the long hours of prayer, the sorrow that escapes all comfort as souls make their way to hell, the agony of a commander whose lieutenants send in such desperate pleas for help from beleaguered fortresses on all sides.

This is an office not to be refused at one's own pleasure, but cheerfully accepted when obedience demands; it is an office lawfully desired, but only by a man who wishes to make a holocaust of himself. Naturally, it is not a state into which one steps lightly.

Immediately upon assuming his office, the bishop becomes the torch-bearer for all others, the center of all eyes. He carries the responsibility for the souls of his people and they look to him unquestioningly for leadership. It takes a good man to be a bishop; but not necessarily the absolutely best man. Once he has undertaken his apostolic task, the bishop cannot lightly lay it down; he is dedicated to the souls of others and they must be his first consideration. He cannot desert them for any reasons of personal convenience, safety or even of greater perfection offered by the contemplative life.

The religious state: As a "state of perfection."

Even in religious life there are grouches, early-morning indispositions, people who find the coffee abominable; for the religious state and sanctity are not synonymous terms. That you can take as absolutely first hand information. There is no halo included in the habit that is given to a postulant. These men and women are called religious because they bind themselves to the service of God with the chains of love;

they offer God a holocaust of themselves and that is the work of religion. They die to the world; though not infrequently they have difficulty staying dead. Because by their state they unite themselves to God, it is called a state of perfection.

The postulant is not asked to work miracles as a condition of admittance; for sanctity is not a pre-disposition to the religious life. Rather it is the goal of religious life; indeed, while religious life demands many things, it also offers many helps, gives freedom from many temptations and is, generally, a boon to the weak as well as to the holy. In fact, we might say that one can save one's soul much more easily in the religious life -- but not nearly so comfortably.

The essence of religion

The obligations of the religious are the source of his joy as well as of his discomfort; they embrace, over and above the Ten Commandments, his rule and the three counsels of Christ that make up the essence of the religious life: poverty, chastity and obedience. These latter are embraced under vow and necessarily so: since the state of religion implies an obligation to the things of perfection, an immobility or permanence that is conferred by the vows. There is a graphic statement of the purpose of the vows in the story of the Roman emperor who recovered the true Cross and, from his piety, determined to shoulder it while he retraced the Way of the Cross; but with all his great strength, he could not move a step along that sacred way until he had taken off his shoes and discarded his royal robes. From another point of view, we might say that the religious, in his vows, has taken to himself a wife that will give him no peace short of perfection, he has put himself under a happy necessity that forever drives him on to better things. Or again, the vows enable a man to offer all of his life in an instant; to get the business over with quickly in a kind of spiritual self-destruction, so that he can stand aside in something of the eternity of God, with time stretched out complete before him.

The vows do make up the essence of religious life; and that life can be variously considered. We might look on it as a spiritual gymnasium in which we constantly exercise to perfect charity. It may have the air of a quiet retreat, a state of peace from the uproar of the world and of human appetites; or the emphasis may be on the roaring activity of a holocaust to the Creator. But do not let anyone tell you it is a martyrdom; if they attempt it, you may keep a straight face, but in your heart you have a right to feel amused. What religious life really does is to remove all the impediments to an unrestrained rush to God: the cupidity for external goods, concupiscence, and inordinate self-will.

The three vows

Of the three vows, the greatest -- but not necessarily the most difficult -- is the vow of obedience, simply because it brings the most precious and the most utterly free gift. External things can be extremely valuable; the goods of man's body can hardly be tagged with a price; but the goods of his soul, the utterly sacrosanct faculties that no one or no thing can get at but God and the man himself -- there is a royal gift, the gift of man's own will. This vow of obedience contains the other vows and its acts are closer to the inner acts of religious subjection, the acts by which a man pays his tribute to his Creator in a coin worthy of the Kingdom of God.

From all this it might seem that a religious is teetering on dizzy heights, heights from which it is easy and terrible to fall. In a sense that is true. By reason of his vows, the sin of a religious can be much more serious than the sin of a layman; thus, for instance, a sin of impurity in his case has the added malice of sacrilege. There is too the element of contempt or ingratitude, and the danger of scandal. But on the other hand, the sin of the religious in an individual case, may be lighter by reason of greater weakness or greater ignorance. At the very least, it should be easier for the religious to repent, not only by reason of the habitual direction of his life to God, but also because of the help of his religious brethren.

The labors and support of religious

The young novice who falls into bed at night completely exhausted has long since discovered how false

was the rumor of empty, idle days in the convent. Forty years later, she will still be wondering how in the world a story like that ever got around. There are indeed things to be done in religious life; but the general nature of it only indicates that inner spiritual activity that is at the heart of it. As for the external works, well certainly the religious is not automatically a crusader commissioned to preach, teach, hear confessions and so on; for that he will need the Sacrament of Orders and authorization of the bishop. Even more certainly his habit gives him no right to open a pawnshop, operate a coal mine or run a tavern. In fact, secular business is forbidden to religious, unless it is engaged in by reason of charity and then only in moderation and with the permission of his superiors. At any rate, it must not interfere with the essential business of religious life.

But after all, these religious must keep alive. How? Well sometimes the very rule of a religious demands manual labor; thus the ancient Benedictines and Carthusians had manual labor as their official work. In other cases, not the rule, but brute necessity demands manual labor. Other religious, as the Carmelites of Wheeling, West Virginia, subsist on alms but they are not allowed to ask for the alms, depending on divine providence to send them sufficient for their needs. Still others live by out and out begging; and among these are the Dominicans and the Franciscans, hence their name of mendicant or begging friars.

The mere fact that so few Dominicans, Franciscans or Carmelites have starved to death is some little indication of the place religious life has in the hearts of Catholic layfolk. They understand, of course, that the purpose of the begging is not to insure a lazy leisure for the friars. It is legitimate to receive alms or beg for them when the religious are engaged in works of public benefit, such as contemplation, or when they constantly distribute their own goods to the poor. A lazy or greedy beggar is vicious, whether he wear a religious habit or not; if the solicitation of alms is a medium of humility, of necessity, of penance or of utility, it is virtuous. The particular purpose of Dominican begging is to release the brethren from manual labor that they might more profoundly pursue their work of study, teaching and preaching.

Our astonishment at the cut of a religious habit might be mitigated to some degree if we remember that it was not designed as a pattern for the Beau Brummels of this, or indeed of any, age. It is the garment most fitting to one who has become a fool for Christ as Christ became a fool for us on the Cross. Thomas, in his own day, asked if religious could legitimately wear old or vile clothes; and answered, matter of factly, that of course they could if they had nothing else to wear. The answer might well have been autobiographical. He also noted other reasons such as bringing home to others the religious' contempt of the world, a gesture of penance, or of humility. Of course, if the religious habit is paraded from vanity (God save the mark!), for purposes of greed, or if the clothes are old and shabby through sheer negligence, there is little virtue in the wearing of the habit.

The field of religious activity: Basis of differences

That there is unity in the religious state is evident from the common dedication of all religious to the service of God; that there is variety can be hidden from no man's eyes, least of all from the eyes of a man who has seen the benumbing array of religious habits at a University summer school session. There is, however, a more scientific way of distinguishing religious orders than by the habit; for each order is organized to its last detail with its proximate end in view. Thus, the proximate end of Dominican religious life (to keep the example in the family) is a double one: contemplation in the monastic tradition and the scattering of the fruits of that contemplation by preaching and teaching, particularly in university circles. To attain those ends, the Dominican has very special means: full monastic observance, choral office, cloistered convents, silence and a rigid course of study. The proximate end of the Jesuit Order is the education of youth; and in order that they might be more free for that physically exhausting task which takes up so much of every day, its members are freed from the community monastic observance.

Active orders

Seen in this light, the varieties of religious orders give a panoramic view of the human heart, the wide fields of sacrifice to which the human heart reaches out under the inspiration of divine love. We find

military orders with the proximate end of battle, battle in defense of the worship of God, defense of the community or, as St. Thomas suggests -- approving the ideal of a later chivalry -- in defense of the poor or the oppressed.

Then there are the other active orders, less aggressive, who take care of the poor, the aged, beggars, the sick, children, educate youth, indeed, take care of almost everything human that needs caring for. An American needs no examples of this type of religious life. There will be orders dedicated to preaching, the parochial ministry, missions, and so on; in other words caring for the spiritual needs of their neighbor. And there will be orders dedicated to study. In the time of St. Thomas it was a burning question whether or not a religious order could be dedicated to study. His defense of that ideal was a defense of his own Dominican Order; and he points out, from the experience of his own intense years, that the labor of study is a constant chastisement of the flesh and a curbing of worldly desires. He noticed too, again from his years at the books, that study served contemplative life both directly, by the study of divine truth, and indirectly by removing the intellectual errors which are an impediment to contemplation.

Contemplative orders

Then there are the purely contemplative orders which represent a direct approach to the goal, to God Himself. Since the worth of the religious state is measured by its approach to God, these orders are much higher than the purely active orders, higher and harder, for their approach is direct.

Highest form of religious life -- union of active and contemplative

In between the active and the contemplative orders is what is, in practice, the highest form of religious life -- a union of the contemplative with the active, so that both are proximate and principal ends of this type of religious life. It is the type of life represented by the Dominican Order; its superiority is argued by St. Thomas (again in defense of the family) on the obvious grounds that it is much better to have light and give it than merely to have it; it is a greater thing to contemplate and give the fruits of contemplation to others than merely to contemplate. The study, the preaching and the teaching of Dominican life represent one side, the side of the dispersal of the fruits gathered by the other side of Dominican life, the side of contemplation and monastic observance.

Again in answer to a question of his time, St. Thomas insists that it is not an impediment to religious life for the community to possess goods; the care of such common things is not the care of selfishness but of charity, for each member is seeking not that which is his own, but that which belongs to the community. Abuse is, of course, possible through too much solicitude or too much wealth; but the thing itself is not to be condemned because of a particular abuse of it that may crop up in the course of history.

Strange as it may seem to us, though it is quite logical, solitary religious life is in itself more perfect than community religious life; although it is the most dangerous to all but the perfect. I say this is logical because community life, after all, is a means to perfection; hence it is unnecessary when perfection is already had. Solitary or hermit life, then, is for the perfect. For anyone else it is extremely dangerous, for it strips a man of the helps he gets from community life: the help to intellect from instruction, and the help to affection from the rebuke of example and correction. It has been said that community life keeps a man from getting old. That may or may not be true. But it is certainly true that community life does all that can humanly be done to keep a man from getting odd. In it there is as little chance for the development of eccentricities as there is for the seventh child of a family of twelve to become spoiled.

Entry into religious life

An historical or a modern world-wide study of religious life brings to light two practices that meet with small sympathy in our country today: the taking of a vow to enter religious life and the reception of children into monasteries. This coldness is due, to a great extent, to misunderstanding. We forget that a vow is itself an act of virtue, of the virtue of religion; and that just as sin is worse when it proceeds from a will obstinate in evil, so a virtuous act is better if it proceeds from a will firmly fixed in good, as is the

case in the vows. What is more important, from the side of misunderstanding, is that we look upon entry into religion as something absolutely irrevocable, like the loss of our second teeth. Granted that having taken such a vow a man must enter the religious life or commit sin; that does not mean that he must stay, nor that he must be kept even if he wants to stay. Nor does it mean that he does not have time, plenty of time, to find out what it is all about before binding himself for life to the religious state.

As for children, much the same limitations must be kept in mind. It is true that children have been taken into monasteries as mere infants; but certainly they were not bound by irrevocable ties to religious life until they could bind themselves. To St. Thomas, this meant until they reached the age of reason which, by his computation, was the age of puberty. The practice today, as always, is to guarantee the full freedom of entry into religious life: for it is only by love that this life can be lived, and love cannot be forced.

Perhaps we have adopted too much of the point of view of our pagan age. We wonder if those who enter religious life very young know what they are missing; yet it never dawns on us that they will never finish finding out what they are getting. We concentrate on what they are surrendering, watching them go with a puzzled reluctance. We shy away in distaste from one who induces others to enter religion as we would from a kind of proselytizer; though St. Thomas says rightly that the reward of such is very great. It is the reward given to those who bring others to Christ. No doubt God, with His infinite patience and comprehensive knowledge of human vagaries, can understand it, but it must be bewildering to the angels to see Catholic parents fighting off their children's attempts to get closer to Christ. Christ Himself had a word to say, a sharp word, to the men who tried to shield Him from children; here it is the children who are being shielded from Christ.

Perhaps some of the modern distaste is inspired by the momentous character of this decision to enter religious life. Such finality of choice comes as a jarring shock; it is such an ultimate disposition of life. Again this is the viewpoint of the pagan; the making of the decision normally does not require much advice-seeking or long deliberation. We should deliberate about things because they are dubious, not because they are final. The entry into religious life is certainly a good; the candidate does not expect to persevere by his own strength but by the power of God. So for the most part, the candidate for religious life enters the novitiate as gaily as a girl goes to her marriage. He might well take counsel about the manner of going, about securing entrance, about the particular order he will choose, the possibility of some impediment that might bar him; but the entry into religious life itself should be as easy as falling in love. That is precisely what it is.

The common goal -- fullness of life: Fullness of action

Now we have come to the end of what is called the moral part of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas. To sum this up we should really go back to the [first chapter of the second volume](#) of this work where we started to talk of the goal of man. If that be difficult, let me point out, just passing, that in that first chapter we uncovered the key to human life and action, which we said was the goal. Human action is a motion going to some place; and that place, that goal, gives meaning to human life, a goal which we determined was the vision of God, the union of man with his last end. From all sides that successful conclusion of human life meant the fullest perfection, the greatest development, the fullness of human life. So the vision of God is the end of man, and at the same time the fullness of human living.

Fullness of achievement

In all the rest of that second volume, and throughout this one, we have been considering the ways and means by which man wins to that goal: the intellect, the will, the passions: the habits or principles of actions, which when good are virtues, when bad are sins, the one driving men on full speed to the goal, the other draggling him back or shunting him off the road that might lead to the goal. We saw that it was only that which went towards the goal that was worthy of the name of action; that it was only by approach to the goal that we achieve. From the very beginning, then, we have seen the true notion of practicality. Since then we have worked up step by step to its fullest development.

Contemplation and modern life

In this chapter we have come to the fullness of achievement -- contemplation -- to the most abundant state of human life, the state of perfection -- the religious state. Perhaps this final result of our study would be summed up by the world today in such terms as this: the fullness of action is possessed by the dreamer, the fullness of achievement is found in this thoroughly sterile condition they call the religious life. The statement would be grossly unfair; but it would have the virtue of bringing out clearly by contrast our modern world's notion of action as mere activity and of achievement as the denial of all goals.

We have come to these conclusions with complete intellectual honesty. We have proceeded step by step; not looking at only this or that fact, but insisting on an examination of all the facts. And all the way through we saw that human fullness and the fullness of virtue marched side by side. Every motion of defense we made for the fullness of virtue was a defense of humanity itself.

Activity and modern life

It is easy, then, to understand how much injury has been done to human life by cutting contemplation out of it. It is as reasonable to cut off a man's head and feet and expect him to run a race as it is to cut off the principles and the goals of human life and their consideration, and expect human life to go somewhere. In other words, we have reached the ultimate in frustration when the modern devotees of activity have destroyed their own idol, when those dedicated to activity have destroyed activity itself, removing from it its human element. Obviously, thought cannot be taken out of human action and have it still remain human; not merely thought, but upward thought, thought of the ultimate goal.

Religious life as a norm of full life of an age: In itself

We might sum up all this in terms of the religious life, by pointing out that the religious life is truly the most practical of human lives because it goes most wholeheartedly to the goal, to the purpose, to the sole reason for all activity. At the same time that it achieves fullness of action it also achieves fullness of actual accomplishment; for it gets done the things that above all other things must be done.

In the estimate of the age

It is precisely because the Catholic can see this truth that his own active life is so rich in its actions and in its fruits. In fact, we might say that the fullness of the life of any age may be accurately judged by its attitude towards religious life; not towards religious, you understand, but towards the religious state. In an age that has nothing but contempt for the apparent futility, the impracticality, the inactivity of religious life, there will be little of practicality, little of true activity, nothing of achievement. On the contrary, where religious life is recognized as worthy of the highest of human efforts, you will find men aiming at the right goals and at least trying, trying strenuously, to share in those goals. By that very fact, such an age will share to some extent in that fullness of action, that fullness of achievement. In other words, the men of that age point all their efforts towards the goal that is worthy of men; by those actions they constantly take steps towards the one goal that is worthy of achievement, the one goal that gives reason to human life, the last goal, God.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. III
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**A COMPANION TO THE SUMMA
VOLUME IV -- THE WAY OF LIFE**
**(Corresponding to the *Summa Theologica IIIa*
and Supplement)**

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CONTENTS

[FORWARD](#)

**CLICK Q. NUMBERS FOR
ONLINE ENGLISH SUMMA**

I. <u>MYSTERY AND MEN</u>	
II. <u>THE DREAM OF THE AGES</u>	<u>(q. 1-3)</u>
III. <u>THE TRUTH OF THE WAY</u>	<u>(q. 4-8)</u>
IV. <u>LIKE UNTO US</u>	<u>(q. 9-15)</u>
V. <u>THE MAN AND HIS GOD</u>	<u>(q. 16-21)</u>
VI. <u>THE DIVINE MEDIATOR</u>	<u>(q. 22-26)</u>
VII. <u>VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD</u>	<u>(q. 27-34)</u>
VIII. <u>THE HELPLESSNESS OF GOD</u>	<u>(q. 35-39)</u>
IX. <u>CHRIST THE MAN</u>	<u>(q. 40-45)</u>
X. <u>CHRIST THE VICTIM</u>	<u>(q. 46-52)</u>
XI. <u>THE CONQUEST OF DEATH</u>	<u>(q. 53-59)</u>
XII. <u>FRUITFUL SIGNS OF LIFE</u>	<u>(q. 60-65)</u>
XIII. <u>SPIRITUAL INFANCY AND MANHOOD</u>	<u>(q. 66-71; 72)</u>
XIV. <u>THE BREAD OF LIFE</u>	<u>(q. 73-78)</u>
XV. <u>THE UNDYING VICTIM</u>	<u>(q. 79-83)</u>
XVI. <u>THE CONSTANT RESURRECTION</u>	<u>(q. 84-90; Suppl., q. 1-28)</u>
XVII. <u>THE SICK AND THEIR PHYSICIAN</u>	<u>(Suppl., q. 29-33; 34-40)</u>
XVIII. <u>THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOME</u>	<u>(Suppl., q.41-68)</u>
XIX. <u>THE END OF LIFE</u>	<u>(Suppl., q. 69-91)</u>
XX. <u>ETERNAL BEGINNINGS</u>	<u>(Suppl., q. 92-99)</u>

FOREWORD

ST. THOMAS died too soon to finish his book, the Summa Theologica. Not all authors are so fortunate. This book marks the completion of a series, projected long ago perhaps with an eye to Thomas' good fortune. The first was a search for the ultimate answers that form the bedrock of human life, human action, and the living of human life; the second furnished the key to human life and human action; the third concentrated on the living of human life in all its exuberant fullness; this, the fourth, traces the royal road a man's feet must walk and the goals that await him at the end of the journey.

Volume IV:
IIIa & Suppl.

FOREWORD

1. **MYSTERY & MEN**
2. **INCARNATION**
(IIIa, q. 1-3)
3. **HYPOSTATIC UNION**
(IIIa, q. 4-8)
4. **CHRIST'S HUMANITY**
(IIIa, q. 9-15)
5. **CHRIST'S WILL**
(IIIa, q. 16-21)
6. **PRIEST & VICTIM**
(IIIa, q. 22-26)
7. **MARY**
(IIIa, q. 27-34)
8. **CHRISTMAS**
& BAPTISM
(IIIa, q. 35-39)
9. **CHRIST THE MAN**
(IIIa, q. 40-45)
10. **PASSION & DEATH**
(IIIa, q. 46-52)
11. **RESURRECTION**
(IIIa, q. 53-59)
12. **SACRAMENTS**
(IIIa, q. 60-65)
13. **BAPTISM &**
CONFIRMATION
(IIIa, q. 66-71; 72)
14. **EUCCHARIST**
(IIIa, q. 73-78)
15. **COMMUNION**
& SACRIFICE
(IIIa, q. 79-83)
16. **PENANCE**
(IIIa, q. 84-90; Suppl., 1-28)
17. **EXTREME UNCTION**
& HOLY ORDERS

[\(Suppl., q. 29-33; 34-40\)](#)

18. **MATRIMONY**

[\(Suppl., q. 41-68\)](#)

19. **JUDGMENT
& RESURRECTION**

[\(Suppl., q. 69-91\)](#)

20. **HEAVEN & HELL**

[\(Suppl., q. 92-99\)](#)

It was the Son of God Who declared "I am the way"; this book takes His words literally, as they were meant to be taken. Its subject matter, then, is the sublime mystery by which the Son of God became man to lead men to God, the mystery of the Incarnation. It does not stop at an examination of the mystery but goes on to trace all the consequences of God's dwelling among men: the life of Christ, detail by detail; His blessed mother; the continuation of His life in the sacraments; and the goal of heaven which is at the end of the royal road, the goal of hell which is the terminal of any other path. From beginning to end, this book deals with the supernatural, and that without apology, excuse, or defense; all this has been taken care of in previous volumes. Its contents are thus not so much an argued thesis as a divinely stated fact. If a modern reader is avid of facts, he will find a sublime diet of divine facts here; if, however, he is fastidious in the matter of facts, particularly supernatural facts, this diet may well prove too much for him.

It was not, however, for the fastidious, but for those who were hungry for God that these books were written. If they do something to stave off starvation from those who have the courage to admit their hunger, Thomas may be pardoned for not having seen to it that they were not finished, and I may be forgiven for the effrontery that began them.

Again, I wish to express my gratitude to Thomas for the good things in these books, and to my critics that the bad things are not worse.

W.F.
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[Back](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER I -- MYSTERY AND MEN

1. The attraction of the mysterious:
 - (a) Natural witnesses.
 - (b) Concrete evidence.
 2. The appeal of science.
 3. Mystery and the mind of man:
 - (a) The three thirsts for knowledge:
 - (1) For the solution of problems.
 - (2) For the penetration of natural mysteries.
 - (3) For the penetration of divine mysteries.
 - (b) Mystery and progress or growth.
 4. A world without mystery:
 - (a) A modern tragedy.
 - (b) The tragic modern escape.
 - (c) The reasonableness of modern unreason.
 5. A book of mystery -- The Summa Theologica:
 - (a) The mystery of God The Beginning:
 - (1) Of God in Himself.
 - (2) Of the world proceeding from God:
 - a. Of angels.
 - b. Of the corporeal world.
 - c. Of men.
 - (b) The mystery of God The Goal:
 - (1) Of the goal of man.
 - (2) Of human action.
 - (3) Of virtue.
 - (c) Of God the Way:
 - (1) Of the Incarnation and life of Christ.
 - (2) Of the sacraments.
 - (3) Of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell.
- Conclusion:
1. The Summa an invitation home.
 2. The Mother of men.
 3. The home of men.

CHAPTER I -- MYSTERY AND MEN

MUCH of modern effort is dedicated, in one fashion or another, to the eradication of mystery. This book, with its three predecessors, advocates and champions mystery. It is all very well to laugh off mystery, to banish it sternly, or to strap it to an operating table for purposes of dissection. Mystery, nevertheless, remains a decidedly attractive thing precisely because it does not cease to be mysterious. And man will have his mystery even if he has to bootleg it.

The attraction of the mysterious: Natural witnesses

Mystery is as natural to man as breathing; and nature is not easily changed. The child's world of fantastically beautiful mystery, marching alongside of grotesquely fearful mystery which turns out to be merely amusing because so obviously a toy to be used or discarded, is a thoroughly natural world. Later on in life we dispense with the Cinderellas, the fairy godmothers, and chivalrous knights, though the wicked princes are more difficult to banish; but we insist on retaining mystery. The child's absorbed delight in mystery is only one of many willing witnesses to the naturalness and attractiveness of mystery. Among others, mention might be made of the rich folklore of primitive peoples and the delightful, often delicately beautiful tales so faithfully preserved (and, indeed, still composed) by the Irish.

Oddly enough, many of the denials of the mysterious are in reality protestations of it. A travelling salesman once assured me, with benign tolerance, that in a few years science will have completely cleared up the mysteries of Scripture, particularly the mystery of alleged miracles. The very magnitude of the statement intrigued me; and, of course, encouraged the salesman. He rushed on to drive his point home with a crushing example, the miraculous collapse of the walls of Jericho. The Scriptural account traced the sudden denuding of the city to the miraculous power of the trumpet blast of the besieging Israelites. That

was, he explained, much too old fashioned; the real explanation lay in the cleverness of the Jewish trumpeters. Just as the right note on an organ will shatter a wine glass, so the right note on a trumpet will crash down walls; quite simply, the trumpeters had struck the right note. The whole thing was thrown back into the realm of the mysterious when the solver of miracles was asked: What note was it?

He resented the question; it seemed somehow unfair. By it, he was made to see that he had unconsciously given testimony to the inevitability of mystery and of the infallible tendency of the human mind to ferret it out and rest in it; even, indeed, to create mystery as a resting place where mystery does not exist.

There is nothing unreasonable about the attractiveness of mystery, however high above reason a particular mystery may be. Rather, behind that attraction is a profound reason, a reason with its roots buried deep in the nature of the heart and mind of man. Our human thirst for knowledge is not to be quenched by eight years of schooling, or by eighteen; by a year's investigation, or a lifetime's. That thirst is for infinite truth and infinite goodness. Clear knowledge of a thing, or an aspect of it, merely serves as a starting point of a new race for knowledge, the jumping off point for a deeper plunge into truth; it is a mark quickly put behind us as we rush on to new, and equally unsatisfying, goals. Only when we can see an object worthy of the unlimited capacities of our powers do we approach the happiness for which our whole being cries out. Such an object is mysterious.

This is not theorizing. It is a common experience in the hectic life of that very humble purveyor of truth, the lecturer. Let him mount the platform armed with a lecture that bristles with practical problems and immediate applications; the audience will yawn him down. If, on the contrary, his intellectual wanderings touch on such things as the essence of an angel, the intellect of a man, or the foundations of the universe his audience will be straining at the leash like a hound eager to be off after the hare; they are impatient for him to end only insofar as they are eager to get into the argument themselves.

Concrete evidence

By way of confirmation of this, there is the fact that a priest need never be lonely; indeed, that he has little chance to be alone. The collar he wears is a public proclamation: "Here is a man who deals in mystery." There is no class who can resist the invitation. Consequently the priest is constantly engaged in intriguing conversations with bootblacks, taxi-drivers, porters, university professors, lawyers, and children. And he is learning all the time. He should not be too surprised when the ticket agent at Grand Central holds up an impatient line of travellers while he pushes a Bible under the grating and demands an explanation of an Old Testament prophecy. He must learn not to be impatient when the cleric behind the information desk at Chicago's Union Station greets him with questions instead of answers. He is, and always will be, a fascinating conversational target, no matter what nature may have done to his nose or time to his clothes; for he is a man of mystery.

The appeal of science

This appetite for mystery is so keen that it leaves a man restless, bored in the face of the obvious; but eager, straining forward to get at the unknown. If men were, with complete unanimity, to embrace scientific knowledge as the one and only valid knowledge and scientists were to succeed in making all the details of this knowledge transparently clear, a tidal wave of despair would sweep the world. Scientists would be lined up before firing squads by the dozen every morning before breakfast, and newspapers would carry headlines announcing the executions of these public enemies.

For it is the infinite detail and the technical obscurity of science that has given it its tremendous prestige in the eyes of the layman. Its advance has been too rapid and too technical for him to grasp its findings. If it ever gets to the brevity and clarity of a philosophical or theological definition, it will become as dull as the process of sweeping the floor or washing the dishes. Not a few modern authors have capitalized on an insight into this truth, producing best sellers that have neither mystery nor technical detail but only obscurity to recommend them. Apparently the ordinary man, finding himself beyond all doubt befuddled, is expected to conclude that he is facing mystery; obviously, a good many do just that. In contrast there is

the perfect, though extremely brief, definition of sin given by Thomas: "*actus humanus malus*," -- "a bad human action." Theologians and washwomen will be savoring that until the end of time, clear as it is, brief as it is; it embraces the double mystery of the humanity of man's actions and the evil of his sins.

The mind of man must have mystery because the mind of man must have intellectual food. Since it must have that food, it will not starve to death in quiet patience; it will revolt, will search out its mysteries where it can find them, even though the search take it to the secret chambers of hell.

Mystery and the mind of man: The three thirsts for knowledge: 1) For the solution of problems

Modern scholastics have changed the figure to underline the fact that the mind of man has a triple thirst. The least of these three is the thirst for the solution of problems, for the answer to the question how; this is the thirst of the mechanic. It is a conceptual affair, a matter of order between man's concepts and the workings of the world. Progress in this line is a horizontal pushing ahead accomplished by the correction of past mistakes; by it a man leaves the intellectual home of former days and forges ahead along bright but indefinitely winding roads. Inevitably there is in all this a tragic air of constant beginnings and no permanent ends, of the countless failures upon which its success is builded. It is a vagabond progress, whereas man was made to live in a home.

For the penetration of natural mysteries

The second, a philosophical thirst, is for reality, for being, for a knowledge of the thing in itself. In this knowledge, progress is not horizontal but vertical, had by deepening knowledge already possessed, not by the correction of past mistakes. For this a man does not rush down the high-road leaving his house behind, but rather, as Chesterton has it, he builds up the towers of his own castle, beautifies his gardens. This is the knowledge of mystery, of metaphysics, of philosophy. In absolutely everything in the world there will be the element of mystery because there will be the element of being; and never will the knowledge of the mystery be exhaustive. This is why we find every man a philosopher, even every scientist, though so few men are scientists. For here, in mystery, man is at home. His mind was made for being, for things in themselves; which is no more than saying that the mind of man was made for mystery. In contrast to the knowledge of problems, the knowledge of mystery is like the full bottle of warm milk compared to the infant's pacifier. Only on the nourishing food of mystery does the intellect of man increase in wisdom and strength.

For the penetration of divine mysteries

If the mind of man is at home in metaphysics, it is much more at home in theology which deals with mysteries above all other mysteries. The mysteries of theology are, indeed, the fare upon which those giants we call the saints were nourished. Above all else, the mind of man is made for God, made for the infinite horizons of limitless truth; this is the object fully and adequately worthy of his powers. Man is at home with God, at home with the supernatural; there he is a native basking in the long sought warmth of his native sun.

A world without mystery: A modern tragedy

Without mystery man is homeless, discontented, despairing, destructive, even animal. He is a vagrant; the longer the vagrancy endures, the more bitter he becomes. The modern tragedy consists precisely in turning all men out of doors to wander on the roads of the world, making vagrants of men by robbing them of mystery. Rather, the modern tragedy consists in the *attempt* to pull down the walls and roofs of the homes of men. Such an attempt could not succeed. Men, of their very nature, will fight for their homes. Actually the attempt to make the mind of man homeless is being defeated by the nature of the mind of man.

The attempt itself has given men some grounds for despair. If it could succeed, men would always have to look down, for there would be nothing to which they could look up. In spite of their intimate knowledge of personal pettiness, personal limitations, they would be forced to see in themselves the fullness of

intellectual perfection: reason enough, God knows, for despair. Yet, strangely, we have tried today to turn all this into ground for pride and presumption. Remembering only that we are moving horizontally, that there is nothing above, we look down from our superior height like worms sneering at the dust through which they move.

The attempt has given men ground enough for boredom, for men have been presented with a threadbare world and asked to become excited about it. They themselves are the patchwork of the centuries, the queer result of a meaningless jumble of elements, not to be fooled by illusions of beauty, of truth, and of goodness. They themselves, these men, are old, cynical, tired, stretched out under a sky moth-eaten with dying stars line bedridden patients staring at a fly-specked ceiling.

The attempt has given men sufficient grounds for destructiveness, viciousness, animality. Gangsterism, national and international, is not a passing phenomenon in such a world, but a natural development. Why should men not hate such a bitterly disappointing world, why should they respect the persons, the ideals, the hopes of such a bitterly disappointing humanity? Why should they not hate their very selves for the tortured existence they are forced to live?

The tragic modern escape

Men could not live in such a world as this. The attempt failed; the mind of man, starving, has called up mysteries of its own as a dying man in a desert calls up from his own diseased brain mirages that but add to his tortures. The modern man's escape from intellectual homelessness is perhaps more tragic than the vagrancy to which his leaders had condemned him; for he has gotten into a house surely other than the house of God. The monsters called up in a kind of streamlined devil worship now threaten to devour the modern man: the cloak of mystery has been thrown over a machine, a party, a class, an appetite; incense has been burned, hosannas sung, and the gods have turned on their worshippers to destroy them.

This is by no means a wholesale condemnation of men and things. Rather it is a statement of conditions under which human life is intolerable; yet it is a condition embraced by thousands of men and women today. Moreover, it is understandingly embraced. Men shy away from mystery, when it is precisely mystery which will save them, not because they scorn that salvation but because that mystery has been so badly misrepresented. There is something honorable in a man's refusal to be frightened by what he considers unworthy of fear; there is strength in a man's refusal to take a path he considers merely an escape from the labor of thought. Today the mysterious is looked upon too frequently as an insult to man's intelligence, to his courage, to his willingness to work. Actually, of course, it is none of these things.

The reasonableness of modern unreason

It is true that mystery exceeds reason; but this does not mean that man cannot know the mysterious, naturally or supernaturally. It is an insistence that there is still more to be known, a challenge to his courage, his humility, his persevering labor. The smallest insight into the mysterious is more satisfying than all other knowledge, it is much more of a perfection of the mind of man. It gives some answer to that persistent "why" which it is man's unique privilege, in this material world, to ask. To expect satisfaction with anything less is to demand that a man be happy playing with the toys of children.

Really there is no need to argue this point. It is openly acknowledged in our distinction between a wise and a learned man, it is canonized in the saint. We admit that an ignorant woman may be very wise, while a learned professor may be very stupid indeed; we salute the wisdom of Finley Peter Dunne's "Mr. Dooley" in spite of the beloved characters' blissful ignorance of the language which he speaks. Man has, by such an insight into mystery, accomplished a little, by the ultimate insight into the ultimate mystery he has accomplished all, of that for which he exists. He has grasped something of reality, has produced the supremely human act at the peak of his intellect's potentialities reinforced by divinity -- the highest act of his highest faculty. So he has something of the independent, all-embracing view of God: independent of time, place, matter, politics, wars and family squabbles. He has, in a word, the viewpoint of wisdom; and wisdom has never been the reward of the sluggard or the coward.

A book of mystery -- The *Summa Theologica*

The three preceding volumes of this set made a close examination of a book of supreme mystery -- the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas. The *Summa* has always been a book of mystery and will always so remain; for it is a book of theology, a book about God, the supreme reality and so the supreme mystery. The readers of those volumes can no doubt testify that this book of mystery has not been a lazy man's escape from the labor of thought; that it has not evoked fear but courage and love; that it has not been a childish attempt to escape reality but rather a divine insistence on it. These readers are excellent witnesses to the nourishing power of the intellectual food which is mystery, to the actual growth it promotes, to the substantial progress of the mind which, while satisfying the intellect, does not glut it but rather sharpens its powers.

It will have been noticed, too, from the preceding volumes, that the diet of mystery is not only satisfying to the intellect but also to the will, to the appetite. It is always true that the heart can go no farther than the head; an imprisoned mind means an imprisoned heart. Only when the gates of wisdom are swung wide can the heart of a man sally forth to the object of its desire.

This last book of this set, completing the study of the *Summa*, does not fall short of its predecessors in its subject matter. As a preparation for the long journey into mystery which it proposes, it may be well to take a quick glance at what has already been done to familiarize us with mystery.

Surely one thing that has been apparent throughout these books is that the *Summa* of St. Thomas is satisfyingly about God, satisfyingly about the supreme mystery. The Companions, starting with St. Thomas, investigated God's existence and in so doing looked at the roots of the order, the origin, and the truth of the world. Then, hardly waiting for a deep breath, they set out on that audacious expedition into the very nature of God.

The mystery of God The Beginning: Of God in Himself

The readers of the first volume will remember something of the beauty of God's simplicity, the purity of His perfection, the desirability of His unutterable goodness, the sweep of His infinity, the comfort of His unchanging Being, the startling intimacy of His omnipresence, the long vista of His eternity, and the peace of His perfect unity. All of these mysteries were seen, not passingly, but with the fixed glance of deliberate, penetrating study; because He encouraged us, we could be rude enough to stare at God.

There was no hesitation in examining the knowledge of God, in scrutinizing the vision of Him Who alone can freely walk the corridors of our hearts and minds, knowing, indeed causing, the details of the most minute actions of the most insignificant nature. We dared to look at the ideas of God and at the Truth which is the root of all truth.

That "we" of the preceding sentence may be a little surprising. It has been dodged for pages, but can be dodged no longer. The fact must be admitted that the readers and the author of these books are not at all in the position of disciples and master; that atmosphere of a family discussion, so characteristic of Dominican Houses of Studies for seven hundred years, is inevitable when men settle down to the study of St. Thomas. Here it is completely obvious at once that there is one master; all others are students who never finish their learning.

With that comforting assurance of fellowship in learning, then, we saw the will of God in its freedom, its efficacy, its beneficence. We were charmed by the love that does not discover goodness but rather creates it; we were a little astonished by the close alliance of mercy and justice, seeing mercy at the root of all justice and truth behind both. There was, too, the providence of a Father joined to the power of God, a providence reaching in a special way to us because of all creatures we can share in the life of God.

We even went so far as to peer into the happiness of God; farther still, into the inner life of the divinity,

that subsistent knowledge and love that makes up the Trinity of persons and here we got a vague insight into the unceasing yet unchanging activity of God.

Of the world proceeding from God: of angels; of the corporeal world

All of this was the mystery of God in Himself. Mystery did not disappear when we went on to consider the procession of creatures from God, for we were still considering God, God as the principle or origin of all else. The consideration of the beginning and duration of the universe left no space for boredom, while the angelic world was a gold mine of mystery. Their infused species were an unfavorable contrast to the drudgery of our school days; their love, a realization of the ideals buried in human heart. With such knowledge and love, their sin and punishment presented mysteries worthy of the steel of our minds.

Of men

A quick, but detailed, examination of the seven days of creation allowed us to hurry on to that world that is a little less than that of the angels and infinitely above the world of matter, our own human world of men and women. Here everything was before our eyes in a glance at ourselves. Yet there was no dearth of mystery in the study of the human soul, its union with the body, its powers that make of man a cosmos including the wonders of the plant world, the animal world, something of the angelic world, and even something of the divine. We saw our ability to bring all of the universe into our minds by knowledge, and the corresponding ability to go out to all of the universe, even to God, by our love.

There was, of course, the inevitable human contradiction of appetites that can sink lower than the animals or soar higher than the angels. Above all, we spent considerable time in the study of that prerogative of intellectual nature, that instrument of mastery that distinguishes our every action from the world in which we live -- our free will.

To complete the picture of humanity, two other considerations were essential. Consequently we considered the knowledge of the separated souls, such as the saints in heaven; and the first appearance of human beings on the face of the earth - - the first man and the first woman. Understandably there was some nostalgia in the consideration of the life that might have been in the garden of Eden if the image of God had not forgotten what manner of man he was.

Returning to the wider view, we looked at the government and conservation of the universe, a breath-taking panorama worthy of the eyes of God. We saw the government of the physical and of the angelic world; in the latter, surely one outstanding marvel was a variety of beauty that leaves the human mind staggered. In the government of the universe creatures have a part to play, for God is no terror-stricken dictator who dares not share His power. We studied the part played by the angels, by men, and even by corporeal creatures.

All this was the work of the first volume: the study of the God of things as they are and of the world of things as they are. Throughout it was a study of substantial realities, which means, of course, a study of mysteries; yet, from first to last it was a study of God, the supreme reality, the supreme mystery, God in Himself and in the world of creatures proceeding from Him. It was, throughout, a matter of seeing things as they are not as suspended unintelligently in an unintelligible vacuum, springing from nothing for no purpose, but rather as ordered. Each thing was in its place and, seeing it there, understanding its relation to the whole, we were enabled fully to know the thing itself. There was none of the underestimating, none of the overestimating, none of the grotesque mistakes that come from losing one's head in the clouds or burying it in the mud. We took the view of wisdom, the composite, all-embracing, serene view of eternal truth.

The mystery of God The Goal: Of the goal of man

In the second volume we passed from the world of things to the world of action. After all, substance exists for function, things exist for a purpose and the achievement of purpose is action -- nor will action suffer

any other explanation. The world of action, then, is above all else a world of goals. It is a world hardly to be appreciated by our times for such a world is meaningful, a world where the final cause tower, above all else and sheds the rays of its goodness on all that thereby becomes desirable. Or, to put it as Thomas did, the first volume was a study of God as the efficient cause; the second, a study of God as the final cause.

Of human action

We were, of course, primarily interested in that complex, sometimes comic, but always significant world of human action. No doubt the real edge of that interest was faced towards our particular human actions here and now. At any rate, we had the undeniable fact of action as a starting point; and, since there is action, there is a goal. Human life is nothing more than a race to the goal; so our first task was to determine what that goal was. This was done by a painstaking examination of every possibility, concluding to the supreme mystery of the eternal vision of the essence of God.

The everyday actions of men are the steps to that goal. Here we were furnished with constant mysteries; in fact the rest of the second volume was spent in the analysis of these actions of ours. The extrinsic principles of them, with which the volume closed, were easy: law as the guiding factor directing men to their end, and grace by which the smallest acts were given an eternal significance. As for the intrinsic principles, well, we exposed the passions, refusing to pass them by piously as something base and at the same time refusing to bow down before them as awful divinities. We saw them for what they are: movements of the sense appetite in man, an appetite that was designed to be regulated by season and, so regulated, to play a great part in the working out of a man's life.

Of virtue

The rest of the story of that volume is the story of habits. The story of success was the story of good habits or virtues -- a privilege and an absolute necessity of man. Here we saw such personal habits as fortitude and temperance keeping order within the passions; the social virtue of justice for our relations with others; the divine virtues of faith, hope and charity freeing our minds and hearts for the enjoyment of friendship with no less than divinity itself. At the apex of this successful building there was the divinely mysterious beauty of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The story of the bad habits or sins was the story of human failure. After the investigation of their inner nature and tragedy, we tried to trace their causes in ignorance, passion and malice; we looked to see what part God, man, or the devil had in the mistakes of men. We stood appalled at the terrific effects of sin: the utter marring of the beauty of the soul by sin's stain, the irremediable, irrevocable, eternal punishment of it.

All this work of the second volume was really an exposition of the general principles upon which the living of human life is based. These were the basic principles behind the pursuit or abandonment of happiness. Certainly this is a most important affair for us. In fact, it is so important that all of the third volume was consumed in an exhaustively detailed examination of these habits of happiness which are virtues and the habits of unhappiness which are vices. This third volume was a study of freedom, of fullness of life: for the mind by faith, for the will by hope and by charity's participation of divine life and love. In justice we analyzed social life; in injustice, social anarchy. We saw religion as justice towards God laying the foundation for a divine social life. We looked into the mystery of courage; of greatness of soul; of the self-mastery of temperance; of the truth of humility. We studied modesty, play, and miracles and enjoyed ourselves with all three. The volume ended by the solemn comparison and evaluation of the two ways of life open to men: contemplation and action.

All this busy medley of human living, of human action, is because God stands at the beginning and the end of it, calling it into being by the desirability of His infinite goodness. Again we are back to God.

This is what human life means, whence it comes, to what goal it goes, and the steps by which it reaches that goal. Yet this does not exhaust the mystery of a Christian life. There is mystery enough, God knows, in God. We can lose ourselves easily in the surpassing beauty and mystery of the Trinity. There is mystery

enough in life; in the angels; in the world; above all in men. But there is not yet an end of mystery. There still remains the road along which we run to the goal and the light by which we avoid stumbling; both furnished by the Truth Who is the Word of God and the Son of Mary. This will be the subject matter of the present volume.

Of God the Way: Of the Incarnation and life of Christ

In this volume, then, we come to the climax of mystery and so to the climax of satisfaction of both mind and heart. For in the very next chapter of this book we must plunge into that mystery which is a stumbling block and a foolishness to the unbelieving; the mystery of the Incarnation, of God made man. Bethlehem will always be a rallying point, not only for the hearts but for the heads of men; the mystery of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity clinging to His mother's breast will not be exhausted through all of an eternity.

We shall not only consider the fact; we shall actually penetrate into the very heart of the mystery from what vantage points philosophy offers once the mystery is revealed. We shall go through all of the hidden life of Christ, into the full meaning of the union of humanity and divinity in one divine Person, into the life of Mary the Mother of God. For Christ the Truth Who, in His own words, is "the light of life," the "light of the world." We shall follow the truth, then, follow every mysterious, frightening, comforting step along the path He has marked out for us; every staggering step to Calvary's drama of the death of God, and on to the glorious resurrection which is the death of death.

Of the sacraments; of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell

Finally, as a climax to the mysteries of this volume, we shall see that continuation of the life of Christ which is the sacramental structure He instituted: a steady, burning light of sacramental care watching over every phase of a man's life; his birth, growth, food, drink, his mistakes, his love, his sickness, and death. We shall, in a word, follow the truth -- even through the last things a man faces to the goal which is an eternal beginning, or an eternal end without end. This final mystery we shall spend an eternity enjoying or an eternity regretting.

The *Summa*, an invitation home

This volume closes the set of a layman's edition of the *Summa Theologica*! It is eminently fitting that this study should be carried on to its conclusion while the *Summa* itself remains unfinished; for the *Summa* is a very great book, too great for one man, or, indeed, for one age. Its very incompleteness is an emphasis of its character of a wayside shelter for men on their way home. It is not a permanent home for the minds or hearts of men; but rather an inviting insight into and a foretaste of the comfort of the enduring home to which it speeds the hearts and minds of men. It smacks of home precisely because it is steeped in the mystery without which the mind and heart of a man are vagrants bemoaning the empty futility of their existence.

The Mother of men; The home of men

Down through the ages the *Summa* has been the peculiarly favored instrument of the Mother of men on earth, the Catholic Church. For that Mother has been convinced, and history has borne her out, that the man who can be induced to read the *Summa*, rather than read about it, will find it hard indeed to wander the aimless roads of sterility and error. Just as the *Summa* is a wayside station for travellers, so the Mother of men is a Mother of pilgrims. Men are not at home in the *Summa*, they are not at home in the Church; but they are on their way home. For the home of man can only be in the supreme reality, the supreme mystery, the only God.

CHAPTER II -- THE DREAM OF THE AGES **(Q. 1-3)**

1. Men and their dreams:
 - (a) The stuff of dreams.
 - (b) A dreamless world.
 2. The realization of the vision -- the Incarnation:
 - (a) Its nature:
 - (1) The doctrine of Faith.
 - (2) The errors of men.
 - (b) Its mystery.
 - (c) Credibility of the fact of the Incarnation.
 3. The fittingness of the Incarnation:
 - (a) From the nature of God.
 - (b) From the end of the Incarnation -- the redemption of men:
 - (1) The price of our ransom.
 - (2) Inducement to good.
 - (3) Restraint from evil.
 - (c) From the time of the Incarnation.
 4. The hypostatic union:
 - (a) Elements of the union:
 - (1) Distinction of nature and person.
 - (2) Varieties of union.
 - (b) Properties of the hypostatic union.
 - (c) Grace, merit, and the union.
 5. The Person and the union:
 - (a) Relation of the union to the three Persons of the Trinity.
 - (b) Its relation to the Second Person.
- Conclusion:
1. The modern world and the Incarnation:
 - (a) Reason and the mystery.
 - (b) A contrast with early errors.
 - (c) The missing foundations.
 2. The Christian world and the Incarnation:
 - (a) The word was made flesh; Mary's realization.
 - (b) And dwelt amongst us; the Apostles' realization.

CHAPTER I -- THE DREAM OF THE AGES **(Q. 1-3)**

A DREAM can be an opiate or an inspiration. It can be the world of make-believe by which the coward escapes reality; or it can be a star lighting up the path of men, leading them on to a revelation of the profoundest meanings of the world even when it stops over a cave. It can be the restless, charging steed on which a man rides over the hordes of things earthly, crashing through the barriers that imprison the world.

It is to be noted that a dream, either as a reverie or a vision, is of no use to a man whose mind is blind. If his eyes are so dim that he cannot see the horror around him nor the splendor of the goal which makes battle a glory, he will not dream. Indeed, he cannot dream.

Men and their dreams: The stuff of dreams

In one sense or another, men have always been dreamers because, normally, men are not blind. There has always been a percentage of cowards among us, of men and women who use their dreams to escape reality; but that percentage has always been small, since the human heart is a thing so stout as to dare again and again the dangerous business of love. A far greater percentage of men live on dreams in the sense of visions. There has always been a vision before the heart and mind of a man; how else would that heart and mind reach out, as they do, beyond what is already had, straining to the ultimate grasp of the infinite itself?

When men stood on the lowest rung of their human achievement, what was only an ordinary thing seemed high and hard; at such times their visions have been lowly, even despicable things. At other times, their

visions have been as startling as a joyous shout of courage thundering out of clouds of desperate battle. They have been daring, reckless, superhuman things.

In other words, the stuff of man's dreams has always been furnished by the far horizons of humanity. Behind every human life there has been at least the ghost of that wild, reckless dream that goes as far as dreams can go, even to God Himself. Sometimes it was a tortured, twisted dream, a kind of nightmare which revolved around the mad notion that men could become God. Sometimes it was a disappointing, shrunken thing, as though the dream had squeezed itself through too narrow an aperture to reality, a distorted thing that revolved around the absurd conceit that men were gods because the human level was the peak of reality. Much more persistently, the dream has been that dream of dreams centering on God dwelling amongst us, being like to us but still God. It made God homely, familiar, tangible. It made Him man, but, because He still remained God, that dream was powerful enough to uproot the staid mediocrity of men left on their own level.

A dreamless world

As long as there was left to them the far human horizons, men dreamed dreams and saw visions; robbed of these horizons, the magic stuff of dreams was gone. It is the shame of our time to have shortened the horizons of man, step by step, until now he is blind for want of something to see. By removing God and heaven from his heart and mind, our time has made it impossible to look up. Man might have been left to stare along the monotonous level of his own humanity, even though his eyes, whatever direction they took, would always end up short staring at the gray walls of nature. But that was allowing too much of the stuff of dreams. His very nature was denied; he was denied the right not only to look up but even to look along the distinctive horizon of his own humanity.

He was only allowed to look down, to search, nauseated, the depths from which he allegedly came to find there some reason to sustain his self-respect. Of course the visions of the children's tales were forbidden childish eyes; after all, we had found psychological horrors in the guileless wanderings of Alice in Wonderland and reduced all dreams to sex.

This blind man's world would be too stolid, too brutal, too animal for men to bear; but it is hard to keep men blind since, do what we will, men remain men with all that divine dissatisfaction and reckless reaching of the human heart. We have tried to make the inspiring glimpse of a vision impossible, we have attacked the inclination to dream, have driven it out and in its place planted a horror of the visions that might have led men on; but we have forgotten that men will dream, must dream, or they will die. They will become sick of the revolting depths, uncertain of the limited lives ascribed to them, and they will either despair or, in spite of arguments to the contrary, they will dream.

The realization of the vision -- the Incarnation: Its nature; The doctrine of Faith

There has been reason for the dreams of men in the very nature of man's mind and will. For that dream of dreams, the dream of our walking arm in arm with God, there is reason more solid than the nature of man. It rests upon the long promise of God, a promise whose fulfillment was awaited so patiently by a race that knew what it was waiting for and somewhat less patiently by a world that knew that much was lacking. That dream was realized, that seeking became a reality, when the maid of Galilee answered the angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word." At that instant God became incarnate. God was made man. The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

In his Summa St. Thomas does not touch on the Incarnation until he has treated exhaustively of God and man; and with very good reason. It is only by knowing something of God and something of man that we can appreciate the splendor of the union of the two in the Incarnation. It is only by the contrast of the infinite, dazzling perfection of God with the limited, stumbling perfection of the best of men that we see something of the generosity and unreckoning love involved in the Incarnation, with the consequent debt of gratitude owed to God by men. When we understand man's relation to God, his desperate need for

attaining that final goal, we can understand much more of the tender thoughtfulness of God in giving us a personally conducted return to Himself. Without one or the other, God or man, there is no sense to the Incarnation; without a knowledge of both, there can be no insight into the mystery; without the goal, thoroughly understood, the full, homely meaning of the incredible fact is lost.

The angel Raphael's protection and guidance of the younger Tobias on his long journey and safe return home is a dim shadow of the life of God on earth. Here God was not merely taking on the appearance of a man, as did the angel, he assumed man's own nature. He treated us like the children He hoped we would become, taking us by the hand, showing us by the example of His own life how we were to live our lives lest, as children, we be frightened by the majesty of divinity, He came to us in the familiar nature with which we must face all the struggles of our own short lives.

So much love and sacrifice went into the Incarnation, and so much love and sacrifice has come out of it through the centuries, that it is easy to give emotion its head in talking of this mystery; but this was never the way of Thomas. Because of that very emotional appeal of the mystery, it is essential that we get its intellectual side firmly and clearly. By our Faith it is infallibly true that the Word of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, assumed true human nature from the Blessed Virgin Mary. In this mystery there is one person involved, the person of the Son of God; there are two complete and perfect natures, a human and a divine, really distinct from one another and joined only in the Person of the Son of God. Christ, the Person) is at the same time true God and true man; God from eternity, man in time.

Faced with a truth of this proportion, the human mind not infrequently rebels; and a revolt against truth adds up to error. It might be noted at once that in this business of error we admit no superiors; it is an old trick of our human nature promptly to exhaust every possibility of error. In the comparatively simple matter of preparing a letter for the mails, for example, there is only a limited field for mistakes: the name, the street number and name, the city, the country, the return address, the postage, and the box in which the letter is deposited. Yet every day in America mistakes are made in every one of these respects. We can be depended on for mistakes; and that was no less true two thousand years ago than it is today.

The errors of men

In the mystery of the Incarnation three things are involved: the divinity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, and the union of the human and divine nature in the one divine Person. In the first four centuries of the existence of the Church every possible error was made against all three. Some men said that Christ was not God, denying His divinity. They were willing to look on Him as the most perfect of men, as more than a man, or even more than an angel, as long as He was to be less than God. Other men, defending His divinity, insisted that He was not human: perhaps His body was only a ghostly body; if it were real, it must have been a heavenly, not an earthly thing; or, since the evidence of His suffering and death was overwhelming, granted that He had a body, He could not have had a soul; again the evidence was too much, so perhaps He had no human will.

The attack on the divinity and the humanity of Christ did not exhaust the possibilities of error; there was still the matter of the union of those two. Some heretics insisted that the union was entirely accidental, like that of a heap of stones thrown carelessly together. Others, indignant at such a mistake, refuted it by maintaining the union was an essential one: the divine nature and the human nature were somehow fused together to form a third mysterious thing that was neither God nor man, as matter and spirit are united to form what is neither a soul nor a body but a man.

Error in this matter is not surprising, for this is mystery. The reason for the error is always astounding. It rests upon the notion that we can treat a mystery as we would a problem in mathematics. We are not content to feed on it, to penetrate it; rather we must destroy it by reducing it to the dimensions of our own human mind.

Its mystery

Of course there is mystery here since an infinite Person is involved. The truth is so wide that only the swinging doors of the divine mind can possibly accommodate it. Our minds, in contact with this truth, are like the arms of a very small child seeking to embrace its mother. The child can cling to its mother even though its arms cannot encircle that loved one; even though the arms of our mind cannot go around this truth, at least we can cling to it. We cannot discover the truth of the Incarnation by any human means. It must be told to us by God; once told, we cannot possibly understand it fully, for it is a properly divine truth. But we can and do wax strong on it, penetrate it a little, deepening the darkness of its splendor and lovingly examining it from all sides. What we can do by our own reason in this matter is to ward off the shower of small stones thrown by objectors and see the complete freedom of this mystery from any contradiction.

The Incarnation is a fact and a fact worth clinging to. Indeed, it is the central fact of the universe, the fact that gave youth back to an old, tired, disillusioned, despairing universe. It reopened the gates of heaven. It is much more than the beginning of an era. It is a release from slavery for creatures who have freedom in their very blood. It is the essential fact of Christianity.

We can, of course, speak of the historical Christ. The fashion today, however, is to speak of an historical Christ as if He were a mere character in history no different from any other man who walked across the human stage. This is sheer nonsense if, at the same time, one insists on retaining a claim to Christianity; yet when I have pointed out to individuals that the modern smartness was in reality a denial of Christianity, I've been made to feel as heartless as though I have told a child there was no Santa Claus. The conclusion simply cannot be dodged: if Christ were not divine, then Christianity is a despicable hoax.

Credibility of the fact of the Incarnation

Christ was divine. We cannot prove this by reason; but it can be known and known more certainly than we know the very first principles of thought. For here, you see, there is no such intermediary between ourselves and supreme truth as the light of human reason. This truth comes to us on the direct and full authority of Truth itself; it cannot be proved, it must be believed. Nor is it such a difficult thing to believe; despite its immanent mystery, it is an eminently credible truth.

The existence of Christ and the words of Christ are as certain as any historical truth can well be. Yet this man, Christ, said He was God, not in a whisper, not obscurely hinting, but publicly: before His disciples, before crowds, before His judges. He was so understood; indeed, for saying this thing He died. His statements are well worthy of belief. His whole life is evidence that He was neither a fool nor a liar. He was not an actor talking Himself into a part. The splendor of His doctrine, the perfection of His life, His love of God and men are more than enough proof of this. To say the contrary, to say that Christ was deceived or was a deceiver of men, is to fly in the face of the historical evidence. Yet this man, who was neither a fool nor a liar, seriously made the claim again and again that He was God.

His statements had the solemn confirmation of God Himself. There were, for example, the express words of approval at the transfiguration and baptism; there were the miracles of the conservation and propagation of His Church of which the Incarnation was a fundamental doctrine. Miracles are not worked in confirmation of a lie for the very simple reason that God is Truth. Christ Himself worked miracles in express proof of the truth of His words. He made prophecies which were fulfilled. Through Him were fulfilled all the long prophecies of the Old Testament. Surely, if any statement made in the history of the world is worthy of belief, it is the statement that Christ was God, that God became man. Believing it, we have laid hold on the truth around which all human history revolves.

If God were a clumsy lover of men, we might be forced to make excuses for something or other about the Incarnation. Certainly, in the course of human love, we must make allowances for love's good intentions. We know the lover did not mean to spill coffee on a gown in his eagerness to arrange a wrap, to wake up the baby with an over-cheery greeting, to arouse the enthusiasm of the populace by a resounding kiss in a railroad station. Human love is, often enough, clumsy and embarrassing in its expression, but not so divine

love; precisely because it is divine, it is perfect in every way. It is not surprising, then, that the Incarnation is perfect from the side of God, from the side of men, and even from the angle of all the circumstances.

The fittingness of the Incarnation: From the nature of God

We shall see more of the beauty of the perfection of the Incarnation in eternity; but even now our stumbling minds, peering at the great work of God, see enough to make us lose our hearts completely. We know, for example, that the visible world was not meant as a set of blinders but rather as lenses giving new sight to our eyes, that we were not meant to stop at the obvious but to penetrate to the invisible things of God through the visible world spread out before our eyes. In the Incarnation, the perfections of God are manifest as no world can manifest them. In the infant Son of Mary there is evidence of a divine goodness that did not shrink from the womb of the virgin or the weakness of the flesh; of the thoughtful justice that brought about the conquest of man's enemy by man himself; of the wisdom that made a perfect payment of a most difficult, an infinite price; of the power that is indeed infinite, for nothing is greater than for God to become man.

Indeed, if we remember no more than the infinite goodness of God, the fittingness of the Incarnation strikes our minds in a burst of splendid brilliance. A quirk of human nature makes first page news of vice while virtue is made the material for an epitaph, perhaps because we so readily see that a rotten apple can spoil a whole barrel. It is, however, no less evident that a good neighbor fills a neighborhood with good neighbors; that a wise man scatters his wisdom; that a saintly priest can change the whole character of his parish. For scattering power is even more true of good than of evil.

Some of that scattering of good is undoubtedly necessary; but not all of it for, after all, we do have beggars. We can give a dime away now and then and we hardly believe ourselves more generous than God. While it is undoubtedly true that God does not have to diffuse His goodness beyond the ineffable confines of the Trinity, what is more natural, more perfectly becoming, than that infinite Goodness should scatter itself? Creation is a statement of the efficient diffusion of that goodness; the life of sanctifying grace, a non-substantial participation of the divine life itself, is a declaration of the divine eagerness to share goodness, an eagerness impatient of the limits of nature; the highest diffusion of the highest Good is found in the personal and substantial union of God to human nature.

If our notion of generosity were not the finite thing it must always be, we might have said that we could have expected something like this from God -- with the comforting privilege of saying "I told you so." In solid truth, only God could have had such an expectation. Always if we are seeing the truth we are overpowered by the goodness showered upon us.

From the end of the Incarnation -- the redemption of men: The price of our ransom

The inherent beauty and goodness of the Incarnation, the divine vistas it opened up, the supreme dignity it conferred on our fallen nature add up to a total of such charm as even to sweep some theologians off their feet. They decided that the Incarnation would have taken place if Adam had never sinned. Thomas yielded to no man in his recognition of the charm of the Incarnation; but he was a hard man to sweep off his feet, intellectually as well as physically. He had the irritating habit of keeping his feet solidly on the ground even when he was peering into the high things of Good. In this matter, he could see no room for conjecture. A truth such the Incarnation can be known only by revelation; and revelation assigns one definite motive for the Incarnation, namely, the redemption of man and the destruction of sin. He agrees with Augustine in his joyous phrase: "O happy fault," the fault of Adam that merited such a redeemer.

His hard-headed denial that the Incarnation would have taken place in any case has seemed like a dash of cold water thrown on the romance of the Incarnation. In fact, it has been a dash of cold water, clearing our eyes and our heads; not at all a damaging thing when we are looking at the truth. Romance built on anything less than the truth is a pitiful thing, doomed from the start to shattering disillusionment; there is nothing pitiful nor disillusioning about the Incarnation. In reality, Thomas's opinion gives a more profound

insight into the wonders of a divine wisdom that could make the sin of Adam work to such good. It does not decrease, it recognizes the sublimity of the romance of the Incarnation.

Inducement to good

With the purpose of the Incarnation, the redemption of men, clearly in mind, the full perfection of the Incarnation as a fitting means is not hard to see. How better can man be redeemed than by moving him to good and restraining him from evil? And how can man be moved to good more effectively than by the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity, by the solid steps of good works, by positively sharing in divinity?

Of course the worried father, looking into the very eyes of Christ, would find it not too difficult to say: "I believe, Lord, help thou my unbelief." It is not hard to understand the hope and courage of the woman suffering from an issue of blood as she crept up behind Christ to touch the hem of His garment, the garment of the Son of God at that very instant on His way to raise the daughter of Jairus to life. The love of Magdalen, great as it was as she followed her Master up and down Palestine, was nothing compared to the love awakened in her heart by the three hours on Calvary. It is hard to resist a love as impetuous as that of Mary's Son. There is no easier, more effective way of engendering faith than by seeing, talking, living with the Son of God. There is no deeper root for hope than the evidence of His eagerness to help.

As for good works, how could they be made easier for us than to have Christ Himself mark out with His own tired feet the steps we are to follow. The road from Bethlehem to Calvary is not nearly so hard, as long as we can put our arm upon His; we may even find the courage to stop in the midst of our agony for a word of comfort and a gesture of help to others before we plod stubbornly on. This was the example Christ left; an example that was taken up joyously by all of the saints who crowd the corridors of heaven.

The final inducement to good was the share we were given in divinity. Now our nature shares substantially in that divinity by the Incarnation, until, in heaven, we personally and individually will share in that divinity by the vision made possible through the grace of Christ.

Restraint from evil

A man is not restrained from evil because he is thrown behind bars or tied hand and foot. Give him some self-respect by showing him he can fight evil, give him the truth that he might see what has to be fought, and set him free to fight -- then, indeed, he has been restrained from evil. That is what Christ did for us in the Incarnation. He humiliated the satanic master before the very eyes of his slaves; He gave new dignity to a nature that had crashed from supreme heights. He protected us from the error of presumption, showing us that it was by His grace and His sufferings that we were saved; from the error of pride by opening our eyes to the humility of God. Finally, the supreme gift of freedom was bought by the ransom that set us free from the slavery of the devil.

In one sense, this Incarnation of the Son of God is more than beautifully fitting: it is absolutely necessary for a complete satisfaction in strict justice. God in His divinity could not suffer for sin; man as an individual could not redeem a whole race, let alone pay an infinite price. It was absolutely necessary that some nature capable of suffering and merit should be assumed by a person whose life had infinite value. Only this, through the justice of God, could perfectly and completely satisfy for man's offenses.

From the time of the Incarnation

God knows men; and nowhere is this more evident than in the timing of the Incarnation. A child at his home-work, if helped too soon, may resent the help, confident of his own abilities; he may take the help too lightly, or depend on it so much that he will put forth no efforts of his own. Man, who is always a child, also needs time to accept help: time to admit the humiliating knowledge of his own defects; time to see how much of truth he could lose; time to perceive how much of virtue would die out even with the help of the Old Testament; time, in other words, to be ready to accept the help that only God could offer.

He needed time, too, to prepare to welcome a Savior of such dignity. Yet he could not have too much time, lest his faith become sluggish. Indeed, if the Incarnation were put off till the end of the world, man, with his capacity for getting used to anything, might well get used to the depths in which he would by that time be wallowing. Look what happened to knowledge, to reverence of God, to moral life, in the actual time elapsing between the fall of Adam and the actual coming of Christ.

God was not too late or too early in the help He brought to men. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was made man in the fullness of time, at just the right time, a time that gives the faith of men its full scope, embracing a faith of the future for the ages past, a faith of the present for the contemporaries of Christ, and a faith of the past for all of us who would come after Him.

Thus far we have seen the fact of the Incarnation, the credibility of that fact, its beautiful fittingness; but, as yet, we have done no more than glance at the mystery itself. The technique is something like that of a man faced with a task of which he is a little afraid. He will clear off the desk, arrange his correspondence, attend to odd jobs that have been neglected for months, working all around the principal task while he tries to keep his eyes averted from it. Eventually he runs out of excuses and has to get down to work. It is time that we got down to work at the mystery of the Incarnation, scrutinizing the very heart of it -- the hypostatic union itself.

The hypostatic union:

Elements of the union: Distinction of nature and person

We have the material of this mystery stated clearly in revelation: a divine nature, a human nature, and a divine Person. This divine Person, at one and the same time, exists in two natures, being His divine nature while having His human nature. Yet there is only one Person involved. This extremely bald statement of the mystery brings home the necessity of our fully grasping the notion of person and that of nature, along with their difference.

A philosopher would meet this difficulty by saying that a person is the responsible agent while a nature is that by which this agent acts; but this is little help to anyone but the contented philosopher. It becomes clearer when we notice that it is John Jones who talks, laughs, enjoys poetry and makes mistakes; and that he does all these things because he is human, because he has human nature. The proud young father peering through the glass walls of the hospital nursery runs smack into the whole truth when he admits his complete conviction that all the babies are human but he hasn't the slightest idea who is who.

There is no difficulty in seeing the difference between nature and person; after all, every man has the same human nature, but every man is a different person. The difficulty comes in trying to snare this difference with the frail lariat of words. Perhaps the closest we can come to it is in insisting on the non-exclusive character of nature and the decidedly non-communicable character of person. Nature, then, is not a perfect unity, it does not forbid communication; while the personal note establishes complete unity that makes this person distinct from everything else in the universe, a thoroughly completed substance, capable of rights and duties. Once that personal note is present, this nature can act; the acts are acts of this person, they can be attributed to absolutely no one else in the universe.

In the case of the hypostatic union, we have a human nature and a divine nature. The divine personality constituting a divine person is there; but the human personality which would constitute a human person is not there. This human nature is personalized by a divine personality. In this union, then, there is no human person; only the Person of the Son of God. The union is not a union of nature to nature; human and divine nature are not tied to each other directly but in the personality of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The same Person is the subject of the actions which proceed from both the divine and the human nature. It was Christ Who was hungry, Who was thirsty, Who was sorrowful; it was that same Christ Who forgave sins, Who raised the dead, Who founded the Church.

The notion that nature is united to nature in this mystery is not only heresy, it is an insult to intelligence. It would mean that the human and the divine nature were tossed together like a heap of stones, i.e., they were

not really united but rather stood side by side. The result, of course, would not be one person but two, Christ would never have existed. Such a union might mean that the divine nature and the human were fused together like hydrogen and oxygen into a mysterious third thing that would be neither God nor man. If such a union is taken to mean that the divine and human natures, incomplete themselves, somehow complete each other as body and soul complete each other to form human nature, the result is just as absurd. For the outcome of this union would be neither God nor man, while the process itself would involve the absurd error of an imperfect God completed and perfected by a defective human nature.

No, this union was not of nature to nature; it was a personal union. Not a simple personal union in which the person is the result of the union of incomplete substances such as the body and soul in man. Here, in this mystery, the union is a personal, substantial one in which the person is not caused by the union but rather *pre-exists* it. In this unique personal union, with its unique title of "hypostatic," the two substances brought together, human and divine nature, are both complete and the person pre-exists the union. The difference between union of this kind and the personal union out of which the human person emerges can be made quite clear by a momentary consideration of the dissolution of this latter union. When a man dies, the union of body and soul is dissolved. Since a person originally resulted from that union, with its dissolution, the person no longer exists: the soul of John Smith may be in heaven, but not John Smith; in fact, John Smith isn't anywhere until after the resurrection when body and soul are reunited. When Christ died on the Cross, there was the same separation of body and soul through the destruction of human nature; but the Person, the Divine Person Who had pre-existed the union with human nature, continued to exist.

In this unique way of hypostatic union the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became incarnate. That is a solemn truth of faith. The divine Person, then, is the sole responsible agent in the whole life of Christ. It was the Second Person of the Trinity who was born, grew, suffered, died; and it's precisely here that we find the secret of the infinite worth of the smallest acts of the Son of Mary.

It was not necessary to wait for our time to uncover the objection that the doctrine of the Incarnation adds something to God: before the Incarnation He was not man; afterwards, He was. This is exactly the same difficulty we faced in the first volume of this work in dealing with creation. Indeed, it is the fundamental difficulty found in all the relations between God and His creatures; and it is precisely in the nature of relation that we find the answer. Fundamentally, of course, the answer is that divine action perfects others but does not add perfection to an already infinitely perfect God.

Our mind being what it is, we prefer to take answers apart and examine every smallest detail of them. Pondering this matter of relation, then, we see that it is no more than the order of one thing to another, always dependent on its two terms. When a pillar, for example, is seen by a tourist, there is a relation set up between the two; something quite impossible without both the pillar and the tourist. The same is true of the relation established when the earth is heated by the sun, or when human nature is assumed by the Word of God. Do we say that something was added to the pillar by the fact that it was seen by the tourist? Or to the sun because the earth was heated by it? Of course not. Nor do we say that something was added to the Word of God through the union to human nature.

Rather, there was something very definitely added to the tourist, to the earth, and to human nature. The difference between the two is that on one side there is a real relation -- the side of the tourist, of the earth, of human nature; on the other -- that of the pillar, of the sun, of the Word of God, there is only a relation of reason. The rule of thumb by which we can distinguish one from the other is this: where dependence is found, there is a *real relation*; where there is no dependence, there is a *relation of reason*.

Perhaps all this will not seem so overpowering if we leave the world of facts for the world of possibility. After all, a huge man does not look nearly so big standing next to a man who is still bigger; an enemy does not seem nearly so deadly if, just beyond him, is an even more deadly enemy. Perhaps the hypostatic union will not seem so intellectually frightening if we look at some of the hypostatic unions that might have been.

Varieties of union

From the very fact that one of the divine Persons did assume a created nature, it is clear that any one of the divine Three can do the same. Even without this confirmation of fact, the truth is dear merely from a consideration of divine Personality. What this involves is the ability to place an act of assuming that nature and the power to complete that nature. The question really boils down to a query as to whether or not a divine Person can do directly, through His divine nature and the infinite perfection of His divine personality, what is ordinarily the work of secondary causes. Certainly a divine Person can assume a created nature, any divine Person; for any divine Person is omnipotent and each divine Person is infinite personality.

Properties of the hypostatic union

Could divine *nature* assume a created nature? Certainly this is not the proper work of nature, for it will give the last note of incommunicability while the divine nature itself is in fact communicated to all Three Persons. This is rather the work of personality in the full philosophical sense of the term. Looking at it from another angle, nature is the root of action but never the immediate responsible agent. By reason of His divine nature, the Son of God worked miracles but it was the Son, not the nature, Who did so; by reason of His human nature, the same Person could suffer and die, but it was the Person, not the nature, that suffered. The divine nature, then, cannot properly be the first and immediate agent in the assuming of any created nature; it must always remain the radical, not the immediate, principle of action.

Can one divine Person assume a created nature, excluding the other two Persons? If we remember that the assumption of a created nature implies the act of assuming and the completing or perfecting of the nature assumed, the answer to this question is not difficult. The principle of the action of assuming is the divine nature which is common to all Three Persons; in this, no one Person can act alone since it is precisely because of the numerically common nature that all the works of God external to the Trinity are common works. But from the angle of the completion of a created nature, a work proper to personality, not nature, the infinite personality of any one divine Person is more than adequate. This is, in fact, the precise story of the procedure of God in the Incarnation.

The Person and the union: Relation of the union to the three Persons of the Trinity

Pushing this world of possibilities still farther, could a divine Person assume two, three, four, five, a dozen created natures? Or, on the other hand, could one, or two, or three divine Persons be incarnated in the same created nature? All this may seem a little absurd, but it is not absurd. It is some little evidence of the tremendous power of that divine Personality and the mystery of the identically one common nature of the Three Persons.

The condition of the divine Persons does not exclude community of nature but only community of persons; They do in actual fact all possess the same divine nature. It is, then, quite possible for two or three of the divine Persons to be incarnated in the same created nature; in such a case, They would then possess a human nature in common as They now possess a divine nature in common.

As to the other question of a multiplicity of created natures assumed by one Person, there is no difficulty if we remember that the assumption of a created nature is possible because of the omnipotence of the divine nature and the infinite character of divine personality. To ask whether a half dozen or a dozen created natures could be assumed by one Person is simply to ask if there is a limit to the omnipotence of God and to the wide sweep of divine Personality. The answer is obvious. The Son of God could have assumed a dozen human natures.

Its relation to the Second Person

It could have been otherwise. But it was most fitting that the Son, of all the three Persons, take created nature and that that created nature be a human nature. The Son of God, as the eternal concept of God, is, in

a sense, the exemplar of all creatures. Just as by participation of this exemplar things are constituted in their proper species, so through a union, not participated but substantial, of this Word to human nature, men are restored in order to an eternal and unchanging perfection. We might say that the Word of God is like the architect's plan of a house: it is by that plan that the house is built in the first place; and it is by that plan, participating in it, that the house is to be restored once it has collapsed.

The modern world and the Incarnation: Reason and the mystery

There is, too, the fact that the Word of God is the concept of eternal wisdom through which all the wisdom of men is derived. Man is perfected in wisdom by the participation of the Word, as the disciples are perfected by participation of the word of their master. For the consummate perfection of this nature of ours, then, we must have a personal union with the Word of God. It is eminently fitting, to see the thing from another angle, that men who are to be the adopted sons of God should participate through the natural Son of God in the similitude of that sonship. Again, as the first man sinned, desiring inordinate knowledge of things which should not be known, so through the Word of true wisdom, through this gift of true knowledge, can man be led back to God.

A contrast with early errors

There is reason enough for the Incarnation to leave the mind of man staggered. It does. It always has and it always will. Precisely because it is a mystery far surpassing the powers of the human mind, there has been open rebellion against this truth. In the beginning of the Church, these rebellions were gigantic; solid, thumping errors were made on an intellectual basis, errors that demanded the fine, sharp thinking of great minds to detect their fallacy, to show that there is no contradiction in the Son of God becoming man. In those first centuries, the possibilities of error were exhausted and the errors were met. Since that time, there has been a steady decline of intellectual opposition to the Incarnation. From then on, attacks on the Incarnation were really pot-shots taken with air-rifles against an impregnable fort.

In the Reformation there was a definite loss of the intellectual content of faith; indeed, faith itself was reduced to a kind of trust, confidence, a thing of the appetite. More and more, since then, Christianity outside the Church has been an easy victim of rationalistic attack. In fact, in our day that Christianity is succumbing to a scholarship that has been discredited for a generation. This Christianity has adopted a program of compromise with "progress" because it has no weapons of the intellect with which to fight. It is not surprising, then, that today, outside the Church, it is quite the ordinary thing to consider Christ as merely a man. Undoubtedly there is in this a certain shamefacedness about the supernatural; here and there, there is an open denial of the supernatural; increasingly there is a denial, not only of the divinity of Christ, but of all divinity.

The missing foundations

Today the Incarnation will gradually slip further out of the minds of men. Our world cannot accept the Incarnation because it lacks the ingredients of that Incarnation. It does not know what God is, or, indeed, if He is at all; and God plays a very important part in the Incarnation. Even less, perhaps, is known about man when we doubt his spiritual soul, intellectual powers, free will, his beginning and his goal. Under these circumstances, to accept the Incarnation is to accept the union of unknown things to no purpose whatsoever.

It might even be that we are barred from the future knowledge of the Incarnation by our modern rejection of the mysterious. That the barrier of rejection of the mysterious is beginning to break down is one hopeful sign of our times. Perhaps when its crumbling has progressed enough, we may yet know something of man, something of God, and, through the gracious kindness of God, something of the Incarnation. Certainly men are stirring to impatience at a dreamless world. Perhaps mysteries will give them back the stuff of dreams, restoring the far horizons of humanity. At the moment, our world is far indeed from the supreme and realized dream of God made man. So far that only the wisdom of God can envisage the time

or manner of its return.

The Christian world and the Incarnation: The word was made flesh; Mary's realization

There is a chasm indeed between this world and the Christian world. In the Christian world, the Word, the Son of God, was made flesh. A girl of fifteen or sixteen welcomes Him into herself. Hers is the first human heart to thrill at the proof of love given in the exaltation of fallen nature and the humiliation of God. She was the first to stand aghast, yet believing, at the lengths to which God would go. She was the first to recognize the kinship of Christ, our Brother, and to feel something of the serenity, the courage, the inspiration, and recklessly responding love awakened by the presence of that divine Companion Who was man. She was the first to carry the incredible tale the length of the land.

And dwelt amongst us; the Apostles' realization

To the Christian world, the Word was not only made flesh; He dwelt amongst us. Twelve ignorant men entered into His life, ate, walked, slept with Him, sat under the stars and listened to His sublime doctrines, watched His agony, were witnesses of His Resurrection and Ascension, and, eventually, they understood that God, personally, had come to mark out the path men must travel, given authentic example of how men must love and work and sacrifice and forgive, suffer and die. Eventually, too, they took to the path, laboriously putting their feet down in the footprints He had left for them, and after them have come a host of men and women for two thousand years, treading the same path, under the same guidance, inspired by the same help, and to the same goal. At the core of their splendid lives was this fundamental truth that God became man, as it was at the core of their religion, as it is at the core of the world. For them a dream has been realized.

That dream is a star leading men to the secret meaning of the world, the charging steed upon which they crash through all the barriers of self, of society, of nature, to the realization of that other incredible dream, the dream of seeing God face to face.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER III -- THE TRUTH OF THE WAY (Q. 4-8)

1. Contrasting contacts of high and low:
 - (a) Patronizing contact.
 - (b) Ennobling contact.
2. Intimate contact of divinity in the Incarnation:
 - (a) Root of early errors -- human nature seen from above:
 - (1) Contrast of divine perfection and human limitation.
 - (2) The nature most fitting for assumption by God.
 - (b) The human side of the union:
 - (1) Not a person assumed.
 - (2) Not a man.
 - (3) But a singular nature from the stock of Adam.
3. The humility of Christ -- the truth of Christ's human nature:
 - (a) Four errors and their basis.
 - (b) The truth of the human nature of Christ:
 - (1) A real material body.
 - (2) A human soul with all its faculties.
 - (c) The order of assumption of human nature.
4. The ennoblement of humanity the grace and virtue of Christ:
 - (a) The divine ennoblement -- the grace of union.
 - (b) The created ennoblement -- grace in the human soul of Christ
 - (1) The individual grace of Christ:
 - a. Its nature.
 - b. Its accompaniments.
 - c. Prophecy and the apostolic graces.
 - d. Perfection of grace in Christ.
 - (c) The capital grace of Christ -- the grace of headship:
 - a. Its nature.
 - b. Its extent: Christ the head of the Church, of souls and bodies, of men, of angels.
 - c. Degradation of human nature -- headship of evil:
 1. The devil as head of the wicked.
 2. Anti-Christ as head of the wicked.

Conclusion:

1. The truth of human nature:
 - (a) Perspectives and truth.
 - (b) Perspectives of human nature:
 - (1) Seen from above.
 - (2) Seen from below.
 - (3) Seen from a horizontal plane.
 - (c) Truth of the perspectives:
 - (1) As partial views.
 - (2) As complete views.
2. Obstacles to belief in the incarnation in ignorance of human nature.
3. The Incarnation and humanity:
 - (a) Not a insult but an accolade.
 - (b) Not patronizing but ennobling.

CHAPTER III -- THE TRUTH OF THE WAY (Q. 4-8)

TO THE nineteenth century, natural law was a mechanical distributor of men which did its work as inexorably, as perfectly, and as justly as a sorting machine separates coins. If a man lived on the edge of starvation, that was precisely where he belonged; and, presumably, he should have been happy to find his proper place. If he were rich, he could revel in that wealth, he deserved it, his place in life was his proper one. Some men were in high positions, others in low; but all were in their proper places. It need hardly be added that this doctrine was not formulated by men on the edge of starvation. Nor were they the only ones who suffered grave injustice in the name of that doctrine; it was much too comforting for those on top, utterly despairing for those on the bottom of the social ladder.

Contrasting contacts of high and low: Patronizing contact

The two extremes of society met only in a patronizing contact of condescension. Men and women from

the higher levels went slumming; whether such expeditions were merely forms of amusement or well meant expressions of real pity, they always threw the whole burden upon those receiving help. Both as gestures of mocking contempt and wholehearted pity, such contacts aroused a smouldering resentment.

When it gave rise to institutional charity, this philosophy of the natural law soon smothered resentment by completely breaking the spirit of man. The dignity of the individual man was forgotten in the exercise of duty to an obviously lower thing which left that lower thing firmly imbedded in its inferiority. Here and there, an occasional rebel would refuse to be grateful, smarting under the obvious emphasis of his defects. But on the whole, institutional charity destroyed the vulnerability of its victims, broke their spirit, robbed them of self-respect, and moved them to submit to its ministrations as though, in truth, this were the best they could expect from life, being what they were.

Ennobling contact

Yet there is another way of conferring a favor, not a patronizing but an ennobling way; a way that puts all the burden on the giver. "Give a hand up," a Community Chest catch-word of a few years ago, is an accurate expression of this ennobling beneficence. There is a certain bending down involved as there must be in the conferring of any favor, for we must have what another lacks to minister to him; but it is not a patronizing pat on the head that serves principally to remind men of conditions that are already bitter enough. It is rather a rekindling of old fires, an awakening of great capacities, or, even, the bestowal of new capabilities.

It was in this way that the Son of God could stoop to a sick man and say: "Thy faith hath made thee whole," emphasizing the human part in the divine miracle. He could address a sinner: "Be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee," paying the divinely subtle compliment of recognizing how downcast a man's heart is by the consciousness of his sins. This is Christ's way, a divine way, of bestowing favors. That alone would be enough to recommend it. But it is not only a supernatural, it is a naturally wholesome way of bringing together the high and low.

Throughout all the contact of higher and lower in the world, where the divine touch is still unmarred, the contacts lift up, ennoble the lower thing; they do not press it down deeper into its inferiority. Thus when plant life and sensitive life meet in intimate contact in the animals, plant life operates on a much higher plane than when it exists alone. Animal powers in intimate contact with the rational in man, surpass the levels they reach when existing apart. In our own world of human contact, sharp brushes with our intellectual superiors spur our mind on to heights that surprise us; contact with sanctity shakes the greatest of sinners to the depths of their souls and lights, if only for a moment, the old spark of courage and hope for the things of God.

Men rightly resent patronizing. If they are somewhat wiser, they pity the patronizer for he is a victim of a peculiarly paralyzing blindness. When it is a question of man to man contact, the idea of stooping to men beneath us involves an element of contempt and its correlative of smug satisfaction. And contempt of men is an act of spiritual provincialism unworthy of the cosmopolitan heart of man. Christ was merciful, He was wrathful, but He was never contemptuous; for Christ was never blind.

Intimate contact of divinity in the Incarnation:

If there be any justification for patronizing, surely it is justified in God's relations to men. For ourselves, we may reach up a little above our fellows by the accident of knowledge, of strength, of sanctity; but fundamentally we are on exactly the same level of humanity with all other men. In the Incarnation, God stooped the infinite distance between divinity and humanity. That distance would still have been infinite if it were perfect human nature, rather than a fallen nature stripped of its gift by the sin of Adam, to which He was bending. Yet God's assumption of human nature was not a mocking expedition into the slums of creation. His kindness was not a slur on humanity; He did not break man's spirit or rob him of his dignity. He came to enkindle old and new fires that would light up ineffable paths for the feet of every man.

Root of early errors -- human nature seen from above: Contrast of divine perfection and human limitation

Perhaps one of the roots of error about the Incarnation is to be found in the one-sided insistence on the infinite distance between the divine and the human. It is safe to say that, on the whole, human nature was looked on consistently from above at the time of the Incarnation. Both Jews and pagans had their eyes fixed on heights of divinity infinitely far above men; human nature, seen from the heights of divinity, seemed to them a tiny, even an insignificant thing. Dazzled by the divine perfection, they were unable to see its image in man; the fire of divinity was so big, they did not notice the spark of humanity. So limitless was the divine, it seemed to demand a kind of contempt for everything limited, humanity included. The idea of a union of the human and the divine seemed to men of that time like an insult to God.

There is a half-truth in that position that gives it a reasonable appearance. It would be insulting to suppose that intimate contact with humanity could add anything to God; but it is not an insult to divinity to see in that contact with humanity a gracious gesture ennobling that lower thing which is man. It is true that only to a divine mind could such generosity have occurred; but that is no reason for the human mind to refuse to have anything to do with such generosity. It is true that humanity is infinitely distant from the perfection of its Creator; but that does not mean that the innate dignity of human nature is to be forgotten or denied.

The nature most fitting for assumption by God

If God did determine to assume a created nature, surely no nature other than the human is so fitted for union with God. This is not to say that human nature has any title, any right, any natural capacity for substantial union with God. But on the grounds of fitness, everything beneath man falls short by comparison with human nature's unique imaging of God by intellect and will, along with the tremendous possibilities of its destiny of eternal face to face vision of the Godhead. On the grounds of necessity, all natures above the human are excluded; for the act of the angels in sinning is something that cannot be undone, the redemption of the angels, consequently, is an impossibility. Man is not driven to his action; nor is his choice eternally fixed by one act. He is an image of God, but a wavering one; his nature can be united substantially with God, and it needs that union desperately.

The human side of the union: Not a person assumed

Before plunging into the details of this fitting and necessary union of God to man, it is of extreme importance that we make an exact determination of the human element of this union. It must be understood that here there was no question of God scrutinizing the Jewish population of that time in search of a life companion, or of a person of exactly the right perfection of nature that God might then rob him of his nature and destroy him. There is no question here of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity assuming a human person; there is no human person involved in this union at all.

Not a man

Something was certainly assumed by God. If a person were present in what was assumed, it would be necessary either to annihilate that person or assume him. In the first case, God would have created a person much as a child would light a match, merely for the mild amusement to be had from blowing it out. In the second case, there would have been no real union in the Incarnation, merely a conjunction of persons, human and divine; Christ, then, would be no more than a name to signify an ill assorted pair of twins. What God assumed in this union was not a human person but a human nature

This assumed human nature was not that ghostly, unreal thing that had sprung from Plato's idealistic disgust with the material. However unhandy the material side of our nature may be in a subway, however expensive it may be in a restaurant, if we are to be human we must have a body; and God assumed a *human* nature in the Incarnation. This human nature was not the abstract, universal nature that exists in the mind of man; divinity was not united to a human idea with a resultant fiction that would be of small

comfort and less utility. Nor is this human nature as it exists in the mind of God; for that would mean an eternal wedding of the Son of God to a divine idea, which idea is in reality identical with divinity itself. This is not human nature in the specific, universal sense in which it is common to all men; in that case, Christ would be the sole possessor of human nature with such consequent absurdities as Christ taunting Himself, questioning Himself, killing Himself.

But a singular nature from the stock of Adam

Rather, the human nature taken by the Son of God was a singular human nature such as we have, a human nature taken from the line of Adam.

God could, of course, have concocted a human body from the materials of a test-tube and then have infused a newly created human soul. He might have brought forth this human nature from nothing, as He did in the beginning of things, whole and entire. Actually, He did none of these things. He took the material side of that nature from the pure womb of the Virgin, the flesh and blood of Mary; the soul, of course, must always come directly from divine hands. After all, it was not a test-tube or its ingredients that had sinned; there would be no humbling of the devil, no restoration of human self-respect and dignity in a victory won by a strange new nature coming directly from the hand of God. For the full manifestation of divine power and the ennobling victory of humanity over Satan, God had to take on fallen nature, nature weakened by sin and the penalty sin deserves, and lift it to the heights of the divine.

In *Father Malachys' Miracle*, a novel that shouldn't be allowed to grow old, the scientists of different cities were called together to explain the marvellous event that had all the world talking. According to the reports they had received, a dance hall had been whisked in an instant from the midst of a city to a rock out in the ocean, leaving a gaping hole where it had formerly nestled snugly crowded between two houses. After investigation, the scientists offered explanations which were various but exhausting. Some said that, contrary to gossip in the neighborhood, the dance hall had never existed; the story of its existence was a false rumor. Others insisted that, despite appearances, there was really no gaping hole between the two houses. While still others, disregarding the dance hall perched on a rock like a sea gull and the empty space of its former residence, pointed out that there really were no trustworthy witnesses of the whole occurrence.

The fictional verdicts are humorous, but not exaggerated, instances of a very human trick; the trick of molding the world to our way of thinking, rather than conforming our thought to the hard realities of truth. In a sense, the trick is humanly understandable. There is much less of discomfort and annoyance in filling our house with purely imaginary guests, for imaginary guests will not spill real ash trays, break real dishes, or produce real disorder in the house. Solid flesh and blood guests, unfortunately, do all these things. The acceptance of truth makes us host to the world; the guests we then entertain, solid, real guests, can cause considerable havoc in the world of our dreams.

Men, faced with the living Christ, seeing Him eat, deep, grow weary, hearing Him speak, pray, weep, were faced with the indisputable truth of His humanity. It was, in more than one sense, an uncomfortable truth for it brought God too close for comfort. The sun is all right in its place, but not too close; the Roman emperor of Christ's time was given loyalty, but no mere officer of the Roman army would look forward to a week-end with the emperor as his house guest. The high priests were held in high esteem by their people; but the people would be embarrassed, uncomfortable, uneasy with the priests in their very house. All these high and mighty things are much better at a distance. Obviously, then, the splendor of divinity was not something to have in the next room. Most likely this terror was not so much a sneaking fear of uncovering some imperfection in God, but was rather a fear of a keener realization of the responsibilities and imperfections of man.

The humility of Christ -- the truth of Christ's human nature: Four errors and their basis

At any rate, men went about escaping the truth by substituting every possible imaginary version of it that

would not disturb the comfort of men. It was said, for instance, that Christ had no body; what men saw was a phantom body. In this way God was kept at a distance; but it also meant that from the ecstasy of Mary at Bethlehem to the tears of Magdalen on Calvary, indeed to the last despairing sinner rushing to the feet of Christ, the story of Christ is a long story of deception. The followers of the God-man, then, are victims of a lie that is more monstrous for being divine.

However, the evidence to the contrary was a little bit too much even for men in love with their comfort. After all Christ did stumble under the cross. Well then, they said, let us say that Christ had a real body; but at least it was not an imperfect, earthly body such as we carry through life. It must have been a celestial thing, a body made of the superior material from which the shining stars are formed; a material that really couldn't lose its form, a body that could not be separated from its soul.

Nevertheless, Christ did bow His head and die. Again the evidence was too much and men agreed to the reality and materiality of His body. Not all the emergency exits, however, had been tried. At least it could be claimed that He did not have a human soul; the work ordinarily done by a human soul could very well be done by the Word of God without serious inconvenience. Yet Christ's soul grew sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death; and, unless the whole thing was a lie, that soul informed the body, became an essential part of the composite human nature.

In a last desperate stand against truth, men, agreeing to the reality of Christ's body and soul, denied Him a human intellect and a human will. They would not concede to His soul those faculties which were responsible for man's original rebellion against God and his degradation of himself; for that inconstant, fickle thing called human love. This would be unworthy of divinity. One wonders if they had forgotten that it is those same faculties that are the source of the heroism of the saints, the utter abandonment of all else for God, of the unearthly yearning of the human heart.

The truth of the human nature of Christ: A real material body

That all of these escapes from truth are false is of divine faith. They are all false for exactly the same reason, namely, because of that denial of humanity to Christ. They are all monstrous because they make the supreme act of divine love a living lie. If Christ had no human, material body He was not a man. All the lovable human acts of which the Gospel tells us are no more than the fantastic reports of gullible dupes of an immoral divinity. The divine Person involved here is the Word of God, the First Truth, the source of all truth; there is no room for a lie in the story of His life among men.

A human soul with all its faculties

If Christ had no soul, He was no man. That body of His was a false front, a dummy responding to mechanical tugs on its different strings to give an impression of life. And all the basis for sympathy and understanding, courage and inspiration, that has come to men from the struggles and difficulties faced by the soul of Christ is gone. If Christ had no mind or no will, the Evangelist lied when he said that Christ "wondered"; Christ was using meaningless terms when He said in the Garden "Not my will but Thine be done." Without a mind, without a will, the flesh borne by the Son of God would be bestial flesh; for by these are we evidently above the animal world, by these we are responsible, by these we merit. So the whole farce played in Palestine is as empty as a lie deserves to be.

The authors of these errors, faced with the Incarnation of the Son of God, reacted much as a family crowded into an East Side tenement would react to the sudden discovery of genius in their midst. To them, human nature could not be assumed by God. Why, they knew all about human nature; they had seen it under all circumstances, had lived with it all their lives. In other words, their fundamental failure was that they did not appreciate the dignity of human nature; they overlooked its imaging of divinity, its direct production on the spiritual side by God, its ultimate destiny of eternal vision of the essence of God. The men of that world denied the humanity of Christ, not out of respect for divinity so much as out of disrespect for humanity.

The Son of God took to Himself true human nature, body and soul, in the very instant of the miraculous presence of the human material of that union in the womb of Mary. At that moment in the history of the universe, heaven and earth waited in hushed suspense for the answer of a very young girl. Upon her answer depended the realization of the dreams of men. Because she answered rightly, generously, unquestioningly, God was made man.

The order of assumption of human nature

Understand, there was no question of intervening time. We must not picture human nature cooling its heels waiting for the tardy arrival of the Son of God. Neither is there any question of the Son of God taking our human nature part by part, as though the soul were taken from all eternity, or as though the flesh were taken while the world waited for God to turn out a particularly perfect soul. In neither case would the Son of God be taking on a human nature. Neither must we suppose the presence of any intermediary bond between human nature and the divine Person, such as joins Siamese twins, or as frail as the grace that binds us to God. This was a direct, immediate union of the Son of God with human nature.

We can, indeed we must, speak of an order of dignity. In this sense we can say that the soul was before the body, the spiritual before the material powers of man. We can speak of an order of causality, putting the soul first because it is the life-principle of the body. But it must be well understood that all this is a manner of speaking, necessary because our minds must have order even in the instantaneous. If we are spirited from the bottom of a flight of steps to the top in an instant, we must still look back to count the steps; we are uncomfortable in a modern elevator that whirls us up to the fiftieth floor unless we have numbers to check off as we soar up. In this mystery, we can soothe the grumblings of our minds by talking about the distinctions of first and second that we inject into the mystery; but we must not lose hold of the truth that there is nothing either in human nature or in the supernatural order that could serve as a medium for this union.

The ennoblement of humanity the grace and virtue of Christ: The divine ennoblement -- the grace of union

Because we ourselves are united to God by grace, there is a persistent inclination to make grace the bond of the hypostatic union. But there is no sense in which this is true. If we take grace in the sense of a gracious act of the will of God, then grace was the cause, not the bond of this union. If by grace we mean the grace of the human soul of Christ, then grace is an effect of the hypostatic union. If grace is taken to mean the grace of the hypostatic union itself, we are stating the act of the assumption of human nature, not a bond between it and the divine Person.

If we pause for a moment in the consideration of this mystery to recover a little from our breathlessness, even that moment of rest is haunted by the thought that it is disturbing to have God so close to us. We can understand the twisting and squirming of the human mind trying to escape the grasp of that truth, for in the midst of our sins it is terrifying to realize that the nature we are degrading was joined to divinity through God's own Son. It is hard to justify our cowardice, our fear, our discouragement when we know the authentic character of the example of human living given us by Christ, an authenticity that is divine.

There is too the flattering comfort that accompanies the role of protector so evident in men's fear that God might humiliate Himself. It was as though they looked on God as an innocent abroad in an unsavory district; they feared He might somehow be soiled. So they moved to protect God even at the cost of truth. It is strange, seeing the clarity of the same truth in the human order, that such mistakes should have been made. Thomas, writing for beginners in composing his *Summa Theologica*, did not lower himself. The teacher of first graders descends to an inferior intellectual level but she does not demean herself, nor does she degrade the children she teaches. In the Incarnation, God was not dragged down; He came down. It was a gracious gesture of an infinitely generous love which rather raised God in our estimation even though it added nothing to God. The Incarnation is a graphic statement of the depths to which the love of God will plunge seeking us out; it is in no sense a lowering of God.

Half truths are only occasionally dangerous; they are always worthless. If we underestimate man we have also underestimated God; with the result that we have not knowledge of either God or man. Obviously, we cannot underestimate a dinner and still properly appreciate the cook whose skill produced it. The heretics of the early Church, underestimating the nature of man, forgot the nature of God, Whose divine wisdom had produced man. It is not surprising, then, that they did not see that God's union with human nature would be supreme generosity from God and a supreme boon to man. They missed its ennobling character for human nature; and at the same time, they did not see that it would not be a divine slumming expedition but rather an awakening of humanity to its forgotten potentialities and a creation of new capacities in human nature.

Human nature needed that ennobling badly. It had been beaten down too long. It is quite possible that a great deal of Irish pride in Irish scholarship can be traced to a sense of vindication after years of unfair accusations of ignorance. Certainly the pride of American Negroes in their sports' champions has a long background of unjustified conviction of inferiority. A sense of failure can get into the blood and bones of a man. If he is beaten often enough, he may come to expect failure and cringe before its very threat. Human nature was in much this position before sin and the devil. It needed a taste of victory. It needed a tangible proof of its own greatness to be itself again. This taste of victory, this conviction of its own greatness ably portrayed in the life of Christ, has been at the roots of the indomitable courage of saints and sinners who have tried, with varying degrees of success, to follow the footsteps of the Master.

The obvious and substantial ennobling of human nature is found, of course, in the very hypostatic union itself. To ennoble, if it means anything, means to exalt; here human nature was lifted up beyond the dreams of men to personal union with divinity itself. From that time on, all members of the human family have had solid reason for pride; and it is a very human trait to make the most of the slightest basis of pride. It is not only a mother or a father who speaks so proudly of "my boy" and what he has done, but brothers, sisters, and cousins removed to the third or fourth degree miss no opportunity to drag in the name of an outstanding member of the family.

The created ennoblement -- grace in the human soul of Christ

However, for a full appreciation of the exaltation of humanity in the Incarnation we must look within the very soul of the man Christ. There we will find a vivid statement of the sublime heights reached by man. There we have a landmark to which our efforts can be directed, by which they can be guided. For there, by the same medium by which our own souls are perfected, a man walked the heights of perfection.

The individual grace of Christ: Its nature

In the soul of Christ there was exactly the same sanctifying grace which, in our own souls, makes us holy and pleasing to God. It *had* to be there if the soul of Christ were to move on a supernatural plane. It was as absolutely necessary for His soul as it is for our own. It was necessary for this most noble of men Who was to elicit the most noble of acts, to be given the supernatural principles of those actions, just as it is necessary for us; He Who was to be the cause, the source of grace to all other men, had to be given the grace He was in turn to give. This habitual or sanctifying grace was not only present in the soul of Christ, it was necessarily and inevitably present. One cannot get close to fire without feeling some warmth. One cannot stand under the spray of a fountain without getting wet. We cannot hold a cup under a stream without filling it. So the human nature of Christ, intimately, substantially united to God Himself, could not but participate in that divinity; and participation in divinity on the side of the human soul is sanctifying grace.

Its accompaniments

The consequences of grace in the soul of Christ were the same as they are in our own souls: that magnificent set of supernatural virtues, the material of the third volume of this present work, the tools by which his eternal niche is carved out by a man's own efforts. Christ could not carve the rock of eternity

with the fingernails of human nature any more than we can; He too needed that supernatural help. But in Him these supernatural perfections were of a supreme degree. And quite reasonably so. Just as the condition of a baby's lungs will give an estimate, perhaps unnecessary, of the power of the baby's voice, or the strength of a man gives a good idea of the shattering effect his blows will have, so the sublimity of the grace of Christ is itself a statement of the perfection of the virtues which flow from it.

There is one limitation to the virtues of Christ; but it is a limitation laid down against imperfection. Christ did not have the virtues that in themselves implied some imperfection. Thus, for instance, there was no faith in Christ. For faith implies the lack of the vision of God, a vision that was had by Christ from the first instant of His conception. There was no hope in Christ, at least in the sense of its principal object, the beatific vision; Christ did not hope for this, He had it. There might, though, very well be hope in Christ in the sense of that completion of happiness to be had after the resurrection of the body.

Prophecy and the apostolic graces

In Christ, the grace of prophecy and of miracles were almost constant things, giving irrefutable testimony to the presence in Him of those apostolic graces which are given, not so much for the salvation of the one receiving, but for the salvation of others. Of course, it should have been so; for Christ was Chief of the apostles, the first Teacher of faith and the whole purpose of these graces is to make truth manifest. It was for this that He came into the world.

Perfection of grace in Christ

A man is perfect in proportion to his approach to God; and the measure of his approach is sanctifying grace. Christ the man needed this supernatural perfection as every other man needs it; His human nature was no more capable of the supernatural of itself than ours is. He needed it and He had it, completely, fully, perfectly. If we remember that all this was the perfection of Christ the man, we can see much more of the exaltation of human nature in the Incarnation.

Rigidly, absolutely, Christ was full of grace. The phrase has been used of others and rightly so; but not in such an absolute sense as it is of Christ. Mary was full of grace; John the Baptist was full of grace; Stephen and the apostles were full of grace. That is, each of these had all the grace necessary for the work they had to do, Mary excelling the others because of the eminence of the work for which she was destined, the inestimable work of being the Mother of God. In this same relative sense, it is quite true that all of us are full of grace; for the comforting truth of the matter is that all of us have the grace necessary to fulfil the work assigned to us by God, to live up to the obligations of our state in life.

In Christ, however, the fullness of grace was absolute; and in Him alone. No one had a greater work to do than the redemption of the whole human race, so that, in Christ, we might say the relative fullness of grace coincided with the absolute. What He had to do could be done only by God; Christ the man was God.

Lest we be swept away by the splendor of the grace of Christ, the note of the human in Christ rings out like a buoy sounding in the darknesses of divinity to warn us again and again that all of this happened to Christ the man. The grace and virtues of Christ were perfections of a human soul; they were not, then, infinite, not uncreated but finite, created things. It is true that there was nothing of grace lacking to Christ; looking down the long ages to which this grace of Christ would reach as the source of grace to all others, we are not wrong in describing it loosely as infinite. Certainly any increase of it is impossible. If grace is the measure of our approach to God, how could Christ get closer to divinity? Once we have possessed the goal of our lives, increase in grace is no longer possible to us; Christ possessed the vision of God from the first instant of His conception. The degree of glory is given in proportion to the degree of grace, once and for all; Christ possessed glory from the first moment of His life.

This supernatural perfection of the soul of Christ is one of the sharpest rebukes the Incarnation brings to our age. No sane man of our time would reject the telephone as an effeminate substitute for a shouted message from New York to Chicago. Yet thousands of men of our time, men who pride themselves on

their sanity and reasonableness, reject divine help as an insult to their self-sufficiency in living human life successfully. In the Incarnation, the most perfect of men confessed His complete need of these supernatural helps; by these helps He was perfected, and by them alone.

There is a particularly solemn note in this rebuke because of the indisputable fact that no man walks the length of his life in isolation. In injuring himself, he injures others; in perfecting himself, he perfects others. Wherever he is and whatever he does, there will be repercussions from his life in the lives of those with whom he comes into contact. The apostles, and all the saints who followed them, were right in speaking of the spiritual children they had begotten; the awful tale of the still-born spiritual children still remains to be told.

For men, this influence on the lives of others, for good or ill, necessarily remains an extrinsic thing touching no more than the outer surface of another's life. Christ, by the very things by which He was perfected, perfected others, and perfected them intrinsically. The phrase "a second Adam," so dear to the Fathers, is both profound and exact. Christ was indeed a second Adam; like the first, He also was a principle of men, not indeed of their physical natures but of their spiritual perfection. As in Adam the physical nature which was to be the source of all others was perfect in the very beginning; so in Christ, from Whom was to proceed the endlessly long line of the blessed, the spiritual nature which was to be the source of all perfection was itself perfect from the very beginning.

The capital grace of Christ -- the grace of headship: Its nature

The source of Christ's own perfection was the habitual grace in His soul. That same grace, as the source of the perfection of others, has been called the *capital grace* of Christ, the grace of His headship. It is well to understand this dearly, for it is the final, exquisite detail in the exaltation of human nature: the grace by which Christ is the head of all men is the habitual grace of the human soul of Christ in its superabundance, as working to the perfection of others.

The headship of Christ is well worth a thorough investigation, if for no other reason, because the figure of the Mystical Body which has won such wide appreciation today depends entirely upon it. Such an investigation does not represent any real difficulty; but it is somewhat complex, perhaps because it parallels so exactly the idea of headship in both the physical and moral order on a purely natural scale. If we do no more than look at our own head, which is always conveniently handy, and its relations to the rest of our body, or at the head of the State and his relations to the rest of the body politic, we have the outstanding characteristics of the headship of Christ at our finger-tips.

In a summary way we can list these characteristics as: distinction, conformity, union of order, and continuity of the head in relation to the members. When we bring the consideration down to the concrete, it is completely obvious. Take, for instance, the details of the first characteristic, that of distinction. No man needs detailed instruction to grasp the fact that he is much more grossly insulted when his face is trampled on rather than his feet; or, to put the same thing in another way, no one of us is surprised at the twenty-one gun salute given to the head of a State, though we would be astonished, as private citizens, if the guns boomed every time we appeared in public. We insist upon a real distinction on grounds of *dignity* between the head and members. We know there is much more cause for worry when we see an epileptic throwing a fit on the edge of a skyscraper than there is in the antics of a tight-rope walker in the same position: for we have complete confidence in the *government* or direction of things when the head is in charge; none at all when it isn't. We are quite sure that we cannot beat ideas into our brains with our fists, though we constantly expect our brains to communicate motion to our hands; we know, in other words, something of the eminent *power* of the head, and the lack of that command in the members.

The same detailed parallelism could be made in regard to the characteristic of conformity between head and members. But this is really not necessary. It is completely plain to us that if the distorted masks worn by primitive peoples in their rites were more than masks, we would be looking upon things of utmost

horror; it takes no deep thought to see that the union of totally unrelated heads and members would be as certain a guarantee of disorder and war as the confinement of a cat and a canary in the same cage. What, for instance, would happen if the Emperor of Japan were to be installed as ruler of America tomorrow morning?

There must be a union of order between head and members if complete chaos is to be averted; after all the head is served by the hands, the different members serve one another at the behest of the head. There must be continuity between head and members, for power must flow from the head into the members; a woman might wish, vaguely, that she could take her head off at night for the sake of her hair-do, but the temptation to try it is really not serious.

All these characteristics are to be found in the headship of Christ; He is really the head. That simple statement is a vivid picture of how truly Christ is ours, of the heights to which our nature was lifted in Christ the man, of the intimacy of our life with Christ and the catastrophe of our separation from Him. We are one with Him and it is by His grace that we ourselves live.

Its extent: Christ the head of the Church, of souls and bodies, of men, of angels

All of these inspiring truths are not lessened but magnified by even a brief glance at the sweeping extent of the headship of Christ. He is the head of all the Church, for He does for the Mystical Body what the head does for the physical body. He is the first of all the members, the most perfect, the most powerful; from Him life flows into all the members. He is the head of all souls and bodies; for His humanity was the instrument of the salvation of all souls and bodies, from Him grace flows into the sons of men to make the bodies of men here and now instruments of justice, to give them glorious immortality in eternity.

He is the head of absolutely all men in this life and of some men in eternity. He is simply and absolutely head of the faithful in heaven who are united to Him in glory, and of the faithful on earth in the state of grace who are thereby united to Him in charity. In a lesser sense, He is head of the faithful who have the misfortune to be in serious sin for they are still united to Him by faith. Potentially, He is head of those who have no faith and never will have; He is potentially head of those who have not the faith but who will have it at some time in the future. In other words, He is head of all those men who have at least the possibility of union with God.

He is head of the angels; they too belong to the Mystical Body of the Church. Nearer to God, He has more of perfection, participating more perfectly in the gifts of God, and from Him the angels receive accidental grace and glory. In relation to the angels, Christ enjoys all the characteristics of His headship of men.

There are other Christs, not only in the sacramental sense of the priesthood administering directly to the souls of men as Christ did, but also in the sense of the external government of men. It is true that Christ alone is head as far as the interior influx of grace to the members of His body is concerned; but as far as external government goes, Christ has allowed a participation in His headship, a participation limited in time, place, and power. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ, the visible head of the Church, participating in the headship of Christ.

Degradation of human nature -- headship of evil:

The devil as head of the wicked

There is one exception to the headship of Christ. He is not the head of the damned in hell. These are the headless ones, a horde rather than an ordered group. They have irrevocably cut off their head. They are slaves now, victims of their stupidity in attacking the head to their own destruction. The devil is their head only in the sense of external government; for while the devil may tempt, taunt, suggest, call names like a spiteful boy, play the part of a sneak or a coward, unless a man surrenders, the devil can never crash the gates of a human soul. Obviously, his headship is not to be compared to the headship of Christ with its intrinsic flow of life to the depths of a man's soul. Yet, in a very real sense, the devil does accomplish a difficult task in leading men to destruction and degradation against every inclination of their nature, every

dictate of reason, every inspiring desire of their heart.

Anti-Christ as head of the wicked

Unquestionably the devil has many subjects. He is head of the wicked, their invisible head. Later on, towards the end of the world, the wicked will have a visible head in Anti-Christ who will reach the depths of evil, with all the force of diabolic help and suggestion behind him to speed his descent and accomplish his goal of destroying men by leading them away from God.

Conclusion: The truth of human nature: Perspectives and truth

A new step was taken by the motion picture industry when it introduced shots taken from odd angles. This was paralleled in the amateur world by the craze for candid-camera pictures. In both lines some striking results were achieved: distorted results that were comic, tragic, ridiculous, horrible, and often extremely humiliating. Behind all these results there is a really profound truth. The most familiar things can look completely strange if they are seen from a new angle; even a harmless cabbage leaf can look like a devouring monster if seen close-up through a magnifying lens. For our grasp of the truth of things depends to a great extent on the perspective from which we see them.

Perspectives of human nature: Seen from above, seen from below. seen from a horizontal plane

Thus, our human nature can be seen from below; then it looms as gigantic, imposing. Seen from above, it shrinks into humbling insignificance, dwarfed like a string of freight cars that, from a height of twelve thousand feet, look like tiny match-boxes cast down carelessly by a child. Human nature can be seen from its own level; then it appears as an inspiring and humiliating union of the lowest and highest in creation. Mary, seeing herself in this way, tasted a fearful joy at the Annunciation.

Obstacles to belief in the incarnation in ignorance of human nature

All these views are true enough if they are not taken as the whole truth. Man is gigantic, imposing compared to the level of life beneath him. Man is tiny, insignificant compared to the infinite perfection of diversity. Man on his own level is the combination of the lowest and highest in the universe; he is capable of great love, of unstinting sacrifice, but he is also capable of great sin, of complete selfishness, of calamitous failure. To take any one of these as the whole story of humanity is to fall into absurdly tragic error. Thus the naturalist today looks at man only from below and sees him as the peak of perfection; the humanitarian sees man on his own horizontal level and is bewildered by the paradox of humiliation and inspiration with no key to the solution of the mystery. Much of Protestantism has looked upon man from above and seen him only as insignificant, corrupted, utterly powerless, a fit victim for despair.

The Incarnation and humanity: Not a insult but an accolade

To be properly appreciated, human nature must be seen from all these angles, not from any one. And it must be appreciated if we are to grasp the significance of the Incarnation. The Son of God assumed a human nature. If we see man only from below, we discard the idea of the necessity of the Incarnation, rejecting it as absurd. If we see man only from above, we consider the idea of the Incarnation an insult to divinity. If we see man only on the level of his own human nature, neither from above or below, we remain in ignorance of the world in which he lives, the man himself, God, and the very goal of the Incarnation.

In the early centuries of the Church, humanity was seen most consistently from above by pagans, Jews, and to some extent by Christians. To men of that time, then, there was something shocking, even insulting to divinity in the idea of the Incarnation. In our times, human nature is seen almost as consistently from below or, at best, from its own level. Now the Incarnation seems an insult to humanity. The truth lies between these two precisely because the truth is the whole view of human nature.

Not patronizing but ennobling

The Incarnation is a gracious gesture of love from divinity; and a gracious gesture of love is never unbecoming. This particular gesture is a badly needed ennobling of humanity, never a degradation or a reflection upon that humanity. In other words, God has not patronized us in the Incarnation, He has not come down to us in a sneering, humiliating way that would leave us just so much more aware of the hopelessness of our defects. Rather He has come to us, bending down indeed, not to remind us of any bitterness in the contrast, but to rekindle old fires within us, to awaken us to a realization of our own great capacities, and to confer upon us new abilities that make our every act ring in eternity.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER IV -- LIKE UNTO US (Q. 9-15)

1. Statements of human nature:
 - (a) A thing of evil and corruption.
 - (b) A thing of sweetness and light.
 - (c) A thing indifferent to evil and to good.
 2. Christ's summary of human nature:
 - (a) "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
 - (b) Significance of the summary:
 - (1) For all men.
 - (2) For Christ the man, like unto us.
 3. The perfection of Christ's human nature -- the willing spirit:
 - (a) Perfections of grace and virtue (Chapter III).
 - (b) Perfection of knowledge:
 - (1) In general -- human and divine knowledge
 - (2) Human knowledge in particular:
 - a. Knowledge of the blessed.
 - b. Infused knowledge: its object, act, and habit.
 - c. Acquired knowledge:
 1. Its object.
 2. Its progress.
 3. The teachers of Christ.
 - (c) Perfection of power in the soul of Christ:
 - (1) Simply -- not omnipotent.
 - (2) Relatively:
 - a. To others.
 - b. To Christ Himself.
 1. To His body.
 2. To the fulfillment of His will.
 4. The defect, of Christ's human nature -- the weakness of the flesh:
 - (a) In general.
 - (b) In particular:
 - (1) Defects of soul, i.e., of intellect and will.
 - (2) Defects of sense appetite:
 - a. The possibility.
 - b. The fact:
 1. Pain, sorrow, fear.
 2. Admiration and anger.
 - (c) The harmony of defects and perfections in Christ.
- Conclusion:
1. The splendor of the paradox:
 - (a) The strength and weakness of man.
 - (b) The strength and weakness of God.
 2. A truth that is too hard:
 - (a) For men of power.
 - (b) For men of thought:
 - (1) Philosophies of optimism.
 - (2) Philosophies of despair.
 - (3) Philosophies of animalism.
 3. The Incarnation and cowards.

CHAPTER IV -- LIKE UNTO US (Q. 9-15)

NOT SO very long ago, a newspaper report of a medical meeting quoted one of the doctors to the effect that mothers, while very nice in themselves, were really luxuries. A child of today, outside the biological accident of birth, could take a mother or leave her alone; certainly it had no real need of the old-fashioned mother. Granted that the reporter might have had his passion for accuracy slightly dampened by the conjectures of a medical convention, still the trend seems to be in fact towards loosening the knot that ties a mother to her child that she might be freer to "live her own life." The unusual note in this report is that it states that trend from the child's point of view to give us the unflattering picture of a child cheerfully shrugging off its mother as so much excess baggage.

Maybe the modern child does feed that way about a mother. But then we would hardly expect a child to

appreciate all of the homely functions of home when we ourselves take so much for granted. And we do take too much for granted. By way of making this point, let us suppose that some child of our day should be deprived of this luxury formerly known as a mother. If we concentrate on just one little consequence of that condition, we are given a somewhat startling insight into the obvious things we never see. Try to realize what a dreadful state that child would be in from the mere fact that no one really knows him. To the friends he will make, he will seem much better than he is; to his enemies, he will appear much worse than he is. To all the rest, the multitudes of men and women he will pass on the street every day, he will be just another stranger; they will not be interested enough in him even to hazard an opinion on his goodness or badness.

The home has always offered a subtle relief for all men. A man knows his friends are wrong in their benevolent estimate of him; he has inside information on the limitations of his own goodness. He sincerely hopes, in fact he must hope, that his enemies are unjust, that he is not nearly as bad as they think he is. At one time or another, he will walk the streets of a strange city and be a little frightened at the multitude who do not care in the least whether he is good or bad. But when he comes home he is enveloped in an invigorating atmosphere of truth. Here everyone knows him, better, perhaps, than he knows himself. Those at home know he is not perfect; they know he is not completely corrupt; and they are decidedly interested in him for just what he is.

Statements of human nature

Personifying human nature with these facts in mind, we can readily understand how justly we speak of "Our Holy Mother the Church." We can see human nature coming home of an evening from a world in which it is a stranger, a world in which some men think it all bad while others can see nothing but good in it. Human nature comes home to the atmosphere of truth, to the Church; it snuggles into a warm robe, relaxes in slippers and finds grounds for hope, reason for effort, and support for love. Here human nature is known as neither all bad nor all good; and it has been staunchly defended against all comers for two thousands years for precisely what it was.

A thing of evil and corruption; of sweetness and light; indifferent to evil and to good

Men have vilified human nature, spat on it, despised it, insisting it was all corrupt. This was the ugly heresy that, retaining the name of Christianity, deservedly earned the contempt of so many modern minds. In the face of that contempt, it had to abandon its fundamentals or change its estimate of human nature; it was the fundamentals that went by the board. Other men have put human nature on a pedestal, insisting it was all sweetness and light. There human nature has remained, feeling silly, irritated by the combination of incense and rare air, despising its courtiers. At least the cloying sweetness of the whole business gave it a sympathetic understanding of the mean temper of lap-dogs.

By others, human nature has been elbowed about, trodden on, blindly passed by like another atom in a subway universe. It has been jabbed at, tamped, analyzed, and prescribed for like one of a thousand patients being rushed through a clinic operating on a mass production scale. It has felt outraged, undignified, irritated, and bitter at the conviction that no one in the place really cared what its condition was.

Christ's summary of human nature

It has been a steady comfort for human nature to come home, to come to the place where it was really known; to come to the feet of God and hear the God-man corroborating the experience of centuries by the words of the eternal wisdom that is God's. Christ's summary of human nature is perhaps the briefest, certainly one of the most beautiful and profound that has come down to us. Standing over His sleeping apostles there in Gethsemane, with the blood of agony still fresh on Him, He said: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." The very words, few as they are, give vivid expression to a divine, unselfishly generous understanding of human nature that removes the element of surprise from Christ's later thoughtfulness for the women of Jerusalem, His care for the thief on the Cross, and His solicitous farewell

to His Mother.

Significance of the summary: For all men

The whole picture in the Garden is worth studying well. On one side there is the long-suffering, understanding, pitying God asking so little. The sleeping group is made up of high-minded men who cherish goals impossibly out of reach, their hearts and minds stretching out to unthinkable things; and the flesh so often having the last word in their lives. So might the lives of the best of men be summed up: always we fall short; always we are unprofitable servants. This might be a summary of any year of our lives; indeed, of any day of our lives from childhood's first examination of conscience, with its solemn, wide-eyed, firm purpose of amendment for faults that would not put dust on an angel's wing, to the last moment when we link arms with the divine Companion of the road and set out for home. It is no doubt significant that in the fairly short tract which we are considering in this chapter, Thomas, who made so few mistakes, is twice forced to retract opinions he had held and written down in his earlier days, thereby giving as strong testimony to the weakness of the flesh as the brilliance of his doctrines gives testimony to the willingness of the spirit.

Once when very young, I was sent to a little church in the mountains of Switzerland on Christmas eve to hear confessions. On arriving, I asked the curé if there were not some peculiarly local expressions, expressions meant not to hide the truth but to make the hard work of baring one's soul a little less difficult. His answer, which is the sole reason for this bit of autobiography, was classic. Shrugging his shoulders, he said: "*C'est toujours la même chose*" -- it is always the same thing; and he was right. For while the spirit is always willing, it is likewise true that the flesh is always weak.

It was kind of Christ to give us this statement of the truth of human nature; in doing so, He gave us a declaration of the whole-hearted character of divine love. The Son of God did not pick and choose from human nature, like a spoiled child picking the nuts out of the salad or the raisins out of the cake. He did not choose the willingness and dodge the weakness as a half-hearted Christian might embrace the truths of heaven and the love of God while shying away in terror from hell. Christ took the whole, essential nature. In reality, it is a blasphemy born of snobbery that denies to Christ this or that part of our human nature; that is pleased to see Him in rapt contemplation but nauseated by the thought of sweat on His brow. This makes God a half-hearted lover, squeamish, cowardly, selfish, like a woman who smiles on orchids and diamonds but goes pouting to a judge at the mention of babies or housework.

For Christ the man, like unto us Christ was true man. Assuming human nature meant that He was not only embracing a willing spirit but also bearing, and bearing with the fierce pride of a fighting clan, the burden of the weak flesh. In Gethsemane He said in actions what men might not stop to read if it were said in words, offering us a kind of divine tabloid account of His humanity; for never has flesh protested so vehemently as when its protests were round and red and dropping to the ground, never has spirit proved more willing than when it said in the midst of agony, "Not my will but Thine be done." Never has understanding been more generous, more profound; never has the spirit of man faced higher goals or faced them more courageously. The Son of God took on the perfection and the defects of human nature, for Christ was man. It happened to Him, as it happens to every man, that the vision's splendor called Him on but the road was long and rough and hard.

In the last chapter we saw half of the perfection of Christ's human nature in the perfection of His grace and virtue. We stopped there as a child might stop, pushing away the delightful drink that it might swallow and breathe after that long satisfying draught. In this chapter we shall look at the rest of that picture of supremely willing spirit; thus fortified, we shall go on to look at the defects, the weaknesses of the flesh. First, let us finish up the beauty of the picture by considering the knowledge of Christ.

The perfection of Christ's human nature -- the willing spirit

Perfection of knowledge: In general -- human and divine knowledge

Christ was God. As God, He had that eternal, infinite, perfect knowledge which belongs to God. But that was as God. Had he no more than that, His human intellect would have remained the barren thing it is at the beginning of every human life. Intellectually, He would have remained an infant all through life. His intellect would have been a host to the universe forlornly surveying its empty castle to which not a single guest had come. This human faculty would have been merely an idle decoration of divinity, as grotesque as a moustache scratched on a masterpiece. For the mind of a man exists to know.

The Son of God took on human nature in all its perfection. In Him that human nature reached a climax of perfection. No one of the distinctively human potentialities remained unfulfilled. His was not a ragged, limping, decrepit human nature, but one that reached to the utmost of its perfection. He had, then, not only a divine knowledge, but also a human knowledge.

To some this human knowledge of Christ seemed superfluous. It was a tiny creek that would be swallowed up by the ocean of divine knowledge, a candle completely dimmed by the flood of sunlight. This might be true if human knowledge were a rival of divine knowledge, but it is not. Our wisdom is derived from divine knowledge; it is nothing more than a participation of that eternal and supreme Truth. Rather than being dimmed by proximity to its source, the brightness of our knowledge is increased as we get closer to the source from which we receive the light.

Human knowledge in particular

We might sum up the knowledge of Christ by saying He had all of the knowledge that can come to the human mind; after all, that is no more than saying that none of the potentialities of the human mind were unfulfilled in Christ. What can we know? We might begin by asking what we do know; but that is much too discouraging for a beginning. Pushing aside the personal consideration for an objective tabulation of the fields of human knowledge, we might check off theology, philosophy, history, the confusion of languages, the welter of sciences, politics, and so on. We would think that we had assigned an enormous field to one human mind; though, actually, we would only be walking a race horse. All of this is merely one kind of human knowledge, the acquired knowledge that is inextricably bound up with frets and worries, midnight silence and university degrees. This is what we spend our life gathering bit by bit as we abstract the universal from the singular with the help of our active intellect, separating the gold of the intelligible from the dross of matter.

Our possibilities, however, go far beyond this grubbing. We touch on the angelic world by infused knowledge such as Adam had, such as comes to the souls in Purgatory and to the blessed in heaven. Unfortunately, infused knowledge is the miraculous exception in this present life, otherwise books like this would be entirely unnecessary. Indeed, we even invade the sphere proper to God; the human mind does see God as He seems Himself, directly, face to face, in the beatific vision. Even this is within our power; not within the power of the principles of our nature, of course, but within the field opened up to our nature by the addition of supernatural help.

The investigation of the knowledge of Christ, then, is more than an unveiling of the beauty and perfection of Christ the man. It is a concrete statement of the heights to which human nature was exalted in Christ, a blueprint of the perfection to which every possessor of human nature is in fact ordered; for Christ the man was one of us. His knowledge included the knowledge of the blessed -- the vision of God -- the infused knowledge which is proper to the angels, and the acquired knowledge common to all of us in this life. In all these ways some men do know. In all these ways the God-man knew most perfectly.

It might be mentioned in passing that further investigation of the knowledge of Christ may well be a humiliating experience for those who have read the previous volumes of this series. Nearly all of the investigation will be a review, an application of the material covered in dealing with the nature of man; as such, it will no doubt offer some surprising evidence of how much we can forget.

Knowledge of the blessed

The human mind of Christ saw the essence of God directly but only as a man can see it. That is, in His vision there was nothing like the clarity of God's own vision and its comprehensive grasp of divinity. This vision was possible to the mind of Christ only because of the supernatural help of the created light of glory, a light that pales into insignificance before the uncreated light of the mind of God. The human nature of Christ was a created thing, capable of only finite acts, as are all creatures; certainly it was quite incapable of the infinite act necessary to enfold the divine essence.

In the beatific vision, every man sees what pertains to himself, all those things to which he is tied by some bond. It was no different with Christ, except that all men pertain to Christ their Savior and their Judge. By reason of His deeply special interest in every detail of every human life, Christ sees in the divine essence all that pertains to all men; a comforting, if astounding, truth. Even with His human mind, He would see the successively infinite hopes, thoughts, desires of men, over the whole long span from the first man to the very last.

He sees all this more clearly than any saint or angel will ever see anything in the essence of God; and the reason of this is a truth that hits at the heart of human living. It is true that in this life knowledge is a serious liability, forever carrying with it the burden of leadership and the weight of responsibility for the little ones who have not an equal share of knowledge. But it is also an asset, particularly when it is mellowed by grace, for it widens a man's world; or, rather, it widens a man's mind so that he can admit more of the world into himself. In the vision of God, the knowledge we have so laboriously acquired plays no part. We see more or less deeply into that divine essence, not by reason of the development of our minds, but by reason of the light of glory; this vision is, after all, a supernatural thing not to be measured by natural yardsticks. This light of glory, which is the measure of our penetration of the divine essence, is given to us in exact proportion to the degree of our grace and merit. In a word, it is sanctity, not learning, that ultimately counts.

Infused knowledge: its object, act, and habit

Coming down a step from the knowledge proper to God to the knowledge proper to the angels, the infused knowledge which flows directly from God, we are in the presence of a manner of knowing that leaves us frankly envious. The learned theologians who came to examine the doctrines of Catherine of Siena must have been, unless they were very holy, just a little resentful of her superior theological knowledge; there must have been, among them, some rueful comparison between their own long, hard, tedious path to knowledge and her swiftly joyous short-cut. They gave testimony to the miraculous character of her knowledge; and miracle it was. But this is not true of the knowledge of the angels or of those who see the face of God.

For them this is not miraculous; it is the ordinary, the usual, the natural thing for the citizens of heaven. There the spirit is uppermost, it is not dependent on the body. Perhaps we can see the natural character of this type of knowledge better if we consider a blessed soul before the resurrection of the body. In what is then its present state, it has no body, that is, it enjoys a mode of existence that is purely spiritual. Along with the new mode of existence, there must be a new mode of acting, for action necessarily follows the mode in which a nature exists. Without a body, the only way for a mind to know is to receive that knowledge from God, since, obviously, the mechanism for abstracting ideas from matter -- the apparatus of senses and imagination serving the active intellect -- is missing.

True enough, it is hard for us to conceive of a man getting his knowledge directly, immediately from God as a normal, natural thing; as difficult, in fact, as it would be for us to conceive of wings on a cow. But that is because we forget our affinity to the angels, we forget that we, too, are spirits. We are so accustomed to looking at streets, buildings, taxicabs and buses that we never think to look up and notice there is a sky. Christ Himself, Who was not given to idle talk, insisted that in the resurrection men would be like angels.

From the point of view of its content, the infused knowledge of Christ was far superior to that of the

angels. By it, He knew all a man is capable of knowing by natural reason and all those things which will be revealed by God; the angels, while their natural knowledge was complete from the first instant, enjoy only a fragmentary and gradual sharing in revealed knowledge, a kind of piece-meal munching on tid-bits from the table of God. The infused knowledge of Christ was also greater than that of the angels on the grounds of its penetration of the hearts of men and of its certitude, since Christ was so much closer to the Source of all certitude from Whom nothing is secret. Yet, in another way Christ's infused knowledge was definitely inferior to the angels; this manner of knowing is natural to an angel, it is a little too big to be manipulated expertly by the mind of a man.

There is a certain freedom in the use of this infused knowledge which Christ, of course, enjoyed too. He could use it, as the angels do, without any reference to the phantasms which are the normal source of our ideas. On the other hand, He could, if He liked, refer it to the phantasms and go on from there to reason discursively, not because He had to, but as a boy who has learned a trick well does it over and over again, just for the fun of the thing.

Acquired knowledge: Its object

It is always hard to keep the human mind from rushing ahead on wings of fancy in matters that come close to the heart. In this matter, perhaps because of memories of childish tears of despair, of examinations that were flunked, or of the absurd, stubborn mistakes of youth, some men have been loath to concede a real acquired knowledge to Christ. A knowledge that is extracted from material things by the use of the sharp scalpel of our active intellect, seemed too bloody a thing to be worthy of Christ. Yet if we put emotion to one side and look at the problem hard-headedly, it is quite clear that this acquired knowledge cannot be denied to Christ. If His nature were perfect, and it was, then all its potentialities must have been realized, for an unrealized potentiality is a distinct imperfection. Just as Christ's possible intellect, the faculty whose act is to know, was brought to full perfection by infused knowledge, His active intellect realized its potentialities in the work of acquired knowledge. If we deny the active intellect of Christ its proper work of abstracting the intelligible from the material, it becomes a mere decoration, a toy that is not even played with. Christ did not take any part of our human nature as lightly as all that.

Its progress

If we remember that a man's knowledge is not limited to singular things, the things directly offered to the senses, we shall save ourselves needless difficulty in our consideration of the acquired knowledge of Christ. There is no question but what the senses of Christ never came into contact with a swing band or a radio thriller; yet Christ's acquired knowledge did extend to all the direct objects of man's intellectual knowledge, to all the essences and laws of things. Obviously this took time, for the human mind is kept busy enough learning one thing at a time and Christ's was a human mind.

There was then real progress, positive growth in that knowledge of Christ, not merely a manifestation of knowledge or an experimental verification of what had been known in this way all along. To deny this is really to maintain that the robe of Christ's humanity was shabby in spots, for it would imply unrealized potentialities in the active intellect of Christ. We do not defer to the dignity of Christ as God by picking the pockets of Christ as man.

The teachers of Christ

Christ learned; but Christ was never taught either by men or by angels. Just passingly it might be noted that in this solitary fact there is reason for perpetual gratitude on the part of the human teachers of all the ages; for by it they were given protection against the absurd but very human mistake of taking seriously the superiority whose constant expression is demanded by their work. The learning of Christ is fruitful material for investigation. The human mind can find out a thing for itself or it can be taught by others; of the two, personal discovery is by far superior. After all, a pupil does not get ideas from the teacher's mind as a load of coal is transferred from a truck into a coal-bin. He receives his ideas through the medium of words which are nothing more than the signs or symbols created by men to signify a man's own

knowledge. The creatures of the universe are also signs, but signs made by God; they are signs of the wisdom of God, not of the wisdom of man, and it is a more noble thing to be taught by God than to be taught by men. It was eminently fitting that Christ should have been independent of the teachers of men: from the very first instant of His life He was a teacher of men, not their pupil.

Perfection of power in the soul of Christ: Simply -- not omnipotent

Christ was man, walking the roads of Palestine, feeling the heat of the sun and the cool of the night, often sleeping under a blanket of stars like the poorest of His contemporaries. But He was an extraordinary man, perfect in grace, in virtue, in knowledge. What could He do with this perfection; or, more properly, what in fact did He do with it?

To answer that question, we may look at Christ's life from two angles. The one shows us failure, defeat, death on the cross; the other shows us Christ healing the sick, raising the dead, forgiving sinners, doing all things well. Unquestionably it was the inherent defects of human nature that made possible His tragic end. How great a part did the power of Christ's human soul play in the wonders of His earthly life?

There can be no doubt of Christ's omnipotent power as God; and there can be no less doubt about His complete lack of omnipotence as man. Christ as man, for instance, could in no way create, nor could God Himself use Christ's human nature as an instrument in creation. What could He use it for? As an instrument it must have some proper action if it is not to be a silly mockery; and what action can an instrument have on the nothingness from which the soul is created ?

Short of omnipotence, however, Christ's soul was all-powerful. Considered in itself and its natural powers, it could do all those things proper to a soul; those things and no more. As an instrument of divinity, united to a divine Person more Intimately than our hands are united to our bodies, it could work all the miracles conducive to the end of the Incarnation. It was only a physical, instrumental cause, yes; a cause whose power was really the power of the principal cause who was God. But it was none the less a true cause and these miraculous effects were truly the effects of Christ the man.

Relatively: To others

To Christ Himself: To His body

In the concrete, then, the humanity of Christ as the instrument of divinity could, and did, drive out devils, forgive sins, heal lepers, raise the dead. By its own power it could not add one cubit to the stature of Christ; it could not regulate His digestion, His nutrition; in fact, it was faced with the same helplessness we face when we come to the boundaries of those kingdoms which are not subject to the will of man. Yet when Christ walked on the water, when at His word the apostles let down their nets and caught a great draught of fish, when the fig tree withered at His curse, all this was the result of the humanity of Christ acting as an instrument of divinity; none of these things is subject to the power of the will of man.

To the fulfillment of His will

It is true that by its own power the soul of Christ could do all that He willed, but this was simply because Christ was too wise to will what could not be done. Another man, in an idle moment, might sit dreaming by the shore of a lake and, playing a childish game with himself, wish that he could transport himself across the lake without bothering about a boat. Christ's will could entertain no such fantasies; but the human will of Christ did, in fact, set out across the lake without bothering about a boat, not dependent on its own power, but as an instrument of the Word of God, for in this it was capable of acts proper to omnipotence itself.

These considerations lend special significance to the prayers of Christ. When He went up into a mountain to pray before choosing His apostles, he prayed for effects which were to be produced by His human will of its own powers. But He also prayed for those things that His will was to produce as the instrument of divine power -- for the resurrection of Lazarus, for the confirmation of the strength and the faith of the

apostles at the last supper. This has particular importance for it brings out the fact that prayer is more than an act of humility, more than a statement of truth, more than a sharp cry for help; it is the spade by which we turn over the earth in preparation for the divine seed. Prayer is itself a cause, playing a necessary part in the government of the world.

Glancing back at what we have seen of the human nature of Christ, it begins to be clear that He took all of our human nature in a sense larger than was at first obvious. He took more than the essentials of human nature; He selected something from every state in which human nature has existed. From the state of innocence in which Adam was created He took freedom from sin; from the state of glory which is the last home of man He took the vision of the essence of God; and from the state of guilt in which we now labor He took the subjection to the penalties of sin, that is, the weakness of our flesh. It is worth noticing that while Adam, in the state of innocence, had immunity from bodily harm, this gift was passed over by Christ; He not only came to redeem us, but also to show us how to suffer and to die, knowing that it was in learning these lessons that most of our lives are spent.

The defect, of Christ's human nature -- the weakness of the flesh

That Christ took on our bodily defects -- hunger, thirst, and all the rest -- is of faith; it must be believed on the infallible authority of God. That He need not have done so is obvious from the infinite value of all the acts of this divine Person; any one smallest act was more than sufficient to redeem the whole human race. Why did He embrace the things from which we shrink?

Well, for one thing, it was the most fitting way to redeem men. The soul of redemption is charity, which He took on in the perfection of His soul; and the material of redemption, the material for suffering for others, is to be found only in the weakness of the flesh. Christ literally underwent all penalties while He was one with us through charity. But over and above this, the defects of the body in Christ strike a note of support and nourishment for the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity that is hard for the dullest of men to miss. Christ underlined these again and again as opening up the direct path to God; at the same time, He made them so vivid, so pleasing, so humanly appealing to our eyes as to make us forget the rough spots in the long road home.

How much easier it is for us to believe that He was truly man when we see the extreme fatigue that brought deep so quickly to Him even in a wildly tossing boat; or the helplessness of His infancy in the cave at Bethlehem. This very weakness of Christ was an emphatic stressing of the nature of the goal of our faith. Our ideal is not a physical but a spiritual strength by which we conquer the devil and human weakness. Our bout with the devil, after all, is not a wrestling match but a battle for sanctity. How much easier it is for us to hope with the example of His strength in suffering before our eyes, knowing how thoroughly He must understand, having gone through it all Himself. How much easier it is for us to love, seeing His love reach the peak of sacrifice which fulfilled His own heroic definition of love's extent: "Greater love than this no man hath, that he give up his life for his friend."

Defects of soul, i.e., of intellect and will

The importance of Christ's suffering for our own uneasy lives can be gathered from the fact that His very capacity to suffer was a constant miracle in Christ; God, you know, does not waste miracles. Normally, because body and soul are such intimate neighbors, the glory of the soul redounds to the body, glorifying, spiritualizing it, as it will the bodies of the saints after the resurrection. Although Christ had this glory from the beatific vision of God, the full glory of the soul from the first instant of His life, that redundancy to the body was deliberately and miraculously impeded. The enemies of Christ put Him to death? Oh no. He spoke a profound truth when He said: "I have power to lay down My life and to take it up again." The sacrifice of Christ was voluntary in the fullest sense of the word; it was not merely submitted to but sought after, something that could have come about only because He wanted it so.

Defects of sense appetite: The possibility Let there be no mistaken conclusions drawn from Christ's eagerness to show us how to suffer and how to die. Granted that miraculous damming of joy in the inner

recesses of the soul of Christ, granted the determination of the divine and human wills of Christ to suffer these things and gladly, it is none the less true that the lash on His back seared as deeply as on the back of any criminal, the nails were driven through His hands and feet perforating them as they would ours. In other words, the sufferings of Christ were not a sham, a shadow of reality; they were real with a reality made possible by the eagerness of God's love for us and the willingness of His Son. Christ was willing to undergo the actual infliction of all this pain; the physical acts themselves followed the inexorable laws of physical nature.

The more firmly we grasp the truth of the freedom of Christ's sacrifice, the more deeply we penetrate the depths of God's love for us. In this line, it will be a help to realize that Christ had no obligation whatsoever to submit to the defects of our nature. For the rest of us, there is no escaping these things; they are a punishment for the sin of nature which all men contract at birth. Even Our Lady, miraculously preserved by the Immaculate Conception, should have and would have contracted this debt of punishment if divine payment had not been anticipated; she was in fact without sin by reason of the anticipated merits of Christ. Christ's own innocence was something quite different; it was not had by purchase but by right. He was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of God; as a consequence He could not have had the original sin which is the source of the penalties we all must pay. He was born of the line of Adam, but not of the seed of Adam; and original sin was a sin committed by the head of the house of humanity and handed down by the head of the house ever since.

It is well to understand that there was simply no point in Christ having a sinus headache or bad teeth. The defects He took on were to satisfy for the whole of human nature, defects which did not imply a contradiction to knowledge, virtue, or grace; for all three of these were necessary for the New Adam in His redemption of the human race. Such defects were death, hunger, thirst, and so on. The implications here are, of course, not flattering. Thomas makes the implications explicit statements and thereby ruins a perpetual topic of conversation; but he is not just being cruel, his point is necessary if we are to grasp some of the limitations of the defects of Christ. According to Thomas, sickness and diseases, other than those bound up with nature itself as penalties of original sin, are fruits either of our own sins, the sins of our parents, or, at the very least, are the results of weakness in the generative power of our parents. This is no compliment to a race that worships at the corner drug store; yet we confirm the truth ourselves in the now famous program of "building up resistance." Thomas himself was sturdy, but even Thomas suffered for years from a badly ulcerated leg; he was not, you see, pointing the finger of scorn at weaker brethren, but humbly facing his own human nature.

After having seen the perfection of Christ's knowledge which barred ignorance from His mind, and the perfection of His grace and virtue, effectively barring sin from His soul, there would seem to be little room for consideration of defects in the soul of Christ. Still, because sin plays such a major role in every human life, indeed, in the whole economy of the Incarnation, Christ's challenge, "who shall convince me of sin," will always remain startling to human ears. That constant surprise of men is reason enough for a keener consideration of sin relative to Christ.

It is of faith that there was no sin in Christ. Plainly, human nature cannot stand next to a divine fire and shiver; it cannot be, at the same time, full of food and hungry. Christ from the beginning had full possession of the Beatific Vision, which means that there was an intimate personal union of His human mind with the divine essence. There was, further, the personal union of His human nature with a divine personality, the union which is the very essence of the Incarnation. In Him there was an absolute fullness of grace. In this condition, human nature is not to be decoyed into sin; there is simply no rival good to furnish the material for temptation.

Quite aside from these fundamental reasons, there is the complete unbecomingness of sin in Christ. He took human nature for our redemption and instruction. Sin's destruction of charity wipes out the very principle of one man's satisfaction for another by wiping out the bond of union between them; in Christ's case it would defeat the very end of the Incarnation. Moreover, a sinning Christ, which is to say an unlovely and unloving Christ, would not be one to awaken love in us. On the side of instruction, sin does

nothing toward conservation of the truth of human nature, let alone the teaching of it, for it is contrary to nature. It is not help to virtue, or instruction in virtue, surely one of the great ends of the Incarnation, for it is the denial in practice of all that virtue stands for.

Not even the unpremeditated nudgings of sense appetite that make up so much of our uneasiness and worry were present in Christ; and of course there were none of those raging outbursts of passion that leave a man shaken and shamed in the knowledge of the loss of control over his own life. These inclinations to sin, were they present in Christ, would imply that He found something of desirability in the tinsel and make-up of sin even in the broad daylight of the vision of God; that there was an attractiveness in companionship with the devil to a nature personally united with the Son of God. Certainly there would be an implication of imperfection in the virtue of Christ; for as virtue grows more perfect, our control of these movements of sense appetite is proportionately perfected. These things have their roots in sin, at least in original sin; and in Christ there was no such sub-soil of evil. They were useless for the ends of the Incarnation. All the proper defects of the soul, then -- ignorance, sin, and the inclination to sin -- were not to be found in the soul of Christ.

The fact: Pain, sorrow, fear

However, Christ had a full share of those other defects which affect the soul through the body. All these can be summed up in one word by saying that the soul of Christ could and did suffer; for the soul of Christ was, after all, the form of His body, intimately, substantially united to it. Thus, for instance, Christ suffered exquisite pain when the crown of thorns was pressed down on His head, pain that affected His soul as it would the soul of any man. Why shouldn't He have suffered pain? He had full and perfect faculties; He enjoyed none of the impassibility of Adam's first days; and all a man needs for pain is a bodily injury and the consciousness of that injury.

Admiration and anger

Sorrow went deep into the soul of Christ with the knowledge of evil such as He had in Gethsemane, or from the outpost of the Cross: evil to Himself, to His mother, to His apostles, even to the enemies who were doing so much more damage to themselves than they would ever succeed in doing to Him. Christ felt fear during the long days of Nazareth, during the short, busy days of His public life, during the quiet nights with His apostles, for ahead of Him loomed loneliness, betrayal, rejection by His people, death. He wondered, too, at the faith of the centurion, and pondered hundreds of other things every day. In fact, from the point of view of the acquired knowledge of Christ, wonder and admiration must have been as constant in the life of Christ as in the joyous expedition of childhood. God was His teacher, using the creatures of the universe as the symbols of His teaching; every day was a day of wonder for the marvellously wise Christ. Nor should this seem so strange. It is only our dullness and blindness that takes the world for granted; the perpetually young who remain alert of mind keep the precious gift of wondering at the mystery of ordinary things. That Christ was angry we have on the authority of Scripture itself. His was a burning, scathing anger, yet not an anger such as blinds and binds a man's reason; rather it was accompanied by an inner serenity whose faint shadow can be found in the saints when their contemplation does not impede work nor work prevent contemplation.

There is really no need to go into all the passions of the soul of Christ. Christ was human and the passions are an integral part of human nature. But in Christ, the passions shared fully in that divine balance that is proper to human nature in its fullest perfection; they were not, as we find them, rushing ahead of even reason's quick step, turning to overwhelm the mind of a man, or deliberately, maliciously passing all bonds of law. Yet the passions of Christ were flesh and blood passions, for Christ was a man.

When we examine the humanity of Christ detail by detail, the conclusion in each case is so clear as to be irrefutable. Yet, assembling those details to form the whole picture, our minds are far from content. In this chapter we have seen Christ as possessing the goal of life, set facing Calvary; as holding to First Truth directly, set grossing in knowledge; as in possession of perfect happiness, yet with all the defects of body

and soul compatible with His mission.

Conclusion: The splendor of the paradox: The strength and weakness of man

The only possible answer is a frank admission of the paradox. The scholastics put it beautifully in describing Christ as both *viator et comprehensor*, i.e., both on the way and already arrived at the goal. We can get some little intellectual grip, though with no more than finger-tips, on this paradox by means of Thomas' analysis of the beatific vision. Essentially it is an act of the intellect seeing the essence of God directly with the first and immediate effect of joy in the will. Its secondary effects, proceeding successively down from the will to the inferior faculties, reach to the glorification of the body. The essential act, then, is the vision of the essence of God. Integrally it will include all of its effects: joy in the will, in the inferior faculties, glory in the body. Christ was a possessor of the goal of life as far as the essential act and its first effect is concerned, i.e., He saw the essence of God and from that vision joy flooded His will. By a miraculous intervention, the secondary effects of that divine vision were impeded during His life, then, He was still "on the way" as regards the lower faculties and His body.

For us, there are several advantages in this composite picture of Christ. Christ is not only God and man, showing us both ourselves and our goal, He is a man Who was at the same time in heaven and on earth. In a sense, He is at the same time what we are and what we must strive towards; in another sense, He is what we must be even now, for while our feet touch the roads of the world our minds and hearts must always be in heaven.

The strength and weakness of God

The splendor of this paradox of the weakness and strength of Christ finds its reflection in the willing spirit and weak flesh of every man. There is indeed something splendid in a man's undaunted approach to a bruising, uncertain battle, in the dogged courage which holds to high goals, in the sacrifices worthy of that goal made in spite of constant failure, day after day, week after week, year after year, generation after generation. Chesterton put this splendor in the mouth of the Virgin mother of God when he had her say to the beaten Alfred -- and this by way of encouragement -- "you have wars you hardly win and souls you hardly save." It is the splendor of courage which shines alike in the penance of the worst of sinners and the generosity of the most sublime of saints.

That Christ, knowing human nature so well, should still have taken on that paradox was more than a re-consecration of the marriage of spirit to matter. In us, that paradox lights up life only by the intermittent sparks generated by the clash of steel. In Christ, it was of a steadier, kindlier, more substantial light. His is the warm, welcoming, beckoning beacon light of faith, hope, and charity; His faith, His hope, His love for men which are the solid grounds of our faith, our hope, our love for God.

A truth that is too hard: For men of power

This truth, too, was recognized as a hard saying and men have been refusing to tolerate it for ages, either because they do not know God or they do not know men. In our time, that ignorance has concentrated its error chiefly on the nature of man.

Some men have thought that human nature could be made the victim of the stratagems of a bully or a cynic, that it could be beaten or bought into submission. As it, having seen the prize which is no less than God Himself, anything else could be substituted for it in our hearts; or as if there were an answer to the divine question: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" As though a beating could stop the march towards the supreme goal by experts in being beaten, by men who have never learned to quit, despite the weakness of the flesh, because they know that as long as the spirit remains willing, the fight can continue. Yet this side of human nature has been forgotten every time a persecution has been launched; the persecutors have forgotten that Christ's summary of human nature was accurate, that the spirit does remain willing.

For men of thought

Men of thought, philosophers of optimism, have told us what great ones we are, assuring us that the flesh is no longer weak. To them, human nature is all goodness, for they are afraid we cannot bear up under the fact of sin. They would have us pretend that failure is not there. We must call everything by different names so that, in a huge child's game of pretense, we can all be happy, cheerful, and helpful. Of course, we could not be any of these things if we were forced to face the truth.

Still others, the philosophers of despair, have insisted that the spirit is no longer willing, that the flesh has prevailed, that the courage is dead, that men are beaten never to rise again. High goals have been abandoned and we must resign ourselves to being thoroughly comfortable, though miserably unhappy, rather than attempt to be supremely happy though always slightly; uncomfortable. They have lost the knowledge of the joy of trying, yet, in spite of themselves, they worship at a throne of power with a cult of success.

The Incarnation and cowards

The Incarnation is a hard truth. The paradox of willing spirit and weak flesh is a hard, humiliating truth. Certainly, the truth of the Incarnation is not a truth for cowards, for it is a truth based solidly on the truth of divine and human nature; no coward can face these truths. To face the truth of divine nature, we must face not only mercy but also justice; we must look at a goal that cannot only be won but can also be lost. To look at the truth of human nature, we must see not only its strength but also its weakness; we must consider its possibilities not only of victories but also of losses; we must face the paradox of high goals and feeble efforts. In a word, we are challenged by a call to warfare, with all the responsibilities such a crucial fight involves; and a battlefield has never been the proper place for a coward.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER V -- THE MAN AND HIS GOD (Q. 16-21)

1. The truth at the core of human life:
 - (a) Effects of its recognition.
 - (b) Effects of its obliteration.
 - (c) Wonder of humanity:
 - (1) Reason for its revelation.
 - (2) Details of its truth.
 - (3) Its explanation -- the image of God.
 2. The wonder made more evident -- the Incarnation.
 3. Knowledge of this truth in Christ (Chapter IV).
 4. Expression of this truth:
 - (a) Importance of accurate speech.
 - (b) Rules for accurate speech of Christ.
 - (c) Some applications.
 5. The wonder of humanity in Christ:
 - (a) The unity of Christ.
 - (b) The desires of Christ:
 - (1) In general.
 - (2) From the side of the faculty.
 - (3) From the side of the act:
 - a. The free will of Christ.
 - b. Its conformity to the divine will.
 - c. Contrariety of desires in Christ.
 - (c) The works of Christ:
 - (1) Theandric operations.
 - (2) His works from the side of human nature:
 - a. The works in themselves.
 - b. In their effects -- merit:
 1. For Christ Himself.
 2. For us.
 - c. The subjection of Christ.
 - d. The prayer of Christ:
 1. Its possibility.
 2. Its fittingness and necessity.
 3. The objects of the prayers of Christ.
 4. The answers to the prayers of Christ.
- Conclusion:
1. Condition for grasping the wonder of man.
 2. The modern world and the wonder of man:
 - (a) Inevitable blindness.
 - (b) Compensations offered.
 3. The remedy for blindness .

CHAPTER V -- THE MAN AND HIS GOD (Q. 16-21)

THE hurried reader of the morning paper skips quickly through the report of another amnesia victim with no more than a vague moment of compassion to mark the path his running eyes have trod. To the policeman who discovered the victim, to the doctors and nurses who cared for him, this sick man may be a source of a strange pity tinged with a little fear. Here is a stranger to the world: he does not know who he is, whence he is, where he belongs, or the goal to which he is going. He is as odd a sight as would be a solitary wave separated from the ocean but still showing all its natural characteristics. A thoughtful man would appreciate the atmosphere of mystery here and perhaps see a warning of profound truth.

The sense of mystery and fear is justified, for the victim of amnesia presents a picture in miniature of a truth universal in its application and its importance. His condition declares, in a negative way, a truth that is at the heart of everything, a truth that must be seen if we are to see the meaning, the beauty, the full perfection that is in this world of ours; the truth, namely, that nothing exists alone, that everything has its place.

The truth at the core of human life: Effects of its recognition

Perhaps we can see this more clearly in terms of our own human life. That central truth of human life finds accurate expression in the phrase "man and his God." For that is the truth of a man's place in the universe. If that truth is seen, then we have seen the place of God, the place of man, and the place of the world. It is a truth that, apparently separating God and man, actually ties the two together and sets both off from all else by uniting them to all else.

Effects of its obliteration

The attempt to deny this truth, to submerge it, escape from it, or despair in the face of it makes up the history of much of the unidentified misery in the depths of the human soul. On the other hand, its recognition produces the humility, the peace, and the order characteristic of the soul of a saint, or the rebellion, the war, the chaos that ravages the soul of the deliberate sinner. It is a truth that every man must know, indeed, that every man, at one time or another, does know at least in a vague, confused manner; for at one time or another the wonder of man has dawned on the mind of every man. Seeing this truth of the proper place of man, we are presented with the singular spectacle of a dependently independent being; there precisely lies the beauty and marvel of man.

Wonder of humanity: Reason for its revelation

To be seen rightly, man must be seen as possessed of a mysterious unity which cuts him off from all else as a distinct person in the universe, yet as essentially dependent on an absolutely necessary support by God. His desires are his own, whether in harmony with or in open conflict against the desires of his God upon whom he is so totally dependent. His works are his own; whether they be the wonders of human knowledge, of human love, or, outstripping the limits of nature, works of supernatural merit that reach into the very hearts and souls of others, works that endure eternally.

He may deny this truth and flaunt his rebellion in the face of God; or admit it, and protest his subjection to God in a concrete summary of all the wonders of mankind as he kneels down to pray. For, since only a master is capable of praying, prayer itself is an act of a master; and, since only a subject needs prayer, it is a protest of subjection. Prayer is man's statement of his superiority over the material universe for prayer is his exclusive privilege; at the same time, it is his insistence on his part in the government of the universe for by it he fulfills the decrees of God.

Details of its truth: Its explanation -- the image of God

There will be more than enough of beauty, more than enough of wonder in any human life to occupy the mind of a man for a lifetime if he sees man in his proper place, subject to his God, above all the rest of the material universe. If we wished to put the reason for this beauty and wonder in just one word, we could insist that man alone, of all the creatures in the material universe, is the image of God. In comparison with divinity, he is like the colored print of the Sistine Madonna; even this rough copy will bring out much of the fearful wonder of divinity to a thinking man. This image of God is a marvel and a promise; it is a glimpse of divinity seen in the shallow pool of humanity, with a solemn promise of fuller beauty in a later vision.

The wonder made more evident -- the Incarnation

All of this is true of mere man seen in his proper place. But, after all, we are children. To see man in this way means that we must strain our eyes at long horizons, sweep vistas that stretch from God to the smallest things in the world. Because we are children, we easily tire of such long distances; we are easily distracted by the first bright thing that hits our eyes, each new thing makes us easily forgetful of the last thing we have seen. To bring the ends of the world together, from the speck of dust to the infinite perfection of God, to fold all the intervening detail into a tight compactness that would give us an outline of the universe, not in one volume, but in one glance, God became man. In the Incarnation, the man and his God are the material for one glance of faith. In that mystery, God and man are united so closely as to be one subject of action. There we see the divine and human nature in a constant interplay of action,

desire, subjection, and prayer in the one Individual.

Knowledge of this truth in Christ (Chapter IV)

The knowledge of the truth of the divine and human nature of Christ is the Catholic child's right, a man's comfort, and a theologian's delight. In the last few chapters, we have tasted of the delicately strong, finely seasoned food of the courtiers of the queen of the sciences. Some will have found it odd, too substantial, or too dainty for a steady human diet. Surely it is a food for which a taste must be cultivated. It food for the gods. Indeed, it is God's own food.

Expression of this truth: Importance of accurate speech

Mere knowledge of the truth, however, is not enough. Being what we are, we are going to speak of the truths we know; and it is extremely important that our speech be accurate. As many a man struggling with a foreign language knows from experience, we may know the truth and speak so badly as to spread error; or we may not know the truth yet, speaking so badly, actually tell the truth, as some fortunate students have learned to their surprise in the course of an examination. A person who does not know the truth, if he but speak insistently as well as accurately, can do a very efficient job of spreading error. The fact is that we are going to speak. For men are angels surrounded by fences; men must speak, for they must have company and their only means of vaulting the separating fences are words or their equivalents.

Words, then, are precious things to a man, things to be appreciated even more than water in a desert or hope in a fight. To misuse words, to betray them, to waste them seems criminal and has certainly produced calamitous results. When the subject matter of our conversation is the Incarnation, we have placed huge, precariously balanced burdens on the shoulders of our words. The slightest misstep brings that burden crashing to earth as the shattered remains of a superb truth which we call heresy.

Rules for accurate speech of Christ

The chief difficulty in talking about the Incarnation is that both a human and a divine nature, with their distinctive properties, belong to one and the same Person. The difficulty is not serious if we are careful with words, hardly more serious, in fact, than it is to talk of a man who is both a barber and a tenor. All that is true of a barber is true of this man, and all that is true of a tenor, is also true of him; though, obviously, what is true of barbers is not necessarily true of tenors. In the case of Christ, all that is true of God and all that is true of man is true of this one Person; but, obviously, what is true of God s not true of all men. We must be very careful, in other words, not to attribute to the divine what is contradictory to it, or to attribute to the human what human nature cannot have.

Yet it is undoubtedly true that the characteristics, the properties, of both God and man are true of this person. Theologians have called this the "communication of idioms or characteristics." It does not mean that, since the Incarnation, we can say that divinity is a biped. What belongs to humanity was not given to divinity; nor was what belongs to divinity given to humanity. But in the concrete, both humanity's and divinity's characteristics are true of Christ.

The key to the solution of the difficulty is in the word "concrete." It is not John Smith's humanity that laughs like a horse; it is John himself. *He* is the concrete subject of all action, of all properties; not his nature. We cannot say that a man is humanity, for man is a person; what he has of humanity, then, will be had in the concrete. In other words, the concrete term directly signifies the person; it is only obliquely that it signifies the nature by which this person has this property.

The one thoroughly universal rule of speech, then, in regard to the Incarnation is that the concrete can be said of the Person (Who is, of course, always concrete). Thus, we can say that God, i.e., this Second Person of the Trinity, is man; that this man, i.e., this concrete Person, is God. A moment's thought will warn us that we cannot predicate the abstract of the abstract, by saying, for example, that divinity is humanity; nor can we predicate the abstract of the concrete in such expressions as "divinity is this man,

God is humanity." It is just as false to predicate the concrete of the abstract. The reason for all this is simply that in such statements, we have not preserved the identity of the person, who alone is the subject of action, of characteristics, of attributes.

Thomas had a horror of falsehood which was, no doubt, the inevitable corollary of his burning love of truth. He would not tolerate ambiguous statements relative to Christ. Expressions that, while correctly understandable in themselves, still smacked of heresy or were in heretical use, were to be firmly set aside. He would not even have names in common with heretics. He was a lover impatient of any slightest reflection on the object of his love. It was because of this that he put special emphasis on the point that there are many things which must not be attributed to Christ without definite limitations; attributes, for example, which belong to a nature exclusively or that are repugnant to the subject. To say, for example, that Christ is mere man, is the adopted son of God, while true of any other man by reason of human nature, are definitely repugnant to this Person, Christ, of whom we are speaking.

Some applications

Perhaps this will be clearer if we bring it down a little further. In Christ there were three classes of properties or attributes: those He had by reason of His divine nature, such as His infinity, eternity, omnipotence; those he had by reason of His human nature, such as His capacity for suffering, dying, and so on; and, finally, others that were had by reason of the union of the two natures in this one Person, such as His role as Redeemer, Mediator, and so on. Where a doubtful expression might be misunderstood, all danger is removed by attaching to the expression the limitation which points a finger clearly at the origin of this particular attribute. It is quite accurate to say that Christ is a creature, if we add "according to His human nature." It is true that this Person is eternal, according to His divine nature. To put it all briefly, what is true of the one nature cannot be said of the other except in so far as these two are one; and they are one only in this Person. Thus, we can say that God was made man, but we must not say that man was made God.

Of course there are difficulties to be urged against this mystery, old, old difficulties sitting like beggars by the side of the road as the centuries pass, clamoring for reason's beneficence, but not with much hope. One such difficulty argued that because Christ had two natures, He was not one but two, i.e., He was not possessed of that sovereign unity which is characteristic of every man. The answer is so obvious as to awaken wonder that the difficulty has held to its feeble, flickering life so long. A man who has two eyes is not double, indeed, he does not even see double; for the subject, the person, who possesses these two eyes is one. Possession of two natures no more doubles Christ than the possession of two eyes doubles John Smith. In each case there is one person: Christ has two radical principles of operation as John Smith has two principles of sight.

An equally ancient objection has run head on into a striking modern illustration of its sophistry. In our time it has become possible to transfer the cornea of a human eye from one man to another, giving the second man sight. If this transferred cornea is put into my head, that does not mean that there are now two existences in me. The cornea begins to be by the same existence by which I am. So in Christ the human nature, coming to the already existing divine Person, has not an existence different from that divine Person; there are not two existences in Christ, but by one and the same existence the divine and human nature exist. Radically the answer is always the same: it is not nature but person which is the immediate subject of all predication, of all attributes. It is I who exist, not my nature; though it is by reason of my human nature that I exist in this way. This truth is not nearly so obscure as we insist upon making it. A voice coming over the radio can be made to sound high and shrill, or full, rich, and low by a mere turning of a dial. The radio does not make the sound nor hear it; it modulates the sound. Just so, nature does not make existence but rather modulates it. By reason of human nature, Christ could exist in this way, although He existed by a divine existence.

The wonder of humanity in Christ: The unity of Christ

Christ is one Person having two natures. Logically, then, He had two wills, i.e., two organs of intellectual desire. This truth is as inescapable as the fact that a man without eyes is blind. Mere bars of logic are no guarantee that the human mind will not try to escape; indeed, such is our capacity for trickery, that we even try to escape in the very name of logic. To protect us from the trickery of our own minds, this truth is bolstered by the infallible authority of God. Nevertheless, men made the escape; and by their error, were condemned to make still more errors. For error is as fertile a thing as a lie though, as Chesterton said, a lie can only be young once; which, perhaps, explains the prodigious initial activity of errors and lies. Instead of attempting to pursue the numerous offspring of an original error, let us concentrate our thought on the aging ancestor.

The desires of Christ: In general

Some men have shied away from the activity of a human will in Christ. They may have been sentimental lovers of peace who saw war in mere juxtaposition; they may have been introverts who had so long shunned the society of men in their thoughts as to become barred within themselves by fear of a clash with men. At any rate, the very idea of the human and divine wills at such close quarters sounded the din of battle and deafened them long before the battle could have started, as a person surrenders to sea-sickness while the boat is still tied up to the pier. In a desperate attempt to avert this purely imaginary but titanic struggle, they took the guns away from humanity, denied it all activity except as a purely passive instrument of divinity. The human will of Christ was to be a mere pawn moved about by the divine will.

Christ had a human will because He had a human nature. It was not a dog-eared or moth-eaten human will; it was a perfect one because Christ's human nature was perfect. Christ, therefore, not only had the faculty of will, he had its acts for without its acts the faculty is imperfect. His will, like ours, had that natural and necessary act that deals with the end of life; He naturally and necessarily willed happiness. He had the no less natural, but entirely free, act of the will which deals with the steps to the goal, the means to the end. Yet there was no war of human and divine wills in Christ.

From the side of the faculty

That what was human in Christ did not snarl at the divine will does not argue to a defect in the human side of Christ. Human experience should long since have made it clear that submission to the divine is not an obliteration of the human; though our naivete still takes a battle with divinity as an argument for virile humanity. Saints like Dominic and Pius V went through all of life without a single mortal sin; yet it would be hard to find human lives that were more fully, more humanly lived. They were moved by God, of course; but their acts were no less humanly done. We go to Mass on Sunday, undoubtedly moved by God; but it is not God Who has hold of our arm as we are pulled out of bed.

The whole second and third volumes of this series were detailed examinations of this happiness and fullness of human life under God. Throughout all three preceding volumes we have seen the sovereignty of the human will again and again. We have seen that the divine movement is not destructive of human freedom but the cause of it, as it is the cause of the necessity of all lesser causes. There is no need to go into that again. Let one more illustration cover it: it is by reason of divine movement that a hen lays an egg, but no one maintains that God has laid the egg personally. Of course Christ had a human will; of course that human will was active. For Christ had a human nature; and a will is an integral part of a human nature, as a divine will is an integral part of a divine nature; the two need not clash, should not clash. When they do, it is the human will which has attacked its own humanity.

Walking along the same path of logic from the same premise of the human nature of Christ, we must come to His sense appetite, or His organ of sense desire. A man of today, with a smattering of one-sided psychology, might be shocked at such a notion. To him it would mean picturing Christ immersed in the confusing battle to escape neuroses, fixations, complexes, counting ten in an attempt to hold his temper, or giving his golf sticks to a caddy.

All this is an injustice to sense appetite. It is like accusing a tramp of being born on the rods of a freight

train, because that is where you now find him. This was not the way sense appetite started off in man; it was not made for this, but worked its way down thus far as a tramp works his way down to the last level of homelessness. Yet a tramp is still made to live in a home; and sense appetite, whatever its perversions, is still made to obey reason. It is only in such obedience that it reaches its happy perfection, not in the wild roistering of uncontrol or the sulky silence of inactivity.

It was this healthy sense appetite that Christ had, having perfect human nature. He did look for figs, He asked for bread, and He wept at the grave of Lazarus. Christ, in other words, was what *we should be* in relation to our sense appetites; in Him, sense appetite was precisely what it should be in us. In actual fact, we approach that perfection of sense appetite in Christ when we are at our happiest, most human. Certainly this does not mean an obliteration of sense appetite, nor does it argue an unfair bullying of a weaker thing by a particularly strong, tough will talking out of the side of its mouth; though it is true that, in us, the will's relation to sense appetite is not unlike a mother's care of a child, including such unpleasant things as washing behind the ears and an occasional spanking.

From the side of the act: The free will of Christ

On the same grounds of His perfect human nature, we cannot deny Christ free will, all of it, its acts in relation to the goal, the steps to the goal, and the acts incidental to the goal. After all, there is many a good story told in heaven, even though the goal has long since been reached. Christ cannot be denied the completely free acts of His human will, the acts other than those dealing with the end, without admitting in Him imperfections unworthy of the New Adam.

Its conformity to the divine will

Yet superficial thinkers do not find it easy to concede the free will of Christ. The argument is that since Christ could not sin, He obviously was not free. The argument is, of course, absurd, as absurd as to deny the ability to drink wine to one who, for one reason or another is not capable of becoming a drunkard. Sin is an abuse of liberty; and liberty's abuse no more enters into its definition than monstrosities enter into the definition of a man. The choice demanded by liberty is not that between acting well or acting badly, but of the various ways of acting well or, at the very least, the choice of acting or not acting. That Christ could be gloriously free though He could not sin should not be a truth particularly difficult for us, in the full richness of our human experience, to admit, for certainly we can be sure beyond all doubt that no one has ever found freedom in sin.

Superficial thought, however, is apt to be much more stubborn than superficial disease: perhaps because even an honest loss of an argument demands the bitter effort of intellectual labor. At any rate, these opponents of freedom in Christ insist that even the choice of good was denied Him. He had been commanded by His Father to undergo death, and in precisely this way; that ended the matter as far as He was concerned. Of course. But since when has a command destroyed freedom? We do not attempt to command a bench or a chair, we do not rightly command even an animal; for to command means to move by a moral, not a physical, force, by intellect and will, not by a tow-rope. It supposes freedom and depends upon it. Surely no one is more free than the saints in heaven with all their full, joyous obedience to God. It is just because they are so free, and Christ was so free, that both they and Christ could lay such strong claims to obedience. In His very obedience there is proof enough that Christ laid down His life freely.

In our lives, the effort to choose frequently digs deep furrows of responsibility to mark plainly the dividing line between the face of youth and of maturity, it turns night into day as far as sleep is concerned, and, even then, often leaves us with no results to reward all our efforts. But this hesitation and doubt is a limp put into liberty's quick step by our ignorance and weakness; it does not follow that gawkinsness is inseparable from liberty's full stride. There is so much we do not know, that we know we do not know that we may well be uneasy in our decisions. Christ, you will remember, was neither ignorant nor weak.

Contrariety of desires in Christ

Neither was there the civil war in the soul of Christ that so often rages in our own when our will is torn two ways by the sheer inability to pick the better thing, or when sense appetite seriously threatens, even successfully rebels against reason. The appetites and desires of Christ were in complete harmony, at quiet peace, even in such bitter moments as the agony in the Garden. The will of Christ was in complete command of His lower faculties and was, at the same time, in complete harmony with the will of God. Not that the scourging at the pillar or the agony in the Garden were a pleasure to His sense appetite. His orders were to undergo these things, not to find them a source of pleasure, and submission to reason is far from a paralysis of the senses. Just as the human will has its most proper operation, though it be subject to the divine will, so the sense appetite has its full and proper operation in its very subjection to reason; of course it properly flees sorrow and pain, but with the limitation of that flight to the demands of reason.

So a man sits down in a dentist's chair freely, not in an expectation of ecstasy, but for the glory of God, the sake of his health, or the beauty of his face. Sense appetite, it is clear, does not reach to the glory of anyone; it is totally uninterested in health, or beauty. Its concern is with pleasure and pain. It does its work in the dentist's chair, protesting against the pain, urging escape from it; but, on the whole, a dentist rarely has to pursue his patients or retain them by force.

The works of Christ: Theandric operations

Men wondered at Christ, as well they might. They saw Him sink into exhausted sleep with the same relief any tired man would enjoy; yet they saw Him rise and stop the storm at sea with a word of command. Wondering, they were at the edge of the mystery of the two radical principles of action, the divine and the human nature, in Christ, each with its own proper operation. The human actions were plain enough.

Men could not see the ineffable action of divinity itself; but they could and did see (and were afraid seeing it) the divine-human action whose first cause was divine nature and whose instrumental cause was human nature -- the leper cleansed at His touch, and Lazarus answering His call from the depths of four days in the grave.

If men had scrutinized the Son of Mary more keenly they would have found grounds enough for wonder in the human acts of Christ, acts that proceeded from His human nature. The ordinary man's kingdom is a limited thing with the maintenance of order within those limits difficult enough; beyond those limits, he has no control at all. His intellect and will are his complete servants, his sense appetite is a somewhat surly help; there his rule stops. He may shout himself hoarse but his vegetative powers continue on their way as serene as a stubborn puppy; he may concentrate his will to its utmost, but a charging tank will still knock him down and crush him.

In Christ, there was that same human kingdom but with complete, whole-hearted obedience from the territory subject to a man's control; indeed, even the outer provinces were under His sway in the sense that all that affected His body was known and consented to from the beginning. Inasmuch as His human nature was the instrument of divinity, the whole universe of action was as much His slave as was the whole universe of things, as eager to obey as the wind and waves on the sea of Galilee.

His works from the side of human nature: The works in themselves

If we are to grasp the worth of the life of Christ, we must remember well that the field of strictly human action was much wider in Christ than it is in us. Before this divine Person the whole field touched by the action of man was wide open. This is important, for it is by these actions, actions under his control, that a man merits. It may be argued that there should be no question of Christ actually meriting, since He was God's own Son; but that is to forget that Christ was also man. It would not be nearly so worthy of His dignity as man to be born with a silver spoon in His mouth as to achieve the hard-won fruit of His own labors. In the first case, a man is pampered, dependent; in the second, he makes himself. While it is true that man was made, under God, to be master, the kind of master he was made to be demands the very best

that is in him.

In their effects -- merit: For Christ Himself

What could the Son of God merit ? Well, obviously, as God He could merit nothing, being already in possession of all things. Even as man, it was not at all fitting that He should merit grace, knowledge, beatitude, for that would argue that at one time or another He lacked these things; as we so readily understand in our own lives, while it is a stirring thing to see a man win back to virtue by penance, it is a much more inspiring thing for him never to have been without his innocence. But Christ could, and did, merit such things as the glory of His body, things pertaining to His exterior excellence, such as His ascension, His veneration, and so on; indeed, we could sum up the merit of Christ by insisting that He merited all things that were of lesser worth than the dignity of meriting itself.

Merit for us

More important, from the angle of appreciation of the fruitfulness of Christ's labors, are the benefits that came, not to Him, but to us, for it was for us that He came. We have a quick, though somewhat vague, view of the scope of Christ's merit by remembering the perfection, the superabundance of His grace and realizing that the principle of all merit, in Him as in us, is sanctifying grace. Nor are we likely to dismiss the merits of Christ lightly if we keep in mind our own helplessness in meriting for others. In strict justice, we merit only for ourselves. What we merit for others is only in the name of God's mercy, the divine friendship, and our own dispositions; all these make an affirmative answer to our prayers from God a fitting thing. Christ, in strict justice, merited such things for others as the first grace by which a man begins to live a divine life, faith, the remission of sin, virtue, perseverance, eternal life and all that pertains to it. In concrete terms, the sinner is like a hungry child staring at a bakery window; no one can take him in but Christ. Indeed, his very hunger is from Christ; without Him, the sinner would starve, not knowing his own hunger. The saint is a child hoisted on his father's shoulders in order to see, to desire, to reach out, and possess divine gifts; no one knows better than the saint how helpless he is without Christ.

Christ Himself was not born with a silver spoon in His mouth; we can be very sure, then, that there are no spiritual playboys degenerating through idleness and ultimately slipping into heaven by reason of the labors of their ancestors. Christ merited richly, infinitely for us. These merited graces flow down from Christ, as the Head of the Mystical Body, to men who are its members. All these things are due in strict justice to the Mystical Body; but they are gratuitous to each member individually, their completion is in the individual's own hands. Every man must make his own way to heaven; yet the journey is possible only because of the Son of Mary and His merit.

The subjection of Christ

In His grace, knowledge, virtue, desires, works, merits, Christ was perfect man. Which is only another way of saying that He was subject to God, for the perfection of man, like the perfection of all else in the universe, lies in subjection to his superior, in maintaining his own place. Lest we miss so obvious a truth in the perfection of Christ, slurring it over to protect our own pace, He put it into plain words again and again in insisting on His obedience to the Father. Like all other men, Christ's subjection to God was not on one slim ground. His goodness as man was a trickle of water flowing from the ocean of divine goodness; His power was that of a creature, held in trust from the Creator; His will was the will of a servant in the presence of his lord. This last was really the landmark of His life. Here His example to men was overwhelmingly convincing, though men are not yet convinced. He was jealously obedient to God; He gave a positively eager subjection to all who shared in the lordship of God: to Mary and Joseph, to the Chief Priests, even to the Romans who were putting Him to death.

The Greek Fathers spoke of Christ being subject to Himself because He was both God and man. While true enough if rightly understood, the statement is dangerous because of its implication of a dual personality in Christ. We use the same type of expression in recognizing a man as master of his fear but the slave of his anger, at the same time the master and the slave of himself. Of course we are not arguing

that he is two persons; rather that there are two reasons of subjection and dominion. We are speaking loosely and we know it, for strictly speaking, a master and a servant are two different persons. It is much safer to be accurate; and accuracy, relative to Christ, demands that we say that according to His human nature He was subject to Himself as God.

The prayer of Christ: Its possibility

All this is merely for the sake of accuracy. The fundamental truth is the subjection of Christ, the man, to God. Nowhere is that truth given more consistent expression than in the constancy of the prayers of Christ. Christ prayed; a truth as astonishing as the tears of Christ. In fact, the more we examine the prayer of Christ, the more wonderful it seems. It should be so. It should catch our attention and hold it. For He gave us an example of how and why to pray; we need the study of it badly.

For prayer, while a thoroughly natural act, is still extremely difficult to a stiff-necked race. The very kneeling position of prayer, a position of subjection, is a symbolic statement of its difficulties. We sometimes forget that that position is also a proud statement of our ability to pray, of hope, of faith, indeed, of a rightful claim to a share in the government of the universe. The poverty and ignorance of our times is never more apparent than in our contempt for prayer. Perhaps that is why Christ left such sharply delineated pictures of His prayer: alone on a mountain in the evening; in the desert; at the grave of Lazarus; at the last supper; in the Garden; on the Cross. It is no doubt in the study of His subjection that our proud age will find itself.

That Christ could pray is evident from His possession of a human will, since prayer is no more than the elevation of that human will to God that it might be fulfilled. Prayer has seemed a child's instrument, like the magic lamp of Aladdin or a fairy godmother; there is some truth in the conception, for we are ever children reaching beyond our own powers. But prayer is also a man's instrument in the proudest sense of the term man; it is a tool for a man who dares to take his part in the workings of the world. For prayer is more than a child's coaxing smile tossed charmingly at God. It is a physical cause as necessary for effects as the preparation of a field before the sowing is necessary for the harvest. In the preceding volume we saw that God gives men a part of His power in the government of the world. Our prayers are fulfilments of conditions of His divine decrees without which these effects would not be produced; by prayer, we take our responsible role in the world.

Its fittingness and necessity

It was fitting that Christ should pray. He was man; more than that, He was our teacher on the living of human life, and an integral part of that life of ours is the prayer of it. By His prayer, He showed us from Whom we came, to Whom we go, and the part of prayer in our journey. However, it was more than fitting that Christ should pray; it was necessary. Not as though He were not God, not as though He were impotent; but because He was man, with a man's part to play in the government of the universe, with a man's offering to make for the fulfilling of divine decrees.

There is solid comfort for men in the prayer of Christ. Take that one agonized prayer in Gethsemane. In it there is the final stamp marking His humanity as genuine; there is a nod of approval for our hurried, desperate prayers against fear, for pleasure, against sorrow, and for all the other objects of sense appetite. By His example, these are human things, humanly desired, and rightly asked for as long as in the request there is humble subjection to the eternal, far-seeing wisdom of the Father Who is guiding us home; as long, that is, as we have the trust to say "Thy will be done."

The objects of the prayers of Christ

Praying there, prostrate on the hard, bare rock of the Garden, Christ prayed for Himself that we might learn to pray for ourselves; that we might know that the most perfect man needs help and needs it desperately; that we might learn from Whom to seek all the good that we need; that we might learn to say thanks for what we have received and for the things we still need. As far as an observer could see, the

prayers of Christ, like our own, were not all answered. If the observer were wise, he would know that he could not see into the soul of a man; he would recognize that he could not hope to catch sight of the calm hope that leaves no room for bitterness in what we call an unanswered prayer. That is, he cannot see the constant chord in the melody of prayer -- "Thy will be done." With us, not knowing the divine will, our prayer is a constant act of loving, trusting faith; with Christ, knowing it full well, prayer was a complete act of obedience.

There is a profound beauty and attractiveness in a person seen at prayer, whether it be a child kneeling at night, a sinner hiding his face, or the Mother of God receiving an angel. This beauty is a matter of profound truth, not of mere sentiment. For a man at prayer reveals the wonders of his humanity as clearly as though he had drawn aside a curtain to show us man in his place. Man is above all else, for he alone is capable of prayer; he is subject to God, master of himself, a sovereign agent of divinity, the image of God looking back out of the mirror of the world at divinity.

Conclusion: Condition for grasping the wonder of man For the wonder of humanity is unseen until it is viewed in its proper place in relation to God and to the rest of the world. Nor is this peculiar to humanity; it is true of absolutely everything in the world. A human ear may be a thing of beauty until it is pinned to the dissecting table; a human head is a beautiful thing unless it be served on a platter at the command of a king. Yet in our time, it is as though we had torn the heart out of a rose and stood there wondering a little angrily what had happened to its beauty; for we have torn man out of the universe, yet wonder that he puzzles, frightens, or disgusts us.

The modern world and the wonder of man: Inevitable blindness

Each discovery about man, each "liberation" proclaimed in the name of man's humanity, is only another sickening blow struck at a bound man. The modern scholar demands that we see beauty in a disfigured creature, inspiration in a creature devoid of hope, wisdom in a contradiction, or order in chaos, like a humorless man roaring at his own pointless joke. We simply cannot do it. Men have been forced to leave the world of beauty, of wonder, of inspiration, of incredible truths; but because they still cry out for all those things, they are allowed to proceed on an "as if" basis. The franker ones, of course, must force their eyes to continue to sicken until they are relieved to escape the light they have learned to loathe, to welcome darkness; or train their palate to savor the hush and draw back in revulsion from the bread of angels.

The remedy for blindness

It is a perverted blindness that is rather proud of itself, though it shuts men off forever from the beauty and wonder of man. Perhaps "forever" is too strong; certainly the blindness must endure as long as man will not be seen in his proper place, as long as the relation of man to God, and man to the rest of the universe, will not be faced. Perhaps it will endure as long as men refuse to look at the God-man; at Christ's human and divine natures united in the one divine Person. For this is a miniature of the central truth of the universe; the divine tabloid compressing in one picture all the beauty that the long, wide vision of the universe can give to us.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER VI -- THE DIVINE MEDIATOR (Q. 22-26)

1. Time and truth:
 - (a) The difficulty of truth and error.
 - (b) The field of buried truths.
 2. Modern burial of fundamental truths:
 - (a) Leadership and its goal.
 - (b) Priesthood and sacrifice.
 - (c) Hidden treasure in the Christmas cave.
 3. Christ's part in sacrifice:
 - (a) General characteristic of priesthood.
 - (b) Work of the victim.
 - (c) Christ the perfect priest and perfect victim.
 - (d) The effects of Christ's priesthood:
 - (1) In general.
 - (2) For others.
 - (3) Christ the eternal priest.
 - (e) The type of Christ the priest.
 4. The place of the priest and the victim in the divine plan.
 5. The royal family of the priest:
 - (a) Sons by nature and by adoption.
 - (b) Fittingness of adoption:
 - (1) On the part of God.
 - (2) On the part of men.
 6. The adoration of men:
 - (a) Identity of worship given to humanity and divinity of Christ
 - (b) Other objects of supreme adoration in Christ (*latria*).
 - (c) Veneration of His mother (*hyperdulia*).
 - (d) Veneration of the saints (*dulia*).
 7. The priest at His work: the mediation of Christ.
- Conclusion:
1. The tragedy of buried truths:
 - (a) The tragedy of modern leadership.
 - (b) The tragedy of modern irreligion.
 2. The treasure cave of Bethlehem.
 3. The kings and the infant.

CHAPTER VI -- THE DIVINE MEDIATOR (Q. 22-26)

THE contention that the obvious is most easily missed by the human eye or the human mind, while it may be well argued, seems to place a very low estimate indeed on the content of human knowledge. For it is quite certain that it is a strong human trait to stop at the obvious for the very good reason that a little extra labor is demanded to go beyond the obvious to the hidden. The spectator, for example, idly watching archaeologists excavating a buried civilization, say in Egypt or Greece, is usually quite content to spend his wonder on the time, labor, and expense necessary to unearth the traces of that lost culture. Yet a moment's reflection would impress him with the fact that much more time, much more labor, and incredible expense went into the actual burial of that city, particularly if he were a spectator who had somehow managed to live through the nineteen forties.

In our own lives, there can be no doubt of the effort, the discouraging labor, and the amount of time necessary to unearth truth; the long hours of study, the dogged years of relentless pursuit that is never nearly as successful as we would wish it. Yet all this is even more true of the burial of a truth, particularly of a fundamental truth. In our own short, personal experience with the lives of men, we cannot have missed the difficulty, the time, even the expense that go into the deadening of a man's conscience, into his burial of the truth of sin. Perhaps the uneasiness, the worry, the torturing remorse of the process cannot be measured accurately in terms of time or money; but if labor is to be measured by what it takes out of a man, no one has worked harder than the man who is finally able to take sin for granted.

Time and truth: The difficulty of truth and error

Such personal experience is well buttressed by the evidence offered, for example, by a contrast of primitive and later civilizations. In the former, for instance, marriage was almost universally monogamous, only later developing into the varied forms in which it is found in history; the mythical state of promiscuity so blithely talked of today is not a landmark in the history of man but a threat upon humanity's horizon. Among the primitives, worship of God, as far as the evidence allows of a conclusion, was originally monotheistic; it is only much later that those perversions developed that are to be found among the present peoples of the world. In fact, all this can be safely generalized; the field most likely to contain more fundamental truths more deeply buried is precisely the field enclosed by the fences of "higher civilizations." If, for example, we are in search of the perversions of the truth of sacrifice, it is to the higher civilizations we must go to come upon the ultimate perversion of human sacrifice; if sex perversions are the goal of our research, then we waste time laboring among the records of the primitives.

The field of buried truths

The burial of truth with the same determined eagerness with which a dog buries a bone is not to be considered as an historical peculiarity that has long since died out. The practice was never more common than in our own time. Take, for instance, the essential, the fundamental truth of leadership, a truth which proceeds from the fundamental fact that a man has some place to go. In our own very high civilization, men are enthusiastically, fanatically, following leaders who champion the denial of a goal for men, or who deny all motion to the individual man as such; leaders, in other words, who explicitly surrender all valid claim to leadership and so all solid faith in leadership. Some modern leaders have called forth goals that can have no meaning to the individual, goals of a race, a party, a class which exclude the individual as such; still others insist upon following the people as a mother follows a spoiled child's aimless wanderings.

Modern burial of fundamental truths: Leadership and its goal

From time immemorial, a leader has been a man who stood out in front, between the people and their goal, so that they could be sure of the direction of their goal by a glance at the leader. Today, a leader is not expected to stand between his people and something else; rather, he represents the blank wall where all hope must end. In the spiritual world, the leader should take up the awful position between God and His people; today, spiritual leaders, though seriously laying claim to leadership, insist that there is no God and, consequently, no purpose in leadership. What has happened to so fundamental a truth as that of leadership if it hasn't been buried?

Priesthood and sacrifice

Then, too, there are the fundamental truths of sacrifice and of the priesthood. Surely there is no truth more thoroughly buried today than these two; yet there is little more fundamental, if for no other reason, because there is little more fundamental than the recognition of primary truths. And these are primary truths. From the beginning, men have seen that a child cannot effectively deny that he has had parents; on the same basis, they saw that a man cannot deny his Creator, for his very dependence is an acknowledgment of that creator. The recognition of man's dependence is, at the same time, a recognition of God's dominion. These are truths that must be recognized if man himself is not to be denied.

The recognition of the dominion of the Creator is made by each creature according to its nature. Man, the intelligent creature naturally in harmony with the rest of creation, sought to acknowledge this truth in a human way; universally, men have hit upon sacrifice, and so upon priesthood, as the means of human acknowledgment of their own position and of the dominion of God. Since sacrifice was, for the most part, an act of a group, of a community, it was to be offered by one who could speak in the name of all the people, by a community official who was called a priest.

The recognition of man's position and of God's dominion, over and above the need for-sacrifice, also made clear the necessity of winning to that final position which is the destiny of the human race, to that God Who is the goal of life. It meant going to a goal and making reparation for the endless wanderings

and recessions from that goal. In other words, by the recognition of the truth of his position, man recognized that he had a place to go and that he needed spiritual leadership to get him to that spiritual goal. The work of the priest, then, has always been to furnish that spiritual leadership, to stand out before the people in that no man's land between God and men with the souls of men depending for eternity on the exercise of his office.

Christ came to remove the debris from buried fundamental truths as well as to give us new truths. Of the buried truths, none received greater emphasis in His life than those of priesthood and sacrifice.

Hidden treasure in the Christmas cave

The birth of the babe in Bethlehem has always been a shock and a comfort to the world. It is a simple, homely expression of an unthinkable truth. The ages have rightly stressed the homeliness of that scene: the family group of mother, father, and the Child Who had no father but God. That first Christmas throws us off our guard by putting God at our mercy; its surprise blow strips us of all the protective armor with which we cover our heart from the incursions of the outside world. The helplessness of God has pierced the armor of man. Yet we see the scene no less truly when we see it as the cave where God began to unearth buried truth.

Mary kneeling at the manger, offering her Son to God as every good Jewish mother would, made the first offering of the Perfect Victim; this was, too, the first act of the Perfect Priest, for the infused knowledge of Christ dated from the first moment of His life. Priest and Victim was her Son, and God; she knelt in adoration before Him; He, the High Priest, interceded for her. In that picture alone we have all the material of this chapter.

If the priesthood were subject only to human explanations, then it could be said securely that only one who was very young, very foolish, rashly presumptuous, and absurdly gallant would dare to undertake it. Fortunately the explanations are not limited to the human order. These men are not those who have chosen but rather who have been chosen, and that by God. However, the human side is not neglected or wasted by God; there is still the element of eternal youth, of divine foolishness, of the reckless gallantry of love in the priesthood. When these things die out of it, the priesthood will be only a name. So to our time, as to all times, the celebration of a first Mass or the ordination of a priest is a gala event; even the most casual acquaintances and complete strangers crowd into the church to drink in some of that intoxicating atmosphere that envelops the departure of reckless love down the hard road.

Such presumption as may be present cannot linger long. The saints among the ordinary people to whom the priest ministers, the helplessness of his wisest words, and the divine efficacy of his fumbling efforts keep the priest well aware of his own failings. Indeed, the very consideration of his principal work of spiritual leadership makes his own helplessness and the efficacy of divine help the central truths which furnish the support by which alone it is possible for him to face his work.

Christ's part in sacrifice: General characteristic of priesthood

For the work of the priest can be summed up in one sentence: he is to stand between God and the people. On the one side there will be the desperate, trusting dependence of these men, women, and children spurring him on; on the other, the unutterable perfection of God shining upon him with a brilliance that throws his every weakness into bold relief. If this were a merely human office, it would be a lonely, terrifying, comfortless thing to strike terror into the heart of any man. Because it is a divine office, it has depths of serene joy that only God can sound.

As the intermediary between God and His people, the life of a priest is an endless series of journeys of heart and mind from God to men and back again; in time, he becomes like an old pack horse who looks naked without a burden. Coming from God, he carries the precious burden of divine gifts -- truth, love, the divine life of grace; coming from man, he carries to God the stuttering prayers of the human heart and the petty satisfactions we are able to offer for the sins we have committed.

The chief act by which the priest accomplishes his office of mediator has always been the act of sacrifice; it is that act, indeed, which has called the priest into being. In Christianity, the sacrifice of the New Law is the Mass, the central act of the Christian religion and the principal reason for the existence of the priesthood. It is in sacrifice, then, that the priest is most truly a priest; it is then that he stands most squarely between God and the people. The sacrifice is a vain gesture, the priesthood a useless office, if the victim's destruction does not attain to the ends of sacrifice.

Work of the victim

The Old Testament distinction of offerings for sin, for peace, and as a holocaust is a succinct statement of the ends or goals of sacrifice. Sacrifice, after all, must do just two things: it must pay man's debt to God, acknowledging His position; and acknowledging man's position, it must fulfill his double need of dealing with sin and winning that divine life which is his peace. these are noble ends indeed for a human act: a holocaust to God, remission and satisfaction for sin, the conservation and increase of that share of divine life within us which is grace. It is small wonder that men looked with awe on the simplest act of solemn sacrifice.

Yet, before Christ, only the benign tolerance of God could look with favor on the victims offered by men, could accept a holocaust, a supreme act of worship, from such feeble hands, inevitably weary and soiled from wielding weapons in the war for the priest's own soul. With Christ came the perfect priest and the perfect victim. Swaddling clothes may seem strange clothes for a high-priest; we hardly expect to see a high-priest: lying in a manger under the watchful eye of a mother or nailed naked to a cross under the glaring eyes of an angry mob. These are garments more fitted to a victim than to a priest; but, then, human nature was a strange cloak for God to take up in His short walk through the world. No doubt it was because He knew it would always be more difficult for us to see Him as a victim than as a priest that He left that indelible record of His victimhood, of the beginning and the end of His human life.

Christ the perfect priest and perfect victim

But priest He was; and the only priest on Calvary. It was He Who offered the sacrifice there, not His executioners. Indeed, He was the perfect priest from the very beginning. His Christmas gifts were the kind of burden we should expect to tire the back of a worthy priest: for He brought truth, love, grace, even God Himself to us; His gift to God was full satisfaction for all sins and the prayers of all the centuries of fighting Christians who would accept His challenge to set out on the hard road of the cross.

The effects of Christ's priesthood: In general

He was priest and He was victim. He accomplished, as the victim should, the remission of the sins of men, peace with God, and a union such as only God Himself could have conceived, a union in His own Person and in the lives of each man by grace now, by glory in eternity. The offering for sin, the offering for peace, the holocaust, found their perfection in the life and death of Christ. The sheep and goats, victims in the Old Law, were accepted by God in lieu of better things; the Son of God made man was an adequate victim, perfectly accomplishing the ends of sacrifice and loosing a flood of grace on the souls of men of all ages.

For others

Christ the priest stood between God and man. On Calvary He was raised a little above the earth; for three hours He hung there, far below heaven, a little apart from men, very close to God. The hopeful men of all ages can look over His shoulder, sure of the goal and the direction of the goal; on the other side, there was the white glare of the divine light which could find no fault in Him. All other priests, in the very act of sacrifice, are a part of the multitude for whom they pray, for they are sinful men themselves dependent on divine mercy; Christ, alone of all priests, sinlessly approached divinity and made His plea in His own divine name.

Christ the eternal priest

In a wider sense the whole life of Christ, from beginning to end, was the act of a priest; for the wider sense of sacrifice includes all that is offered to God that the spirit of men might be lifted up to God. Surely, every act of Christ's life was directly aimed at that end; it is not lightly that we call Him Redeemer and Savior. Indeed, the priesthood of Christ still endures, it is unending. The act of a priest, after all, is not the offering of sacrifice to the exclusion of the consummation of that sacrifice; and that consummation is accomplished only when the people for whom the sacrifice is offered attain the final union with God which is the end of the sacrifice and the eternal holocaust of all who are saved.

The type of Christ the priest

The priest of the twentieth century, continuing the work of the perfect Priest, is also a spiritual leader standing between God and men. Nor is his office a lonely, burdensome, terrifying one for he stands there, not in his own person, but in the person of Christ. He need make no excuses for the priest who is offering the sacrifice, no apologies are necessary for the victim; for the priest and the victim are still Christ Himself. This poor human instrument standing on the altar is no more than an instrument in the hands of the High Priest. As Mary was on the first Christmas and on Calvary, the humble Catholic of today is present at the perfect sacrifice accomplished by the perfect Victim and the perfect Priest; now, as then, the people need only look over the shoulder of their leader for sure direction to the goal. What there is of imperfection, of unworthiness, is not material for worry for the people, but for the priest. Though he was chosen and did not choose this life for Himself, the standards to which he must measure up, to which he will be held, were set by that High Priest during His life in Palestine; it was Christ Who died on the Cross, not His loved ones, and it is the priest who must run the risks, face the dangers, and assume full responsibility, not the people.

In that same wide sense of sacrifice, of which we have spoken above, it is true that the whole priestly life of a twentieth-century priest is a sacrifice from beginning to end. He is set apart in order that all of his life, all his actions, might focus on the one effect of bringing men to God; it is for this that he exists, that he studies, that he works, that he lives. In a sense, his priesthood, too, is eternal. No priest counts his work done when the Mass is over or the confessional slide shut; it is finished when the gates of eternity swing shut on those who were committed to his care, when the eternal consummation of his sacrifice is begun.

The place of the priest and the victim in the divine plan

Through all the long chant of the priesthood the same melody has rung out clearly: gifts to men, worship and satisfaction to God. And it is through Christ alone that all things have come to all men, that all sins have been satisfied for, that the perfect holocaust was offered to God. The priesthood of the Old Law was a figure and a promise of that which was to come; what efficacy it had was by anticipation of the merits of the perfect Priest for whom the chosen people waited so anxiously. That this might be clear, the priesthood of Christ had early been foreshadowed in the strange figure of a priest, Melchisedech, who comes from nowhere into the pages of Scripture and disappears into the void from which he had come. It was strange, among a people so careful of lineage, that no mention was made of the ancestors of the priest -- almost as though he were pictured as unbegotten; it was strange that his sacrifice should have been of bread and wine, as a kind of promise, even a description of the Mass; it was even more strange that all the priests of the Old Law, still in the loins of Abraham, should have made their gesture of subjection to this stranger in the tithes Abraham paid to him.

The priesthood of the New Law is a continuation of the priesthood of Christ, not merely a memory of it. It is as dependent upon Christ the priest as an echo on the voice that gave it birth; in fact, it is as dependent on the priesthood of Christ as the existence of man is on the existence of God or the miracle of a saint on the efficacy of divine power. For in all the priesthood of the New Law, it is still Christ Who is actually the priest and the victim.

Even aside from the divine guarantee of its endurance, it would probably be extremely difficult to wipe out the memory of Christ's priesthood from the minds of men. For generosity is one thing to which we pay spontaneous tribute; particularly generosity that goes all the way, with no conditions spoiling its flavor. Of course we distinguish between generosity that reaches its heights by mistake, that, for instance, which leaves a child ruefully regarding the candy bag emptied by a generosity that thought there was more than one piece left; and that which makes no advance reckonings, such as that which enables a mother to send a son off to war with a smile veiling the tears in her heart, or which enables a wife to saunter out of the world she has known arm in arm with a husband who has brought disgrace or poverty upon the family. In our human estimation, this sort of thing makes up for many a defect; even the infamous and unlawful wife of Herod, Herodias, regains something of our respect when she passes out of history with one final, splendid gesture of generous choice, refusing to abandon her exiled and despoiled husband. If the sacrifice of Christ the Priest was no more than an incautious whimsy of God, it would have been a thing of wonder for what it gave away the very life of the Son of God.

But this was no divine whimsy. We come closer to an appreciation of the recklessness of divine generosity if we remember that in the mind of God, the intelligent Creator, there is a kind of architect's blueprint containing the smallest detail and the greatest item of the universe He has made. The small corner of these divine plans which deals with men we call predestination. Among the men whose every breath is detailed there is the man Christ Who was leader, king, legislator, above all, priest. Every detail, then, of the priesthood of Christ, every item of His sacrifice was clearly, serenely, wisely, eternally embraced in the plan of God. This truth has been the comfort of every priest since Christ and the perpetual humiliation of a human generosity which tries to match the divine. Indeed this was no divine whimsy.

The royal family of the priest: Sons by nature and by adoption

From our side, the purpose of Christ's priesthood was to bring us home. Because so much is so freely given to us, we may easily take too many things for granted, forgetting that the home to which He is bringing us is His home by right; it is ours only through still more generosity on the part of God. He is the natural Son of the family; we are members of the household only by an adoption that stooped the infinite distance between divinity and humanity to take us into the family of God. Nevertheless we are members of the family, brothers of Jesus Christ, and heirs of heaven.

Still we must not let the splendor of the home dull our appreciation of the adoption which is the means of our getting there. Not long ago, the newspapers reported that a couple had just discovered that their adopted baby of one year was feeble-minded. Since this condition could not be the result of environment, at least in so short a time, they demanded the right to return the child as so much damaged goods. The story was hardly any longer than that; yet it silhouetted perfectly the limitations of human adoption. In general, a man adopting a child is being generous, sharing his riches and his home with an unknown child. Of course, the child will not receive the wealth of the father immediately, since that kind of wealth cannot be shared and kept at the same time; it is clear, too, that considerations of his own comfort, his own companionship, and that exquisite joy that comes from caring for one who is as hapless and as grateful -- as a child have entered into the adoption. Even so, the adoption was a generous act. The present condition of the child, however, is not due to any generosity on the part of the adopter. He hasn't made the perfection of the child; he must institute a search for the perfect baby. In this particular case, the shop-lights were rather dim and the foster-parents considered themselves cheated.

Fittingness of adoption: On the part of God

Divine adoption is something else again. We need have no worry about being sent back because we are feeble-minded; God has not been cheated. His creative love does not search out a good child to adopt; rather, He makes the goodness which He adopts. He shares His riches with His adopted children immediately, as well as giving them a share in the divine heritage; for from the beginning we participate in that by which God is rich -- His infinite goodness -- a treasure which can be shared and not be diminished, which can be given away with nothing of it being lost. Nor has God filled an empty house

with the joyous laughter of children because He was lonely. The house was not empty; nor was He lonely; but He is good. It is His divine goodness which alone explains our right to the house of God.

On the part of men

Once we see something of the goodness of God, His adoption of men is understandable. We are the image and likeness of God. We have an intellect and will, as He has; we are capable of knowing and loving the infinite, though in our own humble way; with divine help, we are capable of knowing and loving God in His own divine way. In fact, there is nothing so much like God's own natural Son as a man in the state of sanctifying grace. Understand, this similarity is not that of a home to the architect's idea or of the student's knowledge to his teacher's idea. This is a family likeness ; through grace and charity we are one with God as the Son is one with Him by nature.

We are very much at home with the High Priest and Victim. Perhaps we are a little awkward and self-conscious at first; but only for a very short time. We are at home. There may be some of that strangeness and tension on our part that comes to a family whose new priest has just come home for the first time; but after all this is our brother and we are soon ourselves. When at last we reach heaven, we are one of the family who has long been looked for and at last has arrived. On arrival, we receive the rousing welcome given to one who might have strayed a little to reach home somewhat later, a little more the worse for wear, a little more ready for rest.

The adoration of men: Identity of worship given to humanity and divinity of Christ

Yet, for all that homely, lovable familiarity, we do not forget that Christ is God. His priesthood and sacrifice, never separated in our eyes from His life, are reminders and commands of that complete worship we owe to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We serve Him, love Him, live intimately with Him, yet every minute, as Mary did, we adore Him because He is God.

It is to the divine Person, of course, that we pay this tribute, as in the human world it is the person we praise or blame, not his hand, his foot, or his nature. If human nature could be separated from the Person of the Word, and thus from divinity, we would pay it the lesser tribute which we give to Mary, the tribute of supreme excellence among the saints. But it cannot be so separated; we must then, give the humanity of Christ adoration, though not absolute but a relative adoration. Thus, In adoring the Sacred Heart, or the Precious Blood we are really adoring the Word Incarnate.

This may become more clear from an examination of the tribute we pay the images of Christ. The Catholic, kissing the crucifix, does not imagine that that crucifix is alive, that it is God, that it is a mysterious power; certainly he does not consider it a representation of something that does not exist, never did exist, and never will exist. These might be the pagan's views of his idol. The ordinary Catholic would be astonished, and a little amused, at such notions; as amused as a man accused of falling in love with a piece of paper because he was caught kissing the picture of his young wife. Of course he gives honor and respect to the picture; not because it is a picture, but because it is a picture of his wife. This is a relative respect; by it he means to honor his own wife. So a Catholic, kneeling in prayer before a crucifix, gives the crucifix a relative adoration, an adoration that is referred to the Master who is represented on that crucifix.

The point should not really be so difficult; at least it is a general rule in all our human dealings that we give the same respect to a person absolutely that we give to his image or memory relatively. Our respect for the corpse at a funeral certainly does not flow from our esteem for dead bodies; it is an expression of our esteem for the person to whom this body once belonged. The relative anger of a mob burning a tyrant in effigy is not inspired by a hatred of effigies, nor is the mob under the delusion that it is destroying the tyrant in the destruction of his effigy. When a human mind has wandered so far as to make this kind of mistake, it is lost in the jungle of voodooism.

Other objects of supreme adoration in Christ; veneration of His mother; veneration of the saints

This respect or tribute to excellence varies according to the excellence it honors. The respect we give God, for example, is called adoration. To lesser degrees of excellence we give veneration, a tribute whose real basis is sanctity: for this is the preeminently human excellence; this is the respect we give to Our Lady, to the saints, to the very wise, the old. In Latin, the terms are much more precise. *Adoratio* is the generic term including all these tributes to excellence; that which is due to God alone (our "adoration" in English) is called *latria*; that which we give to Mary as the mother of God is called *hyperdulia* ; finally, the tribute paid to the saints is *dulia* .

All this may seem too technical a laboring of a perfectly clear truth; but history brings eloquent testimony to the importance of accuracy and clarity in this matter. Undoubtedly the identification of the Latin generic term *adoratio* with the English "adoration" contributed a great deal to the storm against images that swept Europe with the Reformation. At times this rioting was due to ignorance; at others, to a malicious preying upon ignorance by those who knew better. At any rate, the charge was that these images were being adored with the very same adoration with which we adore God. Notice the contrast: the modern pagans in Russia, Germany, and Spain destroy images in a petty gesture of hatred against God; the Reformers destroyed images in an ignorant gesture to protect the rights of God which, in fact, were not being violated.

The Reformers' charge was false. But the quarrel was an old, old one. The same error had been condemned in the Councils of the eighth century; and in all its long history, the error had given birth to vandalism, hatred, bloodshed, murder, general destruction. Why was all this argument made about so simple a thing as images? Why was the Church so stubborn about the whole thing; would it not have been much simpler for the Church to renew the Old Law prohibition against images and stop all this violence?

Well, there was first of all the matter of truth. The Church may surrender, in fact has surrendered, territory, wealth, power, but not truth; for the last bit of truth is more important than all the safety, security, peace, and beauty to be found in the world. Then, too, there is the very purpose of images as a more than sufficient reason for the stubbornness of the Church. These are the books of the little ones, the script that can be read by the most unlettered of men; and the souls of these little ones are worth any price that may have to be paid for them.

Images are a memory lesson that continues to be repeated as long as a church stands; they are the seal by which the mystery and example of the lives of Christ, Mary, and the saints are impressed on our minds. The world did not have to wait for modern psychology to discover that vision is an effective means for vivid, serious instruction, for the inflaming of affection, and for indelible memory. Men knew long ago that the horrors of war visible in the streets down which they walked were far more impressive than the most detailed story of a returning soldier. In the ordinary course of human events, some things are going to strike our eyes, impress themselves on our memories, and claim our affections; if among these are not the saints, the Mother of God, and her Son, then we leave the field open to the undesirable things of the world to pay court to our hearts without any rivals.

The priest at His work: the mediation of Christ

Within the easy familiarity of a family circle there is God, Christ His natural Son, and the adopted sons and brothers of the Priest and Victim. On our side, we adore Him, familiar as He may be with us, for He is God; on His side, the High Priest, our Brother, goes about His priestly work in our favor, standing between God and ourselves, bringing us divine gifts, offering our paltry gifts to God. Of course we have other mediators: saints on earth, saints in heaven, Our Lady herself, not infrequently the shamefaced sinner pleading the cause of one who has shown mercy. But no one of these can perfectly effect the work of mediation, no one can unite us perfectly to God but Christ, for only He established the bond of friendship on Calvary and released a flood of grace into our souls. Others can only work to this end. The union itself is God's work, a work proper to Him Who is one with us in human nature and one with God in divine nature.

The tragedy of buried truths: The tragedy of modern leadership

There is inevitable sorrow in the unearthing of a buried civilization for it is the revelation of a human tragedy. Looking down on the crumbling stone, we are gazing on the final defeat of all the thoughts the works, the hopes and struggles of a people who are gone. There is this mercy about it, however, that the citizens of that culture died with it; they did not have to live on after their world was dead. The burial of a fundamental truth, on the other hand, has all the bitterness of a buried civilization to which is added an ultimate agony; for the human beings to whom it was a pillar of home are forced to live on without it.

The burial of the fundamental truth of leadership was a bitter blow to humanity. It struck directly at the truth of a man, his dignity, his freedom. And men had to live on after the truth had been buried; they had to smile at its funeral, submit to the despoilers of humanity, and even, later, join with the champions of this rule of absolute tyranny.

The tragedy of modern irreligion

What has been true of leadership in general is above all true of the perfection of leadership, the spiritual leadership whose proper act is sacrifice. The burial of the fundamental truth of the priesthood has left the soul of man bewildered, lost. It had already been a little lonely in an entirely material world which gave it no spiritual companionship; but now, that soul has been snatched from home and country to a barren exile, alone. The wandering, exiled victims of our present war, miserable as their plight is, are a very mild likeness of the hidden misery of all men brought on by a more subtle attack that has pulled man out of the harmony of nature and forced him to live a lie.

The treasure cave of Bethlehem

The cave of Bethlehem sheltered more than the mother, her Child, and the foster-father; it contained, too, all the fundamental truths which the world had tried to bury throughout the centuries. These truths are never buried beyond recovery because God Himself was born in a cave; there we find such truths as the immortality of the soul of man, the validity of his intellect, the freedom of his will, his faith and hope, his virtue and merit, courage and high endeavor, the goal to which he goes. Fingering this treasure of truth, we must not overlook the truth of man's position and God's position in the universe; nor the absolutely fundamental truth of the priesthood and sacrifice.

The kings and the infant

There was a delicate divine irony in the providence which brought the kings of the East to the humble throne of the Infant with their treasures. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were royal gifts offered by royal hands and a fitting tribute to a poverty-stricken Child Who yet was God. The kings brought the treasures of the world; they took with them the buried treasure of fundamental truths. In reality, it was the Infant who had brought treasures to the kings, not the kings to the Infant.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER VII -- VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD (Q. 27-34)

1. Woman and the world:
 - (a) The criterion of an age.
 - (b) Bases of a philosophy of life: animal, rational, divine.
 - (c) Fundamental tests of woman's life:
 - (1) Sanctity.
 - (2) Virginity.
 - (3) Marriage and childbirth.
 - (4) Evaluation of the infant.
 2. The exemplar of womanhood -- the mother of God.
 3. Preparation for divine maternity:
 - (a) Preparation of soul -- perfect sanctity:
 - (1) Immaculate Conception.
 - (2) Freedom from actual sin and the inclinations to it.
 - (3) Fullness of grace.
 - (b) Preparation of body:
 - (1) In relation to God -- absolute virginity:
 - a. Its universality.
 - b. Its stability and merit.
 - (2) In relation to men; marriage to Joseph.
 - (3) In relation to the angels; the Annunciation.
 4. The Infant conceived:
 - (a) Material of the flesh of Christ:
 - (1) Remote material: the ancestors of Christ.
 - (2) Proximate material: furnished by Mary.
 - (b) The active principle of conception.
 - (c) Characteristics of this conception.
 - (d) Perfection of the infant in the womb.
- Conclusion:
1. Mary and the woman of the modern world:
 - (a) In the light of the fundamental tests.
 - (b) From their preparation for life.
 2. Fruits of the lives of Mary and the moderns.
 3. The only choice: Madonna, Virgin, Magdalen.

CHAPTER VII -- VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD (Q. 27-34)

Woman and the world: The criterion of an age

THE housewife bustling about her kitchen, the tired shop-girl smilingly meeting the discourtesy of customers, the product of a finishing school stepping into a world that is always glamorous to youth, these may all seem far removed from the abstract philosophies of life which mold the thought and action of an age. Actually, the status of woman, any woman in any age, is a concrete expression of the philosophy of life on which the citizens of that age proceed in the living of life. This statement does not demand mental gymnastics for its comprehension, nor does it ask philosophy to work the modern miracle of standing erect in a careening street-car serenely powdering its nose. It merely demands a consideration of the solid fact that the life of woman is one of the most vivid and accurate of all the norms of judgment of an age and its philosophy.

Bases of a philosophy of life: animal, rational, divine

A moment's examination of our age, or any age, will bring out unmistakably the only three bases for human life: the animal, the human, and the divine. The life of every age is physical, human or divine; built up on the basis, that is, of strength, justice, or charity. It is true, of course, that some men of every age have acted like animals; it is also true that in the most debased ages there were some men who were uprightly human, even some who were saints. The question here is not of the exception but of the rule, of the ideal to which an age looks and the things that it condemns or mocks. Considered in that general light, there is nothing in an age that so sharply mirrors its philosophy as the lives of its women.

Perhaps this fact can be brought out most briefly by a short comparison. A sea-plane can stagger through pounding seas for a while, for it has something in common with the sea, some bond of unity; but in a very short time it is pounded to pieces. When it soars above the sea into the air, its flight is swift, accurate, though, often enough, quite rough; the air is its proper medium; that is where it belongs. If it is equipped with superchargers, variable-pitch propellers, and a sealed cabin, it can get above the level of ordinary air to travel in the stratosphere; there its flight is of such speed and grace as to stagger the imagination.

Fundamental tests of woman's life

Woman has something in common with the animal level of life, some bond of union with it; but if she is forced to live on that level very long, she must break up. Physically she is no match for a man; in an age whose philosophy is based on strength, she becomes a toy, an instrument of pleasure, an inferior creature, for the principle of such an age is that might makes right. She was made to live on a human level, on that plane she is the equal of the mightiest and the wisest. Yet, because on the purely human plane strength so often usurps the place of justice, the course of her life may often be very rough. On the supernatural, the divine, plane, where she can expect not merely justice but also charity, she reaches her highest perfection; there her life is one of smooth grace for there, above all other planes, is where she belongs.

Every age has had a practical opinion of woman because every age has had a philosophy of life whose expression has thundered ceaselessly on the shores of woman's life. Strangely enough, in the ages most unkind to women it is women themselves who are often the most aggressive champions of the debased philosophy by which that age lives. It may be that such women have actually become convinced of the philosophy of that age; it may be that they have been tricked by the specious promises such an age always holds out to its victims; or it may be that woman's championship of such a philosophy is merely another expression of that subtle, feminine practicality which knows so well how to listen and to say the things that men most willingly hear. The repercussions of a philosophy of life upon women has been so clearly seen that the attempt to dodge them has produced queer results in the history of humanity. In some ages, the nineteenth century for example, the result was an hypocrisy that approached the comic. Apparently the nineteenth century was a romantic age; actually, its romantic glorification of women was fatalism that tried to hold to the Christian respect for women. It found itself helpless to do so except by glorifying the only weapons its philosophy had left for women in a world of brute strength and mechanical inevitability, namely, youth and beauty. Women, trying to live up to the demands of their age, lived in a nightmare of absurdity that found a feeble reflection in the very clothes they wore. Still other ages attempted to hold to an animal abuse of women in an age of a human philosophy of life by maintaining that woman was something less than a human being.

More frequently, however, there has been a frank application of a definite philosophy of life to the women of that particular age. In an age based on animal philosophy, woman is a toy, a domestic instrument, or a necessary nuisance; in any case, she is to be used and discarded. In a rational age, she will be an equal who could yet be taken advantage of when the need arose. In a divine or supernatural age, she is the daughter of the mother of God, a member of the mystical body of Christ, coming directly from God and going to Him, redeemed by His blood, and cooperating in one of His greatest works, the generation of human beings.

Sanctity

To discover the status of woman, it is not necessary to carry on extensive researches into the philosophy by which an age lives. No more is necessary than the application to woman's life of the basic tests of human and divine life for a woman. We need only ask a few questions. What value does she, and her contemporaries, place on sanctity; i.e., has the divine any place in her life? What is her estimate of virginity? What is the attitude of her contemporaries and herself to marriage? What part has the consecration of love and the stability of justice in the living of her life? What is a child, what is the evaluation of infant life? In a word, has reason any place in her life?

Virginity

More concretely, it can be said positively that an age which mocks sanctity, considers virginity a matter of taste or lack of opportunity, declares marriage a legal convenience for the satisfaction of passion, and strips the child of rights, giving it consideration only in accord with parental convenience -- such an age is based on an animal philosophy of life. Its norm of living is purely physical; its yardstick is brute strength.

Marriage and childbirth; evaluation of the infant

Ultimately, of course, the difference between an animal and a rational age boils down to the difference between the denial and the admission of the spiritual nature of the soul of man. If the vote of an age goes against the spiritual character of man's soul, then the only basis of judgment is the material; the weaker must, of course, suffer. And the weaker are always the women and children. It may seem fairly safe to deny a child's rights, since the child is, after all, quite helpless; so the thing is promptly done by abortion and its cousins. But once the lie has started, it is hard to stop. If the child presents an opportunity for the expression, in a particularly cowardly way, of materialism's social principle that might is right, why should the principle stop there? It does not stop there. We talk half laughingly today of the battle of the sexes; but it is not a very good joke. There was never such a thing except in a materialistic age; even then, the war has never lasted very long. In such a war, on such a basis, woman always loses.

All this is on the negative side. The positive side can be seen, clear-cut and decisive, by even a hurried glance at womanhood's model, Mary, the mother of God. There we can see not only what woman can be but what she is. This is woman's place and her titles to it.

The exemplar of womanhood -- the mother of God

The perfection of Mary's womanhood stands out most sharply in the supreme moments of her life: in her divine maternity and her preparation for it. To put the same thing in the words we have been using up to this point, Mary's perfection is brought out from the confused detail of her age by the application of these basic tests of any woman's life: sanctity, virginity, marriage, the evaluation of the infant. Mary, seen from the vantage point of these basic tests, leaves no room for doubt of the basis upon which woman's life is lived to its fullest. It must, of course, be remembered that Mary is a model in the order of nature as well as in the order of grace. Grace does not destroy but rather perfects nature. Mary, then, is the exemplar for women, not only in so far as she is the holiest of women, but also as the most womanly of women, the most free, winning the highest possible place in the hearts and minds of men.

Preparation for divine maternity: Preparation of soul -- perfect sanctity: Immaculate Conception

Mary's preparation for her divine maternity began in the first instant of her life in the womb of her mother by that singular privilege which is called the Immaculate Conception. It is necessary to stop here for a moment and remark on a world-wide instance of that obtuseness which is the despair of teachers. An explanation is given, made very clear, repeated again and again, and every student agrees that he understands perfectly; then a recitation is called for and the student not only have the matter backwards, they give it that way. It has been explained again and again that the Immaculate Conception has nothing to do with Mary's conception of Christ, that it refers to Mary's conception by St. Ann and it has nothing to do with a virgin birth. Yet year after year, it is taken as a statement of the virgin birth of Christ. The Immaculate Conception is not a statement of a miraculous conception; but of a miraculous preservation from sin in the entirely natural conception of Mary by her mother.

In a previous volume, it was explained at great length that all the seed of Adam contract the sin of nature (Original Sin) in receiving nature from nature's head. Christ was not an exception to this general rule; for He was not from the seed of Adam, as will become more clear later on in this chapter. The one solitary exception to the general rule was Mary, and the exception in her case was made in anticipation of the merits of Christ. Though from her natural origin she should have contracted it, she was preserved from

Original Sin; and that preserving grace of the merits of Christ freed her from all rebellion of the lower appetites, from every least motion of sense against the regime of reason.

St. Thomas, in his treatment of the original sanctity of Our Lady, insisted on three things: her purity from sin; her redemption by Christ; and the fact that the grace of her sanctification was also a grace of preservation. On these same principles, Pope Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception to be of faith. But there is a serious dispute among theologians as to whether Thomas taught or denied the Immaculate Conception itself. The argument hinges fundamentally on a distinction of priority of time and of nature; in other words, the question at issue is whether Thomas was arguing that we must *think* of Mary as conceived before being sanctified, or whether he maintained that Mary *was*, in time, conceived and later sanctified. The defined doctrine of the Immaculate Conception makes it clear that Mary was preserved from original sin in the very instant of her conception; so that never, even for the shortest period of time, was there a stain of sin on her soul.

The argument as to the stand of Thomas is sharp, sometimes even bitter. Really it does not merit sharpness or bitterness. In the light of the humanity of Thomas, it seems small to begrudge him a single mistake or to gloat over his having made one. In the light of the incredible accuracy of his far-reaching mind, he might well have foreseen and taught this truth of faith as he did so many others. Certainly it would be a contradiction of evident facts for any man to challenge Thomas's love for and appreciation of the sanctity of the mother of God.

Freedom from actual sin and the inclinations to it

He insists, for instance, that never in all the course of her life did Mary commit any actual sin, either venial or mortal. She was the mother of God. As the honor of parents reflects on their children, much more does the shame of a mother reflect on her child; Mary would not have been worthy to be God's mother had she been guilty of sin. Then, too, she above all others was so close to Christ, the Holy One; He took flesh from her and dwelt so intimately in her, not only in her womb but in her heart.

Fullness of grace

Mary's proximity to her child and its effects is brought out beautifully in Corregio's "Holy Night" which, I believe, hung in Dresden before night fell in Germany. In it, Mary is bending over the Child Who, however, does not appear in the picture; over Mary's shoulder, Joseph can be seen standing in the shadow. The Virgin's whole face and body is alight with a brilliant, soft splendor as though she had just put her arms around the sun. The moving beauty of the picture has solid foundations in the profound truth of the effects on Mary of her divine Son. The farther we take her away from Christ, the less we know about Mary herself; the closer we bring Mary to Christ, the better we understand her. It is this proximity to the source of all grace that makes it so easy for us to understand something of the fullness of the grace of Mary; He was the fountainhead; she was the closest of all men and women to this source of living water.

Perhaps we can get a still further insight into the perfection of Mary's grace through a homely example. An oaken log, lying in the damp underbrush, is only a potential source of the comfort of fire. When it is first exposed to the flames, it undergoes a period of disposition, of drying out. When that is over, the form of the fire invades the log and we see miniature flames, dancing like elves, catching tentatively at its huge sides with finger-tips that slip again and again; as they grow bolder and stronger, the flames seem to rush at the log in solid ranks, are repulsed, to try again and again. Finally, the whole log, entirely aflame, is a holocaust worthy of the dignity of an oak. In the perfection of Mary's grace, we can distinguish three somewhat similar stages. The first, the stage of disposition, made her worthy to be the mother of God and called the Immaculate Conception. The form of perfection really took full hold on her soul in the conception of Christ and her constant life with Him. Finally, in the glory of heaven, she is a blazing holocaust of grace, one with God in the beatific vision.

Mary's preparation of soul was perfect. She was sinless in her conception, spotless through all the days of her life. Others had been sanctified in their mother's womb, Jeremias and John the Baptist for instance, but

only she was immaculately conceived. Others all through their lives had avoided mortal sin; she alone passed through the course of human life without the slightest stain of even venial sin.

**Preparation of body: In relation to God -- absolute virginity:
Its universality**

Normally, we speak of virginity in its spiritual sense, meaning the abstention from all voluntary venereal pleasure, whether lawful or unlawful. When we speak of Mary's virginity, over and above this we include that physical integrity which, in other women, may be lost in various ways and which is virtuously surrendered in the consecrated act of marriage. Even in this physical sense, Mary was a perfect virgin though she conceived and bore a son.

This virginity was flatly miraculous. Its challenge today a part of the universal challenge to the supernatural. The challenge is not made in the name of the progress of science, though it is under that heading that many reject it today; rather it is made in the name of the decadence of faith. There is no scientific question involved here at all; for the point at issue is not what a secondary cause in the physical order can do, but rather what the first cause can do. Philosophically the possibility of this miraculous virginity represents no difficulty whatever. If the secondary cause of natural conception, the natural father, operates by virtue of the first cause, as everything must, then surely the first cause can produce the same effect without the secondary cause which is so entirely dependent. To put it more plainly, God can do anything which He has put within the power of any of His creatures.

We do not expect a worm to jump up and run down to the beach for a swim. We are quite sure the best a worm can do by way of locomotion is to crawl along flat on the ground; that is the only mode of operation open to it, since it is a worm. A man can, of course, crawl along on his stomach if he wants to; but we see no difficulty in admitting that he has several other means of locomotion. After all, he is not a worm, his nature is not limited to one avenue of action as is the material creation which does not enjoy his intellectual knowledge. The critics of the supernatural, in denying to God the power of His creatures, demand that the action of God be as limited as the action of nature, even of irrational or unknowing nature. Since the operation of any being follows the nature of that being, of course the operation of God follows the omnipotently perfect nature of His being. The possibility of the virgin conception and birth of Christ is plain philosophically; the fact of it is something to be accepted by faith.

For us the fact is certain. In the conception of her Son, the power of God entered the womb of Mary as serenely enriching and undamaging as a thought entering the mind. In the birth of Mary's Son, the Son of God left her womb, leaving the seals unbroken, with the same divine ease with which He came to the Apostles after His resurrection, the doors being locked. Ever after, Mary's loyalty to her divine Lover and the humbly unselfish love of Joseph preserved that virginity intact.

The fact is sure. The beauty of the fact is worthy of a work of God. Mary's Son was the eternal Son of God. It was beneath the dignity of the eternal Father to share His parenthood with a man. Christ was the Word of God; He should have proceeded from His mother as He does from the mind of God, without corruption, with no destruction of integrity. He came that He might take away the sins of the world, yet a natural conception would make Him guilty of the sin He came to destroy. He came that men might be born again spiritually of the Holy Ghost; so He himself was conceived through the power of the Holy Ghost. He came to restore integrity to human nature; should He take integrity from His mother? He it was Who commanded that parents be honored; would He overlook the opportunity to give His own mother the sublime honor of virginity?

Perhaps because those who bow before the altars of the animal are always blind to beauty, this enduring virginity of Mary is taken today as an unnatural condemnation of sex. That mistaken estimate has missed the whole beauty of virginity and the whole meaning for all her daughters of Mary's spotless purity. This is a divine emphasis of the sacred significance of sex, not its condemnation. Here it was plainly said that sex is not a toy, not a master, not an instrument of pleasure, but a messenger of love, the physical

expression of spiritual sublimity. Separated from love, sex is not human but animal. In Mary, that love was a divine love, a love that needed no physical expression; indeed, from the side of the divine Lover a physical expression was an impossibility. To that love, Mary brought purity as every woman should. Her virginity was absolute, to emphasize the high place of purity and the sacredness of divine consecration; in all other wives, Mary's virginity is paralleled by faithful chastity, that is, by adherence to the human significance of sex.

Its stability and merit

In order that the preparation of her body be absolutely perfect, Mary gave her virginity the stability and perfection that cling to a vow like perfume to a flower. She consecrated not merely her act, but her very power to act; the whole substance of her body, not merely its use. This vow of virginity was probably made absolute only after her espousal to Joseph and in conjunction with him; for the Old Law seemed to make generation an obligation, a part of the race's preparation for the Messiah. It was only after the glorious news of Gabriel that Mary knew she could take an absolute vow of virginity.

In relation to men; marriage to Joseph

In her preparation for life, Mary could not, of course, slight the virtue of justice which regulates the relations of men to men and men to God. In justice to her Son, to herself, and to society it was necessary that she be married. In that prosaic statement lies a wealth of significant truth: the truth, for example, that the strength of Rome needed the stability of the carpenter's home in Nazareth; that God needed the protection, name, and care of a father; even the strange truth that the devil himself could not penetrate the mystery of this family. There, too, is the truth that the mother so protected by God needed a husband to escape the blundering penalties of men, to preserve her good name, and for the love he would give her, a love that would make care, thoughtfulness, protection completely sure.

Joseph's position as head of that family was necessary for our stumbling hearts centuries later; that, by an added witness to the mystery of the Incarnation, we, who are so slow to believe, might have a confirmation of the word of the mother of God. From Joseph's part in that family life, we are given a divine approbation of virginity for both sexes; and in the vivid language of his action, we see the blessing of God on marriage. Joseph was truly the husband of Mary; this is not to be forgotten. We must remember that Joseph was deeply in love with Mary, and she with him. In their union, there was that complete consecration of soul that is the essence of human love; the mutual surrender of rights which is the essence of marriage, though the exercise of rights was suspended in the name of a greater love which the constant presence of the divine Child would not permit them to forget; here there was even a God-given child to be moulded by a human mother and father.

In the contemplation of Mary's perfection, it would not do to overlook Joseph. A dogged, humble, unquestioning devotion marks all of his recorded life. The uneasiness about his wife's condition as they approached Bethlehem, the shock of the news that every place was taken, the panicky search for quarters, all this was Joseph's worry. The warning of Herod's murderous intent was given directly to Joseph; the hurried flight into Egypt was a matter for him to manage. The long return from Egypt to Nazareth was something for Joseph to plan and carry out. He faced a routine of daily drudgery that hardly brought in a living when he would have liked to lay kingdoms at the feet of his beautiful young wife.

In fact, Mary's entry into the life of Joseph was a signal for unceasing trouble. Before his espousal and marriage to the mother of God, Joseph's life was one of serene, uneventful peace; he was a humble artisan in a tiny village completely off the trade route which was the artery feeding men's desires for power and wealth. Quite probably nothing out of the ordinary had ever happened to Joseph; his was the serene routine of quiet, daily labor. But that was before Mary came. There was the immediate worry about her miraculous pregnancy, a terrible agony for one who knew Mary as Joseph did and one that well deserved the prompt assurance of the angel to put an end to Joseph's search for an easy way out for Mary. He was rushed to the other end of the land with a wife whose time had almost come, and forced to find lodging where there

were no lodgings to be found. Kings visited him and his family who had never thought to come within miles of a king. Kings pursued him and tried to put his Child to death. He was driven into exile and forced to earn substance for his family among strangers. Mary brought trouble to Joseph, plenty of it; and he loved every instant of it. He rejoiced that he had been chosen to protect her, to give her unselfish devotion. In other words, Joseph was in love.

It is impossible to think of Joseph without loving him; He was indeed a father and we have seen his likeness on earth. For love is always a call to things above ourselves, to unquestioning sacrifice and complete consecration; it is an invitation to heroism which, somehow, we do not hesitate to answer. It is the natural parallel, in the lives of men and women of every age, of the Annunciation of the angel to Mary.

In relation to the angels; the Annunciation

This was Mary's preparation in the sight of the angels: an unquestioning response to the proposal of God. The Annunciation was an instance in which the human heart most closely imitated the enduring embrace of angelic love. It was right that Mary be told of the mystery beforehand. It was right that she receive the Son of God in her mind and her heart before receiving Him in her body; certainly that faith in Him would bring her more joy and more merit than the mere physical bringing of Him into the world. It was right that she who was to be the principal witness of the mystery should, above all others, be certain; and how could she be certain except by divine instruction?

Mary, it must be understood, was not an ignorant peasant girl pushed into divine things unwittingly. This was the Queen of heaven in her youth. Her offer of herself to God was a willing surrender of youth and beauty made with eyes wide open and heart unwavering; her gesture was regal, majestic, marking one of the heights achieved by human nature, for her acceptance was an "I will" of human nature to a spiritual matrimony with God. The Annunciation was a hushed moment in the history of the universe when the fate of the world hung on the response of the Virgin Mary.

The longer we study the scene of the Annunciation, the deeper it digs into our heart with that quietly mysterious penetration we notice in loving regard of the strange familiarity of a loved face. How thoughtful of God to send an angel! It was in complete accord with His general order of providence which makes angels the leaders of men to divine things as it makes all higher things the leaders of the lower; but it was more than that. It was a gesture of apology from angelic nature for the original betrayal by an angel of that nature through a woman. What a pair they make, the virgin and the angel! How close they approach one another; if St. Jerome was right in maintaining that to live in the flesh but not according to the flesh is not an earthly but a heavenly life, never did human nature approach closer to the angelic.

It was a divinely clever touch to have Gabriel appear in bodily form to announce the visible coming of the invisible God. Mary was to receive the Son of God not only in her mind but also in her womb; it was, then, not only her mind but also her bodily senses that were refreshed by the angelic visitor. This was a story to which the world must hold with certainty, even though for that certitude it be necessary to make tangible an angelic spirit and to record in sound the flashing message of angelic intelligence.

No angel ever did a better job than Gabriel. If he had been told of his mission at the beginning of his long angelic life and had sat down in a corner of heaven in a grim concentration of his angelic mind through the centuries, he could hardly have improved on the composition of that brief message. He was a messenger with a story to tell to a virgin, a story which must win her consent. Really, then, he had three things to do: he must catch her attention, announce the mystery, and win her consent. Notice that he took no gamble on his angelic beauty and majesty alone riveting the attention of Mary. Maybe he was a particularly humble and modest angel; maybe, knowing Mary's absorption in God, he thought she might sniff at a mere archangel. At any rate, he took no chances; he promptly astonished her beyond measure by his very first words.

To a really humble mind, as Mary's was, nothing is more astonishing than to hear oneself praised. Here

was unlimited praise, and from an angelic source: "Hail full of grace"; as if that were not enough, there was a hint of the miraculous conception, "The Lord is with thee"; finally, an indication of the blessings that were to follow on that vaguely hinted privilege, "Blessed art thou among women." This was indeed a cautious angel who took no chances.

With Mary's astonished eyes fixed on him in rapt attention, the first part of his work was done; he went rapidly on, instructing her in the mystery of the Incarnation: "Behold thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son." Then telling her of the dignity of the Child, the Son of the Most High, he explained to her how it would take place: "The spirit of the Most High shall come upon you." Sweeping on to the convincing conclusion, he cites the example of Elizabeth and states the root of all these wonders, the omnipotence of God, "for no word shall be impossible with God." It is a breathless scene, moving with the rush of love. Who can say how love enters a human heart; how could Mary say what the angels' words had done to her heart? There is no hint of doubt in the Virgin. She did not ask, "how shall I know this," as Joachim did, stating his disbelief; rather, she declared her firm belief, asking, not how she could know, but how it could be done. Whether this question was asked in a moment of anxiety for her cherished virginity or in a thoroughly justified curiosity, it was a question wonderfully becoming her age and her sex.

Her answer put the mystery of love into human words that would resound within the walls of the world until there were no more human hearts to love: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word." Complete surrender, complete dedication; unconditional, joyous, eager; words whose garments are faith, hope, humility, absolute trust.

The Infant conceived: Material of the flesh of Christ: Remote material: the ancestors of Christ

Then the Son of God was made man. He took flesh from a child of Adam, but he was not from the seed of Adam. He was prophet, priest, and king as a worthy descendant of His ancestors; more than that, He was God and the Author of His ancestors. There is much discussion about the genealogy of Christ as given in the Evangelists who give it through Joseph. Some have claimed that Mary and Joseph were so closely related that the genealogy of one would be that of the other; the Evangelists' accounts, then, give us the actual ancestors of Christ while preserving the Jewish custom of tracing ancestry through the male line. If this is so, it is not hard to detect the divine humor smiling at our ponderous theories of selective perfection of the race, for most of the women, besides Mary, mentioned in the Gospel account of Christ's ancestry were disreputable. Others maintained that this account is strictly the line of Joseph, explaining that among the Jews an adopted or legal sonship was considered as strong and true a bond as natural sonship. If this be the case, then we know nothing of the ancestors of Mary; and, again, there is reason for a divine smile at our pride of family and race.

Proximate material: furnished by Mary

The proximate parent of Christ was beyond all question the Virgin Mary. She gave to Him what every mother gives to her son; He was flesh of her flesh, blood of her blood. It was to this that all her preparation was directed, for this it was necessary; her Son was the Son of God.

The active principle of conception

Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost; that is, the active principle of generation was God Himself. Since this conception was a work extrinsic to God Himself, it was, of course, the work of the whole Trinity; but it is attributed to the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, for it was a work of love and by the Holy Ghost we ourselves are also made sons of God. The first cause, God, did what is ordinarily left to the causality of the second cause, a human father. Not that the Holy Ghost is spoken of as the father of Christ; the Son of God already had an eternal Father in heaven. This generation was not according to that substantial likeness that is essential for the establishment of the relationship of father and son. It was miraculous, for it was a generation by the direct action of God; yet, since it was from the material offered by the Virgin, on this

count it can be called natural.

Characteristics of this conception

However, through all the Incarnation, it is the miraculous that holds our attention, as it is through the life of Christ. Here, in the very first instant of Christ's life, the miracles piled one on another might shock our minds into incredulity if we did not remember the infinite power of the active principle in this generation. Because God Himself was the generator, the body of Christ was a perfectly formed human body at once; it was informed by a rational soul in the very first instant and, in that same instant, was assumed by the Son of God. All this we have seen, at least in principle, in a previous chapter in studying the essence of the Incarnation.

Perfection of the infant in the womb

The perfection of this divine Infant was spiritual as well as physical. From the first instant, His soul possessed sanctifying grace, the use of free will, infused and beatific knowledge. For God was the generator, and the Son of God was the Person involved in this assumption of a human nature. The perfection of the Infant obviously has a deeper significance than fittingness to the Son of God and the mother of God. Here is underlined a truth that marks the sharp difference between the pagan and the Christian world. For here is written, in capital letters of perfection, the truth that the infant, helpless though it be, is the equal on human grounds of any adult; and this from the first instant of its life. Where justice and charity are the bases of human life, this truth is evident; where physical strength is the foundation of human living, what chance has the infant?

Conclusion: 1. Mary and the woman of the modern world: In the light of the fundamental tests

The material of this chapter might well be summed up in a comparison of Mary with the woman of the modern world, if it be soundly understood that the modern part of that comparison does not dignify this or that woman, or group of women, but the modern ideal. What is said of modern woman, then, is by no means a wholesale condemnation of the women of the twentieth century; rather, it is an exposition of the position of woman today in the light of the things approved or disapproved, applauded or mocked by the philosophy by which our age directs its life. With this caution well in mind, we may ask: what is the result of the application of the fundamental tests of woman's life to Mary's and the Christian woman's life as against the woman of the pagan world?

We have seen something of Mary's sublime sanctity, her absolute virginity, something of her regard for marriage, and her justice to herself, her Child, to Joseph, and to society. We have seen her response to the high call of love. What of the modern woman?

What chance has she to strive for sanctity when the very existence of the soul is denied, the freedom of her will rejected, and the moral code scoffed at as a mere convention? Virginity? A personal matter of fastidiousness or of social fitness, when it is not something to be tossed away quickly in the name of development of personality. Is marriage thought of in terms of justice to the child, to the husband, to society; or rather in terms of physical beauty and social convenience? The question is, of course, rhetorical. Is there a high, unselfish, even reckless response to love's demand for sacrifice; or a careful reckoning of personal advantages, a clinging to an avenue of escape in love's most sacred acts, with a door left open for a quick retreat at the moment when love's price becomes too high?

From their preparation for life

We have looked at Mary's life as a preparation for divine maternity: a preparation of soul through sanctity, of body through virginity; an enveloping the lives of men in relation to marriage, and as reaching to the heights of the angels in the Annunciation. What would be the preparation of the woman of our time if she were to follow the ideals of her age? Surely not sanctity. Hardly virginity. For marriage, there would be

some physical, financial, emotional, and social reasons considered; but that would pretty well sum it all up. A shorter summary could be made by simply listing the considerations of self.

Fruits of the lives of Mary and the moderns

The fruits of such lives are fruits worthy of the sowing. Mary was blessed among women. In her lifetime she won unselfish love, the joy of caring for her Son, the triumph of Calvary, the sorrows of earth and the glories of heaven. Just such fruits have come to the Christian mother ever since. The pagan earns the scorn of men for her cowardice, her shallowness, her selfishness, her lust or her weakness, though it was at the behest of men that these things were cultivated. She wins indifference from her child who returns what he has received. There is none of the triumph or exquisite joy of sacrifice, for there is no sacrifice. The shallow pleasures of earth will not drown earth's sorrows. In eternity, at least there will be many questions to answer.

After all, a woman was not made to live in a world whose philosophy of life is on an animal basis, where strength alone counts, where might is right. In such a world it is the weak who suffer, the women and children; in such a world, woman has but two strong points, her youth and her beauty. Who shall blame her for clutching so desperately at them; who shall blame her for not exposing others to such a burden, for refusing to weaken her own precarious position by the burden and dependence of children ? Certainly not one who embraces the philosophy by which she is asked to live; yet, in the end, it is precisely such as these that give her the bitterest scorn.

The only choice: Madonna, Virgin, Magdalen

Her life was meant to be lived at least on a human basis of justice. In the divine life of charity, she attains her fullest development, her fullest happiness; for here justice and love rule, not strength. On such a basis, she has open to her a life of fullest perfection, the kind of life portrayed by the model of women, Mary, the Virgin and Mother. In these two alone a woman can find happiness; she must be either the mother or the virgin, with virginity maintained or, by the bitter path Magdalene walked, regained.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER VIII -- THE HELPLESSNESS OF GOD (Q. 35-39)

1. The feast of the child:
 - (a) The two sides of Christmas: Mary's and the Infant's.
 - (b) Two types of helplessness.
 2. The gift of Christ.
 3. The Infant and the Christmas story:
 - (a) The birth of Christ:
 - (1) Birth in general.
 - (2) Birth of Christ in particular:
 - a. The fact itself.
 - b. Consequences of the fact:
 - 1) For Christ.
 - 2) For Mary.
 - c. Time and place of the birth of Christ.
 - (b) The manifestation of Christ:
 - (1) Persons to whom it was made.
 - (2) Its order.
 - (3) Its agencies: angels and the star.
 - (4) The Magi.
 4. The law and the Infant:
 - (a) Circumcision of Christ and the Holy Name.
 - (b) The offering in the temple.
 - (c) The purification of Mary.
 5. The close of the hidden life:
 - (a) Baptism of John the Baptist:
 - (1) Its fittingness and origin.
 - (2) Its effects.
 - (3) Its subjects and duration.
 - (b) John's baptism of Christ:
 - (1) The baptism itself.
 - (2) Its circumstances
 - (3) Divine testimony at the baptism.
- Conclusion:
1. The helplessness of God and of men:
 - (a) The example of Christ: Christian helplessness.
 - (b) Mockery of Christ:
 - (1) Helplessness of sensuality.
 - (2) Helplessness of brutality.
 2. Foundation of the mockery -- the decline of personality:
 - (a) Evidenced by the attitude toward infants.
 - (b) Evidenced by the attitude toward adults.
 3. The sad lesson of Christmas: become like little children.

CHAPTER VIII -- THE HELPLESSNESS OF GOD (Q. 35-39)

AT TIMES the Providence of God seems unnecessarily unkind. At such times, when that thought is lurking in our minds ready to spring into bitter expression, we are actually in possession of strong evidence of our own blindness; the prayer to be said is not one for relief, but one for belief, for humility, for sight for our blindness. For instance, you have just come upon a tragic climax to a life-long story of devotion. A woman, left with two very small children, succeeds in rearing them by a life of teaching. With the children grown, happily married, with families of their own, she is pensioned and is ready for rest, with pleasant reading, perhaps a little travel. Then she suffers a stroke that leaves her helpless, dependent upon the kindness of her daughter; to add a touch of bitterness, let it be Christmas Eve. We could be in entire sympathy with the thoughts of that woman if they ran something like this: "A merry Christmas! After all these years, when I could have had a few months of rest and enjoyment of the reward of life's labor; what a fine Christmas I've been given."

We could sympathize with her because we, too, have our share of blindness. There is no difficulty in seeing the tragedy. Her bitterness is a human, understandable thing. It is hard for us, as it is for her, to see how she could have a merry Christmas. And the reason of the difficulty is that we are blind to half the

Christmas story.

The feast of the child: The two sides of Christmas: Mary's and the Infant's

After all, there are two sides to Christmas, Mary's side, the one we can easily understand and emphasize in our own lives, is one of thoughtfulness, love, care of the Infant; of the joy of giving what little there is to give. Surely, there is another side; the side of God. It is odd that we should so persistently overlook it, for there would be very little to Christmas without the Child. The Child's part of the story is summed up in the word "helplessness." The idea must have been of tremendous importance for the Almighty Himself to give it such emphasis. Translated into terms of action, it perfectly complements Mary's side of Christmas; indeed, it makes possible her side. The Child's part in Christmas was not a bestowal of gifts but a reception of them; not the outpouring of love, care, thoughtfulness, but the grateful acceptance of all these things. Yet, if we reflect a moment on what Mary brought to the Child and what the Child brought to Mary, it begins to dawn on us that it was the Child Who brought the superior gifts.

To understand this, we must see that there are different kinds of gifts. There are, of course, the obvious ones: candy, stockings, grand pianos, love, or life. But there are also more profound gifts that play a much greater part in the living of life: the offering, for example, of opportunities to others for the expression of their love, a chance for them to sacrifice, the privilege of the consecration of themselves to man and to God. Something of the profundity of these gifts appears from the Christmas story's delineation of the helplessness of God; it is strange indeed that we so frequently miss the perfectly obvious truth that without that helplessness none of the other joys of Christmas would be possible.

There is a human contempt for some types of helplessness that is a healthy contempt: our contempt, for example, for the wife who insists on being entertained, cared for, coddled; for the man who will not work because the community owes him a living; for the timid, indecisive souls who meet a crisis by wringing their hands; or for the parents whose families must be raised by others to save these weaklings from utter failure. But there is real danger in the extension of this contempt to all helplessness. This was the error of the nineteenth century, an error based on the single norm of material success which made the poor objects of contempt. We can hardly say that such success is no longer an object of worship; yet the Christmas story itself is an insistence that not all helplessness is an object of contempt.

Two types of helplessness

To escape this danger of generalizing contempt, we must learn well to distinguish the humble helplessness which is based on a knowledge of personal defects and limitations from the proud helplessness which has its basis in an exaggerated idea of personal perfection. The humble kind is rather young and happy looking, whatever its age; for it is constantly surprised by the kindness and fairness of others. The proud variety, worried and old before its time, is surly and bitter at the imperfect recognition given its own excellence. The first looks on what perfections it has as commands to give and to serve; in its eyes, imperfections, even its own, are titles to receive and to be helped. The second admits of no imperfections; but does insist that its perfections are titles to receive, while the limitations in others are commands for them to give, to serve their superiors.

The gift of Christ

Modern examples of the proud helplessness are found in those who insist on being loved to the exclusion of their loving, on being served and obeyed though they refuse to serve or obey anyone or anything. An age-old example of humble helplessness is given by the Infant in the crib at Bethlehem and emphasized throughout all of His life. The contrast between the two is sharp, as severe as that between the humility of Christ and the pride of Rome. Throughout His infancy, His adolescence, His hidden life in Nazareth, the Son of Mary received gifts; He gave others only the opportunities for love's expression. This was His time of human helplessness, a time invaluable to the fullness of other human hearts. In His public life, His passion, His death, His activity was primarily one of giving, not of receiving; He made the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead rise, sins disappear from the souls of men. He did all things well;

giving, giving, to the utmost limits of divine generosity, even to the limits of that Last Supper and of Calvary.

The perpetual undertone to the roar of His life and its climax was the constant reception of gifts. He was served by the faithful women and even by Judas, the procurator of the apostolic band; by Magdalen and her sister, Martha; by Veronica on the road to Calvary. Even as He died He was given vinegar and gall; in death, His body was cared for by Joseph of Arimathea. Indeed, even in that mockery of a trial, Pilate tried in his weak way to give Him some protection.

This particular truth of the life of Christ is worth remembering. As the model of human living, as the Truth and the Way of life, He manifested the two types of joy that are always open to every human heart, the two types of gifts which every man is capable of giving. For every human being has his limitations, his imperfections, i.e., he can receive from others, indeed, he must receive from others. In other words, the poorest of us has in his power the gifts of the Infant, the gift of helplessness. At the same time, every human being has some measure of perfection, something to give, some point of superiority; i.e., every human being has the power to give the gifts of Mary and the adult Christ. Indeed, that very superiority is a demand that we bestow these gifts. If our appreciation of the gifts of Christ stops at His power and activity, then we have overlooked half the treasure He brought us: clearly, the priceless tears of the women of Jerusalem would never have been called forth by a world conqueror; the confession of Longinus was torn from him by a dead Christ helplessly fixed to a cross.

The Infant and the Christmas story: The birth of Christ: Birth in general

St. Thomas was never one to establish his affections on the airy foundation of feeling or imagination; he was not a romancer, but a lover who never saw deeply enough to satisfy his love. He insisted that the head go first and the heart follow after; but follow all the long, hard way of truth. In treating of the birth of Our Savior, quite naturally he begins by a profound examination worthy of his great mind. He asks what is the goal of birth in general. Who or what is born? What difference does it make?

Truth always makes a difference which ignorance or blindness seldom sees. It is important to know that the intention of nature in a birth is the specific nature, for the real purpose of a birth is a specific purpose. Perhaps the importance of this will be more clear if we consider birth, rightly, as a motion; obviously the goal to which any motion is going is important, so important, in fact, that it distinguishes one motion from another, a pat on the back from a spanking. The goal to which the motion which is birth goes is a nature.

Birth of Christ in particular: The fact itself

Yet it is the person, not the nature, that is born; just as it is I, not my humanity, that falls downstairs, that learns, that is loved. It is the person, not the nature, which is the subject of all action, of all attribution. In the cave at Bethlehem, the Son of God, the eternal Word of the Father, was born; the *Person*, a divine Person. Thus the Son of God had two births, for He had two natures: one in time, from Mary; the other in eternity, from the Father. In each case it was the same Person Who was born.

Consequences of the fact: For Christ

Just as truly as Christ was the Son of God by His eternal birth, He was the Son of Mary by His temporal birth. Her divine maternity was a real perfection in Mary, an addition to her long list of perfections of which all the world would forever after be proud. But, clearly, His temporal birth added nothing of perfection to the infinite perfection of the Son of God. Our difficulty in understanding this is precisely the same as our difficulty in seeing how actual creation added nothing to God, though He could not be called Creator before the world began. The philosophical complexities of this difficulty, hinging on the distinction between a relation of reason and a real relation, have been gone into repeatedly in the course of these volumes, particularly in the treatment of the Trinity in Volume I. There is hardly any need to interrupt the story of the birth of Our Lord to go into it again.

For Mary

Let us, rather, approach the thing from the obvious, common-sense angle; a woman is the mother of one whom she conceives and bears. Mary conceived and bore Christ, bore Him joyfully, without pain, without help, for she bore him virginally; He passed from her womb as through a closed gate. She gave Him what every mother gives her son. To deny Mary's motherhood would be to wipe all motherhood from the face of the earth; a decidedly difficult task. Because this Person, her Son, born in Bethlehem was a divine Person, Mary was the mother of God. Mary, of course, did not produce the Person of her Son; no mother does. In this case, a wholly unique case, the personality of the Child did not result from the union of body and soul within the mother's womb; is existed from all eternity. The Son of God existed from eternity, and it is the Person, not the nature, that is born. The Son to whom Mary gave birth was a divine Son; His mother was the mother of God.

We shall come back to this later on in this chapter. From what has already been seen of the Incarnation, its importance is evident. Just passingly, let it be noted that there is a special pertinence, peculiar to our day, to this analysis of birth by St. Thomas. Because it is the person who is conceived and born, we cannot dismiss the beginnings of life as something vaguely human, distinct from a person. From the first instant of life, all the sovereign majesty and inviolable rights of man belong to the newly conceived infant.

Time and place of the birth of Christ

This sovereign Infant of Bethlehem had all the dignity of God as well as the dignity of man. Unlike other men, this Man could and did choose the place of His birth, and with all the infinite wisdom of divinity. Every detail, then, of that birth in Bethlehem is packed tight with meaning for us. He came when all the world was at peace, for He was the Prince of Peace. He, Who was to have one flock and one shepherd, came when all the world was under one ruler. He was the divine physician paying His call precisely when His chosen people would be most disposed to accept His help -- when a stranger sat upon the throne of Juda. He came in the night, just when day was preparing, for He came to bring light to those who sit in darkness. He came in mid-winter that from His first instant He might begin His suffering for us.

We shall see much more of the divine insistence on lowliness and helplessness if we keep the deliberate character of that divine choice well in mind. Consider the possibilities He might have been an emperor's son, born in Rome to command immediate, world-wide attention. He might have come in a blaze of terrifying divine majesty, as He will at the judgment. His aim, however, was not to impress or to terrify men; it was to redeem them and to win their love. The means He used were not the human means of power, wealth or force; but the divine means of meekness and humbleness of heart by which men are made to see the frailty and vanity of human things rather than the alluring heights of groundless pride. So He came in the obscure town in fulfillment of a promise to David. Like that great king, He made His start in Bethlehem; like him, He found the fulfillment of His kingdom in the royal city of Jerusalem, a fulfillment of shame and disgrace in contrast to the glory and power of David. He came to Bethlehem, a word which means the city of bread, for He was the bread from heaven come down for the food of men's souls.

It is taken for granted that whoever can get home at Christmas, goes home; for this is the feast of home. It is the rallying point of all hearts, as home always is; obviously, it is a time for gathering around the family hearth. Indeed, it is a miniature picture of home: the Virgin, Joseph, and her Child. Yet, all that emphasis on home takes its inspiration from Bethlehem where "Christ Himself is homeless, and all men are at home." And He was really homeless. It was not merely the poverty and destitution of His birthplace, for these do not rule out the possibility of a home. It was not that His mother had crept under the last bit of cover available; nor that His crib was shared with beasts. Rather, He was born here as one passing through, as a vagrant; what she said later about Himself, that He had nowhere to lay His head, began to be true from the very first instant.

In fact, there was a great deal of the vagabond about both Christ and His mother; the great moments of her

life, as of His -- His birth and His death -- would come literally on the road far from home. Perhaps this was divinely arranged to enable us to realize how much home means to us, seeing Him without it. Perhaps it was to emphasize, from the very beginning, the extent of His love for us in His willingness to surrender so priceless a thing as home. At least, the same price has been demanded by Him from everyone who has since tried to carry on His work of love. Yet, in a larger sense, where Christ and Mary are, men are always at home. An even more profound message of this homelessness of Christ is that no man is at home; all men are on their way, pilgrims, until finally they come to rest with Mary and the Child.

Christ's coming to Bethlehem was a quiet affair. It has been so ever since; for His coming to us is not a matter of over whelming our minds with evidence, but rather of winning our hearts by grace. If we are to receive Him at any time, it must be through faith. At the first Christmas, He gave our faith a little help, for His coming left no doubt of His humanity; but we shall never know His divinity except by the humble road of faith. In this life, men do not see the Godhead, they believe in it. On the cross, Christ could truly say: "they know not what they do"; Paul, later, could insist on the same truth, arguing "if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory." All this was as true of the beginning as it was of the end of the human life of the Son of God; the Lord of glory must be humbly believed in, not proudly demonstrated.

The manifestation of Christ: Persons to whom it was made

As it is now, so it was then; the coming of Christ was manifested to only a few. In the twentieth century, it is a comparative few who gather around His altar on Christmas Day to welcome Him. So it was then. But then, as now, these few encompassed all classes of men. Then, as now, the secrets of divine wisdom are not given equally to all but, rather, immediately to some -- less for their own sake than that they might carry the good news to the many others.

That the coming of Christ should have been made known to some is self-evident; otherwise, there was no point in His coming. That the knowledge of Mary and Joseph was insufficient to serve the divine purposes is equally self-evident; after all, that was a family knowledge which might well be suspect by a people already too willing to suspect. As a matter of fact, in such a case suspicion would be reasonable, as reasonable as our own tolerant acceptance of a mother's estimate of her own son.

There is food for solemn thought in the ushering in of Christ by terror in Herod and his royal city, and by the rivers of blood that flowed from the murder of the Innocents in Herod's attempt to cut short the reign of the new King in its infancy. This was a prophecy of the welcome of the Church of Christ in all ages; and a declaration of the futility of the hatred which inspires it, for the tyrant can never kill more than the body and even in this, his highest achievement and most serious threat, he gives his victim a martyr's crown and immediate entry into heaven. The tyrants; of course, continue to lash out, for the dignity of the heavenly kingdom makes earthly kings tremble; darkness cannot welcome the Prince of Light with any joy; and, too, every coming of Christ is a reminder of His ultimate coming as Judge.

Divine wisdom gathered a motley crowd to the coming of the Word of God: the carpenter and his wife; the shepherds, poor, ignorant, crude, with the smell of the herds fresh on them; the Magi, cultured, learned, powerful, rich; Simeon and Anna, the just pair of the Temple, wise with the weight of the years -- Jew and gentile, young and old, sinner and saint, poor and rich, learned and ignorant. Such a crowd could be gathered only in the name of something that touched our common human nature deeply; such a thing as birth, or death, or life's ultimates. Here, there was all of that and more; here was something that touched even on the common spark of divinity which glowed so faintly in all that crowd. For here was life, the death of sin, the birth of the Infant, the long-awaited coming of God.

In this light, the light of the appeal to our common human nature, it is interesting to glance at the list of the uninvited. No invitation was issued to the Greek philosophers who had turned to sophism away from truth; to the Scribes and Pharisees who had turned to formalism away from the law; nor to the Roman tyrants who had turned to force and greed away from justice. It is as though the divine secretary, drawing

up the select list, had looked to those who still held fast to human things; for only those who still esteem the human are capable of divine things.

Its order

The shepherds first saw the light, on the very day of the birth of the Son of God. Some thirteen days later, the Magi arrived; some forty days later, the mystery was made known to Simeon and Anna in the temple. In the order of this manifestation there is contained an account of the manifestation of Christ to all the ages. He manifested Himself first to the people of Israel; then He was made manifest to the gentiles from all the ends of the earth; finally, before the last page of the world's history is written, He will be manifested to all the Jews prefigured by that just couple in the temple.

Humanly speaking, the beauty and charm of the Christmas story lies, to a great extent, in the fact that it is a child's story of a Child's feast nicely proportioned to the fresh loveliness of a child. In a sense, only a child can understand it. It can appeal only to a child; so, because none of us ever entirely grows up, Christmas has a universal appeal. It is a divine fantasy; in the sharpness of its contrast and the richness of the fields it opens to the eyes of man, it is comparable to, even surpasses, the most gorgeous fairy tale of childhood. Christmas brings the Child's gifts which break the wicked enchantment of blindness and transform the world. Things are not at all what they seem: shaky, dirty tenement steps are a golden stair to heavenly mansions; the dull, gray, meaningless existence now becomes a high romance, an adventure with every moment a desperate gamble for heaven or hell; there is no human life without meaning, no moment of human life which does not demand courage and high resolve; what was a bit of bread is the body and blood of the Son of Mary; a dash of water bursts open the gates of heaven; a murmured word in dark spot does away with the stain of sin; life is a race run with ferocious speed to a goal that is incredible except to one who has the eyes of a child opened by the divine Child of Bethlehem.

Its agencies: angels and the star

After the Child and its Mother, who are always the center of it in a child's mind, the details of the feast that delight a child are especially the multitude of the heavenly hosts singing in a sky split open to let down the light of heaven, and the kings from the East with their gifts and their guiding star. To the eye of the cynic, all this seems like extravagance greater by far than a modern debutante's coming-out party, God parading His superiority in rather questionable taste. In actual fact, it is not extravagant but homely, proceeding from solid and familiar grounds, grounds as simple as a syllogism or as the methods of our first teacher. We learn step by step going on from what we already know to a knowledge of that which is as yet unknown. In precisely this human way, God gently led men to the knowledge of the coming of His Son; with the usual divine thoughtfulness, He stooped to the limitations of men, dealing with them in terms with which they were familiar.

To the just, who were familiar with the movement of the Holy Ghost, the message was delivered with no external agency; Simeon and Anna heard it in their hearts. To the shepherds, as Jews familiar with angelic messengers, the news came through angels; to the Magi of the East, long used to scrutinizing the stars, the message was brought through a star. Even where the medium of this good news to humanity was sensible signs, the signs were always heavenly: angels and stars, for a heavenly kingdom and a heavenly King were being announced.

All through this tract, St. Thomas has crowded his Summa with rich quotations from the Fathers; the Fathers, too, were in love with the feast of children. There is a great temptation here to linger; but it is a temptation that must be set aside. Not altogether set aside, of course; we shall go ahead, but slowly enough to glance over our shoulders now and then at the star and the kings it guided.

This affair of the star is not at all an approval or vindication of astrology. Clearly, here it was not a matter of a star dictating the time and details of man's life; man did not measure up to a star, but rather a star bent down to a Man. It was just such a delicate gesture of celestial bodies as was made in sorrow on Calvary when the sun was darkened; a gesture made to the Lord of all things alike when He was helpless

in a manger and dead on the cross. Down through the ages, men have made efforts to explain the star of the Magi, and by explaining, of course, they have really meant to explain it away. The most modern example is the special Christmas show put on by the planetaria of large American cities; the sky is shown as it was on that first Christmas while it is carefully pointed out that at that time three planets converged to give the extraordinary brilliance which has come to be known as the star of Bethlehem. Really, it is not any one detail of the Christmas story that makes it necessary to explain the whole thing away -- not the star, nor the shepherds, nor the angels, nor the kings; it is only because the story of Christmas demands too much of the hearts of men (not their minds) that men resort to a smoke screen of science to dodge it.

Obviously, this star is not susceptible to human explanation. It did things that are not done by well behaved stars, even by the imps among the stars. It had its own private path, followed by no other star, a path that led to Bethlehem. It did not wait until night to step out shyly with the other stars; it appeared brazenly day and night. It was temperamental; sometimes suddenly disappearing, as when the Magi approached Jerusalem, then reappearing after putting the Magi to exhaustive inquiry and upsetting both Herod and all Jerusalem. It was a light-footed star, its movements visible even to the naked eye; it not only moved, it stopped and started again, as though waiting for the Magi to catch up with it. Finally, it came to its last stop, and did what a good star never does; it came down, not crashing to earth, but in slow majesty from the heights to rest gently above the manger-bed of the Infant until even the Magi could have no doubts as to its meaning. A converging of planets indeed! Here was the end of their journey; indeed, the end of all journeys. Here was the goal of the feet of men; this was the place to stop.

Then there was an astonished cave and a proud star. It is not every night that a star descends so low as to point out one cave in a huddled town like Bethlehem, its hillside cluttered with caves. It is not every night, in fact, it is only on one night, that a star is called on to conduct kings to the King of kings. The great brilliance of the star need not have been merely from its closer approach to earth; it might well have been from the proud satisfaction of the star in an extraordinary job perfectly done.

The Magi

It was odd that kings should have come seeking a King. It is more odd that they should have come without arms and armies, generals and advisers; that they should rather have come alone with gifts for a prophet, priest, and king -- with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Even they must have understood why the star disappeared at Jerusalem, seeing the astonishment that met their inquiries. Of course they were rushed into the presence of Herod; of course the Sanhedrin was quickly called to investigate the question. Surely, by then the Magi realized that they, in their turn, were messengers of a King they had not yet seen.

It was odd, too, that they should have been so completely satisfied to find, at the end of their long trip, a carpenter, his virgin wife, and an Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes. It was even more odd that they should have fallen down in adoration with the same simplicity as the shepherds and have opened their treasure chests to offer royal gifts to an Infant. It is odd -- but only to those whose eyes are not opened to faith, to those who cannot see. To the others, well, obviously, God would not send a star to light their path and leave their hearts and minds in darkness. They knew.

They knew from the beginning that it was not an earthly but a heavenly King they sought. They knew He would have none of the trappings of an earthly kingship. They knew He would choose the weak things of the world to confound the strong. For they knew the saving truth: God was made man; the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. Warned by an angel of the perfidy of Herod, they went back to their own lands by another route, not with a star over their heads, but with the Sun in their hearts. So they pass out of history; but they never travel far enough to pass out of the hearts of children, even of the children who take childhood with them into mature responsibility.

The law and the Infant: Circumcision of Christ and the Holy Name

Eight days after the birth of Our Lord, between the visit of the shepherds and the Magi, the Child was

christened in the quiet privacy of the family. In the practice of the Jews, that meant that He was circumcised and given a name. The name He was given was not one handed down by a long line of ancestors, but one appointed by God, a name that stated the stupendous mission which explained the coming of the Child. He was to be the Savior of all men; so, quite simply, He was called Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Anointed One of God. It would be Joseph who attended to the circumcision; so it would be this most gentle of men who would bring about the first shedding of the blood of God for men and give to the most sceptical tangible evidence of the truth of the humanity of the Son of God.

Circumcision was the baptism of the Old Testament. Christ, Who was without sin, needed no baptism; still He should have been baptized, if for no other reason, to give divine approbation to the instrument by which so many of the patriarchs had found friendship with God. God's dealing with men is always so quietly thoughtful, even when He takes something from them to give them something better. So here, there was a divine approval for that which was to lose its efficacy, an accolade for the race of Abraham, and an insistence that His divine Son be unmistakably one of that race. There was, too, an example of obedience to law and the first of those assumptions of the full burden from which Christ had come to free others. With all that, there was the divinely gracious removal of this least of possible physical stumbling blocks to the acceptance of Christ by the Jews.

The offering in the temple; the purification of Mary

Forty days after the birth of the Child, we have another example of the divine respect for the institutions by which men live and of respect for men's attachment to these institutions. The days of the purification of Mary, who, as a Virgin, needed no purification, being finished, the Child, in obedience to the law to which He was superior and of which He was the author, was presented in the temple. According to the law, sacrifice was offered in expiation of sins for Him Who had no sins, and in consecration to God of Him Who was already God's Son. As He had come for us, not for Himself, so all these demands of the law were satisfied, both by Him and by His mother, that from the very beginning we might have a constant example of obedience.

With the legalities over, Joseph, Mary, and her Son, after the hurried flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth, drop completely out of sight except for the one brief glimpse of the anxious search of Jerusalem for the lost Christ Child. There is just this one gesture of the supreme Teacher made on His entry into manhood. All those hidden days are summed up in the same words which sum up all of His life which has been described in this chapter. He was subject; the helplessness of God. In the manifestation of His birth, in the fulfillment of the law, Christ Himself took no active part; His was rather a passive role. There was one more manifestation to come, one more act in which Christ was wholly passive, a manifestation that marked both the transition from the hidden life at Nazareth to the public life of labor about His Father's business and the transition from the Old to the New Testament. This was the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist in the river Jordan.

The close of the hidden life:

Baptism of John the Baptist: Its fittingness and origin

John the Baptist was a fitting figure to bridge the gap between the Testaments. He brought to his labors all the sanctity, the gaunt strength, irresistible singleness of purpose, and burning zeal of his predecessors, the prophets of the Old Law of whom he was the last. He came, not with the weapons on which they had depended, but with a new one taught directly by the Holy Ghost, the instrument of baptism.

It is not hard to visualize the emotions of John on that day, standing in the shallow waters of the Jordan, when Christ came down to be baptized. John had met Christ once before, at the time of the Visitation; then, even in the womb of his mother, John had leaped for joy. Now, again, his joy would be no more capable of restraint: it must break out in a protest of his unworthiness; it must give fearless testimony to the Lamb of God Who was to take away the sins of the world. Never did man look more joyously on the closing days of his labors; never did man see another progress, while he himself diminished, with more

whole-hearted rejoicing. For John was the friend of the bridegroom.

Its effects

This last of the prophets wielded a new weapon, a public thing that drew crowds to whom he could be the precursor of the Lord. This was the weapon, baptism, to be consecrated by Christ Himself and, later, when given divine institution and divine powers, to be the gateway to heaven. For the present it could make no such pretensions. What it could, and did, do was to prepare men for Christ and for a worthy reception of His baptism by leading them to penance and accustoming them to the ceremony which, under Christ, was to be the absolutely necessary means of salvation.

Its subjects and duration

There is a sharp distinction between the baptism of John and that of Christ, for the former did not give grace. Rather, like all the life of John, it was a preparation for grace as it was a preparation for Christ. As a preparation, it was not ordered merely to the baptism of Christ Himself by John. The multitudes that flocked to the Jordan did not come in vain; they needed preparation for the coming of such a King, needed it badly, and here they got it. Why did John not stop baptizing once Christ had come? Well, men still needed the preparation of penance. Men still lived in the shadow of the Old Testament and the full light of the New had not yet fully dawned. John had come to prepare, not to present an obstacle to the approach of Christ. Yet, had he stopped at once, he might easily have been suspected of envy or anger, surely he would have aroused envy in his disciples; his very continuation, indeed, gave him just that much more opportunity to send men to Christ.

John's baptism of Christ: The baptism itself

Christ stepped into the Jordan River, through which the Israelites had come into the Promised Land, that He might begin that march into the kingdom of God. He was what St. Thomas considered the perfect age just thirty. This was, after all, the beginning of his public career as a teacher, priest, and victim; it was not work for a child, or a boy, but for a man. He had spent enough of His life observing the law so that none could ever say He overthrew the law because He could not keep it; in thirty years a man can commit a fairly representative crowd of sins if he puts his mind to it. There is no sin a man could not commit in that time; and there was no sin that Christ did commit. In a deeper sense, the perfect age of Christ at His baptism is a statement of the truth that it is baptism that makes the perfect man.

Its circumstances

He came to John and was baptized, cleansing the waters for all time, and taking on Himself, as He always did, that which He commanded to others. That baptism, which opened up His own life among men, began His Testament, and swung slowly shut the gates of the Old Testament, was one last gesture of reverence and submission to the giants of the Old Law, the greatest of whom was His instrument in introducing the New.

Divine testimony at the baptism

The divinity of Christ was well hidden in the garments of His infancy at Bethlehem. The testimony it received was by the implements of God and for the very few. At His baptism, that divinity was no less hidden, but its manifestation was by the direct approbation of God Himself; for this was the beginning of the career of the Way and the Life, and here was the divine statement of His full authority to form the hearts of men and redeem their souls. As John poured the water, Christ, in a vision peculiar to Himself, saw the heavens open. And well He might. For this was the beginning of the battering down of the doors locked since the sin of Adam. He, the Son, stood in the Jordan; the Father's voice declared that this was His beloved Son; and the Holy Ghost hovered over Him in the form of a dove. He Himself later instructed His apostles to baptize all men in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; here, in His own baptism, was the solemn approbation of the Trinity.

There ended the purely helpless stage of the life of the Son of Mary. From then on, He was not only to receive but also to give. To understand the rest of His life in the later chapters of this book, as well as for a fuller understanding of what has been said in this chapter, let us go back to the notion with which this chapter was started; the notion of helplessness.

**Conclusion: The helplessness of God and of men:
The example of Christ: Christian helplessness**

Christian helplessness demands a nice blend of humility, magnanimity, and courage. It demands a recognition both of our limitations and our abilities. It demands the acknowledgment of the obligation to give, imposed by perfection and ability; of the need to receive imposed by imperfection and limitation. The followers of Christ are children of God: as children, they are always in need of help; but they are also men, capable of such extreme offerings as martyrdom itself. They are imperfect, but sovereign; they are helpless, but of unlimited capacity. They are not God; they are not slaves; they are not automatons; but they are Christian men.

Mockery of Christ: Helplessness of sensuality; helplessness of brutality

Pagan helplessness bases its claim to help, not on limitations but on exaggerated perfection. Its one basis is pride, with free rein given to one or another of the sense appetites. In a soft, effeminate form of sensuality, or in a base, ruthless form of avarice, it is an inhuman and disgusting thing that merits the revulsion even of the pagan. The extreme of this revulsion, no less revolting in itself, is seen today in the idolatry and brutality of power, even of physical power.

Actually, all three of these are basically the same. All three demand service from inferiors while admitting no obligation to serve. All three are based solidly on pride in one's own perfection; all three unleash a sense appetite. As inevitable corollaries of all three, there is the ruthless attempt to implant in others a sense of limitation without a sense of perfection, a knowledge of weakness with no courage or pride; for it is only in this way that they can guarantee themselves the service they demand. These men call themselves gods and deny they are men; in their world there is room only for unholy gods, for slaves, and for automatons. In all three, the inevitable conclusion is finally reached: a denial of the personality of man, of his humanity, a substitution of the mass for the individual. For in this pagan world, man is not human either in his power or in his helplessness.

**Foundation of the mockery -- the decline of personality:
Evidenced by the attitude toward infants and toward adults**

These mockeries of Christian helplessness miss the truth of the sovereign, undying spirit of man, his inalienable rights, his ordination to God; above all, they miss the truth of the supreme Vindicator of these truths. Our present theory and practice in regard to the unborn child, toward despised classes, races, or parties is indication enough of the lengths to which this paganism has already gone in our times. We have lost the meaning of man's helplessness as well as of his power, from the unborn child up and down the whole line. Indeed, the truth of man himself is lost even in those who ride the crest of success; they have forgotten that they, too, are men.

The sad lesson of Christmas: become like little children

The Christmas story is a devastating test of the humanity of any age. It is a story only to be understood by understanding children; perhaps that was part of the meaning of Christ's demand that we become like little children. For it is only when we can fully appreciate the child that we can know the man. Often enough, it is a hard thing for the pride of a man to become like a little child, particularly in a world which worships at the altar of material success; for childhood means helplessness and, in such a world, helplessness is a badge of servitude instead of rightly a claim to the most precious gifts others have to give, while success is a title to service rather than an obligation to serve. In such a world, a man cannot become a child.

because he has forgotten what it is to be a man.

[Back](#)

[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)

[Next](#)

CHAPTER IX -- CHRIST THE MAN (Q. 40-45)

1. The Way of life:
 - (a) Stages marked by the divine Exemplar of human living.
 - (b) Reasons for the order of these stages.
 2. Divine lessons in human living:
 - (a) Four activities of man.
 - (b) Their modern contraries.
 2. Christ the Man -- His converse with men:
 - (a) Essentials for social intercourse: justice and charity.
 - (b) Fittingness of Christ's life among men.
 - (c) Its characteristics:
 - (1) Not solitary and austere.
 - (2) Poor.
 - (3) Obedient to law.
 - (4) Victorious over Satan -- Christ's temptation:
 - a. Its reasons.
 - b. Its circumstances.
 - c. Its order and manner.
 4. Christ the Teacher:
 - (a) The doctrine of Christ.
 - (b) Its immediate subjects -- exclusively Jews.
 - (c) Its characteristics:
 - (1) Not without offense.
 - (2) Public.
 - (3) Always oral.
 5. Christ the Wonder-worker:
 - (a) The miracles of Christ:
 - (1) Their reasons.
 - (2) Their cause.
 - (3) Their beginning.
 - (4) Their purpose.
 - (b) The scope of Christ's miracles.
 6. The glory of Christ the Man -- the transfiguration:
 - (a) Its fittingness.
 - (b) Nature of its brilliance.
 - (c) Its witnesses, human and divine.
- Conclusion
1. Ways of life:
 - (a) Christ's way.
 - (b) The way of the modern world:
 - (1) The world and men.
 - (2) The world and truth.
 - (3) The world and divine things.
 - (4) The world and the glory of men.
 2. Dangers to social life:
 - (a) Injustice -- met by law.
 - (b) Familiarity -- met by:
 - (1) Absolute perfection -- in Christ.
 - (2) Appreciation of the eternal in man,
 - (3) Growth.
 3. A test of divinity and humanity.

CHAPTER IX -- CHRIST THE MAN (Q. 40-45)

THE improvement of communications aroused a persistent and increasing curiosity about peoples on the other side of the globe by shrinking the world. A desperate world war with ultimates at stake changed that curiosity into a consuming interest that set everyone peering over the back fence into the most detailed affairs of the family just around the world. It was to accommodate this curiosity, to satisfy the urgent demands of this interest, that newspapers adopted a steady policy of presenting this or that particular international back yard in the form of daily maps.

These maps were small, simple, easy to follow and were particularly appreciated by those who had come into contact with much larger, more detailed maps. Thus, for instance, the contrast between the newspaper

map and a federal survey map of a rural district is almost like the contrast between the finite and the infinite as far as detail is concerned. The news paper map is better for our ordinary purposes, perhaps, because it is so much easier, simpler, much more helpful. But it will stand only a first glance; by it, one cannot even follow the account in the same newspaper of the military moves the map was drawn to make clear. On the contrary, the federal survey map is so detailed as to be almost frightening; it will, however, stand a second scrutiny. In fact, the more we study it, the more we appreciate it: every road, every creed, even every house is plainly located. With such a map, a stranger can safely pass through this territory.

The Way of life: Stages marked by the divine Exemplar of human living

Christ, as the divine model of human living, gave us a map of life. It is a perfect one, because it is divine; as perfect, it cannot be obvious or easy, certainly it cannot be dismissed as completely absorbed in one glance. Rather, the more deeply it is studied, the more it is appreciated. We may examine it any way we like: we may take a corner of it, study that intently, weighing every line of its detail; or we may stand off a bit to see the map as a whole, with a resulting view of the whole terrain comparable to an aerial photograph.

Looked at in this latter way, three quite different types of countryside are easily distinguished bordering the road a man must take home. There is first of all the space between birth and adolescence, a quiet, carefree, happy time; this time Christ passed principally in Nazareth. This is ordinarily followed by the period, long or short, that is taken up with the prosaic work of living, a time when a man meets only the ordinary obstacles that enter into a human life. Thus, in the years of the public life of Christ, in spite of petty persecutions, the nagging of the Pharisees, the dullness of the apostles, and the unappreciative stubbornness of those He was helping, He was engaged in the business of living. It is only later, toward the climax of His life, that He faced the bitter territory of suffering and dying which, quickly or with agonizing deliberation, brings every man's life to a close. This is the large scale map of man's life: living, suffering, dying. The path is plainly marked by the feet of Christ, indeed, in the last stages of the journey, the footsteps are drenched with blood.

It is not without importance that Christ, the divine model, spent some thirty years of the thirty-three He had to live at the business of living before plunging into the last two stages of suffering and death. In this, as in other things, Christ took the hard way. Living is a preparation for suffering; above all, it is a preparation for death. It is the long, slow, patient hours of preparation that gall the heart of a man; yet it is only a master in the art of living who knows how to suffer, and only those who know the meaning of life can know something of the art of dying, for that is the art of plunging into another life.

In a sense, suffering is an intensified course in the perfection of living. If at the start of our suffering, we do not know very much, we must learn shortly for suffering plunges us into the Master's role. We make some curious mistakes, do some incredible fumbling, but we catch on because we have to. When we have learned the lessons of living and suffering, then we are ready to die; for then we are ready to try a greater life.

Reasons for the order of these stages

Thomas treats these three stages in the life of Christ as distinct chapters, going easy on us with the knowledge that our minds must learn slowly, step by step. To plunge into a consideration of suffering, by-passing living, would be like plunging into calculus before having learned the meaning of numbers. In life itself, there is always the fear that suffering, coming too soon, may result in cowardice, bitterness, self-pity, and ultimately, despair. The conclusion would seem to be that only the old, and therefore wise, should suffer were it not for the easy grace and masterly perfection with which a Christian child suffers. Since Christ came, you see, even a child can be wise, can taste of the fullness of life.

In this present chapter, we shall limit ourselves to the first of these three stages of human living: the prosaic business of ordinary living as it was carried out by Our Lord, Jesus Christ. If we isolate this spot on the map of life left us by Christ, standing back a little to get the whole view of this little section,

several high points immediately stand out. There is, for instance, His converse with men; then His doctrine; His temptation; His miracles; and His transfiguration. Remembering that this was the divine Exemplar of human living, we can understand that these outstanding activities of Christ are a model for the activities of every man; a truth that is immediately seen when it is translated into the language of ordinary life.

Divine lessons in human living: Four activities of man

Thus translated, we see the life of Christ as plainly marking out the four activities of men: the fast hold on human things, which is to say the embrace of other men and the rejection of the devil; the offering to others of the abundance of one's own mind and heart, a task which, of course, supposes both the abundance and the willingness to share it; then the arrangement of the furniture of the soul to make room for divine things, working the wonders that God has given men to work, fitting oneself to be an instrument of divine power; finally, the appreciation of the inner glory of oneself and of all other men. In other words, Christ, by His living, brought special emphasis to bear on the fundamental actions which must find their way into the life of a man. These are the things a man must do if he is to live up to his high destiny; this is the perfect test of success or failure of a life.

Their modern contraries

An age that had failed by this test would look something like this. Instead of embracing other men, there would be a world-wide contagion of hate; rather than shun the devil, such an age would embrace the devil himself if he furthered the purposes of such an age. This, of course, need not be so crudely stated; the same thing could be accomplished by a series of catchwords like "business is business," "ethics is a personal matter," "right is what is good for the party, the race, the class," and so on. Instead of advocating the sharing of the abundance of mind and heart, such an age might urge every man to be a rugged individualist, working entirely for himself whatever the cost to others; again, the thing might be said less crudely by insisting that men were really working for a far distant ideal, like the perfection of humanity, the race, or the party. Such an age, rather than insisting that men make room for divine things in themselves and fit themselves to be instruments of divine power, would ask men to narrow their minds down to the world of the senses and the goals that are proper to masses rather than men. No man would be encouraged to look for enduring glory either within himself or within other men; for that would be completely fatal to the aims and ideals of mass movements since, in that case, all other things would have to serve the individual. A vision of glory man must have; so this age would speak movingly to him of the glory of the state, the race, the group, of humanity.

However, a human way of living is not to be attained by destroying either the group or the individual. That is a modern method of meeting complexities, a method which, if adopted by the medical profession, would result in doctors shooting the patient whose diseases they could not diagnose. These are ways out of a difficulty, surely; but in the first case the humanity of life is destroyed as effectively as the second destroys the life of a human being.

Christ the Man -- His converse with men: Essentials for social intercourse: justice and charity

Men are made to live together, to associate, to converge. That very word, "converse," contains the whole story; for its original meaning is to turn, to swing about frequently as a star swings serenely in its orbit as in the place where it belongs. This is where men belong; in association with other men. The life of a man turns about, around, even within the lives of others; indeed, this is so true that we keep the circle of our lives small enough to make that constant and frequent turning possible. In other words, all men live in a small town because they are men. A New Yorker might be indignant at such a statement, thereby proving it; for his beaten path does not allow him to see much of the city. Anyone else would discover in very short order that New York City is made up of thousands and thousands of small towns. Every man is constantly putting up fences, marking out paths, placing limits to the activities of his days in order that he

might swing through the daily orbit familiarly, easily, with a pleasant sense of belonging.

That same rich word, "converse," with its insistence on frequent turning, carries a warning of the difficulties of social life. The frequent contact with men easily brings with it the danger of friction, of heat, of wearing, with the possibility of disintegration coming precisely at the point of contact. Certainly these dangers exist in social life; to an age as mechanically expert as our own, it should be immediately clear that men living together must have a social lubricant of some kind.

The lubricant of society is Justice; for the very least that must be given to men, if they are to live together, is that which is their own. Men's rights must be respected; otherwise there will be, at the point of contact between lives, a disintegration either of the society or of the individuals composing the society. If men are to live together perfectly, living at the intense degree that perfection demands, the added, high-grade lubricant of charity is absolutely necessary. It is charity which brings not only the rights of other men into consideration, but also the very needs of others. Without these, charity and justice, society has no chance for continued existence as human.

Fittingness of Christ's life among men

All the centuries have been surprised that God came down to live in the tenement of human society. He must have known that there His life would be crowded into the lives of others, would bump into them, clash with them, cling to them, bounce off them. Who could have believed that God would live so with men, humanly, familiarly, pulling the walls of His world about Him in a circle small enough to be completed again and again? Yet, in fact, He had His own country, His own city, His mother, relatives, friends, acquaintances. God did indeed come very close.

Its characteristics: Not solitary and austere

He might very well have insisted on the infinite superiority of His divinity and, while taking on a human nature, have lived off to one side, solitary, hidden from the eyes of the vulgar horde, much too good to mix with them. Fortunately, snobbery is not a divine trait or there would never have been an Incarnation. God came to teach men truth and to free them from sin; so He came to the places where truth was threatened and sin flourished. He elbowed His way into the crowded market-place, walked the dusty roads, thundered against the violation of the temple at the very height of a feast. He did not sit back, like the mythical maker of a perfect mouse-trap, content with His perfection and graciously stooping to forgive any sinners who might come to Him. He went out on the highways and byways seeking the sinners, pursuing them like the Hound of Heaven He was, eagerly, anxiously, relentlessly.

He came that through Him we might have easy access to God. We needed His help, for it is not an easy thing to go to God, particularly when we are weighed down with sin; even though we know there is no place else to go, we still have our human pride and our human fear. The enemies of Christ unwittingly made clear to the sinners of all future ages what confidence and courage His familiar life with men had poured into the human hearts of His time by accusing Him of surrounding Himself with sinners and publicans. Sinners ever since have laughed with joy to learn that the men who had the most reason for terror were precisely the ones who came to the feet of the Son of God.

Of course they came to Christ; He had made Himself one with men. He did not embrace the rigid fasting and penance of John the Baptist, for He did not wish to tower above men, striking terror into their hearts; rather He came down among men that they might more easily walk into His divine heart. He gave a perfect example in the absolutely necessary things and among these rigid abstinence from food and drink is not included. Abstinence is not an end in itself but a means by which men might attain to control and continence; the sinless Christ had no need of this means, so He lived as other men, eating and drinking.

True, He slipped off from time to time alone: to a high mountain to pray, into a desert to fast. But that was not to mark Him off sharply from other men or to furnish Him with an escape from social intercourse with men; it was to etch more deeply into the hearts of His apostles the truth that he who would give the

fruits of contemplation to others must himself have some physical quiet, some time to pray, to stand off a little from the roar and confusion of life that he might keep his own values safe. For there is always the danger, in such work, of taking personally, and seriously, the honors men pay to an office; not to speak of the danger of starving the appetite for the things of God.

Poor

All through His life, Christ felt the privations and tasted the joys of poverty. On His own testimony, He was hungry, thirsty, and without a place whereon to lay His head. Nor was this a condemnation of riches. It was no secret in Christ's time that riches can be an occasion of pride and offer opportunities for sins that are not open to the poor man; but then neither were the men of that time ignorant of the fact that poverty can be no less an occasion of sin, indeed, an occasion of all those sins a man will commit to seize the riches upon which his heart is set. It is neither riches nor poverty that count; but the poverty of spirit which is a casting aside of the trinkets of the world in the realization of how little they contribute to the perfection of man's life.

Christ's divinely deliberate poverty was a bold declaration that man's life is not one of the body but of the spirit. Too, it was a thundering warning to His disciples. They were to give their whole time to God, not to become involved in the world of business; their teaching must not be open to the suspicion of avarice; their hunger and thirst must be a testimony to the world that they had come, not in search of corporal riches, but to dispense spiritual wealth. They would conquer the hearts of men not by human power, but by divine power through human weakness.

Obedient to law

Men do not need riches for human living; they simply cannot get along without fellowship and law. It is small wonder that Christ insisted so strongly on these two. He came to perfect the imperfect law, yet His observance of that imperfect one was most exact; He came to liberate men from the burdens of the Old Law, but first He carried the burden Himself. None of His contemporaries could accuse Him of sin. He was no lawbreaker; for He would not have us miss the fact that the fruits of sin are degradation, subjection, and tyranny, not the liberty and perfection He came to give us. Even His indignant declaration that the Son of man was Lord of the Sabbath was not a rejection of law but a condemnation of a misinterpretation and a vicious perversion of law. Clearly the law of the Sabbath was not meant to forbid divine works; it did not prohibit the works necessary for life, even for corporal life; above all, it did not prohibit what pertains to divine praise and worship.

Now and then, the commands of the law seem unbearably heavy. If our human nature does not point this out to us, there is an angelic nature always ready to whisper it to us; for our fight for perfection is not only against our own nature but against the princes, the powers, the dominations of the angelic host who lost their own battle long ago. The abstract assurance of divine help against these vastly superior forces is a grand comfort; in the actual heat of the battle, it is a more solidly comforting thing to our human hearts to have before our eyes the concrete story of divinity's own strategies against satanic cunning.

Victorious over Satan -- Christ's temptation: Its reasons

The temptation of Christ was just another of the devil's bad mistakes. He had to guess; and he guessed wrong. Not even an angelic intelligence could pierce through to the divinity of Christ, for that is something to be believed, not seen; the devil could see the sinless life of Christ and suspect the mystery, then remember the infant helplessness of Christ and doubt that God could make Himself so lowly. He could not believe, for belief flows only from a good will. Up to the last minutes of Christ's life, then, the devil was on tenterhooks about this strange Man; was He really God, or was He merely man?

It was fortunate for us that he made the mistake of trying to find the answer to that question. At least, his mistake protects us from foolish pride or smug security in our own sanctity. For sanctity is no guarantee against temptation; it is an invitation to it. The devil hates saints, they approach so closely to God; and,

with the stupid stubbornness that has marked all of his career, he continues to batter his head against the divinely protected wall again and again. Really, sanctity and good works constitute a kind of diabolic desert where there is neither shade nor rest for the evil one. Indeed, sanctity is a desert place in another sense, for the corridors of sanctity are seldom crowded and man always faces his greatest dangers alone; so it was that Christ underwent His temptation when He was alone in a desert place. It was His invariable custom to face first the hardest of the things He demanded from us.

He went at that difficult task in a fashion that leaves no doubt in our minds as to the method we must pursue. There is no better preparation for future temptations than present fasting and penance. We know very well that there is no time in our lives when we can depend upon quiet security, rest on our arms idly waiting for the next fight to come up; surely we cannot take any chances on the grounds that we have worn down our strength with laborious good works. It was to a tired and hungry Christ, tired and hungry from fasting and penance, that the devil came. Whatever the cause of the fatigue, it is just at that time, with our body protesting a bit, that the devil is most likely to make his attack; he was never one to overlook so powerful an ally as our sense appetite.

His diabolic strategy in the temptation of Our Lord is worth noting well. Since temptation must always come from the outside as far as our soul is concerned, it must be by way of a suggestion. Being what we are, suggestion has no chance for infiltration except along a path already made smooth by the journeys of our heart. The devil does not shock a saint into alertness by suggesting whopping crimes; he starts off with little, almost inoffensive things to which even the heart of a saint would make only a mild protest. So it was with the temptation of Adam; so also with the temptation of Christ. These two heads of the race could not be grossly attacked; they were to be subtly fooled. To our first parents, the devil made an intellectual appeal, a suggestion to that element of curiosity in all of us, asking: "Why did God forbid this particular fruit?" With that wedge securely in, he became bolder, appealing to pride and vainglory with a promise that their eyes would be opened; it was only when definite progress seemed to have been made that the full horror of the temptation was made plain in his invitation to the extreme pride of rebellion -- they should become like gods.

Its order and manner

When the devil approached Christ, he used practically the same strategy -- there is, after all, very little room for originality in the line of sin and temptation; he was perhaps a little more subtle with Christ, paying Him the same dubious compliment a bandit pays his victim in approaching him with extreme caution. He tempted Christ first with what even the most spiritual of men desire, the food necessary to sustain the body: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." From there, he went on to that to which even spiritual men are too often victim, ostentation and vainglory: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down . . ." (from the temple). With inevitable grossness, he advanced a temptation that appealed not to spiritual but to carnal men, the appeal of the riches and the glory of the world, going even so far as contempt of God: "All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me."

The devil, of course, understood that the desire for food was no sin. By reminding Christ of His hunger, the devil could at least discover whether this mysterious Man were willing to call on God for a miracle instead of taking ordinary means to obtain food; means such as John the Baptist had used, subsisting on locusts and wild honey, or the even simpler means of turning about and going to the nearest town for food. If Christ were willing to do these things, He might be guilty of gluttony in resorting to miracles rather than waiting for His food; there would be an even greater possibility of a taint of pride entering into His life.

The first thrust was not successful. Wisdom in the tempter would seem to indicate a complete change of attack, a search for some even subtler approach. But the devil is not wise, which is one of the reasons why he is a devil; the planned attack had to go forward, in spite of the failure of the first necessary maneuver, stupidly becoming clumsier at every step. It is no sin to trust in God, quite the contrary; but to plunge off a great height in deliberate temptation of God, demanding a miraculous rescue, that is something else again.

To desire riches and the honors of the world is not necessarily wrong; but to be willing to abandon God and adore the devil to attain those ends, there is no excuse for that Christ was quite patient with the first two temptations, for, after all, He had come to conquer the devil by justice not by overwhelming divine power; at the third temptation, He lost all patience. He did more than reject the temptation, He dismissed the devil with a brusqueness that must have been gall to so proud a spirit. This was something not to be tolerated for an instant; for this was a direct attack, not on the things of men, but on God Himself.

That outburst of divine indignation sent the devil clinking away, still mystified by the God-man. When he had gone, the angels came and ministered to their Master. We shall read once more of an angel ministering to a tired Christ; then it will be on the edge of His passion, as here He was on the threshold of His public life. Each was a beginning; and it is at just these moments that comfort is needed, for beginnings, particularly beginnings of divine things, are hard. Since then, it is not angels but the Master Himself who brings comfort to the hearts of men courageous enough to begin.

Christ the Teacher: The doctrine of Christ

From the desert, Christ returned to the cities of men and set off on His career of bearer of divine truth to men. Much later, this part of His life would be summed up with a simplicity whose beauty forbids adornment: He had done all things well. He spoke with the appeal and persuasiveness of an orator reading the heart of his audience as plainly as the page of an open book; He denounced evil with the thundering authority of a supreme legislator; He confirmed His doctrine by stunning miracles, even more by the calm, persistent, quiet sinlessness of His life. All this was but the vehicle of His message. The doctrine itself surpassed anything that teachers of men have ever conceived; and it answered the deepest demands of the hearts and minds of men.

Its immediate subjects -- exclusively Jews

Yet, looked at objectively, the actual proposal of this doctrine seems to have been miserably limited. It was strictly held within the narrow limits of Palestine and, even there, was restricted to Christ's own people, the Jews. Why did not Our Lord preach to all men? How could He expect the same results from the lesser teachers to whom He commissioned this world-wide preaching? The point is that the lesser teachers actually achieved greater results, thereby showing more plainly the power behind that teaching. Obviously, it requires more power, not less, to accomplish through other, frailer instruments, than to work from the abundance of one's own expertness and power; only one who possesses an overflowing abundance can safely and effectively share it with others. It was the divine power of Christ that could send His small band of apostles to convert the world -- and have them succeed.

Christ's restriction of His preaching to the chosen people was part of that orderly procedure so perfectly proper to God's action. The promises of a redeemer and a messiah had been made to the Jews, not to the Gentiles; the Jews, then, should receive the fulfillment of these promises. They were the chosen people, they had had generations of preparation; they should be given the first chance to welcome the Messiah. From them, as a final, perfecting preparation, all excuse for rejecting the Messiah should be removed. But why did Christ not branch out in His teaching after the initial rejection by His people? That is not the limit of the patience of God. Seventy times seven was the number He gave Peter, and Peter was only a man. No, God keeps knocking tirelessly at the door of a soul until the rejection is ultimate, hopeless; until God Himself is put to death and an end made to His teaching.

Its characteristics: Not without offense

He came to the Jews in fulfillment of divine promises, in the name of God's love of the race. His love was the strong love of God, a love great enough to be terribly severe. By their malice, the leaders of this chosen people were impeding the salvation of the whole race; they were rejecting the doctrine of Christ which alone held out hope of salvation; their vice was corrupting the life of the people. This was not the time for a lover of the people and a teacher of truth to tread gently lest he hurt the feelings of some who were considered great among men. Of course Christ roared against them, sparing them nothing; yet there

was the full vigor of divine love in that violence, a love that embraced the leaders perhaps even more strongly than the people who followed them.

To curry favor at the expense of truth may serve the disastrous ends of cowardice and selfishness; it can do no good to men or truth, for there is no price at which either men or truth can be sold. It does no cause good to sacrifice men in favor of power, for it is men and God who are the sources of power. On the other hand, it did the cause of Christ no harm to uphold the truth at all costs, to place men before all else. The people of His time, as those of every age, knew well the corruption of their leaders. If Christ had venally won the whole-hearted support of these corrupt leaders, He would probably have lost the few hearts that clung to Him as the sparse fruit of that three years of sowing; He would certainly have lost the millions of hearts that have since come to Him as the full harvest of His labors.

Public

When, in the last days of His life, Christ was called to account, He could say with complete truth: "I have spoken nothing in secret." He had not come to hide divine truth but to manifest it; He was not a miserly Master huddling over His knowledge in dark corners, gloating over His exclusive possession of it, afraid to share it lest He lose His mastery. The things He had to say needed nothing of the garments of sly ambiguity which hide the ugliness of the obscene and allow it to slip furtively into the souls of men. Christ taught publicly: to crowds in the temple, on the sea shore, in desert places, on the high road. To the little group of apostles and disciples, He talked incessantly. He let slip no opportunity to publish His truth. Some things He spoke to the multitudes in parables, giving them the milk of children because they were not capable of the meat of men; clearly, it was better for them to have this than nothing at all. Even these parables were explained in detail to the apostles to whom it was given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God that they might instruct the children of men.

Always oral

Many years after, closing his own attempt to put the teachings and deeds of Christ in the prison of written words, St. John admitted the hopelessness of it: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." The world could not contain the books, only heaven can; it is quite impossible to contain the sublimity of the teachings of divine wisdom within the narrow confines of words. Christ Himself wrote no words beyond those few He scrawled in the sand to scatter the accusers of the adulteress; how significant that it should have been sand in which He wrote! He did His real writing on the hearts of men and thus forever scotched the petty error that His doctrine was not more than is contained in the written Scriptures.

Writing seems somehow unworthy of the dignity of God. There is, first of all, the slavish character of the labor; then, too, the written word is thrown broadcast with just a faint hope for the best, like the seed of a sower thrown into the wind. Christ reached all men, sending His words carefully, from hand to hand, down the long line of infallible teachers to whom His word was entrusted. The complaint against His lack of writing has no justification. Those who make the complaint would not believe if they were given books autographed by the Son of God, any more than the brothers of the rich man in hell who would not receive Moses and the Prophets would have believed one returned from the dead. For it is not lack of truth, but lack of the courage to desire truth that is truth's chief obstacle. It is hard to see how the autograph of Christ would carry more weight than His summons to Lazarus already dead four days. Yet the result of that miracle was not a complete conversion of all its witnesses; you will remember that there were some who sought to kill Lazarus that the miracle might be denied, as though the second death would be more irrevocable than the first.

Christ the Wonder-worker: The miracles of Christ: Their reasons

While the written word did not befit the dignity of Christ, His miracles certainly did. There was nothing

confining about them; rather, they threw open the vast spaces of infinity to the human mind. Indeed, their whole service is to lift the mind of a man above the limits of nature by bringing him into sharp contact with the Author of nature. A miracle is a wave of divine power that lifts men up to the crest and lets them see the distant shore if only for an instant. More concretely, they are worked either to confirm the truth or to show the presence of God in the man who does the works of God. On both counts, Christ fittingly worked miracles.

Their cause

The miracles of Christ, like all true miracles, were worked by divine power, for miracles are such precisely because they outstrip the powers of nature. It is true that Christ reached out and touched the leper to cleanse him, it was His human voice that awoke Lazarus, Magdalen knew from His loving glance long before He spoke that her sins were forgiven; but the hand, the voice, the eye were mercy instruments of divinity, channels which carried the power of God. Christ, even as an Infant in the manger, had both the divine power and the human instrumentality of that power, for He was both God and man. It is, however, an extravagance of unbridled imagination to picture the childhood and adolescence of Christ as a gloriously triumphant journey leaving an uninterrupted wake of miracles behind it. If there was bread in the house at Nazareth, it was because it had been earned by Joseph and his Son; if the clothes were clean, it was because Mary had washed them.

Their beginning

There was no point in miracles until some truth was to be confirmed; until it was time to manifest the divinity of Christ to all men. The first miracle, then, is that recorded as such by St. John, the changing of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana. It is comforting to remember that this first miracle was worked at Our Mother's request, that it was for such a human end as saving the host of Christ from embarrassment, that it was a benediction of such a holy thing as marriage. I have often wondered what the bridegroom said to the master of the feast in answer to his complaint about saving the better wine until the last. Probably he just smiled knowingly and shrugged his shoulders, hoping Christ would not give him away.

Their purpose

From this beginning to the very end, all the miracles of Christ had the common purpose of confirming the truth of divinity, of manifesting to men the presence of God among them. All were, of course, works transcending natural powers; all were done in Christ's own name. Again and again, He insisted that it was in confirmation of His claim to divinity that He worked miracles; if what He said were not true, then God Himself would have collaborated in a gigantic lie.

The scope of Christ's miracles

Certainly, the scope of the miracles of Christ was a plainly written documentation of His mastery over all the universe, that is, of His divinity. Angelic beings bowed to His command in every expulsion of the demons from their possessed victims; the heavenly bodies offered their homage and submission when they covered their face against the spectacle of the death of God. Most constantly, however, His miracles revolved around His fellow-men; of these, the outstanding ones are the healing miracles, the miracles whose final goal was not the salvation of the body but of the soul. After all, He had come to save men, to enlighten their minds, and relieve them of the burden of sin. That no least doubt of His divinity might remain in the minds of men of good will, all irrational creation gave Him unquestioning obedience.

These were proud days in the lives of the apostles. The simple fishermen of Galilee were living familiarly with the Lord of the universe. Before their eyes, nature tumbled over itself in its eagerness to obey Him, the eyes of faith showed them the greater miracles of grace within the souls of men; they shared His confidence, listened to His patient reiteration of divine truth, even partook of something of His infinite power on that mission where they were told to heal the sick, raise the dead, give freely of what they had

freely received.

They returned from that journey bubbling over with enthusiasm, swelled a little with consciousness of self, to be met with the laconic word of the Master: "Let us go apart and rest awhile." That is, let us stop for a minute to think, to remember, to pray; after all, you are the same men you were before, not God. As the days of His life grew shorter, His warnings of His passion and death grew more plain; to the apostles, they were steadily unwelcome, even a little frightening, shaking that confidence and sense of power that had so recently come to them.

The glory of Christ the Man -- the transfiguration: Its fittingness

They had some reason for fright. He was starting them off on a long journey over a road that was rough and steep. His divine wisdom could easily understand that the comforting memories of three intimate years with Him would hardly be enough for them. In the kindness of His heart, He gave them concrete, ocular evidence of some of the joys that awaited them at the end of the journey. For an instant, there on Tabor, Christ unveiled to His beloved three the glory of His human soul shining through His human body.

Nature of its brilliance

Understand, this transfiguration was a revelation of human glory. It was essentially the same brilliance that is a permanent quality of the bodies of the saints after the resurrection, the brilliance that would have been constantly shining forth from the body of Christ had not a constant miracle been worked to prevent what would have overwhelmed men as it did the apostles on Tabor. This glimpse of glory completed the dim sketch of the glory of the human body after the resurrection. Other vague details had been drawn when Christ passed through the closed womb of the Virgin, when He walked upon the water, when He passed unharmed through the hands of the Jews who attempted to apprehend Him before His hour had come.

Its witnesses, human and divine

This apex of human glory was not only for the men who were to come after Christ, but for those faithful ones who had preceded Him. Fittingly, then, Moses and Elias were present at that preview of glory in the name of all who had gone before; Peter, James and John, in the name of all who were to come after. Those five witnesses were really a mighty company: the Law and the Prophets, the Head of the Church, the first of the apostolic martyrs, the most beloved of the disciples and greatest of the evangelists, the Sons of Thunder, and the Rock upon which Christ was to build His Church.

The transfiguration of Christ was really a revelation of the full significance of our position as adopted sons of God. By that adoption, we are made conformable to the natural Son of God, imperfectly now by grace with its glory for the soul, perfectly in heaven with its glory for the body and soul. We enter the life of grace by baptism, the life of heaven by the light of glory. As at the baptism of Christ, go here again at His transfiguration, there is the divine witness to His natural Sonship and a divine promise as to our adopted sonship. As at the baptism the Son was baptized, the Holy Ghost appeared hovering over Him in the form of a dove, while the Father's voice was heard approving; so here on Tabor, the Son was glorified, the Father testified, and the Holy Ghost hovered over the scene in a luminous cloud.

They came down from the mountain a little shaken to set about the business of suffering and dying. But now, what a different task it was, not only for them but for all men; for here was the goal that explained all the hardships and difficulties of the journey -- the vision of glory within a man now, shining through his very body in heaven. Here was the secret of the glory of man: a human sharing in divine life.

Conclusion. Ways of life: Christ's way

These were the high points of the divine lesson in human living. This was the way for a man to live and this was the reason for a man's living as a man: to live intimately with men, holding fast to the roots for respect and love of all other men that reach into divinity itself. For in every man there is a spark of the

divine, and the promise of consuming brilliance which is a dim reflection of the reward for human living on a divine plane. This is men's reason for embracing men and for their recoil in horror from the satanic enemy of all men. In this human life of God we can see the inner depths which house the treasures that are to be shared with other men; here is an indication of the part divine things are to play in a man's life and of the wide room that must be left in a man's heart for those divine things. This is the culminating glory reserved for that sovereign being who is a man.

The way of the modern world: The world and men, truth, divine things, the glory of men

Christ's way of living cannot, of course, be the mode of life in a world that has banned the spiritual to give itself wholly to the material. On a material basis there is little to love in men, nothing, certainly, to make us embrace other men; even if there were, it would be quite impossible for us to get out of ourselves. In such a world, the devil is not an enemy if he serves our material wants and goals. There are no treasures to be shared with other men, for in such a world every man is bankrupt of human riches; men must rather grope about in the refuse heaps of the world, increasing their hunger by satisfying only their animal appetites. In such a world, there is no room for divine things, for the divine is not to be encompassed within the material. Here, indeed, there is nothing of glory for man where his nature is distorted, perverted, degraded.

Dangers to social life: Injustice -- met by law

In such a world, human living is impossible. There cannot be social life among men without justice, and justice is impossible if men cannot get out of themselves, cannot see others, their rights, and the obligation to respect those rights. Injustice, then, is the fundamental social threat, a threat normally met by the regime of law; but what law can there be in a materialistic world beyond the law of force?

Familiarity -- met by: Absolute perfection -- in Christ; appreciation of the eternal in man, growth.

A more intimate threat to social life springs from the penetrating knowledge born of familiarity; and this threat can be met only by absolute perfection -- as in Christ where deeper penetration only uncovers greater perfection -- or by seeing deeply enough into man to discover the spark of the divine in him. There is a real danger in familiarity of exhausting the grounds of appeal and coming upon a vast territory of defects and imperfection that drives us in revulsion away from our fellow men. The threat is neutralized if once we see the eternal in man, the spark of the divine life that makes the meanest of men a messenger of the sublime truths of God by his very existence; the threat is extinguished by a steady growth in perfection, a fanning of that divine spark into a flame of charity that will culminate in the holocaust of heaven. In a material world, men can get terribly disgusted with men. Obviously, in a material world there can be no absolute perfection; just as clearly, there can be no perception of the eternal in man by men who deny the eternal; and growth can only be the crass material thing that, in any man, is a constant threat to the life and joys of every other man.

We might say that the human, that is the social, way of living presented a severe test of the perfection of Christ. In the sense that His divinity was His title to superiority, it is not hard to see social life as a test of His divinity. It is not easy for a superior to live intimately with his subjects, yet hold to his dignity and authority; in the human order, his defects will inevitably be discovered. It is difficult for a superior to win the affection of his subjects and keep it, not only because some of his acts will inevitably displease some of his subjects, but also because there will inevitably be some defects in his commands, his laws. Christ, the supreme Lawgiver, lived intimately with men, met this test and pegged it. Strangely enough, His very success in the test was reason enough for men to shun Him. Not that they had found His law defective; the trouble was there was no defect in it. It was not that they found an imperfect superior; but rather one so perfect that subjection to Him was demanded. Men were not anxious to give up the things that the perfection of the Lawgiver and His law demanded. Something of this crops up in the daily life of every age when the pure are mocked by the impure, the just by the unjust, the truthful by liars, the merciful by the pitiless, the wise by the stupid, the industrious by the lazy. Not that these things are not valued; rather,

because the recognition of them in others constitutes a stinging and constant rebuke.

A test of divinity and humanity

Social life is a test of humanity, for it is a constant test of our awareness of the spiritual in man, of our own growth in spiritual things, of our straining towards perfection. It is only on the grounds of the spirit and its growth that men can live together as men; for man, you see, is also a spirit. He cannot be made to live as a mere animal, a plant, or a clod of earth; for he is none of these things. He must live the way Christ lived or he must cease, slowly or quickly, to live as a man. He must hold fast to the vision of glory, even though the road be rough and long; for the loss of the vision will not make the road easier, it will rather make the whole necessity of the journey a thing of complete despair.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER X -- CHRIST THE VICTIM (Q. 46-52)

1. Men and the mysteries of suffering and death:
 - (a) The place of suffering and death in human life.
 - (b) Their significance for human life:
 - (1) Meaningless catastrophes.
 - (2) Inhuman events inhumanly met.
 - (3) Means to ends worthwhile.
 2. A divine prescription for success:
 - (a) The way of the cross and its interpretations.
 - (b) The friends of Christ and His gifts to them.
 - (c) Paradox of eager suffering and instant charity.
 3. The suffering of Christ:
 - (a) The passion itself:
 - (1) The necessity and manner of it.
 - (2) Its degree.
 - (3) Its circumstances.
 - (b) The cause of the passion:
 - (1) The part of Christ.
 - (2) The part of His executioners.
 - (c) Mode of operation of the passion -- merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, redemption, and efficient causality.
 - (d) Effects of the passion:
 - (1) Negative.
 - (2) Positive.
 4. The death of Christ:
 - (a) The fact.
 - (b) Its effects:
 - (1) From the side of His divinity.
 - (2) From the side of His humanity.
 - (3) In reference to our salvation.
 5. The burial of Christ:
 - (a) Its reasons.
 - (b) Its effects on the body.
 - (c) Its duration.
 6. The descent into hell:
 - (a) Its fittingness.
 - (b) Its circumstances.
 - (c) Recipients of its benefits
- Conclusion:
1. Philosophies of suffering:
 - (a) Philosophy of gloom.
 - (b) Philosophy of joy.
 2. Double basis of difference:
 - (a) The sufferer a victim or a sovereign master.
 - (b) The goal of great worth.
 3. The Victim Who conquered and His book of the cross.

CHAPTER X -- CHRIST THE VICTIM (Q. 46-52)

Men and the mysteries of suffering and death: The place of suffering and death in human life

TO THE superficial observer, suffering is obviously an interruption of the motion of life, while death is its end. Naturally, then, men have felt keenly about suffering and death; they have felt even more keenly about their inability to understand them. When the two are thrust full force upon the attentions of men, as when the world is subjected to a siege of severe suffering and violent death, philosophies of protest spring up like mushrooms to mark the soil made fruitful of doubt by the flood of mystery. From the early nineteen-twenties, for example, philosophers rebelled at the idea of a providence, of a good God, of an orderly world because men had just been through a World War. No doubt in the nineteen-fifties, if human reason is still recognized, a whole new crop of protest-philosophies will rise up and set themselves against eternal truths because men by the millions have suffered and died.

It is plain that the divine model of human living could not ignore these two spectres that dog the steps of

every man. An extremely rare few may escape physical suffering; no one escapes death. Christ had come that all men might know by a glance at His life what they were to do at any moment of their own. To make sure there would be no mistake about these two crucial periods of man's life, He merged the two in a gigantic climax to His own life that the attention of these two thousand years might be focused on that part of His life. He did not minimize the importance of a knowledge of the meaning and technique of suffering and dying.

Their significance for human life: Meaningless catastrophes

In one way or another, every man must meet these supremely hard facts of suffering and death. The way men have met them is an indication of what they have learned of the business of living, how much they have known of the meaning of life. To some men, stopping short at a superficial view of life, suffering was a thing of horror, a meaningless catastrophe which interrupted work, love, pleasure; the mystery, finality, the corruption, and inevitability of death were terrifying, it was the complete end of the only life, the only value they knew. In the face of these threatening unknowns, they fled; but of course they did not escape. They are still trying to escape by pushing the suffering of others from sight, by legalizing any means to avoid suffering of their own even though this demands the coining of such high, sounding names as euthanasia, therapeutic abortion, mercy killing, and so on for the dastardly act which has always been known as murder. Obviously, there is little of nobility or mercy in this sort of thing when death means what it does to these modern champions of escape -- the end of everything.

Inhuman events inhumanly met

Other men could find no human meaning in suffering; it was an inhuman thing and they met it inhumanly. Sometimes the weapon of defense was the perversion of sadism and masochism, a perverted wringing of pleasure from pain from which nature itself shrinks in revulsion. In their flight to an ecstasy of passion to block out all reason, these men faced suffering by digging down to a level beneath that of the animal. Still others met this inhuman thing by brutalizing their own sensibilities, by animalizing man. They submitted to suffering stolidly, like dead things, not because suffering had any reason to it, but in a kind of stupid endurance that was a denial of the individual's own nature.

Means to ends worthwhile

Men who saw beneath the surface of life met suffering and death humanly. They saw that the motion of life was not merely the movement of arms, legs, lips, or eyes, but also of mind and heart. Life was, above all, a spiritual race to a spiritual goal; it was not to be held up by a physical impediment, any more than an angel is to be thrown by a stalwart football player. These men left suffering and pain intact, not denying them, not meeting them with brutal indifference, not twisting them into a horrible pleasure; rather they ordered them to the soul's high purposes which are not to be interfered with by any created force. They destroyed nothing of man, neither his higher nor his lower nature; rather they subordinated the lower to the higher in all reason, thus perfecting the whole man.

A divine prescription for success: The way of the cross and its interpretations

In His death on the cross, Christ gave the full human meaning of suffering and added to it the rich flavor of the divine. He was not merely submitting to suffering, making a virtue of necessity; He embraced suffering. So the graphic symbol of His last moments became the universal symbol of all His doctrine and His Life. Those who watered down His doctrine in later centuries quite logically stripped the body from the crucifix; those who revolted against Him, trampled on the crucifix or made it a mockery. They were quite right. For on Calvary, by His cross, Christ gave the full statement of His way of human living, the full details for life to those who would come after Him. If we are to abandon His way of life, we should destroy the cross.

The friends of Christ and His gifts to them

He Himself has said that the only way to follow Him was to take up the cross; and this has been astounding advice to human ears. It is strange to men that divine wisdom, in mapping out the best way for men to live, could hit upon no better way than that of the cross. This was not mere theory, even divine theory, for God took that royal road Himself; it was not a drastic exercise to round the spiritually flabby into shape, for He gave it to the most perfect of His friends -- to Peter, James, John, Magdalen, and His mother. His methods have not varied. The very special gift to the followers of Christ has always been a full cup of suffering; their response to His gift has always been as astounding as the death of the Author of life on the barren hill of Calvary. To them, suffering was not a thing to be cringed from in terror; it was not a brutal dose to be taken in dull stupidity; rather, it was a share in and a completion of the works of the Master to be joyfully embraced, a vital help to others, a safe, sure, short way to heaven. Above all, it was an opportunity for the concrete expression of love, for sacrifice.

On Calvary, Christ's way of dealing with suffering and death was mocked as evidence of effeminate weakness by those whose god was brute strength. The hedonists of the time, whose norm was pleasure, recoiled from it. The intellectually proud, who could not see beyond the walls of the world, looked on with pity or indifference.

Paradox of eager suffering and instant charity

The men of the world have not changed much since then. The Cross of Christ is still seen as an exhibition of weakness, a shocking, revolting thing, or a needless, useless loss. This paradox of a suffering and dying God is not to be understood by the world. The initial paradox was bad enough, that He Who had come that men's joy might be full should leave a prescription of suffering. The consequences of it have been positively bewildering: for the most joyous people in the world are those who most eagerly embrace suffering for themselves; yet these willing victims are the most thoughtful, the most kind, the most pitying towards suffering in others. But, then, isn't this a fairly exact correspondence with the Model Who had time and heart, even in His agony, to continue the work of healing the sick, comforting the distressed, forgiving sinners, and providing for the lonely hearts of the world?

The secret of this paradox, as of all the paradoxes of Christian action, is to be found in the union of the divine and the human. Those of Christ's own life flowed from the substantial union of human and divine nature in the Person of the Word of God; those of the twentieth century's Christian life take their rise in the participation of divine life by men through grace. Of course Christianity is a puzzling phenomenon to those who know nothing of God and little of man. The full implications for human living of the crucified Christ are gathered only by one who knows both God and man and spends a lifetime of contemplation, with divine assistance, of both.

It is certainly true that any appreciation of the paradox of Calvary depends upon a humble study of the union of the human and divine in that tragedy. A whimper of pain immediately awakes some pity in us, for pain is well within the field of our own experience; when we have traced it down and found that a man and not a dog is suffering, our appreciation of the pain is deeper, our pity more profound, for we know how much more it means to a man to suffer than to a mere animal. On Calvary, we are trying to understand something of the sufferings of God. The work of this chapter is to look at the passion of Christ in itself, to see what it means for a God-man to suffer.

The suffering of Christ: The passion itself: The necessity and manner of it

Obviously Christ did not have to suffer as the sea has to roar in a wild wind; He did not have to suffer as a man is forced to stand upright because he is lashed to a post. Had Christ not passed through the hands of His enemies untouched when they tried to seize Him earlier in His life? Even there in the Garden of Gethsemane, the crowd that had come roaring out for His blood fell down at the mention of His name. On His own word, He could have had twelve legions of angels when God knows one alone would have been more than enough. His word had called the world into being; and men came to reduce Him to helplessness

with swords and clubs! What stupid weapons for a battle with God!

It is essential that we see clearly that Christ was not forced into His passion. What necessity was involved was that of a means to an end, the necessity a man is under to walk across the street if he is to get to the other side. Man was to be freed from sin, the humanity of Christ was to be exalted, the prophecies of Scripture to be fulfilled; and the passion and death of the Savior were the means by which these things were to be done. This is not a denial of the possibility of other means to attain these ends; the point is that this is the way that had been decided on by God, and God's are not changing plans accommodating themselves to last-minute information pouring in from the ends of the earth.

His choice, then, of the means to the end of the Incarnation was a supremely wise, eternal choice. The passion and death of the Son of God were the best ways to obtain the things for which the Incarnation took place. The point is worth stressing. Perhaps we can understand it by a glance at the reasons for the superiority of the modern transparent, compact, extremely light raincoats for women over a raincoat made, let us say, of sheet-iron. The latter would certainly keep out the rain and so attain the chief end of a raincoat; but it would be folded into a hand-bag with extreme difficulty, would hardly be beneficial to the clothes beneath it, and might easily wear off a few layers of skin. It would certainly be no help to the disposition in hot weather, and be an irritating thing to find draped over a chair. The modern raincoat contributes many more things by which the end of all raincoats can be more fittingly attained. The Christ-child might have glanced around His stable nursery, given one baby smile, of infinite worth because He was God, and then returned to eternal glory. This would have been more than sufficient to redeem men, to attain the principal end of the Incarnation. But would that divine smile have produced all the other things which pertain to the salvation of men over and above the forgiveness of sin?

Would it, for example, have given them that unanswerable protestation of limitless divine love that would stop their human hearts and start them off again in a rapid, eager beat as they attempted to respond to that love? Would men have had that terrifying estimate of the price of their souls, with its consequent conviction of the grave necessity for avoiding sin? Would it have flashed before men's eyes the living examples of humility, obedience, constancy, and justice that were struck out from the flint of the cross? Would it have sent men down the ages with their shoulders a little straighter, their heads a little higher, their step a little firmer in the knowledge that man, who had been conquered by the devil, had turned about and given his enemy a beating; that man, who had merited death, had conquered death by dying on a cross?

That cross against the sky with its arm flung out to the world was not a *beau geste*. It was not the exaggerated declaration of love from a cavalier professional in these matters. Hung between the earth and the sky, the blood that edged slowly down its rough surface to the earth beneath it consecrated the ground men walked on, while its arms purified the air as if to say a new world had been made. It stood there on the brow of the hill in a bold, challenging rebuke to the fears of men. This was the worst men could do and it could not stop the triumph of a Man; what, then, is to be feared from men? By the fruit of a tree, men had met defeat; by the bitter fruit of this tree, they conquered. Here was the new Moses with arms outstretched, praying. Here was a new rod, striking not the living rock but the very gates of heaven to swing them wide and loose a flood of grace upon the hearts of men.

Fighting men returning from war usually bring back a full quota of strange and interesting stories. It is to be noticed, however, that the stories revolve around the comic side of army life, the strange customs of foreign peoples, the compelling beauty of strange lands. These men have practically nothing to say of suffering and death. It is hard to go into the details of these things. It is much harder when the subject of the suffering is not merely a companion in arms but a companion in heart. Thomas, for all his reputation as a cold-blooded metaphysician, showed this same reticence when he came on slow feet to the very cross itself and looked at the divine Victim. He makes no attempt to detail every suffering of Christ; indeed, what human word could contain them, what human heart hold them? Rather, Thomas adheres to a generalization of Christ's sufferings, to a classification rather than a description of them.

Its degree

Looking at the cross through the eyes of Thomas, it is evident to us, as it was to him, that there is no question of Christ facing the evils which affect the soul directly, such evils as sin or the loss of grace. Nor could there be question of such intrinsic evils as sickness or the corruption of the body. What Christ suffered was brought upon Him from extrinsic sources. In this sense, Christ underwent all suffering.

Not that Christ underwent every individual suffering. Even the ingenuity of hate has its limitations. The officers of Elizabeth had to work fast to complete the sentence of hanging, drawing and quartering. Had a few more details, such as drowning, poisoning, shooting, scalding, and overeating been added, their complete obedience would have been impossible. Add a few modern touches, such as airplane crashes, train wrecks, plunging from skyscrapers, and it is fairly easy to see that no one man can possibly undergo every individual suffering. What Christ suffered was every kind of suffering. His passion was the work of Jews and gentiles, of men and women, of princes and their officials, of priests and people, of friends and enemies. What can a man suffer? Well, he can be deserted by his friends. He can be stripped of his reputation, robbed of respect and honor. He can lose his possessions, even his very clothes. His soul can be weighed down by the weariness of distaste, by fear, by sorrow. His body can be beaten and wounded. It was in this sense of a man utterly stripped that Christ hung naked on the cross.

A man's body can be made to suffer in a great variety of ways. His head, for instance, might be crowned with thorns, his hands and feet transfixed by nails, his face beaten and spit upon, his whole body torn by lashes. He might suffer in his sense of touch, in his sense of smell as by dying in a place long used as a depository of dead criminals, the place of skulls; his ears might be assailed by insults, obscenities, blasphemies; and his eyes might reveal to him the course of the tears streaming down his mother's face as she watched him suffering all these things. All these could happen to a man; all of them did happen to Christ.

He suffered every manner of suffering and His sufferings were greater in intensity than any other the world has seen. Understand, we are still viewing the Victim under that merciful light of generality. It is quite possible that some other man be crowned with sharper thorns or carry a cross a greater distance; the question here is not of this or that suffering but of all these sufferings taken together in a subject Who was the Son of God. We have some notion of the intensity of Christ's sufferings even if we stop at their universality and the slow, exceedingly painful relief that comes through death by crucifixion.

A more penetrating light is thrown on this intensity of suffering if we keep in mind the interior sufferings of Christ. It must be realized that He was bearing the sins of all the world, bearing them with a wisdom and charity that brought the full horror of sin, every sin, directly before His eyes. We must appreciate something of the torment of His soul when we remember that He could look into the very souls of His executioners and disciples as they sinned; and He was God to whom nothing is more hateful than sin. This last point, the subject of these sufferings, brings out fully the length to which God will go in search of love from men. Knowing that this man was God, we can know with what suffering the Man Christ saw the slow approach of death, the loss of this life which was above all other lives, the life of God. The wine at Cana had astonished the master of the feast for, like all things miraculously produced, it was perfect. So was this miraculously produced body of Christ endowed with the keenest of senses, the sharpest responsiveness of appetite; it was most perfectly fitted to respond thrillingly to the lightest touch of joy and, by that very fact, to shudder with the utmost of agony under the brutal blows of pain.

In other men, pain may be assuaged by reason; the martyrs, for example, in their ecstasy could be insensible to pain, or a woman in labor be joyful in her pain thinking of the child who will soon be in her arms. A child might even rejoice a little in the misfortune of having to have a sliver removed from finger, considering the reward promised for submitting bravely to the process. There was none of this in Christ. He would not permit it; rather, He insisted that every faculty operate to its fullest for the redemption of man. All this suffering was in the most complete sense *voluntary*. He took upon Himself the amount and degree of suffering proportionate to the fruit that suffering was expected to bear -- nothing less than the

redemption of all men from all sin; proportionate, that is, to the sins of all the world. That He should have died so soon, after only three hours of agony, could be a surprise only to those who did not know what suffering He was undergoing, only to those who did not understand that this was the perfect Son of Mary Who was redeeming the world.

In insisting on the universality and supreme intensity of the suffering of Christ, Thomas is not forgetting that Christ enjoyed the beatific vision, the joy of heaven. This in no way interfered with or lessened the tragedy of Calvary; rather, the very absence of its resonance in the body of Christ is just one more word in the long recorded testimony of divine love.

The superior reason of man is not a direct subject of sorrow; its object is truth. It becomes involved only in the suffering of the whole man. And it was by this superior reason that man sees God in heaven. Christ on the cross did not suffer directly in this superior reason; but intolerable suffering came to it indirectly from the suffering of the whole man. At the same time, the limitless joy of the vision was in Christ's will, but dammed up lest one trickle of it relieve the suffering offered for men. In heaven, the flood of that vision to the body is such as to spiritualize the material, to glorify the body with the radiance that was seen in the transfiguration of Christ; but on Calvary, this played not the smallest part in relieving the suffering of the body of Christ.

Its circumstances

Death seems so far removed from the young that it is particularly hard to watch a young man die. Christ died a young man, in His early thirties. There was this comfort in His dying: since he surrendered that life in the name of love, there could never again be any question of the unconditional character of that love. The perfect age of thirty is a sad time to die. But it is the right time to bring out the full, deliberate offering of a life for love.

The hill upon which Christ died is just outside the old walls of the city of Jerusalem. It rises sharply from the very foot of those walls to a height that is just about level with the top of the old walls, and so close that a man could easily throw a stone from the wall to the brow of the hill or, peering a little, could read the inscriptions over the crosses of the criminals dying on the hill. Jerusalem was the place for Christ to die, for Jerusalem was a royal city and He was a king; Jerusalem was the killer of the prophets and He was the greatest of the prophets. According to St. Thomas, Jerusalem was the center of the world, the navel of the universe; and this is certainly true if we are speaking of the world of the spirit. It was a fitting place for Him to die Whose death was to have repercussions to all the ends of the earth. He died outside the walls as the scapegoat of humanity, rejected and outcast by His people.

He hung on the cross between two thieves. Perhaps that special touch of disgrace was added in the hope that the people whom He had loved and healed, comforted and forgiven would identify Him with these criminals; if so the hope was vain. Ever since, the world has talked of His cross with hardly a word for the other crosses; kings have searched for and found and carried His cross, particles of it are still adored throughout the world. The others? They have played their part. They clustered around that central cross as around a judgment seat and heard a divine sentence passed. They showed to all men that suffering can be a soaring flight direct to heaven, or a weight pressing us down deeper into hell; for it was from the vantage point of a cross that one criminal recognized the throne and royal robes of the King, while the other saw only a dying criminal who could be safely mocked.

The cause of the passion: The part of Christ

Christ, dying on the cross, was a willing victim but He did not kill Himself. It was not Christ Who stripped off His garments, drove the nails into His hands, or the spear into His side. His enemies could and did kill Him; but only because He submitted to them. He could have rendered them impotent or, submitting, He could have brought His body unscathed through their feeble, human gestures of attack. He did neither. Life was not so much being taken from Him as being laid down by Him. Not envy, not hatred, not the power of His enemies, but the obedience and love of the victim tells the real story of His sacrifice;

He was obedient even unto death. An unwilling sacrifice is no sacrifice at all; surely, it is not the means of such a sweeping reconciliation as Christ planned. Man had lost God by disobedience; here, God was regained by the obedience of a Man.

Christ laid down His life in obedience to the command of His Father; the obedience, like the command, was inspired by an infinite love for men. That obedience brought out the terrible severity of divine justice's refusal to forgive sin until the penalty had been undergone; at the same time, it revealed the infinite goodness of God Who sent His only-begotten Son into the world to die that men might escape the penalty of their sin. With the help of His own people, Christ was handed over to the Gentiles to be put to death; salvation follows the same course, from the Jews to the Gentiles, not for the destruction of God but for the happiness of man.

The part of His executioners

Strictly speaking, there were very many who had a part in Christ's death, but their roles were vastly different. His Father gave Him over to death moved by justice, goodness, and love for men. The Son surrendered to death from that same goodness, and from obedience. Judas betrayed his Master from greed; the Jews betrayed Him from envy. Pilate handed Him over to the mob because of a cowardly fear that made him tremble at the name of Caesar. The surrender of the Father and the Son will be praised for all eternity; the acts of the others will be condemned without end.

True, there was some little excuse for the Romans. What did they know about the Messiah and His coming? What interest did they have in the rumors they had heard of the wonders worked by Christ? There was even some excuse for most of the mob that hooted at the heels of Christ up to Calvary; and then dunk away in terror to their homes. They had none of the expert knowledge of the Scriptures that would enable them to judge of Christ independently; even though they had been impressed and enthusiastic about His life and works, it was the function of their leaders to approve and dis approve. They themselves were easy subjects of deception.

But the leaders of the people -- there is a different story. They had the Scriptures and they knew them. They had followed the works of Christ in detail and had examined them with expert eyes. They had the norms of discrimination between the works of God and the works of men. Like all the others gathered on Calvary to kill Christ, they did not know He was the Son of God; but they, above all others, should have known. They could have known only by faith; but they did not receive the faith that would allow their eyes to pierce the veil of His humanity because they did not want that faith. They put the impediments of hate, envy, arid deceit in the way of faith; and only those of good will can see the things that belong to the eyes of God.

On them, as they wished, rests the blood of this innocent Man. Theirs was the greatest sin, a sin in itself greater than any other that can be committed. As we pass down the line of the executioners, the sin becomes less, for the norm of gravity in sin will always be the malice of the will; that malice lessened definitely after Judas and the princes of the people, coming down in a steadily decreasing degree to the common people, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers.

Some one has defined the efficiency of modern transport as the ability to get us a long way quickly so that we can start back sooner. This is really more than jest; it is an epitome of the fact and the vanity of our worship of activity. We have actually come to the irrational stage of seeing positive virtue in rush, hurry, aggression. As a corollary of that, there is pity in our hearts for the poor people who are condemned to live their lives in one place, particularly a small place. To our minds, what a man does with his hands, his feet, or even his brain, are all important; we do not at all appreciate what a man can do with his heart. To the thorough modern, then, Christ on the cross is a picture of utter helplessness, of complete frustration; He could not go anywhere, could not get anything done. A religious-minded modern might ponder sadly on what those helpless hands of Christ might have done, what words the swollen tongue might have spoken, what sinners might have been sought out by the transfixed feet. As a matter of fact, it was when Christ was

so helplessly fixed to the cross that He got the most done.

Mode of operation of the passion -- merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, redemption, and efficient causality
Divinity has certainly gone to extreme lengths to bring us to our senses, to a realization that in rushing around the world we are only circling back to the place from which we started. We move in circles, inevitably, unless it is our heart that moves. All that Christ had done in those busy three years in which He had not so much as time to eat, was as nothing compared to what He accomplished on Calvary. Just when the full causality of the God-man was unleashed, men stood mocking or pitying His helplessness. From that cross, Christ's divinity operated as the efficient cause of all the wide effects produced by the passion of Christ in the lives of men; Christ's human will, from the deep roots of grace and charity, merited all those effects; His flesh satisfied for the punishment due to our sins, freed us from the slavery of sin, and was the means of sacrifice by which we are reconciled to God. The efficient, the meritorious, the redemptive, the satisfactory, and sacrificial causality of the redemption of men flowed out from a man dying on a cross. This was God's way of getting things done.

Effects of the passion: Negative

A modern true to his training would immediately object that as far as could be observed, all that Christ did on Calvary was to die in disgrace and tear out the hearts of His friends. Just what did Christ get done there? To understand the difficulty of answering that question to the satisfaction of the twentieth century, as well as to appreciate how far we have drifted today from the goals of men, it is only necessary to reflect for a moment on how little the revolutionary effects of Christ's passion mean to the modern world. What do these things mean today: liberation from sin, freedom from the power of the devil, release from the punishment due to sin, reconciliation with God, the opening of the gates of heaven, and the exaltation of the God-man, Christ? What a snicker such a litany would win in Union Square! What reasons for a man to die!

Positive

Yet, it is only by these effects that a man can win the fight of his life. Indeed, it is only the thoughtfulness of divinity and the divine respect for the powers of man that still keep every man's fight his very own. These effects of Christ have been won for us; but we must allow their application in our own lives. The life of man is a battle he must win himself, one that is worth winning for himself as an individual, but one that he can win only because God died on a cross. And the world shrugs in indifference!

The death of Christ: The fact and its effects:

When Christ bowed His head and died, His life ended, as every man's does, by His soul leaving His body. But it is a serious mistake to see that dead body in the arms of His mother as so much human wreckage, a mass of matter destined for corruption. The soul of Christ was not a tow-rope hooking His body to divinity any more than His flesh was a chain tying His soul to divinity. There was no intermediary of that union of God and human nature; the union was immediate and by reason of the Person. As He was taken down from the cross and during those three days of death, the Person of the Son of God and His divinity were still intimately united to that body, still intimately united to that soul, even though soul and body were separated. This Person did not result from the union of body and soul, nor from the union of human and divine nature; this was an eternal Person, not to be destroyed by the destruction of the union of body and soul. What God took, He kept. That grace of union; like all grace, could be lost only by sin; and there was no more sin in the dead Christ than in the living one.

The burial of Christ: Its reasons

In this light, the care and love given to the dead body of Christ, the courage of Joseph of Arimathea in demanding it of Pilate, the sorrow of His mother receiving it from the cross, were more than the reverence that springs from loving memories. Everything suffered by that dead body, even though it were only the caress of love, had infinite value for the souls of men. It is true, of course, that during those three days,

Christ was dead; that is, He was no longer man, for man is not a body, neither is he a soul, but a composite of the two. Here that composite had been dissolved. The dead body of Christ was a body without a soul; but otherwise it was exactly the same, still possessed by the same Person, still united to divinity through that Person. Christ had not merited death, but He took it; He had not merited corruption of the body, and this He would not take lest there be any slightest doubt of His divinity.

Its effects on the body

Indeed, it was not at all fitting that that body should suffer corruption; the fact that it did not has ever since been a serene comfort to men and an unanswerable refutation of Christ's enemies. It was a foregone conclusion that men would doubt Christ's death; even though Pilate sent a spear through His heart, and His tomb was sealed and guarded day and night. Precautions such as these cannot stop the doubts of men when doubt seems so much more comfortable a thing than belief; even though it may be necessary to stoop to stupidity by hiring sleeping witnesses to testify to events happening during their sleep, such men will have their doubts. Either Christ's death or His resurrection must be rejected under penalty of accepting every single detail of His life and doctrine. For us, who have no doubts, there is comfort in watching Christ placed in the tomb; from that time on, men could watch those they loved placed in a tomb and remember that the doors of every tomb are not eternally locked, that every tomb has an exit as well as an entrance, that it is a gate rather than the end of a road.

Its duration

Perhaps, too, the burial of Christ was to remind us that we are to die to sin by Baptism, to be buried from the world, and separated from the inordinate passions of men. Christ was in that tomb for two nights and a day that we might know it is a double death, the death of sin and the death of the body, that we escape by Baptism and its full consummation.

The descent into hell: Its fittingness

As His body drooped on the cross with the breath of life gone out of it, the soul of Christ descended into hell; not to the hell of the damned, but to the hell which we call Limbo. There was already confusion and despair enough in the devil's kingdom as the knowledge of His victory became more apparent; in Limbo the souls of the just awaited the opening of the gates of life by the death of the Author of life. It is not at all strange to us that Our Lord's first thought in death would be for others, as all the thoughts of His life had been. Only God knows how long the centuries had seemed, waiting there in Limbo; perhaps that was why He hurried so. Surely, only God can tell us of the hilariously joyful reception given the Savior of the world by those who tasted the first fruits of His sacrifice.

Recipients of its benefits

When the short visit was over, there would be a little note of sadness such as perpetually dogs the steps of sin. For there would be souls in Purgatory who had not yet satisfied for their sin and these could have no part in His triumphant possession of His kingdom until the last farthing had been paid; the souls in Limbo would still bear the stain of original sin, and so could never enter that kingdom. As for the damned in hell, He had not come to them, He had nothing to bring them, not the slightest bit of their punishment was relieved. They had chosen, and held fast to their choice; not even the Conqueror, the Master of the universe, the God of all, forces the human will to change even so stupidly disastrous a choice as this.

Mary, on the arm of John, went down from the hill and its sepulchre into a city empty of Christ; but she carried with her the secret that would change forever the view of men on suffering and death. To Mary and John, the mystery of death and suffering was cleared up by faith: its finality was done away with by the knowledge that it was the beginning of a new life; its corruption was more than matched by the glorification of the body that was the ultimate goal of death; death's inevitability was more than made up for by the certitude of immortality.

Conclusion. Philosophies of suffering: Philosophy of joy

In other words, they entered that empty city in full possession of the Christian philosophy of suffering and death. They had learned from the dead Christ that suffering was to be joyfully embraced yet to be mercifully and constantly relieved in others. They knew now that suffering would be their lot in order that their joy might be full; that the way of the cross, for all its sorrows, was a joyful road leading to fuller, and perpetual, joy.

Philosophies of suffering: Philosophy of gloom

In sharp contrast to this, the materialistic philosophies of their age still shuddered before the sight of suffering and the terror of death. To them, suffering and death still remained mysterious, something for the most part hated, yet, paradoxically, something that is quite willingly inflicted upon others. Those philosophies were then, as they have been ever since, apparently dedicated to pleasure and to flight from pain; yet in actual fact, they were philosophies of gloom and pessimism not only to the victims sacrificed to their ends, but to the very champions of these philosophies.

Double basis of difference: The sufferer a victim or a sovereign master

Mary and John, and all who would come after them, faced suffering and death, not only as men and women, but as men and women who had been made partakers in the life of God. Their materialistic contemporaries, and ours, faced these mysteries of pain and death, not as participators in the life of God, not even as men and women, but in a fashion worthy only of something less than a man. Really, it should have been so; the basic differences of the two views clearly would allow nothing less sharply contrasted to the Christian, the victim, the sufferer who dies, is in reality a sovereign master, wielding even such terrible weapons as his own pain and death for his own high purposes, rising above the material and what the material can inflict upon him, always carrying within himself that spark that gives him independence of all that is less than the spirit. In the other view, the sufferer is simply and solely a victim of superior forces; he is beaten, vanquished. There is nothing within him to give him title to independence of the forces that crash upon him to his destruction; he is the slave of obviously superior forces; his outlook is one of hopeless despair.

The goal of great worth

In fact, the materialist has no reason for fighting against hopeless odds. He has no place to go, no goal worthy of suffering, nothing worth the price of death. The one thing he knows is the life he has in his hands, and he knows precious little about that; to preserve it, he should logically go to any lengths, scruple at no means however base. On the other hand, the follower of Christ along the way of the cross aims at goals that are not only worthy of a man; they are goals proper to God, goals so far superior to anything material as to make the loss of any material things, or all of them, a mere trifling price to pay. The Master's question still remains unanswerable: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" His incredible promise still holds: "He that shall lose his life shall find it." For there are some things worth the price of all the suffering a man can endure, even of all the sufferings that the God-man could endure; and there are some things to which death is not a threat but a gateway.

The Victim Who conquered and His book of the cross

The world of our time, or of any time, gazing on the Son of God dead on the cross, looks at a willing Victim who conquered, at a Man who died and, dying, conquered death, at a Man who wrote in the indelible words of infinitely precious acts a fundamentally important lesson for all men to read. There it is written, never to be erased, that the spiritual is superior to the material, that all things in man's life, even life itself, are to be ordered to the good of his soul. In the crucifix, the universal symbol of the life, doctrine, and death of Christ, He has left us the whole book of divine wisdom for human living. It is a compact thing, readily scrutinized by the most ignorant, though it is never exhausted by the most wise and

the most holy. It has been the book of the saints. In that book there is the answer to the enigma of suffering and to the horror of death. There is the ultimate chapter on human living by the divine Exemplar of human life.

[**Back**](#)[**A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV**](#)[**Next**](#)

CHAPTER XI -- THE CONQUEST OF DEATH
(Q. 53-59)

1. The double note in the conquest of death:
 - (a) Of joy in the destruction of its finality.
 - (b) Of fear in the guarantee of responsibility and judgment
 2. Basis of the denial of the conquest:
 - (a) Fear of living.
 - (b) Pride of life.
 3. The conquest and the Conqueror:
 - (a) The resurrection of Christ:
 - (1) Its necessity and fittingness.
 - (2) Its primacy and cause.
 - (b) Body of the Conqueror:
 - (1) Its reality.
 - (2) Its qualities.
 4. Manifestation of the conquest:
 - (a) Its limitations.
 - (b) The proofs offered.
 5. Causality of the conquest:
 - (a) As to bodies.
 - (b) As to souls.
 6. Consequences of the conquest:
 - (a) The ascension of Christ:
 - (1) Its fittingness.
 - (2) Its cause.
 - (3) Its goal.
 - (b) His place at the right hand of the Father.
 - (c) His judicial power:
 - (1) His title to judgment.
 - (2) The extent of the judgment.
 - (3) The second judgment.
- Conclusion:
1. The battle of life and death.
 2. The conquest of life by death:
 - (a) Its double aspect: of relief and of sadness.
 - (b) Common significance of these two.
 - (c) Their common consequences.
 3. The conquest of death by life.

CHAPTER XI -- THE CONQUEST OF DEATH
(Q. 53-59)

To a young doctor just beginning his practice, or a young married couple setting out on their common life, it seems impossible that anyone can ever get too old to dream. In a sense they are right; but it is true that it is the youth of a man that is filled with dreams. As adolescence changes into manhood and womanhood, vast horizons open up to give birth to the dreams of the young. The long, wide roads are faced with a tingling joy of anticipation; yet in the very midst of the grand dreams of conquest, there is often a note of misgiving, a tinge of fear on venturing into this huge new world.

If this fear actually takes precedence, an unhealthy state of indecision develops, spelling the end of effort, of accomplishment, even of life in the human sense of hearty living. On the other hand, if that fear is kept healthy, it is an invaluable check-rein on our plunging hearts, keeping them from running wild by insisting on caution and some measure of prudence in even our boldest efforts.

This strange mingling of joy, anticipation, and fear seems to be the common note of all the goals that open up new roads, the ends which are beginnings. It seems to be the genius of our nature to be forever seeking wider, longer, harder goals, to approach them with mingled joy and fear; yet to be stagnated, stifled without them. All this is, of course, true of the goal of death which opens up the horizons of eternity. From this point of view, the story of Our Lord's resurrection was particularly well told, with its note of fear on the part of the soldiers, of great joy on the part of the disciples; for the combination of these two is typical of the emotions of every man as he reaches an end that starts him off again on a new road.

The double note in the conquest of death: Of joy in the destruction of its finality

There is reason enough for joy in Christ's conquest of death, for it tore down the wall at the end of life's last blind alley, lifting the barrier of finality which lies heavy across the path of every human heart. A barrier is always a source of suffering for a human heart with its innate drive for newer, wider, higher goals, and which never has enough of traveling, since it was made for the infinite. When the last door, the door of death, swings wide, there is an immediate, joyous release from the haunting fear that perhaps there is an end of love, of knowledge, of accomplishment, and of all the other things that the human heart treasures; the fear that what a man presses on to so desperately for all of a lifetime may yet be taken away from him.

It is quite certain that life is not long enough by far. Youth surely does not know the deep values hidden in the roar and confusion of life; it takes time to appreciate these things, since we learn so very slowly. Life is a cathedral which must be visited many times to get more than a dim appreciation of the beauty of its lines; it is a masterpiece that must be looked at lovingly hour after hour, day after day, if our eyes are to see the soul of it; it is a book to be read again and again, each reading giving its lines new significance, new depths. When life is nearly over we begin to put proper values on such familiar, homely things as spring sunshine and the pure beauty of winter. Not even then have we more than scratched the surface of the mystery of love, of sacrifice, of selfless family life, and God's hovering benevolence. We need more time. It would not do to lose life just as we begin to penetrate its worth.

Of fear in the guarantee of responsibility and judgment

Yet, seeing this door of death swing wide into a new life, there is, too, a distinct and healthy note of fear in facing the endless stretches that will satisfy our hearts. For if death is conquered and life goes on forever, while the good is preserved, the record of evil, too, has to be faced. Man cannot wipe out his deeds with the help of a faulty memory; he must face his life, all of it, with responsibility for the evil as well as with pride and affection for the good. The man who is utterly fearless at such a prospect is somewhat of a fool. Briefly, the conquest of death not only opens up the possibilities of heaven but also of hell; it guarantees judgment, complete and accurate casting up of all accounts.

Basis of the denial of the conquest: Fear of living

This is a fearful truth for a man; it is insupportable for a coward. To some men of every age, the news of Christ's resurrection has been bad news, so bad as to drive them to the childishly irrational extreme of refusing to read the news as though that would destroy it. A prospective lawyer who would burn the report of his bar examination for fear of learning that he had failed would soon discover that he could not begin his practice simply because he had destroyed that report; the men who refuse to read the news of Christ's resurrection must ultimately learn that they cannot go out and live just because they maintained their ignorance of life. In actual fact, what they have done is to give fear the upper hand, ending all real effort, real accomplishment, real living by going on record as denying anything in life worth living for, worth the awful burden of responsibility.

Pride of life

In a strange paradox, these cowards who are afraid of life put their denial of life on the basis of pride and thus join hands with others whose pride has gone so far as to submerge even healthy fear. Both conclude to the supremacy of man. One, by releasing him, through a denial of responsibility, from answering to any superior; the other, by a strong, indignant rejection of dependence as a slur on human greatness: what we cannot reach by our human powers simply cannot exist.

It is hard for the hand, the eye, or the mind of a man to reach to the uttermost limits of truth; so hard, in fact, as to be impossible. Though the truth that the soul of man is undying can be reached and has been reached by the human mind, these men will have none of it. As for the resurrection of the body to eternal

life, that is incredible. After all, we have only God's word for it; and we are not taking anyone's word for anything. We, they say, depend on no one. We live our own lives. We stand on top of the world. Though we had nothing to do with our own beginnings, though we have less to say about our own ending, though our knowledge of the space between these two is pitifully vague and our knowledge of the space beyond either beginning or end is necessarily second hand, we are supreme. After all, we can know more than a tree, a dog, or a cosmic force; so we must know all that can be known.

Pride and fear are no new things in human life. It is true that we have no record, in the story of Christ's resurrection, of the kind of fear we know so well today, the fear that destroys life in preference to living it. But we have a record of a pride that would go so far as to bribe witnesses to deny the uncomfortable truth. However, neither pride nor fear destroys truth. Christ rose again from the dead; man has his life to face, both its good and its evil.

The conquest and the Conqueror: The resurrection of Christ: Its necessity and fittingness

In a sense, Christ had to rise from the dead. He had made the resurrection the test of the divinity of His mission; it was the supreme sign granted to the stiff-necks of His own generation. Without the resurrection, His doctrine and His life would have seemed to men only another episode in the long history of pseudo-prophets, continuing to our own day, who promise to return shortly after death and whose disciples have kicked their heels while they waited, feeling more and more foolish, more and more angry at having been duped, until, finally, they stalk off, through forever with the master who did not keep his appointment.

The Mother of Christ, in her triumphant song, had said of God that He exalted the humble and brought down the mighty. Her Son had insisted "The first shall be last and the last shall be first"; "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He Himself had been humbled to the utmost degree, even to the disgraceful death on the cross. The exaltation of His resurrection was God's only fitting answer to the humiliation of Calvary.

The heavy hearts and slow steps of the disciples trudging to Emmaus are a faint picture of the feeble faith that would have flickered in the disciples of Christ had He not risen; Paul was right when he maintained that if Christ had not risen our faith would have been vain. Notice the bitter regret in the words of the two disciples making their way out of Jerusalem to escape the scene of their great disappointment; they explained to the risen Christ, Whom they did not know, that they had hoped their Master was the Messiah Who had come to save all Israel. This is only a faint rumbling hint of the thunderous, crashing disappointment that would have come to the hearts of men if Christ had not risen, a disappointment the more disastrous because of the great heights to which the hopes of men had been raised.

The coaxing phrase which they addressed to Christ, "it is now toward evening and the day is far spent," is much more than a statement of the time of day; it is a threat of the approach of an eternal night over the hearts of men if their Master be not risen. On the contrary, the high hearts and eager steps with which they rushed back to Jerusalem, not waiting for rest or food, shows us faintly to what faith and hope, confirmed by the risen Christ, will reach: no hour is too late, no day too fatiguing, no journey too long. For we have risen from the death of sin and the bright goal of eternity lies invitingly before us.

A half-finished job may be a testimony to a man's good intentions; in deference to these, we sometimes blind our eyes and still our tongue before this pitiful evidence of man's wavering will. That half-finished job is, in fact, an unanswerable declaration that its author was a victim of impulse. Perhaps it is because he did not realize the backaches that must go into a garden that he must now survey a healthy crop of weeds; perhaps it is because he did not see the hardships involved in what Stevenson has called "domesticating the recording angel" that a man of today finds himself in a divorce court. At any rate, while impulse is a great beginner, it is a very poor finisher. God is not the victim of impulse. He never turns out a half-finished job, laughing it off or hiding it in confusion. What He starts, He finishes; that is why He started it.

All this is, of course, true of our redemption. It is the work of God and so it is not left half-finished. Christ did not come merely to free us from evils, for that is only half the job; He came, finishing the job, to move us to good. Salvation means much more than throwing off the chains of sin; it means rushing forward to scale the walls of the kingdom of heaven. To achieve the first of these, Christ bore our evils for us; for the rest, He gave us a start, a goal, and an exemplar of the high things to be accomplished by the keen, sharp steel He put into our hands.

Perfect as the work of redemption might be with the full wisdom and power of divinity to guarantee its completion, men could still attempt to escape it. As is the way of God, He allowed men to go their tortuous way when they insisted on blinding themselves. But, again in His divine way, He foresaw and forestalled the vagaries of the human mind in its attempt to dodge a difficult truth. There was a human and divine nature in Christ; so, of course, some men would question His divinity, while others would doubt His humanity. God left no grounds for either uncertainty; if men must escape the truth, they would be forced to spin their doubts from the frail thread of falsehood.

If Christ had popped out of the tomb as soon as the guards arrived, not giving them time to settle themselves for a long vigil, they might have questioned the reality of His death, considering it a conjuror's trick with the executioners playing the part of accomplices. If He had let weeks, months, or even years roll by, men might easily have forgotten about His death, have surrendered hope, and actually have questioned the resurrection when it did happen. It was, of course, for Christ to choose the moment of His resurrection. That absurd gesture of the cords tied about the hands of God in Gethsemane was no more absurd than the solemn sealing of His tomb and the establishment of a soldier guard before it; as if the Omnipotent were to be held by bonds that are efficacious against men.

As a matter of fact, Christ had tried to ease the reception of the news of the miracle of His resurrection by what might be called the practice sessions or rehearsals: the resurrections of Lazarus, the son of the widow of Naim, and the saints who walked the streets of the Holy City after His death. He could not hope that men would accept the fact of a man walking from the tomb quite as nonchalantly as they do the fact of a man walking from the door of his house in the morning; but, at least, the shock of contact with divine power in meeting death might be eased enough so that the minds of men would not be numbed by it. Of course, these were merely rehearsals; these men who had risen from the dead had to die again, and men saw them die. Christ was the first Who rose from the dead immortal; He was the real conqueror of death. The rest of us are to share in that conquest but it was first accomplished by Him.

Its primacy and cause

It is obvious that a dead man can do little for himself, otherwise he would certainly not put up with the banked flowers that cloy the air with sweetness. Man's re-entry, like his first appearance on life's stage, is not written into the script by man himself. Christ the man was as helpless as any other human being. In fact, once He had bowed His head and died, that Man no longer existed; His soul was separated from His body and their reunion could not be arranged by either the body or the soul. It is to be remembered, however, that divinity was still united to that dead body, still joined to that separated soul; the Person of the Son of God still possessed both the body and the soul. By the divine power of that Person, the soul and body could be reunited, and they were. Christ raised Himself from the dead. It was by His own power that the soul and body were reunited and the Man walked forth from the tomb: not in answer to a command, as did Lazarus; not raised up by the hand of another, as was the widow's son; but of His own power, for Christ was God.

All through this tract on the conquest of death by Christ, Thomas walks on the solid ground of divine authority. This is not material about which a man can afford to guess. These things are important. We must know them, and beyond all doubt, because they are the things that wait at the end of life and give it its fullest meaning. At that, Thomas's caution was no more than an imitation of the caution of God; for every detail of this conquest of death was expressly brought out by God Himself and carefully set down in His inspired writings. In this tract, every article of Thomas proceeds from an explicit text of Sacred

Scripture.

Body of the Conqueror: Its reality

From the darkness of the narrow tomb, through the daylight of that first Easter morning, came the same Man Who had died on the cross, possessed of the same body and the same soul. The body, kept incorrupt in the tomb for three days by divine power, was now reunited to the soul; the identical body that had been laid in the tomb by others now came forth by itself. There was no point in an apparent or fantastic body being shown to men that morning; that would mean that Christ had not risen and, as we have seen, Christ had to rise from the dead. Lest there be any doubt of the reality of that body of His, Christ invited the terrified disciples to "Touch me and see, that a spirit has not flesh and bones as I have." With the condescension to their defects, such as we make to the blind in allowing them to run their fingers over our face that they might feel what they cannot see, Christ allowed His disciples, spiritually blind, to feel what they could not believe they saw.

The body they touched, while the Son of God stood patiently suffering their incredulosity, was the same one they had seen nailed to a cross; now it was whole, integral, with every drop of blood lost in the passion recovered. Though Christ had come through closed doors, He allowed the disciples to touch Him; but even sight and touch were not enough.

They must have been strange with Him, tense, pretty well capable of speech; after all, one doesn't have much chance to practice talking to a man who has just died. At any rate, something was needed to break the ice, some little human thing that would put everyone at his ease; with that subtle divine graciousness that is a compliment in its benefactions, Christ asked the disciples if they had anything to eat. At once they were at home with Him again. They had hold of His arm, they were sitting at table with Him, talking to Him again after the nightmare of Calvary.

Its qualities

Though Christ's body was the same, it was now in a quite different condition. It was no longer capable of suffering, for it was a glorified, a spiritualized body with all the sublime qualities of a body completely subject to the soul. Now there was no longer any need, as there had been in the beginning, to stem the flow of the double glory of Christ's divinity and His human soul. Christ came through closed doors, walked with the disciples to Emmaus and they knew Him not; He was at table with them and, when He willed, they immediately recognized Him and He disappeared from their eyes. He could eat food but was not dependent on it. He could move from place to place with the speed of thought. One quality of a glorified body He kept hidden, lest it overwhelm them as it had on Tabor, and that was the splendor that shines through the body from the beatific perfection of the soul.

At our own resurrection, considerable repair work will be necessary. There will be broken noses to be straightened, lined faces to be smoothed out, missing teeth to be recovered, gnarled hands to be returned to the fine beauty of youth. There was none of that repair work necessary in Christ. His body, being miraculously formed, had been perfect. The one thing that might have been done, the removal of the awful scars of the passion, was left undone; these scars were no longer awful but rather things of striking beauty. They were a badge of merit, an eternal prayer for men, a declaration and an inspiration to courage and unquestioning love. They were identifying marks that would be worn in their turn by thousands of men and women who literally took up His cross; to others, who would refuse that cross, they would be an eternal rebuke, as unanswerable as unrequited love.

When we speak of the witnesses of the resurrection, following the lead of Scripture which itself uses the word, we must be careful to understand what is meant by the phrase. The resurrection of Christ was not the sort of thing that could be seen or tested by human means. Our knowledge has a wide scope, but it also has a limit; certainly, one of its limits is marked by the tombstone. What we know of the future life, we know, not by human investigation, but by being told, that is, through revelation; and the resurrection of Christ, being well beyond the milestone of death, certainly pertains to the future life.

We can see the punishment and pains of life; so men witnessed the passion of Christ. We see public rewards, and reasonably so, for these stir other men on as punishments give them pause. But the punishments and rewards that follow on death are not administered in a market place for all to see. They are God's secrets; through His goodness, they are told to some that the good news might be spread. So it was with the resurrection; it was not a public fête but rather the mystery of an Easter dawn.

We know nothing whatsoever of Christ's first visit with His mother, though merely on human grounds, leaving aside His divine thoughtfulness, we can have no doubt that His first appearance was to her. We do know, however, that, of all His other appearances, the first was to a woman, Mary Magdalen. That appearance was the climax of a story which has meant more to sinners than anyone but God can tell, showing them what they know deep in their own hearts, namely, that their capacity for great love is not less but more than their capacity for great sin. Even on Calvary, Magdalen had hardly reached such heights of loyalty, of unselfish devotion, and complete, unquestioning love. Of all His followers, she alone received the risen Christ without question; in that scene there was no room for explanations, for protestations, for demands. He merely said, "Mary"; instantly, joyously, she responded in words that left nothing to be said: "My Master."

One turns from the scene regretfully, as though much more had been missed than had been seen, as much was there to see. Outstanding is the delicate thoughtfulness of God balancing womanhood's accounts; a woman had begun the sad story which ended in man's death, now a woman began the glad story of this Man's conquest of death. Then, too, there is the divine recognition and appreciation of human love. This woman had been faithful even to the end: when the disciples scattered before the threat of Calvary, she was under the cross, when they huddled in fear and doubt in Jerusalem, she was at the tomb; even though it was apparently empty, she clung to it, for it was all she had left of the Master to Whom she had given her heart. His first appearance to a woman was a rebuke and a refutation to the pride of men. For it is not by strength, power, or keenness of intellect that our place in the kingdom of God is determined; but by our success in living, a success which is measured by the heart's approach to God.

There were no eye-witnesses to the resurrection of Our Lord. True, the guards had good reason to suspect that something was happening: "there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and drawing near rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment like snow. And for fear of him the guards were terrified, and became like dead men." One can understand their terror; but it was terror of an angel, not of the risen Christ. The picture of a glorious Christ stunning the heavily armed soldiers by His splendor is more an artistic summary of the whole significance of the resurrection than a portrayal of the fact. This resurrection exceeded all human knowledge; it could be learned only from above. As the order of divine providence has always been to lead the lower by the higher, men learned of the resurrection through the angel who sat on the stone where Christ was laid and answered men's unspoken questions: "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth. He is not here. He is risen."

Its qualities

For themselves, and for the rest of the world, it was important that the disciples know, and know well, the facts of Christ's resurrection. In making it His personal business that they should know, Our Lord stressed two points: the truth of the resurrection and the glory of His risen body. The first He brought home to them by appearing to them, talking with them, eating and drinking with them, permitting them to touch His body. The second, that is, the fact that He had risen to a different life, He brought out clearly enough by showing His body's dominion over matter; and even more impressively, from the standpoint of the human heart, by His refusal to return to that life of constant social intercourse and familiarity which had marked all His days with them.

Manifestation of the conquest: Its limitations

Superficially, it would seem a mark of much greater love for Him to give them the full measure of the comfort of His presence during the few days still left before His Ascension. Actually, however, that would have been a rather feeble, nearsighted love which could not look beyond the moment into the future, beyond the surface into the depths of the souls of the disciples. They might easily have fallen into the error, had He lived intimately with them again, that would hide the full sweep of life after death; they might have been satisfied that He was among them again, falling back into old ways, taking for granted that His life now was as it had been before. There was no chance for this when the Master was here only for a moment and gone again.

As it was, there was no time to get used to Christ, to begin to take Him for granted. He came from nowhere and disappeared as mysteriously. Locked doors, great distances offered Him no impediment. To some, He revealed Himself fully and clearly, matching the clear, solid faith in their minds with the clarity of His appearance; to others, it was only with a veil of mystery about Him that matched the veil of doubt and confusion that their tepid faith had allowed to drop before their eyes. Under such circumstances, they were always on tiptoe of mystery and expectation; their minds were sharp, their attention keen, their ears alert, faith digging deeper and deeper foundations in their hearts.

The proofs offered

Christ did not attempt to argue His disciples into accepting the resurrection by overpowering them with syllogisms. This thing was not susceptible of proof; in its beginnings and in its goal, it was outside the whole scope of nature. What He did do again and again was to give them evident signs of His resurrection, signs of the credibility of the mystery. The signs were indeed necessary, for their hearts were not easily disposed to belief; their very slowness and stubbornness adds a force and validity to their testimony which place it above all suspicion by those who came after them through the centuries. In a real sense, we might say that all men put their hands into the side of Christ along with Thomas.

There was an abundance of these signs sufficient to satisfy the most exacting, the sort of abundance we have come to expect from God. There was, for instance, the testimony of the angels and that of Scripture to the fact of the resurrection. To assure men of the reality of His risen body, Christ did everything but put Himself under a microscope: the apostles saw His body, they touched it, they even put their hands into His side and their fingers into the wounds of His hands and feet. In testimony to the living character of this body, to its being vivified by a soul, Christ performed all the operations proper to man: on the side of the nutritive powers, Christ ate and drank; on the side of the sensitive powers, He saw and heard His disciples, answering their questions, saluting them; on the intellectual side, Christ discoursed with them, and explained the Scriptures. On the divine side, He showed the possession of divine power by the miracle of the fishes the apostles found already broiling on the shores of the Lake of Galilee when they scrambled from their boat to greet Him. To the glory of the resurrection, He brought the testimony of entrance through closed doors, invisibility or visibility as He willed, and so on. In view of all this, it would be an unreasonable man indeed who would doubt that it is reasonable to believe that the Son of God had risen from the dead.

Causality of the conquest: As to bodies

It is a truth well worth the believing. For it is the model, the exemplar of every other resurrection. Indeed, it is the cause that lies behind the rise of the countless thousands of men who have lived and died, and will live again; this is the fact that changed the rock at the door of the tomb from a blocking boulder to a triumphal arch. Perhaps we can see this best if we look at the life, death, and resurrection of Christ as an integral whole, as indeed they were, destined to destroy death and restore life. This whole was the instrument used by the first cause, divinity itself: thus the life, passion and death of Christ were the common instrumental causes of both the conquest of death and the beginning of eternal, glorious life; His resurrection, by way of exemplar, was the cause of the destruction of our death and the restoration of our life to immortality.

As to souls

In exactly the same way, the resurrection of Our Lord is the cause and exemplar of an even more wonderful resurrection that goes on about us every day: the resurrection of the soul from the death of sin to the life of grace. That spiritual tomb is sealed by our choice of sin; it is guarded, not by the soldiers of Rome, but by the legions of Satan and the disorderly hordes of inordinate appetites, guards who do not fall asleep. Because Christ has risen, the soul can come forth from this tomb in its original splendor. Again, there are no witnesses; only the weeping Magdalen, our own soul, overcome at finding the Master and Friend once more.

Consequences of the conquest. The ascension of Christ: Its fittingness

We are never more conscious that we were not made for earth than after such a fresh resurrection from the tomb of sin; then, above all other times, we realize keenly that we are pilgrims, that our soul is a little lonely, a little out of place in a world of matter, a little anxious for the world of the spirit. In much the same way, the body of Christ was a little out of place after the resurrection; it did not belong in a world of corruptible bodies, for it had begun an immortal and incorruptible life. It belonged in a heavenly and incorruptible place. So, when the time of consolation and instruction of the apostles had come to its close, the Master took them to the top of the hill overlooking Jerusalem, said His last farewell, gave the last assignments that would keep His followers occupied to the end of time, and ascended into heaven. Behind Him He left a lonely, frightened, helpless group which was yet the nucleus for the conversion of the world. That group was so stupefied by His loss that it took an angel to get them back into the city; there, they huddled in fear of their lives for ten days in an upper room.

Had not Christ said He would be with them always? Yea He was and He will be by His divine presence. But He also said, "It is better for you that I go," and He was right, as God is always right. This was the work of strong love, not of that coddling, imperfect, weak love that saps all the strength out of the one loved. It was better, much better. It would be hard for them ever again to tear their hearts away from the goal of heaven, for He took a large part of their hearts with Him. It would never be hard for them again to hope, knowing He had gone before to prepare a place. Now, indeed, their faith would have its full scope, resting utterly without question on His word alone. He had given them a few days of consolation; now they must stand on their own feet, through His help; not attached to creatures, not dependent on men, not holding even to such a lovable thing as familiar, human life with the Man Christ.

Its cause; its goal

Christ rose to the height, of heaven by the same power by which He had come forth from the tomb. He ascended to a place above every other created thing, a place worthy of His grace, His merits, His dignity. The Head of the Mystical Body blazed the trail in glory as He did in suffering, preparing our way. He is the high-priest entering the holy of holies that He might constantly intercede for us, taking His rightful seat at the court of heaven as Master and Lord of all things, not forgetting us but rather sending us His divine gifts in new abundance. Of course He took our hearts with Him, deepening our reverence and awe for His glorious humanity, with no lessening of our faith, our love, our hope of one day standing before Him and saying with Thomas, but without his doubts, "My Lord and my God."

His place at the right hand of the Father

We may smile at the astonishing versions a child can give of the Apostle's Creed; but, after all, "Jack Dempsey shall come" does not sound so very unlike "from whence He shall come." It would be only just if the angels smiled at an adult's no less childish mistake of trying to picture the right hand of the Father. The phrase, of course, is not to be taken literally; it contains no slight to left-handed people, indeed, a left-handed God would be no more absurd than a right-handed one. The phrase is a vivid metaphor with at least three senses. The right hand figuratively means the glory of divinity, the happiness of heaven, or the judicial position of the Judge of the world. For Christ, then, to sit at the right hand of the Father means that with the Father He has the glory, the happiness, and the judicial power of divinity. By His divine

nature, Christ sits at the right hand of the Father inasmuch as He is equal to the Father; according to His human nature, He occupies that position because He is in possession of the divine goods of heaven in a more excellent degree than any one else in that kingdom. But it is precisely as judge that the risen Christ captures our fascinated eyes.

His judicial power: His title to judgment

To be a judge, clearly it is not enough for a man to look like one, talk like one, or walk like one; he must have power. Even possessed of power, he is no judge whose judgment proceeds from anger, greed, or any other vice; he is a mock judge rendering mock judgment because he is not judging from justice. If these two, power and love of justice, are the predispositions to judgment, the very soul of it is the wisdom by which it proceeds. So true is this, that in human affairs that wisdom is not left to individual capacities to the best of our ability, we embody our common wisdom in the law by which a judge must judge. The predispositions to judgment are evident enough in Christ: He is the head of all men, the Son of God, with complete power and jurisdiction; He had died for love of justice, the justice of His offended Father. But it is particularly on the third count, the wisdom which the soul of judgment, that His pre-eminent title to judgeship is clear; He is the incarnate Wisdom, the Word of God.

It is true that judgment, as a work external to God, is common to the whole Trinity; it is attributed, however, to the Second Person as to divine Wisdom. God is always the first source of just judgment; but, as in this life the power of judgment is committed to men relative to those who are subject to them, so in heaven the power of judgment is committed to Christ the Man. After all, He was a man himself, living His life intimately with His fellows His judgment, severe as it may be, will not taste so bitter coming from one of our own. It is eminently fitting that the risen bodies of men be brought before the First of the risen and the Cause of the resurrection of all others; then men can stand facing their Judge, looking into His eyes as they have loved or feared to do during life.

Even if Christ did not have title to Judgeship on the grounds of His divine nature, even if His supreme dignity as Head of the Mystical Body, His superabundance of sanctifying grace, and so of justice, be put aside, there is still the strong title of His merits. He had earned that judgeship. It was just according to the justice of God that He should judge Who had fought so hard for that justice, and conquered; Who had subjected Himself to the judgment of men and tasted all the bitterness of their unjust judgment.

The extent of the judgment

The sweep of the judgment of Christ staggers the mind. If we attempt to conceive of a judgment that takes in every detail of one human life, we must confess our failure. Extend that to all men living at any one instant, or, indeed, to a judgment of all men dying at any one instant, and we are overwhelmed by the massive detail involved. If we push it further to include all men who ever have lived and died or ever will live and die, and then go on to the myriads of the angelic host, at the same time realizing that we never have evidence for a complete judgment of any one human action because we cannot reach the hearts of men, it begins to dawn on us that judgment is God's work. Perhaps we had best leave the working out of it to Him.

The second judgment

The angels have already faced judgment by the Son of God when, in the beginning of the world, they fought their fight and lost or won; yet, they must face another judgment, as every man must, for the details of their lives, like ours, are not finished for years, for centuries, perhaps even to the end of time. An attempt to judge the damage done by fire is futile until the fire is extinguished. Neither can the life of a man be judged until its very last effect is accomplished; it is often only after the passing of time, even of long periods of time, that we can determine whether those effects are ultimately good or bad.

Our lives, you see, are not contained within the narrow boundaries of our years. Our smallest actions, because these are our own and we are answerable for them, are not to be measured by the distance a voice

will carry or the fragile things our strength will crush. We have lived and we die; but we live on in the memory of men, a memory which may treasure a lie of ours that will endure for centuries doing its deadly work, a lie that must ultimately be damned to make way for truth. Our children live after us, and theirs after them. Who can say when the surge of our life dies out of theirs? The apostles preached for a few years before being crushed by the power of Rome; has the effect of that preaching yet stopped? The great heresiarchs Arius, Luther, and the rest -- were stopped by the barrier of death; their words and works were limited by the finite limits of a man's power, but the effects, which were their very own, are still being reaped by other harvesters though centuries have passed.

Something the same is true of the angels and the devils, for they play their part in the world of men and the actions of men. They have their work, a work of hate or of joy; they will have their rewards and punishments, meted out fully only when the last trace of that work has ceased to agitate or ennoble the world. The whole of a man's life is to be rewarded or punished, all of it; and the reward or punishment is given to the whole man, all of him, body and soul.

Conclusion: The battle of life and death

It is only when bodies and souls are reunited that the conquest of death has reached completion; only then can the last word be said on this conquest. It may seem odd that the word "conquest" has been insisted on again and again in this chapter. Really, no other word will do. It is a fighting word to describe a grand fight. Even in the physical sense, these two, life and death, are at each other's throat from the first instant of infant life; death is a threat, an enemy encroaching, an enemy who never gives up the fight. In the spiritual sense, the same battle of life and death, of virtue and sin, is on from the first dawn of reason; it is a struggle where no quarter is possible, no end in sight, until one or the other has lost.

It is not the kind of fight a man can stand aside and watch. There is no possibility of neutrality. He is plunged into it by his very manhood. He must take sides. It is paradoxical, but strictly true, that those who think too much of life, fight desperately on the side of death; those who think too much of the joy of life, fight unceasingly on the side of misery; those who think too much of the glimpse of heaven possible in this life, fight strongly for hell. Men must take sides and they do. Life or death must win in the career of every man. We have seen the results of the victory of life; how about the victory of death?

The conquest of life by death: Its double aspect: of relief and of sadness

In the denial of the resurrection, that is, in the surrender of the palm of victory to death, there is a double note paralleling, at least on the surface, that of life's victory. There is, first of all, a note of relief, a sense of escape; one has succeeded in throwing off the stifling blanket of responsibility, escaped from the haunting possibility of evil into a world without barriers, a world of new freedom. Man no longer has to answer eternally for his life and his acts; he is free. But the note is false. It is a release that sets man at the mercy of his desire, delivers him up to the animal world, makes him the victim of a civil war within himself and of slavery from without.

Along with this sense of relief, there is a hopeless sadness, a penetrating, tragic thing patient of no consolation; for man is convinced that life, love, knowledge, accomplishment, justice, companionship and all the rest do have an end. Man cannot stand that sort of tragedy very long. He copes with it, in some cases, by unreasoning resignation which produces a fatalistic calm and creates its own ends of vague generalities to minister the small comfort of empty dreams. In other cases, he meets it with an eager, desperate draining of the cup of life before it be dashed from his hand. Or, finally, he arms himself with a cynical refusal to live a life which has no meaning; it is this attitude which takes its ghoulish satisfaction in a mocking disruption of the lives of others and the destruction of its own.

Common significance of these two

Both these notes of death's victory take the heart out of human living. The first, in the name of freedom, delivers a man to slavery, a fact easily verifiable in any "age of freedom." The second either squeezes the

meat out of life, destroying man's taste for the very things he started out to clutch so eagerly -- leisure, pleasure, power, and the rest; or, in the case of the fatalist, it makes life a ghostly thing, a hollow, haunted existence. In these victories of death, men must walk in the darkness of unreason, if they are to walk at all, or frankly face the despair of it and surrender unconditionally.

Their common consequences

In a word, death has conquered life and made of it a grim masquerade of the living dead. The air, the odor, the very color of death in its corruption penetrate the deepest reaches of life; the blinding darkness of the tomb hovers over all; its doors are already closed forever.

The conquest of death by life

In Christ, life has conquered death. The air, the odor, the very color of life enter into the darkest corner of the tomb. Death is a gateway, as is life; a motion to high goals, as is life; a fulfillment of hope, an unveiling of faith, a consummation of charity, as life never is. Life's promises are fulfilled by death's opening up of enduring life. The rehearsal is over, death lifts the curtain, and the eternal play is on.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER XII -- FRUITFUL SIGNS OF LIFE **(Q. 60-65)**

1. The dignity and mystery of a sign:
 - (a) Its union of material and spiritual.
 - (b) Its harmony with human nature:
 - (1) An exclusive privilege.
 - (2) A constant reminder.
 2. Divine supremacy of effective signs:
 - (a) Contrast of divine and human signs.
 - (b) Expression of divine thoughtfulness:
 - (1) Stooping to man.
 - (2) Continuing the life of Christ.
 3. The essence of effective divine signs -- the sacraments:
 - (a) Metaphysical essence: signs of sanctity.
 - (b) Physical essence: matter and words.
 4. Necessity of the sacraments:
 - (a) In general.
 - (b) In particular.
 5. Their effects:
 - (a) Principal effect -- grace:
 - (1) In sacraments of the New Testament.
 - (2) In sacraments of the Old Testament.
 - (b) Secondary effect -- character.
 6. Their efficient cause:
 - (a) Principal cause.
 - (b) Ministerial cause:
 - (1) The ministers themselves
 - (2) Conditions required in the minister.
 7. Their number:
 - (a) Actual number.
 - (b) Mutual order.
 - (c) Relation to salvation.
- Conclusion:
1. A world rejecting the sacraments:
 - (a) Angelism of pride.
 - (b) Materialism of sense appetite.
 2. The indictment of experience:
 - (a) Errors against the sacraments.
 - (b) Lives without the sacraments.

CHAPTER XII -- FRUITFUL SIGNS OF LIFE **(Q. 60-65)**

A GOOD part of our everyday life is spent waiting for a traffic light to change, pursuing the arrows in a subway station, or scanning the announced destination of a bus. We see nothing to marvel at in such an expenditure of time; these are ordinary signs and signals and life is full of them. Some of them are comic, like those necessary to keep out the incorrigibly curious or to rescue men with a penchant for losing themselves; perhaps a new low was reached in this line when American railroads were forced to the conclusion that a man could not tell his back from his front, making it necessary to re-edit the sign "dining car forward" to "dining car in opposite direction." Other signs are terrifying, such, for example, as "contagious disease," or "explosives." Still others, usually dedicated to frightening a man into buying what no one possibly needs, are downright silly.

The dignity and mystery of a sign: Its union of material and spiritual

Yet even such prosaic signs as a policeman's exasperated wave at traffic or a small boy's derisive sounds are wrapped in dignity and mystery simply because they are signs. In all the world, these are the only things that can penetrate the material side of man and make their way into his mind; the mystery and dignity of that penetration has been more than enough to occupy philosophers from the beginning of philosophy. Indeed, in a larger sense, whatever penetrates to our minds does so by way of a sign.

In this way, all of the universe which we come to know is a divine sign; it has a meaning, it carries a message. In so far as it is a sign, it is a mysterious wedding of the spiritual and the material, one of those apparently ill-matched affairs that still turn out so well. To change the figure, a sign is a hulking material figure which carries in its bulky pockets an elusive ray of the divine intellect. Of all the physical universe, man is the only creature capable of appreciating this strange mixture of the material and the spiritual; he is the only one to whom signs mean anything, and he alone can give that mysterious gift of meaning to dull, mute matter. There is, for instance, nothing about a red light that of itself commands us to stop, nothing until the mind of man has wedded its matter to his meaning; a mere painted "right" or "left" is serenely indifferent to our direction but, because there is a mind behind it and a mind in front of it, it steers the steps of a man.

Its harmony with human nature: An exclusive privilege, a constant reminder

There is something delightfully human about every sign. It is a perpetual reminder of the dignity and mystery of our own nature, for we, too, are the fruit of a union of spirit and matter, of soul and body; that intangible spiritual power and the clumsy limitations of matter find their way into all our work. We are like a happily married couple who, by the very fact of their own happiness, become incorrigible match-makers; we who are spirit and matter place the impress of matter and spirit on everything we touch. Indeed, now that Christ has come among men and died for them, a sign is a reminder of that greater dignity and mystery of the union of divine and human nature in the person of the Word, the Incarnation. Every smallest sign is an incarnation of the spiritual in matter; the star of Bethlehem was more than a guide, it was an image, a vague mirroring of that supreme union which springs, not from the minds of men, but from the heart of God.

All this is true of any sign; for every sign unites spirit and matter to carry a message through the senses of a man to his mind. It is within the capacity of the most illiterate of men to give material things this dignity and power simply because every man can understand and express understanding; every man has the power to give and to grasp meaning. This is man's unique privilege in the physical world, a privilege which he has, not by reason of his state in life, his wealth, his fame, his education, but simply by reason of his humanity. Of course, when the power of God is behind them, signs exceed in mystery and dignity anything that man is able to produce in this life. The touch of the hand of Christ exceeded the gestures of any of His contemporaries; it did not stop at binding up a wound, it cleansed lepers. His word did not merely commiserate sinners, it forgave sins.

Divine supremacy of effective signs: Contrast of divine and human signs

In other words, the signs of men penetrate to the intellect of others, and this is a marvel in the physical world; but the signs of God penetrate to the will, to the very essence of the soul. They not only signify, they actually accomplish what they signify. We grasp something of this if we can imagine a mother's counsel, "Now be good," changing a malicious child into a little saint. It is only in this way that we shall see that Christ's short sentence, "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee," was not merely a statement of hope, not a vague promise, not a word of counsel, but an effective destruction of sin.

Expression of divine thoughtfulness: Stooping to man

If the divine signs had stopped short at mere meaning, at the articles of faith, for example, that alone would not have been sufficient to melt the hearts of men. It would have been a great kindness: a great Master's careful choice of words ample enough for a child to grasp. We are material as well as spiritual, while God is pure spirit; it would be generously thoughtful of Him to stoop to our level, using a medium accommodated to our lowest of intelligences, softening the bright glare of pure intellect for our weak eyes, by beginning His great actions in the field of the sensible.

But God does not stop at the merely kind; He constantly goes on to the surpassingly generous. He does not stop at mere meaning with His signs, He pushes them on to a really divine causality. He takes our familiar,

tangible, homely things -- like bread, water, and oil -- both to signify and to accomplish the divine things that must be done to our soul if we are to live the life of God. It was as though God bowed to the mechanic in all of us, respecting our childish insistence on taking things apart and seeing how they work, even when the things are supernatural mysteries. We clamor for a sight of the causes whose effects flow into our lives; while it is impossible to do away with the mystery of divine workmanship, God at least shows us the implements of His mysterious craft. He hands over His kit of divine tools for us to examine, to fondle, to marvel at.

Continuing the life of Christ

Indeed, there is an even greater divine thoughtfulness in these effective divine signs we call the sacraments. We have seen something of the loneliness and helplessness of the apostles in the loss of their Master. Seeing that, we have some little indication of the loneliness and helplessness of age after age of sinners, some hint of what it would mean to weak men and women, or even strong men and women, to be faced with the hard things of Christ without the comfort of the Master's presence. Christ came to destroy sin, to give grace, to assure salvation, to win us a share in divine life; through the divine power and the instrumentality of His humanity, He ministered to the desperate needs of the men of His age. What a tragedy if His work were finished at His death, if only a memory of Him remained! There would always be sin, sorrow, and difficulty; there would always be the high level of divine life to be reached, a level much too high for mere men or mere women. If we had only His words of wise counsel and the gradually dimming light of His history, still weak, still sinning, still in need of help and courage as we are, we would indeed be lonely and helpless. This life of the God-man had to be continued through all the ages in which men would need Him; the fruits of that life had to be applied. With a generosity second only to that of the Incarnation, the divine power, again through the instrumentality of the material, worked to this incredible end of giving us Christ always. The disciples of Christ in the twentieth century are not lonely, as they were not lonely in any other century; the life of Christ goes on among them through the medium of the sacraments.

The essence of effective divine signs -- the sacraments:

Metaphysical essence: signs of sanctity

Generically, the sacraments are signs. As such, they link arms with the newsboy's whistle, the railroad man's signal, and the lover's kiss; much as the president of a nation, in his humanity, links arms with bootblacks and senators, derelicts and saints. In their primary signification, the sacraments have an order to things sacred. They are not sanctity but rather signs of it. And it is precisely in their relation to sanctity that they part company with all other signs, as the lover's kiss parts company with the railroad man's signal by the relation it has, not to stopping trains, but to stopping hearts with the sublime message of love. A sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing. As a sign, it is meant for man who is the only one who needs signs, and the only one who can we and appreciate them. Since the only thing pertaining to man that is intrinsically sacred is sanctity itself, a sacrament refers specifically to the sanctity of men. It is a sensible sign of sanctity or sanctification.

Perhaps we can make this a little more concrete by recalling that the sanctity of men is an internal thing produced by sanctifying grace. The sacraments, then, are signs of sanctifying grace; not past grace, or future grace, but the present grace by which men are made holy. To stop there is to consider only one signification of the sacramental sign; for seen in its entirety, it is a souvenir and a prophecy as well as a sign of sanctifying grace, signifying all that enters intimately into our sanctification. Surely, it signifies the passion of Christ which is the efficient cause of our sanctity; just as surely it signifies the eternal life which is the goal or final cause of our sanctity.

St. Augustine wisely remarked, and history bears him out, that men cannot be gathered together for any length of time in the name of any religion, true or false, without some visible sign to unite them, that is, without some sacrament. It could not be otherwise, men being what they are. We come to the knowledge of the intangible, intellectual, spiritual things only through the world of things that we can perceive by our

senses. Of what use would be a sign that men could not see, hear, or touch; of what help would be a treasure of spiritual goods of which men would forever remain ignorant? If the sacraments are to signify things to men, they must be open to the senses. And that necessarily sensible character of the sacraments is one of the homely, human things that brings us so close to God in so comforting a way -- our own way. It is the bridge over the infinite abyss which separates the divine from the human as our human signs are the bridge over which we pass from the material to the spiritual.

In fact, the sacraments are a two-way bridge. In the use of the sacraments, our worship goes to God while our sanctification comes from Him. If the sacraments were a one-way bridge, we might very well pick and choose for there is no impertinence in our determination of the path our own feet will walk; but there is decided impertinence in attempting to lay out the path of the feet of God. The determination of the precise matter of the sacraments, the material of the sign, is not ours but God's, for determination means limitation to one thing and the limitation of God's power to this or that means is God's work, not ours.

In a word, we do not make our own sacraments; that belongs to God. But they must be made. They must be determined, fixed things because they are signs; indetermined signs, shifting signs with constantly variable meanings, are not signs at all for they have no meaning that can be grasped. The sacraments, as divine signs, are perfect; there can be no doubt whatever as to their meaning. To guarantee this perfection, each sacrament is made up not only of a material, sensible thing, but also of a consecrated form of words adding to the material thing the ultimate refinement of exact expression.

Physical essence: matter and words

There must be no mistake in the meaning of the sacraments. Imaginative expression has its place, but not here; the goal of words in the sacrament is a sharp, clear-cut, altogether unmistakable conception. In fact, the union of words and matter in the sacraments is more than a perfect medium of signification. Christ, the Author of the sacraments, was the Word of God united to the sensible flesh of human nature and the sacraments are a perpetual memorial of that union. Moreover, man, who is sanctified by the sacraments, is himself a creature of body and spirit; so, also, the sacraments are the fruit of a union of the word with matter.

Not just any words will do, you understand; these must be determined words, more determined, indeed, than the matter of the sacraments. For the words are the form giving the specific and detailed signification to the matter, beyond all shadow of obscurity. The minister of the sacraments may stumble over the Latin, for the years can do strange things to one's Latin; his missing teeth may produce odd effects in his articulation; but as long as the proper sense of the words remains intact, so does the sacrament. On the contrary, if a minister, torn by a passion for originality, decides to concoct his own form, deliberately inducing substantial changes, there is no sacrament at all. He must intend to do what the Church intends and use the very words that leave his intention cleanly exposed for all to see.

Necessity of the sacraments: In general

An odd paradox of our age insists that men limit their knowledge to that of the senses, whether those senses be nude or clothed in scientific apparel; and, at the same time, scorns the idea of beginning with the senses for a knowledge of the spiritual and the divine. Both ends of the paradox involve a pitiful ignorance of nature: the first part, implying a denial of the validity of man's intellect; the second, a denial of man's position beneath the angels and above the material, dependent on the material though capable of the divine. In each case, there is more than a little of that stubborn pride which so often leads to absurdities and refuses to admit even evident absurdities precisely because it is pride. If, by reason of that pride, men cannot see the psychological need for the sacraments, it is too much to hope that the moral need of them will be understood; that men will see, that is, that human nature, subjecting itself to corporal things by its sin, has lost much of its appetite for things of the spirit and must recover that appetite through the medium of a mixed diet. Human nature, in its present condition, cannot stand the rich food of the spiritual; just as man cannot live by bread alone, so neither can he digest pure spiritual food. The remedy for his condition

must come into a man's life by the same road as the disease; for by that disease all other roads are closed.

In particular

Indeed, in our state of fallen nature, our affections are so rooted in corporal things that we have extreme difficulty in pulling ourselves away from them. It is a testimony to the wisdom and power of God, a wisdom that might well be imitated by reformers, that He does not try to tear those affections out by the roots; rather, He turns them to the high ends of His divine plan, using such sensible works as anointing with oil and whispering in the complete privacy of the confessional box as the means by which our affections are purified and turned to Him.

The perfection given to a man by the sacraments, the fervor they awaken in his soul, the help they bring are enough to impress the mind of a man profoundly. Many theologians were so deeply struck by these things that they were of the opinion that even in the state of innocence enjoyed by Adam there would have been sacraments. Thomas is in flat disagreement. His conclusions are not the result of a lesser respect, affection, or enthusiasm for the sacraments; but they are the result of solid reason. In the clear light of reason, there is simply no room for sacraments in the state of innocence. Thomas goes further. He insists that in that original condition of men, sacraments would have been useless, even disorderly things. If there were sacraments then, it would have meant that the soul of a man was perfected by some corporal thing; whereas the very essence of that state was the complete domination of the inferior by the superior: the soul by God, the body by the soul, the world by man.

It was a different story after man had sinned. From the first moment of his sin, man lost that complete domination of spirit over matter; from then on he had need, desperate need of sacraments. In every age since then, there have been sacraments. Before the establishment of the Old Testament, there were such sacraments of the natural law as a kind of baptism through the prayers and faith of the parents for the child, sacrifice, tithes, certainly a kind of penance. Before the coming of Christ, the Old Law operated by anticipation of Christ's redemption through such sacraments as circumcision, the Paschal Lamb, the loaves of proposition, the purification of women, the consecration of priests, and so on. With the coming of Christ, our own sacraments were instituted by Him.

These three stages of sacramental life mark a gradual advance to perfection; the matter of the sacraments becomes more determined, men are given surer guarantees of the paths to God, until, with the sacraments of the New Testament, complete determination and clarity put men's minds serenely at ease. As we shall see later on in this chapter, the great difference between the sacraments of nature, of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, was that only the latter contain and effect the things they signify; the others are limited to mere signification, exciting the heart of man by what they signify to the necessary acts of faith, hope, and love. To say this briefly the scholastics explained that the sacraments of the New Testament work *ex opere operato*; the others, *ex opere operantis*. We can see this difference in an historical setting if we remember that Luther never got beyond the natural and Old Testament conception of the sacraments. He never arrived at the point of accepting literally the saving words of Christ: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."

There is a point worth making here by way of forestalling many an objection. The variety in the sacraments in these three stages of man's history is not an indication of a puzzled divinity gradually discovering better and better means of saving men in the hard school of experience. It is not because of a wavering, indecisive mind that a father orders his children to wear one kind of clothes in summer time and changes his orders when winter comes. The sacraments are fitted to the times of men. Before the Old Law and before the Incarnation, the sacraments were essentially prefigures of that central event in history which is the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ; after the story of redemption had been told, the sacraments no longer looked to the future but rather dealt with the present and effective salvation of men.

It is a little unfair to leave Luther all alone with an erroneous conception of the nature of the sacraments; his error was, in fact, common to all the reformers and their various successors in our modern sects. The

error traces its ancestry to that stubborn attempt to fit all things into the human mould, to an essential pride which cannot see beyond the fact that we are wonderful creatures. Of course we are, and we are ever ready to admit it. How, then, can a drop of water on the head of an infant wash away sin from the infant's soul? We cannot see it done. It certainly is not an inherent quality of any water we know. We ourselves cannot give water that property. So it cannot be done. It is just a sign calculated to awaken us to a recognition of our need for forgiveness, for cleansing, and for the faith by which this will take place.

**Their effects: Principal effect -- grace:
In sacraments of the New Testament**

Nevertheless, that bit of water does wash away sin. It is a doctrine of faith that the sacraments are sensible signs instituted by Christ to give grace, not merely to signify it. Every Catholic must believe that the sacraments cause grace independently and of their very nature, not dependently on the disposition of the minister or the fervor of the subject; that they contain the grace they cause and effect that grace by way of an instrumental cause. Theologians may dispute as long and subtly as they like about the circumstances or modes connected with the sacraments; but the essential truth of their independent and effective causality must be held without question.

The sacraments are a means instituted by God to incorporate man into the Mystical Body of Christ, to elevate him to the supernatural plane, to allow him to participate in the life of God, knowing and loving God as God knows and loves Himself. That participation in the divine life is, radically, habitual or sanctifying grace which inheres in the essence of the soul and does for a man supernaturally what conception and birth do for him naturally. It gives him life. No one imagines that the water of baptism seeps down through the head of a child to his soul like a cleaning fluid aimed at the unsightly spot of sin on the soul. No one pretends that mere water, as such, hides within itself the life of God. It is God Himself Who is the principal cause of grace in a man's soul; it is He Who possesses divine life essentially and from Him it must be shared. The words and matter of the sacrament are the instruments of the divine Workman, specially selected by Him for effects that only He can produce.

They are, however, real causes; they are not mere signs, mere hopes, mere declarations of faith. They cause grace as truly as a hammer in the hand of a carpenter drives a nail or as an axe wielded by a woodsman fells a tree. The sacraments contain grace as an instrumental cause contains the effect it produces by the power of the principal cause. In other words, grace is in the sacraments as in an instrumental, passing power which belongs not so much to the instrument as to Him Who uses it.

Seen in the concrete, this truth is really not difficult. If the infant to be baptized has been brought through a freight-yard on the way to church, it may have some soot on its head; in the course of the baptism, the soot will be washed off, streakily perhaps, by the water of baptism. This effect is a proper and natural effect of water; water has this power completely and naturally, so that, relative to this effect, water is the principal, not the instrumental, cause. Over and above the effect of soot-removal, there is the effect of sin-removal which is the real reason why the infant was brought to the church at all. This sin-removal is not a proper and natural effect of water; this capacity is not had completely and naturally by water, but passingly in so far as it is used as an instrument; as a hammer has power to drive nails only when it is used by a carpenter. That sacramental power, causative of grace, is nothing less than a passing movement of God, elevating and applying the instrument He has chosen. The difference between God's use of the sacrament and the woodsman's use of his axe is that the latter only applies the instrument, while God not only applies His instrument but also gives the instrument the power to flow into this extraordinary effect.

If we go back to the carpenter and his nail-driving, we have a rough parallel which tells the whole story of the causality of the sacraments. The carpenter is the principal cause of the nail being driven. His hand is an instrument, but a conjoined instrument, one immediately united to the principal cause, indeed, an integral part of the carpenter. The hammer is also an instrument, not conjoined but separated, put to work through the medium of the conjoined instrument, the carpenter's hand. In the sacraments, the principal cause is God. The humanity of Christ, substantially united to the Word of God, is the conjoined instrument, finite,

created. The sacraments themselves, matter and words, are separated instruments wielded by the principal cause only through the medium of the conjoined instrument, the humanity of Christ, for it is by the passion of Christ that grace has been given to us and the sacraments are an application, a continuation of the work of the God-man, Christ.

In sacraments of the Old Testament

None of this was true of the sacraments of the Old Law. They were in no sense principal causes of grace, for they were not God. Nor were they continuations of the life and work of Christ Who did not as yet exist. They did not cause grace. They signified the justification of men which was to be had by faith in the coming of the Messias. They were signs and no more than signs.

There is another point, often neglected, to be mentioned before leaving the subject of the grace caused by the sacraments. The reason for the variety of the sacraments of the New Law is precisely because of the variety of the work to be done by them. Each sacrament ministers to a different need of men. Yet, the habitual or sanctifying grace of all the sacraments is exactly the same; the difference, then, lies not in the sanctifying grace, but in the individual effect proper to each sacrament, an effect which we know by the name of sacramental grace. This is, at least, the habitual grace with a definite title or right to special graces necessary for the work this particular sacrament fits a man to do. The sacrament of matrimony, for example, will produce sacramental grace or titles to all the special graces necessary for the whole long length of married life, the grace to walk the baby patiently at night, to bite one's tongue in the midst of a family quarrel, or to deal with the other party in marriage with a charity that far surpasses the demands of justice. Confirmation will give the sacramental grace which is a right to the graces necessary to play our parts as spiritual adults; and so on, with each of the sacraments.

Secondary effect -- character

A few of the sacraments have still another effect, over and above this rich deposit of grace; the sacramental character. It is a mysterious thing called mark or character only metaphorically, for it is thoroughly spiritual. It is a badge of our membership in Christ, a participation of His eternal priesthood by which we are dedicated to the sacred things of divine worship; above all, it is a dedication to that perfection of divine worship within ourselves which is our own spiritual life.

Stripped of its metaphorical language, the sacramental character is an instrumental power of the soul by which we are rendered capable of receiving or conferring spiritual things, according as that power is an active or a passive one. Thus the character of Baptism, a passive power, gives us title to the reception of the other sacraments; that of Holy Orders, an entirely active power, gives a man the capacity of conferring the sacraments on others; while that of Confirmation, partly passive and partly active, both admits us to the sufferings to be undergone by the followers of Christ and fits us for the stern, positive action that spiritual manhood demands.

Only these three sacraments imprint this indelible mark upon the soul. The character of all three is an eternally enduring thing, for all three are a participation in the incorruptible priesthood of Christ and are subject in the incorruptible soul of man. Only these three confer character because these alone are directly ordered to action, to reception or bestowal in reference to our spiritual perfection, and to the worship of God. Because it is a question of action, these characters are imprinted on our faculties, not on the essence of the soul; to be more precise, they are imprinted in the faculty which is the immediate source of action in man, the practical intellect. The practical intellect, then, by this character is constantly protesting its faith, its submission to the authority of God; even a heretic in hell is thus eternally giving witness to faith in God by the character imprinted upon his practical intellect.

Their efficient cause: Principal cause

Since these effects are produced in territory that is open to no one but God -- the soul of man -- they are obviously God's works. A priest, absolving the penitent sinner, never thinks to puff out his chest in pride

at the great load of sin he has done away with. He knows this is God's work, that he is only the minister, the instrument in the hands of God. Even without further consideration of the nature of the sacraments, it would be clear from this alone that no priest, no bishop, no pope can institute a sacrament; all these men are instruments for the use of the sacraments, not authors of sacraments.

The sacraments are in strict truth the determined channels down which the power of God flows into the souls of men. Who is to plot out the course divine power will follow? Indeed, who would have dared suspect such subjection of divinity to the human will had not God Himself commanded it? It is no exaggeration to say that the sacraments have subjected divine power to our wills, for by them the flow of grace is put as completely at our command as water is by a faucet or music by a radio set. There is nothing to it; just receive the sacraments, and there you are with grace. Nothing to the participation of the life of God! We walk through a wonder-word idly, not at all abashed, hardly impressed, at home. Of course, things at home are to be taken for granted!

Ministerial cause: The ministers themselves

Christ Himself could not make men the first, or principal, cause of the sacramental action. Yet, by reason of His own supreme excellence, He could have given His ministers a greater participation of His powers relative to the sacraments. Indeed, He could have gone so far as to allow them to produce the effect of the sacrament, grace, without the sacrament itself; or even, as secondary causes, to institute new sacraments. The fact is that He did no such thing.

Nor was this a matter of jealousy on the part of Christ. He was not hoarding His power but rather guarding the faithful from the ever-present danger of placing their hopes in men rather than in God. It does not take much imagination to see what a tremendous multiplication of sacraments, true and false, there might have been otherwise; nor what hopeless bewilderment and ultimate discouragement would have invaded the hearts of the simple faithful. These human ministers were to feed the sheep of Christ; but the Master reserved the preparation of the food to Himself. The sacraments were not designed as frail helps depending utterly on a holy priesthood; they are solid supports depending directly on God. They may be administered by men who lack faith, hope, and charity, who are positively steeped in sin; but their effect on the faithful is in no way diminished, though, in these cases, they are poison to the ministers.

Conditions required in the minister

The one thing demanded of the human minister in all the sacraments is the intention of doing what the Church does. He is an instrument, it is true, but a living instrument; he is not only moved, he moves himself, and that self-movement is essential. The water he pours might be poured in just this way for a dozen other purposes; it is tied down to this one sacramental purpose by his intention. An atheistic doctor, baptizing a baby to reassure the mother, may think the whole thing is pure mummery; but if he intends to confer the sacrament, the sacrament is conferred. These are sacred things. They are not to be conferred, as Luther alleged, by drunks, idiots, or jokers with no sense of humor; but by men actively participating, for that instant at least, in the priesthood of Christ.

That priesthood is a sacred office of eternal consequence reserved by God for men; for it is man who is thoroughly conformed to the High Priest in His human life and human sufferings. Angels could administer sacraments if God so willed it. Indeed, angels have distributed Holy Communion, as was the case with Blessed Imelda; but it has happened much more frequently that angels have summoned a priest to administer the last sacraments to a man or woman dying alone. Obviously, then, since the ministration of the sacraments depends on the will of God, all diabolical participation in this matter is absolutely precluded. It would be as easy to imagine God allowing the devil to sing the infant Christ asleep in his arms as to conceive of God permitting diabolical administration of the sacraments.

Their number: Actual number

We shall see each sacrament in detail in the following chapters. For the moment, let us take one quick

glance over all of them that we might see them in their proper place, grasp their interrelation and proper evaluation, lest the abundance of detail later on obscure the beauty of the whole structure. It is of faith that there are seven sacraments; a definition directly against the reformers who picked and chose as they liked. That there should be just seven, no more and no less, Thomas shows in an article of surpassing beauty.

The sacraments were instituted for a double end: the worship of God through the spiritual perfection of man; and the remedying of sin and its defects. On each of these counts, there is solid reason for precisely seven sacraments.

Just as in his corporal life, a man's perfection is both individual and social, so also in his spiritual life. In the field of the corporal, he is individually perfected by the acquisition of life through generation, its preservation and increase through growth and nourishment; while sickness and weakness, the great impediments to life, must, of course, be provided against. In his spiritual life, these things are given to a man by Baptism which gives him birth, Confirmation which gives him growth, the Eucharist which gives him nourishment; while Penance and Extreme Unction remove the impediments to spiritual life which are sin and its after-effects. Spiritually as well as corporally, man is taken care of in his community life by the establishment of public authority, with its right to rule and exercise public acts, and by natural propagation; both of these are provided for spiritually through Holy Orders and Matrimony.

The same number seven is arrived at if we examine the sacraments from the aspect of their supplying for the defects of sin. Baptism is directed against the death of the soul, giving life. Confirmation works against the infirmity of spiritual infancy, giving strength. The Eucharist is against the weakness of the soul for sin, giving nourishment; a spiritual food to offset the cravings of man's appetite for carnal food. Penance is against actual sin; Extreme Unction against the vestiges of sin left on the soul. Holy Orders works against the deception and dissolution of the community; while Matrimony is ordered against concupiscence and the extinction of the community.

The same complete beauty of the sacramental hierarchy is seen even more clearly when the sacraments are referred to the virtues. Thus, Baptism, corresponding to faith, is against original sin; Extreme Unction, corresponding to hope, is against venial sin; the Eucharist, corresponding to charity, is against the malice of the will; Holy Orders, corresponding to prudence, is against ignorance; Penance, corresponding to justice, is against mortal sin; Matrimony, corresponding to temperance, is against concupiscence; and, finally, Confirmation, corresponding to fortitude, is against weakness and cowardice.

There just isn't room for any more; there are no gaps to be filled. The sacraments greet man coming from the womb and usher him to his tomb. They take care of his infancy, his adolescence, his manhood. They guard his personal, domestic, and social life. Through all the wide field of the virtues against the defects of human nature, man advances confidently, a spiritual warrior fully equipped with supernatural weapons that will not be outmoded. There is not a moment of his life, no part of his being, no phase of his career which is neglected; he is saturated with the supernatural. He has become a member of the Mystical Body, raised to the divine plane to live the life of God; not at this time or that time in his life, but always.

Mutual order

It is to be noticed that in all the enumerations of the sacraments, except where they were aligned with the virtues, Holy Orders and Matrimony come respectively sixth and seventh. This is not coincidence. Man's primary work is to save his own soul, as against the social service idea which has been recently substituted for the kingdom of God. The things that pertain to the perfection of the individual soul come first; then, and only then, the sacraments referring to the community. Holy Orders precedes Matrimony because the latter has not so full and exclusive a participation of the very essence of spiritual life. Of the sacraments dealing with the individual as such, Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are always mentioned in that order. Again, there is no coincidence. These three should precede Penance and Extreme Unction for they are directly ordered to perfection, while the latter two are only accidentally so ordered, by reason, that is, of the deplorable calamity of sin. Of the first three, Baptism obviously is first, for it is spiritual birth;

Confirmation is next, for it is growth to manhood; finally, there is the Eucharist as the fullness of perfection, directly ordered to the end of all man's spiritual life, eternal union with God.

Of all the sacraments, the Eucharist is supreme in dignity and excellence; for it is the body and blood, soul and divinity of God Who is the author and end of the sacraments. All the others are ordered to the Eucharist as to an immediate end, revolving around it like so many planets around the sun. Holy Orders, the sacrament of the priesthood, is obviously ordered to the Eucharist. By Baptism we are born that we might be united to Christ; by Confirmation, we are strengthened lest shame and human respect keep us away from the sacrament of His presence. Penance and Extreme Unction are ordered to a completely worthy reception of it; while Matrimony, in its essential significance of love's complete union, is the consecrated sign of the union of Christ and the Church as well as the instrument by which is guaranteed the long line of the future children who will come to be received by Christ and to receive Him. In ordinary practice, the reception of the other sacraments is bound up with the reception of the Eucharist; this is even true of Baptism, if the baptized be an adult.

Relation to salvation

From the point of view of necessity, Baptism is the one absolutely necessary sacrament for salvation. Penance, of course, is no less necessary once mortal sin has been committed. And Holy Orders is completely essential for the community. All the others are necessary, not absolutely, but rather for the most fitting, the most perfect attainment of the goal. In the language of modern theologians, Baptism is necessary by a necessity of means, that is, without it salvation is utterly impossible; the others are necessary by a necessity of precept, that is, although salvation is possible without them, they must be received because they have been commanded.

Conclusion: A world rejecting the sacraments: Angelism of pride

The beauty of the sacraments, which we have touched on in this chapter and will continue to examine in the following chapters, will to a great extent be lost on the world of the twentieth century. Ours is a world that is without sacraments because it has deliberately rejected them. That rejection began in a pride that sought to elevate men by denying half their nature, insisting that religion of the spirit alone was worthy of man. It was a kind of angelism that caricatured human nature by degrading its material side. In our own day, we have seen the same pride turn its energies to a championship of the material in man at the expense of the spiritual. Obviously this is no less a caricature and a degradation, for it denies man's soul and man's God, turning him loose as an animal, a slave to his sense appetites whether those be appetites of strength or of pleasure, of the bully or of the effeminate weakling. The sacraments, of course, insist upon both man's spiritual and material nature.

Materialism of sense appetite

The first of these perversions of pride has not worked, nor will the second. The short span of years since the reformation has seen the degeneration of the wholly spiritual religion, more or less free of sacraments, into a subjectivism and ultimate indifferentism. Its decline can be traced step by step through the sickness and death of formal protestantism. That slow death was no more than an expression in fact of the truth that man cannot live on the spiritual alone, that he is no angel, and, above all, of the more profound truth that man cannot live on man-power alone. No more will the second last, powerful and energetic as it seems now; for it is no less true that man cannot live by bread alone, that he is not just another animal. It is no less true now than it has been from the beginning, that men and nations, whatever their strength, cannot live without God.

The indictment of experience: Errors against the sacraments

Perhaps the death sentence of a world that rejects sacraments is to be read in the one truth that man cannot live by lies; his diet must be truth. From the very beginning, errors against the sacraments or denials of them have been falsifications of absolutely fundamental truths. They have necessarily included errors on

physical nature, explaining, for instance, that all material was evil; on divine nature, making God powerless or impersonal; and on human nature, making man an angel or a beast. Inevitably they have scorned the Church's guardianship of truth and the faith which is the guarantee and the liberator of the minds of men. Man cannot attack truth without having the universe come tumbling down upon his head.

Lives without the sacraments

All these religions without sacraments, whether the object of their worship be political, humanistic, or even a kind of degraded divinity, are sad, hopeless things, as sad as the disciples in the upper room after the Ascension of Christ; for they are religions without Christ. Their acts of worship are a kind of gloomy memorial service through which a man walks embarrassed, self-conscious, hushed, on tip-toe lest he awaken the dead; or they reverberate with a loud, thundering fanaticism which is afraid of quiet, afraid of being alone, lest the rumble of despair destroy the last vestige of courage. Both are religions of death.

For them, the life of Christ is over, if it ever began. Certainly there is no continuation of that life, no perpetuation of the work that men need so badly. In direct contradiction to them is the living Church for whom Christ's life goes on in the sacraments. There one can always find the joyous shouts of children, the rejoicing of the friends of the bridegroom; for here, Christ still dwells among men. This religion is necessarily open, sunny, human, even divine; for the life it perfects is completely human and gloriously divine. It is a life made free by truth; the truth of physical nature, of human nature, of divine nature; the truth of the Church and of the faith. It is a life made possible by the sensible signs instituted by Christ to give grace, the signs which are the seven sacraments.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER XIII -- SPIRITUAL INFANCY AND MANHOOD (Q. 66-72)

1. The mystery of birth:
 - (a) Of all birth.
 - (b) Of human birth.
 - (c) Of birth to divine life.
 2. The mystery of growth:
 - (a) In human life.
 - (b) In participated divine life.
 3. Basis of appreciation of the birth and growth of a man.
 4. Birth to the life of God -- Baptism:
 - (a) Its essence and institution.
 - (b) Its physical nature:
 - (1) In itself -- matter and form.
 - (2) The conferring of it.
 - (c) Emergency births -- Baptism of fire and of desire.
 - (d) The instruments of birth -- the ministers.
 - (e) The spiritual infants:
 - (1) In general.
 - (2) In particular.
 - (3) The effects of birth:
 - a. Regeneration -- opening of the gates of heaven.
 - b. Enlightenment -- equipment of the virtues.
 - c. The family likeness -- character.
 - d. Equality of and impediments to the effects.
 - (f) Contrast of birth in the Old and the New Testament.
 5. Growth to spiritual manhood -- Confirmation:
 - (a) The sacrament and its essence.
 - (b) Its effects -- character and grace.
 - (c) The persons involved -- subjects, patrons, and ministers.
- Conclusion:
1. The double life of man, natural and supernatural:
 - (a) The tragedy of stopping at the natural.
 - (b) Distortion of the natural by enemies of the supernatural:
 - (1) Distortion of birth.
 - (2) Distortion of growth.
 - (3) Distortion of manhood.
 2. Bethlehem, Calvary, and the appreciation of man.
 3. Men signed by Christ.

CHAPTER XIII -- SPIRITUAL INFANCY AND MANHOOD (Q. 66-72)

EVERY beginning has about it that which demands a tribute of admiration from the most sceptical of men. With our gift of vision, we can see the long roads it opens up, the obstacles that must be hurdled before the far distant goal which has called it into being is reached. At the very least, there is a stirring courage in every beginning; it is the launching of a ship in spite of the long history of giant waves, pitiless storms, wreck, and disaster. It is the story of the universe in miniature; something new has come in, something old must pass on. Beginning, even to the dullest of us, is a word that means battle, fatigue, desperate effort, triumph or failure.

The mystery of birth: Of all birth

Never is that more true than when life begins. It is true that the very nature of life puzzles us, we cannot dissect it scientifically, cannot as yet reproduce it; but that is not the whole of the story. No little of our

interest in birth is contributed by our own knowledge of all that life entails; its possibilities and threats, the tragic finality of its loss. Birth itself is wrapped in mystery; so much so, that, were it not so common, it would leave us as terrified as the Roman soldiers who gaped at the empty tomb of Christ. For birth, too, slowly swings back the heavy gates that bar the entrance to life; it is an issuing from the dark isolation of the womb by one who is not dead but lives, equipped for the struggle of life.

Of human birth

In the presence of human birth, the tribute which spontaneously issues from our hearts is one of deep respect, of tenderness, and, above all, of humility. Even the superficial observer cannot miss the quiet pride and complete self-satisfaction of the mother, nor the almost gloating, insistent, even boresome exultation of the father. These are the things anyone can see; the deeper, more sacred emotions are not for public display. Actually, in the heart of every parent there is more than a stirring of awe at this mystery which readily brings out a deep humility enslaving the parent to the child; there is even a kind of adoration, so lowly does the parent feel in this presence.

Small wonder. Here it is not merely a matter of tearing down the barriers to life, of a triumphant exit from the tomb of a mother's womb; here is the first small gleam of the spark that will break out into an undying flame. We are present at the establishment of a kingdom which will demand constant government, will include complete sovereignty, and impose heavy responsibilities; we are foreign kings come to lay our gifts at the feet of an infant king, where, of course, they belong.

Of birth to divine life

Here, God knows, is mystery and dignity enough; but this is not all of the mystery of the birth of a man. The infant is still to be born into that life which is proper to the omnipotent Lord of life. He is to see the things that are properly for the eyes of God; to love with a love that in its object and its beginnings is nothing short of divine; to live the life of God every moment, even though he is immersed in a world of men. Whether it be a question of the kitchen slavey or the first lady of the land, once that second birth has taken place, it is a divine life that is being lived. By this birth, man is incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ; he is endowed with the long reach of love that is stopped by no barriers; he is given hosts of helpers in the communion of saints. His smallest acts are given an efficacy which moulds the hard metal of life into an eternal masterpiece of divine grace.

There, indeed, is a beginning. It is as superior to human birth, in the visions it calls up, the struggles it prophesies, the triumph it promises, as the birth of a man is to that of an animal. Indeed, it is infinitely more so. This second birth entails no long months of preparation, no excruciating pain; it takes place in an instant, suffering no threat to its success.

The mystery of growth: In human life; in participated divine life

This same contrast is present between natural and supernatural growth. In the natural order, a man's years from infancy to manhood are glorious things compared to the rest of the physical universe. Every animal goes through a stage of automatic, inevitable building up of physical strength in order that it might quickly pass on the species. It has nothing to learn, nothing to govern, nothing to look forward to; no enemies within itself and no enemies without except equally blind or instinctive forces against which the animal will blindly and instinctively react. But the years of human growth are uneasy, slow, dangerous times; there is so much to learn, so unruly a kingdom to govern, such difficulties to overcome, such threats to life and learning, such hopes to face courageously. Growth in the supernatural order is an instantaneous thing, as is supernatural birth. In an instant, the infant passes to manhood; instantaneously he has courage, strength, the force that enables him to look out on a world that would take the breath away from an angel and be eager to get into the fight because he is so eager to win to its end. It is a growth that will always remain mysterious to us as the things of God must always remain mysterious to the minds of men, as the things of men must always remain mysterious to the world of the animals.

Basis of appreciation of the birth and growth of a man

There is a very odd thing to be noted about this supernatural life of man. It is not to be conceived as an extra coat put on against colder weather or an added pillow for more luxurious rest; it is not a bit of cosmetics artistically added to improve the beauties of nature. It is much deeper than this; so deep, in fact, that, historically at least, without its consideration men have always erred grotesquely, horribly, about the natural birth, the natural growth, the natural life of man. Divorced from the supernatural, they have studied man as a primitive might study an airplane, blind to its sky-soaring purpose; they have been as bitingly critical of the human design as a stubbornly ignorant man might well be of the design of the ship if he had never heard of an ocean.

As a matter of fact, human life exists only on a supernatural plane; all men are ordained to eternal and supernatural life with God. Aside from the necessity of understanding the essentials of supernatural birth and growth for the successful living of human life, we simply cannot make a just estimate of our humanity without that understanding; we must have it if we are to respect the material side of our nature and embrace the spiritual, if we are to avoid making ourselves ghosts or beasts. Exclusion of the supernatural has led men again and again to complete pessimism or the silly illusion of omnipotence.

Birth to the life of God -- Baptism: Its essence and institution

This birth to divine life is as easy to perceive as the birth to our natural life because it comes by way of a sensible sign; yet, it is as impossible to understand as the eternal acts of God, for it is a divine thing. Like the life it generates, it puts something of the infinite into finite hands, and we find this a concept as elusive of our mind as that of a ray of sunshine wrapped in cellophane and sent through the mail. Yet the divine gift is as easily traced as the package shunted along by the postal service. For the sacrament of *Baptism* is a sensible sign instituted by Christ to give the first sanctifying grace which is the birth of a man to the life of God.

In this sacrament, as in all the sacraments, there is a double element to be considered: the sacrament or sensible sign signifying, and the effect signified and produced. In the three sacraments which leave an indelible character on the soul of man, there is an intermediary between these two; that is, there is a sign that signifies, an effect which is signified and in no way signifies anything else, and a sign which, while signified and caused, also signifies. All this sounds extremely complex until it is stated in concrete terms. The complexity is immediately dissipated when it is said that the character of the sacrament is intermediary between the external, sensible sign and the grace produced by the sacrament. The character is signified by the sensible sign and produced by it; in turn, it signifies the sanctifying grace. It is, of course, the sensible sign itself which is properly the sacrament. Thomas, using the phrase consecrated by the Fathers, expressed all this briefly by distinguishing *sacramentum tantum* (sensible sign), *res et sacramentum* (character), and *res tantum* (sanctifying grace).

The full importance of this will be seen later on. Just passingly for the moment it may be noticed that the character-imprinting sacraments are particularly safeguarded. They are given but once; no chance can be taken with them, for that original conferring must endure. It is as though God, to protect man from himself, made allowance for the possibility that a man would not be in the best of shape to receive these sacraments when they were conferred; He attached a receipt (the character), always good, which assures full delivery of grace if presented when a man does get into shape for these sacraments. It might be that the containers of a man's soul are all filled up with the heady wine of the world; when some room is finally found, God is waiting patiently to deliver the wine of His life.

Its physical nature: In itself -- matter and form

The institution of Baptism represented quite a step up for ordinary water. It had been used as a means to cleanliness from the beginning, no doubt with perpetual regret by children who are never fussy about these details, sparingly perhaps by the less socially minded, shiveringly by the men to whom a cold bath is an act of heroism. As a matter of fact, water was never a particularly brilliant agent of bodily cleanliness until, to

its humiliation, soap was introduced as its helpmate. Of course it made no slightest pretensions towards cleansing the soul; it was humble enough, going about its business quietly or boisterously, falling from clouds, meandering through deep river beds, crashing the ships that showed contempt for its power in the open sea.

For all its invincible might far from land, men in their own element made water a lowly household drudge, too sluggish, too dull, too beaten to protest. It was the family workhorse plodding on its gray routine without a thought of congratulations or special favors. Then on one day, as suddenly as the Virgin of Nazareth became the Mother of God, and by the same agency, plain water was elevated to undreamt of heights; in a sense, it was made the mother of the men of a new race, for it was chosen by God as the instrument of divinity in cleansing the souls of men and bestowing divine life upon them.

That day started off like any other day for the mass of water all over the world. Men were drinking it, washing in it, sailing through it, idly fishing in it, or just sitting by it dreaming the dreams evoked by water's restless life. One man was standing in the shallows of an historic river, pouring water on the heads of others as a sign of repentance for sin. That was a strange ceremony in the land of Israel. It was strange to the river Jordan. To the Baptist came another man, Who was also God. Over the protests of the prophet of the Messiah, He, too, was baptized; but here, as in all the rest of His life, the important thing was not what men did to Him but what He did to men. In this case, it was not what the water did to Him, but rather what He did to the water that made all the difference in the lives of all the men who were to come after Him.

In the instant of the baptism of Christ, plain, ordinary water was consecrated by this contact with God. From that time on, wherever it existed all over the world, divine power would flow through water to the souls of men when it was rightly applied. It is true that this new instrument was not to be used by God immediately; it was a marvel of the New Testament, and the Old had yet to die. When it had died with Christ on the cross, and when the New Testament had come forth with Him from the tomb, then water entered into its divine rights.

From then on it would wrap men as a shroud, ushering them into the tomb of Christ that with Him they might issue forth from the grave into a new life. Its power to drown men, cutting off their supply of life-giving air, was transmuted into the supernatural power to strangle sin by giving life-giving grace. It became at the same time a means of burial with Christ and a resurrection with Him to the life of God.

It was powerful, and wonderfully kind, of God to use the worn, dog-eared little book that plain water had always been to men in order to tell the story of supernatural birth; as kind and as powerful as His use of the familiar star to tell the story of His birth to the students of the stars. Between the lines of the familiarly soiled pages of this book, the mysterious chemistry of faith brought out the words written in invisible ink by the finger of God. There was the extension of the mercifully fertile capacity of water beyond the refreshment of desert earth, of drought-stricken, feverish bodies, to the regeneration of souls parched into desert barrenness by sin. In water's calm, cooling touch was now to be seen the merciful abating of the fever of passion; in its limpid clearness, something of the visions vouchsafed by faith.

This consecration of water tells the mysterious story of another birth, death, and resurrection by which all men are born, die, and rise to a divine likeness; but above and through all this is the comforting assurance of the limitless generosity of God. Originally, He had bestowed water on men with positive extravagance; with the same free hand, He shared His divine life with them. For men are not to be found where there is no water; so that wherever men can live their human lives, there they can be born again to divine life. That divine birth is much more essential to the success of the life of a man than water is to his very existence; and what is necessary, naturally or supernaturally, has always been made easy by God, as easy as breathing or seeing, as accessible as water, as universally within reach of the hands of man.

This prodigal generosity of God with His own life is seen more clearly when we realize that the water necessary for Baptism is plain, ordinary, natural water. The means of divine birth, then, is not a precious

treasure handed down in a privileged family, not a rare thing transported with great care to the ends of the earth; rather it is to be had by walking down to the sea, stepping into a river, bending over a spring, or putting a vessel out in a spring shower.

The words which make the sensible sign of Baptism dear beyond all doubt, the form of the sacrament, are classic in their simplicity and completeness: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Just those few words coming from human lips, be they lips of saints or sinners, believers or infidels, those words and a little water, and man is born again. Yet, brief as they are, these words clearly declare the living instrument (the minister), the material instrument, the actual baptizing, and the principal cause, the triune God.

There is the same deceptive simplicity about this bestowal of divine life that marks all the works of God with their own special beauty. It was an altogether simple prescription for living, for instance, that was written in ten short sentences by the finger of God; yet it would strain all the energies of men of every generation. For all the long, patient hours of His teaching, Christ's final orders to His apostles were simplicity itself: "teach ye all nations, baptizing them." Yet that magnificent simplicity has consumed the lives of the most heroic of men. Obviously it does not do to tamper with the simple-looking works of God. This is how the sacrament of Baptism was instituted by Christ, with divine simplicity; so only can it be conferred.

The conferring of it

From the artistic point of view, there may be only one way for a human face to be washed, for of course the artist would try, even against such odds, to preserve dignity and grace. From the essential angle of cleanliness, however, there are possibilities of exuberant variety. The task can be approached with the calm impersonality and economy of a cat. It might be gone at cautiously, applying water to the spots that are obviously soiled. There are face-cloths for the fastidious; or the individually satisfying, though socially stressing, splash-and-splutter methods of the rugged individualist so popular in crowded Pullman cars. Whatever the leanings of personal taste, the point is that all these methods accomplish, more or less, the essential task of cleansing.

It is precisely this sensible sign of washing that is demanded for Baptism. As far as the validity of the sacrament goes, it makes little difference whether the water is poured on a man's head or whether a man's head is poured into the water. Indeed, we might refrain from both and simply sprinkle water on the subject to be baptized. The limitation of the process to a "pouring" of water in the Latin Church is not a matter of validity but of lawfulness; it must be done this way under pain of sin for the minister, but not under pain of nullity for the sacrament.

Over and above the bare necessity of the sacrament, there are the rich beauties of the liturgy, as over and above the bare, essential four walls and roof of a home, there are tasteful decorations and convenient furniture. These latter add nothing to the protective power of the house against the elements; but they are far from superfluities. The liturgy of Baptism adds nothing to the essential effect of the sacrament; nonetheless it completes the beauty that might be expected of a work of God. That completion is made up of a call to our inner devotion, a wealth of instruction, and direct action against the powers of evil.

Emergency births -- Baptism of fire and of desire

Men must sometimes be satisfied with bare protection against wind and storm; obviously, too, all men cannot have the rich beauty of a solemn birth to divine life. Not infrequently, it is a matter of clutching desperately at just the one moment of life granted after birth; sometimes it is even necessary to invade the mother's womb to win another citizen for the kingdom of God. Indeed, millions and millions of men can never enjoy the sure, safe delivery into divine life effected by the sacrament of Baptism; nor does this mean that they are spiritually still-born, barred forever from the divine life they might have had. The sacrament of Baptism is the means of normal supernatural birth. Besides this, there are two abnormal or emergency exits from the death of sin into the life of grace. One, the path taken by the martyrs, is known

as the baptism of blood, and is a complete destruction of sin along with full infusion of the life of grace accomplished by the infallible power of God in return for the supreme witness of martyrdom. The other, baptism of fire or of desire, destroys sin and brings life to the soul by reason of the very dispositions of the individual; he has turned to God in his unconditional desire to do all that must be done for salvation.

All three Baptisms of water, of fire, and of blood -- concur in their common effect of sanctifying grace, in birth to the divine life. But only one of the three is a sacrament; for only one produces its effect of its very nature by reason of its institution, only one is a sensible sign signifying and producing grace -- the Baptism of water. This is, therefore, the only one of the three which produces that indelible mark of fellowship with Christ which is the character of the sacrament. Consequently, it is only the Baptism of water that requires a living instrument of divine power, a minister; surely, it is clear that there is no minister of the desires that spring, from the depths of a man's heart, while to classify a lion in a Roman arena as a minister of Baptism would be stretching things somewhat.

The instruments of birth -- the ministers

Because men cannot live a supernatural life without supernatural birth, we have seen that God chose the most common of materials as the matter of the sacrament of birth to divine life. The material for Baptism, ordinary water, is to be found wherever men live; and wherever men can be found, there, too, there are ministers of Baptism. It is true that the ordinary minister of solemn Baptism is the priest, and fittingly so; he is the minister of the sacrament of unity which is the Eucharist, and by Baptism a newcomer is admitted into this unity. But in case of necessity, anyone who can lay claim to humanity in his actions can be the minister of this supernatural birth of Baptism. Men, women, or children, laymen or clerics, believers, infidels or heretics all are valid ministers of the sacrament; subject, of course, to the essential limitations demanded by the sacrament itself, that is, valid matter, correct form, and the intention to do what the Church does, to confer the sacrament. It is obvious, then, that the sacrament is not to be conferred validly by an idiot, a drunk, a complete paralytic, a mute, or a practical joker.

The usually clumsy and self-conscious god-father and the inevitably confident and self-assured god-mother are really the nurses and instructors of the spiritual infant. They do not play an essential part in the supernatural birth of the child any more than a nurse or governess does in natural birth. Their office pertains to the full beauty of solemn baptism. By their part in the ceremony, they take on the responsibility for the spiritual education of the infant should their efforts be necessary, and thereby contract a spiritual relationship with the child.

To get back to the comparative examination of the three Baptisms, it must be noticed that, while baptism of fire and of blood share with baptism of water the honor of ushering a man into divine life, the first two reach only to the barest of essentials. Wherever it is at all possible, Baptism of water must be received, for Christ has commanded it and with good reason. It is only by Baptism of water that a man receives his badge of membership in Christ, his titles to the reception of all the other sacraments, and his incorporation into the visible Church; no small items, by any means. Then, too, Baptism of fire may stop far short of a total remission of sin since it is so dependent on the dispositions of the subject; while Baptism of water is a complete remission both of sin and the punishment due to it, a secure remission infallibly producing its effects, not by reason of the dispositions of the subject, but by reason of the institution of Christ.

The truth of the complete purification by the sacrament of Baptism suggested a wild scheme to some heretical minds by which they might combine the full, though doubtful, luxuries of a sinful life with the eternal joys of the vision of God. Why not delay Baptism until just before death? Meanwhile, all restraints could be tossed aside with impunity. It was, of course, a silly notion based on the assumption that the human hand was quicker than the eye of God. It is a terribly dangerous thing to attempt to fox the Omniscient. Looking at it sensibly, it should be clear that the beginning of life is not to be dodged, under penalty of missing all of life and life's goals; nor is it to be delayed. It must be had as soon as possible; so we baptize the infant within a few days or a week; if necessary, immediately at birth. An adult, unless he be in danger of death, must, of course, undergo instruction on the nature of the supernatural he is being

introduced to. Since he must start living that supernatural life immediately after Baptism, he must know what it is all about.

Christ's words were absolute: all men were to be baptized; not when they pleased, not at the moment of death, not when they had finished sinning, but without any limitation whatsoever. Should sinners be baptized? Well, if they were barred, Baptism would long since have rusted away in the tool shed; for all men, from the youngest infant to the oldest patriarch, are sinners. There is, however, a distinct difference that separates sinners cleanly into two groups: there are those who are fighting sin and those who embrace it. The only difficulty, relative to Baptism, comes up in regard to the second group. Can a man be separated from the sins he still has his arms around? Of course not. If he were baptized, the sacrament would be a false sign inasmuch as the grace it signifies would not be produced.

Nevertheless, if such a one is baptized, the first thing signified by the sacrament, the character is produced; this man, then, has in his possession the divine receipt on whose later presentation the full payment of grace is made by God. The one condition absolutely demanded from an adult receiving Baptism is that he have the intention of receiving the sacrament; granted this much, no disposition of his can utterly defeat the sacrament. Perhaps later in life he will come to his senses and regret his sins; then the full blood of the graces of Baptism, dammed up so long, is let loose on his soul.

The much more normal case is that of the sinner who comes to Baptism sincerely sorry for his sins; here, there is a direct and immediate application of the merits of the suffering and death of Christ. His sins and their penalties are completely forgiven, not by reason of the disposition of the newly baptized, but by reason of the infallible power of God. No penance is imposed on this man after Baptism, for his soul is pure of all stain. He is not required to go to confession. Indeed, how could he be? Before Baptism he is incapable of receiving any other sacrament; after Baptism, he has no sins to confess. It is only in the case of conditional Baptism that the individual immediately goes to confession and receives conditional absolution, for there is the possibility that the former Baptism was valid, necessitating the sacrament of penance as the only means of forgiving sins committed since that first Baptism.

The spiritual infants: In general

To the Catholic mind, Baptism will always be the sacrament of children. It ushers a newcomer into the family. It lays the cornerstone of an eternally enduring domestic edifice. In a larger sense, it makes children of us all, children of God. Surely, there is no age at which a child cannot receive Baptism; the very youngest has tasted death in Adam, of course it can taste life in Christ. To be nourished in that supernatural life from infant days makes everything about it easy, homely, familiar, part of our blood and bones. Perhaps that is one of the many reasons why there can never be a substitute for Catholic education; home is, after all, the best place for a child.

In particular

Yet, this is no reason for a misguided zealot to invade a family of Jews or infidels, baptizing their children by force, or to slip into an insane asylum and baptize all the inmates. There are cases, of course, in which the Baptism of a non-Catholic infant is entirely reasonable; if the child, for instance, has been abandoned; if one of the parents has been converted to Catholicism and wishes the Baptism of the child; or if the infant is at the very point of death. Outside of these cases, the guardians and parents have natural rights over infants before they become masters of their own lives and over the insane who have never enjoyed the use of reason. These rights are not to be violated. It is, of course, evident that parents or guardians do not have power of life and death, either natural or supernatural, over their children; but it is only when the child is in danger of natural death without Baptism that the question of Baptism is a final question of supernatural life or death. Nevertheless, Baptism, once conferred on such minors is valid; it produces its eternal effects, for it operates effectively by its very nature.

The effects of birth: a. Regeneration -- opening of the gates of heaven

Sudden spring rain falling on barren earth to recall it to life and make it richly fruitful is only a faint suggestion of the effect of the water of Baptism on the soul of a man. The infant coming forth from its mother's womb is a little better image; it is, after all, making an entry into life; but it is not coming back from death. Christ's resurrection is perhaps the best picture of the first, astounding effect of Baptism; the effect of regeneration, of resurrection from the death of sin to the life of grace. For Baptism flings open the gates of heaven; after that, there is only the long road to travel by which we approach the gates that wait open for us.

Enlightenment -- equipment of the virtues

The full rich equipment that comes into our soul with the grace of Baptism is hardly less impressive to our penurious minds. Not only is all sin remitted, both actual and original; not only is every last punishment wiped out; but the means by which we can walk the long road home with firm, giant steps has been given to us. Faith, hope, charity, the four cardinal virtues, all the gifts of the Holy Ghost spring up with a sudden vigor that makes an Alaskan summer's approach look like slow motion in nature. In the infant, these virtues wait poised for action until the infant's faculties are capable of that action; but in the adult, their supernatural fruitfulness makes itself clear to the eyes of God and His saints instantly, even though we, who "see through a glass darkly," can mark no difference from the previous actions of this man.

But why did God stop there? Could not the death and the merits of Christ have gone all the way in undoing the damage of original sin? Why didn't He win back for us the preternatural gifts that supply the inherent defects of human nature; why did He not assure us freedom from suffering, from civil war within ourselves, from death and the chance of complete failure? God knew it all along; for the rest of us, well, it seems we must learn for ourselves that men can never be given enough, that a gift is as likely to awaken a roar of protest at its limitations as to evoke a murmur of gratitude for its perfections.

Yes, Christ could have done all this; but He did not. He made us members of His Mystical Body, full of grace and truth, like unto Him Who fought His fight, carried His cross, and won His triumph. We, too, have to fight. So much the better. We shall appreciate the goal to which we fight; we shall earn it; we shall make it our own. We shall suffer, and it is better so; our Master suffered to show us the divine shortcut to heaven. We also shall triumph, but only if the battle is won, only if we refuse to quit, only if we wield the weapons put into our hands and wield them with a stout heart. Put these same questions honestly and see what happens to their semblance of justified complaint. Why is courage necessary for life? Why must I face the possibility of losing? Why must I carry the responsibility of human life? Or, to put it all in one word, why was I ever born a man?

Equality of and impediments to the effects

Baptism brings the gifts of divine life and complete destruction of sin to all who receive it. To all infants, these gifts come equally; they are proportioned to the disposition of adults. They can be held up on their way into the soul by barriers of infidelity or defective sorrow for sin, except for the one effect of the indelible character; and this is itself a guarantee of the other effects once a man has removed the barriers he has erected. In the character of the sacrament is to be found the family likeness of the adopted sons of God. This likeness cannot be marred, as might a natural family likeness, by talking out of turn in somewhat rougher company than we are accustomed to; it cannot be destroyed by even so crushing a fall as that from the heights of sanctity to the depths of sin. Its recognition does not require anxious peering for a family likeness at the request of an imaginative mother where we can hardly recognize humanity. This likeness is beyond all doubt; it is clear for all of an eternity. It is not necessary to trace its outline again and again; it will not be eroded by the winds and rains of life; it will not wear out. It has the marks of the chisel of the divine Sculptor about it; and He works for eternity, not time.

Contrast of birth in the Old and the New Testament

All this is not mere promise, not a matter of prefiguring, not a prophecy. It is not a profession of faith in the remission of sin by the future merits of Christ. All this circumcision, the baptism of the Old Testament,

was; this and no more. The character of Baptism, however, is a positive, divine stamp; indelible, adequate, complete, with all the effectiveness and finality of the word of God.

For all its sublime effects, Baptism is only supernatural birth; it produces infants, not giants. Yet, for men to live the life of God is a giant's work, particularly when that life is to be life among men and in the midst of enemies who are no less than angelic powers. By Baptism a man is a child; and, in a way, a child lives a life all its own. Its existence is individual rather than social, for it has not yet arrived at the fullness of life which will enable it to communicate of its riches to others. Childhood, then, is a preparation for manhood; surely, individual life is unworthy of man who, like God but in his own humble way, does not move along determined paths but roams the world, master of his life, distributing his riches in lordly fashion. He is a social being; for him, then, supernatural birth is not enough.

Growth to spiritual manhood -- Confirmation: The sacrament and its essence

We must be brought to spiritual manhood, to the fullness of spiritual life, that we might do the things of a man. This full spiritual growth to perfection is the purpose and the effect of that sensible sign instituted by Christ which we call *Confirmation*. It is true that we may search the Scriptures in vain for an account of its institution; but then, John had warned us long ago that not all the deeds of Christ could be written in a book. For our comfort, however, there is the scriptural account of John and Peter's descent from Jerusalem to the faithful who had not yet received the Holy Ghost, though they had been baptized; when the apostles arrived and laid hands upon them, they all received the Holy Ghost.

The fullness of life, the coming of the Holy Ghost and His grace, is signified by the olive oil used in the sacrament; no doubt, because of its richness, the perpetual greenness of the olive tree, the nourishing, soothing, and healing powers of the oil, the symbolism of peace of the olive branch. The communication of that fullness to others, the supernatural social life, is signified by the balsam which is mixed with the olive oil and whose fragrance permeates to the far corners of the church. This mixture is the chrism of Confirmation with which the cross is signed on the forehead of the spiritual infant in consecration to perpetual warfare; it is the proud symbol of the warrior Chief carried boldly by all of His followers. The same union of the ideas of adult manhood and courageous fighter is to be seen in the very administration: the bishop, who possesses the fullness of power, lays his hands upon the subject, then gives him a gentle tap on the cheek that is both a warning and a promise.

Its effects -- character and grace

The form of Confirmation is simple and solemn. The bishop says: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Simple as they are, the words clearly determine the material sign beyond all doubt, and assign both the living instrument (the bishop) and the principal cause, God Himself. The words should be solemn. For the spiritual infant, while brought before his Chief by a patron, indicating his childish need of being sustained by his elders, in the few instants demanded for this signing and anointing, in the few simple words uttered by the instrument of God, the boy is changed into the man. More sanctifying grace has poured into his soul, bringing with it the titles to all the future graces he will need to meet the emergencies that will come to the adult soldier of Christ. On his soul, there is stamped the indelible identification of his membership in the band of fighters who march undaunted behind their Master to face incredible odds; the fighters for the faith.

Just as infancy and adolescence are ordained to full manhood in the natural order, so Baptism is ordered to Confirmation in the supernatural order; Confirmation is as necessary in the supernatural order as manhood is in the natural. Yet we must be careful about carrying images over from the slow-moving material world into the altogether spiritual world of the sacraments. In this world, independent of the limitations of matter, a weary old man can be born again and become a spiritual infant; while a small boy becomes a spiritual man within an instant.

The persons involved -- subjects, patrons, and ministers

In this swift moving spiritual world, the essentials of life are had by the smallest infant. Confirmation, then, has nothing like the absolute necessity of Baptism about it. This could have been seen easily enough from the very difficulty of its material and administration; God has not made it too easy, so it cannot be absolutely necessary. Its material is not easy going, natural water, but a mixture of olive oil and balm; its minister is not just any human being, but the possessor of full spiritual power, the bishop; nor are its subjects all men, but only those who have already entered into life, who have been born by Baptism.

The double life of man, natural and supernatural: The tragedy of stopping at the natural

It is this second, and supernatural, life, completing and perfecting the natural, that is all-important for man. This is the life for which all else must be sacrificed when sacrifice is necessary: youth, beauty, health, comfort, even natural life itself. Perhaps one of the bitterest, certainly one of the most cryptic, expressions of the importance of supernatural life is Bossuet's terrifying sentence: "Those who give us birth, kill us." Unless the generation be double, both natural and supernatural, there is profound truth in that indictment.

Distortion of the natural by enemies of the supernatural: Distortion of birth

Weigh the sentence carefully for a moment. We can pity the still-born child and appreciate something of the bitter disappointment of the parents; they had looked along the road that this life will now never travel; they had seen visions of its possibilities, its fineness, its courage, its triumphs. What a horror it would be were still-born children to return year after year to saturate the walls of the home and the hearts of the parents with their own bitter disappointment at being excluded from life. How infinitely more horrible it would be if the parents themselves insisted both on the birth that is death and the ceaseless, ghostly wandering of dead children through the house.

In a very real sense, that is what has been done by the men and women of an age that scorns supernatural life. They have given their children only half a life, insisting that their children be supernaturally still-born; and, consequently, that these living-dead children haunt the halls of home and the hearts of parents. The children have been barred from the life of God, yet they live forever. We are blind indeed to mistake the dead for the living; we are mad to be complacent in that mistake. That very blindness hides from our eyes even the little that is left to life without the supernatural; for the natural life of man has been thoroughly understood only by those who saw beyond it to higher goals, by those, that is, who saw in man not only the image but the son of God.

Men deprived of that vision can cherish grotesque notions in place of respect, love, and understanding of the natural life of man. Birth can become a thing to be sedulously limited, even when it is not taken as an evidence of vulgarity, of animality, a biological accident, a matter of political policy, or of social and emotional convenience. The strength of a man can easily become a thing to be surrendered eagerly that men might find the cowardly comfort and release from individual responsibility that are the rewards of incorporation into a mob.

Distortion of growth; of manhood

Man can be denied both his childhood and manhood, even when, grudgingly, he is given birth. Normally, childhood is a time of carefree development and of protective habit building; to be shielded from life, from evil, from struggle until the child is able to handle these things itself. Without the vision of the long goals of men, it can easily become a naked revelation of life, an institutional existence at the mercy of impersonal officials, to be followed by a cancellation of adolescence which pretends that high school children are university men, while undergraduates are statesmen directing the whole of national life.

Why should these youngsters wait for that which never arrives? As the purely natural view becomes more solidly entrenched, it becomes more and more impossible to achieve manhood and womanhood. Under such circumstances, a philosopher could find many a pertinent question to ask: What principles and what

ideals are there for man to defend? What is there for which he can struggle? What is there worthy of unending love? When the whole story of a man's life is told, what difference does it make? If it made any, what could he do about it? The questions would pile up; but the only answers available would fool only those who had been duped from the beginning of their intellectual life.

Bethlehem, Calvary, and the appreciation of man

We must have bent our stiff necks to enter the low doorway at the cave of Bethlehem if we are to appreciate any infant. We must know that man must be born again to understand his first birth. We must have stood on Calvary as that dead body was lowered and placed in a tomb, sealed and guarded, if we are to know something of the life of man. We must see the shroud of Baptism envelop a man before we can see him rise again.

Men signed by Christ

It is only by seeing men who are signed with the sign of Christ that we can know what it means to be a man and, knowing, understand why the "men signed of Christ have wars they hardly win and souls they hardly save, yet go gaily in the dark." It is by this knowledge that we can trace the majestic lines of the Lord of the world in the red, wrinkled features of the infant or the white, wrinkled features of old age. Man must be born to live and grow to manhood; he must be born again, enter into another life and reach another manhood if he is to have full understanding of his fellow-men, his own life, and his God.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER XIV -- THE BREAD OF LIFE (Q. 73-78)

1. The way to a man's heart:
 - (a) An open road -- by the need of man.
 - (b) A double road -- by reason of double need.
 - (c) Roads that are thoroughly mapped
-- man's interest in food.
2. A contrast in foods:
 - (a) The body nourished by inferiors.
 - (b) The soul nourished by superiors.
 - (c) Process of corporal and spiritual nourishment.
3. A case of spiritual indigestion and its history:
 - (a) The regretful renouncement of food.
 - (b) The progress of starvation.
 - (c) Reasons for the starvation
-- the predispositions of the mystery.
4. The fact of the mysterious food:
 - (a) Essence and existence of the Eucharist.
 - (b) Fittingness of its institution.
 - (c) Its necessity.
 - (d) Its prefigures.
5. The mystery itself:
 - (a) The mystery of the matter:
 - (1) Ingredients of the mystery -- bread and wine.
 - (2) Process of the mystery:
 - a. Passing of the substance of the bread:
 - 1) The change itself -- transubstantiation.
 - 2) Its effects in relation to substance,
accidents and substantial form.
 - b. Existence of Christ in the Eucharist:
 - 1) As to subject.
 - 2) As to quantity.
 - c. Continuation of the accidents.
 - (b) The power of the form.

Conclusion:

 1. What men live by.
 2. Hunger strike of the twentieth century.
 3. The Angelic Doctor and the Bread of Angels

CHAPTER XIV -- THE BREAD OF LIFE (Q. 73-78)

THE explorer of the virgin regions close to a man's heart who reported his findings with such classic brevity was either the perpetrator or the victim of a great injustice. He might have supposed that all the world would understand his "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach" was no more than an inadequate metaphor for a truth too long to be fully told; or he might really have thought he had reached the end of the road when he had come to the outer boundaries of the physical nature of man. In the first case, he deserves the sincere sympathy of all the millions of misunderstood authors; in the second, well, at least he has plenty of companions who stop with him at the half-way station thinking it is the end of the road.

The way to a man's heart: An open road -- by the need of man

In actual fact, catering to a man's stomach has more immediate effect on his waist-line than on his heart. Let us give the author the benefit of the doubt and accept his metaphor. Then the roads he points out are really the highways of beneficence. When it is pity that is being kind, there is a certain tenderness awakened; but pity rarely leads to love because by its nature it emphasizes the superiority of the benefactor, and love cannot but be humble. Sheer generosity, on the other hands is such a selfless thing as to be of the immediate family of undying love Man is grateful for gifts; in his gratitude, he is prepared to start gratitude's endless circle by giving gifts in return, even giving himself in return.

The degree of the recklessness of his return gifts will depend to a great extent on the bright flame of

generosity that inspired it and the need to which that generosity ministered. A man is grateful for the small beneficence of a match with which to light his cigarette, but not exuberantly grateful; he is more grateful for a roof to keep off the weight of the world, for clothes to maintain his dignity, and friends to buoy up his heart. When the ministrations are to his radical needs, when he is given the things by which he lives and without which he dies, his gratitude can easily be turned into the earth-shaking force we call love.

No question about it, a man needs food. A comfortably lined stomach, too, is unquestionably a necessary disposition to romantic moods; at least, the perfume of a bakery shop will rudely interrupt the most romantic protestations of a starving man, and fasting has always been more closely allied to penance than to romance. Of course, the thing must not be carried too far; an overstuffed lover will be hard to keep awake. But beyond the matter of predisposition, the ministration of food evokes a singularly child-like gratitude from the most robust adult. It is almost as though he were not only grateful that his life was not allowed to flicker out for want of fuel, he is a little surprised that so lethal a weapon of food has been used to such beneficent purposes. Ignorance can work marvels of destruction with food; unskillfulness easily surpasses those marvels; it is only in our time that governments have discovered they can break the spirit of a man, mold his disposition, and determine his political and economic future by the simple device of depriving him of the proper vitamins. No wonder a man is surprised and grateful to rise from a meal not only unharmed but positively nourished.

A double road -- by reason of double need

Man, however, does not live by bread alone; he has a mind and a heart that are nourished by truth and goodness. If he is grateful for the things by which he lives physically, he is uncritically devoted, exorbitantly grateful for truth and goodness. Because there are none of the immediate protests of nature against poisonous or half-cooked fare in this order, charlatans and hypocrites have reaped a harvest of gratitude and love with none of the labor of truth and goodness. But aside from that, in our time there is more than sufficient confirmation that the road of physical food is only one road, and not a through one at that, to a man's heart; the other, truth and goodness, is a wide open road that leads straight to the depths of a man's heart. Why else does the most mediocre of university professors move before his pupils in a pillar of cloud by day; or the major professor slightly obscure the sun for his graduate student?

Roads that are thoroughly mapped -- man's interest in food

If the original explorer meant that the road to a man's heart was by the things which support his life, he was quite right. There is nothing obscure about the fact, nothing hidden about the roads. Man's thirst for truth is amply testified to by his naive trust of the learned, his unquestioning sacrifice in the interests of education, his high honor for those who have professedly amassed a supply to distribute to others. His interest in physical food -- well, there has never been much question of that; though there has been, perhaps, no greater, more detailed interest than in our time when vitamins, calories, carbohydrates and starches roll off the tongues of children like a litany of old friends. In a sense, anyone can find the way to a man's heart, because he wears the directions written boldly on his whole nature.

But there is much more to the nourishment of a man's soul than the truth he can discover from other men, or the goodness he can see glinting, now and then, in the sunlight of his own penetrating glance. Perhaps we can understand that best by contrasting the character of the food of the body and of the soul. That there is a considerable difference should be apparent to our times, of all ages. Not so long ago in America, when a depression made skeletons of strong men, we saw many a mighty spiritual feat from men who had scarcely strength to lift their feet: thoughtfulness, sacrifice, refusal to stoop to ways unworthy of man to avoid the spectre of starvation. We know then, that it is possible to have a well-nourished soul in a starving body; as if that evidence would not be enough for our sceptical minds; the world has since been filled with millions of the starving who nourish the world with their heroism. It should not be too hard, then, to understand the possibility of a starved soul in a comfortably nourished body. These two do not flourish on the same diet.

A contrast in foods: The body nourished by inferiors; the soul nourished by superiors

The body needs the support of things beneath it. It feeds on them, destroying them, changing them into itself; and prospers in the process of bestowing a destructive nobility on the animal, plant, and mineral world. The soul needs the support of a superior; it feeds on truth, goodness, above all on God, not destroying these things, not assimilating them into its own substance, but rather being changed by them, and even, in the case of God, in some sense being changed into Him. The body is always losing something that must be replaced; the soul is always gaining something that need never be replaced but that so increases its capacity that only the infinitely inexhaustible could possibly keep it alive. Men are indeed interested in food, food of body and of soul, for men are interested in life.

Process of corporal and spiritual nourishment

Since a breach has been made in the walls of nature and man has slipped out into the fields of God, it is more than ever true that he does not live by bread alone. To live the divine life that is now his, he needs divine nourishment: truth that is proper to God; goodness that is God's own; yes, even the very body of God, the food of angels that yet has never graced an angelic table. When that food was first offered to men, many turned away in doubt and distaste; it was a hard saying, that promise, and the food was altogether strange to the diet of men. The saying is still hard for men who measure love by their own limits, generosity by their own check-book, and power by their own strength. The food is still strange to those who have yet to taste it; for one must taste and see the sweetness of the delights of divinity which are not to be imagined from the experiences of men.

A case of spiritual indigestion and its history: The regretful renouncement of food

Those who did taste it became enamored of it; they knew something of the truth of the promises: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him." "I am the bread of heaven; unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you." They tasted and lived, lived as men had never dared hope to live; lived by the life of God. Little wonder, then, that men cherished the gift. For eleven hundred years, it never occurred to men to challenge it directly; it was too close to dreams, too wholly reality, too vibrant with life to leave room for a doubt. When, at last, the restless mind of a man struck out at this gift, it was with an undertone of the regret and shame a man feels when his fit of distemper aims barbed words at those he loves most. Berengarius denied the real presence of Christ, but with the proviso that the symbol moved man to create his own heavenly food for the nourishment of the life without which there was nothing to live for. Before he died, he knew the emptiness he had introduced into his own life, admitted it, and received again the Bread of Life.

The progress of starvation

He had shown a dark path to the human mind, irritated in the obscurity of faith. Still, men would have none of it. For men do not easily surrender the things by which they live; and more than time is necessary to teach men to see light in darkness, life in death, plenty in starvation. It was five centuries before the Eucharist was challenged again; and, again, the challenge was a regretful, even a half-hearted one in its beginnings. Luther could not bring himself to deny the divine prudence in the Eucharist; Calvin slithered, rather than plunged, into it; it was Zwinglius who dared to step as far off the path of life as Berengarius had.

Reasons for the starvation -- the predispositions of the mystery

From then on, men steadily lost the taste for this divine food. In a way, it was inevitable. As men lost interest in Christ, how could they keep interest in His constant presence; as they lost hope for things beyond the stars, what point was there in feeding on the Bread of Angels; as they forgot Calvary, what meaning had the living memento of that gesture of friendship? The thing was inevitable as men lost sight of the far horizons of divine life. To eat this Bread, a man must approach humbly to a food that is his Master, falling down in adoration; he must be stripped of the fundamental selfishness that puts himself

before God, or he eats it to his damnation; he must have courage, the courage to face a human life divinely lived. This is too much to ask of a world whose prescription for life is rather pride in self-sufficiency, satisfaction at whatever cost, and escape from life rather than a challenge to it. Men have become so hungry that the food is distasteful; but they nonetheless starve for lack of it.

The fact of the mysterious food: Essence and existence of the Eucharist

Yet, the food is there for men to eat; on the word of God, it was given to men, is still given to them. If that is not security enough, men must go hungry: for the mind of man, because it is not the mind of God, cannot encompass the supreme act of divine generosity. The sacrament of the *Holy Eucharist*, the divine food of man's supernatural life, was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper when He took bread, blessed it, and gave it to His disciples saying: "Take ye and eat. This is my body"; and taking the wine, in the same manner, saying: "Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins." By these words He fulfilled the promise which had sounded so incredibly hard to the ears of so many, the promise that He would give them His body to eat and His blood to drink. The fulfillment of that promise was in the sensible sign of the accidents of bread and wine, instituted to give grace, not, as in the case of the other sacraments, by the power of the Holy Ghost in them, but by containing the very body and blood of Christ Himself.

The promise should not have been so hard to believe, the food not difficult to take. After all, we do not expect an earthly father to give a child life, generating it, and then do nothing to conserve that life; why, then, suspect the heavenly Father of our supernatural life to bestow that life on us, generating us in Baptism, and not provide nourishment for the conservation of that life? Indeed He did provide, and much more than nourishment. For if we take the internal physical perfections of a man, that which he attains by growth, as paralleled in the spiritual order through Confirmation, then the whole gamut of external perfections are paralleled in the spiritual order through the Eucharist: it is a man's food, his clothes robing him in new dignity, the house to which he flies to shelter, his companion, friend, his treasure, even, in a very real sense, his goal.

Fittingness of its institution

While Our Lord had promised all this long before, had had it in mind from the beginning of His human life, and eternally in His divine mind, He saved its actual institution until the last moments of His life. It was to be a souvenir of His passion and death, indeed, in its accomplishment as sacrifice, the very renewal of that precious death; what more fitting than that it should stand touching shoulders in the memory of men with the death of God that men must not forget? That Last Supper was a sad farewell which the silent gloom of the disciples showed they well understood; He was taking leave of them, yet would not leave them; He would no longer live among them in his proper human form, but He would never be absent from them under the sacramental veils. They were His friends. He was leaving them a gift; given at any time, it would be cherished by those who loved Him, given as His last gift it would be doubly dear, indelibly chiseled on the memories of those who would bring the story of His life and love to all ages.

Its necessity

Obviously, the Eucharist is by no means a divine superfluity, a flamboyant touch to the already divine perfection of humanity. Men need this Bread of Life. Indeed, if we look at it from the side of the unity of the Mystical Body which it signifies, men simply cannot get along without it; for to reach the goal of his life, man must at least belong to the soul of the Church. Considered in itself, however, it is not one of the utterly indispensable means to heaven. A moment's comparison with Baptism, with which we are now familiar, will serve to bring out clearly the exact degree of the necessity of the Eucharist. Baptism is necessary as the very beginning of spiritual life, the principle of it; the Eucharist is rather the end, the consummation of it. Just as it is sufficient to have the end in view, in desire, to accomplish an action that leads to it, so it is sufficient to have the Eucharist in desire to lead the life that goes to the goal of union. Baptism of desire does remove the impediments that bar a man from eternal life, but it is possible only to

an adult; for, clearly, as Baptism is the first of the sacraments, it cannot be had implicitly, in desire, in the reception of any of the other sacraments. Quite the contrary with the Eucharist: for all the sacraments are ordered to it as to their end, Baptism included; so that even an infant, receiving Baptism with the faith and intention supplied by the Church, also receives the Eucharist in desire, implicitly.

Its prefigures

Having received God Himself in the sacrament, men lovingly traced the long history of its promise through the patient years of the Old Testament. There was, for instance, Melchisedech's sacrifice of bread and wine, foreshadowing the outer sign of the Eucharist; all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, particularly the expiatory sacrifices, prefigured the expiatory death of Christ which is signified and renewed in this sacrament; while its nourishment, sweetness, and heavenly delights were foretold in the manna, the heavenly-sent food that fell upon the Israelites facing the long years of life in the barrenness of the desert. But more than all others, it was the paschal lamb that foretold to men the fullest story of the Eucharist. The lamb was eaten with unleavened bread; it was perfect, spotless, and immolated by the whole people; its immolation was a sacrifice by which the Israelites were preserved from the destroying angel and delivered from the captivity of Egypt. The parallel is so perfect as almost to have torn away the veils of a figure to show an explicit promise of the Lamb of God.

The mystery itself: The mystery of the matter: Ingredients of the mystery -- bread and wine

Coming down to a more detailed examination of the Eucharist, we must look for the matter and form that constitute it, not at the moment of its reception by the faithful or the priest, but at the moment of consecration in the Mass. From one angle, this sets the Eucharist apart from the other sacraments, for all the others are perfected, or accomplished, in their use, whereas the Eucharist is already in existence before it is administered; thus, for instance, it is not the blessing of the baptismal water or the consecration of the oil for Confirmation that constitutes these two sacraments, but rather the use of this material, the pouring of the water and the anointing with chrism. There is this common note, however, in all the sacraments; they are perfected, accomplished, at the precise moment when the form is joined to the matter, the words to the thing, to produce the perfect sign; this is no less true of the Eucharist than of the other sacraments, for it is at the moment of consecration that the words of the form are applied to the bread and wine.

In the determination of the matter of the Eucharist, the primary question to be asked is: "What did Christ Himself use?" As we have already seen, the determination of these channels of grace is entirely God's work; that Christ used this or that material settles the question of the matter of a sacrament. Yet, the mind and heart of man insist upon going further, searching for the reasons of the peculiar fittingness of this matter rather than that. In the course of these tentative explorations into the wisdom of divinity, the saints have come upon reasons much too richly beautiful to be lightly cast aside.

Certainly, then, the matter of this sacrament is bread and wine; for it was bread and wine that Christ used at the Last Supper. That it is beautifully fitting material is clear from a number of considerations. After all, this sacrament was instituted by way of nourishment, and bread and wine was the ordinary nourishment of the men of the time of Christ; God has a way of conferring awful dignity on simple, ordinary things. Then, too, this was the sacrament of Christ's passion, a truth beautifully brought out by the separate consecration of bread and wine, the separate consumption of the body and blood of the Lord. It was fitting that this sacrament, as the type of the unity of the Church which is made up of many faithful, should be wrought from bread, made up of many grains, and wine, pressed from many grapes. Just as there are no determined number of the faithful in the Church, so there is no determined quantity, large or small, for the matter of this sacrament.

Christ consecrated wheaten bread, and unleavened wheaten bread. No other than wheaten bread, then, will suffice for the validity of the sacrament. The leavening, or lack of it, does not pertain to the essential validity of the sacrament; in actual fact, the Greek Church uses leavened bread as a protest against the

heresy of the Nazarenes and its confusion of the legalism of the Old Testament with the sacraments of the New. What is necessary, that the consecrating priest avoid sin, is that he follow the rite of the Church to which he belongs; and, in the Latin Church, the bread to be used must be unleavened as the sign of the incorrupt body of Christ and the uncorrupted sincerity of the faithful.

The wine used in the first institution was wine of the grape; no other will do for the validity of the Eucharist. A little water is to be poured into the wine before the consecration as that was probably what Christ did in accordance with the custom of the country. This touch of water signifies the people sharing in this sacrament; for as the water, mingling with the wine, becomes one with it, so the people, by the use of this sacrament, are made one with Christ. As we have seen, this sacrament is not constituted in its use by the people but in the consecration of the Mass; consequently, this matter of the water mixed with the wine does not pertain to the validity of the sacrament.

Process of the mystery: Passing of the substance of the bread: The change itself -- transubstantiation

There is little difficulty in determining the matter of this sacrament. Where the eyes of the mind go blind and the eyes of faith must take up the work is when we come to the revealed truth that the body and blood of Christ are truly present. By the words of Christ, repeated by the priest, the whole substance of the bread is *changed into* the substance of the body of Christ, and the substance of the wine is changed into the substance of the blood of Christ. That change of substance to substance, completely unique in the whole field of change, is called *transubstantiation*. If that term is understood, all else that will be said about the sacrament will have nothing of the vague or indistinct about it; if the content of that term is believed, the whole truth of the Eucharist is known.

From the side of the fittingness of the thing, the truth of this sacrament has all the simple perfection of a supreme work of God. This is the full perfection of all the shadowy figures of the Old Testament, the reality come to dissipate the mist of its promises and prototypes. Christ Himself had declared again and again that the disciples were His friends; and what is more strikingly characteristic of friendship than a joyous and constant union of friends? Men had not been cheated of the merit of faith with regard to His divinity; why should they not be given the opportunity to accept His humanity in this sacrament on the same divine authority?

That there be no misunderstanding about the precise meaning of this mystery of the Eucharist, many questions may be asked, questions that are necessary only because of our human capacity for obscuring the obvious. There is, for example, the question of the substance of the bread and wine; do they remain in this sacrament after the consecration? Obviously not: what is changed does not remain, and the body of Christ is here, not by local motion, not by pushing the substance of bread into a little smaller space, like a last-minute customer edging his way into a seat on a crowded subway; it is here by way of change, by the substance of bread and wine being changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Christ did not say, "Here is my body," He said, "This is my body"; and this was no time for inaccuracy of expression. Moreover, the faithful would be trapped into idolatry, adoring a sacred host that was still bread.

Well, what happens to the substance of bread and wine in the consecration? Is it annihilated? Does it return to its component elements? The answer to both questions is no, because the substance of bread and wine are changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. The whole effect must be measured by the sign of the sacrament, for the words produce precisely what they signify; "This is my body" does not signify annihilation nor decomposition, but change.

Existence of Christ in the Eucharist: As to subject

To the restless human mind, still protesting at the mystery of the sacrament, there seems to be at least one avenue of escape: how can the substance of bread be changed into the substance of the body of Christ? Perhaps the best answer to that question is: Figure out some other way! We know, on the authority of God, that this sacrament contains the true body of Christ; and there simply is no other way to get it there. If one

demands that Christ come there by local motion, in His own proper species, then He must leave heaven, and take up His residence in just one host, not in the millions that are preserved in tabernacles throughout the world; for the body of Christ does not, cannot, enjoy the ubiquity of God.

There is reason for the restlessness of our minds. Certainly, we can effect no such change as this; our efforts do not revolve around the change of a whole substance, but of one or the other of its essential elements. We can produce changes in the matter of things, trimming them down, building them up, molding their shape and so on; we can produce formal changes, driving out one substantial form by the introduction of another to the goal of a substantial change. The power of God is quite another thing. If it did not extend to the whole of things nothing would ever have existed, for the first production had to be by way of creation, producing the whole of being; some power must extend to both matter and form, or there would be neither matter nor form for us to work on. It is this *whole* change, of substance to substance, that is transubstantiation.

That the accidents of bread and wine, in the philosophical sense of "accident," remain in this sacrament is something we can verify by our own senses. There is no deception here. What our senses tell us is true: there is whiteness, roundness, the redness of the liquid, the odor of wine; if error is introduced, it is because we conclude from the presence of the accidents to the presence of their natural subject, the substance of bread and wine, pitting our minds against the faith that preserves us from error. After the consecration, these accidents exist without a subject, supported by nothing in the natural order but by the solidity of the power of God. They are not subjected in the body of Christ or His blood; He does not begin to look like bread and wine, to be as fragile as a host, as fluid as wine. This sort of thing cannot be done any more than we can transfer a smile from the face of a man to the leaves of a tree. What is done has nothing of impossibility; obviously, if God could give the substance of bread the power to sustain its accidents, He can support those accidents directly, which is what He does.

With this divine support, the accidents retain all their normal characteristics. They can nourish, be destroyed, corrupt, and so on; not because these characteristics are flowing from their proper substantial form, for if that were still present there would have been no change at all, but because it is God Who is miraculously keeping them in existence. The change by which the status of these accidents has definitely passed into the miraculous is not a slow tortuous thing of strained muscles, sharp explosions, or long, careful periods of preparation; this is God at work directly, and infinite power works in an instant. There is no period between the presence of Christ and the absence of the bread and wine; but in the one instant, bread is no longer there and the Savior of men has taken up His secret abode among men.

He had lived among men before, not secretly but openly, yet even the dullest had recognized there was a wonderful secret about that human life in Palestine. They recognized it by their rebellious or awestruck questions, spoken and unspoken: how could this Man forgive sin; how could He give His body to be food; how could He feed the hungry multitude, heal the sick, give sight to the blind, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead? His divinity hid behind the veil of His humanity; some men believed what they could not see. Returning to His Father, He would not leave His own alone; so both His humanity and His divinity were hidden behind the veil of the sacrament where men could see Him with the eyes of faith, and not see Him with the eyes of the body or the eyes of the mind.

The comfort this doubly secret presence brings to men is not less but greater than the divine works of Palestine; and, again, men's questions are rebellious or awestruck: how can the whole Christ be in this sacrament, under each species, under each particle of each species; how can the physical quantity of Christ's body be contained in a wafer; how can He be in millions of places at once; how can a mere man move the Son of God from place to place with no more difficulty than he finds in carrying a tiny vessel?

The mind of man will not find adequate answers to these questions any more than it did to the ones posed during the three years of Christ's public life; but it can remove the appearance of impossibility that clings to the very form in which these questions are posed. Just as the notion of the entirety of the change of substance to substance removes the apparent impossibility in the questions about the substance of bread

and wine and their accidents, so the notion of the substance of the body and blood of Christ being present by the words of the sacrament brings out the truth that it is the mysterious, not the ridiculous, that thwarts the mind of man in the Eucharist. In other words, a literal acceptance of the meaning of transubstantiation is really the intellectual foothold granted to our feeble minds by the graciousness of God: in this sacrament there is a *change* of the *whole substance* of bread and wine into the *substance* of the body and blood of Christ.

To appreciate the full significance of this, we must remember that our approach to the substance of anything is normally somewhat indirect. The substance of bread, for instance, is got at from the outside. We see the color, the shape, the quantity of the bread; our eyes certainly do not see its substance. Yet we know that the smallest crumb is as substantially bread as the largest loaf; we know that the substance of the bread pervades the whole loaf and every piece cut from it. The precise point is, that we have approached that substance through the accidents of bread. Let us suppose, now, that by a miracle, this order was reversed, that the substance was the outer fortification through which we must pass to get at the accidents; obviously, our senses would be completely helpless for the substance is not to be seen or touched, our minds would fare no better for they would not have the prerequisite sense knowledge from which to begin their own operation. But, granted the knowledge of this state of affairs through the word of someone who could know, then we could understand that the accidents would enjoy all the intangible characteristics proper to the substance itself, since they would be existing there in the mode proper to substance

In the case of the Eucharist, the substance of the body and blood of Christ is present, all of it, as the proper effect of the sacramental sign which produces what it signifies: "This is my body, this is my blood." The words of consecration of the bread, then, produce the *substance* of Christ's body; those of the wine, the *substance* of His blood. But because, in actual fact, the substance of the body of Christ in heaven, and the substance of His blood, are not separated from their accidents, nor from His soul and His divinity, all these are also present in the sacrament; for the words of consecration, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, produce the body of Christ as it exists at the time of consecration. The point to notice here is that the words produce the substance; all else follows on that substance because of natural union, or natural concomitance, with it. Whatever else, beyond the substance, is present must be present in the way substance is present; the natural order of our approach to the accidents has been reversed.

As to quantity

Is the whole Christ present in this sacrament? Of course. Isn't the whole substance of bread present in bread? Is the whole Christ present both under the accidents of bread and those of wine? Of course. For the words produce the body and blood as they exist outside the sacrament: to the body, then, there is joined, by natural concomitance, the blood, the soul, and the divinity of Christ; to the blood, the same natural concomitance assures the presence of body, soul and divinity. Is the whole Christ present under every particle of the host and every drop of the consecrated wine? Of course. Isn't the whole substance of bread present in every crumb whether the crumb be separated or joined to the loaf?

Still, it seems ridiculous to maintain that a perfect man be somehow compressed into the dimensions of a tiny wafer. The statement can be made in this way only if we have pushed aside the statement of transubstantiation; and then we are not talking about the Eucharist at all. It is not a question of compression or shrinking. The substance of the body is present by the power of the words of consecration; all else, then, is present in the mode proper to substance, as intangible, invisible, as indifferent to the limitations of space as substance itself. The whole physical body of Christ is present, with all its proper dimensive quantity, but *in the mode of substance*, that is, as substance is present.

Continuation of the accidents

Obviously, a priest cannot take Christ by the hand and lead Him to the Communion rail; all that is tangible in the sacrament is the remaining accidents of bread and wine. These the priest can touch, these he can

carry, and, carrying them, He is moving Christ, not directly, but by moving that under which the substance of Christ exists. Christ, then, is in the tabernacle because the accidents of bread and wine are there; not because living quarters have been assigned to Him as a kind of alternate to the diving quarters of heaven. Substance, by its own nature, is not properly in this or that place; it is located rather by the accidents which are in contact with the surrounding world. Here, the accidents in such contact are the accidents of bread and wine. Christ's body is not broken when the host is broken; it is not disfigured when the host is profaned; it does not corrupt when the host corrupts. None of these things happen either to the substance or to the proper accidents of Christ; there is no way in which they can happen to a substance, and the accidents of Christ exist here by way of substance. Our Lord, then, does not have to leave heaven to be present sacramentally on our altars; He does not rush from church to church to give a little time to each one. Substance is not in place except through its accidents; the substance of Christ is present wherever the accidents of bread and wine remain after consecration, and this without any prejudice to His continued presence in His glorified body in heaven.

We cannot see Him, either with bodily or intellectual eyes, any more than we can see the substance of bread if the substance veils the accidents rather than the accidents veiling the substance. We see Him by the eyes of faith, and in no other way. Not even an angel or a devil can see Christ in this sacrament; His presence here is entirely supernatural, entirely beyond the natural powers of a mind, even so powerful a mind as that of an angel or a devil. He can be seen in this sacrament by those blessed in heaven who enjoy the vision of the essence of God.

Now and again, to bolster a wavering faith, to shock a sceptic out of his smugness, or to give particularly vivid consolation to a saint, things have miraculously appeared in this sacrament: perhaps a few drops of blood, the face of Christ, the image of a child, and so on. Sometimes these visions have been accomplished in the eye or the mind of the individual for whom they were meant; at others, the appearance has been external, objective, seen by many. In no case, has it been Christ Himself in His proper physical presence Who appeared. The objective appearance is no more than a change in the accidents of the bread or the wine; in both the subjective and the objective vision, a sign has been given of the truth of the sacred presence of the Son of God.

The accidents of bread and wine, once transubstantiation has taken place, remain without their proper subject. The substance of bread or wine is no longer present, these things cannot now take root in the substance of Christ; they exist miraculously supported by the hand of God, the First Cause, doing directly what He normally does through a second cause -- the substance of the bread and of the wine. There are then two miraculous operations in this sacrament: the change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ; and the maintenance of the accidents by the direct operation of God.

These are not ghostly apparitions of accidents. They have not been weakened, changed, frozen in some strange condition. They have been maintained exactly as they were. Consequently, anything that could normally happen to accidents of bread and of wine -- be broken, spilt, trampled on, corrupted, used for nourishment -- can happen to these accidents. In other words, our senses do not deceive us when they report the presence of real accidents of bread and wine; we deceive ourselves when our intellect, pushing aside the supernatural revelations of faith, concludes from this report that the substance of bread and wine are present, as if this whole affair were entirely in the natural order.

The power of the form

It has been noted earlier that the Eucharist differs from the other sacraments in that it is perfected or accomplished, not in its actual use, but in the very consecration of the material; and that, unlike the other sacraments, the consecration of its material is not in a blessing by which the matter receives instrumental power, but in the miraculous conversion of the substance. Necessarily, then, there is a difference in the double form of this sacrament compared to the forms of the others. All the others contained the notion of the use of the sacrament -- baptize, confirm, anoint, and so on -- while this one implies no more than the

actual consecration; as a result, the forms of all the others are expressed in the person of the minister, by way of command, or by way of prayer; the words of this form proceed as from the person of Christ Himself speaking, giving us clearly to understand that the minister does nothing but speak the words.

A momentary glance at this double form will help to avoid some rather serious misunderstanding. Thus the form of consecration of the bread is: "This is my body." Notice that it is not said that "This is made my body," or "This is becoming my body"; for this change is instantaneous and must be expressed in terms of an accomplished fact. In the expression of such a change, the word "this" cannot refer to what is no longer present but to what is contained under the species or accidents, while "my body" refers to the proper nature of the substance now present. It is to be particularly noted that these words are to be taken not only as significative but also as causative, for the sacraments are signs which produce what they signify; consequently, these words do not presuppose a change already taken place and merely express it, they cause that change. And, since this change is instantaneous yet must be expressed in the necessarily successive medium of words, these words are not to be cut up, separated, but the whole expression must be understood with reference to the last instant of the words being spoken. Notice, too, that Christ did not say "This bread is my body," nor "My body is my body," but "This is my body," i.e., what was formerly bread and contained under these species is now the body of Christ. All of this is, of course, equally true of the form of consecration of the wine.

Both parts of this double form have the fundamental fittingness of perfect signs, that is, they clearly signify consecration. The form for the consecration of the wine is considerably longer than that of the bread: "This is the chalice of my blood, of the New and Eternal Testament, the mystery of Faith, which shall be shed for you and for many unto the forgiveness of sins." Thus, over and above the fundamental fittingness of this sign, there is the added expression of the triple purpose of the shedding of Christ's blood: that we might receive the heritage of the Testaments, that we might come to justice through faith, and that our sins might be forgiven us.

Like the forms of all the other sacraments, the form of the Eucharist is an instrument; in the very words, then, there is an instrumental power making possible the accomplishment of an effect totally above the natural power of words. Each part of the Eucharistic form, that is the words of consecration of the bread and those of consecration of the wine, has this instrumental power and independently. So that, if it should happen that only the words of consecration of the bread were said, Christ would be present under the accidents of bread even though the wine were never consecrated. Otherwise, the words themselves would not, in fact, produce what they signify, indeed, they would be quite completely false.

Once the words of this double form are said by the priest over the proper matter, the Bread of Angels is prepared and ready for the tables of men. Possibly it will always be true that men will not throng the banquet hall where such a meal is served. They know well that they cannot hold to life and neglect the things by which a man lives; the difficulty for the men of all ages has been the complexity of life which is open to every man. That his animal life cannot be sustained without the nourishment offered by the things beneath him which exist to serve him has been clear to every man; a wrong diet, or complete abstinence from food in this order, has immediate and unmistakable results that refuse to be ignored. But man has not been nearly so keen in his perception of the vital needs of his rational life; he has been too often completely dense about the divine life that is his for the taking.

Conclusion: What men live by

All ages have seen what truth will do for a man, and what goodness will do both for a man and all those with whom he comes into contact; the scholar and the saint, the two who have not neglected the nourishment of rational life, are signally honored in the history of men. In our own times, we are furnished with firsthand knowledge of what a diet of lies and error can do to a man, for we have seen more than the perversion of the minds of men, the twisting of their lives, and the convulsion of their world; we have seen them commit intellectual suicide by denying themselves all basis of rational life. We are as familiar as any other age with the corroding effects of evil; we are more familiar with the convulsive death of

things human brought on by a professed ignorance of any distinction between good and evil, or, indeed, of the very existence of one or the other.

Hunger strike of the twentieth century

If men can make such mistakes about their own rational life, it is understandable that the divine life to which they have been invited should suffer no small neglect. Originally rejected with an air of regret, that food has become a vague echo from history to millions of men today. Perhaps, originally, it was too much for the pride of men to accept a food that was so far above them that they must fall down in adoration before it even as they ate it; certainly it was much too rich in the demands it made on their minds and their hearts, too rich, that is, for comfort. It is not easy to live on the body of God, however sweet the heavenly food; and ease is one of the fondest illusions of the children of men.

Yet the fact remains that, spiritually, a man is what he eats; that he cannot keep his soul alive on the things beneath him, nor mangle the things above him for spiritual nourishment as he does things beneath him for physical nourishment. Because no man welcomes death, all sorts of substitutes have been concocted for the Bread of Life. Man cannot live without a superior to nourish him; the death of starvation was not warded off but made to look like a banquet when men made their own superior thing for their own nourishment. Sometimes it took the form of a class, a race, a party, a political ideal, the vague future of humanity; but in all these cases, it was men who were food for the absolute and who were destroyed by it, not the absolute that was food for men, perfecting them.

In other words, man dies whether he attempts to content himself with things beneath him or whether, realizing their inadequacy, he attempts to create his own superior; in the one case, he is accustoming himself to the husks of swine, in the other he is munching on his own self. In both cases, there is not nourishment, not life, but degradation and death awaiting the diners. It is still true: "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you."

The Angelic Doctor and the Bread of Angels

Thomas, then, had a double reason for pouring his heart out on his Eucharistic treatises: his grateful love of the God Who nourishes men, and his restless, sympathetic love for the millions of men who were nauseated by the heavenly food because they had not tasted it. At any rate, the Angel of the Schools outdid himself in writing of the Bread of Angels. His theological treatise in the *Summa*, the divine Office of *Corpus Christi*, his Eucharistic poems are masterpieces, fusions of mind and heart smelted by all the pent-up fury of Thomas's love; and the precious metals poured into the melting pot were no ordinary mind, no ordinary heart, but the mind of a genius and the heart of a saint. Since his time, the world has echoed with his music, in every church in the world his *O Salutaris* and *Tantum Ergo* say for all men what every man must say as he bows in adoration before the Bread which came down from heaven.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XV -- THE UNDYING VICTIM (Q. 79-83)

1. Limitations of help:
 - (a) The fact and bases of limitation in general.
 - (b) Prerequisites of help.
 2. Help of the undying Victim:
 - (a) Need of a victim.
 - (b) Need of food.
 - (c) Anemic rebels and rebels in starvation.
 3. The bread of life:
 - (a) Relative to those receiving it:
 - (1) Its direct contributions to life:
 - a. Grace, sanctifying and sacramental.
 - b. Glory.
 - (2) Its indirect contributions to life:
 - a. Remission of sin.
 - b. Preservation from sin.
 - c. Remission of punishment.
 - (b) Relative to those assisting at its accomplishment.
 - (c) Impediments to its effects.
 4. The banquet table:
 - (a) Manner of receiving the food.
 - (b) Guests of the banquet:
 - (1) In general -- invited and uninvited guests.
 - (2) At the first banquet -- the Last Supper.
 - (c) Servants of the table:
 - (1) Of the accomplishment of the sacrament.
 - (2) Of its distribution.
 - (3) Their obligation.
 5. The undying Victim:
 - (a) The substance of the sacrifice.
 - (b) The accidents of the sacrifice:
 - (1) Its time and place.
 - (2) The words of its celebration.
 - (3) The acts of its celebration.
 - (4) Dangers and their remedy.
- Conclusion:
1. Two forms of unity:
 - (a) Of absorption.
 - (b) Of friendship.
 2. The bonds of the unions.
 3. The Victim and the victims.

CHAPTER XV -- THE UNDYING VICTIM (Q 79-83)

MORE is necessary than a full, flowing stream if we are to get a pail of water; at least we need an empty pail. More than a generous heart is necessary if we are to help others; yet, even emptiness on the part of the one we are trying to help and willingness to help on our side are not enough. Concrete proof of this statement is had from the floods of knowledge that pour from the lips of teachers day after day in America, rushing over the empty heads of thousands and thousands of children; when the flood is stopped at the end of the day, many a pupil emerges unscathed. Surely, an empty-headed pupil and a learned teacher do not complete the recipe for successful communication of knowledge.

Limitations of help: The fact and bases of limitation in general

Nor is this peculiar to the art of teaching. A superior soon recognizes the difficulty of giving correction to a proud man; a parent quickly sees the futility of much of the advice he gives to the young; while the flatterer is constantly balked and bewildered in his attempts to inflate a humble man. This is a peculiarity of man which is the basis of his social life and of the possibility of the negation of that social life. He can communicate with others, giving and receiving; but he can also refuse to communicate. He has the unique

privilege of saying "no."

In fact, man can go much further than a brusque refusal; he can argue himself into the most untenable positions, and hold them. He can, for instance, blind and deafen himself to the point where he does not, positively cannot, see his need for help. This is the foundation upon which most of the helpless who will not be helped build their strange fortresses. Ultimately, no doubt, the whole thing must be traced back to exaggerated self-sufficiency; at least, the acceptance of help is a humble, and often humiliating, business.

Prerequisites of help

There is a clear expression of the prerequisites of help in the charming and familiar story of the prodigal son; finally casting aside the husks of swine which were his only food, he resumed to his father's house protesting his unworthiness, and was feted with music, dancing, and the fatted calf. It is to be noticed that he first came to a realization of his starvation; then went on to an acknowledgment of his unworthiness and rebellion against the rule of his father's house. There would have been no prodigal son had he so accommodated himself to the diet of swine as to be blind to his own starvation; or if he had forgotten his father's house and had remained unconvinced of his own unworthiness. Even with all these, the story would never have been told had there been no return and subjection to his father.

Help of the undying Victim: Need of a victim

Christ, the undying Victim, hanging on the cross or renewing that sublime sacrifice in the Mass, brings infinite help to men; but not if they are blind to their need of a victim. The Living Bread that came down from heaven offers rich nourishment to the souls of men; but vainly if they are unaware of their starvation. Well, the modern objects, why should we need a victim? We have got along some three hundred years without sacrifice. Why should we need food? We have been doing well enough without it.

You see, men can blind themselves, particularly when they stare into the hypnotic eyes of pride. Man needs a victim because he is not God; because he has superiors above him as well as inferiors beneath him; because the Supreme Superior is the almighty Lord of all things. In the name of the truth of his own nature and of the divine nature, man must recognize divine sovereignty; or, what amounts to the same thing, he must recognize his own position in the universe. Moreover, that recognition must come in an expression harmonious with his nature and significative of the supreme dominion of God. In a word, sacrifice must offer to God a sensible offering in whose consumption or destruction is publicly declared God's supreme dominion.

He would need a victim, this man, even had he remained totally innocent of sin and on a purely natural level; for he would still be man, and God would still be God. Since he has been raised to a divine plane, invited to live the life of God, an acknowledgment of that divine supremacy is even more pressingly necessary; it should be more readily seen and more easily given. When we add the fact that man has rebelled against truth by sinning, we have noted the added necessity of reconciliation to truth's proclamation.

Need of food

Anemic rebels and rebels in starvation

Why does man need food? Again, because he is not God but man. He needs food for his soul as well as for his body because he is a man and not merely an animal. He cannot live on himself, for his life is not from himself; he cannot live on things beneath him, because a part of him is not ennobled or enlivened, but degraded and sickened by feeding on the things of earth. We might say that a Catholic is an anemic creature spiritually who needs a victim and food; a Catholic sinner is still more anemic and in need of food and a victim both for nourishment and reconciliation; while the modern pagan is a rebel in starvation who denies his rebellion and smiles away his starvation.

Need of a victim and food really means the need of truth, peace, and plenty. Without a victim, man can

never have truth or peace, for the denial of God's sovereignty is a declaration of war on the First Truth. Without food for the soul, there can never be that plenty in man's life which is the fullness of life, of love, of union with God. The modern pagan surrenders hope for peace and plenty, yet, strangely, talks unceasingly of security. He has officially joined the bank of the helpless who will not be helped.

Though its uniqueness is sufficient title to a place in history, that is not exactly the point of my mentioning here that once upon a time a procurator served Camembert cheese in an American Dominican refectory. The cheese went solemnly untouched past the uplifted nose of student after student; finally arriving in the professors' territory, it was immediately demolished by unanimously cooperative action due, no doubt, to the fact that an unlooked-for fruit of European training is the proper evaluation of cheese and wine as staples of life. This is not merely a matter of history; rather, it is a rough parallel of the Old Testament story of the Israelites whose souls were nauseated by the light food God had sent them in the form of manna. If we add just a touch more of disgust, we can grasp a not uncommon opinion of the sacred food of the Eucharist; it is the same reaction that greeted Christ's first promise of it: "These are hard words, and who can hear them?" Hard words, indeed, that man should live by the flesh of God.

**The bread of life: Relative to those receiving it:
Its direct contributions to life: Grace, sanctifying and sacramental**

Let us look at that food more closely. In previous volumes of this work, and more than once in this volume, we have seen that sanctifying grace is the supernatural life of the soul. Where one finds a sensible sign containing and producing grace and its effects, there is a sacrament feeding the soul of man. In this sacrament, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is really contained, His passion is here represented and renewed, a renewal of the fountainhead of all grace. As a consequence, this sacrament is a rich banquet which refreshes the spiritual life of the soul, sustaining it, increasing it, repairing the ravishes of daily life, flooding the soul with delight. It is food fit for a king.

That this is true becomes clearer as we focus our attention on the sacramental grace of the Eucharist, the special titles to graces necessary to attain the particular end of the sacrament. The precise object of the Eucharist is charity or the union of love between the members of Christ's Mystical Body and their Head. Just as the sacramental grace of Matrimony gives title to the helps necessary to meet the difficulties and emergencies of the long years of married life, so the Eucharist gives men a right to the actual graces necessary to make acts of love of God, every act increasing, deepening, adding power in action to that common life we share with God.

Glory

The full implications of this truth are too often passed over; yet, they are plain enough and of profound significance. It will be remembered that in the preceding volume, it was said that the basis of friendship is a common ground. On the human level, an increase in friendship is a matter of increasing or deepening that common ground within ourselves, hoping that our friend will keep pace with us or, at least, keep that common ground alive; though there is nothing we can do about its dying out in him. If we realize that the supernatural life of the soul is precisely that common ground of divine life, sanctifying grace, and that it does not grow greater or less in God, to Whom it belongs essentially, but only in us, then we begin to see something of the full meaning of the special end of the Eucharist. It is to make fuller the life of God within us, to increase His friendship, not only at that instant in which we receive the sacrament, but for the future, giving us rights to the graces necessary constantly to increase that divine friendship by acts of charity. Once this is really understood, we can see the wisdom of Pius X in insisting on early Communion and appreciate, to some little extent, the torrent of divine love that overflowed the heart of the child Imelda on her reception of her first -- and last -- communion.

This food is indeed the food of angels; yet, it is only a promise of what is prepared for us by this sacrament, a taste snatched in the kitchen before the heavenly banquet. It gives us Him Who has thrown open the gates of heaven, sowing the seed of eternal glory, sanctifying grace, with a complete assurance of

strong, quick growth; it is, truly, a solemn pledge of the full bloom of that eternal glory. If grace is glory in embryo, as it is, then the Eucharist gives both the means and the promise of development of that embryo in giving us the right to the graces necessary for acts of charity.

Food is an engrossing subject, but only among healthy, hungry men. It is rare that it is discussed over the cigars and liqueurs. A thumping headache takes all the reasonableness out of breakfast; a sick stomach makes us wonder how people can talk of anything so disgusting as food. With a little fever, food is out of the question; if we are really sick, then it is time for the cook to take her vacation and for the druggist's wife to price fur coats. All this is in the natural order; in the supernatural and spiritual order, things are quite reversed. This food creates a hunger for more of it; an overstuffed angel dozing in the afternoon sun is no less inconceivable than a human soul that has had too much to eat. It just cannot happen, for spiritual food enlarges our capacity rather than exhausts it.

As for illness, that is what this food is for; there are no spiritual drugstores. A slight spiritual indisposition -- headache, stomach ache, a little fever -- all these are grouped together under the name of venial sin; and they are directly destroyed by the food from this angelic banquet table. For the proper effect of the Eucharist -- acts of charity -- directly remits venial sin by the displeasure at sin which is contained in charity. Charity, you see, is always whole-hearted protestation of love of God, with no conditions attached; it simply cannot permit a treasured collection of snapshots of former lovers, beribboned bundles of correspondence, or regretful sighs at loving memories.

To look at it in another way, the wear and tear of daily life on our souls is not caused by the exercise of virtue; for virtue is not exhausting, it is invigorating. The tired business man in the supernatural order is a man who has been about the wrong business, the business of sin. The burning up of energy by activity in the natural order can be paralleled in the supernatural order only by the heat of passion and other venial sins which diminish the fervor of charity. Just as food and rest restore the energy burned up by physical activity, so the Bread of Life restores the brightness and alertness of charity and repairs the damage done by venial sin.

Not even a chef, acknowledged as supreme by his most jealous fellows, feels insulted when a dead man looks coldly upon his confections. A dead man has no use for food so, in an eminently practical way, he has nothing whatever to do with it; food ministers to life. This supernatural food, the body of Christ, is not for dead men, for men in mortal sin. To serve it to the dead and have them consume it would be a desecration of a sacred food; indeed, this reception of the sign of unity, when unity has been broken by mortal sin, would be a living lie, a mockery of the whole signification of the sacramental sign.

Its indirect contributions to life: Remission of sin

Such is the wonder of the divine order, however, that if a dead man, not realizing he is dead, approaches this sacrament, he is brought to life. For this sacrament contains Christ Himself, the source of all remission of sin; unquestionably He can make clean the foulest soul. It is true that the sacrament was limited, by Christ's own institution, to nourishment of the living; yet, it infallibly produces grace where the subject does not place an impediment and the mortal sinner who is unconscious of his sin has placed no obstacle to the sacrament. To put this in practical terms, there is no place for fear in approaching Holy Communion: we do not have to fear venial sin, for the sacrament forgives it; we do not have to worry that we might have forgotten some mortal sin, or that there is serious sin unforgiven through some accident or imperfection of our past confessions, for in all these circumstances, the sacrament brings us life.

Preservation from sin

Just as natural food builds up our strength and gives us resistance to disease, so the Eucharist, as food of the soul, is also medicine of the soul. It builds up the strength by which we can throw off the attacks of sin; indeed, it goes further and assures a constant weakening of the attacks of sin. For the acts of charity, which are its direct effect, flow from and increase the appetite for the things of God; automatically, then, it decreases the concupiscence of the flesh, the appetite for the things contrary to God. These two appetites

are nicely balanced against one another: as one increases, the other decreases; as one is plentifully fed, the other languishes; the starvation of one is the best diet for the well-being of the other.

Of course, the attacks of sin are not going to be annihilated; there will always be some fighting, even though it be no more than annoying guerrilla warfare by insignificant detachments behind the lines. We cannot organize a huge campaign against sin, crush it, and then embark on a program of disarmament; we must resign ourselves to a perpetual state of organized defense to meet the constancy of these attacks. This sacrament arms us with the weapon that makes all hell tremble, the weapon of the cross; for the sacrament is, in itself, a symbol of the passion of Christ, a last souvenir of friendship and suffering, a renewal of the story of Calvary. By it, God makes a living sign of the cross on the soul of a man; and that stark symbol is one Satan can never understand but has feared from that first moment when the cross stood against a darkened sky.

Remission of punishment

As food, this sacrament is not ordered to undoing the ravages of disease; the after effects of sin, that is, punishments, are not dealt with directly by the Eucharist as a sacrament. Nevertheless, its invigorating strength indirectly reaches out to destroy even this unhappy memory of evil days; for the sacrament produces acts of charity and the punishment due to sin is not fireproof against the white heat of charity's fervor.

Relative to those assisting at its accomplishment

The Eucharist as a sacrifice is another matter. Like that of the cross, the sacrifice of the Mass is offered to God directly in satisfaction for sin; to this end it produces its definite effect. In itself, this sacrifice, with the Son of God as the Victim and High Priest, is more than enough to remit all punishment due for all sins, for it is of infinite worth. Its effect has been limited (by the institution of Christ) to finite proportions from the side of the Church, the offering priest, and those for whom it is offered. Christ has made no limitation whatsoever on those who benefit by this sacrifice. He died for all men, and this is a renewal of His sacrifice; the prayers of the Canon of the Mass, then, which reach out their arms to embrace all the living and the dead are an integral part of that divine compassion that stretched the arms of the Son of Mary wide on the cross. No one is excluded; but, of course, those who actually assist at the sacrifice can profit more by it, and still more if they actually partake of the heavenly food.

On this point, there has been a good deal of cavilling recently on the more or less consecrated phrase, "offering up a Communion." If we are to insist on the utmost technical rigor, we may argue that this term is inaccurate: we offer up the Mass, for it is a sacrifice; but Holy Communion is food, a gift, a privilege, something not offered but enjoyed. But as the phrase is ordinarily understood by Catholics, it is a handy expression of a fact that is both a little too complicated for ordinary language and much too sublime to be perfectly mirrored in words. We share a privilege; by reason of food's nourishment, we are stronger to do for others; an increase in friendship brings us closer to our friend and puts us in a more favorable position to demand much more for others. This is what happens in the intimate union with our divine Friend in the Eucharist. Perhaps, "I will remember you in my Communion," would be better than "I will offer up my Communion for you." At any rate, what we do is make a promise, and by that promise the thing is secured, that at the sacred moment when Christ is within us, we will plead the cause of others.

In this particular case, since our Friend is divine, a long list of desired favors drawn up beforehand carries no threat of weariness or displeasure to this intimate meeting of friends. On the contrary, it is an authentic confession of our need of Him -- a profound consolation to any friend -- and a clear proof of the wide embrace of our love of neighbor. From another angle, there is great generosity on our part in giving even a little of this divine colloquy to others. It is so completely ours, so intimately personal, and so completely effective for ourselves.

Impediments to its effects

Indeed, nothing short of mortal sin can stop the primary effects of this sacrament in our souls; unless that impassable barrier blocks the path of God's generosity, we infallibly receive sanctifying grace and charity. Past venial sins, however numerous they may be, do not hold up these gifts; not even venial sins actually being committed during the reception of the sacrament deter the divine Friend from completing the embrace of His love. For these divine effects, we need no more than the state of grace and the right intention.

We do pay a high price for tying strings to our heart at this time, playing with the trinkets of venial sin instead of entertaining the divine Guest; for actual venial sins do take our minds off this gesture of friendship, destroying our devotion, and robbing us of much, if not all, of the spiritual sweetness and consolation that might have been ours. From our side, it becomes an absent-minded kiss; but, because God has a part in it and His love is always creative, it has profound effects in our souls. As a penalty for our absent-mindedness, we hardly taste its sweetness.

Every man will take his food, even his supernatural food, in his own way; and with surprisingly different results. Shivering in sub-zero cold, a man can drink whiskey with no more effect than if it were water. In the heat of argument, a man can dash down a glass of wine and never know he has taken it; a man in love gets all the heady effects of wine without bothering to draw the cork; while the tired French peasant, in the leisurely quiet of the evening, takes his wine with slow, deep appreciation, reaping a richer harvest than nourishment. In the supernatural order, an infidel can eat the Bread of Life with no more effect than a sheep or a horse munching grass, even though this be a very chic infidel. On the other hand, infants, the perpetually insane, and half-wits who have been baptized all receive both the sacred sign and the grace and charity it signifies because of the spiritual power given them by Baptism. While a Catholic in mortal sin receives the sacred sign, but to his own damnation.

In other words, the Eucharist can be received only sacramentally, as in the case of infidels or Catholics in mortal sin. It can be received only spiritually, as in a spiritual communion or a communion of desire. Or it can be received both sacramentally and spiritually, that is, both as regards its outer signification and its inner effects; this is what happens when a person in the state of grace approaches the Communion rail. These last alone are the invited guests, wearing the required wedding garments, though they come from the highways, byways, and dark alleys of the world.

A Catholic recoils in horror from the idea of an unworthy Communion. Nor is this revulsion explained fully by the fact that this is the gravest of all sacrileges, that, next to the sins against divinity itself and the humanity of Christ, it is the gravest of all sins. There is in the back of the Catholic's mind the memory of another false gesture of friendship, another kiss given in betrayal; and the threatening darkness of Gethsemane seems to gather in his heart at the thought of it. Fortunately for our peace of mind, since we all know our deep-seated unworthiness so well, an unworthy communion is not an easy thing to accomplish. It is never the result of an accident, of forgetfulness, or of inattention; it has to be done deliberately, on purpose. There can be no doubt about it. Even when it does so happen, it is often due in no small degree to human respect, shame, a bit of cowardice that has much more resemblance to the weakness of Pilate than to the baseness of Judas.

Still, if these uninvited guests approach the divine banquet table publicly, Christ is not one to cover them with confusion by refusing to give them the Bread they dare to ask; Judas, too, drank of the sacred cup. If the individual in question is a public sinner, one who by an unreformed life that is public knowledge has already gone well beyond the reach of confusion, then it is a different matter. If the priest knows there has been no repentance, he can and should refuse Communion; but that knowledge is so extremely hard to come by as to be almost impossible. The priest must *know*, know beyond all chance of doubt; for the arms of Christ have ever been wide enough to embrace any and all sinners on the one condition of repentance.

If the approach to Communion is a private one, then both the public sinner and the secret sinner, whose sins are known to the priest, are to be refused the sacrament. But, again, the priest must know. Even though he has that difficult knowledge, the priest is not to refuse the sacrament if the approach to it is

public; then the royal Guest is ushered into the disorderly house of that soul by His own priest. A day will come when judgment will be passed on this violation of a sacred thing; for the present, let the sinner learn the depths of divine love for him by the length of the patience of God.

The banquet table: Manner of receiving the food

The Church insists on a fast from midnight before the reception of this sacrament. The reasonableness of the command as a protection against drunkenness and gluttony is evident; this, after all, is not the place for a saturated champion of his own appetites. But we have missed much of the meaning of the fast if we stop at that purely negative purpose. It is a little gesture of reverence, this mortification of ours, a gesture by which we brush all the things of the world aside, even necessary things, that we might be utterly alone with Christ; we plug the doorbell, cut off the telephone, and lock the doors by way of assuring Him we want nothing to intrude on His visit. Indeed, that fast is a symbol of the perfection of the food we are to receive: the Bread of Life upon which we can live alone, live forever, and know only a hunger for still more of this same Bread.

There are cases, of course, when the fast from midnight is dispensed with. Obviously, it should be set aside if, otherwise, a man might go hungry for the nourishment of his soul or when, by this little gesture of reverence, a very great irreverence may be visited on the sacrament. Thus, a priest who is not fasting may complete the Mass of another who has taken sick. The faithful may touch the sacred Species and consume them, lest they be profaned by the enemies of Christ. Sometimes the broken fast must be disregarded to avoid public scandal, or to receive Viaticum, a companion for the last few steps of the road home. Adults who have tasted salt in their baptismal ceremony may yet receive Communion immediately after. Finally, the sick, who have little hope of quick recovery, may receive Communion once or twice a week after taking medicine or some liquid nourishment. The Church, you see, has reaped no little harvest of wisdom and common sense in two thousand years of caring for men.

Guests of the banquet: In general -- invited and uninvited guests

There might seem to be two extremes relative to the use of this sacrament, that is, not to receive it at all or to receive it every day. Actually, these are not extremes at all. One is absolutely forbidden in its complete denial of the use of the sacrament; we must receive it at least once a year. There is, in other words, a positive law against spiritual hunger-strikes. The other is urgently advised; we should receive Communion frequently, even daily and, while this latter is often a matter of a confessor's advice, it is not necessarily so. The reason for the counsel is obvious. We cannot get too close to God; there is no danger of too intimate a friendship with Him. We have nothing to fear, nothing to lose, and everything to gain; even a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

At the first banquet -- the Last Supper

This was a last gesture of friendship. It is bread, not poison. The sacrifice of the Mass and the distribution of Holy Communion were introduced into the world as the one note of gladness in that last sad meal of the little company of Christ on Holy Thursday. On that night, Christ Himself said the Mass and gave His body and blood to His disciples, first receiving them Himself; as in all else, He observed what He commanded. Since that time, the priest has always received Communion under both the species of bread and of wine, thus completing the sacrifice; because of the danger of spilling the wine in attributing it to the faithful, this was early abandoned as a risk that was totally unnecessary since Christ is whole and entire under both species.

It is the opinion of St. Thomas that Christ Himself gave Holy Communion to His false friend, Judas, thus setting an example for the treatment of secret sinners at the Communion rail; their judgment is for later. If this is true, it is not in the least surprising or puzzling to us who know something of the kind heart of Christ. What may well be puzzling about that Last Supper and first Mass, is the condition of the body which Christ Himself received; it must be puzzling, for it wears the intangible garments of mystery.

Consecrating that night, Christ said: "This is my body." Then, as now, the effect of those words was to change the substance of the bread into that of the true body of Christ, that is, the body which this Man, Christ, here and now possesses. At that first sacrifice, then, Christ and His apostles received a body capable of suffering, not a glorified body; for that was the condition of the true body of Christ. If a particle of that consecrated bread had been preserved through the hours of Calvary, though it could not have been spit upon, beaten or scourged, the body of Christ it contained would have died in the sacrament; during the days of Christ's burial, the body in the sacrament would have been a dead body. On Easter morning, it would have been a glorified body united to the soul of Christ.

All this is saying no more than that the Eucharist contains Christ Himself; not a sign of Christ, not a symbol of Him, not a memory of His body. The form of the sacrament, the words of consecration, has no power other than to produce the body and blood of Christ in the condition in which they exist at the time of consecration. Once produced, body and blood are real and, of course, in no different a condition in the sacrament from their condition outside of it; for they are one and the same body and blood.

Servants of the table: Of the accomplishment of the sacrament

In instituting the sacrament and sacrifice, Christ said to His apostles: "Do this in commemoration of me." He spoke to them alone; they and their successors have the power to consecrate bread and wine, and no one else. However faithfully others may imitate the rites of consecration, the effect of transubstantiation is not produced. It is only through the act of the spiritual power given in the sacrament of Holy Orders that this wonder of God's generosity can be worked. It is the principal and exclusive work of priests. They accomplish the sacrament in the consecration of the Mass, not in the distribution of Communion to the faithful, though they are the ordinary ministers of Communion. In case of necessity, and by a special delegation, a deacon may distribute Communion; indeed, to give Viaticum even a layman may distribute Communion. For the consecration, however, no exception can be made; only one who has received the indelible character of Holy Orders has this power.

Of its distribution

Once had, it cannot be lost. The priest may be in a state of sin, he may be a schismatic, a heretic, an apostate; the character remains indelible, the spiritual power at the root of effective consecration is not destroyed, weakened, diluted. A priest in such a condition evidently does not do himself any good by consecrating; the point is that, in spite of the damage of sin done to the priest himself, the sacrament remains intact. The Masses of such priests, and the official prayers they say in connection with it, are no less inherently effective than those of St. Thomas Aquinas, the poet of the Blessed Sacrament.

There are some few circumstances which justify the faithful in seeking the sacraments from unworthy priests; but, normally, the procedure is rightly indicated by the Catholic's instinct to shun the spiritual touch of such as these, as he would shun the touch of a leper. The sheep still know the voice of the shepherd and shy away from the voice of a stranger. Surely, nothing a priest does is so intimately connected with the care of the flock of Christ as his offering of sacrifice for them. Indeed, it is because of this that there is a solemn obligation on every pastor to offer Mass for his people on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

Their obligation

Beyond that, and short of some obligation of justice such as a stipend, a benefice, and so on, Mass is a privilege for the priest, not an obligation. Theologians agree that a priest must say Mass several times within the year. But this is hardly a thing to which a man need be driven, especially a man to whom this must be the very center of life; a man does not need to be beaten to his own hearth, unless he has long since forgotten it is his. Then he is a homeless man making a gesture of home life that has no more truth in it than a forced smile or a handshake from an enemy.

For the priest is at home on the altar, and not much of anywhere else. He belongs there, and it is terribly

important to the people that he be there; for they need the Victim and the sacrifice as an acknowledgment of the fundamental truth of God's dominion. They need the priest because man cannot subsist on a lie. It is not without significance that the Catholic Church, alone of all Christian churches, still has the Victim and the sacrifice at a time when the Christian world is losing its hold on the truth of God, the truth of man, and the truth of the universe.

The undying Victim: The substance of the sacrifice

Earlier in this book, we treated the notion of sacrifice in dealing with the death of Christ. Here, we must at least recall the definition of sacrifice as the destruction or immolation of a sensible thing by a legitimate minister, made to God alone in testimony of His supreme dominion. The destruction of the victim signifies God's mastery of life and death; its offering by a legitimate minister makes it an official act of the community; that it be a sensible thing is demanded because it is a human thing and a community thing, and it is only by sensible signs that men communicate with one another. In the New Testament, that sacrifice is Calvary and its renewal in the Mass. Our sacrifice, then, is a representation and renewal of the sacrifice of the cross: by it, Christ is offered and mystically immolated. Or destroyed, in an unbloody sacrifice under the accidents of bread and wine. It is sacrifice offered by a priest in acknowledgment of the supreme dominion of God and for the application to us of the satisfaction and merits of Christ.

Those who deny that Calvary was a sacrifice must, of course, deny the sacrifice of the Mass. Those who question the presence of Christ in the Eucharist cannot admit the Mass as a sacrifice, for they have denied the Victim. From the beginning, the doctrine of faith on the true sacrifice involved in the Mass was clearly understood and jealously cherished; it seemed so obvious in spite of accidental differences. Men saw, of course, that on the cross the sacrifice was bloody, while here it is unbloody; that there, Christ offered Himself immediately, here He offers Himself through the ministry of the priest; there, He paid the price of redemption, here He applies it. There is the same type of substantial unity and accidental difference between the Mass and the Last Supper. There, Christ Himself offered the sacrifice, here He offers it through the hands of the priest; there, He looked forward to Calvary, here He looks back to Calvary. But all three are substantially the same, indeed, they are specifically the same. From the side of the Victim and the principal Priest, they are numerically the same. They differ only from the side of the action of the priest offering the sacrifice.

It never occurred to the thinkers of the Church seriously to defend the sacrifice of the Mass because it was not seriously challenged. There is no such exhaustive examination made of the Mass as there is of many other truths of faith. It was only after the attack of the Protestant Reformers in the sixteenth century that theologians plunged into a detailed examination of the essence of the Mass and the formal reason of sacrifice in it. Today, it is generally agreed by theologians that the action of the sacrifice consists in the consecration alone, with relation, of course, to the consuming of the species as an integral part of the sacrifice.

There is, however, a wide variety of opinion as to what makes up the formal notion of sacrifice in the Mass. All admit that there is a mystical immolation or destruction. Some see this immolation in the lowering of Christ to the state of food and drink. Others place it in the mystical killing of Christ by the sacramental separation of body and blood which thus gives Christ the external garments of death. Perhaps the most tangible of these opinions is that which places the formal reason of sacrifice in the sacramental separation of the body and blood by the words of consecration, in so far as they, of themselves, virtually kill the victim; the words of consecration, producing only what they signify, produce first the body and then, by the words of consecration of the wine, the blood. Thus virtually, or considering the proper power of the words, body is separated from blood; normally, this is certain death. This action, death-producing in itself, is impeded by what the theologians call "natural concomitance"; that is, the body produced by the words also has all that is naturally joined to it, namely, blood, soul and divinity, and the blood produced by the words also has all that is naturally joined to it, namely, body, soul and divinity.

This is not too difficult if we remember the difference between physical and mystical immolation. The

former is a true immolation with the physical change or destruction of the victim; the latter is no less real and true an immolation, but without the *physical change*. Mystical immolation, then, is present when the sacrificial action -- in itself and its reception by the victim fatally destructive -- is impeded by some other disposition of the victim. In other words, the sacrificial action virtually, considering its own power, produces the effect of destruction.

Let us look at it in the concrete. John the Evangelist was thrown into boiling oil; by a miracle he emerged unharmed. The immolation was real, but mystical. It is true that such a sacrificial action, received in a person or thing existing under their proper accidents, can be prevented only by a miracle. But where the person or thing does not exist under its proper accidents, as is the case in the Eucharist, the sacrificial action falls, not on the accidents, but directly on the substance.

The immolation of John, though mystical, was real and sensible. The immolation of Christ in the Mass is mystical, real, but sensible only in so far as the words of the form and the immediate object, not through its own accidents but those of bread and wine, are sensible. It must always, of course, remain the mystery of the Mass, as Calvary must always remain the mysterious offering of the death of God. In fact, the Mass is not nearly so mysterious in its manner of accomplishment as in the solemn fact that the Victim of this real sacrifice is God Himself; Only God could have thought of it; only God could have found ways to accomplish it; the ways of the Incarnation and the consecration. Only the generosity of God could have gone through with the incredible act of love; only men could doubt the gift of God they held in their hands.

The accidents of the sacrifice: Its time and place

Because of the august character of the mystery, the general law of the Church demands that it be celebrated only in sacred places; that is, in blessed churches and oratories which have not been profaned or polluted. For the same reason, sacred vessels, specially blessed, must be used; and only altars that have been consecrated. As for the time of the celebration, though customs have varied down through the ages, the common law today permits the saying of Mass from one hour before dawn to an hour after mid-day.

Wherever and whenever it is said, the Mass is always the perfectly constructed drama. It is not mere representation, but the drama of the death of God, written by God, with God as the central figure. God is a very good playwright. Every word, every gesture is packed with meaning. A total stranger to the faith, assisting at Mass, is mightily impressed; a wholly ignorant Catholic is lifted out of himself; while the Catholic who has familiarized himself with the detailed meaning of the liturgy finds the Mass an absorbing story, an earnest prayer, a high romance, as well as a supreme sacrifice.

The words of its celebration

In two articles, St. Thomas gives a detailed treatment of the words and acts of this drama; on the same topic, whole volumes have been written. Manifestly, it is impossible to go into great detail here. In a quick, free-hand sketch that just catches the outlines, we may notice here that Thomas, in the words of the Mass, distinguishes several steps. A period of intense preparation stretches from the beginning to the completion of the proper prayer of the Mass. A period of instruction extends from the epistle and includes the *Credo*. The very heart of the Mass includes an offering or offertory; the consecration, extending from the Preface to the Lord's Prayer; the preparation for Communion, from the Lord's prayer to the Communion. Finally there is a short but intense thanksgiving.

The acts of its celebration

The acts of the Mass can be roughly divided into those that commemorate the passion of Christ and those that pertain either to devotion or reverence. In the first group are the signs of the cross, the mystic number of times they are used, the outstretched arms of the priest after the consecration, and so on. In the second, are all such acts as the upraised hands of the priest in saying the prayers; while the third includes such as the inclinations made by the priest, the washing of the hands, the taking of wine and water after

Communion, and so on.

Dangers and their remedy

Deficiencies at one time or another in the offering of the Mass are rendered certain by the fact that the minister of the Mass is a man. The priest may get sick, he may die, the church may be bombed; the material used may be imperfect, the priest may forget this or that part of the Mass, or not be sure he has said this or that word. And so on and on to the thousands of things that perpetually furnish young priests with ample material for worry. Every care is taken in advance that nothing will interrupt the sacrifice, nothing work to invalidate it; every possible situation is foreseen and provided for. If, in spite of this, some defects occur, there is legislation covering the situation either by way of supplying the defects or administering punishment to a negligent priest. It would be hard to ask more in the way of solicitude for the Mass.

Conclusion: Two forms of unity: Of absorption

In the beginning, God remarked, almost in an off-hand fashion, that it was not good for man to be alone. He might have made that much stronger by saying that man refuses to live alone. He must unite himself with others who are his equals or inferiors, he must attach himself to some superior being. He has admitted the truth of his loneliness in all his social activities from the beginning. He has insisted upon unity, even though, at times, he paid much too high a price for quite the wrong kind of unity.

The wisdom of the East advocated a unity of absorption; by it, a man was united to the absolute, but to the complete destruction of his own individuality and personality. The program was thoroughly oriental in its whole outlook and genius; yet, from time to time, it seems to have had a subtle, reptilian fascination for small groups of men of the West. It is only in very recent times that it has dared, by an open appearance, to risk the wrath of men nourished on Christianity. Such a thing cannot be tolerated for an instant where there is an appreciation of the humanity of man. Its success in winning millions to the ideal of absorption into a process, a state, a group, or a race, is itself an evidence of how thoroughly man had been calumniated by his champions of the last three centuries.

Of friendship

The unity which has been the characteristic aim of the West insists upon a rigid safeguarding of the individuality and personality of man; its claim has been, not to a destruction of man which might delight the heart of a coward, but to a perfection of man that would challenge the great heart of a saint. In the concrete, this unity is one of order and of friendship, rather than one of physical absorption. The unity of order is accomplished by truth, a unity of intellect in the recognition of man's place in the universe; this recognition is adequately expressed by sacrifice which is a statement of man's dependence and God's superiority, bringing out at the same time, man's superiority to the material world in which he lives. The unity of friendship is accomplished by that unity of wills that lies at the root of unselfish love.

The bonds of the unions

Obviously, the unity of absorption ties men together by slavish bonds that destroy the men themselves; the bonds of order and friendship, tying men to all the universe and the Creator of that universe by truth and love, are altogether unintelligible without the enduring sovereignty of the individual mind and will. The supernatural medium of this latter unity is the Eucharist, both as a sacrament and a sacrifice; Augustine's description of it as "the bond of unity," understood in this sense of unity, states the very nature, the beauty, and the immeasurable value of the Eucharist to men.

The Victim and the victims

In this sacrifice and sacrament, all the world partakes of the body of the Victim, as in the Old Testament the priest lived by the bodies of the victims of sacrifice. But here the food is not consumed to its

destruction; nor does the adored object of sacrifice consume the men who worship it; rather the food, the sacrifice, and the men are eternally enduring, men lifted up to the heights of the God before Whom they bow. Here is man's road to peace and plenty: to the peace of order and the plenty of the fullness of love. Here, in this sacrifice, the Victim is God, an undying Victim Who gives His life but does not lose it. What we have overlooked in our own times is the profound truth that for unity either God or man must be the victim; and only God can be the undying, indestructible Victim by whom men are saved.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XVI -- THE CONSTANT RESURRECTION
(Q. 84-90; Suppl., 1-28)

1. Mistakes and their makers:
 - (a) The fool and the wise man.
 - (b) The wisdom of the wise.
 - (c) The outcasts of human action.
 2. The technique of the makers of mistakes:
 - (a) The child's technique.
 - (b) The man's technique.
 - (c) Their common helplessness.
 3. God's technique with man's mistakes:
 - (a) Destruction of the inherited mistake -- by Baptism.
 - (b) Destruction of personal mistakes -- by Penance:
 - (1) The sacrament of Penance:
 - a. Its matter and form.
 - b. Its necessity.
 - c. Its accidents.
 - (2) The virtue of penance:
 - a. Intrinsically considered: genus and species.
 - b. Extrinsically considered: object, origin, relation to other virtues.
 - c. Its possessors.
 4. The effects of Penance:
 - (a) On sin: mortal and venial.
 - (b) On punishment due to sin.
 - (c) On virtues, merits, forgiven sins.
 5. Integral parts of Penance -- contrition, confession, satisfaction:
 - (a) Contrition:
 - (1) Its nature and object; distinction from attrition.
 - (2) Its quantity and quality.
 - (b) Confession:
 - (1) Its necessity.
 - (2) Its integrity.
 - (c) Satisfaction:
 - (1) Its nature.
 - (2) Its necessity.
 - (3) Its means and limits.
 6. Minister of the sacrament of Penance:
 - (a) A priest with jurisdiction.
 - (b) His office and obligation.
 - (c) The seal of confession
- Conclusion:
1. The living Christ:
 - (a) In Palestine:
 - (1) Key to His life among men.
 - (2) Its dramatic heights.
 - (b) In the sacrament of Penance: a constant drama, the constant resurrection.
 2. The secrecy and difficulty of confession:
 - (a) A hard truth for a cowardly world.
 - (b) A balance of difficulty and effects.
 3. The conquest of death

CHAPTER XVI -- THE CONSTANT RESURRECTION
(Q. 84-90; Suppl., Q. 1-28)

THERE has been much loose talk in our time of the worship of the machine, of the terror of the mechanical idol which is said to be a kind of modern Moloch before which men bow in adoration as it destroys their lives. Men of our time, or any time, may appreciate a machine as a most excellent means to other ends, they may make use of it with ruthless disregard for other men's lives; but the evidence is all against modern man adoring anything mechanical. It is easy to awaken a child's excited interest by giving it a mechanical toy; but it is practically impossible to fasten the child's interest on the toy for any great length of time. After seeing the toy do the same thing over and over again, the child tires of it, even though he does not, in an exceptional case, dissect it to see what accounts for this strangely monotonous activity. It is no trouble at all to gather a New York crowd in front of a window where a shiny, new machine turns out cigarettes or flapjacks as though by magic; but after a week, it is just another machine. Let a baseball

or a football team function with machine-like precision to constant victory and the biggest games are soon indistinguishable from secret practice.

On the other hand, we can watch a craftsman work as long as we like, with no lessening of our fascinated admiration; we fondle his hand-made product, caressing it with praise long after we have dumped its machine-made counterpart in its appointed place to do its coldly efficient work unnoticed and unthanked. For all its perfection, for all the genius that goes into its design, there is a sameness about a machine that quickly bores us. It is a product of human ingenuity and, as such, attractive; but it is human ingenuity that is lifeless, frozen, static. On the contrary, the product of the craftsman has an endless variety about it, plenty of elbow-room for imagination and originality, and, inevitably, some few mistakes.

The variety, imagination, and originality appeal mightily to the human in all of us; this is human individuality at its flourishing best. Perhaps, however, it is on the count of the inevitable mistakes that the deepest appeal is made; for here we can rightly feel we are one with the artist. In a way, a mistake is not only a bond of unity with the rest of frail humanity, it is a distinctive badge worn with a kind of shame-faced pride. For we are the only ones who make mistakes. If an archaeologist, examining newly unearthed relics of past ages, comes upon indisputable evidence of mistakes, he has an authentic record of the presence of men. The angels made only one mistake; neither the animals nor God makes any at all. Only men can put a letter in the wrong envelope or burn the morning toast.

Mistakes and their makers: The fool and the wise man

A mistake is a genuine mark of human activity; moreover, it is a universal mark, for all of us make mistakes. The line dividing wise men from fools is not a line drawn between the absence of mistakes and their presence; rather it distinguishes the area of infrequent and dissimilar mistakes from that of frequent and similar ones. A wise man does not make the same mistake twice, but he does make others; whereas the fool cannot get variety even into his mistakes, their very character showing a lack of imagination and originality that approaches the monotony of a machine and recedes from the stamp of human activity.

The wisdom of the wise

The difference, of course, is much deeper than this. A wise man recognizes the reason for the distastefulness of mistakes. True, they are human things, but not agreeably human because they fall short of humanity's capacities; there is something the matter with them. Now that it is all over, we know we shouldn't have argued with the traffic policeman, that it was a mistake to bring up the subject of illness before a hypochondriac, that the very small, very white lie was not so easy an escape after all. These are human acts, disfigured with pock-marks of unreason, of inhumanity, whether the particular pock-mark be one of ignorance, of malice, or of lack of control. One thing comforting about these disfigurements is that they need not be repeated, the disease need not be contracted again. A wise man can do something about them for the next time; and he does.

The outcasts of human action

Nothing disfiguring and ugly is welcome; so mistakes are always uninvited guests in our lives. Yet, they are forever knocking at the door at the most inopportune times. Perhaps our enemies will give them a hearty smile of welcome; but for everyone else, there is an embarrassment and tension about their arrival like that set up by the meeting of a shady past with a brilliant future. The easy, pleasant flow of life's conversation is instantly hushed; in the dead silence, all eyes focus on us to see how we shall face the confusing moment, how we can show a mistake to the door suavely, without a scene.

The technique of the makers of mistakes: The child's technique; the man's technique

The actual technique of dismissing a mistake varies with every individual. Some, clinging to methods found effective in childhood, brazenly deny the presence of mistakes through all the length of life; no one is deceived, of course, least of all these people themselves. Others employ strong-arm methods; the

mistake is instantly hustled out of mind by a big muscled forgetfulness that never quite succeeds in ejecting the mistake the whole distance out of life itself. Still others put their trust in nonchalance. The mistake is greeted with a light, amused laughter that chimes on a desperate little note into a pathetic silence, like the tinkle of a doorbell into the ruined hopes of an abandoned shop. The silence is as portentous, and more tensing, than that of a hushed theater waiting for the point of a pointless joke. Then there is the whole class of timid compromisers, terribly anxious to keep the peace yet enjoy the spoils of war, who imagine that mistakes are handled effectively by an apologetic little cough or a muttered "pardon me." Some of us, however, do grow up. Faced with our mistakes, we make no attempt to deny them. We admit them, look them in the eye; for it is well to fix their features in mind for future reference, it is good to study their strategy that we might meet them more successfully in the future.

Their common helplessness

But wise men or fools, perpetual children or fighting men, are all faced with a common helplessness in the face of their own mistakes. Almost any little boy can take a clock apart; no little boy can put it together again. The clumsiest assassin can snuff out a human life in an instant; the cleverest cannot restore it. A conquering army can destroy the treasures of centuries of genius by a few well-placed bombs; and then must stand as helpless as the barbarians surveying the ruins of Rome. For our constructive power is very much less than our destructive capacities. Once we have shattered the fragile perfection of a human act, there is absolutely nothing we can do about restoring its delicate beauty. We can be careful of future destructions, yes; but this is over and done with, and the best we can offer is our regret. In a sense, then, all mistakes are fatal; that is, in relation to the life of the act in which the mistake occurs. Some are horribly fatal in their effects destroying what can never be restored, things like innocence, love, or life.

God's technique with man's mistakes

Such helplessness could fill a man's life with tears if it were not for the comforting difference between human powerlessness and divine power in dealing with the mistakes of man. The almighty power can do something, in fact everything; what is more, it does all that need be done. Not that God turns back the clock, decreeing that yesterday never existed; that is too much even for God. But the echo of the voice of Mary's Son has not yet died out of the world; befouled rebels against God still hear "thy sins are forgiven thee," throw off their filthy rags to put on the wedding garment, and are admitted to a feast of peace such as Magdalen found in the banquet room of the Pharisee. That divine voice still speaks its message of mercy in the sacrament of Penance.

Destruction of personal mistakes -- by Penance:

The very externals of Penance are holy things. The words and acts of the penitent declare that his heart has turned from sin; the words and the acts of the priest promulgate the pardon of God. But it is not to the intrinsic holiness of these things that we must trace their divine effectiveness; that can come only from divinity. It is because these signs were constituted channels of grace by Christ that they loose a flood upon the soul which leaves it as pure as would the words of God Himself. Penance is a sacrament, a channel of grace, designating the course of divine action; as such, it produces what it signifies.

This sacrament, alone of all the sacraments, was constituted in the form of a judicial process. There is, then, a touch of misery in it, something of the tenseness of judgment, and all the finality of a terribly irrevocable sentence; for, as judgment, it necessarily revolves about crime, the crimes of men against God. However, instead of the ordinary judicial process's rigid protection of truth against human weakness, this judgment, with a truly magnificent confidence in human honesty and courage, puts truth at the mercy of man by recognizing the accuser, the witnesses, and the defendant in the one person of the penitent. These two, the sins committed after baptism and the acts of the penitent (contrition, confession, and satisfaction) submitting these sins to the priest, are the remote and proximate material of the sacrament of Penance.

The sacrament of Penance: its matter and form

Obviously, the matter of Penance is not to be sanctified as is the water of Baptism; rather, it is to be destroyed as is the substance of bread in the Eucharist. The full clarity of the sacred sign, leaving no doubt of the effect of the sacrament, is stated with sharp brevity in the solemn words of the priest which are the form of the sacrament: "I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." By those words, a man is reborn and sin is destroyed, the helplessness of man is rescued by the omnipotence of God, mistakes are undone and a man can walk the roads of the present and the future free of the awful burden of the past; for the sacrament, like all the rest, effects exactly what it signifies.

The profound importance of this sacrament to human living has made the words of Christ, bringing it into existence, some of the most cherished that history records. There was a hint of it, of course, in Christ's own dealings with sinners; "Thy sins are forgiven thee" is not something men will forget in a hurry. An explicit promise of the sacrament was made when Our Lord gave Peter the power of the keys, saying "To you I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." The direct institution of the sacrament came after the resurrection of Christ, putting it among those last minute treasures of His life among men, when He breathed on the apostles and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." As in the beginning God had breathed the breath of life into dead dust, so now He breathed the breath of life into all the generations of men who would die to divine life, falling victims of the heavy blows of sin.

Life came back to men. And the tree of that life was the cross of Calvary; this sacrament is its fruit which men, coming upon it thousands of years later, have clutched as desperately as Magdalen held to the feet of her Master. What a world of despair it would be if that fruit had not been given. By his very nature, man must try to remedy his mistakes, particularly those that threaten the success of his whole life; in sin, he was faced with a mistake that destroyed the very principle of the life of God within him, yet there was absolutely nothing he could do about it of his own powers. For there can be no salvation for men unless sins are forgiven; and only the power of God can remove the stain of sin.

Its necessity

It is true that, through the grace of God, an act of perfect contrition destroys sins and brings grace; we shall see more of this later on in this chapter. But the sacrament of Penance an instrument of forgiveness absolutely infallible in the production of its effects, as infallible as Christ's own words: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." In fact, that perfect contrition which forgives sin itself includes, at least implicitly, a desire for the sacrament of Penance; so that we may say that, once a man has grievously sinned, the sacrament is absolutely necessary, either in fact or in desire.

Its accidents

Doubt or uneasiness about the effects of this sacrament really reflects on the power of Christ Himself. The sacrament is not something that has to be applied to the soul over and over again before a real lustre is accomplished, much as we polish old silver, never quite satisfied with the perfection of the result. Long years of heavy sighs, tears, bitter regrets, the long face of perpetual sadness, these are not the appurtenances of this sacrament. Indeed, they might well be suspect as children of pride. Their roots may go no deeper than the shocked vanity of the sinner who never gets over his astonishment that such a sterling character as himself could commit such sins, though of course they are easily understandable in others; it may be that he is still pitting his own power of sinning against God's power of forgiving and weeping at how badly the divinity comes out in such a contest.

There is no need for a lifetime of uninterrupted external penance. It is true that a man is, and should always be, displeased at the fact that he has sinned. A murderer who emerges from the confessional both delighted at sin's forgiveness and gloating over the murder he has committed, has wasted the priest's time as well as his own; it simply is not possible for a man to enclose both God and sin in the one embrace. In

the sense of displeasure at the sin we have committed, eternal penance endures; but the proper emotion after confession is one of complete joy, of release from the slavery of sin, of gratitude and wonder at the friendship of God. Our groans add nothing to the effect; for it is only because God has died that anything can be done about sin, it is only by the power of His passion that we can escape from the grave we have dug ourselves into.

Penance is not a coat of whitewash that wears off from time to time and must be renewed; it is infallibly effective, and its effect is the destruction of sin. It is, then, a radical obliteration of all that is inimical to divine life; it is complete and "for keeps." Yet, it is not a miracle that happens once in a lifetime; rather, its frequency is measured by the ability of man to sin and be sorry, and the divine capacity for mercy. We are rather sure of our constant capacity for sin; we are absolutely sure of the divine capacity for mercy. Let us look a little more closely at the virtue that brings us to the feet of Christ again and again, our ability to be sorry.

The virtue of penance: Intrinsically considered: genus and species

The virtue of penance is a noble thing that has been grossly treated by a world accustomed to think of men in terms of animals. A penitent is not a dog come cringing in terror to its master's feet; he is not the victim of a passing wave of shame and confusion beyond his control that hurls him into an abject posture before he can prevent it. Penance is a good habit, a thing of reason which enables a man to regret an act that was unworthy of his manhood. Supernaturally, it is an infused habit which enables a man to use the high grounds of regret furnished by faith and to begin the destruction of sin because it is an offense against his God.

We haven't yet arrived at the point of sneering at justice, yet that is precisely what penance is -- justice to God. By sin, we have invaded the rights of God; by penance, we offer what compensation we have to offer, pitiful enough, God knows, in return for the pardon of God. We are not giving something to God by our penance, any more than an apology for unwarranted insult gives anything to the man who has been insulted. We do not belittle ourselves by penance, any more than the thief belittles himself by surrendering his loot. We are merely facing the truth and making amends for our violations of the minimum requirements of social life with God.

It is true that, offending the Infinite, we can offend infinitely, while our penance is necessarily a finite, human thing. That is why God died for us. But by this virtue, perfecting our will as all justice does, we bring our little part to the judgment seat; and in return we receive, not condemnation, but pardon. The fact that the beginnings of penance are to be found in fear is no condemnation of penance nor does it reduce the penitent man to the status of a cringing animal. There are some things a man should be afraid of, for only a fool is absolutely fearless. Certainly, a man should be afraid of the wrath of an offended God Who would justly leave us to our miserable choice of an eternal hell.

However, Catholic penance rarely proceeds from such fear alone. Most frequently there is an element, often enough an exclusive element, of filial fear which is a mixture of reverence and profound love. It is a fear that recoils, not so much from threatened punishment, as from injury to One Who has been so infinitely good; it knows no worse evil than final separation from One Who is so deeply loved.

Extrinsically considered: object, origin, relation to other virtues

In a stately parade of virtues, penance would have to give precedence to many another. But in the disordered bustle of everyday life, penance often finds itself first elbowing a way for its fellows. It is a rough and tumble virtue, fitted by nature to carry off the brawl with sin; a handy virtue, indeed, to have around in times of crisis, especially when it so humbly and unobtrusively gives away to its superiors when the immediate fight is over. In a life like that of Our Lady, where no brawling enters in, penance has nothing to do; and it does precisely that without a single regret. The habit, the infused virtue, was of course in Our Lady; for it comes with the rest of the supernatural equipment brought to w on our birth to the life of God by grace.

Its possessors

It is not hard to see that penance has not much to do in the saints in heaven except to give thanks for the sins that have been forgiven. In the angels, good or bad, there is no room at all either for the habit of penance or for its acts. For penance involves the capacity to change one's mind and the object of the affections of one's heart; in other words, to change a course of action, to regret, and to do something in the opposite direction. The angels love but once and that forever, whether they have embraced sin or sanctity. They may regret the action for what it has done to them, but they have no notion whatsoever of revoking or changing that course of action; for what an angel does, he does once for all, just as what he knows, he knows completely, once for all. We may have our moments of discontent and grumbling as we munch our peasant fare in the tenements of rationality, thinking enviously of the royal palaces of intellectuality inhabited by the angels. But there is an advantage, too, in our lowly state; for it is only here that there is a second chance, that one can make a mistake and repair it, that one is not eternally committed, by the very nobility of nature, to one course of action without recall.

Spiritually, an angel can die but once, while a man can die a thousand times or more; for the angel dies forever, whereas man has life within his grasp even though he be dead. To understand better the resurrection that has been given us, let us suppose that a board of experts on sin, aided by a satanic council of strategy, had, after exhaustive study, declared that they had finally hit upon a sin that could not be forgiven by the sacrament of Penance. Then, let us say, they submitted their findings to Thomas for criticism over the protests, of course, of the satanic members of the board.

I do not believe Thomas would even look at the formulae, statistics, and equations; after all, life is short and there are so many important things to do. He would probably say something like this. "If there is such a sin, it is unforgivable either because man cannot be sorry for it, or because the sacrament of Penance cannot wipe it out. The first supposition is an insult to free will and the power of grace, a lie that conflicts with both natural and supernatural truth. The second, is a denial of the infinite character of mercy and the infinite power of the passion of Christ. Take away all the paraphernalia of your theorizing; there cannot be such a sin."

The effects of Penance: On sin: mortal and venial

It is not only that Penance can and does destroy any one mortal sin; even though thousands of such sins were to herd together like a gang of toughs, they would be just as helpless to resist the blood of Christ. Penance forgives all sin. It cannot wash the face of the soul, leaving smudges here and there in less prominent spots; no mortal sin is remitted without sanctifying grace which cannot live in the same soul with mortal sin for the simple reason that the will of man cannot go in different directions at the same time. The sins that must be submitted to the tribunal of this sacrament are the mortal sins that have not yet been forgiven; these are the primary objects against which this sacrament is directed, what the theologians call "necessary matter." The free matter, which may or may not be submitted to the judgment of the confessor as the penitent likes, consists of mortal sins already forgiven and venial sins; but there must be some sin told in the confessional or there can be no sacrament. The priest, asking about sins of one's past life, is not whiling away the idle hours; he is making sure that there is matter for the sacrament, guaranteeing that the sacrament, with its infallible increase in sanctifying grace, will be received.

Venial sin can be taken care of without the sacrament. It does not require a new infusion of grace, since it does not expel grace but dwells, though not joyously, in the same house with charity. Of course, the forgiveness of venial sin demands something of the virtue of penance, at least that implicit displeasure at venial sin which is implied in an act of charity; for not even these slight sins are to be snatched out of a man's hands as a noisy rattle is taken from a baby by a nervous mother. Wherever there is a movement of the will to God and away from sin, there is a forgiveness of venial sin; so in every new infusion of grace, venial sin is forgiven. On the contrary, wherever the will of man clings to his venial sin, no force in heaven or on earth will separate him from it. In actual fact, there are thousands of occasions for the

forgiveness of venial sins. The reception of the sacraments, a fervent Our Father with its detestation of sin, acts of reverence to God such as the acceptance of the episcopal blessing, the use of holy water, genuflections, and so on, are all means of forgiving venial sin.

On punishment due to sin

To get back to the sacrament, it is always as complete in its effects as a man is willing to let it be: mortal sin, venial sin, and the punishment due to sin are all wiped out in this sacrament. We enter the confessional box enemies of God, and leave it friends with a right to His eternal heritage. However, if a man enters the confessional clinging to a venial sin, he comes out with it still in his hand; if he wants to hold to some of the temporal punishment due to sin, no one will take it away from him. In other words, what there is of sin or its vestiges after confession corresponds to the glance we throw over our shoulder at the world of sin; if our turning to God from sin is really complete, then there is no slightest trace of sin or its debt of punishment on our souls.

On virtues, merits, forgiven sins

It is to be remembered, however, that the effects of Penance fall on the soul, not on the body of man. A drunkard cannot expect to lose his taste for whiskey by a sincere confession. Physical dispositions and acquired habits are not whisked out of existence, short of a miracle; they must be worn down by steady battling. The point is, a man acquires the weapons of battle in the infused virtues, good habits directly from God, that come to him with the grace of the sacraments. Mortal sin, taking the life out of the soil of the soul, destroys most of the splendid growth of infused supernatural virtue; with Penance, grace falls with the refreshing effect of a spring shower, bringing all those destroyed virtues back to life.

The degree of this restored life will depend on the degree of grace a man receives in this sacrament, and this, in turn, is a matter of his conversion to God and away from sin. Infallibly, however, he will receive grace, its accompanying virtues, and the merits of past works that he lost through his sin. In the economic order, bankruptcy usually means that some one else has all the money this man has lost; in the spiritual order, the end of a depression means that a man has recovered much of the treasure of merit he had piled up, perhaps all of his original fortune, or even a much greater one, depending on the intensity of his sorrow for sin and his love for God.

It is altogether too much to expect Penance to give life to works that were never anything else but dead. Good works done in mortal sin have never had title to an eternal reward; they are not to be given that title by Penance. They are the works of a dead man done in death and nothing will change them. In a sense, God undoes the work of man by restoring to life by grace what man has killed by sin, but man has no such power over the work of God; for what God destroys cannot be revived by any power of man. Thus, the sins destroyed in this sacrament are not to be called back to life the next time a sin is committed. They are dead, divinely executed, annihilated beyond burial. We may produce some of the same kind, but they will have to be brand new; we may weep over the memory of the forgiven sins, but we cannot very well worry about them without admitting that we are entering the shadowy territory of the non-existent in search of material for worry.

Integral parts of Penance -- contrition, confession, satisfaction:

Contrition: Its nature and object; distinction from attrition

Up to this point, we have been looking at Penance as a whole, alternately marvelling at the power and love of God on the one hand, and at the renewed life of the soul of man on the other; but always seeing the sacrament in its completeness. The procedure was natural enough. After all, the beauty and character of a face impresses us long before we begin to study the excellence of individual features. Perhaps one of the reasons why love never tires of its object is that we come down to the last details so slowly, and never quite to their ultimate depths. Thomas was just coming down to such details of penance when the ink ran out of his pen. On his way to the Council of Lyons in obedience to a papal command, sick and terribly tired, Thomas was welcomed into the house of strangers to wait for his rendezvous with death. The

intense, ceaseless labor of another son of Dominic came to a close when the bright, quick-burning flame of his life sputtered out. Thomas had paid the ultimate penalty for falling in love with truth.

Of the two human elements in penance, the acts of the accused and the judge, Thomas had just noted the three that are proper to the penitent -- contrition, confession, and satisfaction -- when death closed the cover on his *Summa*, putting an end to his search for truth by giving him supreme Truth. Here, we must leave the mature work of Thomas, take farewell of the *Summa* we have wandered through in these volumes, and, with a little envy of an older brother's quick trip home, fall back on the earlier works of Thomas for the completion of the outline he had sketched for his supreme work.

The three acts to which Thomas had given his last farthing of attention make up the proximate matter of the sacrament of penance. By contrition, the sinner wills to make recompense for his sin and to avoid the sin in the future; by confession, he subjects his sin to divine judgment; and by his satisfaction, the acceptance of the penance imposed, he makes the recompense demanded by the judge of this tribunal. To the Catholic, there is nothing complex or mysterious in all this; he has been expert in its knowledge and practice since childhood.

He knows, for instance, that on coming to confession he must be sorry for and detest his sins, firmly resolving to avoid them in the future. Sometimes, that sorrow of his is only imperfect contrition, that is, attrition, a sorrow that does not trace its ancestry beyond a fear of gaining hell or losing heaven; again it may be perfect contrition, that perfect sorrow which is contrition in its strictest sense and which turns from sin in disgust as an offense against a Friend Who is infinitely good. In either case, the Catholic completes his confession with an easy mind; for even attrition is sufficient for the sacrament of Penance.

Its quantity and quality

Contrition, that is, perfect contrition, destroys sin of its very nature, though it always carries with it the obligation of submitting all mortal sin to the sacramental judgment. Attrition, on the other hand, is helpless of itself to get anything done about sin; yet is completely effective when coupled with sacramental absolution. The point to be noticed here, by way of anticipation of the demands of some who would be more Catholic than the Church, is that both of these are supernatural sorrow, sorrow produced by the aid of grace, sorrow whose motive is supernatural, whether that motive be heaven, hell, or the infinite goodness of God. It is not necessary that a man feel upset, downcast, disgusted, or angry at himself as guarantees of his sorrow; in fact, none of these have anything to do with the efficacy of this sacrament. A man might, merely naturally, be full of loathing for the baseness of gluttony or drunkenness; what is demanded here is not the natural, but the supernatural, not a repugnance of sense appetite but a renouncement on the part of the will.

Over and above its supernatural character, this sorrow for sin, whether contrition or attrition, must be more than a matter of words or imagination; it must be real, for it is an integral part of a terribly real sacrament. Moreover, it is not a delicate hint, a subtle implication, or a generous but highly imaginative interpretation; it is formal, a positive act by which a man here and now sorrows for his sins. There are no cautious reservations to be tacked on to it as though it were a dangerous partnership agreement with God, it must be sorrow for all sins; nor can it be carefully measured, lest we go too far with it, it must be a supreme sorrow, a sorrow that regrets this sin more than anything else. It must, however, be distinctly understood that there is no question here of feeling sorrow; where feeling has any part to play at all in this sacrament, it is as an echo of the resounding rational sorrow, the sorrow of the will that is essential for the sacrament. Even on the side of rational sorrow, a man may be very much more intensively sorry about the death of his wife than at his own embezzlement of a thousand dollars. No one will try to change that fact. It is not necessary, in fact it is very often impossible, to have that supreme intensive sorrow for sin; what is demanded is that we be prepared to give up any other good rather than commit this sin or keep it on our souls. In the theologian's terms, the sorrow demanded for confession must be *appreciatively*, not *intensively*, supreme.

Confession: Its necessity

With all this in mind, it is not easy to understand how the word got around that confession was a license to commit sin and an encouragement of it. The recent convert to Catholicism is astounded that the rumor ever could get started. Our contrition is as firm and final a farewell to sin as the human will can speak. Its word is not a wish but a determination to avoid sin, even though it can have no guarantee against future sins. The point is that sin has lost its attractiveness and so we put it out of our heart, not tearfully, sighingly, half-heartedly, but emphatically. It may creep back later but only on condition of a change in our present disposition. At the moment we are determined; and that means that we propose to use all the means available to avoid future sin: prayer, caution, avoidance of the occasions, and so on. A license for sin? No indeed. But a brave defiance of all the attraction of sin.

This is not a blind optimism which disregards a long history of weakness to coddle a pollyanna attitude towards the future. We know what we are up against, coming to confession and facing the future afterwards. We are not ignorant of the defects in ourselves; in fact, we have honestly focused our eyes on them. Knowing them, aware of all the odds against us, all the enemies drawn up in full fighting strength, we are still willing to have another try at it; to pit our will, fortified by the grace of God, against them all in a fight to the death. It is this clarion courage in the weakest of sinners that is so constant a source of humility and inspiration to the priest in the confessional.

The notion of confession as an encouragement to sin becomes still more absurd when we realize that all that has been said refers to the first of three acts of the penitent. There are still two others, confession and satisfaction, which set up quite substantial barriers to comfort in sinning. Take confession, the telling of our sins to the priest, for instance. It might not be so hard if we could talk about the sins of others; but if we try this, we shall discover shortly, very shortly, that this is no place for gossip, if there is any place for gossip. The trouble is we must tell our own sins, simply, nakedly, truthfully; not exaggerating them, minimizing them, excusing or explaining them away.

Its integrity

If anyone thinks this easy it is because he is an armchair penitent who has not yet personally made the long step over the threshold of the confessional. We are approaching a doctor of the soul; of what use is it to fake or hide a sin? We stand before a judge; how can he judge us if we give him false testimony? Yet, the things to be made known are those which no one but God could discover unless we revealed them; things we hardly can face ourselves. Confession is, indeed, difficult. It demands high courage and deep humility, secret though the telling may be; some inkling of the flood of grace which pours into the soul of the penitent can be had from the fact that the temptation to dodge this difficulty by cheating in the act of confessing hardly occurs to the Catholic. Perhaps it would not be so hard if we could write it out, or make our sins known by signs so that we would not have to hear the things we have done in the cold, clear tones of the spoken word. But unless there is a very good reason, even this softening of the difficulty cannot be allowed; the confession must be oral.

The difficulty must not overshadow the gracious thoughtfulness of Christ in leaving us this sacrament. This is not a high price to pay to be rid of sin. At any rate, by the command of Christ, our sins must be made known; He constituted the apostles as judges of the sins of men, so the material for the judgment must be furnished by the sinners. We must confess our sins and with a certain frequency. The bare minimum is fairly evident: a man must confess when he knows himself to be in mortal sin and he finds himself in danger of death; when what he is about to do, for example, to receive Holy Communion, demands the state of grace and this man, in fact, has not got it. But this procedure is not the high road to perfection; obviously, when a man has committed spiritual suicide, he should not see how long he can stay dead. Even where there is no question of serious sin at all, the infallible grace with its strengthening of the virtues is good enough reason for really frequent confession; for there are no men who cannot stand a little more help from God.

In the confessional, we must tell all the sins that have not yet been submitted to the absolution of a priest, as far as, here and now, they can be or should be confessed. We must tell them all; that is, the kinds of sin, their number, particularly aggravating or minimizing circumstances, and the external acts which flowed from them. However, this does not mean that we must draw pictures for the priest. The point is not to give a perfect, detailed, exhaustive account of sin; but to give the priestly judge accurate information. In actual fact, this need for completeness or universality in our confession is no cause for uneasiness. If we walk into the confessional with the intention of telling everything, we approach an expert who has his own solemn obligation to get the evidence straight; if anything is not sufficiently clear, it is the priest's duty to ask questions. Our part consists in trying to tell our sins honestly and with what we consider sufficient frankness; the ultimate responsibility is the priest's.

Obviously, if we have forgotten some sins, they cannot be confessed; if we have only thirty seconds to live, we can hardly cover the forty year space since our last confession. In other words, there will be times when the material integrity, or completeness, of our confession may be, or even must be, dispensed with. But the formal integrity, the telling of all the sins that can be and should be confessed, never allows mitigation.

Perhaps all this is said adequately enough when we say that we must not try to hide things in the confessional; it may be dark and not swept very often, but it is still no hiding place for even so elusive a thing as a sin. If we are trying not to hide anything, then we are certainly not trying to encourage forgetfulness. Sometimes we shall have to do a little research work before confession, examining our conscience to make sure we do not mislay any of the bundles we should be bringing to the courtroom as evidence. Not that we must undergo a soul-searing, tortuous self-analysis, determined to unearth the last detail and arrive at a mathematically exact statement of the number of our sins; it is to God that we are coming for judgment and He demands no more than a reasonably diligent attempt on our part to recall our offenses against Him.

Satisfaction: Its nature

With all the evidence in, we submit it with a contrite heart; the judge ponders it, makes his judgment and, before giving the life-restoring absolution, imposes a penance upon us. It may be only a light penance to dust off our wings, or a heavy one to blast out the remnants of sin; in either case it is a satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to sin. The priest has no choice, he must impose a penance; the penitent has no choice, he must accept it. For both the giving and accepting of the penance are integral parts of the sacrament; without them, there is no sacrament.

Normally, a penitent does not roar in protest at the penance; this sort of thing is expected in a baseball player's reception of an umpire's decision, but quite unexpected in a confessional. The results, however, are pretty much the same in both protests. Without uttering a word of protest, a penitent may bitterly rebel against a penance and decide not to say it; by that decision, he has rendered the sacrament invalid. For the imposition of the penance is the judge's work, not that of the accused; it can be changed or mitigated only by a judge sitting on the same case and with the same evidence. The penance must be accepted; if it is, the sacrament moves smoothly on to its incredible effects. Later we may forget the penance, or even neglect it; that will not undo the sacrament, though it may well leave us guilty of the sin of negligence.

The misfortunes of life, of which we are assured a fair share, almsgiving, fasting, prayer, are only some of the possible means of satisfying for the temporal punishment due to sin quite apart from the sacraments. But all such means must have the mark of satisfaction upon them; that is, they must be voluntarily done or suffered by way of recompense to God. In a sense, even so delicately beautiful a thing as an act of love of God can operate to the destruction of temporal punishment, though this is rather by way of merit than by way of satisfaction. In a much stricter sense, charity is at the root of all strict satisfaction. Certainly, it is only in charity that we can satisfy for our own sins; and it is only by the bond of charity which makes us one with others that we can satisfy for the punishment due to their sins. Under any other circumstances, satisfaction for the punishment due to sin is much more a matter of God's generous acceptance of a trifle

rather than a tribute to the value of our particular works.

Its necessity

The point of charity making it possible for us to satisfy for others is tied up closely with the comforting doctrine of the Communion of Saints. By charity, we are one, members of the same Mystical Body; we can operate for the whole or for any part of it. Indeed, the merits or punishments of any part are in a sense those of the whole. From this family helpfulness, the doctrine of indulgences is an inevitable conclusion, in spite of the calumny that has been heaped upon it for centuries.

Its means and limits

An indulgence is the remission, in whole or in part, of the temporal punishment due to sin. It is not a license for sin, or a forgiveness of sin; indeed, it demands freedom from sin to be effective, for it depends upon the bond of union which is charity. The background of indulgences is made up of the superabundant merits and satisfactions of the saints, of Christ Who had no sin of His own and Whose merits were infinite, and of the sinless Mary with her charity above that of all the saints and angels. All these make up the treasury of the Church; for these works, unnecessary for their authors, were not done for this or that man, but for Christ and the Church. That treasury is dispensed by the Head of the Church on the conditions laid down by the Church and determined by it; but only to those who, by their charity, are living members of the Church.

Minister of the sacrament of Penance: A priest with jurisdiction

All through this chapter, we have paid very little attention to the man on the other side of the confessional grill; probably, most of the readers of this chapter have hardly noticed the omission, for this is the entirely normal degree of consideration given to him. Particularly in large city churches, he is more impersonal than the voice of a foreign radio broadcaster. He may never have seen the penitent, the penitent may never come in contact with him again; yet, in his quiet whisper, he wields the power of Christ Himself, saying whether this man is to rise from the dead or to rot in his tomb. It would, beyond doubt, be more accurate to say that it is the penitent who decides whether or not this priest shall be allowed to use the power of Christ on him; it is the penitent who denies himself absolution, for this cannot be denied to a penitent who is rightly disposed.

At any rate, that impersonal figure in the darkness of the confessional deserves a little more study. It is true that you may, if you like, confess your sins to a layman; you may shout them publicly at a revival meeting; it may even be that some day you will be allowed to broadcast them over the radio. But in all these cases, you need expect no absolution. This power is given only to an ordained priest; its source is the character of the sacrament of Holy Orders, an active spiritual power indelibly imprinted on the soul of a man. The character alone, however, is not a commission turning a priest loose on a world of sinners; his act of absolution is an act of government, an authoritative act, which needs what the theologians call "jurisdiction." That is, over and above the power of Holy Orders, the priest must be given a share in the power of government by one who has this power by reason of his office -- the Ordinary, or bishop.

His office and obligation

Moreover, the priest's office of confessor is hedged about with prerequisites and conditions in a manner calculated to make it fool-proof. Aside from the actual circumstances of hearing confessions, circumstances completely familiar to Catholics, there is the matter of the requisite knowledge of a confessor. Young Dominican confessors, on their way back every three years to face a two-hour grilling by a board of five examiners, will testify to the seriousness of this demand in actual practice. Surely, the confessor must have a solid possession of the virtue of prudence; for here he operates as the ruler and guide of souls. He must bring special excellence to the confessional in such Christian virtues as zeal for souls, that he might be all things to all men; indefatigable patience, to deal with the infinite variety of the unprepared, the ignorant, the tepid in such a way as not to lose a single sheep from the fold; a strong

courage, lest he hesitate to admonish; and a purity which will enable him to reach out his hand to help others without soiling himself.

So equipped -- and the responsibility for that equipment is his to be answered for eternally -- he must sit in judgment on the deeds of men, judging with all the efficacy of Christ's own judgment. He must teach and admonish men, dispose them for contrition, correct their lives, lead some on to heights of sanctity, rescue others from the mire of sin, and, rarely, face the awful fact of his inability to give this penitent absolution. Aside from the physical considerations, such as lack of air, nervous tension, and the aching fatigue involved, this gives us some insight into the heroism of the Cure of Ars' ordinary day of from sixteen to eighteen hours in the confessional. Certainly it makes quite unnecessary my assurance that every young priest, equipped with all these things and adhering to all the conditions demanded, walks into the confessional for the first time in a state of terror. A doctor's mistake may, at the very worst, bring physical death; here, a mistake may mean eternal spiritual death for which the priest is strictly accountable.

The seal of confession

It is probably the secrecy of the confessional more than anything else that has caught the imagination of every age. Probably the world outside the Church never really realizes how absolute that secrecy is. The world might understand, at least vaguely, that the confessional secrecy extends beyond sins to all the penitent has said in the process of sacramental confession, whether absolution is given or not; that is, everything that would make the sacrament onerous or odious. It could be easily understood that this included all that might redound to the injury or even to the displeasure of the penitent; such things as physical defects, outstanding virtues, personal qualities, and so on.

The secrecy, of course, goes beyond this. These things not only cannot be told, they cannot be hinted at by the priest. They cannot be made known directly or indirectly; in fact, the priest cannot, outside the confessional, talk of these things even to the penitent without the penitent's permission. All this might be gathered by an outsider studying the records; he might even understand that the penitent himself is obliged to no such secrecy. The real mistake is made in comparing confessional secrets with professional or natural secrets. There is an infinite difference between them. Professional or natural secrets can be, indeed, sometimes must be revealed; certainly, in cases where their preservation would do serious damage to a third party or to the common good. These things, after all, are known by man. The knowledge of the confessional is not man's but God's; at no time does it belong to the priest. He cannot reveal it to save his own soul from hell, to save a nation from annihilation, to save the Church from being utterly obliterated. The priest simply does not know these things.

Conclusion: The living Christ: In Palestine: Key to His life among men

Some two thousand years ago in Palestine, the leaders of the people heard the Son of Mary say: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." They were indignant, demanding who but God could forgive sins. They were right; for this man was God. This act of forgiveness revealed, not only His divine power, but the whole purpose of His life among men. He came that men might have life; therefore He came to raise them from the death of sin. For this He lived, suffered, and died, that men might be free of the chains of death they had voluntarily embraced.

Its dramatic heights

A subtle realization of that central fact in Christ's life has led men to single out particular moments of that short life as focal points for the human heart. The whole of it was a great drama; but moments of it reach heights of the dramatic that men will never allow themselves to forget. There was the breathless moment when a woman stood before Him, silent and ashamed, after her accusers had all gone away; we can still hear His merciful judgment: "Neither do I condemn thee; go in peace and sin no more." There was another moment of silence, when the guests of the Pharisee stared in consternation at the woman who threw herself at the feet of Christ: "Much is forgiven her for she hath loved much. Go in peace; thy faith hath

made thee whole." Hanging on the cross, He reached up from the depths of an agony only to be relieved by death, to snatch a repentant soul from hell.

In the sacrament of Penance: a constant drama, the constant resurrection

When Rubens introduced Magdalen into his magnificent "Descent from the Cross," the picture was taken out of his hands; for any artist who has allowed the Magdalen to walk across his canvas has had to make her the most arresting figure on it. Men have held fast to such memories of Christ; for this was God at work on the mistakes common to all men, doing what no man could do, destroying them. Men have more than memories of Christ to cling to. His life did not end on Calvary; rather, we might say that His life started there, to be continued by His own institution in the sacramental structure of the Church, never more strikingly than in the sacrament of Penance. There, day after day, hour after hour, century after century, in all corners of the world, those same dramatic moments are reenacted; men rise from the dead to the life of God.

The secrecy and difficulty of confession: A hard truth for a cowardly world; a balance of difficulty and effects

It might be hard to understand how men could shrink from such miracles of mercy if we did not have personal experience of the difficulty of confession; having had it, we can appreciate the courage of the silent adulteress waiting judgment. It is not that men are necessarily afraid of having their mistakes known; after all, the secrecy of the confessional is so well assured as to be taken for granted. There is, of course, the difficulty of being honest with one's self, of deliberately recalling and regretting sins committed. And there is the even greater difficulty of mustering the courage to fight back against the possible sins of the future; of admitting defeat, perhaps again and again, and still, somehow, finding the courage to go on fighting. This sacrament is hard. It is a terrible blow to vanity; a severe test of courage; a challenge to a great heart. Vanity never recovers, and it shouldn't; but self-respect and courage are both causes and effects of a good confession.

The conquest of death

It is hard, yes; but is it too high a price to pay for release from death? For escape from darkness? For the restoration of the ruined work of a lifetime? For divine friendship and its eternal reward? No, the mystery is still on the side of sin and man's preference to remain in it. Christ's exit from the tomb on the first Easter threw open the gates of hope to the world; but His conquest of death will not be completed until the last absolution is given to the last sinner, until the last man in love with Christ escapes from the grasp of death. How much more complete it could have been, only a survey of the regions of hell will ever reveal.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER XVII -- THE SICK AND THEIR PHYSICIAN (Suppl Q. 29-40)

1. The lonely hour:
 - (a) Contrast of birth and death.
 - (b) Bitter exile -- a man alone.
 - (c) The family and a death-bed:
 - (1) Human family.
 - (2) Divine family.
 2. Double union of birth and death:
 - (a) First birth and first death.
 - (b) Last birth and last death.
 3. Last preparation for eternal birth -- Extreme Unction:
 - (a) The sacrament
 - (1) Its essence.
 - (2) Its necessity.
 - (b) Effects of the sacrament:
 - (1) Primary effect.
 - (2) Secondary effects.
 - (3) Its beauty and fittingness.
 - (c) Its subjects:
 - (1) In general.
 - (2) In particular.
 4. The minister of Extreme Unction.
 5. Divine physicians:
 - (a) Consecration of the priesthood:
 - (1) The sacrament of Holy Orders.
 - (2) Its institution and essence.
 - (3) Its minister.
 - (b) The dignity of the priesthood:
 - (1) Effects of the sacrament.
 - (2) Ambassador of God.
 - (3) Ambassador of men.
 - (c) Subjects of the sacrament:
 - (1) Its limitation in general
 - (2) Qualifications of the subjects.
 - (3) Impediments to the sacrament.
- Conclusion:
1. The welcome of Christ and His Church:
 - (a) The fact.
 - (b) Contrast of fact with modern world.
 2. World without Christ -- a priestless world:
 - (a) The fact and its consequences.
 - (b) Reason for the fact.
 3. A lonely world.

CHAPTER XVII -- THE SICK AND THEIR PHYSICIAN (Suppl. Q. 29-40)

ONCE upon a time, not so very long ago, the birth of a child was considered a private, or at most, a family affair. Today, a man's birth is one of the most public acts of his life. The business office of the hospital has been notified weeks beforehand. On the carefully calculated date, the hospital staff is ready, the operating room prepared. In the course of the actual birth, the delivery room is crowded with nurses, doctors, anesthetists, while relatives throng the corridors. Somewhere in the crowd, of course, there is a mother.

All this is not merely because the mother needs help and, as anyone can see, the infant is completely helpless. It is reasonable that all the knowledge, technique, and experience of society be put at the service of mother and child. The particularly interesting thing about this help is its superior tone. We are not only willing to help; we are eager, even anxious to help as a man with a voice is to accept the slightest hint of an invitation to sing. He knows he can sing and we know we can help. The whole motion here is towards life; we join in heartily as we might chime in with a lusty group who are singing, cheering, surging towards a happy gathering place. We can help. We are alive, with all of life's experience behind us. We

are equipped for living and for fortifying these feeble beginnings of life; we gather around protectively lest a sudden gust extinguish the tiny spark of life.

The lonely hour: Contrast of birth and death

On the contrary, death is becoming more and more a family affair; some day it may even become a strictly private matter. It is true, that in older days hundreds of people gathered for a wake; the significant thing is that friends and neighbors came in long before death itself had knocked at the door. One monastic survival of this can be seen in the death of a Dominican. He dies surrounded by all of his community, passing out of the world with the notes of their victory hymn, the *Salve Regina*, echoing in his ears. Nor, incidentally, is there anything lacking in the wake which follows. The days to which such practices belonged held to the notion that others could be of some help to a man who was dying; and that death was in the nature of a great victory. As materialism seeps through society, and with it a conviction of helplessness, death becomes a private affair, to be hushed up and hustled out of one's attention.

In death, the motion of nature is not toward life but away from it. We may like to stop it, but we know very well that we cannot. We may stave it off for a while or we may drug a man so that he has not his wits about him at the instant of death. But in the moment of actual death, as contrasted with the moment of actual birth, there is simply nothing we can do but what might be done by the bitterest enemy of the dying man: what was done equally by Roman soldiers and the mother of Christ -- merely sit and watch a man die.

Bitter exile -- a man alone

At that moment, a man stands utterly alone. Society and his family have been of incalculable assistance to the fullness of his life from the first instant until this time; but now he is as completely cut off from their help as if they did not exist. They must stand by, as did the mother of the Maccabees, helpless to do more than offer the crumb of wisdom that can be carried on the backs of feeble words. At this moment, a man is an exile, condemned to a bitter loneliness with no hope of reprieve, no chance to return again to the ranks of men. What is more, this exile comes at the most difficult moment of his life, the moment when a man needs help most, for the success or failure of all of his life depends upon these last moments.

Somehow, the thing seems monstrous. We have contempt for a business man who deserts his associates just at the moment of financial crisis. We despise a husband who abandons his wife just as her time for childbirth approaches. We are in horror at the betrayal of Christ by Judas. It is that note of disloyalty, of betrayal that makes our helplessness the more bitter.

The family and a death-bed: Human family

Perhaps it seems this way to the dying man. But, really, this abandonment is not our fault. We are as helpless to come to his assistance as we would be to rescue a child if we were bound hand and foot. In fact, we are shackled hand and foot by nature itself. Although it is not beyond our sight, this emergency is beyond our reach; we may evidence our desire to do what can be done by the anxious solicitude we spread as a comforting cover over the wasted frame of the dying man, but it is a cold comfort. There is still the general practice of a scattered family rushing to the deathbed of a loved one by every means of quick transportation; and when they arrive, what? They can do no more than give themselves what little comfort is to be had by sharing the last moments of the dying man.

Divine family

It must be well remembered that our shackles are those of nature. They do not imprison the supernatural any more than steel bars keep out sunlight or a locked door blocks a guardian angel. This dying man may be a member of a supernatural family, a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. If he is, then there is another family physician present who does more than shake his head in a sympathy which expresses his impotence.

The priest is both the physician and the agent of that supernatural family. With him come the innumerable offspring of the family; not only the living from all parts of the globe unhindered by time and space, not only the hierarchy of ecclesiastical nobles, but all the dead who will never die, and the whole hosts of the angels. The small room is packed with the family, making the room of birth seem empty and barren by comparison; and everyone there can do something and does it. This is something this family can understand, this motion from life to life, from nature to supernature, and they are as eager to help that motion along as we are eager to contribute to the first motion of natural life.

Double union of birth and death: First birth and first death Last birth and last death

There must be constant amusement in the angelic ranks at the befuddlement of men as the paradoxes rain upon us, holding our puzzled interest until the complexities are made plain at the end of life. At the first birth of man from his mother's womb, we scurry about, hurried by our anxiety and eagerness, stressing the beginning of life; the world of the supernatural enters in with quiet efficiency to emphasize that what dies here is more important than what lives. The Church, continuing the life of Christ in the sacraments, is there at birth, giving an assistance that goes far beyond help to bodily life; but the assistance is towards destruction, towards death, to the obliteration of sin.

Last preparation for eternal birth -- Extreme Unction: The sacrament: Its essence

At the death of a man, the Church is also present, again quietly efficient, busy, not in staving off death, but in ushering in life, eternal life. Again the help given is far beyond that to the body. It is help to ends unseen by nature, for at this time nature must leave a man most alone; while supernature gives him most company. This last paradox is effected by the final gesture of a loving mother who has watched over a man from birth through growth, nourishment, mistakes, adulthood, and domestic life. That gesture is called the sacrament of Extreme Unction, literally, a last anointing. It is a term that calls up the first miracle-working expedition of the apostles when, with all the wonders they were working, they still stopped to anoint the sick with oil; there is about it the flavor of the story of the good Samaritan who did not pass by, and the touch of Christ on the fevered brow of Peter's mother-in-law.

Extreme Unction is another of those divinely instituted sluice-gates which man has only to throw open to have his soul flooded by the living waters of divine life. Like all the sacraments, it was instituted by Christ, though the institution is not recorded in the sketchily written account of the things done by Christ; rather it comes to us by way of tradition and its use is noted by St. James in his epistle. Like all the sacraments, it was instituted in a shape that enables man to take it to his bosom, to introduce it to the family of his acts, sure it will be at home; for it, too, is a sensible sign charged with the spiritual. It is a sign made up of matter and of a form that makes the meaning clear beyond all doubt; above all, it is an effective sign producing what it signifies. Like all the sacraments, man can understand its use, learn quickly and easily how to manipulate it, though he will never grasp its mode of operation nor fully understand the marvelousness of its effects.

The olive oil, which is the matter of this sacrament, is not mixed with balsam as it was in Confirmation; for this sacrament is solely for the inner precincts of a man's soul, it is not meant to permeate the world, to drive a man out among men, to move him to share his fullness with others or to defend that fullness. The oil itself is a statement of the purposes of the sacrament; of its soothing, penetrating, healing, unspectacular help against the fever and sickness of sin. Since the matter of the sacrament was not consecrated by Christ's use of it, it needs the consecration of the bishop, who possesses the fullness of the priesthood of Christ. As for the form, well, it is in complete harmony with the quiet, gentle helpfulness characteristic of this sacrament. Rather than a bluff command, it is a quiet prayer eminently fitted to the sickroom or the deathbed; it slips in as unostentatiously efficient as a nun, to give comfort to one who is almost beyond comfort.

The dying man is at the end of his resources. This prayer, which is the form of the sacrament, is a supporting arm raising him from the pillow that he might accept the divine draught. He is slipping out of the arms of his mother, the Church, and in that prayer there are all the good wishes and pent-up love that is too deep to find more lengthy expression. The stumbling limitation of words is, by its very inadequacy, the most authentic expression of the profundity of emotion behind the last fare-loving mercy, pardon you whatever by sight, hearing, smell, taste, word, touch or step, you have done amiss," anointing each of the members of the body as he says the appropriate words.

Its necessity

It is a simple ceremony, a matter of a few moments. It not unlike a Pullman porter's personal pride in his passengers' appearance as he fusses about, brushing shoes, coats, hats, straightening things so that everyone will be in perfect order when the train pulls in. Its simplicity suggests the little, insignificant touches that love prompts when it wants its loved one to look his best; like a mother's last moment poking, pulling, arranging of a child's clothes before entering the old homestead with its eagle-eyed inspection. Obviously, this sacrament has none of the desperate necessity we find in Baptism or Penance. It is not a resurrection or a surgical operation, but a moment of refreshment. After all, we can get home without a Pullman porter; a child can visit the old folks with its hair a little awry, its clothes a little wrinkled. The sacrament of Extreme Unction is not absolutely necessary for salvation.

As a matter of fact, the simile of a mother and her last-minute arrangement of a child's clothing is a quite accurate picture of the primary effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction. It is not primarily ordered to reconciliation of a rebel with God nor to the resurrection of a man from the dead; it is to remove the slightest smudge from the face of a man's soul, to assure his mother, the Church, that the garments of his soul are spotless, that his robes hang just right, most becomingly. Mother Church is preparing to introduce her child to the ancestral mansion, the home of her forefathers, and she insists, lovingly, on her child looking its best.

Effects of the sacrament: Primary effect

The primary purpose of the sacrament, in other words, is not to forgive sin but to increase the beauty and vigor of the soul through an increase of habitual grace and the remission of the punishment due to sin. In a sense, this effect is common to all the sacraments of the living. The very special effect of this sacrament, its sacramental grace, is to strengthen the soul for the last momentous breaths of life, to destroy venial sin and the vestiges of sin, and, where such contributes to the spiritual welfare of the patient, even to give strength to his body.

Few Catholic families have not had a death-bed visit from the priest. To practically all Catholics, then, the ordinary procedure is quite familiar: the priest first hears the confession and gives absolution, then administers Holy Communion; finally, he gives Extreme Unction. This is not merely an arbitrary procedure; Extreme Unction is a sacrament of the living, meant for men in the state of grace, and it is the very last tidying up of the soul before its appearance in eternity.

Secondary effects

It happens, now and then, that a sacrament of the living enters the house of the dead by mistake. Confirmation and Holy Communion in this situation, coming upon mortal sin unexpectedly, are a little at loss. Certainly, they are not equipped to deal with this situation any more than a man in evening clothes is ready to handle the gangster who, to his complete astonishment, answered his ring at a friend's door. Both Holy Communion and Confirmation destroy this sin they have met, but accidentally, in a totally unpredicted fashion, as unusual as the daughter of thousands of enemies with the jawbone of an ass, or the choking of a man with a baby's rattle. Neither of these two was made for this kind of brawl; but they do well enough when forced into it. On the contrary, Extreme Unction is not caught unawares. Coming upon mortal sin in the soul of a dying man, it gets in its destructive blows, not accidentally or indirectly, but with the efficiency of a detective who carries his gun even when off duty. Extreme Unction has hidden

powers designed precisely for this; its purpose, you see, is to prepare a man to meet his God, to groom the soul of a man for entry into the kingdom of heaven however much grooming be necessary.

Its beauty and fittingness

In the light of all this, it is astonishing that so much abuse was heaped on this sacrament by the sixteenth century reformers and their successors. It almost seems as though their pride had blinded them to both the beauty of God and the capacity of the human soul for beauty. If the angels are not pure in the face of God's absolute perfection, man's last preparation obviously should be as complete and perfect as divine power itself can make it. If man is made to the image of God, adopted into the divine family, and shares the life and beauty of divinity, surely his last moments are precious for the fullest possible burnishing of the family likeness which is the passport to heaven.

What a time in the life of a man to ignore the help that was so necessary for every other step in his life! There is a kind of indecency about it; as though a captain were to desert soldiers who had fought behind him, not always so brilliantly, but constantly and loyally, or as though a mother were to abandon a child in its loneliest, most helpless moment. This is hardly the way of men worthy of the name; it is certainly not the way of God.

As the advertisements warn us on all sides, we might pick up a germ in the course of our ordinary day's work; so far, the common sense of men has kept them from encasing themselves in rubber or cellophane to escape contamination. A man might die while eating his breakfast; but that is no reason for every man demanding Extreme Unction every morning as a dyspeptic calls for his glass of hot water. This sacrament is for those who are about to enter the kingdom of heaven through the ordinary portals of sickness and death; it is for the sick, for those in danger of death from sickness or from that natural infirmity which is old age. It is not for a soldier going into battle in full possession of his strength; nor for the criminal stepping into the electric chair; not even for the mother on her way to the delivery room.

Its subjects: In general

Since it exists for a last minute beautification of the soul, this sacrament has no place in souls who need no such last minute attention; souls, for example, like Our Lady's, infants', the insane who have never been capable of sin. Briefly, it is for the spiritually and physically sick. It is the work of a physician; it is those who are sick who need the physician, and they need him as often, at least, as the sickness takes a fatal turn. Consequently, Extreme Unction can be, and is, repeated again and again, not in the same danger of death, but when a notable improvement gives hope of recovery, and then the patient buffers a relapse. It is extremely important to remember that the effects of the sacrament endure as long as the danger for which it was given; by it, we are dressed for divine company, there is no danger of our becoming dishevelled while we wait for the door to open.

In particular

The anointing of Extreme Unction is made in the form of a cross: first on the forehead, and this suffices in case of necessity; then on each of the senses by which the enemies of the soul's beauty might have made an entrance or through which the soul might have passed to keep a rendezvous with sin. Every corner is carefully swept, dusted, polished, that there might not be the slightest disorder in the house of our soul when we throw open its doors for divine inspection. It makes no difference that this particular dying man can no longer smell, or taste, or touch; indeed, it makes no difference if he never had this or that particular sense, the anointing is nevertheless made on the organ of that sense, or as near to it as possible. For even men blind from birth can commit sins of sight; the soul can use these paths to the world, even though they be barred to the entrance of the world into the soul.

It was pointed out, earlier in this chapter, that Extreme Unction is not as indispensably necessary as Baptism. As a consequence, it has not the same universal material nor the same universal minister; only olive oil which has been blessed by the bishop can be used in this sacrament, and it can be administered

only by the ordinary minister of all the sacraments, the priest.

The minister of Extreme Unction

It is time to inquire more closely into the making of these divine physicians. We have been talking, off and on, for most of this volume about the priesthood, for the subject matter of this book has been the life of Christ and its continuation in the sacramental life of the Church. It is impossible to talk about either without covering a great deal of the activity of the priesthood; priests, after all, are other Christs existing to administer the sacraments and offer sacrifice.

Divine physicians: Consecration of the priesthood: The sacrament of Holy Orders

There is more immediate reason now for this special treatment of the priesthood, for we have finished with the five sacraments which minister to the individual life of a son of the Church, the personal sacraments. It is now a question of the social sacraments, those by which the community is cared for: first, the spiritual care and rule of the community through the sacrament of Holy Orders; then, its perpetuation by the sacrament of Matrimony. We might say that this sacrament of Holy Orders completes the image of God in the supernatural world of men's souls. He appears not only as He is in Himself through the participation of His life by grace, but also as the Agent, the Mover, the Cause of goodness in others. That is the distinctive mark of Holy Orders; it is primarily and principally a conferring of the power to fulfill the offices of another Christ, to give to others the sacrifice and sacraments by which they live.

Its institution and essence

This sacrament is a sensible sign of sanctification; by it the priest is sanctified to divine service, consecrated to the work of Christ. As do all the sacraments, it produces what it signifies. It was instituted by Christ, partly at the Last Supper, when He said: "Do this in commemoration of me"; and partly after the resurrection, when He said: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." The sacramental life of a man moves to this sacrament as to a sweeping climax, from his first right to receive the sacraments by Baptism, through Confirmation's strengthening, the Eucharist's nourishing, and Penance's correction to this active power to bring to others the wonders he has himself received. Like all the sacramental signs, this is a perfect sign. Its matter's signification is clarified, brought to the perfection of signification, by the words of the form. In a general way, because there is much discussion about it, it can be said that the proximate matter of the sacrament is the giving of the instruments of the priesthood and the imposition of the hands of the bishop; the form is made up of the words of the bishop as he does these things.

Its minister

Ordination is a solemn, impressive ceremony; it proceeds slowly, with the masterly precision of the erection of a medieval cathedral. For this a master craftsman is necessary. Short of papal delegation, only a bishop and always a bishop can confer this sacrament; he has the fullness of the priesthood, he is the successor of the apostles, to him it belongs to share that fullness as to God it belongs to share His divine fullness in creating the world. Slowly, stone by stone, the edifice of the priesthood goes up; there is plenty of time for the workers to give up the work and leave, but also plenty of time for them to concentrate on each detail all the strength, grace, and solidity demanded of an eternal structure.

Surely, this is the longest, the most solemn, and the most impressive of all the sacramental ceremonies; itself an indication of its importance to both people and Church. At the same time, the ceremony is a compressed story of the long, slow, beautiful, patient preparation of the preceding years. The thirty quiet years of Nazareth were much more than a symbol; they were an example, even a precept for other Christs. The priest's work is not work for a child but for a man, and for more than a man; he is not building for a day or a year, but forever. Each stone is carefully selected, put in place with laborious exactitude. This community is enduring, and the sacraments that serve it are not passing gestures; what Christ will not

abandon, being with it all days even unto the consummation of the world, neither must men abandon.

The dignity of the priesthood: Effects of the sacrament

Holy Orders, as a sacrament of the living, floods the soul with yet more sanctifying grace. It deepens the participation of divine life in him who is to bring that life to others, so that in the priest even so personal a thing as sanctifying grace has an apostolic flavor. For, bringing the priest closer to God, it enables him to lead those he serves to the same and even greater intimacy; giving him more life, it enables him to bring forth a sturdier spiritual progeny.

The special grace of Holy Orders comes to the priest as a million dollar legacy to a pauper; he hardly knows what to do with it. No wonder he is overwhelmed by it; it is a mass of gilt-edged credit that would astonish even the angels. It is a title to all the actual graces a man needs to carry on the work of Christ Himself: to heal the sick, raise the dead, preach the gospel to the poor, cleanse the lepers, make the blind see, and the lame walk; even to go through the agony of Gethsemane and, with somewhat fearful willingness, to lay down his life for a friend. For this, a man needs so much help that only an infinitely rich God could advance him the credit.

Ambassador of God

With sanctifying and sacramental grace, there also comes the character of the priesthood. It is a mark on the soul of a man not to be eradicated by a decree of any state, by any force of arms, indeed, even by the perversity of the will of the priest himself. He is a priest forever; even in heaven, even in hell. By it, his life is stamped with a purpose, he is a divine emissary, commissioned with the same commission as the Son of God Himself: to bring to men the things of God, to scatter these gifts with a royal hand, munificently, unstintingly, as though the treasury were inexhaustible. Freely he has received; freely must he give.

What things of God ? What does he give so freely ? What is it that men need so desperately ? A few years ago, these questions might have been asked with a cynical smile as men looked at their bursting barns, humming factories, and peaceful lands, refusing to look beneath the surface to the souls of men. Today it is more than evident that men need truth: the truth of life, an intimate knowledge of the life of God and a deep knowledge of the meaning of the life of man; the science of living, the secret of successful living, the key to the significance of the universe. Man needs the truth that will free him from the chains of the universe and allow him to wander in the courtyards of God. This is the truth the priest brings.

But truth alone would be as barren a gift as a road map given to a man without a car. Hell is full of men who knew better. Besides truth, man needs help, divine help, constant, penetrating help. It is not easy for a man to live a man's life; how then can he be expected to live God's life among his fellows? Yet, this is the more abundant life that Christ came to give to men. It is the one life which a man must live to escape the awful crash of eternal failure. Help? Indeed, man does need help. Clearly, it is not a light load of gifts that the priest carries; nor does the load ever lighten, the gifts grow less, the importunity of giving ever diminish.

He is a divine plenipotentiary who need not give a reckoning of what he has dispensed but rather of what he has failed to dispense; for it is not generosity but niggardliness which will merit him a contemptuous dismissal. He will not be asked if he had enough rest, plenty of nourishing food, if he enjoyed good health and pleasant recreation; no one cares whether he has these things or not, least of all God. As if to show His contempt for just such things, He visited their opposites upon His favorites again and again: Thomas could not finish the work given him to do, even with his genius and giant strength; Dominic's life is a round of night-long vigils, extreme mortification, and day-long labors showing little results; there was the incredible endurance of the Curé of Ars, practically unsupported by substantial food or rest, and so on and on down the ages. After all, the Master of them all had not so much as time to eat nor whereon to lay His head, He was born in a cave and died naked on a cross; His own question was: "Shall the servant be greater than the Master?"

There is another side of the picture, a distinctly human side which is yet thoroughly divine. To an outsider, a priest seems to be terribly alone. To Catholics, it is comfortingly clear that he is never alone. From the moment that indelible stamp is put on his soul marking him as one of those gathered around the table of the Mass, he is no longer merely a private person. Indeed, he is a whole spiritual community. His acts are no longer private but common, community things; he is the spiritual leader acting in the name of all and for all. What is originally true of the successor of Peter -- where Peter goes, there goes the Church -- is true in a real sense of the priest.

Just as his prayers in the Mass, in Penance, in Baptism, and all the rest have their efficacy not from him but from God, so they have the people, not himself, for their object. He is the ambassador of men as well as the ambassador of God; in his step can be heard the rumble of millions of feet in perfect unison with him. Where he goes, the whole Mystical Body of Christ goes along with him: into a narrow confessional box, into the quietly final atmosphere of a sick room, to an altar set up in a desert bristling with armies, to the deck of a ship buckling under a hail of bombs. His hand raised in blessing does not merely reach to the walls of his church, but to the walls of the world, and beyond.

Ambassador of men

He is an ambassador of men, a plenipotentiary of the human family. What does he bring to God? Well, the gifts of men never exceed that first gift of swaddling clothes; but often enough, men can be found to give all they have. The priest's arms are piled high, as he approaches the divine throne, with sacrifice, prayer, penance, high courage, generous, unconditional love; miserable mistakes with their redeeming tag of determination to start the fight all over again. All these are freely given him by men, freely put into his hands; freely is he to give. There will be no account demanded of what he has thrown at the feet of God; but rather, of what he has failed to bring to the Master.

Subjects of the sacrament: Its limitation in general

Christ Himself died young; and he insisted that His followers at least stay young, drink so deeply of the fountain of youth as to become little children. To the divine mind, it must have been clear that only the very young and very foolish could ever undertake to live His life; for of course, it is an impossible task. It simply cannot be done except by God; only on that basis can even the romantic daring of youthful love approach it in answer to the beckoning finger of God. With the assurance of that divine call, the young man, on his part, brings sufficient science, sufficient health, the right intention, and sufficient virtue; with these, the youth sets off, almost whistling on the long, long road.

There has been some wonder, in the world outside the Church, that Catholic women have not resented their exclusion from Holy Orders. Some of the modern champions of masculine femininity have even been moved to pity. Why is it that men have all the positions of power in the Church? Why is it that only men can be priests and do the work of priests? Why should men be in all the positions of preference? The question could have been asked much more nobly, and fairly, if it were: why should men be put in the positions of danger?

At any rate, the facts are not a proof of God's greater love for men, or of men's superiority over women in getting things done. It is not a bit of divine anti-feminism. It is simply a question of order. Someone must be at the head of any enterprise engaged in by more than one human being, just as among the powers of a man's soul, one must be in supreme command. Obviously, that position of command had to be given either to a woman or a man, there was no other choice; the ordination of God fell upon the man. Man and woman both have their part to do when they are set apart for the work of God, the priest and the consecrated virgin. Why aren't priests teaching kindergarten, disciplinarians in girls' colleges, or caring for the sick in hospitals? To pursue the questions, why did a man hang on the cross while a woman stood underneath, which was the easier part? Why did Mary, who was obviously superior, mother the infant Church instead of preaching the Gospel and working miracles as Peter and John did? After all, she had

not fallen asleep in the Garden, or denied Him to escape the criticism of men. In actual fact, the Catholic woman needs no pity; probably no one is more grateful than she that it is a priest, not a priestess, that she must approach in the crises of her life.

Qualifications of the subjects

It needs no argument, in view of what we have seen of the priesthood, to prove that this is not a sacrament for children. Nor can it be given to the half-witted, or to infidels. Its proper subject is a baptized man of normal intelligence. The laws of today demand that he have completed his twenty-fourth year, have sufficient knowledge for his office, and some title to the support of that office -- or else the complete contempt of any support which is the official "title of poverty" on which religious priests are ordained.

Impediments to the sacrament

The list of possible impediments to the sacrament of Holy Orders is so long, forbidding, and complex that one might wonder how anyone ever does get ordained. However, the candidate for the priesthood need have no worry about any one of these being overlooked when he presents himself. Little of this is left to chance, for the obligation weighs heavy on those who advance a man to the priesthood; lest there be any doubt, the obligation is finally placed squarely on the bishop who administers the sacrament. For this chapter, it will be sufficient to take advantage of Thomas' gifts for compression and analysis.

He divides these impediments into two classes those that might impede a man's performance of the duties of a priest, such as blindness or deafness; and those which detract from what Thomas calls the transparent beauty of the personality of the priesthood. Thomas, you see, besides being a highly speculative thinker, had a keen eye for the practical. The priest is to stand before both God and the people. For the first, eminent sanctity, or at least a state of grace, might be enough. But this is not enough if the priest is to serve the people; what impedes his service of them, destroys his usefulness to them. If he stands before them, not in divine dignity, but rather as a clown, an ogre, or a sloven his very practice gives the people reason for mirth, horror, or disgust, impeding the very things he exists to promote in the people.

It is for them he exists. He must be prepared to go to them in all circumstances, as Christ did. Above all, he must be one to whom all men will come as they did to Christ. The arms of Christ were stretched wide indeed, as wide as the world, as wide as all the conditions in which men of the world can be found; the arms of His Church are no less wide in their embrace. There were no castaways from Christ, only fugitives from the Hound of Heaven. In fact, Christ's attachment to the castaways of the world was an outstanding characteristic of His life. It was to them that He gave the most hearty welcome: the ugly, as ugly as men eaten with leprosy or possessed by demons; the poor; the lonely; the sinners; the sick; the dying -- all found their way to the feet of Christ and were welcomed there. This welcome was not by a mere gesture of pity, for these people rarely welcome pity's slightly superior air; rather, it was by divine help and divine love

Conclusion. The welcome of Christ and His Church: the fact

Among men, there are many grounds of welcome: beauty, power, position, wealth, health, strength, sociability, and so on. None of these was the grounds for Christ's welcome to His castaways. Rather they were welcomed on the grounds of their humanity; because they were men, and so capable of joining the family of Christ and becoming heirs of heaven. There is a sharp contrast in this to the world of our time. Our tendency is to insist on the annihilation either of the sinner or the fact of sin; the poor and sick should be hidden away; the lonely abandoned; the dying avoided in a shuddering escape from the thought of the bitter exile of those last moments. It is not that man is less human in his sin, poverty, sickness, loneliness, or death; rather, the difficulty is that we are not interested in man's humanity.

Contrast of fact with modern world

If the original rejection of Christ by men had actually been effective, if His tomb had remained sealed, all

of this welcome to men as men would have been over with. The same would be true if the continuation of the life of Christ should be broken, if the rejection of the Church and her priesthood by men should ever be efficacious. In the purely human order, the rejection of the officers of an army and the officials of a state turns men from a community into a horde; that is no less true in the spiritual order. Such a rejection would be a kind of vivisection of the Mystical Body of Christ; it would be a wholesale destruction, at one and the same time, of the teachers, the doctors, the judges, and the diplomatic corps of the spiritual community that flows from the life of Christ. It would, indeed, be literally shooting the supernatural Santa Claus precisely at Christmas time.

World without Christ -- a priestless world: The fact and its consequences

The fact is that the world rejected Christ and crucified Him. In the last three hundred years, we have seen a gradually extending rejection of priests and the Church. What is the reason for this modern enmity? We are taking a superficial view of it if we think this enmity is explicable on the grounds of the human failings, or even the crimes, of priests. Christ had none of these failings, no one could convince Him of sin; yet He, too, was rejected. These things are merely the occasion, as was the conviction of Christ out of His own mouth by the high priest. Where the occasions are real, the guilty priests will indeed have questions to answer when they return to their Master. But the real reason for the death of Christ was the work of Christ; that is always the real reason for the rejection of priests. Truth is hated by liars; help is detested by the proud; the spiritual is mocked by the material; mastery by license; divine life by animality; light by darkness.

Reason for the fact

Every age faces the same paradox. Christ did all things well. He came to give life more abundantly, He died for the remission of sin. He came bearing the divine gifts of truth and help. And men shouted: "Crucify Him." Why? Because it is hard to be a man; much harder to be a Christian man. It is easier to snuff out the reminders of man's possibilities and obligations, to let the easy process of disintegration go its corrupting way.

A lonely world

Lying on his deathbed, a man faces his bitterest, most lonely, most helpless moments -- if there be no other Christ there. Against him are hurled the assaults of Satan making the most of his last chance; the memories of sin and of discouraging failure are there; and the terror of the unknown which no human hand or agency can help. The world without Christ is a dying world; literally alone, lonely, helpless, facing those same enemies, the ghastly unknown, and nothing that nature offers can be of any help. Even the sincere friends of the world who do not know Christ can only sit and watch its agony; for this is the place for the divine physician, and for him alone.

[Back](#)[A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV](#)[Next](#)

CHAPTER XVIII -- THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOME (Suppl Q. 41-68)

1. The foundation of the home -- a contract:
 - (a) Justice, a guarantee and a promise.
 - (b) The solidity of the foundation.
 - (c) Its relation to others:
 - (1) Within the home.
 - (2) Outside the home.
 2. Matrimony and nature:
 - (a) Its nature.
 - (b) Its origins.
 3. The consecration of the home:
 - (a) The sacrament of matrimony:
 - (1) Its existence.
 - (2) Its essence: matter and form.
 - (3) Its minister.
 - (4) Its subject.
 - (b) The goods of matrimony.
 - (1) Relative to its act:
 - a. Progeny.
 - b. Fidelity.
 - (2) Relative to its essence: sacramental signification.
 - (c) Its properties: unity and indissolubility.
 - (d) Its obligations.
 4. The modern Cana:
 - (a) Preparation: espousals and banns.
 - (b) Form of celebration.
 5. Enemies and the defense of the consecration of the home: impediments and validation.
- Conclusion:
1. Desecration of the home:
 - (a) Of its unity.
 - (b) Of its indissolubility.
 2. The humanity of home.
 3. The holiness of home.

CHAPTER XVIII -- THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOME (Suppl, Q. 41-68)

IN AN older generation, it was the custom in Ireland for all marriage arrangements to be made by the parents. The boy and girl might know one another casually, or they might never have seen one another until the very wedding day; but everything had been settled by their respective parents. To us, this seems strange, even incredible; like surrounding a kiss with the economic assurances of a bank account. Yet, it had its roots far back in the Christian tradition; it was not an uncommon practice through the Christian ages and received no little publicity in the marriages of royalty in the Middle Ages.

Before condemning this custom out of hand, it might be well to examine our own conscience. Certainly, there are some current methods of arranging marriage that are bitterly cruel, for all the pleasant smiles they wear as they dole out misery. Leaving aside, for the moment, such things as "gin marriages," and those fantastic stunt marriages in airplanes, sideshows, carnivals, on the stages of theatres, and so on, there is yet the decidedly common custom of setting about laying the foundations of a home in the thick fog of passion. As soon as the first breezes of reason hit the fog, those within the home can appreciate the absurdity of the location chosen; though it was apparent from the beginning to observers who knew the territory.

Another not uncommon method might be called the marriage created by parental disapproval. Mother or father, especially mother, has never given a thought to the selection of a partner for her child, having fondly cherished the illusion that her child was "just a baby" and would remain so until it tottered into the grave. In actual fact, the child reaches maturity and makes a tentative selection of its own. Immediately, there is an outburst of parental wrath which is part envy, part selfishness, part outraged pride, with,

perhaps, a little love mixed in. The violence of the storm crushes the romance, the suitor is banished forever, and another candidate is hurriedly rushed on the scene; it may even be that a series of such banishments eventually makes marriage an impossibility, thus completing the perversion of a child forced back into its mother's womb, its life absorbed by its parents.

All these modern methods are, obviously, quite different from the older Christian arrangement by the parents. The older method was pursued slowly, deliberately, with painstaking investigations on both sides; it was considered a normal part of parental duty in assuring the welfare of a child for all of a lifetime. It was the usual thing in the days of St. Thomas; yet, Thomas points out that father or mother cannot force the consent of a child to marriage, since marriage is a perpetual, though lovely, slavery. However, to us of the twentieth century, this mode of procedure is cold, a thing of hard, solid reason; as indeed it is. It is distasteful to us, not so much because it does not take love into consideration -- for neither did it exclude love -- but precisely because of its coldly rational procedure. It seems to strip all the mystery, the glamor, the appeal from this newborn domestic life.

But why must this most important act of man be dissociated from reason? In all other human fields, from sports to statesmanship, we label acts dissociated from reason as insane; for they have all the essential ingredients of lunacy. As a matter of fact, it is that rational consideration that is the principal defense and recommendation of the older method; its condemnation lies in its abuse, in the flagrant violation of justice to be found where parents, under the guise of love, violated the rights of children by forcing their consent. Where parental love was worthy of its name, fully respecting the rights of others, the mother and father were building for a long time and insisted on building well; they were mapping out a journey of a lifetime and they prudently looked over the length of the road.

The foundation of the home -- a contract: Justice, a guarantee and a promise

After all, a home established by marriage is built on the solid rock of a contract. Before a single bride can be laid, the concrete of justice must be well set; for it is only on the team of justice, a solid objective thing, that homes can be built. This is the minimum, no substitute can be found for it; from the beginning this has been the fundamental material and time has not changed either the nature of man or the nature of matrimony. Yet, to modern ears, justice has a clammy, fearsome sound; it calls up pictures of grim judges, heavily armed police, secret agents, and electric chairs. This man and woman are not robbing a bank, starting a civil war, or setting out for a jail; they are only getting married. This is a matter of love, not of justice. It is, indeed, a matter of love; precisely because of that, it is at least a matter of justice. For justice is not an exclusion of love but its safeguard and solemn promise.

The solidity of the foundation

This man and woman are entering a union which they themselves, their future children, and society insist shall be permanent; yet permanency is hardly guaranteed by the dispositions of man or woman, changing as they are from hour to hour and day to day. It is not to be left to the mercy of a passing inclination, a fickle fortune, the blindness of passion; it must rest on objective, tangible, unmistakable rights, a basis established by the deliberate will of man and so one that is easily and accurately judged by other men. That basis is capable of defense, for it is solid enough to have a fortress built upon it; it is a solemn contract.

Its relation to others: Within the home

What, then, of love? This man and woman are entering a common life, a common home, to work to a common end; not the life, home, and end of the husband, not the life, home, and end of the wife, but rather, the life, home, and end of this married couple. These two are no longer two, but one. They are made one by a justice that is so intimate as to destroy the proper object of justice and metamorphose itself into a kind of love immediately. There can be no strict justice within a family because there is no "other" to be dealt with; all are part of one another, they are treated by other members of the family as one treats oneself, lovingly. There is much more than loyalty in a very small brother's rush to aid his beleaguered

older brother with any weapon at hand, sticks, stones, or even his own puny fists. It is a spontaneous declaration of the profound truth that an attack on any member of a family is an attack on all of the family, for this domestic union is so close that "otherness," to a great extent, ceases to exist.

Such a union of man and woman must be preceded or followed by love if the contract is observed. Christ Himself made justice the minimum of love when He said: "If you love me, keep my commandments," for the commandments are the minimum of love for God and are all commands of justice. Indeed, justice, of its very nature, includes a regard for others in demanding respect for their rights; to have less than this and yet speak of love is bitter mockery. Once the contract is sealed, every other gesture in marriage is a declaration of love, of union, of surrender, and consecration. In each of the parties to this contract, there is the spark of divinity that makes a man or a woman a worthy object even of divine love; justice is a strong light for weak eyes which have such difficulties finding goodness to love. By that strong light, and the constant intimacy established by the contract of marriage, love is practically guaranteed. If love does precede marriage, as we practically demand today, then justice guarantees its permanence and its growth. Love is not killed by justice but by injustice and selfishness; justice's demand for intimacy, and its constant opportunities for sacrifice are immediate helps to the full, flourishing growth of love. A love which cannot develop under such circumstances, which complains of being stifled by the demands of justice, is not love at all.

The point cannot be pressed too much today that justice is at the bottom of family life. Regard for others, not for self, is the basis on which a family life is built; and on that basis alone. The regard for others goes far beyond the walls of a home. The open house at Cana, the wedding festivals of our own day, are really symbols telling us that this is not merely a private affair. It is someone else's business, in fact, everyone else's business; it is a public affair and a matter of public interest.

Outside the home

It is fairly evident that society has some interest in marriage. At least, there must be some reason for the space devoted to marriages in gossip columns, society pages, and rotogravure sections; and divorce gets no less attention. Clearly the fact that someone is about to be married, that a marriage has just been destroyed, is considered news by every editor in the land. Society is interested, with an interest not unlike that of brothers, sisters, and parents. The whole community is interested in marriage, for by it a new part of itself has come into being. This is a new unit of the state, another stone bolstering its foundation; of course everyone living in the house of the state is interested. Indeed, the weakness or strength of that stone is the weakness or strength of the whole building.

When marriage becomes a strictly private affair, a fatal disease has set in. When there is in marriage no regard for the state and when the state has none for marriage, then both the family and the state are disintegrating; for domestic life is a feeble flicker without the protection of the state, and the state is non-existent without its family units. A state that tolerates, or positively encourages, a weakening or perversion of marriage is signing its own death warrant; there will be no lack of executioners to carry out the sentence.

From the point of view of that much bigger family of Christ, the supernatural view, there is an even greater and more widespread interest in these nuptials. From this ground will spring plants which will never die; here will come into existence the infants of eternity. We cannot quite picture a celestial charivari, but certainly there is something of an equivalent interest, a boisterous well-wishing, and a demand for an appreciation of this heavenly interest in this family affair. The supernatural mother insists on being there, the Head of the family, and as many others as can squeeze in; and, when it is a matter of saints and angels, not very much space is required.

Matrimony and nature: Its nature

Even theologians, long misjudged as heartlessly rational, have taken this sacrament to their hearts. They

have given it the kind of scrutiny that makes love the severest, though the kindest, of judges, a close, searching, penetrating glance. The very name has been rolled about on the tongue of theologians as a child might savor a last, precious bit of candy. They have seen in the Latin name, *conjugium*, from which we take our adjective "conjugal," a statement of the essence of matrimony; that is, a binding together as with enduring bonds, a declaration of that joyous surrender which is also a conquest. From now on, both parties to the contract carry a common yoke that is light and sweet by its very heaviness and bitterness in crucial times. The word "espousal" shows this union as a solemn thing scaled by deliberate will, a holy promise thus emphasizing, in a one-word description, the efficient cause of this union. While "nuptials," describing the actual accomplishment of the promise, draws a picture of grace and delicacy, a bridal veil thrown over the common life of these two, half-hiding the beauty that from now on has found a little world of its own into which it retires and which it illumines.

What we have come to consider the most commonplace term for this union, the word "matrimony," is really one of its most beautiful names. If its roots be *matris munera*, it emphasizes the offices and duties of a mother; she is, after all, the bearer and chief educator of the child, and these are the primary ends of marriage. What is more fitting a confession of her great part in this supreme human act than to name it after her by calling it matrimony? The word may be derived from *matrem muniens*, thereby insisting on woman's part and man's protection. She is to be a mother, with the man offering full protection to her and her child. The word may come from *matrem monens*, thereby stressing the assurance to this mother that she has arrived at a secure haven, the anchor of her life can now be let down; here is her permanent protector whom she must not leave whatever the attractions offered by another. In all its possible derivations, it is noteworthy that the word stresses motherhood.

It is not at all strange that we should try desperately to crowd the beauty of this thing into one word; men have persistently made just such attempts, as though, somehow, we could keep that beauty very handy, even slide it into our pockets, if we could squeeze it into so small a thing as one word. Of course, such attempts always fail, for words are too fragile and small to carry the heavy cargo of the mind and the heart. Because this is particularly true of one solitary word, we try to define marriage in many words. First of all, it is a union, a conjunction of the lives of a man and woman who are free to marry, a union ordered to a common marital life.

It is this last element, common marital life, whose penetration opens up the fuller signification of marriage. We say something of it clumsily when, in legal language, we speak of a community of bed and board to indicate something of the width to which the doors of our hearts are thrown open. But we say much more, and say it more accurately, when we insist it is a union of the soul through justice, love, and a striving to a common end. With that much said, there seems little room left for quibbling over a division of temporal goods; for this would be like deeding over a house and insisting on retaining ownership of the number over its door. Even this detailed statement will not give us a clear notion of matrimony unless we keep in mind its essential character of a contract. It is not primarily something in the physical but in the rational order. Actual marital intercourse is not of the essence of matrimony, for, after all, Mary was truly married to Joseph; the very essence of this thing consists precisely in that act of deliberate will by which each party surrenders rights in view of the ends of marriage.

In the language of the theologians, the essence of marriage, in the process of its accomplishment (*in fieri*), consists in the mutual consent. The completed essence (*in facto esse*) is the solemn marriage bond that results from that deliberate consent. The material object of the consent is, of course, the persons of the contracting parties; the consent is a formal surrender of rights over their own bodies, always with relation to the end of marriage. But the formal object of the contract, what sets marriage off from any other contract, is precisely the common life, the unity to which these people dedicate their persons. This is the essence, not only of Christian marriage, but of any and every marriage from the beginning of time.

Its origins

For marriage, you know, has had a long history. It was instituted in the garden of Eden and would have

flourished had men never sinned at all. It has gone on without interruption ever since. Apparently, there is no depression to be feared in this matter in the near future. It is definitely and completely tied up with the nature of men, and men can be depended on to marry. Not that marriage is natural to an adult as teething is to an infant. It is not even natural in the sense of something to which our nature causally exposes us, as measles or chicken pox; nor in the sense of the ability to walk or talk, a thing that merely needs a little time and practice. While marriage has its roots in nature, namely, in the incompleteness of man or woman alone, in the limitations of our physical life and the consequent need of perpetuating society, still it is not something that happens to a man or woman; they must bring it on themselves.

Nature demands it for the good of the child and the mutual helpfulness of man and woman, but it is accomplished through our free will. Man is moved to this end, not physically but morally; it is a matter of precept, not a surge of the unconscious, a drive of appetites, an activity of reflexes. As a matter of fact, the precept is not universal in the sense of falling on each individual of the race; rather it is a command to the race as a whole. Not every man has to marry; a man does not have to marry the first woman he meets, nor the fifth, nor the fiftieth. Yet someone has to marry, and has to marry this man or this woman.

Post-revolutionary France was greatly worried about this precept, so much so, in fact, that it was decided the religious Orders had to be suppressed. The members of these Orders were not doing their duty by the race, being constrained by their vow of chastity; and they should be made to do it. Strangely enough, there has been much more reason for the worry of the race since that suppression than ever before it. As a matter of fact, there is never need for worry that there will not be enough men and women free to marry, indeed, even eager to marry; there will be plenty to care adequately for the human race if the marriage contract be lived up to and justice be observed.

Earlier heretics had worried, not that men would not marry, but that they would. To them, marriage and its acts were evil and sins. This was the slimy heresy of the Manichaens, pitted with hypocrisy, which turned in alleged disgust from the material world as the product of a principle of evil. It is no wonder that the men of the West tramped upon this thing; it is no wonder that Dominicans are particularly proud that Dominic had such a part in its extermination. For the truth of the matter is that the world is a mirror of the beauty of God; marriage is not something to be sustained, tolerated, or grudgingly consented to with a sense of unworthiness; it is a matter of divine command. Once marriage is entered into, it is a matter of justice besides being the highest physical expression of man's highest acts; it is not sinful but virtuous, not degrading but ennobling, not unworthy of man but rather the prerogative of man alone.

Marriage existed before sin came into the world; it exists after sin, not as a product of evil, but as a remedy against and a means to holiness. It has been furthered by every civil law worthy of the name as a means of widening the circle of friendships, tying family to family, offering mutual help to citizens and a solid foundation to the state. By Christ Himself, it was given the sublime task of representing before the world His own mystic union to the Church.

The consecration of the home: The sacrament of matrimony: Its existence

There is nothing evil in the essence of this contract; nothing evil in the smallest detail of its execution. This is true of matrimony from the very nature of marriage, with all the sanction of nature itself; it is true of all marriages, wherever and whenever contracted throughout the history of the world. It came directly from the hands of God with the nature of man; from the beginning it had something of the divine about it. When God sent His only Son that men might have life more abundantly, it was inevitable that greater fullness, holiness, greater union would be given to this climax of that heroic thing which is human love. But only God could have thought of making it a sacrament; a source of divine as well as of human life. It is of faith that God did this very thing. This is the last of the sensible signs instituted by Christ to signify and cause sanctifying grace, to signify and produce a participation in the life of God within the very essence of the soul of a man and his wife.

It is significant that this increase in divine life should come to each only through the united action of both, that is, through the establishment of the contract. It is not surprising that with this participation of divine life for each should come the special effect of the sacrament for both, the sacramental grace destined for the perfection of the common life to which they have committed all their days.

The common effect of all the sacraments is astonishing enough, God knows, for it is the life of God. The special effects of the Eucharist, positive acts of love with an infallible increase in divine friendship and a title to glory, have a fair share of the marvellous; the special effects of Extreme Unction, last minute preparation for immediate entry into heaven, staggers our imagination. But the special effects, the sacramental grace, of Matrimony are so thoroughly human yet so divinely generous that they both tear at our hearts and are too much for our petty minds. With this sacrament, a man and his wife receive title to all the graces necessary for the long years of married life. That means the graces necessary to meet the difficulties, disappointments, disillusiones, sicknesses, triumphs and successes of married life; all the petty, mean things that can spring from human contact, and all the grand, magnanimous splendors that can be awakened in a human heart; all the sickeningly immanent dangers that threaten love and life -- and all this not for a day, not for a month, not for a year. This is not just a possibility; it is an infallible title to all the help necessary for all the length of a lifetime.

This sacramental grace of the sacrament of Matrimony is the answer to the moderns' ignoble caution in marriage. Man's capacity for sacramental marriage is a God-given faculty for a God-given life; God does not give a faculty without the help necessary for its use. If a man looks only to all the unforeseeable difficulties of the common life of the home, the responsibilities of the children, the limited courage and strength of man or woman, he has reason enough for fear; but he has seen only a small part of the picture when he has omitted the constant and infallible help of God which is an integral part of the sacrament of Matrimony.

In a sense, marriage was consecrated from the very beginning, for marriage was a holy thing from nature itself. When Christ and his disciples arrive at Cana, marriage received a special consecration. The Master, whose three years of public life were so crowded, did not take time out to come to the nuptials of Cana because He needed a little diversion, by way of giving a nod of approval, or the silence of approbation. He actively entered into the celebration; and the activity of divine love is never barren. The effect here was consecration and holiness.

This sacrament is the last of the channels of grace, the second of the social sacraments. In common with all the sacrament., it has the essential sacramental notes: it was instituted by Christ; it confers and signifies grace; it is made up essentially of matter and form; it is a sensible sign, and a perfect sign because it is a divine sign. There must, then, be something material about it, something perfected by the unmistakable meaning of the form.

Its essence: matter and form

The remote matter about which this sacrament revolves is the very persons of the contracting parties; the proximate matter is the signs or words by which each surrenders the rights over his own body, always in order to the end of marriage. The form is the mutual acceptance of these surrendered rights, an acceptance that must be exteriorly manifested. In other words, the sacrament of Matrimony was instituted by Christ in the form of a contract, as Penance was instituted in the form of a judgment. As the essence of Penance is in the essence of the judgment, so the essence of Matrimony is in the essence of the contract. The sacrament does not change the natural essence of matrimony as a contract, rather it preserves and supernaturalizes it. Natural matrimony is a contract; supernatural Matrimony, the sacrament, is not only a contract but also a sacrament.

Its minister

It is the one sacrament that a lay Catholic gives to himself. The priest assists at and blesses the marriage; he does not administer the sacrament. For the minister of any sacrament is the official instrumental cause

of the sensible sign, and here the sensible sign is the contract which is produced by the contracting parties themselves. Even in the administration of the sacrament, that joint action which is characteristic of married life is emphasized; it is not the woman, not the man, but the man and the woman who are the ministers of the sacrament of Matrimony.

Its subject

To receive the sacrament validly, a person must be baptized and be free to marry, that is, he must have the spiritual power which Baptism gives and must not be laboring under an impediment that makes the marriage contract impossible. This is a sacrament of the living; so it also presupposes sanctifying grace and freedom from all the impediments that, while not invalidating the sacrament, would still make it illicit. The Catholic couple, arranging a marriage, always think in terms of confession, Mass, and Holy Communion, for this is beauty's fullness in the very beginning of married life. Never will they get closer to each other than by both being united to the one body of Christ; never will their love reach higher levels than were reached on Calvary which is here being re-enacted; while from the very beginning, their love is raised to heights totally above the fondest hopes of nature.

It is hard to imagine a gloomier start to marriage than one made in mortal sin. A life of love is begun with a denial of divine love in the heart; a life of justice with injustice rankling in the soul; a life of union and sacrifice by rebellion and selfishness. It means that this married couple are starting married life entirely on their own, for this is a sacrament of the living; in mortal sin, they receive none of the helps for which Christ instituted the sacrament. However, God is kind; through His great kindness, this mistake is not utterly irremediable; when, later, the barrier of mortal sin is removed, all the graces of the sacrament hurry to do their part in bringing this common life to its fullest bloom. Though the Catholic in this state deserves it well, God will not leave him to work out the sublimities and difficulties of this common life by his own feeble strength. He has received the sacrament, though unworthily; he has cast aside the inestimable marriage gift of God. But God is a friend Who easily forgets insults; He is quick to return the gift which is so sorely needed.

Probably the stories of fumbling bridegrooms, who are so flushed, nervous, and confused that they forget the ring and kiss the priest by mistake, are probably very much exaggerated. Nevertheless there is something in the tradition that lets the bride off with a blush and puts all the awkwardness on the groom. Perhaps the difference lies in their perspectives. At this moment, the groom can hardly see beyond his bride and undoubtedly is somewhat lost in the romantic fog of the present. While the bride is more far-sighted, her eyes fixed on the vision of far things, leaving her clear-eyed and relatively calm in the face of this momentous present. These far things offer a splendid vision. Augustine and the theologians since his time have put them down in prosaic language that could not escape the faint scent of beauty by calling them the goods, or the compensations, of matrimony. The goods of matrimony more than make up for all the hard things inseparable from common marital life. They are curtly summarized, perhaps because we hate to trust sacred things to words, in three bare headings: the good of the child, the good of faith, and the good of the sacrament; but these words are no more than a shadow of the things that all of a lifetime will hardly reveal in their fullness.

The goods of matrimony. Relative to its act: Progeny

It is to be noticed that children come under the head of compensation, not of burdens. The child is the proximate end of the marriage. There are, of course, other ends, such as mutual love, protection against temptation, and mutual help; but this is the immediate purpose. At this time, it is the woman who looks forward most to a child as the final expression of love, an expression to be greeted much more joyously than the first distinct words of a baby after months of inarticulate gurgling. For the child is a perfect expression of love; here is a union that is an embodiment of the mother and father; a surrender, for here is a master of them both; a consecration, for here is one that lifts them both to heroic heights of sacrifice.

It is as though what had been so intangibly real before was to become incarnate, incarnate love. These

three, father, mother, and child, are rightly spoken of as a human trinity; the child is a human holy spirit, the living love of those from whom it proceeds. A realization of this makes plain the danger involved in planning a temporary exclusion of the birth of children at the very beginning of marriage, even though this be done by legitimate means; it is like keeping an infant from talking because we enjoy its gurgling. Baby talk is a precious thing, but to insist on its preservation indefinitely is an injustice to the child; so also is the insistence that our love be robbed of its mature perfection.

Let this love remain baby love and it becomes as helpless as an abandoned infant. Limit its expression to husband and wife, and its chance for growth, fullness is definitely cut down; its acts of love, of sacrifice, of consecration, and of surrender are automatically limited, thus cutting off the normal source of strength for love, while the couple's love is left open to the ruthless attacks of time, of hard reality, of pettiness, and all the cements of division inseparable from human communion. This couple has fallen badly behind in an armament race for the defense of love; there is much more possibility that their love can be bluffed from its legitimate possessions by the dictators of sense appetite. This love, which has been kept deliberately in an infantile state, is not merely a backward child; it is a perpetual infant, dribbling and gurgling after forty years in a high chair.

Of course love suffers from being kept perpetually in an infant's walking machine; it is never able to take its own full, free stride. But it suffers nothing like the damage done to it by birth prevention, by the perversion of love. For this not only limits and cripples love, tying it in a narrow infantile sphere, it destroys love's foundation of justice by a consecration to injustice. It fixes the eyes of both parties on themselves, sets them against each other in a perpetual duel of self-protection; whereas love, to exist at all, must be a consecration to another. This sort of thing is an offense to physical nature, particularly to the physical nature of woman, and it meets with a deep, irreconcilable protest, in spite of the woman herself, a protest that eventually expresses itself in physical revulsion and positive hate.

Fidelity

The second good, or compensation, of marriage, takes in much more than the fidelity that justice demands and without which love cannot endure. It includes that minimum; but it goes beyond it to a deep mutual confidence and trust, mellowing through the years, tying husband and wife closer and closer yet so unobtrusively that it is usually taken for granted. Perhaps only those who have lost it, only those who have come to the point of being unable to trust their partner any longer, fully realize how profoundly this absolute trust has permeated every corner of married life. Without it, every gesture becomes an occasion for doubt, for unpleasant worrying, and, ultimately, for disgust. This good of fidelity includes the act of marriage and so the fulfillment of the immediate obligations of marriage. In itself it is a denial of most of the sins that are open to married couples precisely as married. Indeed, both these goods, of the child and of faith, pertain to the act of marriage and may be called justice in action within the home. With them, the success of marriage is guaranteed, for justice is guaranteed; without them? Let us see.

Relative to its essence: sacramental signification

We have seen what the loss of the good of the child means for a marriage. The loss of faith makes the whole of married life an unbearable suspicion when it is not a positive lie. Sins against marital faith, then, are flatly sins of injustice; they are violations of the rights of others as contemptible as sneak-thievery and as tragic as murder. They are a betrayal of love, refusing even that minimum which love demands for life; and they are a stark revelation of the petty boundaries of a traitor's soul in his incapacity to make the effort to see beyond himself.

The only maturity these sins of faith hold out to marriage is a further growth in a lie; while for the accomplice of these sins, there is the doubtful joy of being wrapped in the luxury of a lie by a liar who is advertising the fact that he is lying by his very sins. This is not something to joke about, to smile off as one of the little misfortunes of married life, to connive at, agree to, or encourage. This is evidence of decadence in the most sacred precinct of human life; it is to be detested for the putrescently odious thing it

is.

Its properties: unity and indissolubility

The final compensation of matrimony, the good of the sacrament, goes beyond the act of marriage to its very essence. By it is meant the noble signification of Christ's union with the Church, the tremendous assistance of sacramental grace, and that indissoluble bond which is of the very essence of the consummated marriage. Nature itself demands stability in marriage, for there is always the child, with its nourishment and education to consider; but it is only from the consecration of Christ that marriage takes on that complete unity and indissolubility which gives ultimate perfection to human love. These two persons are now one, as Christ and His Church are one; their union is as indissoluble as that mystic union of Christ and the Church. It is only as indissoluble that matrimony can have this sacramental signification; it is only as indissoluble that it can be a worthy climax of love, for love that introduces the element of time and look to an end has ceased to be love by ceasing to be complete surrender.

Its obligations

The obligations of matrimony are clear enough from the goods of matrimony, for an attack on these goods is a violation of matrimony's obligations. There are, then, just three roads down which the enemies of the home may make their drive to its disruption and destruction: against the child, during pregnancy, at birth or after birth; against mutual justice, by denying love's minimum, notably in the performance or refusal of matrimony's act; against the indissoluble bond of union. To protect these roads, the barriers of matrimony's obligations have been thrown up.

The modern Cana: Preparation: espousals and banns

It cannot be stressed too often that marriage is not a private affair. Throughout the feast at Cana, the doors were thrown open, the humble house was thronged with guests, and, finally, the divine guest Himself arrived. A parallel of that invitation to the world and to God to the marriage celebration is had today in our espousals, or engagement, the publication of the banns of marriage, and the formal celebration under the protection of the Church. By these, the marriage becomes the business of everyone, not to the discomfiture of the bridal pair but to the protection of both of them.

The banns or espousals may be dispensed with for good reason; though, really, that dispensation is a misfortune for it frees the parties from a searching scrutiny of their past by the community memory. If there is nothing to hide, there is nothing to fear in these banns; but if there is something to hide, if one of the parties is really incapable of marriage, then there is something to fear, but not by the innocent party. Indeed, the innocent party is protected from going through a mockery of marriage that would make a ruin of life.

Form of celebration

The form of the marriage ceremony, demanding the presence of the pastor and two witnesses, is dispensed with only in the extreme case of the physical impossibility of their presence. This is a protection of the bond of marriage itself, the bond that is a representation of the tie between Christ and His Church. Under other circumstances, the contract might easily be denied to the detriment of the other party, society, and the children; a denial will not carry much weight, however, if it runs head on into the irrefragable testimony of the priest and two witnesses.

Enemies and the defense of the consecration of the home: impediments and validation

It is, of course, understandable that the young couple, eager to be off on their family life, should be impatient of everything that delays their entry into their own home. Their impatience should be considerably tempered if they realize that all the delays insisted upon by the Church are for the protection of this solemn union of marriage. All the questions the priest asks, all the investigations he makes into the

couple's freedom to marry, are no more than an insistence that this marriage be a true marriage. In the last chapter, we saw something of the tremendous protection thrown around the sacrament of Holy Orders: the qualifications of the candidate, the investigations demanded, the freedom from impediments insisted on. Holy Orders is a social sacrament and society is interested in, even dependent on its perfection. Matrimony is also a social sacrament and society is interested in, dependent on, its perfection.

The barrier of impediments from which the parties must be free is only an expression of society's interest in the perfection of this sacrament. It is quite impossible, in this chapter, to go into these impediments in any detail. There are five impediments that make the marriage illicit, though it remains valid; there are no fewer than fifteen that completely invalidate the sacrament, making the ceremony an empty fiction, a farce that has absolutely no uniting effect on the parties and gives them absolutely no marital rights.

If, in spite of all these defenses, actual damage is done to the marriage itself, the Church makes every effort to remedy this injury in the interests of the sacredness of matrimony. The Church proceeds against the possible or actual injury to matrimony by dispelling the impediments wherever this is possible. Perhaps it is by way of removal of the defects that prevent or interfere with the marriage; perhaps it is by way of dispensation to the things that threaten the perfection of marriage. When the marriage has been actually ruined, or rather, when the defect has resulted in there being no marriage at all, even that hopeless situation is attacked by the process of revalidation; a tremendous effort, almost a straining of the mercy of God, which goes so far as to make this marriage valid, not from this time on, but from its very beginning. In a sense, It is a recalling of the past to repair it.

Conclusion: Desecration of the home: Of its unity

For marriage is indeed a sacred thing. It is the consecration of the home, in contrast to the desecration of the home which is the work of the enemies of Matrimony. The essential consecration of marriage as a contract is in the complete unity it accomplishes; as a sacrament, the consecration of marriage is in the complete indissolubility of that marriage bond. The desecrating forces of the home necessarily attack this double consecration. They contradict the very language of marriage: insisting on selfishness in place of the regard for others which is fundamental to justice and love; they demand conquest rather than surrender; and place individualism where unity should be reigning. Obviously, there can be no unity or harmony under such conditions; which is to say, there can be no common marital life. In opposition to the indissolubility of marriage will be those who take their love cautiously, making sure of an escape from inconvenience; to them, satisfaction is much more important than justice, while love is a word to play with.

Of its indissolubility

It is understandable, but not excusable, that men and women should try to enjoy the delights of Matrimony and escape its responsibilities and hardships. Marriage is not an easy thing. It is not to be lightly entered, for it is something from which there must be no escape. It is really a kind of perpetual slavery, but the eager slavery whose fetters are the beautiful bonds of justice and love. It is something that is not to be thrown open easily to every casual passer-by; it is holy ground even when it is sunk in a cave with only a star for a lamp.

There is some desecration of the home in every age, for every age has its men and women who disregard justice and know nothing of love. Our own times have seen this desecration on a terrifyingly large scale; indeed, it has been more than a desecration, it has been a combined philosophical and social attack on the very humanity of the home. We have been taught to speak in the same breath of the union of man and woman and the mating of animals; we have been directed to look to animal psychology for the whole story of man, even in his own home. Inevitably, then, we have offered the supreme insult to a man and his wife; pleasantly, of course, with a learned air, and with the best of intentions.

The humanity of home

In actual fact, this animalism, this biological extremism, is barred from the home by the essential notions that go into the making of a home: by justice, love, social significance, and the symbolism of the union of God and His Church. Animals are not capable of justice; they are incapable of beneficent love; they cannot have that minimum regard for others that is the barest essential of a common life. Above all, they are incapable of participating in the life of God. The union of matrimony and the mating of animals are not to be mentioned together under penalty of desecrating the home. To proceed to an evaluation of marriage on this animal basis is to destroy completely what nature herself has contributed to the sacredness of the home.

The holiness of home

Of course, such a procedure misses the whole significance of human love, all of its heroism, its nobility, its high courage. Home is a holy place because it is a place of unselfish regard for others, of dedication, of surrender -- all of which are far above anything in the purely sensible order. Above all, home is a holy place because God Himself has entered there. He has made it a means of a deeper, fuller participation of His own life; over it, He looks protectively every instant of its long endurance by the constant help of His grace. It is the place to which God looks today, as He once looked to Bethlehem, for the birth of another son, for the beginning of that feeble life which is yet eternal, for the first appearance of that citizen of earth who is destined for eternal citizenship in heaven.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER XIX -- THE END OF LIFE
(Suppl Q. 69-91)

1. Judgment and the end of life:
 - (a) The possibility of judgment.
 - (b) The time of judgment.
 - (c) The character of judgment:
 - (1) A thing of triumph.
 - (2) A thing of gratitude.
 - (3) A thing of terror.
 2. The basis of terror of judgment:
 - (a) Of human judgment.
 - (b) Of divine judgment.
 - (c) Terror and truth.
 3. The particular judgment:
 - (a) The fact and manner of judgment.
 - (b) The place of judgment.
 - (c) Its consequences -- the places of souls:
 - (1) Fittingness and variety.
 - (2) Exists from them.
 - (3) Help of separated souls:
 - a. From them.
 - b. For them -- Purgatory:
 - 1) Its existence and nature.
 - 2) The pains of purgatory.
 - 3) The help of suffrages.
 4. The general resurrection:
 - (a) Fact and predisposition of the world.
 - (b) Its universality and cause.
 - (c) Its time and manner.
 - (d) Its consequences:
 - (1) Condition of risen bodies: integrity, identity, quality
 - (2) Properties of glorified bodies: impassibility, subtlety, agility, clarity.
 - (3) Properties of bodies of the damned.
 5. The general judgment:
 - (a) Fact and manner.
 - (b) Its purposes.
 - (c) Its time and place.
- Conclusion:
1. The freedom of truth:
 - (a) From injustice.
 - (b) From the consequences of injustice.
 - (c) From judgment.
 2. The repository of the truth of human life.
 3. Freedom of the flesh and freedom of the spirit.

CHAPTER XIX -- THE END OF LIFE
(Suppl., Q. 69-91)

THE climate of Washington, in itself, is a harmless thing. Natives will insist that it is ideal; it has variety, beauty, mildness, with just enough rigor to satisfy a virile man's appetite for an occasional bout with the forces of nature. Strangers, normally, are not to be quoted publicly on the climate. The mind of man, you see, is very stubborn; often enough, even an obvious fact will not stop the human mind short of a denial, though they crash against it as solidly as against a brick wall. But there is one obvious fact that no man denies. There is absolutely no argument about the fact of death. A man may speculate as to the time of his death; but no one wonders whether or not he will die.

Judgment and the end of life: The possibility of judgment

The argument really begins on the other side of death. What are the consequences of it? The answer to that question determines the character of a man's whole life; and there is great variety in the answers. To some, death is merely corruption and oblivion; to others it is an absorption into something superior. In either

case, there is a complete destruction of and an end to the individual. A third answer maintains that death leads to a kind of half-life where the soul drags on its lonely existence without the body; and here again the person has ceased to exist at death. Still another answer has death as an entry into a superior, full, divine life of both body and soul, a life of the whole person. The difference between the two is the difference between the end of a blind alley and the long stretches of an arterial highway. Obviously, the steps of men, in each case, have a totally different ring: in the first, they will be the tired, dragging steps of the hopeless; in the other, the eager or fearful steps of one who has control of his life and must answer for it personally. We know that life is not a walk down a blind alley; so we know that death means a settling of the accounts of our stewardship over the rich humanity that was put into our hands for so many years.

The time of judgment

There is no other time for judgment but at the end of life; for the game is not over until the last man is out, but then, definitely, it is done with. A judgment on the good thief, passed the day before he died, would have been premature and wrong; it was not until the halter had squeezed the last breath out of Judas that the success or failure of his life could be determined, a determination obviously beyond the power of men. Christ was one of the very few who could approach death saying, as He bowed His head, that His work was finished. To most men, only death brings a finish to work. Logically, then, it is appointed to every man once to die, and after death, the judgment.

The character of judgment: A thing of triumph

This final casting up of accounts will have startlingly different effects on different individuals, as, indeed, in contemplation has now; some men flourish on it, others are nauseated at the very thought of it, some run to it eagerly, while others must be dragged to the judgment seat. For Dominic and Thomas, who threw away their lives in literal imitation of the extravagance of Christ, judgment is a triumph; they were fools of the world revealed by judgment to be the wise men of eternity. The king who sat on his throne lost it, while the three who came from the East, gained much greater kingdoms in paying homage to a King in a cave.

A thing of gratitude

It is not hard to see that men and women who stood helpless as ruthless power robbed, defamed, beat, spit upon, and killed them, will greet judgment with sighs of gratitude; what is theirs is at last given back to them, and much more. After the judgment, Lazarus, to whom the crumbs from the rich man's table seemed such a delicacy, need bother no more about crumbs. This is one of the secrets of the patient suffering of Christians as contrasted with the bitter, hating, hopeless suffering of those who have no recourse against injustice; something like the difference between the submission of an only child to the pranks of a school bully, and that of the boy who, all unknown to the bully, has five older brothers.

A thing of terror

There is little difficulty in understanding the triumph and gratitude that may be found in judgment; there is no difficulty at all in grasping the terror of it, the terror of the wise men of the world who have laughed at the fools of Christ, of the strong men of the world who scorned weakness and trampled on it. They have good grounds for terror; but, then, so have we, even though not on the same grounds. One of the privileges of his citizenship that an ordinary citizen is not eager to exercise is that of standing before a judge or being subjected to a verdict of his peers. He has a real terror of a court of law; nor is that terror based on his criminal record, in fact, the more innocent he is, the more likely he is to be terrified. His terror is of human, not divine judgment; and there is a considerable difference between the two.

The basis of terror of judgment: Of human judgment

This man's fear may have somewhat the same basis that prompts us to hang curtains on windows, put locks on doors, and find secret places for diaries. We do not like to throw the doors of our lives open to public

inspection. Not that we are hiding criminal activities, we may be concealing very sacred things; but we know the unsympathetic attitude of strangers and the details of our private lives are not to be mocked. Then, too, this man knows the limitations of human judgment. He has at least heard of its blindness, its capacity for error, its inevitable incompleteness, its bias and venom when hostility lies at the bottom of it. He is taking a chance submitting to it; for even when he wins, he loses, for the veil is torn aside from his life for an instant for all the world to stare in.

Of divine judgment

The basis of terror of divine judgment is something else again. There is no worry about bias, venom, or hostility; here we can be sure the judge has a complete grasp of all the evidence and will give an objective judgment. We can rest assured of an eternally wise consideration of all the motives and extenuating circumstances; we can be sure of full and complete justice. That is just the difficulty; to a race of sinners, justice can well be a terrible thing. What we fear is not God but ourselves; our very terror of judgment is itself an acknowledgment of the faults on our side which we dread to face.

Terror and truth

The difference between the terrified and the undisturbed at this judgment seat is not so much the difference between sinners and angelically innocent saints; rather, it is the difference between men who have lived in a fool's paradise by shrugging aside their sins, forgetting or ignoring them, and the men who were solidly courageous enough to face the fact of their sins in life and do something about them. Sins are unpleasant things at any time; but it is only when we refuse to face them ourselves and have to be forced to see them as they are by the action of a divine judge that they make us victims of terror. For there is nothing so terrible as a truth that cannot be faced.

The particular judgment: The fact and manner of judgment

It would be much better if fear of judgment were a healthy seasoning of all of a lifetime, instead of being saved up for a climax of terror at death. At any rate, every man will have to face judgment. It is of faith that this judgment will come immediately after death; there will be no agonizing period of restless waiting for a tardy judge or endless hours of uncertainty as the trial drags on. This judgment is after death, and it is immediate. That it should be so is fairly evident. It would not be fair to keep the souls of the just on a rack of anxiety, waiting for the parade of all the generations of the world to pass by before they learned what their lives and had been worth; and there is no point to encouraging a smug complacency in sinners who, for ages on end, would hold to the baseless conviction that somehow, some way, they will slip by this last test. No. A man has a right to know his destiny immediately. After death, he can do no more about it; there is no point in waiting, for the soul is ready and capable of punishment and reward.

Man is not kept waiting for centuries for his judgment; he does not even wait an instant. This is a divine judgment accomplished with divine dispatch. In the human order, there is good sense in discussing a case from all angles, a deliberated, measured sentence, and finally, execution of that sentence. For a divine judge, no discussion or deliberation is necessary; He does not learn about the case bit by bit, His judgment is instantaneous. In reality, it is the soul that judges itself. This trial is an uncovering of truth and it is the soul that faces that truth and acknowledges it. The deeds of a lifetime are made known to it in an instant through divinely infused species the natural mode of knowledge of a separated soul; in an instant, by the help of the divine light, the full significance of these deeds is seen; in an instant the soul knows itself, knows what it deserves and receives its deserts. The judged soul has its place and sinks or rises to it. There is dramatic truth in the picture of Satan plummeting from heaven to hell as a stone might crash from the top of a tower to bury itself in the ground at the tower's base.

The place of judgment

We usually think of this judgment in metaphorical terms. The book of life, kept by a recording angel, is solemnly opened; there is a terrified advance to the tribunal of Christ; or Christ, the Judge, comes to the

bedside of the dying man to pronounce His judgment. There is reason to this sort of thing, for we must take things apart to see them well; even though the thing to be dissected is an instant of divine judgment. The soul of the dead man does not, in fact, penetrate into heaven to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Indeed, it never gets into heaven until it is already judged; nor does the physical presence of Christ leave heaven to preside at all the death-beds of the world.

Judgment takes place in the very instant after death and in the very place of death. The soul is judged. What then? Where does it go? Thinking in such terms does not mean that we are allowing our imagination to run wild; rather, it means we are thinking along the lines of the absolutely universal doctrine of the Church. We know, of course, that spiritual substances, such as the souls of men, have no quantity and so have no need of a place in our ordinary sense of the word; they are not stored layer on layer as we pack sardines in a can or New Yorkers in a subway. After the resurrection, of course, it is a different story; for when we have a body, we must have some place to put it.

Its consequences -- the places of souls: Fittingness and variety

Before the resurrection, we are dealing with purely spiritual substances. They are not in place in a way that can be measured, for they are not extended surfaces to be figured out inch by inch; rather, they are in place by a contact of power, that is, by their operation or, in the case of their punishment, by their being acted upon. That is what the very nature of spiritual substances demands; by the divine ordination, more than hinted at in the Scriptures, it is fitting that these spiritual substances be assigned corporal places proportionally responding to their condition of free operation or constant punishment.

Consequently, there is a place assigned for the souls of the just which we call heaven; a place for the souls of the damned which we call hell; and an intermediate place of purgation in preparation for heaven which goes by the name of purgatory. Finally, there is that place of natural happiness, where the sun of the supernatural never penetrates, which is called limbo. These are the states possible to souls of men who have died; these, then, are the places corresponding to these states.

Our visualization of the heavenly city as heavily walled with Peter guarding the massive gates, or of Satan's kingdom with its gates thrown wide open to all comers, is more than an imaginative help to our minds. It is actually much more difficult to get into heaven than to break into a walled city; and, while entry into hell is not so difficult, it is quite another thing to get out of it. As a matter of fact, there is not much point to getting out of either place. A soul never does get out of one or the other in the sense of a prisoner escaping jail; for always and everywhere, the damned soul carries its punishment with it, as the blessed soul its happiness.

Exists from them

Look at the souls of the blessed. Their original contact with the material world, through their bodies, had two purposes: to allow them to reach perfection, and to gain knowledge through sensible things. Without the body, a soul can learn nothing from an inferior world, for all its knowledge must come from above; and its time of perfectibility is all over and done with. Why should it come back? Ah yes, but New York is still New York, and a grand place to visit! After all, some of them have come back; how and why did they do it? Well, an angel can take on a physical appearance, for an angel was made to act directly as a spiritual substance, by intellect and will. But if we want a drink of coffee, mere will power is by no means enough. A soul is not made to act directly but rather through the body; for it to do otherwise, a miracle is necessary. Normally, these appearances of the dead are to be explained by the ministry of angels, though it is a difficult thing to determine whether the appearance is that of an angel or the miraculous work of a dead soul. Since, however, miracles are not to be multiplied, the supposition is that it is an angel unless there is incontrovertible evidence to the contrary.

Help of separated souls: From them

However, it is a mistake to picture souls as existing in heaven completely isolated from the events of the

world, crowding about each newcomer for family news, somewhat as expatriates in the Paris of long ago scanned the meager pages of Paris editions of American newspapers. These souls have intellects and wills; they can think, and love, and pray. In the vision of God, they see all that pertains to them of the events of this earth; indeed, they see much more than ever they could in this life, for they are seeing with the eyes of God which do not stop at the face of a man. It is with very good reason that we ask Our Lady and the saints to intercede for us, even though their time of strict merit is over at death; they are tries and true friends of God, living in an eternal intimacy with Him, and fully conversant with our condition. They can and they do help us immensely. There is nothing we can do for them in return beyond offering them the delicate compliment given to a friend in a request for his help.

For them -- Purgatory: Its existence and nature

There are other souls, though, who are badly in need of our help and completely at our mercy. The souls of those who died in venial sin or with punishment still due to sin remain in purgatory until they pass muster for the pure air of heaven. They possess the same equipment of intellect and will; they can, therefore, think, and love, and pray. They have not the sweeping knowledge of the beatific vision, but their state -- separated from the body -- is itself a demand for the infused species by which spiritual substances naturally know. The common belief in their ability to help us by their intercession is solid.

The pains of purgatory

The point is that they are in a state which of itself demands rather than offers help. Their time of merit is over; the one means at their disposal for ultimately reaching heaven, which is, of course, assured to them, is by the slow process of paying every last farthing. But our time of merit is still with us; these souls must suffer, while we can satisfy for them. They are suffering a double punishment comparable to the pains of hell. They are stripped of all the illusions, the distractions, the sensations offered by the rush of the world; of the fever of passion and the darkness of ignorance. They can, then, turn to heaven with all of their being in a torment of desire that makes every instant of delay an era of agony. This is their parallel of hell's eternal "pain of loss."

Over and above that, there is the "pain of sense" which, in the common opinion of the Fathers and in the revelations of such saints as Catherine of Siena, is a greater pain than any which can be suffered in this life. The common doctrine is that this pain is caused by fire which, operating supernaturally as an instrument of divine justice, causes much more suffering than it does operating on bodies by its natural power. Still, these souls see the justice of all this punishment; they submit to it willingly, eagerly, even lovingly, for it means that the eternal vision is brought closer every instant. They are friends of God who know how, and are equipped to suffer; the guilt of their venial sins is probably wiped out in the first instant after death, allowing them to turn to God with pure, burning love.

The help of suffrages

Obviously they need our help. That we can help them has been solemnly defined by the Council of Trent, a definition that flowed easily from the nature and doctrine of the Mass, indulgences, and the Communion of Saints. These souls can be helped by the official prayers of the Church, by the sacrifice of the Mass, by the gaining of indulgences, indeed, in a lesser way, by all the good works that merit the generous reward so eagerly given by our divine Friend.

The general resurrection: Fact and predisposition of the world

The immediate judgment of the soul of man might have been argued on purely natural grounds. Purgatory has its reasonableness, but only divine revelation could assure us of its existence. The resurrection of the body, while certainly doing no violence to the nature of man, is so entirely supernatural that to speak of it in a pagan world is to talk a foreign language. It was quite unsuspected by the Greek and Roman philosophers. Christianity, following on Jewish tradition, introduced the notion of an eternally enduring person upon which Western civilization rests. The notion has been thrust aside in some contempt by all the

philosophers who shudder at the material world as a thing of evil and who look forward with joy to the release of the soul from the prison of the body. The resurrection is one of the truths lost sight of in the process of liberalizing Protestantism. The moderns, of course, shuddering at the spiritual because it will not behave like the material and stay penned up in a laboratory, see in the truth of the resurrection only a bogey man conceived to frighten the weak-minded.

There is reason enough for the mind of man to stop short at the barrier of death; for this barrier is simply too high for reason to hurdle. The obvious fact of death; the completeness of its corruption and solution of the body, would seem to settle the question of further life for the body. On the other side, there are no more than vague hints from man's own nature: the incompleteness of his immortal soul separated from the body, the insufficiency of sanctions which stop at death, the human yearning for love that will not die and happiness without the tragedy of its loss, man's inner taste for eternity.

Its universality and cause

All these, however, are only hints. The truth of the resurrection of the body is supernatural, known only by revelation from God Himself; but it is known, for God did make the revelation. It is not merely the soul of man, but man himself, all of him, that will live forever; not this or that man alone, but all men, and each possessed of his own proper body. The fact is certain. On the same authority, it is clear that it will be a general resurrection, that is, of all men at the same time, coming only after the last man has been born and has died. We rightly couple it with what has been called the end of the world, although Catholic doctrine has never coupled it with the destruction of the world but rather with the mysterious purification of the world.

There are several vague, mysterious descriptions of that final purification in Scripture; since they are prophetic, however, they are not to be thoroughly grasped before their time. To Thomas, it was a purification by fire that would consume the imperfections of the world and be followed by a changeless perfection. He thought it would be rather nice if hell were made the dumping ground for all the debris. For him, the scientific side of this was easy: it was explained by merely stopping the motion of the celestial bodies and thus bringing an end to all change, all corruption and generation. Science has moved along since his day, with the result that the scientific side of this purification is not so easily explained today. Why should the world endure? Well, on the other hand, why waste a perfectly good world? It would make a kind of Central Park for the Sunday stroll of the blessed when they feel like stretching their legs again on earth, and there is always the heavenly home to return to. How can it be done? Certainly not by any means familiar to us; but then there are a good many things in the divine instrument bag that have not been submitted to human inspection.

Whatever happens to the world, all men will rise again from the dead, good and bad, young and old. They will rise at the sound of a trumpet; not that ears long dead, turned to dust, and blown about the face of the earth will be tuned to that note. Lazarus, dead for four days, was hardly on tiptoe waiting for the voice of Christ which, nevertheless, he promptly answered. Rather, the sound of the trumpet will be an instrument of divinity, as the voice of the priest in the consecration of the Mass is a divine instrument; surely, the bread is not listening for those sacred words, impatient to be changed into the body of Christ. The model and exemplar of this last resurrection was the first resurrection, that of Christ on Easter Sunday; its cause must, of course, be divinity. The humanity of Christ, in this and the other divine works of Christ, is always the instrument of the Godhead.

Thomas has a pleasant statement of the part the angels will play in the resurrection of men. It is not to be a necessary part but rather a share thoughtfully provided by God much as a mother allows a child to pay street-car fare or to carry a package along a busy street. The angels have been working with men from the beginning; guiding, guarding, teaching, helping them. It is only fitting that they should have a part in this last climax of human life. Thomas says that they will "prepare the material for the resurrection"; though it is no doubt an exaggeration to picture them as scurrying to the ends of the earth, gathering the dust of men's bodies, assorting it, arranging it in piles, and waiting for the divine word.

Its time and manner

Thomas follows this up with a phrase as to the time of the resurrection, a phrase notable in the beauty of its simplicity. He says it will come "when the work of the angels is finished." This is their last work for men; when that is over, both they and their wards can rest, rest forever. Thomas does not try to determine the time of the resurrection; Christ Himself had put an end to that speculation when He said that this was known only to the Father. Granted the secrecy of the time, as secret as the end of the world with which it will coincide, Thomas says that it will probably take place suddenly -- since divine power works in an instant -- when the work of the angels is finished.

It will be at dawn, conforming to the model of Christ's own resurrection. It will be as though the turn of the wheel of time had just been completed. At creation, which was time's beginning, the day started off at its beginning; not at the siesta hour, not in time for a late dinner, but at dawn with the sun in the east and the moon in the west; so it will be at the resurrection. At that last moment, the world will look as it did long, long ago, when time itself was just starting; in a real sense, time will start again, for men will begin to live again, men, understand, not souls, not a new race of men but the same men, body and soul, as first inhabited the earth.

Its consequences. Condition of risen bodies: integrity, identity, quality

The resurrection is necessary if men are to live eternally. Yet, there is no point to it if each soul has a body different from its original one; for then not the same, but a different person lives. It is to its same, identical body that the soul has its inclination; this is the body that has merited its share in reward and punishment; this is the body that should be judged. There would be a thoroughly justified grumpiness, for example, in a wrestler who received the body of a chorus girl because of a mixed-up resurrection. It is not enough to retain the same sex and general contours of the original body; the risen body must not only be similar, it must be numerically identical or we have not the same person; it has not been a resurrection but a constitution of a new creature.

This point, reasonable as it is, has been the source of much amusement to scoffers. Perhaps that is why God, in a kind of divine contempt, while assuring us of the fact gave us no information of the manner in which it will be accomplished. Objections have been offered which were meant to be devastating but actually turn out to be amusing. There is the famous case of the cannibal. The difficulty is offered not on the grounds of the bones he picks -- after all this was not a bone-eating cannibal -- but from the side of the cannibal himself. When he comes to die, there will be nothing in his body that was not taken from the meat and marrow of other human bodies; someone will have to go unresurrected, probably the cannibal. Really to make the point it is aiming at, this objection should maintain that the cannibal started his meat diet in the first days of his mother's pregnancy; a thing of extreme difficulty, even for a cannibal. If the objector is willing to accept this, he should have no difficulty accepting anything, even the resurrection of worms. The whole thing arises from a confusion of a man's body with the whole mass of material that a man possesses in the course of his whole life; as a matter of fact, some of w can do without a great deal of that right now. What is demanded for the resurrection is that some of the identical material go into the risen body, actual defect of material being made up by divine power. After all, if a child dies at seven and is to rise at thirty, or a man born with one ear is to be perfect in the resurrection, some material must be added; but the bodies will still be identical.

The same objection is given scientific force when it is said that the resurrection is an impossibility because, obviously, human bodies return to their chemical constituents after death, to enter into the make-up of vegetables, flowers, animals, and ultimately, no doubt, bodies of other men. The answer, however, does not change. The resurrection does not pose God the problem of spreading five pounds of flesh over a big frame; after all, the original material had its source in a divine command. God does not need a whole mass of the material; but not even God can make the same body from totally different materials.

Men, then, will be the same men, but much improved. They will be integrally perfect, that is, they will

have all that pertains to the integrity of the human body. Specifically, Thomas mentions fingernails and hair, not primarily for the comfort of the bald, but because there might be some slight doubt about these superfluities. If, through accident, disease, or congenital defect, anything is missing at death, it will be supplied in the resurrection.

Thomas thinks that men will rise at the age at which their development and perfection reached their height and before they have started to deteriorate. He thought thirty would be about right. And all men and women will rise at the same age, so that a mother can really be young with her daughter, and with her grandmother for that matter; perhaps it is only then that we shall get to know our ancestors. Of course there will be mothers and grandmothers there, for not all arise in the same sex; they must, you see, be the same persons. Clearly a strangely bearded grandmother would not be the same grandmother we had known on this earth; moreover, the diversity of sex is a part of the perfection of the species.

While all will be the same age, they will not all be the same size. There is no particularly perfect size for a human being. Some will be big, some small, some tall and some short; but all with the defects of nature corrected, that is no one will be too big, too small, too tall, or too short. In a word, there will be a pleasant variety, as great a variety, in fact, as there is now; for there will be exactly the same individuals with the rough spots smoothed off. Yet, with all this physical perfection, there will be none of the operations of animal life; there is simply no point to this activity. Man remains a rational animal, but with his animality totally spiritualized; even the damned will forego all animal life.

Properties of glorified bodies: impassibility, subtlety, agility, clarity

In the just, the bodies will be examples of matter completely dominated by spirit. By nature, man is a creature of reason in whom spirit was made to command; in glory, the submission of body to soul far surpasses nature. Four instances of this domination of the soul over the body have been singled out by theologians and called the gifts of the glorified body. The body is said to be "impassable," that is, not subject to injury in any sense, even in that delicate sense of suffering in the very exercise of sense faculties. The soul will dominate the body both as its form and as its mover: in the first case, the result is the gift of "subtlety" which subjects the organic character of the body to the soul; in the second, it is the gift of "agility" which enables the body to move with something of the speed of thought. Finally, just as the body will hinder no operation of the soul, so neither will it cloud or veil the soul's beauty; this is the gift of "clarity" which allows the splendor of the soul to shine through the body, thus making the spiritual beauty as visible as physical beauty is to us in this life.

Properties of bodies of the damned

The bodies of the damned will have none of this supernatural perfection. Since they will have all that nature demands, they will be free from all defects and deformities; but they will have no more than that except for the immortality which keeps them incorruptible, not immune to injury, but rather guaranteed an eternity of punishment. When all men have risen equipped with bodies for eternity, they are prepared for that last great drama in the history of mankind, the drama that strikes such terror to our hearts, principally because we look at it sentimentally rather than rationally; the last judgment.

The general judgment: Fact and manner

To put the fundamental reason for general judgment in simple language, it would be enough to say that it takes away from men for all time any grounds for that comforting activity we call grumbling; no sinner will make his way back to hell mumbling "we were robbed." In more dignified language, the general judgment is the ultimate vindication of the justice and mercy of God. Man, after all, is more than an individual, he is a citizen; he is a member of the great family of humanity. He is judged, justly and finally, as an individual immediately after death and there will be no change in that sentence; as a citizen, he stands before the whole world on the day of general judgment that all might know the wonder of God's ways and the complete justice of the original sentence. There will be no grounds for such a gossip's wonder and speculation as "What is that one doing in hell, she seemed such a grand person?" or "Look at

Johnny Smith in heaven! Wait a few centuries till they find him out."

The original sentence is final. The just, then, can suffer no unhappiness; a revelation of their sins to the world is an emphasis on their courage and penance in getting rid of sin, not a cause for terror and shame but of wondering gratitude at the mercy of God. Today in heaven, Magdalen feels no shame at the public recitation of her crimes in the Divine Office; nor do those reciting the tale revel in an unholy exultation at uncovering the weakness of another. Rather, like Mary herself, they find these things an occasion for wondering at the goodness of God.

It is quite another thing for the damned. All excuses are made impossible; they are shown plainly in their perversity, their pettiness, their stupidity, with no reason for anything but shame in their sins. It will be, this judgment, a public vindication of Christ the Judge and of those who took Him at His word, taking up their crosses to follow Him. Such complete justice is impossible in this world, or even in the particular judgment; here, the whole person, body as well as soul, is finally rewarded or punished.

Its purposes

The fact of this general judgment is sure from faith. That it will not proceed eternally, with a hopelessly boring recitation of details for all the infinite number of men to be judged is evident to reason itself. At the particular judgment, it is the work of an instant for men, by a divine illumination, to know their own sins and their own judgment; in the general judgment, a like divine illumination will make plain all the virtues and sins of all other men. All minds will agree, as the intellect must always agree to the clearly evident, to the disposition of men by the justice of God.

Its time and place

When this judgment will take place is God's secret, made known to absolutely no man. Its place is equally mysterious. The prophetic references to the valley of Jehosaphat may or may not be allegorical; indeed, the location of the valley is itself subject to controversy. Thomas thinks it fitting that this general judgment be in the neighborhood of Mt. Olivet from which Christ ascended into heaven after the triumph of His life and death on earth; there He might descend for His eternal triumph and take all good men with Him from the same spot on which He originally blessed the apostles and left them to the mercy of men.

In the beginning of this chapter, we spoke of the different ways of looking at death and the consequences; these did not represent a variety of views thrown open to the choice of man. There is no choice; we cannot take what pleases us, for only one of these is true. Terror of death is really the result of the fear of life; both are ultimately a fear of the truth of human responsibility, the truth of sin, and the truth of the punishment due to sin. Fear, however, does not destroy these things for they remain the central characters in the drama of life; we are not released from them by fearing them, whereas truth itself, respecting them, does give freedom beyond the ordinary dreams of men.

Conclusion. The freedom of truth: From injustice, the consequences of injustice, judgment

In comparison with this freedom, political and economic freedom, however precious, are petty things. For by the truth of death and its consequences, and the truth of judgment, man is really set free from injustice done to him and from the desire to do injustice to others. He need not despair at the thought that injustice visited upon him will not be rectified; it will. He is not on fire with revenge, for his persecutor must pay to the last farthing; and there is no hurry about demanding the payment. He is not rushed off his feet, reaching out in panic to grab what he can in the few years of his life; the rewards of life will come without his rushing after them. He is not haunted by a fear of life that loses hold even of what little life is given to every man in the attempt to dodge the responsibility of a greater life. Above all, he knows that life is not to be understood by concentrating on its beginnings to the neglect of its end.

The repository of the truth of human life

All these truths have been obscure to some men of every age; but it is the last that seems almost to have been lost to our times. Priding ourself on our knowledge of life's processes and progress, the end of life is neglected and denied with an inevitable loss of life's meaning. The mistake cannot be made without a more fundamental one running along with it, one that would embarrass a child; the mistake of supposing that something comes from nothing, that the world accounts for itself.

Freedom of the flesh and freedom of the spirit

On the other hand, a man who has been freed by truth is free to know human life and, above all, to live it. Others may lay claim to a freedom of the flesh; but that freedom has always been a shame rather than a glory to men, robbing them, ultimately of manhood itself, of the right to hope, of sovereignty of their own lives. Freedom of truth does not release a man from the flesh, but from slavery to it, from cringing before appetite, and surrendering to things beneath him. It gives him freedom of the spirit which finds its immediate expression in the freedom to live life, and its ultimate climax in the glory of the risen man. By it, he can drink deeply of the cup of life, finding it always full to overflowing and his own capacity not diminished, but constantly increasing.

Back	A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV	Next
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CHAPTER XX -- ETERNAL BEGINNINGS
(Suppl. Q. 92-99)

1. Promise of the transient:
 - (a) An end.
 - (b) A beginning.
 2. Some concrete promises:
 - (a) Unchristian beginnings:
 - (1) Their variety.
 - (2) Their comfort.
 - (b) Christian beginnings.
 2. Beginnings of life:
 - (a) Essential happiness of heaven:
 - (1) Its nature.
 - (2) Time of its bestowal.
 - (3) Apparent difficulties.
 - (b) Accidental happiness of heaven:
 - (1) Dowries
 - (2) Aureoles.
 - (3) Fruits.
 - (4) Friends and externals.
 4. Beginning of death:
 - (a) Existence and eternity of hell.
 - (b) Nature of its punishment:
 - (1) Pain of loss.
 - (2) Pain of sense:
 - a. Eternity and reality of hell fire.
 - b. Inequality of pain of sense.
 - (3) Accidental sufferings:
 - a. Of intellect and will.
 - b. Of company of others.
 5. Limbo.
- Conclusion:
1. Aversions to eternal beginnings:
 - (a) To hell.
 - (b) To heaven.
 2. The truth of the beginnings.
 3. Determination of eternal beginnings.

CHAPTER XX -- ETERNAL BEGINNINGS
(Suppl., Q. 92-99)

THE one completely certain thing about any hour is that it will come to an end. The next most certain thing is that its end will mark the beginning of still another hour. If the passing moments measure agony, an hour's death-struggle is a long drawn-out affair, the next hour comes too slowly and stays too long; if it is joy that passes under the scrutiny of time, the death of an hour seems like an echo of its birth; the next one comes much too quickly but is welcomed as a reprieve of joy. Welcomed or dreaded, every hour, in common with all passing things, comes to an end and marks a beginning.

Promise of the transient: An end

Men are familiar enough with this truth to mark its occurrence throughout the rough sections life is ordinarily cut up into: infancy, childhood, adolescence, manhood, senescence. Indeed, they find the same truth in every day, and every moment of every day, in the smile that introduces a laugh, the tears that end a pent-up storm, the last hammer blow that completes a work, or the first kiss that begins love's consecration. For this is the mark of all things passing; and there is little man is more familiar with than things that do not last. It would be strange, indeed, if a man, recognizing the inevitability of the end of his life, did not look to what that end begins; for all of his experience rises up in protest against one such exception to the general rule of things that pass.

A beginning

As a matter of fact, no man has been able to resist at least one quick glance; no man has been able to resist the formulation and statement of the beginning that springs from the end of a human life. Sometimes the eyes were blinded, lest they see too much; at others, the glance was taken through a smoke-screen of discouragement, or through a bright fog of unfounded optimism. At no time could men get their hands on evidence that would satisfy their minds beyond the one point of the indestructibility of the soul of a man; all else has to be taken from the mouth of God, and there has always been a great reluctance on the part of many men to take their stories from anyone but other men or the devil.

Some concrete promises. Unchristian beginnings: Their variety

At any rate, the opinions of men on the beginnings introduced by death may be roughly divided into ones framed for comfort and the one framed by truth. Some men like their beds hard, others soft; some will insist on their eggs done one way, some another; a cold shower is heroism to one man, plain common sense to another, and so on. For men's ideas of comfort run a strange gamut. Naturally then, the comfortable beginnings assigned for death are a strange lot to be crowded into one hostelry except for their common and profound aversion to facing the truth.

Their comfort

Perhaps the strangest comfort is offered by the promise of oblivion as the sequel to death. This end of all beginnings, because a beginning of nothingness for the individual, may be reached by the shattering blow of annihilation, or the slow, insidious, dreamlike caresses of absorption that soothes the victim into complacency as pleasantly as the death-stroke dealt by bitter cold. It makes little difference whether the individual is absorbed into a future humanity, a present class, a future race, or a monstrous political ideal; the point is that for him, death begins nothing but nothingness.

Others, particularly those whose feet have dragged through a life that has never seen the sparkle of a star or the threat of a raging storm, find their strange comfort in having death introduce a life pretty much like the one they had been used to: a little vaguer perhaps, a little more befuddled, a little more pointless, but the same dull, hopeless routine. How desperately this petty comfort is desired is testified to by the prospering trade of tricksters and the steady, contemptuous cooperation of the devil in ministering it freely to people dulled enough by monotony to find it satisfying. Still others are by no means discouraged, not even by solid facts; they are the cheery ones who banish unpleasant things by refusing to look at them. With the best intentions, they set out to flatter humanity, never realizing that their blundering compliments are really unveiled insults. For them, death is the beginning of a state where all men of all time will gather around and just be happy, like the good, sunny, little children they are at heart; they just know that no man is nearly as bad as he thinks he is or as he tries to be. Mischievous, perhaps, but really bad? Impossible; so unpleasant to think about. Besides, God couldn't punish men forever, He just couldn't; think of our sensibilities!

Christian beginnings

As God tells the story of death's sequel, there is enough in it for unlimited inspiration or downright terror; but little indeed for the relaxation implied by comfort as we make our way to it through the maze of life. For the divine account insists that life, in common with all transient things, comes to an end that is indeed a beginning, and a beginning that never ends: death marks the end of man's merit and demerit and begins either the eternal happiness of heaven which he has won by his virtues or the eternal misery of hell which he has chosen by his sins. Once the story has been given us by God, it is not difficult to see its harmony with what we know of man and of God. For our spiritual soul demands eternal life, our composite nature declares there is an end to personal merits; our acts cry out for justice, for reward or punishment; while the nature of God insists that the punishment be eternal and awful, the reward eternal and ineffable.

Every now and then, some utterly degrading evil dares to rear its head in the company of men; the revulsion is complete and the energetic attack to stamp the unspeakable thing out of existence is normally as prompt as a man instinctive gesture to ward off a blow. Every now and then, some vagrant breeze lifts

the veil for an instant from the face of heroic virtue and gives men a passing glimpse of the beauty of God; it brings a serene peace, an inspiring lift, a sense of triumph as though men were suddenly made aware again of the ineffable things within their grasp. In each case, men are brought face to face for just an instant with the climaxes of human life and they know deep in their hearts precisely what death means for the future; unmitigated misery of evil, or unalloyed happiness in goodness.

Beginnings of life. Essential happiness of heaven: Its nature

For some men, then, death begins the life of heaven. Much has already been said about the essential, constitutive happiness of heaven, particularly in the beginning of the second volume of this work where the question was treated at considerable length. It will be enough here to recall that the fundamental happiness of heaven consists in the possession of God, the faint shadows of Whose perfection, beauty, and goodness accounted for all that was real, all that was beautiful, all that was good in the space of our mortal days. Another way of saying the same thing, but from the side of man, would be to point out that heaven is the highest perfection of man's highest faculties constituting his complete fulfillment. The two are seen as one when we remember that we possess God through the beatific vision, that face to face, intuitive knowledge which comes from the immediate union of the essence of God with the intellect of man; from that grasp of God flows the unceasing joy of heaven into the will of man, marking the full satisfaction of all his deepest desires and leaving him at complete peace.

That vision of God is an act that begins but never ends. Divinity is not enclosed in the finite limits of a human concept enabling man to say "I know it all." Rather the act of knowledge begun by the union of the divine essence and the human intellect is an eternally enduring moment of penetration into the depths of divine riches; man will never be finished seeing what he will never fully comprehend, though the simplicity of the divine essence assures him of seeing it all. In the essence of God, each man also sees all that pertains to him, all to which he has any link; and along with this knowledge, there is, of course, the knowledge he has gathered in this life and that which comes by the infusion of species directly by God.

There are several points to be noted here, though they have been brought out before. There is, for instance, the fact that heaven demands the most intense and unceasing activity of mind and will from every man; it is not an eternal vacation in the sense of there being absolutely nothing to do. The deep and lasting peace of heaven is not a statement of eternal stagnation but of complete coordination of all man's faculties operating at their fullest; it is a statement of absence of conflict, not of the absence of any signs of life. The complete satisfaction of man's desires in heaven is not to be confused with the satiety that strikes a man down into heavy slumber after a full dinner, or disgusts him with the thing that has satisfied his appetite; these things are true only of the sense appetites in this life. The spiritual appetites of man, whose echoes will be so completely satisfying to man's senses, are not dulled by satisfaction but made more alert, their quiet is not that of a dozing incapacity for further activity but the quiet of a love that has found all its energies engaged in adequate expression of that love.

Time of its bestowal

As every man is judged immediately after death, he is immediately rewarded or punished. Our faith teaches us that there is no long period of waiting, as though the box-office of heaven could not handle the volume of business; man does not have to stand outside of heaven until his body is united to his soul after the resurrection and the last judgment is pronounced. Immediately after sentence has been passed on his soul separated from his body by death, the eternal reward is his. Nor is there any uneasiness in heaven before the last judgment, as though the sentence might be reversed, any more than there is desperate hope in hell that the first judgment might have been a mistake. The first sentence is final; the last judgment will include the body of man in his reward or punishment and vindicate that sentence before the whole world.

The first judgment has to be final for there is no way in which the happiness of heaven can be lost. Certainly divinity is not going to grow feeble or ugly, slow down, wear out, or die. On the side of man, nothing is going to catch a man's eye, tempting him to greener fields for he will be in possession of all

goodness, his every desire fully satisfied, his mind will have fast hold on the supreme truth; the mistakes prompted by ignorance, passion, unfulfilled desires are all ruled out by the very nature of happiness. That this final goal might be snatched from him by some external force is altogether out of the question: men or devils cannot do this, nor can God without going back on His divine word -- that is, without ceasing to be God. Indeed, if there were not that complete assurance of the eternal duration and complete security of his happiness, it would be absurd to talk of a man's being supremely happy; for as long as there is the slightest chink in the armor of happiness, man will insert the wedge of worry to make himself miserable.

Apparent difficulties

Despite the definite inequalities that will be found in heaven, there will be no cause for rumblings of discontent. Arguing from our own experience with men, it might seem close to a miracle that there be different mansions in heaven, one greater than the other, and yet there be no envy and everyone perfectly satisfied. It is beyond question, assured by the faith, that there will be a distinct gradation of perfection in heaven, based radically on the degree of charity possessed by each man at death, and immediately on the degree of the light of glory given to each man in proportion to his charity. Each will see the same divine essence; but each will penetrate it in proportion to the degree of that supernatural light of glory which makes the vision possible at all. The difficulty comes up only because it is forgotten that every man will see to his fullest capacity, will drink a full cup of his happiness, will have as much of eternal bliss as he can possibly have or possibly want. Under such conditions, it is difficult to call up any vaguest image of a discontented man.

What seems like an even more serious impediment to heaven's happiness is the clear vision the blessed will have of hell. How can a man be happy seeing all those others enduring the eternal and unspeakable miseries of hell? The very prospect sounds inhuman, even brutal. Certainly it would require a considerable degree of corruption and perversion to enjoy the sufferings of others, let alone endure them, precisely as sufferings. On the other hand, pity must be reasonable or we are ashamed of its appearance, conscious that it is sentimentality of the flabbiest sort. A surgeon can deliberately inflict pain on his patients because it is a reasonable thing to do in the interests of health; while the mother who allows an abscess to eat away the life of her child because she cannot bear to submit it to the pain of the surgeon's knife is being eminently unreasonable, inhuman, and brutal. In heaven, there is nothing of the unreasonable; even pity responds to reason's control and never edges over into inhuman sentimentality. Looking at the damned from heaven, the blessed see men, and angels who bombard them with hate, who desire nothing better than that the blessed be dragged down to their misery; they see men in the tortures they have chosen, being punished for sins they still refuse to renounce, undergoing the justice of an absolutely just God because they would have it that way. Under such circumstances, pity is unreasonable; a joy that gloats over this misery is utterly inhuman and has no place in heaven; but a joy in the perfection of the justice of God is quite another thing.

Accidental happiness of heaven: Dowries

The divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity find their counterpart and perfection in the vision, the attainment, and the fruition or abiding joy of heaven. If these three be taken as acts, they are an integral part of the essential happiness of heaven; but, taken in the sense of the habits from which these acts proceed, they are classed among the accidental joys of heaven and described, with a moving touch of very human simplicity, as the dowries of the soul. Since the idea of a dowry has long been extinct in America, it may not be out of place to explain that this sum of money given by the bride's parents to the groom at marriage was calculated to make smoother the difficult task of building up a common life by relieving the husband of the added financial burden of a wife and children, at least in the beginnings of married life. At the very least, this deprived the husband of all title to grumbling at the discovery that two could not live as cheaply as one and love was not enough to support life, while it protected the wife from falling into the abjectness more or less proper to an object of charity. The dowry, of course, added nothing to her womanhood, nor did it give her any further essential capacities for wifedom or motherhood; it was an ornament which the young bride wore proudly on her wedding day.

In heaven, the soul is the spouse of God, starting out on the fullness of a common life more startlingly different than ever was married life to a bride. There is no likelihood of a grumbling husband in this case, to be sure; the bills would not pile up at the end of the month; nor will there be any cringing abjectness at the threat of a diminished allowance. Nevertheless the bride in this heavenly marriage needs a principle or habit which will make the act of vision joyously connatural; another which will make the fullness of love which is fruition an easy, almost natural thing; still another to remove all impediments to the full and complete possession of God. Not that life with God will be hard, but that it might be wholly joyous, these three ornaments of the soul are given to the bride on her entrance into the eternal marriage of heaven.

Aureoles

Because this whole life of heaven is so far beyond the powers of our cleverest words, we are forced, again and again, to fall back on metaphorical language. Thus, for instance, the essential reward, revolving around the uncreated Godhead, is called the "golden crown" which is given to every man who enters heaven. Obviously, this is not something perched on the side of a man's head, but something rooted deep in his soul. The same language must be used of the accidental joys of heaven which, while not pertaining to the essence of it, make up its full integrity. The "little crowns," or aureoles, are the joys that come, not directly from the essence of God, but from the perfection of the works a man has done, for the outstanding victories he was won; again, these are not piled one on another over a man's head; rather, they are primarily for his soul. These "little crowns," three in number, correspond to the outstanding victories to be won in the course of a human life: the victory of the virgin, of the doctor or preacher, and of the martyr. These are outstanding victories for they represent the successful outcome of particularly difficult fights: against the flesh, against the enemies of faith, and to the point of death itself.

Fruits

The special accidental "fruits" of heaven, envisioned as the full development of the seed of the word of God in men, are the joys that follow, not from the vision of God or the perfection of a man's labors, but from man's own condition, his spirituality. Theologians make a definite correlation between these fruits and the virtue of continence, for it is this virtue which is the barrier to the invasion of man's soul by unruly passion, and so the immediate means by which a man embraces the spiritual to the rejections of the carnal life.

Friends and externals

The preceding chapter has already dealt with the sublime qualities of the glorified bodies of the saints. It is necessary here to do no more than insist on the integral humanity of the blessed after the resurrection. Then, the blessed in heaven will be men and women, composed of body and soul, with the full perfection of both body and soul, perfection not only of being but of operation. When this is said, all else is said, keeping in mind the peculiar perfections of the body outlined in the preceding chapter. Thus, for instance, there is no point in asking if there will be a renewal of friendships in heaven; of course there will, for friendship is an integral part of human life. Will men talk there, laugh, walk, hear, see, stand up and sit down? Of course. These are human beings, blessed human beings, but none the less human. This is not a distortion or denial of human life, but a divine perfection of it.

Beginning of death: Existence and eternity of hell

All this is but one side of the story of what death begins. Uncomfortable as the truth may be, the fact is that there is a hell as well as a heaven, that death not only begins an eternal life, it also begins an eternal death; there is not only adequate reward, there is also adequate punishment. We have it on the authority of the infallible word of God that there is a hell and that in that hell devils and men who die in mortal sin are punished eternally. This, you understand, is not something submitted for the judgment of our individual taste; it will not do to decide that we shall accept some of the truths of revelation -- pleasant truths like grace, the Incarnation, the sacraments, and heaven -- and reject one that is particularly displeasing. To

reject any one is to reject them all, for it is to reject the reason for accepting any one of them, namely, the infallible veracity of the God Who has revealed them all.

Nature of its punishment: Pain of loss

With the fact of an eternal hell certain from revelation, the reasonableness of the fact is by no means obscure. By mortal sin, a man breaks off his friendship with God, giving his heart to something less than God; with charity gone, then, man is in exile from God and charity is not to be recovered after death. Inevitably, the exile from divine life must endure eternally; which is precisely the very essence of hell. To look at it from another point of view, by mortal sin, a man chooses a last end other than God; dying in that sin, his will remains firm in that choice. In other words, he wants exclusion from God eternally, only by violence could he be dragged into heaven; hell assures him of getting what he wants. From the other side of the picture, his offense was committed against an infinite Being and is, therefore, infinite no matter how quickly the act was over and done with; it deserves an infinite punishment, a thing impossible to inflict upon a creature except from the angle of duration. Lest there be any question about this, let it be remembered that the whole reason of the necessity of the Incarnation was that only the Son of God could give the infinite satisfaction demanded for man's infinite offense.

It might also be argued that as long as a man's guilt endures, he should be punished for it; and the guilt of a man dying in mortal sin, judged immediately after death, is not wiped out by the passage of any number of ages in hell. The angle of adequate sanction, too, is no light matter; if hell were not to be eternal, a man might well offend God as he pleased and laugh at Him and His punishments, sure that there would some day be an end to them and then he could look forward to an eternity of happiness. Piling up arguments, however, does not bolster the certainty of the truth and the eternity of hell; that certainty needs no support for it rests on the word of God Himself.

To understand the nature of the punishment of hell it is necessary to recall our previous analysis of sin in Volume II of this series. In every mortal sin there is a double element: a turning away from God, and a turning to some created good in place of God. The first is punished in hell by its perpetuation, by an eternal separation from God that is the direct opposite of the eternal union with God which makes up the essential happiness of the blessed in heaven; this is the essential punishment of hell, the pain of loss. Obviously, there is no variety or gradation in this punishment; everyone in hell suffers this, and equally. This is by far the sharpest, the most penetrating pain of hell; for by it, the damned are deprived of the greatest good, God Himself, and they are keenly conscious of their loss. They know then that the goal of life, the one source of order, the one climax of living, is lost to them, not for a day, a year or a century, but forever; their desperation is complete, there is not the slightest grounds for the wildest hope. This is infinite justice, bolstered by infinite power, proceeding against an infinite offense; and there is no escape.

Pain of sense: Eternity and reality of hell fire

The turning to a created good as a last end is punished in hell by what theologians have called the pain of sense. While this has occupied the center of the stage in human considerations of hell, it is actually secondary; it has been given first place only because we find it as impossible, now, to appreciate the loss of the Supreme God as we do to express the ineffable possession of it. This pain of sense is inflicted by the fire of hell. Whatever the lengths of aversion to which sentimentality has pushed modern discussion, the reality of this fire of hell is so universal and so ancient a doctrine of the theologians that question of it would be an extreme of temerariousness. There is indeed hell-fire, and it is real fire; by it the devils and damned souls are punished until the resurrection of the bodies of men, when the punishment of the fire is extended to these risen bodies.

It is quite clear that such fire must operate supernaturally, as an instrument of divine justice and to effects entirely beyond the natural powers of fire. There can be no question of burning devils or separated souls; just how fire punishes them is by no means clear, although it was Thomas's opinion that its action was primarily one of limiting activities, hemming in the proudest creatures of the universe. After the

resurrection, fire's natural effects will be produced on the bodies of the damned. without however consuming them, that is, there will be a miraculous effect here, too, analogous to that of the fire which named in a bush without consuming it to awake the wonder of Moses.

Inequality of pain of sense

In the punishment of the pain of sense there is plenty of room for inequality. It is inflicted in proportion to man's conversion to created good in preference to God, and the degrees of men's absorption in the world of creatures are practically infinite. Here, then, there is a kind of hierarchy of misery corresponding to the hierarchy of happiness in heaven; these are the mansions of hell in sharp contrast to the heavenly mansions prepared by the Savior of men. There is no easing up of either the pain of loss or the pain of sense, no gradual mitigation, for there is no change in the reason for both punishments -- the perverse will of the sinner; there is no escape from the eternity of these punishments through a dulling of perception, a gradual slipping into unconsciousness, or eventual oblivion. It is of faith that these punishments are eternal and without mitigation.

Accidental sufferings: Of intellect and will

Artists are not to be taken literally when they picture the misery of hell by the medium of extreme ugliness and distortion. In fact, nothing of nature is changed or lost in hell. The devils have their full complement of perfect natural knowledge, men retain all the knowledge they have stored up in this life; yet that very knowledge, in both cases, is but another source of suffering, keeping vividly in their minds both the good they have lost and the evil that has reduced them to their present misery. They have had a glimpse of the joyous glory of the blessed, the splendor of the risen Christ, and the perfection of the justice of God at the last judgment; yet, there is not an iota of consolation in any of this for one to whom it is lost forever.

Of company of others

Rather, it is the other way around. The wills of the damned are confirmed in adversity. While there is a full cup of remorse that never empties though it is steadily drunk, the sharpest of regrets for the punishments that must be undergone, there is no repentance for the sins committed; sin is not surrendered and God embraced; rather sin is held fast while God is cursed, the more so as the justice of His punishment is beyond cavil. Love, then, is something totally foreign to the very atmosphere of hell, while hate is of the very air the damned breathe: they hate God as the inflicter of punishments, they hate the blessed as having all that they lack, they hate each other as integral constituents of their present misery, and they thoroughly hate and despise themselves. They would willingly accept annihilation, oblivion, as an escape from their torments; but they know there is no escape, not even so bitter an escape as this. It is indeed a terrible thing to fall under the justice of the living God.

Limbo

The horror of hell might well strike a spark of fear from the heart of a saint; but, while we shrink from the grim prospects of it, it is well to remember that no man slides into hell, as it were by accident. This is a place that must be deliberately entered; a man must knock at the door perseveringly demanding admittance, for no man can get into hell without the passport of his own actual mortal sin which proves he has rejected God. A fifth column in hell is a complete impossibility; there are no victims of unjust court procedure there protesting their innocence. It is quite impossible, then, for an infant who is incapable of personal sins to get into hell; the same holds for idiots, the congenitally insane, and, in general, those who are incapable of sin. If these have not received the gift of supernatural life in the sacrament of Baptism, obviously they cannot get into heaven. Theirs is an intermediate place called Limbo; a place of natural happiness, free of the torments of hell, yet without the divine perfections of heaven.

Conclusion. Aversions to eternal beginnings: To hell

It is not surprising that we should shrink from hell; in fact, that very aversion is one of the first and surest

guarantees of avoiding the place, particularly since a man can act into it only by deliberately choosing the road and furnishing himself with the proper identification cards. What is surprising, and not at all flattering to humanity, is that men should shrink from the truth of hell, as if the place of eternal torment could be obliterated by our denial of it. It is a triumph of unreason so to deal with any truth; it is the height of unreason to give a divine truth treatment of this kind.

There is the usual scramble of reasons behind the unreason, rendering it to some extent reasonable in the sense of explicable; but dissolving none of its unreasonableness to the consequence of making it excusable. Certainly, there is a strong dash of anthropomorphism in our modern refusal to take hell seriously; this is not the way human justice would work, so it cannot be though the whole thing is advanced, not as an implement of human, but of divine justice. There is, too, that strange modern fear of going beyond the field of the sensible; hell is not sensible, we cannot experiment with it, while eternity completely escapes our present experience, so of course there can be no hell. Unquestionably, here and there, there is an element of cowardice that shrinks in terror from the responsibility of acts possible of such momentous consequences. In the case of the first two viewpoints, a man wraps himself in a fog of unreason that allows him to approach the abyss with a certain sense of security until he has actually plunged into it. But in the third, a man begins to taste his hell long before he has swung open the infernal portals; indeed, one of the most horrible characteristics of hell is becoming a modern commonplace precisely through this fear of life. The devils and the damned would, but cannot, embrace annihilation as an escape from their punishments; living men are actually embracing the prospect of personal oblivion, not as an escape from punishment, but in preference to the risk involved in the living of human life.

To heaven

It is somewhat harder to understand how the prospect of heaven can leave men uninterested, indifferent, or positively hostile. One reason may well be the materialist contentment with the world in which he moves, or rather, with that part of it which his blinded eyes can see; this world has been kind to him -- for materialism is an error for the prosperous or those with a prospect of prosperity -- and life seems long, with a great stretch of comforts still awaiting him. He might be willing to settle for present comforts; unfortunately for him, life does not end at death but begins there. It may be that many men have pretty well plumbed the depths of despair; they have despaired of God and despaired of men, so they steadfastly refuse to look beyond the moment when they will leave men behind even though at that moment they must face God. But the most extensive basis of our modern American disregard of heaven undoubtedly lies in the ignorance or contempt of the supernatural -- a natural consequence of positivism's confinement of man to the prison of nature -- and a thorough misunderstanding of the nature of Christian doctrine on both hell and heaven.

The truth of the beginnings

Diluted Christianity has done much to further this tragic condition. There has been a kind of heartless mercy in this dilution, the weakness of compromise, and the kindness of a lie. When fundamentals are in question, this sweetly corruptive delicacy destroys all it touches; certainly, this half-hearted Christianity is fundamentally destructive of man and his acts as well as of God and His acts, though the thing is advanced as a favor to man. Hell must be taken without appeal to sentiment, without a softening process that eliminates it; it must be taken, as truth must always be taken, literally, straight, with its full force. And heaven must be taken without dilution, with no recourse to a symbolic fog that reduces it to the level of subjective ideals or objective myths for simple people. These two are divine truths; in face of them, man does not choose, he accepts or he is lost.

Naturally all appeal is removed from the prospect of heaven if it is looked on as a giant almshouse with no quarters for the rich and fully equipped with all facilities for the poor to gorge themselves on all the things they missed in their lives on earth. If heaven is to be a place of wholesale revenge where those who were persecuted on earth have their innings doing to others what had been done on earth, it would be a good place to keep away from if a man wanted peace and quiet. If it is a kind of eternal watering-place where

the fatigued can sit in the sun eternally doing absolutely nothing, it is a place of torpor rather than of happiness. The point is that heaven is none of these things. True, it has been promised to the poor, but to the poor in spirit; to the persecuted, but to those persecuted for justice sake; it has been described as a place of eternal rest, but of rest for the soul.

In other words, heaven is not at all a simple reversal of the lives men lived on earth; rather it is a completion, a fulfillment, a maturity of what was begun on earth. The poor in spirit, the persecuted for justice sake, those who have exercised their souls in virtue to the point of weariness are not the miserable men of earth; they are the most supremely happy of all the people who walk the face of the earth, regardless of the circumstances of their external life. Heaven comes to these people, not as the answer to his dream would burst on an astonished beggar, the realization of his idyll to a lazy man, or the agony of an enemy to a man on fire with hate; it comes as manhood comes to a child.

Determination of eternal beginnings

The mansions of hell, no less than the mansions of heaven, are not makeshift shacks thrown up after the darkness of death has come down upon life. Both are built slowly, carefully, stone by stone, through all the abundant moments that measure the length of a man's life. A man does not achieve hell by a last minute quirk of divine judgment, but when he embraces sin; a man does not win heaven when God embraces Him eternally but when he embraces God despite the alluring promises of all that is contrary to God. Heaven or hell, in other words, never comes as a shock; it is the harvest that was planted so long ago, watched, cultivated, defended and now reaped in all its fullness. It is the house at the end of the road that could lead nowhere else. In the case of heaven, it is home; and all along the road there were signs marking the path, help proffered to pilgrims, and directions to be had for the asking. Arriving there, man has come home to the God Who made him.

Back

A Companion to the Summa Vol. IV
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