

A. E. Taylor has told me, that our age has more to learn from St. Bonaventura than from St. Thomas. I should like to believe that because I am by temperament a Platonist rather than an Aristotelian. But no one is equal to St. Thomas as a map-maker of the spiritual and moral world. If our need is, as I think, first and foremost for such a map, we do well to go back to him, making such modifications as our own survey may dictate.

TASKS FOR THOMISTS

Some Reflections on 'Thomism and Modern Needs' by His Grace
the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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The address by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury to the London Aquinas Society was a memorable and important event. To such of us as are students of St. Thomas, teachers and thinkers guided by his principles and thought, it was a very great encouragement. The mere fact that a contemporary thinker and scholar of the calibre of Dr. Temple, who is holder of the most eminent position in the Anglican Communion and exercises so considerable an influence on national life, should think it worth his while to turn from his many and pressing public duties to address us, was an event which should not lightly be forgotten, and which should provide us with stimulus for many years to come.

But his address was something more than an encouragement; it was a very serious challenge. Dr. Temple is a Christian leader who has shown himself to be quite exceptionally keenly aware of 'modern needs' and full of 'compassion for the multitude.' His realisation of the unique role which pupils of St. Thomas have to play in meeting those needs and in providing for the hunger of the multitude presents us with claims which we dare not disregard. The very fact that he addresses us 'from outside' makes his claims upon our attention all the more compelling. For must it not be admitted that we

thomists are sometimes apt to forget our responsibilities to the world and the age in which we find ourselves, to live and work in academic isolation, too little heedful of the crying spiritual and intellectual needs of others and of our own obligation to impart to them the heritage entrusted to us—forgetful even of the opening words of the *Summa* itself and of the whole purpose for which it was written?

But it is not only in this that His Grace's words should provide us with an occasion for salutary self-examination. He offers us not only encouragement and stimulus, but also the still greater charity of frank criticism. If we are sincere in our endeavour to use the *Summa* for the purpose for which it was written—as an instrument for teaching the universal truth—we must often ask ourselves the questions—How far are we being understood, or misunderstood? How far do we ourselves understand? How far are we truly representing—or misrepresenting—St. Thomas' own mind? How far are we applying to our own contemporaries the teaching *method* of St. Thomas (I.117.1)¹ which is to lead the pupil from what he already knows to the truths which he does not yet know? And how far are we, not merely living selfishly on the capital which St. Thomas has left us, but also developing it and making it bear fruit in ourselves and others?

He is a poor thomist who supposes that St. Thomas has said all that there is to be said, even regarding the subjects which he explicitly considered and discussed. Yet it may well be asked whether, on those very points to which His Grace draws our attention, St. Thomas has not far more to say than is commonly appreciated, or which is sufficiently brought out by his contemporary exponents. Less with a view to 'correcting' or 'confuting' Dr. Temple than to taking advantage of his 'six points' for an examination of our own consciences, his generous invitation for comment cannot be allowed to go by default.

The task is made all the easier for us by the fact that Dr. Temple is already disposed to be so sympathetic and understanding a critic. His own writings, however much we may on occasion be compelled to disagree with their premisses or their conclusions, have all been marked by that same solicitude to overcome the dichotomy of Grace and Nature which is characteristic of St. Thomas's own thought. He dispenses us at the outset from the vindication of Natural Theology and of the principles of Analogy, which perhaps are the most urgent tasks which confront thomists to-day. But the 'six points'

¹ All references in the text of this paper are to works of St. Thomas. When the title of the work is not given, the reference is to the *Summa Theologica*.

which His Grace enumerates make hardly less urgent demands upon us; for they very neatly summarise misgivings concerning St. Thomas's teaching which are by no means peculiar to Dr. Temple, but are in fact very widespread. Adequate treatment of any one of them would call for a monograph which would far exceed the most generous allowance of space which could be asked for from the Editor of *BLACKFRIARS*. What is here offered is not to be understood as in any way claiming to be an adequate 'reply'; still less as an official and authorised statement by some 'thomist school.' Rather would we try to offer the purely preliminary and personal reflections of one student of St. Thomas, which, it may be hoped, may stimulate further study by others more competent, and suggest where such lines might be more thoroughly pursued.

Since the present writer has recently drawn attention to the prominent and important part which 'affective knowledge' plays in St. Thomas's thought,² and hopes before long to be able to resume the subject with some treatment of the inter-relation of intellect and will, he may perhaps be pardoned from omitting any consideration of His Grace's 'Fifth Point' from the present paper. The first and third 'Points' are so closely related that they may conveniently be discussed together.

RECOGNITION THAT THE SOCIAL ORDER IS NO LONGER STATIC (1).

A NEW EMPHASIS ON RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP (3).

Was the social order which St. Thomas knew indeed quite so static as His Grace suggests? The present writer is in no position to dispute or question it; but it seems worth recalling that there are qualified historians who present a very different view of the alleged 'stability' of the social framework of the thirteenth century and of St. Thomas's position and attitude in its regard. Their findings, if verified, would seem to be by no means irrelevant to the point at issue. P. Mandonnet, for instance, presents the period as one of profound and far-reaching upheaval, economic, social, political and cultural. It was the time, he tells us, precisely of the breakdown of the feudal system. Agricultural over-production, joined with increase in population, was leading to widespread emancipation from the glebe. Consequent on this were the beginnings and rapid expansion of private enterprise in industry and trade, their co-ordination by free association in guilds, the rise of townships and communes,

² *BLACKFRIARS*, Jan., 1943, pp. 8 ff.; April, 1943, pp. 126 ff.

of minting and banking, of universities, of urban civilisation generally. It was (if we are to believe the same authority) a period of intense struggle between these newly emancipated 'bourgeois' classes and the old feudal landlords, and of profound modifications by way of centralisation and absorption in the structure of feudal lordship itself; a period also of bloody internecine struggle within the new bourgeois classes themselves, as well as 'les premières formations nationales qui donnent naissance aux grands états de l'âge moderne.' Political neo-paganism reigned in the Imperial court; Albigensianism threatened not only the established social order, but also the traditional presuppositions of any social order at all. In the world of learning and culture, the discovery of the 'New Aristotle' and his 'Arabian' commentators had wrought an intellectual unsettlement which P. Mandonnet considers more radical than the more advertised 'Renaissance' of the 15th and 16th centuries. It was, he argues, precisely to cope with the conditions brought about by these revolutionary changes (for which the old monastic orders, themselves gravely enmeshed in the decaying feudal system, had shown themselves inadequate) that the Order of Preachers, which St. Thomas joined, came into existence.³

Was St. Thomas unaware of these profound changes which were going on in the world in which he lived? Was his own work—those parts of his work in particular which are directly concerned with social and economic ethics—unconcerned with the revolutionary happenings of his own time? Or were they framed solely on the presupposition that the social and economic relations which had subsisted within the feudal system were static and immutable? He was himself of feudal stock, educated in the feudal-monastic environment. Against considerable, and indeed violent, opposition from his own family, he joined the new Order of Preachers. But what is more remarkable is that his social and economic conclusions almost entirely ignore the 'old order' of feudalism, and indeed any order in which agriculture was predominant. Troeltsch goes so far as to say:

'In his (St. Thomas's) view, man is naturally a town-dweller . . . It is only from this standpoint, and not from the point of view of feudal society, that the claim of the social theory is developed, that all income and all distinctions must be based upon the personal contribution of labour. That is a question of civil ethics, not of feudal ethics. St. Thomas, who is himself an off-

³ Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., *Saint Dominique* (1921), pp. 19 ff. Cf. his *Siger de Brabant*, c.i. For a similar estimate of 13th century social and economic conditions, see Bede Jarrett, O.P., *Mediaeval Socialism*, pp. 20, 21.

shoot of the feudal nobility, ignores feudal tenure and the feudal system. The very one-sided orientation of St. Thomas towards the city . . . is patriarchal within the limits of the necessary concessions to the unavoidable natural conditions of power and natural distinctions, but it is in no wise feudal. It is bourgeois in the sense of the agrarian-industrial town . . .'⁴

Troeltsch sees St. Thomas's teaching concerning the 'just price' itself as precisely an application of permanent principle to the new conditions of his own time. And indeed it would be almost meaningless in the feudal framework. Professor Tawney has written :

'In reality, whatever may be thought of their conclusions, both the occasion and the purpose of scholastic speculations upon economic questions were eminently practical. The movement which prompted them was the growth of trade, of town life, and of a commercial economy, in a world whose social categories were still those of the self-sufficing village and the feudal hierarchy. The object of their authors was to solve the problems to which such developments gave rise. . . Viewed by posterity as reactionaries . . . in their own age they were the pioneers of a liberal intellectual movement. By lifting the weight of antiquated formulae, they cleared a space within the stiff framework of religious authority for new and mobile economic interests, and thus supplied an intellectual justification for developments which earlier generations would have condemned.'⁵

This question of the stability or instability of the 13th century need not, however, detain us. It is of interest only to the extent that it may show how far St. Thomas himself practised what he preached. Of more immediate concern is what he actually preached.

Certainly, 'the social teaching of St. Thomas has in view the conditions of his own time in its *applications*' (italics mine). But equally certainly he did not and could not regard those or any other conditions as permanent and stable. His *De Regno*, in particular, reveals how voraciously he had read such secular history as was available to him, how acutely he was aware of the manifold variety of forms of social organisation and government in human history, and of the extent to which these are and should be conditioned by circumstances of place and time, available means of production, temperament, education and climate. We shall, indeed, find in his pages no such dubious discipline as a clear-cut 'philosophy of history,' still less any doctrinaire theory of inevitable progress.⁶

⁴ *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, Vol. I, pp. 318-9.

⁵ *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Pelican edn.), p. 44.

⁶ Cf. *Spengler views the Machine Age*. BLACKFRIARS, Jan. 1932, p. 17.

He had read and commented with approval on the First Book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and he was aware that man had, on the whole, advanced in the sciences and arts (*In Metaph.*I.lects.4,5, etc.). He had rendered and pondered deeply on his Bible, and he was well aware of the progressive character of man's apprehension of Revelation (II.II.1.7), and of the fact that that apprehension was conditioned by the needs provoked by social and political conditions of the time (II.II.174.6ad2). He was no less convinced of man's tendency to deteriorate spiritually and morally (III.1.6). He will not allow that what was right in the primitive Church is necessarily right in the Church of his own age (e.g. *In Boeth.de Trin.*ii.3ad1).

It does not seem to me that St. Thomas can justly be charged with disregard for the vicissitudes of time and place; but it is equally certain that he is not time-obsessed; and here precisely is perhaps the great service which he can render to us in our modern needs. The ultimate *principles* of action are permanent and stable; but for that very reason their *applications* are indefinitely variable if their ends are to be realised. In this very fact St. Thomas sees the necessity for the virtue of *prudentia* in the individual, and for human positive law and government in society. The moral sciences alone can inform us only concerning universal aims and general norms and principles of conduct, and are by themselves impotent to ensure and direct right action (*De Virtutibus*, I.6ad1). For action is always in the concrete, the singular, and here-and-now; and for the direction of these *prudentia* is indispensable (*ibid.*). *Prudentia* is precisely concerned with the particular and concrete (II.II.47.3), with the contingent in all its given circumstances (II.II.49.6), with the realistic recognition and application of given means to ultimate ends (II.II.47.1). So St. Thomas quotes approvingly Cicero's dictum that *prudentia* involves 'learning from past experience, awareness of present actualities, and foresight regarding future contingencies' (III.II.1ad3). It is the function of *prudentia* to direct present actualities to ultimate purposes (I.22.1), and it should regulate the whole of human life and activity (I.II.57.4ad3).

What *prudentia* is to the individual, that is *government* to society (II.II.47.10,11). Government is needful, not only because of human sin, but also because the determination and application of general principles to changing concrete circumstances is necessary from the very nature of things (I.96.3;4). Even without the Fall, diversity of temperament, climate and levels of cultural attainment, would necessitate diversities of social organisation (*ib.*3). Human legislation is necessary (among other reasons) precisely in order to apply the general principles of natural law to changing circumstances of

time and place (I.II.95.2). Hence good statute law must be 'just, feasible, in accord with nature, in accord with national tradition, suitable to circumstances of time and place' (I.II.95.3). Hence again St. Thomas reiterates the principle that there must be diversities of laws for diversities of peoples and periods (I.II.91.5ad1; 6; 96.2; 100.2; 104.3ad2, etc.). Human legislation, he maintains, is and ought to be changeable and variable, because man himself is changeable, not indeed in his essence, but in his attainments and circumstances. Man, indeed, tends to advance in his intellectual attainments ('quia humanae rationi naturale esse videtur ut gradatim ab imperfecto ad perfectum perveniat'), and this both culturally ('in speculativis') and technically ('in operabilibus'); this fact as well as the changeableness of the external conditions in which men find themselves demands the changeableness of statute law and social organisation (I.II.97.1). This principle is indeed to be qualified by a certain conservatism—great need or the evident iniquity or harmfulness of existing legislation can alone justify its abrogation (I.II.97.2)—but it cannot well be maintained that St. Thomas would have us ignore the variability of man and human circumstance in the matter of social organisation and legislation.

It may be confessed that this seems sometimes to be overlooked by some of his disciples; a too facile 'thomism' may too easily be led to confuse St. Thomas's conclusions with his premisses and both with their particular and transitory applications.⁷ To the extent that such a tendency still exists, it may be hoped that Maritain's great work, *True Humanism*, may provide a remedy. Its thorough examination of the whole matter, and its insistence on the analogical character of the applicability of St. Thomas's social principles, ought permanently to cure us of any tendency to unrealistic idealism and disregard of social change.

Of course it is true that St. Thomas never envisaged the industrial revolution and the gigantic complications which it introduced into the social structure, especially in the application to it of the principles of distributive justice. What is certain is that those principles themselves do not merely permit but positively demand searching criticism of the 'justifiability of the social and economic order which we find existing.' St. Thomas's principles do not merely summon us to a sense of 'responsibility for upholding it, mending it or ending it,' they also condemn the whole situation which to-day renders the individual impotent in any effective way to implement his responsibility. His great value to us to-day would seem to lie especially in this, that

⁷ Cf. *Christendoms, New or Old?* BLACKFRIARS, Nov. 1938, pp. 795 ff.

he will summon us constantly away both from a 'static' idealism concerned only with ends, and a 'fluid' opportunism wherein we became lost and carried away in the purposeless flow of transitory means. He will insist always that we direct means to ends.

And if he would seem to be incapable of envisaging a tranquil and just society in which status, other than that established by the unregulated chances of economic fortune, has no part to play—are we to-day still able to gainsay him? Are we not at last discovering that emancipation from status means in effect only the emancipation of the possessing classes, and that only status can in the long run render effective that freedom and security without which contract itself is only slavery writ large?⁸ Are we not ourselves re-discovering, from the bitter experience of history, that some functional differentiation of society, involving rights and mutual obligations in its several layers is indispensable for the 'good life' and inseparable from man as *animal sociale*?⁹ The gigantic increase and concentration of wealth, and so of power, would seem to be at last forcing us to the recognition of the fact. European social and economic history would have been very different had it take to heart St. Thomas's insistence on the necessity for an organic structure of society at the dawn of the 'Bourgeois Revolution.' 'Beveridge and all that' seems to herald the beginnings of a new and mammoth feudalism, with all its corresponding potentialities for mammoth good and mammoth evil. St. Thomas was well aware of the advantages of centralised government and power; but one of these was the relative ease with which it could be curbed or removed when it proved itself tyrannical (*De Regno* I.6). The very power of the newest Leviathan puts this consideration out of court, and the threat to fundamental freedoms involved in the very technique necessary for restoring and safeguarding them presents us with a problem of unprecedented perplexity and magnitude.

St. Thomas will give us no ready-made solution of the dilemma inherent in the very aim of 'planning for freedom' under modern conditions. But his principles will not allow us to evade it, nor ever to neglect ends in the search for means.

⁸ Cf. the excellent preface to Mr. Middleton Murry's *Heaven—and Earth*.

⁹ This is not only the 'philosophia perennis' of European tradition; it is even more strongly emphasised in the ancient wisdom of the East. Cf. Dr. R. Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, pp. 100 ff. Kierkegaard's *The Present Age* and Maritain's essay on *Human Equality* (in *Redeeming the Time*) are also full of salutary reflections on the matter.

*A FULLER APPRECIATION OF INDIVIDUAL
PERSONALITY (2).*

It seems only fair to the reader, who may be unacquainted with His Grace's own mind on this subject, to point out that no English writer has been more severely critical of the 'Cartesian Faux-Pas' than Dr. Temple himself. 'If I were asked,' he has written, 'what was the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe I should be strongly tempted to answer that it was that period of leisure when René Descartes, having no claims to meet, remained for a whole day "shut up with a stove" . . . That many of our worst troubles not only in philosophy, but also in politics and economics, with all that this means for human happiness or misery, are closely associated with the habit of thought then established I cannot doubt.'¹⁰ Dr. Temple's subsequent criticism of that 'habit of thought,' though arrived at independently and in other terms, runs on lines which a thomist cannot fail to recognise as his own. This is particularly the case when Dr. Temple goes on to quote von Hügel's criticism of post-Cartesian habits of thought to the effect that they 'take for granted, as rock-certain, what is demonstrably non-existent: "I think" instead of "I think such and such realities."' ¹¹ More recently, writing on the same subject, in his magnificent Supplement to *The Christian News-Letter*¹² it is precisely to thomist thought, as represented by Maritain, with its distinction of personality from individuality, that His Grace appeals. And if Dr. Temple would urge that 'many gains are associated also'¹³ with post-Cartesian developments, and that 'they include something true and important,' he will find the most constructive and realistic modern thomist thought in full accord with him. 'It is impossible . . . to conceive that the sufferings and experiences of the modern age have been useless. This age . . . sought to rehabilitate the creature; it has pursued that end along evil roads, but it is our duty to recognise and save the truth which is hidden, is held prisoner, in that aim'¹⁴. The conviction of the 'irreversibility of the movement of history,' of the need to the integration of individuality (at once developed and perverted in the

¹⁰ *Nature, Man and God*. 'The Cartesian Faux-Pas,' p. 57.

¹¹ *Ib.* p. 79. Cf. von Hügel, *The Reality of God*, p. 188. Regarding the thomist premisses for this line of criticism, see BLACKFRIARS, April, 1943, pp. 126-7.

¹² Dec. 29th, 1943, 'What Christians Stand for in the Secular World,' republished by the S.C.M. Press, price 6d., p. 9.

¹³ *Nature, Man and God*, p. 57.

¹⁴ J. Maritain, *True Humanism*, p. 134.

'modern' Western world), with personality, of the imperative demand, in short, to 'redeem the time'—all this has been the *leitmotiv* of Maritain's later work, governed and inspired by the thought of St. Thomas himself. It is not difficult to detect similar preoccupations and convictions behind the work of many other contemporary Thomists, both at home¹⁵ and abroad.

I cannot think, then, that there can be any very fundamental disagreement under this heading between Dr. Temple and St. Thomas. Nor, perhaps, can his modern disciples be justly charged with negligence or indifference in cultivating this field. Indeed, I think it has been shown, and that Dr. Temple would himself agree, that the Thomist distinction of principles of individuality from the person, and their co-relation as subordinate to final ends, provide precisely the principles of solution to the problems and dilemmas into which Descartes' 'false step' has landed us. Nor can the present writer offer very much in addition to the work already done in this sphere, except perhaps to comment on one or two of His Grace's phrases, and to suggest where, and on what lines, there is still work to be done.

'*Persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura*' (I.29.3). St. Thomas is never more liberal with superlatives than strict truth requires; and 'appreciation of personality' can be no fuller than this. Moreover the assertion is a mere prelude to a justification of the attribution of Personality to Deity. It can hardly be seriously contended that there is any depreciation of Personality in the writings of St. Thomas; nor, I fancy, is this the ground of any complaint on the part of Dr. Temple. Again, it could hardly be maintained that St. Thomas was unaware of the many profound differences of characteristics and endowments as between man and man—differences physical, temperamental, moral, intellectual, spiritual and supernatural. It would be laborious, and presumably superfluous, to quote him under these several heads to prove that he was not blind to so obvious a fact of everyday experience.

There is, I fancy, something deeper than this in Dr. Temple's complaint that, 'To me it often seems as if St. Thomas is often speaking of the human *genus* without due recognition of the fact that one characteristic of this *genus*, differentiating it from all others, is the high degree of individuality discoverable in the specimens—a degree so high as to make the particularity of each as fully constitutive of his essence as the generic quality.' But it is just here, I believe, that St. Thomas's familiar analysis of man in the categories of

¹⁵ Most obviously, perhaps, in Fr. Gerald Vann's *Morals Makyth Man*, especially Part II.

Persona, Natura, Principia individuantia, Actus, Objecta, Habitus, Potentiae, can be of the greatest assistance in 'redeeming the time,' and in guiding us in 'applied ethics' in accordance with our present condition.

This analysis cannot be undertaken or reproduced here in detail; but its relevance may be briefly indicated. The most deplorable outcome of Descartes' cogitations has surely been the almost inextricable confusion in subsequent thought between 'the man *who* exists' (the Person or Self), '*what* he is' (the essence or nature) and '*what* he *has*' (the rest). The tendency of man in practice to identify his Ego with his acts, habits, moods, temperaments, even in rarer moments with the generic 'essence' of 'humanity' is notorious. But nothing but disaster can ensue when this confusion is elevated to a theory, or the confusion rendered so inextricable that every way of escape from its ravages becomes blocked. What a man *has* and should *use* inevitably becomes identified both with *what* he is, and both with the Self or Person *that* is and *has*. Applied to ethics this leads to the inevitable substitution of means for ends, and the consequent elevation of racial, group, class or individual peculiarities to the position of ultimate values. These, in consequence, tyrannise over both the person and the community.

The immense vogue of Indian philosophy and yoga, as well as that of Jung's psychology, seems to be largely due to the fact that they offer both a theory and a technique of escape from this illusion and this oppression. The latter, with its clear differentiation of the Ego and the Self, the former with its processes of 'discrimination' of Jiva from Atman and of both from the 'gunas' and their manifestations, undoubtedly represent a salutary recall to the *philosophia perennis*. Western thought itself, even independently of tradition, shows promising signs of a return to sanity in this respect. Perhaps we can already see a trace of this in Kant's somewhat enigmatic distinction between the 'empirical' ego or consciousness and consciousness *überhaupt*—than which, perhaps, there has been no greater bone of contention among his followers and interpreters. But this healthy movement does not really start until Kierkegaard. Unlike Descartes with his stove, Kierkegaard found 'claims to meet'—the imperious personal claims of Regina Olsen, and of God. These claims led him to a revolt from the monstrous pretensions of Hegelian Ideas to omniscience, and to the whole movement away from the 'objectivisation of the subject,' of which, perhaps Buber's *I and Thou* is the finest product to date. But the 'existentialist' movement seems still to be, as Marcel de Corte has argued, vitiated by idealist confusions between the ontological and the epistemological, and it may be sug-

gested that among the imperative tasks which confront thomists at the present time is a fuller drawing out of the implications of St. Thomas's teaching in the matter. 'For,' as a BLACKFRIARS contributor has recently observed, 'since Kant . . . the centre of philosophic interest has passed from the notion of substance to that of subject; and it is the task of the modern "scholastic" to inaugurate a more strict metaphysical analysis of the latter notion, to explore the relations between modern epistemological theory and the philosophy of being, and, above all, to give an ontological framework to the concept, or experience, of "person."' ¹⁶

Much that is truly helpful and suggestive has already been done in this direction by thomists such as Maritain (in his *Preface to Metaphysics*), Gilson (in his *God and Philosophy*) and more especially by Marcel de Corte (in *La philosophie de Gabriel Marcel*). But there are two fields which might seem to offer particularly fertile results were they more sedulously cultivated.

St. Thomas's detailed scrutiny of the peculiarities which attend the meaning and use of the word 'person,' both in the singular (I.29) and in the plural (I.30) would seem to have immense implications, its re-examination might go far to obviate a good deal of the fallacious thinking on the subject which has characterised much post-Cartesian thought. Ability to distinguish between the use of the word 'person' as signifying *individuum vagum* (which as such does not exist) and as *singularis designatus* (which as such exists, but as existing escapes all general categories—cf. I.30.4) might have saved us from many 'fallacies of equivocation' in much writing on 'personality.' It will certainly help us to understand why St. Thomas did not, and could not, bring the real existing person within the general categories of 'objective' conceptual thought. The latent assumption that the 'Self' in 'Self-consciousness' could come within the scope of 'clear ideas' is perhaps the original sin of the 'Cartesian Faux-pas.' It is this which leads inevitably to the identification of the Self with general and strictly 'conceivable' qualities of the Self which are in fact distinct from it, and which if confused with it can only tyrannise over it. It is a mistake which St. Thomas's own clear thinking in the preliminary discipline of predicamental logic would itself render impossible; for clear thinking itself discovers and defines the limits of the possibilities of clear thought.

Closely associated with this purely logical analysis, is St. Thomas's profound inquiry into the characteristics and limitations of apperception (especially in I.87 and *De Ver.* x.7,8,9). While knowledge

¹⁶ January, 1944, p. 38.

of common characteristics whether essential or accidental, which are possessed by the Self, but are distinct from it, is both given in experience (in our knowledge of the other), and may further become by reflection the object of scientific examination and philosophical investigation and generalisation, perception of the self or 'I' is and can be only 'non-quidditative,' experimental and existential (cf. *De Ver.* x.8 with *ibid.* 9). That I am is a certain 'experience' given in knowledge (and, love) of the other and more fully in perception and love of the Self; *what* that 'I' in its singularity is, is beyond the range of intellectual apprehension, for 'I' am subject and not object. Only in the transcendental 'Thought of Thinking,' where the Subject-Object distinction is wholly transcended, is a Logos both adequate to, and consubstantial with, the Knower (and therefore itself to be called Knower and Person) even thinkable (cf. I.34.1,2). In our own very restricted, and purely existential, self-perception, St. Thomas sees the reflection (*imago analogiæ*) of the 'made Trinity,' the basic aptitude which is the precondition of the '*imago conformitatis*' whereby, through grace, man is rendered truly God-like, wherein the 'Self' perceived (still purely existentially, and indeed in the last analysis negatively) is God Himself (cf. I.93.4,5,8, and *De Ver.* x.7).

Fine work has been done by the late Fr. Gardeil¹⁷ and others regarding the relevance of St. Thomas's conception of apperception to mystical experience and to the whole life of grace. But there still seems room for a more thorough elaboration of its important implications for a constructive critique of the development of thought since Descartes and of its consequences, both for society and for the individual, in the world of action and history. It would seem, moreover, a valuable if not indispensable auxiliary if Western thought is to be able to meet and assimilate, without succumbing to, what Professor Joad has called the 'Counter-Attack from the East.'

A GREATER EMPHASIS ON SIN AS DISTINCT FROM SINS (4).

The present-day disciple of St. Thomas has not only to develop and supplement the original 'map' of St. Thomas, he has also to restore it. Since St. Thomas's time there has been no lack of development and supplementation, much of which has been very constructive and valuable. But it cannot be said that it has all been equally meritorious; not seldom has it had the effect of obscuring,

¹⁷ In *La Structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique*.

and sometimes distorting, the original. Developments and supplementations of particular features and details have too often been carried out without regard to the whole and to the principles which governed the whole. The comprehensiveness itself of the original has tended to become lost in a process of specialisation and departmentalisation; readjustments and developments have fallen into the hands of independent cartographers, each working in his particular section and tending to overlook its relation to the whole. Much splendid work of restoration has been done in recent years by scholars and students of St. Thomas, but the influence of their work has not as yet sufficiently affected the more 'popular' expositions and textbooks.

One effect of the farming out to specialists of various sections of St. Thomas's original 'map' has been that, while certain features of it have tended to become highly developed and even exaggerated, others have tended to become neglected altogether as falling within the particular province of nobody. Another has been the tendency for the several parts to overshadow the whole. Much valuable work has been done in the development, for instance, of an independent 'thomistic philosophy,' as distinct from theology; and such a development is fully justified on the principles of St. Thomas himself. But it has sometimes had an unfortunate result as giving the impression of a sphere of reality (as distinct from a sphere of knowability¹⁸) which is independent of grace and the divine economy of salvation; as well as that of obscuring the purely ancillary role of philosophy with respect to the Sacred Teaching (I.1.8), and of the function (for instance) of Natural Theology in its regard. The authentic and original 'map' of St. Thomas would seem, incidentally, to be impervious to many of the criticisms of Continental Protestantism in this matter.

¹⁸ At the beginning of the *Summa* St. Thomas establishes that it is not a diversity of spheres of reality or 'material objects' which diversifies sciences, but a 'diversa ratio cognoscibilis'; 'hence there is no reason why, those *same* things which are treated of in the philosophical sciences to the extent that they are knowable by the light of natural reason, should not be treated of by another science [Theology] to the extent that they are known in the light of Revelation (I.1.1. ad 2; cf. ib. 3 ad 2). St. Thomas thus rightly eliminates at the outset 'that false division of spheres' against which the first of Dr. Temple's Gifford Lectures was directed (*Nature, Man and God*, pp. 3 ff.). St. Thomas will emphatically agree that 'The truth quite plainly is that the distinction between Natural and Revealed Theology is in no way *directly* concerned with the content of the beliefs examined, but with the principle determining the method of examination' (ib. p. 7). But he could not confuse 'Natural Theology' with 'Natural Religion,' or with any 'philosophy of religion' (for religion is a human activity), and he will define more precisely than did Dr. Temple the manners in which the respective 'beliefs' are subject to rational investigation (I.1.8).

Still more questionable, and perhaps still more deleterious in its results, has been the departmentalisation of theology into 'Dogmatic' and 'Moral' theology—a distinction unknown to St. Thomas himself, and not easy to justify on his principles. In the first pages of the *Summa* he emphasises the unity of the 'Sacred Teaching' (I.1.3). Everything whatsoever which falls under the consideration of the theologian must be considered under the one aspect of the light which Revelation sheds upon it; the Sacred Teaching is therefore one and single 'velut quaedam impressio divinae scientiae, quae est una et simplex omnium' (*ib. ad 2*). Although in philosophy matters of theory and practice must each be assigned to distinct sciences (metaphysics or physics, and ethics respectively) (*ib. 2nd objection*), the student of the Sacred Teaching must consider them all in one single science (*ib. ad 2*). In a broad and loose sense of the word, the whole of this Teaching is practical in the sense that Revelation is wholly concerned with truths concerning the salvation of man (I.1.1). But strictly it is at one and the same time theoretic and practical (I.1.4). More especially theoretic, inasmuch as it is primarily concerned with God—and God is not what man 'works,' but man is what God 'works' (*ib. sed contra*). But practical also inasmuch as it deals with human activity and conduct to the extent that these have reference to the attainment by man of his final fulfilment and bliss (I.1.1.corp). It is not easy, however, to make a hard and fast distinction between the theoretic and the practical in the *Summa*. The Second Part, it is true, is more directly concerned with the principles of human practice (I.2.Prol., I.II.Prol.); yet even those questions concerning the Godhead and the Trinity which are of themselves theoretic, have their eminently practical bearings, inasmuch, precisely, that the end and perfection of human life is in God (*ibid*), is wrought through the Missions and Indwellings of the Divine Persons (I.43.1) and the realisation through grace of the image of the Trinity in man himself (I.93, *passim*, and I.II.Prol). Perhaps the Third Part of the *Summa* has a more especial claim to be called a moral theology, inasmuch as it is concerned, no longer merely with the principles of man's conduct in his approach to God, but with 'Our Saviour Jesus Christ who showed in His Own Person the true way to the bliss of immortal life by rising from the dead' (III.Prol.). He alone is 'the Way of our approach to God' (I.2.Prol.); and in the consideration of what He *was* and *did* in the days of His flesh, *does* through the Sacraments of His Church, and *will do* in the general resurrection, St. Thomas sees the 'consummatio totius theologici negotii' (III.Prol.). For him, indeed, the 'moral' sense of Scripture is precisely that which displays 'ea quae in Christo sunt facta,

vel in his quae Christum significat, (inquantum) sunt signa eorum quae nos agere debemus' (I.1.10).

So while it may be pedagogically convenient to distinguish as 'moral theology' certain parts of the 'Sacred Teaching' which are concerned with the more immediate direction of human acts, it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between these and 'dogmatic theology,' and for St. Thomas there can be no distinct 'moral theology' which is independent of the ultimate aims, principles and patterns of human conduct. It is to be feared that the too precise division of theology into 'dogmatic' and 'moral' tends to have this disastrous effect; and also to leave certain essential features of St. Thomas's original 'map' out of account, as belonging to a no-man's-land in the province neither of the dogmatist nor the moralist. Or it may happen that territory belonging to both is too readily ceded in its entirety by one to the other. Sin, in particular, has for obvious reasons come to be regarded as the particular domain of the moralist, and the moralist in his turn has come to treat of sin increasingly from the limited point of view of the confessor's concern with particular and actual sins, in isolation from their setting in the integral 'theory' of human sin and sinfulness as we find it in the *Summa* itself.

And, unfortunately, the process of departmentalisation and consequent atomisation or the original 'map' has not been limited to this tendency to separation of 'moral' from 'dogmatic' theology; there has been a still more lamentable tendency for 'moral theology' itself to be replaced by something quite different. The sad story has been related with immense erudition by Fr. Thomas Deman, O.P.¹⁹ Already in St. Thomas's time, we learn, there existed a useful class of literature known as *Summae Confessorum*. Its function was simply to provide a handy 'vade mecum' and practical aid to confessors in the performance of their duties as judges and advisers. At first, it seems, the distinction of these works from works of theology properly so called was clearly understood. But gradually this kind of literature came to usurp both the name and function of moral theology itself. The results of this development in the domain of practical morals, tending to substitute methods of jurisprudence for prudence as the proximate guide of conduct need not here detain us.

But it can hardly be denied that these developments have had unfortunate repercussions even on more 'theoretic' points of theology. St. Thomas's painstaking and precise discrimination of

¹⁹ *Dict. de Theologie catholique*, Vol. xiii, col. 437, s.v. 'Probabilisme.'

the various analogical senses of the word 'sin' (*In II. Sent.*, 35.2ad2; I. II.88.1ad1) has been virtually disregarded. One outcome of this has been the extraordinary perversion on the part of some post-Reformation thomists of St. Thomas's profound teaching concerning original sin, which in effect made of his 'peccatum naturae habituale' a 'peccatum personale actuale'; it is only comparatively recently that this finely drawn part of St. Thomas's 'map' has been restored.²⁰ This neglect and misunderstanding of St. Thomas's detailed diagnosis of human sinfulness and disease has also led inevitably to failure to appreciate the full worth and profundity of his teaching on its remedy, the atoning work of Christ.²¹

Yet another result of these developments has been the relative neglect into which 'the sin which dwells within' has fallen. In the writings of St. Thomas we shall indeed find no such poignant autobiographical record of interior conflict and guilt such as we find in *Romans* vii. or in the writings of St. Augustine with their tragic description of fallen man's 'non posse non peccare'; nor shall we find such gloomy accounts of the 'necessitas peccandi' as we find in St. Gregory or St. Anselm. The task which St. Thomas set himself was not to record or describe, but to analyse and explain (cf. I. I.5ad2;8). Yet the fact of the impotence of fallen man to avoid sin is constantly acknowledged by him, and its importance underlined. Such is the disintegration of human nature wrought by the Fall, St. Thomas teaches, that man finds himself not only in an evil but in a guilty condition owing to the loss of grace (I. II.82). Neither this disintegration nor this condition is in itself *actual* or *personal* sin in us; but it is nevertheless the source of our inability to avoid actual sin. Without sanctifying grace, man cannot for long avoid even mortal sin; even after justification and with sanctifying grace he cannot long escape venial, but truly culpable, sin. St. Thomas's careful explanation of this enables him to avoid the rhetoric of 'inevitable' or 'necessary' sin, and this perhaps is his great contribution to the subject. Some measure of voluntariness is of the essence of sin; so no sin is *in itself* unavoidable. The 'inevitability' is not in the sin, but in fallen man himself; for while he can avoid *each* sin, his condition is such that he cannot avoid *every* sin. He cannot do all he *ought* to do; therein lies his need for healing grace.

This doctrine finds full expression in St. Thomas's commentaries on St. Paul; it is stated more succinctly in III *Contra Gentiles* (with

²⁰ Notably by J. B. Kors, O.P., *La justice primitive et le péché originel d'après S. Thomas*, and L. Billot, S.J., *De personali et originali peccato*.

²¹ The present writer has dealt at greater length with this in his essay in the recent symposium, *What the Cross means to me*.

special reference to the *imputation* of sin) and in the *Summa* I. II, 109, 8 and 9 (cf. III.1.5). It is a profound and coherent doctrine; perhaps the first serious and successful effort in Christian theology to give a rational (as distinct from a purely voluntarist) account of the imputation of sin to 'inevitable' falls, consistently with the unqualified affirmation of Divine justice and mercy. To be fully appreciated it needs to be reset in its place in St. Thomas's whole account of the principles and purpose of human conduct, of the interrelation of Grace and Nature, of the character of man's original state of integrity and of the consequences of sin, and of the whole genesis of sin (to which Maritain has recently recalled attention²²) as action proceeding from ontologically defective will. Such a task cannot here be undertaken; but attention may be drawn especially to the penetrating psychological study of the 'contradiction' in fallen man which we find in I.II.74.1 (cf. II.II.154.5; *De Malo* iii.3ad8; iv.2; *Quodlib.* iv.21). Seldom perhaps have disciples rendered so sorry a service to their master as those thomists who have in effect obliterated this doctrine with their alien distinctions of 'motus primo-primi' and 'secundo-primi.'

Could Luther's authentic experience of sin have crystallised into Lutheranism—with such disastrous results for mankind—had St. Thomas's Catholic thought on the subject been more widely known and understood in Luther's time? The late Dr. Fressanges has recently drawn attention to the 'eclipse' which St. Thomas's teaching underwent and the 'abysmal ignorance' which prevailed concerning it in those crucial days.²³ We know indeed that Cajetan made full and excellent use of it in refuting Luther's conclusions;²⁴ was it equally well employed in explaining, in a Catholic sense, the truth in his premisses? Might not St. Thomas's integral teaching on human sin and guilt have done much to counteract the epidemic of 'scruples' which, as another BLACKFRIARS contributor has noted, began about that time?²⁵

The answers to these questions must be left to the historians. What is certain is that the revival of 'Reformation theology' at the hands of such as Barth, Brunner and Niebuhr, and the deep and widespread sin-consciousness reawakened in modern man by contemporary events, make it imperative on the thomist of to-day to make the fullest use of his master's work in these particulars.

²² *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Marquette University Aquinas Lectures, 1943), § 3.

²³ 'On a Bus,' BLACKFRIARS, March, 1943.

²⁴ Especially in his *De Fide et operibus*.

²⁵ November, 1943, p. 413.

AN APPREHENSION OF REVELATION AS GIVEN
 PRIMARILY IN EVENTS (6).

His Grace's last 'point' is perhaps the most fundamental and the most challenging—but it is also the most perplexing. There is certainly real need for a sound and critical statement and examination of what St. Thomas really held on the manner of God's Self-Revelation and on the Prophetic Knowledge whereby it is apprehended. There has been no lack of modern thomistic treatises and manuals *De Revelatione*, but these have treated of the subject almost exclusively from the 'apologetic' standpoint of the possibility and credibility of Revelation rather than from the more strictly theological standpoint of the manner in which Revelation has actually been brought about in history.

Misunderstandings of St. Thomas's actual teaching on the subject seem to be extraordinarily widespread. The present writer well remembers the astonishment with which he met such misunderstandings in Dr. Temple's own lecture on 'Revelation and Its Mode.' He had been singularly impressed by the close similarities between Dr. Temple's account, therein expounded, of Revelation as 'the co-incidence of event and divinely enlightened appreciation' with what he had learned from St. Thomas himself. It seemed inexplicable when Dr. Temple added that, 'it must be frankly recognised that this is by no means the traditional doctrine of Christendom,' and quoted Canon Lilley to the effect that for the Schoolmen 'the kind of knowledge that Revelation gave consisted in exact, clear-cut truth-statements.'²⁶

This misgiving is particularly difficult to meet in a limited space. St. Thomas's teaching on the subject is scattered, and it is quite exceptionally rich and complex. The variety of the devices whereby God has revealed Himself to men seems to have taxed to the utmost even St. Thomas's genius for succinctness and simplicity in schematisation. The Scriptural record itself forbids any simple reduction of the manifold breathings of the Spirit to any one single 'mode'; and St. Thomas was too good a theologian to attempt to confine them within one single category, or to dictate in human terms what God *ought* to do rather than to bow down before the complexity of the facts of what He actually *did* and *does*. St. Thomas's Scriptural commentaries display how conscious he was of the variety of the 'divers manners' in which God had spoken through the Prophets (his commentary on Hebrews i.1 is particularly revealing in this

²⁶ *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 308, 316.

respect); and even in his more schematic treatments of the subject in the *Secunda Secundae* and *De Veritate* he steadfastly avoids all a-priori simplifications. We could only falsify his teaching were we to attempt to condense it still further. Pending a fuller treatment, it seems better to take the liberty merely to comment piecemeal on Dr. Temple's observations in the light of what St. Thomas actually says on the various points which they raise.

'*Thomism proceeds upon the widely accepted view that Revelation is given in propositions.*' I do not think that after a careful reading of St. Thomas's treatises *De Prophetia* such a contention could possibly be sustained. Certainly, St. Thomas admits divinely or angelically formed utterance ('*vox de caelo*') among the many 'sensible signs' that may be presented to the prophet's perception (II.II.174.1ad3). The Biblical narrative itself would hardly permit its total exclusion. But *vision* of some kind, rather than hearing, is constantly said by St. Thomas to be the normal means of the prophet's perception, and objects of *sight*, whether exterior (of the bodily eye) or interior (of the imagination)—more rarely of '*visio intellectualis*'—are the medium in which Revelation is commonly apprehended (II.II.174.2). While faith comes from hearing, prophecy comes from *sight* (*De Ver.* xii.1ad4). The imagination is in a particular way the organ of the perception of Revelation, for even perceptions of external event (which perceptions need not be 'supernatural') can be the medium of the Revelation of God's ways and designs for man only in so far as they are transformed and presented to the mind by the imagination (II.II.174.3; *De Ver.* xii.7). A 'good imagination is more important to the perception of Revelation than are good morals' (*De Ver.* xii.4ad2; 5ad6). Hence the immense importance, too often overlooked, which St. Thomas attributes to metaphor and symbol as vehicles of the Sacred Teaching (I.1.9).

Prophetic knowledge, for St. Thomas, is very far indeed from consisting normally in 'exact clear-cut statements.' On the contrary he refers to it repeatedly as a '*cognitio aenigmatica*'; though it admits of varying degrees of clarity, it is commonly '*quaedam cognitio obumbrata et obscuritati admixta*'—'a kind of cloudy knowledge mixed with darkness' (*De Ver.* xii.12). Though it is of itself infallible (II.II.171.6), the prophet is not always infallible in its discrimination (II.II.173.6).

'*I should contend that the primary medium of Revelation is events.*' For St. Thomas there is no limit, short of the Divine Essence Itself, to the medium in which divine Revelation may be apprehended. 'Prophetic revelation extends to all things, divine and human, spiritual and corporeal' (II.II.171.3); the 'mirror' in which

the prophet looks includes what is naturally as well as what is supernaturally knowable (*De Ver.* xii.1), provided only that it should be capable of disclosing God's ways and purposes for man's salvation (*De Ver.* xii.2). Only the direct vision of the Uncreated Godhead is excluded, for then 'cognitio aenigmatica' gives place to the face-to-face vision of that which creatures only reflect; the mirror gives place to the Mirrored (II.II.173.1). For the medium in which Revelation is apprehended is indeed the 'speculum aeternitatis'—but this 'mirror' is constituted precisely of facts in time as reflecting God's eternal designs (*ib. cf. De Ver.* xii.6; xiv.8ad13). These facts may be facts of the external world, natural as well as preternatural; they may be past, present or future (*De Ver.* xii.2). Nevertheless, the prophet is concerned with the past and present principally as indicating the future, because the whole function of Revelation and prophecy is the **unveiling of the outcome** ('eventus') of events in the eternal purposes of God (*De Pot.* iv.1; *Quodlib.* vii.14ad5; cf. II.II.171.3). But the events observed by the prophet are not only those of the external world of history; they may also be events of the interior world of the imagination, whether perceived in the waking state or in sleep (II.II.173.2; *De Ver.* xii.7).

Nevertheless, these facts or events do not of themselves constitute Revelation. They are no more than the *material in which* God and His designs are revealed (*De Ver.* xii.2ad1; xiv.8ad13). It may therefore, on St. Thomas's Aristotelian principles, be allowed that they are 'primary' in the sense in which matter is 'prior' to form,—i.e. in the order of production. But they are not 'primary' in the sense of 'principal'—in the order of importance and perfection. They are 'primary' in the sense that they are presupposed to the apprehension of Revelation, for they are that in which Revelation is apprehended; but they are not in themselves Revelation.

For it is precisely St. Thomas's teaching that '*Revelation can only become fruitful*' (indeed, he would say that it is only truly Revelation) '*through the apprehension and interpretation of events by minds enlightened by The Holy Spirit to that end.*' Revelation, he holds, consists exactly of these two elements—sight, and the divinely enlightened understanding of the significance of what is seen (*In II Cor.* xii. lect.1). Correspondingly, prophetic knowledge consists, firstly of the 'representation,' 'acceptance' or 'perception' of the material, and secondly of the divinely illumined 'understanding' or 'judgment' concerning it (II.II.173.2; *De Ver.* xii.3). The second is the principal and essential element, without which no perception, even of abnormal or supernatural fact, is truly Revelation or truly prophetic (*ibid.* and *De Ver.* xii.7).

Dr. Temple is again in full accord with St. Thomas in regarding the expression of prophetic knowledge and Revelation in propositions as distinct from, and normally subsequent to, that knowledge and Revelation themselves. St. Thomas insists on this repeatedly (II.II.171.2; 176.2; *De Ver.* xii.9; 13). In these passages and elsewhere he is quite clear as to the distinction between Revelation and the subsequent (even Divinely assisted) recording of Revelation in the Scriptures. Distinct again are the articles of the Church's faith, her dogmas, which are immediately and directly not 'revelations' but statements of *our* faith in God as revealed to the prophets and personally in Christ (II.II.1.6; 9ad3). If the distinction which Dr. Temple would draw between 'truths of Revelation' and 'revealed truths' means only that the verbal formulas as such are not necessarily revealed²⁷, then there would seem to be no difference between him and St. Thomas—though the distinction is perhaps rather ambiguous and open to misunderstanding.

'The action of the Holy Spirit does not override or cancel the personal and individual qualities of the prophet, but uses them.' St. Thomas's very thorough analysis of the subject suggests that without dissenting from this statement, we offer some important qualifications. A distinction must be made, as we have seen, between prophetic knowledge itself and the use which the prophet makes of it, by speech, writing, or otherwise. St. Thomas, here as always firmly anti-Pelagian, is very concerned to vindicate the absolute 'graciousness' of Revelation itself as a free gift of God which is, of itself, independent of human deserts and predispositions. He agrees, as we have already seen, that certain dispositions (such as a 'good imagination') are requisite for the apprehension of Revelation; but he will not allow that the Revelation is necessarily dependent upon any natural *pre*-dispositions, whether moral, intellectual or psychological. For God can impart the dispositions together with the light of prophetic understanding (II.II.172.3; *De Ver.* xii.4.5). In this perception and understanding of Revelation, the prophet is mainly passive and receptive to Divine and spiritual agency (II.II.171.2; *De Ver.* xii.1).

It is quite otherwise with the subsequent *use* which the prophet may make of his knowledge in his speech, writings or actions. In this he is normally an active and responsible agent; it is in this sense that

²⁷ 'Not necessarily,' because when Revelation is given by 'voice from heaven' ('I am who am,' 'This is my beloved Son,' 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?') there is coincidence of the medium and the formula; though even here it would seem to be the truth expressed rather than the expression which is 'revealed.'

'the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,' and come within their own control and power to use or misuse (II.II.173.3ad4; *De Ver.* xii.9ad1. *in contr.*), even though in that use also they may receive special divine assistance (II.II.174.2ad3). This subsequent divine assistance ('inspiration') is not the same as Revelation itself. Not all prophets are writers of Scripture (II.II.174.6ad2); nor are all writers of Scripture prophets (*De Ver.* xii.12ad10). Nor is Revelation to be excluded from those who know nothing of the Canonical Scriptures or the human preachers of its message, for in the absence of the latter, 'it is to be held as most certain that God will reveal to them what it is necessary to believe to salvation . . . by interior inspiration' (*De Ver.* xiv.11ad1). In the utterance of prophetic knowledge, whether by speech or writing, therefore, the personal characteristics of the speaker or writer, and his sense of the needs of his hearers or readers, will have full play; this is a principle which St. Thomas frequently invokes in his interpretations of the Pentateuch (e.g. I.67.4; I.II.98.3ad2, etc.). But even here the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and St. Thomas refuses to tie down the divine operations to any one invariable 'mode'; for the Scriptures themselves bear witness to the seizure of prophets by the Spirit to utter words they do not even understand (II.II.173.4).

'There may therefore be other, though of course not incompatible, truths to be learned from the event which is the primary Revelation.' This conviction is the basic assumption of St. Thomas's own principles of Scriptural exegesis. The prophet does not always understand, still less explicitly record, the full significance of what he apprehends, says or does (*ib.*). God who, through human agency and instrumentality, is the Author both of the record and what is recorded, may signify more by the deeds or facts ('gesta' or 'res') than is perceived by the prophet or writer or may be expressly recorded by them; hence 'it is peculiar to the Sacred Science that not only do the words (of its Scripture) signify something; but also the things signified by those words are themselves significant of something' (I.I.10). These further significances in the divine mind and intention of the very facts recorded, to the extent that they are apprehensible by men, are what St. Thomas understands by the 'spiritual senses' of the Scripture, as distinct from the 'literal sense' which is the sense (however expressed) of the words themselves. Interpretation of these 'spiritual senses,' or meanings of the events, should be in no way an evasion of the 'literal' meaning (as Dr. Temple has elsewhere suggested was St. Thomas's idea²⁸); for such

²⁸ *Nature, Man and God,* p. 310.

interpretations of the event are to be based upon the meaning of the words, and are only to be found in and through the meaning of the words (I.1:10). The 'spiritual sense' of one passage is to be constantly checked by the 'literal sense' both of itself and of other parts of the Scripture (*ibid.*) and also by our knowledge obtained through purely 'natural' means (cf. I.68.1).

St. Thomas could make no distinction between God and His action—unless by 'action' we are to understand the *effects* of His action, His deeds. God is truly revealed through His deeds; and it is by the apprehension and the divinely enlightened understanding of these that man is able to formulate truths concerning God and His eternal purposes. Hence, while faith has for its object God Himself—the 'Prima Veritas'—'enuntiabilia' (truths capable of statement in proposition) are indispensable on the side of man if the God who reveals Himself is to be believed in by him, or if this faith is to be confessed by him (II.11.1.2). But it is always possible for believers, whether by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or by the use of their natural cognitive powers (I.1.6ad3), to penetrate more or less deeply into the significance of what they believe (*In Boeth. De Trin.* ii.4). This is especially the case with regard to the supreme Deed of God, the Incarnation of the Word and His atoning work, of which the benefits to man surpass all human understanding (III.1.2). Christians kneeling before the Cross may indeed differ widely in their degrees of understanding, and also in their manner of expression, of the significance of the mystery. But Dr. Temple's own qualification, 'of course not incompatible,' must be added to our acknowledgment of *differing* interpretations. St. Thomas could not allow differing levels of understanding, or differing manner of expression, to include false, or ultimately incompatible, interpretations.

* * * * *

I must conclude by asking Dr. Temple's pardon for treating of his 'sixth point' in so summary a fashion, and in the form of a word-for-word comment upon his own text. But a more direct exposition of St. Thomas's teaching is impossible within a short space. And perhaps this manner of treatment, though not lacking in impudence, may suggest more clearly the points of convergence and divergence between St. Thomas's account of Revelation and his own. It may be hoped that his challenge to Thomists under this head may stimulate a more thorough examination and development of their own heritage on this subject than is here possible.

His Grace concludes with an allusion to 'Platonist' and 'Aristotelian' temperaments which almost amounts to a 'seventh point,'

and provokes us to draw attention to yet another 'task for thomists.' For here we seem to be confronted with an 'either-or' which, I believe, St. Thomas himself has shown to be illusory. 'Perhaps St. Thomas Aquinas made no greater contribution to the history of human thought than by his painstaking synthesis of Plato and Aristotle. Yet perhaps no element in his thought has received less consideration from students of his work'²⁹ It is a theme which cannot be developed here; but among the many services which Dr. Temple has rendered to thomists by his address, it is perhaps not the least that he has again reminded us—however delicately and incidentally—of the need for its investigation.

²⁹ 'The Platonic Tradition and St. Thomas Aquinas,' *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Jan. 1941, pp. 213 ff.

REVIEWS

REDEEMING THE TIME. By Jacques Maritain. (Geoffrey Bles; The Centenary Press; 2s. 6d.).

In point of literary criticism the most pressing comment on Maritain's latest book is this: that while in the early works the focus of intellectual effort lay in those passages where scholastic conceptions were being forged into modern language, so that the high degree of attention required to follow his thought was at the same time an educative discipline in metaphysical thinking, the same can no longer be said in the same sense of 'Redeeming the Time.' The focus is now in a quite different kind of problem, and the reader is no longer aware of the same kind of effort. In some sense, no doubt, it is true that Maritain has established his terms and can now refer to them without the necessity of forging each one afresh; but that does not express the plain fact that he is using words differently and with a different purpose. It would appear, if I have not read amiss the numerous indications in the text as well as the whole manner of his writing, that Maritain is attempting, by entering the struggles of his time, to *make amends* for metaphysics.