

Having already examined something of its methodology, we would like to close with some remarks on the purpose of the work. Fr. Lescoe does not promise a critical edition, but rather "a readable and useful text" (Introduction, p. 25). None of the genealogical apparatus deemed important to a truly critical edition is present, our editor contenting himself with reproducing the arrangement and valuation of manuscripts proposed by others. Thus, Fr. Lescoe has left it "for the Leonine scholars to give us a definitive critical text. . . ."

But why? The entrance of American editors onto the paleographic stage is greatly to be applauded; and the more so when they demonstrate the qualities of scholarship needed in this exacting discipline. Why then propose a half-way house? Perrier's edition of the *De Substantiis Separatis* deserved to be improved, and Fr. Lescoe has improved it. His edition is safe and reliable; indeed as was said above, it is the best to date. But do Thomistic studies not deserve the best absolutely? The first step in the area of paleography might well be to forget there is a Leonine commission. Of course, this involves much greater demands: Fr. Lescoe clearly measures up to these demands. And the next time he will prove it better.

WILFRED J. QUINN

*St. John's University,
Jamaica, New York.*

***The Role of Demonstration in Moral Theology.* By William A. Wallace, O. P. Washington, D. C.: The Thomist Press, 1962. Pp. viii + 244. \$3.95.**

Fr. Wallace has presented us with an admirable study in depth of the complex problems connected with the role of demonstration in both moral theology and moral philosophy, as based on the methodology of St. Thomas. A rapid survey of the contents shows the extended scope of the work.

The first chapter summarizes the notion of demonstration and its various kinds, noting also the procedures which characterize its use in different speculative sciences. Theological demonstration is then analyzed, with emphasis put on how the light of faith affects the demonstrative process and confers a special certitude. Chapter Two considers the place of demonstration in moral science. In the light of St. Thomas' analysis of theoretical and practical knowledge in the *Summa Theo-*

logiae (I, 14, 16), moral science is seen to be not completely speculative, nor completely practical in the sense of prudence, but formally practical and relatively (*secundum quid*) speculative. Fr. Wallace therefore argues that moral science can proceed in a proper resolute mode insofar as it is speculative, although as a formally practical science it has also a practical method, which is compositive in character. This view leads to problems relating to demonstration in moral science, the subject of Chapter Three. The conclusion finally reached is that there are two certitudes associated with moral science. One is a speculative certitude, the result of a strict demonstrative process, terminating in a knowledge of the operable considered as non-operable, having for its truth the *per se verum* of the speculative intellect. The other is a practical certitude, arising from the former and from synderesis; it is a compositive process terminating in the knowledge of the operable considered precisely as such, having for its truth the *per se rectum* of the practical intellect, directly applicable to the singular human act through a prudential judgment. I shall return to this formulation subsequently.

Chapter Four treats the subject of demonstration in moral theology, different from that of moral philosophy and considered under a different *ratio formalis*, the human act as related to supernatural beatitude, and hence having a supernatural morality as divinely revealable. The final chapter then faces the question of the demonstrative process in moral theology. Insofar as its method is speculative, moral theology, rooted first in a *posteriori* demonstration, subsequently has a type of a *priori* demonstration, usually made *ex suppositione finis*. The practical method of moral theology is a type of practical discourse which furnishes rules for the production of the operable by the individual person. This compositive mode of moral theology is distinguished from that of prudence which imperates the singular operable itself; the term of the composition of moral theology is the *individuum vagum*, for whom a rule proximately governing action is furnished without actually imperating the action at a personal level. Hence, some of the conclusions reached by the moral theologian, the ones resulting from the resolute mode, have the full speculative certitude of the results of theological demonstration. Other conclusions, resulting from the compositive mode, have a type of practical certitude in that they furnish rules which *per se* should govern the operation of the virtuous Christian seeking perfection.

It is the problem of demonstration in moral philosophy that interests

primarily the readers of a philosophy journal. For the sake of brevity, I shall pass over the point argued by Fr. Wallace that in its speculative dimension, and where the mode is resolute, moral philosophy achieves demonstrative knowledge. It can be granted that there are demonstrative procedures in such knowledge, but since such knowledge does not characterize moral philosophy, and indeed as such is insufficient, the issue here is of secondary importance. The important question is whether demonstrative knowledge can be attained in ethics as it is a formally practical science proceeding in a compositive mode. Is there, to paraphrase Fr. Wallace's wording, a practical certitude in the compositive process as terminating in the knowledge of the operable as such?

The basic distinction relevant to resolving this question is the one between common and proper principles, and how each functions in moral knowledge. The common principles, known by *synderesis*, are certain in themselves and apply with certainty to action, and such knowledge is enough to give moral philosophy the status of a science. But, as Fr. Wallace would also agree, such principles are insufficient for action, being too general; they announce the common form for acting, but cannot be the proper cause for acting. Hence we must turn to proper principles, and to formulate them we must have recourse to experience and custom: "*Quia oportet in moralibus accipere, ut principium, quia ita est. Quod quidem accipitur per experientiam et consuetudinem; puta quod concupiscentiae per abstinentiam superantur,*" as St. Thomas puts it in the *Commentary on the Ethics* I, 4, n. 53. St. Thomas is therefore led to maintain that all *proper* principles in ethics are uncertain: "*In operativis autem non est eadem veritas vel certitudo practica apud omnes quantum ad propria, sed solum quantum ad communia; et apud illos apud quos est eadem rectitudo in propriis, non est aequaliter omnibus nota,*" (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, 94, 4). Again, in the *Commentary on the Ethics*, St. Thomas concludes: "*Et sic manifestum est, quod materia moralis est varia et difformis, non habens omnimodum certitudinem*" (I, 3, n. 32).

To be sure, Fr. Wallace is well aware of such texts and other relevant ones as well. And he will insist that moral science will have to be complemented by prudence. Yet he also seems to wish to maintain that the fact that the matter of moral science is "*varia et difformis*" need not affect the scientific character of moral philosophy, that it is not impossible to have universal practical knowledge which can be properly called scientific. But what can such practical knowledge be?

It will have to proceed from proper principles; yet these will always retain some incertitude, unless abstracted from application to action, which will not do in moral science. The question of demonstration in ethics thus becomes acute. The logic of demonstration requires that the principles be conformed to the conclusions reached. In ethics, this means that we must apply the principles to human action as taking place in circumstances, which are integral to human action. Such matter, to which the principles must be applied, cannot be wholly determinate. The proper principles of ethics, therefore, can only hold *ut in pluribus*. How, then, can any demonstrative knowledge be realized in the proper domain of moral philosophy?

Fr. Wallace likely acknowledges the substance of this view. When he directly confronts the question of whether practical certitude in moral science is a result of "practical demonstration," he recognizes that "practical demonstration" is not the best terminology; he even insists, at one point, that there is no proper "practical demonstration" which is characteristic of practical science. The real question at issue then must focus on what practical certitude is and where it is found. The summarized statement of Fr. Wallace on this matter is on p. 141. After stating that practical certitude arises from a speculative certitude that moral science can have, and from the habit of synderesis, practical certitude is then stated to be "that of a compositive process, which terminates in a knowledge of the operable considered precisely as such, and has for its truth the *per se rectum* of the practical intellect—in turn directly applicable to the singular human act through a prudential judgment." This formulation is not without some ambiguity. If the statement means that there is certitude in moral science as it proceeds in the compositive mode from proper principles *prior* to the prudential judgment, I cannot see, on the basis of the methodology of St. Thomas, how this is possible. If the statement means that practical certitude is reached only in the prudential judgment, which exceeds the limits of moral science, this is the position that the methodology of St. Thomas leads to.

It is difficult, in a review already beyond its prescribed limits, to state fully and adequately the extended analysis of Fr. Wallace or even to explore sufficiently what I regard as a serious difficulty in the resolution Fr. Wallace reaches regarding the certitude of moral science. Nevertheless, I have tried to point up what I regard as a fundamental issue regarding the character of moral knowledge and certitude as it falls within the scope of ethics, since the resolution of this issue is

crucial in regard to what else can be said about the status of ethics and how it is taught. I can only note in passing that the problem in moral theology would have to be handled in a different perspective, which Fr. Wallace carefully does.

My concern with the fundamental issue raised precluded my being able to call attention to the many fine qualities this study has, not the least of which is showing the definitive relevance St. Thomas' approach to moral philosophy and moral theology has for contemporary issues and questions. Especially in this respect, but in others as well, this work of Fr. Wallace is required reading for moral philosophers and theologians today if they seriously intend to deal intelligibly not only with the important problems in moral knowledge confronting us at the present time, but with the equally important task of teaching moral science, comprehensively, in universities and seminaries.

JOHN A. OESTERLE

*University of Notre Dame,
Notre Dame, Indiana.*

***Commentary on Aristotle's Physics.* By St. Thomas Aquinas. Translated by Richard J. Blackwell, Richard J. Spath, and W. Edmund Thirlkel. Introduction by Vernon J. Bourke. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963. Pp. xxxii + 599, with index. \$12.50.**

The publication by Yale University Press of St. Thomas Aquinas *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* in its series, *Rare Masterpieces of Philosophy and Science*, indicates the publisher's belief that it is a masterpiece "which has unjustly fallen into oblivion and which may have a special message for our time." Indeed, the stated object of this series is to revive such masterpieces. Each work in the series contains an introduction in which the work is discussed and explained by an expert in the field. In the present work, Professor Vernon J. Bourke provides the introduction.

In his erudite and something less than critical introduction, Bourke provides a helpful and reasonably thorough presentation and evaluation of the principal documents of Aristotle and Aquinas, their probable date and place of composition. Somewhat less helpfully, he proposes an opinion on the bearing of these works upon the rise and triumph of modern natural science. His summary of the best efforts to date to