

THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER

BY

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It would be a mistake to consider only what Christian philosophy is. It makes sense to ask what elephants are or what elements are; but Christian philosophy is not that sort of entity. Its reality is not a mere fact; instead its very nature depends upon norms and man's consideration. If one is captivated by historicism, it seems natural to talk as if Christian philosophy were a thing existing independently. The important, but forgotten, distinction between nature and culture would underline the fact that Christian philosophy does not have the status of an object of purely speculative knowledge. It is not among those things which reason cannot make but only considers. Christian philosophy is not there like a carbon atom or an oak tree or a rainbow; the objectivity of the past is only memory, not reality.

Christian philosophy by its very nature depends upon man's consideration. One is a Christian and a philosopher; he is so by choice, in fact by two choices. Hence, the real question is: what is one to be as a Christian and as a philosopher; how is one to knit together this life?

Christian Philosophy as History

Maritain's widely accepted view is summarized in the statement that Christianity belongs not to the definition of philosophy but to its concrete reality. This statement means that "Christian" is predicated of philosophy only *per accidens*. Philosophy as such is not and cannot be Christian. The next question is how philosophy happens to be qualified by what it is not essentially. To answer this question, one must use history as a speculative discipline and set out on a long investigation into the unreality of the past, trying to discern intelligibility in the *per accidens* where there is none. But why should one be concerned about what Christian philosophy was? Simply as a matter of past fact it is of no great account, and purely speculative history is particularly useless and unpleasant.

The Christian Use of Philosophy

If, however, one attends to the real point at issue, the view changes drastically. The real issue is what road Christian philosophers are going to take. For each individually, the question is what is meant by his vocation to be a Christian philosopher. By what responsibilities and fulfillments is it defined? For all together, the question is what the direction of the philosophic community will be.

If one begins to look at philosophy in this practical way there is one distinction which is absolutely essential. This stands between, on the one hand, philosophy in its own right: the philosophical activity, work, and life of the philosopher as such; and, on the other hand, philosophy functioning as an instrument: philosophy being used by something that is not philosophy.

The use of a philosophy, particularly of a metaphysics, usually means its destruction. The only exception is the case in which faith as supernatural makes good use of philosophy. Christianity can make use of philosophy without destroying, deforming, or ruining it; but this is only a possibility.

It is a fact, and one by which Catholic philosophers need not be embarrassed, that almost all the philosophy taught in Catholic institutions—in seminaries, teachers' colleges, sister-formation movements, and colleges for lay students—is not philosophy pure and simple. It is philosophy being used as an instrument. I do not say there is anything wrong with this situation, but there is a danger that such Christian philosophy, like "religious art," might degenerate. Christian philosophy, in the sense of philosophy utilized as an instrument of Christianity, can degenerate very easily into what is found in manuals. It can become intellectually vacuous, boringly repetitious, and out of all contact with experience. Such decadent scholasticism has no real meaning or value.

To discover a solution to this problem one must bear in mind that philosophy used as an instrument is in dialogue, that is, it is in a human situation to which there are two sides. The student need neither be a philosopher, become a philosopher, nor receive philosophy itself. With few exceptions, it does not seem to me necessary, for example, that those who have a vocation to the priesthood should become philosophers or should understand philosophy in itself. I doubt that there should be any philosophy, properly so called, in the seminary curriculum.

Yet philosophy must be used in the seminary curriculum, because the Catholic faith is contained in a tradition, which, whether one likes it or not, has been heavily influenced by philosophy. Although one need not be a philosopher, if he has none of the things that only philosophy can provide, he will have a very difficult time making sense of Catholic doctrine. Thus philosophy must be used as an instrument. What is more, those who are involved in this use—those teaching in the seminary, planning the curriculum, or writing the books—should be real philosophers. To have good liturgical art, each pastor need not be an artist, but he should hire somebody who is a real artist rather than a “religious artist.” Those charged with staffing a seminary or with making appointments to the faculty of a Catholic college should be sure they have real philosophers.

Discrimination of the genuine is very difficult here as it is with regard to art. But the fact that a distinction is subtle does not mean that it is unimportant or able to be ignored without bad consequences. A subtle distinction must be constantly kept in mind and constantly respected.

Augustinianism and Thomism

Some might consider it an insult to call a philosopher an Augustinian and an essentialist; but Augustine is a great saint, a father and doctor of the Church. Dr. von Hildebrand, it would seem, is an Augustinian. He insists upon clarification, stresses the affective side, and demands constant contact with experience; his rhetorical style even has a certain touch of Augustinianism about it. Even when Dr. von Hildebrand talked favorably about system, it was fairly clear that the exemplar for the system he would accept could only be a work such as Augustine's *De Trinitate*. This masterpiece is systematic in a certain sense, but it certainly is not a system formed by the canons of the *Posterior Analytics*. The Augustinian tradition is a great one in Christian philosophy and in Dr. von Hildebrand's work one finds an example of how alive, wholesome, and sound it can be today, and how very much in contact with what is of value in contemporary thought. Clearly all can profit very much from this work.

On the other hand, Father Ashley thinks basically as a Thomist. Of course, he also wants clarification in order to understand what things are. But he wants something more than that: he is primarily

interested in explanation, in the knitting together of facts in causal accounts. Even when Father Ashley worked as a phenomenologist, he was still Aristotelian in selecting a definite problem, analyzing it, and responding to it very neatly and beautifully. In speaking well about existentialism, his comments still had the methodological structure taught in the *Posterior Analytics*.

There are here two distinct meanings of "Christian philosophy," two great modes of thought in Christian tradition. There is no need to discard either of these because the difference between them is not one of irreconcilable opposition, but rather a matter of what is deemed important and emphasized. Such differences do not necessarily lead to conflicts or generate issues; the Augustinian and Thomistic approaches can live very comfortably side by side. Thus, there are at least two senses of "Christian philosophy."

Augustine on Nature and Grace

If one conceives philosophy as an attempt to answer the question: how can I live a good life, then philosophy is reduced to ethics or even to prudential judgment. If so, then there can be only three kinds of answers to such questions as: how can one be happy? One kind of answer is reasonable but unsatisfying, because unworkable in practice. A second kind of answer is unreasonable but more satisfying. Such, for example, are the answers proposed by the primitive cultures: they can be put into practice, but demand a great deal of suppression of reason for a fairly well functioning society. The third kind of answer to the moral question is offered by Christianity. It can be satisfying because it can be both reasonable and lived. If one who begins from ethical questions demands that practicability of ethics that is required if the ethics is to be complete, it is inevitable that he end by transcending pure philosophy and entering the realm of faith. The phenomenon of the restless heart, upon which Augustine fastened, is connected with this difficulty. It consists in the fact that such natural goods as truth, justice, and friendship, for which man reasonably strives and which he should be able to attain by his natural ability, are unobtainable by fallen man. Once man is fallen, unless assisted by grace, his performances are always short of his resolutions. To deny this is to deny the doctrine of original sin of which Augustine was so conscious.

What is not obvious is that the experience of failure to achieve what one wishes makes one radically dissatisfied with the natural

end which should be a satisfying life for a reasonable man. Reasonably moderated efforts with fair success would not leave one discontented and the restless heart would not occur. But, in fact, one's efforts are not thus moderated and they inevitably fail.

Augustine did not know that the restlessness he experienced is not universal. Discontent can be avoided if a solution is accepted that involves a certain amount of irrationality. The primitives and many eastern cultures have accepted such solutions, and contemporary western secular humanism also is attempting to establish a solution which carefully delimits the domain in which reason is permitted to operate. Hence restlessness is not inevitable, but only occurs when reason becomes dominant in a culture and makes its full set of demands. Since they cannot be fulfilled, one must either become a Christian or be doomed to be unhappy. That was Augustine's experience.

Speaking naturally, there is no real reason to suppose that man should attain perfect happiness. Yet when one finds his reasonable desires frustrated, he conceives and wishes for perfect happiness. A reasonable person would not wish naturally for what is beyond his grasp; but with revelation he accepts in faith and hope that grace will make perfect happiness supernaturally possible for him. As a result he easily confuses the notion that man by nature is entitled to be perfectly happy with the truth that God by virtue of supernatural gifts has made man to rest in Himself. One thinks that this should be naturally true because he is frustrated with what naturally should satisfy him.

Now if fallen nature were healed without being elevated, man's existential dilemma would be solved just as effectively. In that case he would not desire what he has no right to expect and could achieve all that he reasonably desires. Nature has no exigency for grace except insofar as fallen nature requires to be healed.

Unfortunately, Augustine himself was by no means clear about this distinction between healing grace and elevating grace. How could he be, for he had not well distinguished between nature and grace. Hence he was led to identify man's experienced dissatisfaction with a desire for God, when in fact the natural desire is only a frustrated wish for what is strictly due nature and which, as frustrated, easily leads man to form an irrational desire for perfection. Thus when Augustine comes to look at philosophy, he cannot imagine it ever being satisfactory in itself. Philosophy always must

be transcended, and the philosophy that is transcended is always more or less erroneous. The critique of philosophical errors, Augustine thinks, leads man to transphilosophical truths.

Dr. von Hildebrand's position is Augustinian, but with a difference. He does not try to undo history since Augustine's time in order to take a stand with him, but takes into account the distinction between nature and grace as Augustine never clearly did. Thus Dr. von Hildebrand insists upon the claim of philosophical knowledge to a certain absolute validity. It is the truth itself that counts and he very definitely, clearly, and completely rejects fideism which would allow philosophy to be relativized for the sake of exalting faith.

A second evidence of the character of Dr. von Hildebrand's Augustinianism appears when he urges that one must take into account the phenomena of the Christian saints and describe their virtues. In urging this he notes that it is one thing to look at these phenomenologically and another thing to consider them in the light of faith, concluding that to consider them in the light of faith transcends philosophy. This makes a clear distinction which one does not find in Augustine for whom faith and reason are joined together or, really, not yet adequately distinguished.

Thus in Dr. von Hildebrand's work one finds an Augustinianism that has become sophisticated by incorporating the development of theology in which the distinction between nature and grace has been clarified. There is here no relativism in the form of a fideism which would hold that philosophy can never really lead to anything without faith.

Nature and Grace Confused

However, there is another kind of Augustinianism which fails to make these distinctions. It accepts the potential alternative, inherent in Augustine's confusion, that implies relativism or fideism with respect to natural knowledge and claims that philosophy is really worthless until transformed by faith. This view is not in any genuine sense a Christian philosophy, for a Christian should not accept it. He can see in the light of faith that it is not necessary to reconcile the errors of fallen nature with the truths of redeemed nature.

The proper philosophy for a Christian should be the work of nature healed and already redeemed, not the work of fallen nature;

though, of course, redemption is incomplete and still in process. Pure philosophy is possible only for a Christian, because if one is not a Christian he is affected, whether he realizes it or not, by the alternative to Christianity—fallen and unredeemed nature. If one does not accept faith, he somehow rejects it with a distorting effect. Only if one accepts Christian truth is it possible, though not necessary, for the distinctions required for pure philosophy to be made.

Those who confuse faith and reason should not be considered more Christian as philosophers than those who insist upon distinguishing them. That the confusion of the two is considered more relevant to contemporary problems could be due to a desire on the part of contemporary man not for philosophy but for easy answers, quick satisfaction, or support for a weak faith which becomes nervous unless it finds bolstering from reason.

During the Middle Ages gradual progress was made toward removing the confusion between principles in Augustine. In this the biggest step was made by Thomas Aquinas who clarified the alternative between the assertion of the distinction of faith and reason as compatible with Catholic faith and the denial of this distinction as incompatible with faith.

Aquinas did not think of nature and grace as if they were two layers or compartments. To think of them in that way assumes that they are generically the same and differentiated within what is fundamentally the same schema or single whole. Aquinas never said that grace and nature interpenetrate. This currently popular image is as dangerous as any other, because grace and nature can interpenetrate only if both share characteristics as do objects in a single genus.

Grace and nature for Aquinas are infinitely more diverse than two species of single genus; they are analogous to one another. Grace and nature are so diverse that no level image, or compartment image, or interpenetration image can do justice to their relationship. There can be no third thing within man by which the two are united; the principle of unity between grace and nature lies only in God who is the author and the end of both.

Of course, the Christian is both natural and graced. But to look for a link or a dividing line between the two in man is absurd. Everything about man is natural; and if a man has grace, everything about him is graced. Anything which can be observed,

discerned, or understood in a man, be he Christian or not, is natural. The liturgy of the Eucharist, insofar as it is a visible rite capable of being observed and understood from the observation, is natural. That does not mean that it is not supernatural, for the two are not contrary to one another.

Everything human which man in the state of fallen, redeemed, or integral nature has done is natural. Everything in man is natural; but everything in Christian man—the whole man—is also graced. Even the curl in the saint's beard is graced and just as truly as his freedom is graced, though of course the two are not equally important.

It is an error to think that grace and nature are two moments, aspects, or elements in a single human existence, for this is to relate the two realities of nature and grace to the one abstraction, human existence. Nature and grace are real; human existence is an abstraction. This abstraction either directly vitiates both nature and grace or does so indirectly by subtly reducing one to the other.

Aquinas himself did not see all the implications of his own principles, but after the Reformation, when the Church faced the challenge of widespread confusion about nature and grace, she had the work of Aquinas to use as a starting point for her clarification. The great scholastic theologians went very far toward making this clarification, although their work was not always perfect. The lesser scholastics and the textbook presentations of theology were even less perfect, as popularization always occurs at some cost to truth. Nevertheless, the chief results of the post-Reformation development in the doctrine of grace belong to the essence of Catholic tradition. One cannot go back.

Recent Problems on Nature and Grace

How, then, should one proceed? Obviously, it is our task to make the distinction all the more precise and complete. Only by distinguishing nature and grace completely and removing from our notion of either anything truly characteristic of the other can one come to understand, in the sense that the human mind can understand, the mysterious duality in which God has chosen to create and to re-create man. The implication of such theological progress for Christian life is that grace could be more perfectly understood to transform nature without at all tending to interfere with it, alter it, or suppress it. That grace heals nature is not interference.

This road toward theological progress has not been followed by many during the last twenty years. There has, instead, been a great deal of nostalgia for past ages of theology. Many theologians fear forward movement and are eager to return to the Church fathers, apparently as a way of escaping issues which a Christian's faith and reason should face in our time. Their "new theology" is an out-moded antiquarianism. Unfortunately theology is not an innocent hobby, and more unfortunate still, popular fashions in theology do not follow the most solid work and profit from the effects of the most acute criticism.

In current theology, especially in fashionable popular works, the distinction between nature and grace is completely confused through the identification of the supernatural with the existential. This confusion is found in Father Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel*. "Spiritual" has come to be used ambiguously to refer either to all that pertains to the human person and subject or to what peculiarly pertains to the life of divine grace. Many completely confuse these two, opposing both of them to the natural.

The word "nature" is either treated with disdain or diluted until it is nearly meaningless. However, the existential, personal, and subjective are just as truly natural and distinct from the supernatural as are the anatomical and the physiological. Freedom is as natural as is the curl in one's beard.

From this there results a distinction between two kinds of Augustinianism, resulting from an ambiguity in Augustine himself. One kind of Augustinianism has taken into account subsequent clarification of the distinction between nature and grace, and hence would seem to be fully acceptable. The other kind of Augustinianism falls into the error of confusing nature and grace after they have been distinguished in the more developed doctrine of the later tradition, and such fixated Augustinianism would seem to be quite unacceptable.

The Christian Philosopher

In view of the above, it is now possible to ask what should be accepted as the responsibility and expected as the reward of one's vocation as a Christian philosopher? What should be the direction of the philosophic community; with whom should it cooperate and whom should it oppose in its professional work? Obviously, based

on a respect for nature, a great deal will be demanded for philosophy.

There is a sense in which the Christian philosopher is in the same position as the Christian mathematician, the Christian politician, and the Christian baseball player. This sense usually is quickly set aside in discussions of Christian philosophy as if it were not very significant. Nevertheless this is the most important sense in which one can be a Christian philosopher. Rather than excluding the others, it includes them; hence it is the basic sense because it indicates the one thing that is always necessary.

Just because the term "Christian philosopher" in this sense is the least definite in specification and the least interesting from the point of view of speculative history, its meaning has the greatest importance. "Christian philosopher" in this sense indicates what can be the result only of the conjunction of grace and nature, while the other senses indicate what can be the result of uninformed faith or of delusion. All other senses of "Christian philosopher" have counterparts signifying factors that are natural and that affect philosophy as if they were simple alternatives to Christianity or other modes of human life that one might adopt if he did not happen to be a Christian. This basic sense of "Christian philosopher" has no positive alternative in nature itself.

If one were a Christian and a baseball player, how would he determine what his proper life should be? It would be to play baseball to the best of his ability and at the same time to live as a Christian to the best of his ability. The problem is one of simultaneity, not one of history. History really has little to do with human reality. Time is a factor in human life; but it is one of the less important ones.

There are at least three ways in which one could achieve integration if one were a Christian baseball player. First, one could consider baseball a worthwhile activity in itself. One would want to take part in it because it comes forth from God, like all good things. To the extent that one is a Christian he would want to play better baseball, because he would be more interested in baseball and less interested in himself. Dr. von Hildebrand has noted this above where he discussed intrinsic value.

In the second place, baseball is a Christlike activity which requires the use of intelligence and freedom, spirit, muscle, and skill. It is Christlike, simply because it is human. Since to the extent that

one is a Christian he would want to be as Christlike as possible, he would try to play better baseball.

In the third place, if one loved God as a Christian, one would want to achieve whatever good he could as a better imitation of His perfection. One's baseball playing would be the stuff, the real content, of one's Christian life. Therefore one would do it and place it on the altar at the offertory to be transformed in Christ. This sacrifice of baseball on the altar would imply that it was played with charitable love for one's family, teammates, and, not least, spectators. One would want to entertain them, because charity had led one into the world to make an irreplaceable contribution to human good, and this particular good would be what one would have to share with others.

Perhaps some baseball players have approached this Christian ideal. Unfortunately, philosophers are subject to somewhat more temptations in their professional lives than are baseball players. They should simply be doing philosophy to the hilt. It is not their business as philosophers to explicate the faith or to devote themselves to the concerns of theology, though if philosophy helps theology so much the better.

The primary business of the philosopher is speculative truth, not the happy life. Although ethics is an important philosophic concern, it should remain a subordinate one. The sense of "Christian philosophy" which admits of a pure metaphysics is superior to the sense which basically restricts philosophy to the ethical. Truth is not exclusively theoretical, but it is primarily so.

Personalism

There is a strong trend observable in Catholic philosophy today toward a type of personalism or degenerate existentialism (as Dr. von Hildebrand observed in his "Dangers in Constructing a Contemporary Christian Philosophy," in *Christian Philosophy in the College and Seminary*, ed. George F. McLean, O.M.I. [Washington: The Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1966]), and which presupposes the unacceptable mode of Augustinianism. Metaphysics is said to be a study of man and being, or of being in relation to man. This division of the subject of metaphysics establishes man as part of its primary and specifying object. There is no problem if ethics is the main concern of a certain philosopher, so long as he does not reject the right of metaphysics to a position beyond ethics, though

such a philosopher simply is not a metaphysician. But there is a major problem if ethics is substituted for metaphysics, for then man is constituted the center of all things.

If the subject matter of metaphysics is man and being, then man is exempted from his proper place within being. Rather than being considered where he belongs within being, he is set apart as a special principle and thus becomes the subject for metaphysics insofar as he is divided against the rest of being. The presuppositions underlying this view are subjectivistic. Once based on this ground a metaphysics can never be built straight and true.

This approach cannot escape all the Kantian problems. In truth, the only real principle divided against the being metaphysics studies is God. To take as the primary and specifying subject matter of metaphysics both man and being is implicitly to confuse, however remotely, man with God. God alone remains outside the being metaphysics studies as its principle. Man is a principle of truth, but he is included in, rather than constituting a transcendent principle of, the being studied by metaphysics.

If "man," that is consciousness or subjectivity, is set over against being from the outset, then to be knowing and to be real necessarily appear as incompatible, and reality must be characterized as what always transcends subjectivity. Consciousness becomes a negation or gap. Consequently, since it is impossible that in God reality and consciousness should be perfectly identified, God, as an impossible ideal, cannot exist. In this way Sartre consistently works out the position that starts from man and being.

The truth in existentialism can be saved in a more adequate metaphysics, which does justice to all the orders of being without distorting everything by unduly exalting human subjectivity. Christian ethics can learn from existentialism, just as it has learned from phenomenology. But Christian ethics is only a secondary concern of philosophy and cannot be allowed to become the primary concern, without losing the humility man's place in reality requires. In that case it would become a mixture of bad philosophy and good faith, for since only Christianity offers a reasonable and satisfying answer to man's most self-centered questions, ethics hardly can exist without eventually calling on faith.

Some turn to existential philosophy as superior to naturalism in its treatment of the problems of metaphysics and theology, though both naturalism and existentialism are reductionisms merely using

different devices and reducing to diverse modes of entity. Certainly, one has trouble if he imagines God to cause free acts in the same way that a natural cause causes a natural effect; but one also has trouble if he imagines God to cause free acts in the same way that one person causes the free acts of another. Persuasion is as little the way that God causes free acts as is a physical push and the fact that persuasion is more personal than the push does not mean it is more like the divine causality of human action. Divine causality altogether transcends both modes of finite causality, and difficulties will be encountered equally whichever of these it erroneously is thought to be.

Others turn to existential philosophy in order to avoid abstractions and deal with the concrete and with real life. This concrete-abstract distinction is used constantly today as a rhetorical device. An unwanted position is called a partial view, a mere abstraction, "all right in theory, but not reality." There are endless opportunities to do this because to perceive is to abstract, to think is to abstract, and to be other than God is to be abstract. The standard of the concrete is the all-perfect. Any dialectician can easily apply this standard to one's ideas and so condemn them as merely abstract.

Hegel was expert in the use of this device and it is now used by all the dialecticians among the anti-Hegelians: pragmatists, dialectical materialists, and existentialists. It should be noticed that the accuser's concrete also is abstract, and often in a less intelligible and more emotional way. The scholastic saying: to abstract is not to lie, is founded on the fact that not-to-be-God is not the same as to-be-nothing. Finite reality is not unreality and partial falsehood, despite what Hegel says. In fact, anyone who would agree with Hegel must simply be substituting his own version of truth, which is a different partial truth, for divine truth.

The Contemporary Task of the Christian Philosopher

One's responsibility as a philosopher is to reality and to truth. The philosopher must be a constant critic of what is fashionable because all movements oscillate irrationally between extremes. This is as true of movements in the Church as it is of any others. When liberalism is strong, it is the task of the philosophers to defend the conservative values. When conservatism is dominant, it is his task to defend the liberal values. When legalism is dominant in morality, he should stress personal values and freedom. But when situation-

ism begins to appear, he should defend objective values including such material goods as human life and the procreative good which is an essential and irreducible human value.

Only reason can moderate the irrational swings of the movement between an absurd legalism and a pseudo-mystical personalism. It is the most solemn obligation of the Christian philosopher to try to inject some reason. Because he seeks to follow reason it will forever be necessary for the Christian philosopher, in accord with the mind of the Church, to oppose the popular trend in the Church.

This responsibility is no less serious during a time of Christian renewal when there is increased hope for Christian reunion. One's actual faith, hope, and charity are somewhat imperfect and to this degree can mislead one as well as guide him aright. The ecumenical movement seems to be unqualifiedly good and is naturally close to all hearts. Still if one's actual charity is not perfect but mixed with a certain amount of selfishness, then even here this heart can lead one astray.

One subtle way to be selfish, especially common among Americans, is to want to be liked and to get along well with everyone in an affable and relaxed fashion. Pleasant personal relations are easily mistaken for charity and relationships purportedly grounded in love can involve exploitation which is hidden or disguised. True and perfect charity could never trespass upon the rights of nature or of reason, but imperfect charity which is sentimental and accompanied by rationalization easily can trample over their claims.

Thus the chief present task of Christian philosophers is to remain at their post, defending both nature and reason. The principle of subsidiarity applies here; each sphere should have its own distinct and responsible authority and subordinate spheres should not concern themselves with the problems of the whole. Philosophy can help Christian renewal best by doing its own work well. It is the duty of philosophy to guard theologians, the pastorally oriented bishops, as well as the Christian community at large against an excessive enthusiasm which easily produces a willingness to surrender rational consistency and such merely natural goods as the initiation of human life.

Far from impeding the ecumenical movement, labor at the philosopher's proper task will be of great assistance. Such labor can steer the movement away from many blind paths into which it otherwise might turn and from which it would only have to return

again. The Holy Spirit never will sanction a Christian unity based upon the violation of reason or of natural goods. God has made us rational animals and undoubtedly wants us to behave accordingly, as did the Incarnate Word of God Himself.

How is one to integrate his complex vocation of being simultaneously a pure philosopher and a Catholic Christian? The advice of Leo XIII is to start from those in tradition who best achieved integration in the fulfillment of their office; in particular, he proposed Thomas Aquinas as a model. It would not be in accord with Leo's advice and the disciplinary intent of the Church to use copious quotations from Aquinas to illustrate thinking that originated elsewhere. What is meant is rather to begin from Aquinas and to depart from him precisely as far as evidence and reason demand. Each philosopher must ultimately judge these demands, using his sources of evidence and his reason. He cannot avoid final responsibility for his own judgment, because he has no philosophic superior.

Philosophic argument is not a strategy of proselytizing. Genuine philosophy must criticize other philosophy and offer itself to all other philosophy for criticism. This exchange is not a dialogue; it is a bloody conflict without which philosophy would not progress. To reject unlimited critique is to reject philosophy and manifest oneself interested only in talking with those who share a special jargon or accept a special set of presuppositions which are not to be criticized.

The chief task of the Christian philosopher is to bring his best efforts, his grace assisted and hope comforted efforts, to bear upon current philosophical problems. For most of us this should mean the problems of concern to English-speaking philosophers. Problems engaging continental thinkers should be a secondary concern for us, because we are less likely to contribute effectively to the work to be done on them, while the work that waits here certainly is not going to be done by Catholic philosophers in Germany, France, or Italy.

In sum, the Christian philosopher's primary aim should be to do the work of speculative philosophy—first philosophy, pure metaphysics—and this work can and should be done as pure philosophy. A secondary, but by no means incidental concern, should be the work of ethics. Ethics cannot remain pure philosophy if it becomes concerned with moral dynamics, with the achievement of the good

life. Pure philosophy can tell us what a good human life should be, but it cannot provide effective guidance, since one does not do that which he would.

Christianity is not merely a religion, a supramoral solution to man's existential problem. Primarily, Christianity is the inroad of God upon creation. The inroad is called Christ and all the effects of God in creation are connected with the Incarnation. Christianity also is a meaningful revelation received by man through and in symbols, especially linguistic ones. Finally, Christianity is the use of all things in the worship of God.

This Christian use of all things in the worship of God sacramentalizes creation in a way that essentially transcends the merely religious. Nature of itself could not achieve such a thing; but redeemed nature with grace will achieve it. The Christian attitude demands unqualified respect for all natural values, because every instrument must first have its own action. Man is to be saved only because he is part of a whole creation which is to be supernaturalized. All the rest of creation is for the perfection of rational creatures only because they are the best parts of a universe whose all-inclusive order is the very best of created realities. That one's own beatitude should reflect divine goodness is more important than that it should fulfill one's desires, though the two are in no way opposed.

Consequently, it is important to recognize and respect immanent, natural, non-moral, and non-personal values. What is most important is not one's salvation, but the divine goodness. Therefore, the value inherent in the procreative good or in speculative truth must be loved in such a way that one would no more directly violate them than he would directly violate mutual love or Christian reunion.

In times past philosophy was given a large place in the curriculum of Catholic colleges because it was thought necessary for ethics and theology, or because it was thought to be good apologetics, or because the college philosophy curriculum was adapted from the seminary program. Now philosophy should keep an important place in the college curriculum because of a recognition of its inherent value. Philosophy should be loved for its own sake by every Christian, even if it butters no bread, makes no dialogue, or offers no help to ecumenism. Philosophy belongs to the perfec-

tion of the kingdom of God, for that kingdom is secular too, and all things, including pure speculation, must be restored to God through Christ.