

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW GOD IS CALLED LOVE

In the preceding chapter we say the value of the good as manifestative principle. It is especially valuable for our study on love because to understand an act we must know its object. To understand a movement we must know the mover. Now the good is that which all things desire; so, to know love, we must first know the good.¹ In the chapter which deals with love, then, Dionysius begins with the good, how it is found in God, how communicated to creatures, for all known and knowable essences exist and have their acts because of it.²

We know that God is supereminently good by His essence, that He is the very being of Goodness, the per se good that extends its goodness to all other beings. Because no other being is good by its essence but only by participation in the goodness that is God, the theologian can truly say: "Nemo bonus nisi solus Deus."³ Since our intellect is too weak to grasp that essential goodness, we must turn our attention to the proportion of gifts of nature and of grace

¹See supra, pp. 12ff.

²IDN., c.4, T.I, II; D.nn.95-112.

³IDN., c.4, T.I, n.269. The chapter ends with a treatise on evil, which has no direct bearing on the present subject.

that God has diffused in a hierarchical scale in both the supernatural and natural order; from its effects we begin to know His goodness as cause. Because of the divine goodness, things exist, are perfected, can be compared and are ordered to an end.¹ They have being, life, knowing faculties and various perfections according to a scale of decreasing commonality, all derived from that same Good. Dionysius treats the communication in a descending order, beginning with angels, then men, then continuing through the lower corruptible things, and on to prime matter, which has a desire for the good of being.² Lastly he treats of the heavenly bodies, a special case, for to the ancients they were corporeal yet incorruptible; to Dionysius, however, they are important as serving to introduce the sun as a source of life and light, as well as the measure of units of time in the material order, and of the perfect or circular motion of the outer sphere.³ All these beings owe their esse, or exist because they tend to the good simpliciter. They model themselves on the exemplar of which they are merely participations, and tend to take on the form of the good and transmit

¹IDN., c.4, T.I, all, with D.nn.95-107.

²IDN., c.4, T.II, all, with D.nn.108-112.

³Ibid., nn.299ff.

to other beings the form of that good whose goodness is His essence, which is also His knowledge and will, for He is pure act. He is "qui est;" His essence is His existence as well as His goodness, and He alone is not ordered to an extrinsic or perfective end.¹ Saint Thomas explains this sun of goodness;

Primo, quidem, quia ipsa divina Essentia est ipsa bonitas, quod in aliis rebus non contingit: Deum enim est bonus per suam essentiam, omnia vero alia per participationem; unumquodque enim bonum est secundum quod est res actu; Deo autem proprium est quod sit suum esse, unde ipse solus est sua bonitas.

Item, res aliae, etsi in quantum sunt, bonae sint, tamen perfectam bonitatem consequuntur per aliquod superadditum supra eorum esse; sed Deus in ipso suo esse, habet complementum suae bonitatis. Item, res aliae sunt bonae per ordinem ad aliquid aliud, quod est ultimus finis; Deus autem non ordinatur ad aliquem finem extra se.²

Light and beauty are of the nature of the appetible and must be known in order to appreciate the act of love. Beginning with the sun, source of sensible light and therefore familiar to us - a fitting symbol of the Sun of Justice Who diffuses all good, but especially intelligible light wherein man will ultimately see Him - Dionysius compares the sun's natural and unconscious radiation with the divinely natural, though intelligent and voluntary diffusion of

¹IND., c.5, T.I, especially nn.629-635.

²IND., c.4, T.I, n.269.

goodness.¹ He develops the comparison in the similarity between the two as cause, illuminating principle and measure. The sun is cause of generation in mobile things, of heat, light and, consequently, of growth and physical perfection.² It likewise distinguishes time, the measure of the being and operation of mobile creatures.

What the sun is in the sensible order, God is in the intelligible and spiritual order, giving being, conserving and perfecting that being with all due perfective operations, ordering creatures to their good, then, through their proper good, to other creatures and ultimately to Him. But He is especially called light inasmuch as He is the principle of knowing faculties and of a supernatural strength to use them, including therein both grace and the lumen gloriae.³ Likewise His eternity measures the angelic aevum and time, the measures of incorruptible and corruptible substances.⁴

Sensible light can only be attributed to God metaphorically, and therefore belongs to the domain of Symbolic Theology. But if by light we mean intelligible light, then we apply it by analogy, for its nature is most

¹IDN., c.4, T.III. Cf., T.I, n.271.

²IDN., c.4, T.III, n.309; D.nn.125-131.

³IDN., c.4, T.IV, especially nn.331-332. Cf., Marietti ~~text~~, p.105a, note 2a.

⁴IDN., c.4, T.IV, n.310.

properly found in God, whose essence is intelligence in act, who is most intelligible in se, and who diffuses the light that dispels darkness by causing cognitive faculties.¹ Most of all, He is light as the Truth that is identical with the Good, adding or infusing into intellectual creatures faith, and, if they co-operate, the lumen gloriae, which, accorded in the measure of Christ's merits proportioned to the soul's desire and corresponding striving, will permit the beatific vision of the spiritual sun.²

As light is prerequisite to recognize beauty, so beauty adds the order necessary for the cognitive power to perceive the good.³ The word implies a kind of clarity resulting from a right proportion, order, or harmony of a thing's constituent parts, and is had by way of each things form, for "a form is a certain radiation coming from the first clarity."⁴ For example, we say that a man is beautiful if his body has a proper proportion and distribution of quantity,

¹IDN., c.4, T.IV, D.nn.125-131.

²IDN., c.4, T.IV, n.323-332.

³IDN., c.4, T.V, n.356.

⁴IDN., c.4, T.VI, n.360: "Omnis enim essentia vel est per forma simplex vel habet complementum per forma; forma autem est quaedam irradiatio proveniens ex prima claritate; claritas autem est de ratione pulchritudinis..."

and is of a clear, ruddy complexion, but the word may be applied to whatever has clarity and harmonious proportion in any order,¹ God, Who is supereminent beauty, not only radiates to each creature a share in the brilliance of His divine goodness and beauty by means of its form, but in that same divine beauty every consonance or proportioning element conducive to union or harmony has its source, whether that proportioning be understood as the qualities disposing material elements to unite as constituent parts of a substance, or the nature and faculties permitting concord and communications among intellectual beings, or the ordering of the universe of creatures to Him Who is the totality of beauty or unparticipated beauty as to its end.²

In creatures there is a distinction between that which is beautiful, or that which participates in beauty, and beauty, that is, the very participation in the first cause which is beautiful simpliciter, and which makes all other things beautiful. In the first cause, which is simple inasmuch as it is pure act, beauty and the beautiful, or goodness and the good, are identified; that identity causes the whole

¹IDN., c.4, T.V, n.339: "Unde proportionaliter est in caeteris accipiendum, quod unumquodque dicitur pulchrum, secundum quod habet claritatem sui generis vel spiritualem vel corporalem et secundum quod est in debita proportione constitutum." Cf., nn.333, 339ff.

²IDN., c.4, T.IV., nn.349-353. Cf., D.n.139, with T.n.339.

multiplicity of existing beauties and goods.¹ It gives them their essence in causing their form, the first radiation of the divine brightness. It gives them unity, order, due proportion or harmony as well as motion and rest.² All these are signs leading us to a recognition of the divine and superlatively beautiful Good that is their source.³ But to know God in His essence is beyond the natural scope of our feeble intellect. Still it was not beyond the scope of the Divine Nature to add to man's intellect, even when it had been vitiated by sin, the supernatural light of grace along with the theological virtues, that we might begin to know and love Him here, and so reach the ultimate face to face vision of Him in Heaven as our end. We quote Saint Thomas:

Dum habent ignorantiam boni quod est finis et viae qua ad ipsam pervenitur, non se movent ad finem consequendum... dum non cognoscunt bonum, non aperitur eorum affectus per desiderium ad capiendum ipsum intra se.⁴

The measure of supernatural light accorded to the regenerated soul is proportioned to the measure of Christ's redemptive gift, and its own efforts. This sets up a circular

¹IDN., c.4, T.V, nn.336ff. Cf., D.nn.133-137.

²Ibid., nn.352-355.

³IDN., c.4, T.V., nn.345-349.

⁴IDN., c.4, .IV, n.329.

motion of light engendering love, which in turn invokes a further radiation of light with its return of love.

Nt quia spiritualia gustata desiderium excitant quae prius ignorata contemnebantur, post primam receptionem luminis, gustata iam cognitione luminis veritatis, magis desideratur et magis desiderantibus magis immittitur: effectus enim divinae gratiae multiplicantur, secundum multiplicationem desiderii et dilectionis, secundum illud Luc. 7 (47): "dimissa sunt ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum:" sic enim quaedam circulatio attenditur, dum ex lumine crescit desiderium luminis et ex desiderio aucto crescit lumen.¹

That beauty and love are related in the divine as in the natural order is plain from numerous scriptural texts where God is called the beautiful and beloved. Dionysius emphasizes the nexus in the following:

Hoc bonum laudatur a sanctis theologis et sicut pulchrum et sicut pulchritudo et sicut dilectio et sicut diligibile et quaecumque aliae convenientes sunt pulchritudinae et gratiose habitae pulchritudinis nominationes.²

In the first cause that is God, then, we have the beautiful and the good identified; accordingly that cause is "id quod omnia appetunt". It is also the principle that radiates each form, which in turn gives each being a share in, or a similitude of the existence of the first being whom the creature resembles. We have then three causalities, efficient,

¹IDN., c.4, T.IV, n.330.

²IDN., c.4, D.n.132. In his exposition Saint Thomas changes gratiose to gratiosae as in T.V, n.334.

final and exemplary, identified in the Divine beautiful and good, as Dionysius points out:

Et est principium omnium pulchrorum, sicut effectiva causa et movens tota et continens amore propriae pulchritudinis; et finis omnium sicut finalis causa, et enim pulchri cause cuncta fiunt; et exemplaris, quoniam secundum ipsum cuncta determinatur.¹

In pointing out the identity of the beautiful and good as cause, Saint Thomas reverts to the intelligibility that beauty adds to the good, which we have already indicated.

He says:

Quamvis autem pulchrum et bonum sint idem subiecto, quia tam claritas quam consonantia sub ratione boni continentur, tamen ratione differunt: nam pulchrum addit supra bonum, ordinem ad vim cognoscitivam illud esse huiusmodi.²

The one absolute Goodness and Beauty that is God is cause, then, of all the multiple goodnesses that we know, or that exist. He is cause of the essence and existence of all substances, and of the form whereby they have a participation in a likeness of His beautiful goodness. He likewise adds unity or indivision to being. Thus He brings about all concretion, all resemblance and distinctions in things; all identity, likeness and equality as well; all harmony and due proportion, within the substance as ensuring the continuance

¹IDN., c.4, D.n.140; T.V, nn.352-356.

²Ibid., T.V, n.355.

of its nature, as likewise in the communication between distinct things, even that mutual interdependence that effects the whole order of the universe and the succession of time.¹ By His providential order He converts inferiors to superiors to be perfected, co-ordinates the equal, and moves superiors to provide for the good of inferiors. By such intrinsic and extrinsic, "inconfusae amicitiae" God establishes, preserves, and perfects all creation.²

On the form communicated, too, depends each thing's proper nature, which is in turn the principle of its movement and rest, a movement ordered to its proper good as end, but co-ordinated into the harmonious movement whereby all things are moved toward the ultimate end that is the divine good, thereby representing the movement wherewith God loves Himself. The importance of the form as a ray of the divine beauty is again stressed by Aquinas:

Forma autem a qua dependet propria ratio rei pertinet ad claritatem; ordo autem ad finem, ad consonantiam; et sic motus et quies reducuntur in causalitatem pulchri.³

But movement itself is twofold. There is the act of the imperfect moved by an agent from potency to act, found in all corporeal things when they are moved according to

¹IDN., c.4, T.VI, nn.361-365.

²Ibid., n.364.

³IDN., c.4, T.VI, n.367.

substance, quantity, quality or place. There is likewise the act of the perfect, the immanent operation of what exists in act, such as sensing, knowing, willing. So the operations of intellect and will in angels and men may be termed motion.¹ By a metaphor drawn from local motion, such operation may be distinguished into three kinds - straight, oblique and circular or perfect - for circular movement has neither beginning or end.² The angel's intellection resembles circular movement, as Dionysius points out in his explanation:

Et moveri quidem dicuntur divinae mentes circulariter, quidem, unite sine principiis et interminabilibus illuminationibus pulchri et boni.³

But the human soul must first turn away from the diffarmity of a multiplicity of natural objects, wherein its cognition is rooted, before it can grasp its first intellectual principles, and only then can it rise to imitate the angel's contemplation of god.⁴

All that we have tried to establish of the comprehensive nature of the universal in causando, which is the divine beautiful and good, the reader will find reviewed in Saint Thomas' summary prefacing our appended translation of the lectures on love.⁵ Herein he stresses that it effects not

¹Idn., c.4, T.VII, n.369; Cf., D.nn.147-150.

²Ibid., nn.371-373.

³Idn., c.4, D.147, Cf., T.VII, nn.371-375.

⁴Ibid., nn.375-378.

⁵Ibid., T.VIII; D.nn.151-155. For the translation, see appendix, p.1. The translation will be numbered according to the Marietti text, and we will indicate the page as app.1 etc.

only all essences, all beings and their movements, but even brings about the very differences and similarities in the being and movement of all things which it produces, conserves and finalizes;¹ that the virtue of every exemplary, final, efficient, formal and material principle subsists in it and is derived from it;² "that it is not only the end in that it is desired, but also in that every substance and every act is ordered to it as to an end."³ Dionysius sums it up thus:

Or, to recapitulate, I might say that everything that exists proceeds from the beautiful and good, and what as yet does not exist is found supersubstantially in the beautiful and good. Beyond all (other) causes, and above every (other) perfective end, it is principle and end of all existing beings, since from it, and by it, and in it, and for it all things are, as Sacred Scripture states.⁴

Since effects turn to their cause in love because it is perfective, since these good effects which are participations of the divine Good are evident to us, since Scripture relates them to the Divine principle, and since the analogic names make the relationship intelligible to us, the Beautiful and Good should also incite the free will of man to love. Dionysius will determine what this love consists of, supporting

¹IDN., c.4, T. VIII, nn.381-390; D.nn.151-154.

²Ibid., T. nn.391-392; D.nn.154-155.

³IDN., c.4, T.VIII, n.390; app.10,11.

⁴Ibid., D.n.155; app.5. The Scripture citation is Romans, xi, 36.

his statements with quotations from Hierotheus.¹ When he describes divine love, he will explain how God is called both love and lovable, then how love's effect, namely ecstasy, may be ascribed to Him, and lastly how He may be called jealous - a term suggesting an intensity of love.²

Now Dionysius has already established that God, as beautiful and good, is the universal final cause. Then every appetite on every level of being - natural, animal, rational or angelic - loves Him. He is therefore rightly called lovable, and the adjectives diligibilis, desiderabilis and amabilis refer to the appetites wherein love for Him is found.³ As object of that love He may be called desiderium, amor or dilectio, for love of God is at the root of every operation: "Omnia pulchrum et bonum desiderantia faciunt et volunt omnia quaecumque faciunt et volunt."⁴ Again, God is love, not only as love's object but as its very act, and when speaking of God's love, the verb Dionysius uses is amare:

¹IDN., c.4, T. VIII, nn.156-178; T.IX-XI. For the quotations from Hierotheus, see T.XII with D.nn.179-183. Cf., Ia IIae, qq.26-28.

²IDN., c.4, T.IX, nn.394-399.

³IDN., c.4, T.IX, n.400: "Ex quo pulchrum et bonum est finis omnium, consequens est quod pulchrum et bonum sit amabile ab omnibus, desiderabile et diligibile, quia obiectum desiderii et amoris est pulchrum et bonum."

⁴Ibid., D.n.158.

He confidently affirmed as a true principle, that the divine Cause of the universe, because of His own superabundance of goodness, loves all creature, creates, perfects, conserves and converts to Himself the whole of creation, and that divine love is good in itself, has its source in the good, and has the good for object. This same divine love, the artisan of the goodness in all that is, existing before time's advent in the absolute good, because of the very excess of its goodness, this same divine love did not suffer itself to remain unshared within itself, but was moved to exercise its infinite capacity to generate a universe.

And let no one suppose that we go beyond the practice of Holy Writ in commending the use of the word amor.¹

Here we would seem to have a real word-problem. We emphasized above that the In Divinis Nominibus manifested its doctrine by applying analogic names to God, names whose notion was found properly in God. We indicated, too, that theology was more certain than any merely human knowledge. Yet here we have a theologian citing Sacred Scripture in support of applying a name to God that seems to imply a passion of the sensitive appetite. Saint Thomas uses the word dilectio to designate a more perfect love, when he summarizes our whole doctrine on appetite and love in the passage already quoted above:²

Cum amor ad appetitum pertineat, secundum ordinem appetituum est ordo amorum. Est autem imperfectissimus appetituum, naturalis appetitus absque cognitione, quod nihil aliud importat quam inclinationem naturalem. Supra hunc autem est appetitus sensibilis, qui sequitur cognitionem,

¹IDN., c.4, D.nn.159-160; app.14,15.

²See supra, p.49. Cf. supra, pp.12-32 on appetite, pp.48-55 on the order of loves; IDN., c.4, T.IX, nn.401-408.

sed est absque libera electione. Supremus autem appetitus qui est cum cognitione et libera electione: hic enim appetitus quodammodo movet seipsum, unde et amor ad hunc pertinens est perfectissimus et vocatur dilectio, inquantum libera electione discernitur quid sit amandum.¹

Love, as we have seen, is the first movement of the appetite. Desire is the effect of love for an absent good, delight for a good that is possessed. The words we use to signify love, desire and delight, generally involve a co-signification of the appetites wherein they are found.² Amor, desiderium, and delectatio seem to suggest the sensitive appetite which is a passion; dilectio and its derivatives refer to the perfect intellectual appetite. Again, amor usually is applied to the love of concupiscence for an accidental good, such as wine, whereas benevolentia or amicitia are used to suggest the true human love, which is love simpliciter.³ Saint Thomas even runs through the modes whereby a thing can be another's good to clarify the point which Dionysius will make.⁴ One fact stands out. Since love is the root of every operation, the beneficent operations of

¹IDN., c.4, T. IX, n.402; app.21,22.

²IDN., c.4, T. IX, n.401. Cf., supra, pp.12-31.

³Ibid., nn.404-405. Cf., supra pp.49ff.

⁴Ibid., nn.406-407.

creation prove that God loves.¹ With what kind of love? And by what word should we designate that love? Would it not seem improper to apply amor to God? Yet Dionysius names God amor in preference to all other words in love's vocabulary, and straightway proceeds to defend his choice.

We know that love in God is supereminently perfect in every respect.² From love of His own infinite Goodness He is "moved" to radiate or benevolently create similitudes of that Good, and so operates to give being, conserve, perfect and order a universe, as naturally as the sun communicates light - yet by a love of dilection, for His essence is His intellection and His will. Each one of these operations has as its term God's own goodness: each of these operations has also as term the creature's perfection.³ We might telescope into one every good aspect of all created love, and we could still have no adequate concept or word to describe Him. His goodness and His mode of love transcend our

¹IDN., c.4, T.IX, n.408: "Et quia omnis operatio uniuscuiusque rei ex appetitu causatur, sequitur quod omnis actio cuiuscumque rei ex amore causatur; et hoc est quod dicit quod omnia ex desiderio pulchri et boni faciunt et volunt quaecumque faciunt et volunt.

²IDN., c.4, T.IX, n.408: "Et quia omnis operatio uniuscuiusque rei ex appetitu causatur, sequitur quod omnis actio cuiusque rei ex appetitu causatur, sequitur quod omnis actio cuiuscumque rei ex amore causatur; et hoc est quod dicit quod omnia ex desiderio pulchri et boni faciunt et volunt quaecumque faciunt et volunt. Et sumit hic desiderium pro amore, quia est effectus eius."

³Ibid., nn.409,423,425; D.n.159.

comprehension, for in Him amor or the "movement" of His nature, that is, of His intellect and will implies choice: in fact, amor and dilectio are identified in any intellectual appetite.¹ But we glimpse the excess of God's love from its procession into creatures, wherefore amor best signifies for us that love wherein the divine operations have their root, though we must always link deliberate choice to our concept of the divine amor, as the following passage from Saint Thomas suggests:

Ex amore enim bonitatis suae processit quod bonitatem suam voluit diffundere et communicare aliis, secundum quod fuit possibile, scilicet per modum similitudinis et quod eius bonitas non tantum in ipso maneret, sed ad alia efflueret.²

The word amor may be applied to God, then, with a negation of the created mode implied by the word as well as of all imperfection found in its usual signification, as is the practice in Symbolic Theology when it transfers metaphoric names to God.³ Yet, to Dionysius, amor is not just a metaphoric name, as we shall see.

He dismisses objections to the word as irrational

¹Ia IIae, q.26, a.3, ad 1.

²IDN., c.4, T.IX, n.409; app.26. The italics are ours. Cf., in the same passage: "Propter excessum suae bonitatis omnia amat." For us amor rather than dilectio suggests excess, as amor likewise signifies the first movement of any appetite, the principle of all operations.

³IDN., c.4, T.IX, nn.421-423.

or unreasonable, with an implication of the contrasting interpretations of its meaning by the interior and exterior man, to whom Saint Paul refers.¹ The exterior man relies only on his senses; to him all love is sensuous or sensual. The thinker turns from sense to intellect to wrest the intelligible meaning hidden in sense images or in the written symbols of human science. He relates any idolum of love, be it sensible passion or artificial sign such as the word amor, to the per se love of choice.² Accordingly the Greek philosopher's measure of love was the noblest of human friendships. But the truly inner or spiritual man, especially the student of theology, accepts Scriptural guidance to envisage a love superior to the noblest concept of the Greek sage, though a passion. He knows that grace and faith can offer him higher and more certain science than reason alone; they teach him a love wherein he may be drawn closer to God by the infused attraction of the gifts than by the most perfect human dilection, as when the holy soul, "divinized by union

¹IDN., c.4, T.IX, nn.410-414; D.nn.160-164. See especially the article on erôs and agapê, pp.139a-140b of the Marietti text.

²IDN., c.4, T.IX, nn.412-422; D.nn.160,161,166. See especially n.422: "Hic autem amor corporalis est quoddam idolum, idest similitudo veri amoris vel magis quidam defectus sive casus a vero amore. Ideo autem prolabuntur multitudines ad hunc amorem, quia non possunt capere uniformitatem divini amoris."

with the God Whom its intellect is too weak to compass, closes its mind's eyes and plunges blindly toward the rays of inaccessible light.¹ It is this amor - wherein the intellectual appetite suffers the operation of God - that Dionysius transfers as an analogic name to its cause, God.² No one among the initiated will misunderstand the term, and it is well to veil God's sacrosanct and incomprehensible love in paradoxical symbols.

Again, good senses normally lead to good comprehension. Amor is the better known term, and therefore a better principle for instruction of the people than dilectio.³ The Scriptures sometimes use it to elevate the popular and gross conceptions of love, as Ignatius the Martyr points out in his commentary on the Canticle.⁴ Generally the Bible employs charity, dilection and love indiscriminately, for God's love so far transcends all loves we know that none of our words can

¹IDN., c.4, D.n.161.

²Ia IIae, q.26, a.3, ad4: "Magis autem in Deum homo potest tendere per amorem passive quodammodo ab ipso Deo attractus; quam ad hoc eum propria ratio possit ducere, quod pertinet ad rationem dilectionis... Et propter hoc divinius est amor quam dilectio."

³IDN., c.4, T.IX, n.415.

⁴Ibid., T.nn.416-417; D.nn.163-164. Saint Thomas remarks the interchange of diligo for amo in various translations of such books as Wisdom and Proverbs between Dionysius' time and his own. See nn.417, 419.

suggest "what" He is. So we may borrow the device of Symbolic theology, deliberately attribute to Him a name of sensuous import, then negate from Him everything that implies the passion of the senses as well as the human mode of making choice.¹ Accordingly, we may use all derivatives of amor or dilectio interchangeably, so long as we imply the meaning of love designated by the hagiographers - the unitive force that makes the lover and the beloved, one. This signification can be applied to the spiritual or the temporal order, to God in Himself or to the creature, or to the relations between creature and Creator. Saint Thomas enjoins this interpretation in the following passage:

Dionysius says that it is enjoined by those who have seized the exact scriptural meaning, that the words charity and love should be accepted from the sacred writers who composed the canonical scriptures, and with the same significance and force that the hagiographers had enjoined, as in accordance with the revelations made to them by God, or that they themselves had revealed in their writings about God. For both words signify a kind of unitive virtue or power for union, which joins that which loves to that which is loved, inasmuch as both have the same desire; a power of fusion, inasmuch as the two are made one because the inclination of each tends to the other's good; a power for the concretion of the distinct, inasmuch as in a coalition like to this the distinctions between the two lovers remain, even when one is a superior, the other an inferior being. And this power existed from all eternity in the beautiful and good,

¹IDN., c.4, T.IX, n.423.

that is, in God, Who loves both Himself and all other things because of His own beauty and goodness.

Furthermore, this unitive virtue is bestowed upon creatures by God, Who is beautiful and good absolutely, because of that same beauty and goodness, for beauty and goodness is the proper object of love. Indeed, nothing is loved except to the extent that it has the nature of the beautiful and good. This, too, is the force that associates those of the same order, i.e. equals, in such a way that they entertain a mutual concord, one for the other, which effects a communication in an exchange of goods. This power of love likewise moves superiors to provide for inferior beings, and establishes those creatures that have less, or inferior beings, in their superiors, inasmuch as it moves the former to convert to the latter, as to their proper good, which they find in their superiors.¹

With this in mind we can apply amor to God as cause of the concretion of parts in a substance, or as cause of the spiritual union of the soul with Him in charity, symbolized by the bride and bridegroom allegory of the Canticle of Canticles. This unitive aspect of love has been emphasized by commentators of Dionysius and of the Canticle, one of whom we quote;

Inspectivum quoque locum in hoc libello tradidit qui habetur in manibus, idest in Cantico Canticorum in quo amorem coelestium divinarumque desiderium incutit animae sub specie sponsae et sponsi, charitatis et amoris viis perveniendum docens ad consortium Dei.²

¹IDN., c.4, T.IX, nn.424-425, with D.n.167. Cf., nn.404-407.

²See IDN., p.139b, m4C, c) in the article "Ερως" ET "Αγάπη", pp.138-140. It is particularly difficult to translate or to manifest the word problem in these passages, due to the poverty of our English vocabulary of love. The Greek agapē becomes both dilectio and caritas in Latin, and these are rendered by dilection and charity in English, while erōs is the Latin amor and the English love. But we have only one adjective, lovable,

Any love, even for the multiple and divisible things of sense, has become a symbol or similitude to know either analogically or metaphorically, the divine love and its source - "the indivisible good which is absolute unity, wherein the good and the one co-incide."¹

We can likewise name God by love's first effect, ecstasy, which transports the one who loves outside of himself.² We have already explained the difference between love's motion outward and in the inward movement of the intellectual process; we likewise indicated, in the love of concupiscence, a tendency for the outward motion of the affections to be deflected by the intention, in order to consubstantialize the desired good in the subject.³ Only the love of benevolence effectually continues on to reach the beloved object as its end. Saint Thomas reviews the doctrine on substantial and accidental love to remark:

to translate the various Latin adjectives indicating the object of charity, love or dilection. We would, therefore, remind the English reader of the distinction in the meanings of the Latin terms. Amor may indicate either the generic or the specific term signifying love in the sensitive appetite; dilectio signifies the intellectual love of free choice; caritas adds an intensity of love whereby the beloved becomes inestimably dear. Dionysius prefers amor and its derivatives to caritas or dilectio as a name for God. See Albertus Magnus, De Coelesti Hierarchia, c.7, n.1, p.159b, solution, with Ia IIae, q.26, a.3, c.

¹IDN., c.4, T.IX, n.421. Cf., Boetius, De Consolatione Philosophiae, latin text of Boece, La Consolation de La Philosophie, (Paris; Librairie Garnier Freres, no date), Lib. III, prosa xi, n.9.

²IDN., c.4, T.X, n.430. Cf., D.nn.168-171.

³See supra, pp.51-53, Cf., IDN., c.4, T.X, nn.428-430.

In both modes of love then, the affections of the lover are drawn by a certain inclination to the beloved object, but in different ways: for, in the second mode of love, the lover's affections, though attracted to the beloved by an act of the will, fall back on himself by way of his intention; when, for example, my appetite reaches out toward justice or wine, my affections may indeed tend toward one or other of these, but in spite of that tendency they fall back on themselves, because they incline to the objects mentioned, in order that the subject may thereby possess a good; consequently, such love does not transport the lover outside of himself with regard to his intended end. But when an object is loved in the first mode of love, the affections are directed toward the beloved object in such a manner that they do not deflect back to themselves, for they desire a good for the beloved object itself, and not with the intention that the subject will derive some benefit thereby. Consequently the latter mode of love causes ecstasy, for it transports him who loves outside of himself.¹

There are three ways wherein this ecstasy can come about. In the first, that loving is as a part to the whole, for it has only partially the good that the beloved has completely, as the body has completely the good that the hand has only in part. Here "the lover orders his own proper good to the beloved."² In the second mode, he who loves is of the same order, as if one hand could love the other; in this case he who loves goes out of himself to the extent that he considers the other another self. In the third, the subject loving is more perfect than the beloved object, and

¹IDN., c.4, T.X, n.430; app.42-43. Cf., D.nn.168-171; Ia IIae, q.28, a.3.

²IDN., c.4, T.X, n.432.

considers it as his possession, as the body loves its hand. The first case is the mode whereby man should love God, "to the extent that he leaves himself nothing of his own being that is not ordered to God."¹

According to Dionysius, this ekstasis is the distinguishing mark of love in God, and of the love caused by Him in others, and erôs or amor signify it more properly than agapé or dilectio. Erôs, for the Platonists, was as a needle inciting each being toward perfect beauty and beyond it. Amor in God is the overflowing source of an infinite effusion from his beauty and goodness.²

Est autem et faciens extasim divinus amor, non dimittens sui ipsorum esse amatores, sed amatorum. Et monstrant quidem superiora providentiae facta minus habentium et coordinata sui invicem continentiae et subiecta divini conversionis ad prima. Propter quod et Paulus magnus in continentia divini factus divino ore: "vive ego." dicit, "iam non ego, in me autem vivit Christus."³

Saint Thomas points to three instances of ecstatic altereity here.⁴ Love of His own beauty transports God out of His essence to create a universe, and to cause in each creature

¹IDN., c.4, T.X, n.432 with n.431.

²Pseudo-Denys, La Hiérarchie Céleste, c.2, pp.187-195, with De Gandillac's introduction, p.38. Here too is found Dionysius' argument for the use of "dissimilar symbols" to unveil the intelligible idea of the divine reality, for they best express God's complete transcendence. For Gregory of Nyssa erôs is the ecstatic summit of agapé or charity.

³IDN., c.4, D.nn.168-170; app.39. Cf., T.X, nn.433-437. The scriptural quotation is from Gal., ii, 20.

⁴IDN., c.4, T.X, nn.433-437; app.44-46.

a love converting its whole being to Him as its end. Derived from His love is the love turning creatures toward each other, impelling superiors to guide inferiors, equals to unite with equals, and inferiors to submit to those participating more in His love. Saint Paul's deifying union is the limit, as it were, of a universal phenomenon, which, in the order of grace, is represented by the participation of each soul as part in the charity of Christ as whole, resulting in the tendency of the whole Mystical Body to the perfect beauty of the Trinity, and to a fervent and efficacious love of neighbour. By this ekstasis Christ lives in each. The ekstasis per se - an eminent operation - is in God; its effect or passion is found in creatures, wherein the virtue of God's ecstasy operates without ever leaving or exhausting that virtue in the Trinity.¹ We quote two of the many texts supporting our thesis:

... Et ipse omnium causa, pulchro et bono, omnium amore, per abundantiam amativae bonitatis extra seipsum fit, ad omnia existentia providentis et sicut bonitate et amore trahitur et ex eo quod est super omnia et ab omnibus segregatur, ad id quod est in omnibus deponitur, secundum extasim facientem, supersubstantialem virtutem, a se ipso inegressibilem.²

... Amor extasim facit, quia ponit amantem extra seipsum. ...quia amor facit quod non solum sibi intendant sed etiam aliis... In omnibus enim his apparet, quod aliquid extra se exit, dum ad alterum convertitur.³

¹IDN., c.4, T.X, n.436. Cf., D.nn.168-171.

²IDN., c.4, D.nn.171; T.n.437; app.39. Ecstasy could be applied to the Trinitarian processions in this sense also.

³Ibid., T.nn.430,433,435; app.42,44,45.

It is, therefore, God's beauty, glimpsed in its effects, which makes the intellectual creature ecstatic, whereas God is ecstatic from love of His own goodness, in an incomprehensibly perfect ecstasy wherein, as Dionysius himself reminds us, He remains ever immutable and unmoved within Himself.¹ Lest we associate imperfection with deponitur in the above quotation Saint Thomas adds:

No contraction in God is to be read into the phrase, "He condescends," but only the sense that God diffuses Himself to creatures, to give them a share in His goodness.²

No imperfection, then, is implied when Dionysius names God ecstatic, for He is designating Him a superexcellent erôs, Who is Himself, or Who causes the object and the motion of every love - amor, dilectio or caritae - whereby lovers are converted to the beloved and therefore transported out of themselves.

Nor is imperfection implied when Exodus names God jealous.³ Human jealousy, best known to us, is "an intense love suffering no sharing of the beloved,"⁴ but radically

¹IDN., c.4, D.n.171: "This is in accord with divine power which is at once conducive to ecstasy, supersubstantial, and immovably fixed within God's essence."

²IDN., c.4, T.X, n.437.

³Ibid., n.438; D.n.172; Exodus, xx.5.

⁴IDN., c.4, T.X, n.438.

the term means only an intensity of love. Since love is the root of all operations, the greatness of the operation bears witness to the intensity of the love. God's love is intense, as is manifest in the unparalleled excellence and beneficence of His operations, and it likewise excites an intense ardour in all creatures aspiring to Him as to their good; but, in contrast to man's exclusive jealousy, God's love creates a multitude of creatures to love and share in His well-beloved good. Again, our will is not the cause of, but is rather moved by the beauty or good extrinsic to us. God's will, cause of all creation, is moved by His own intrinsic beauty to make exterior things, and to make them beautiful and good. So, Dionysius ascribes jealousy to God because His creative love makes things so intensely lovable, that in virtue of His own providential act they seem to become worthy of the ardour of God and man.¹ Then, as if the sum up all his preceding doctrine, he concludes:

In short, the whole explanation of the object and movement of love is to be found in the beautiful and good; desirable qualities and love itself were precontained

¹ IDN., c.4, T.X, nn.438-440, especially n.439: "Et hoc est quod dicit quod Deus dicitur zelotes, sicut per quem fiunt zelabilia, idest intense amabilia ea quae sunt volita vel desiderata ab Ipso vel a quibuscumque aliis." Cf., n.440: "Et hoc est quod subdit quod Deus dicitur zelotes, sicut omnibus quae per eius providentiam proveniunt, existentibus zelabilibus, idest amabilibus intense."

in the beautiful and good, and they exist or come into existence through the causality of the beautiful and good.¹

"The whole explanation of the object and movement of love is to be found in the beautiful and good!" This suggests another difficulty to Dionysius, for the theologians seem to have confused mover and movement in calling God both amabile or diligibile, which suggest the object of love, and dilectio, amor or caritas, which suggest the very movement of love.² He had explained above that any operation, including the operations of knowing and loving, could be considered as a movement.³

He offers two solutions for the difficulty, one based upon the love whereby all things love God, the second upon the love whereby God loves Himself.⁴ In the first case, God is called love or charity in the mode of a cause inasmuch as He infuses love, that is, all the capacity for loving, into creatures. On the other hand, He is said to be essentially lovable and worthy of charity, in that He Himself is the object of His creatures' love.⁵ As Saint Thomas expresses it, He is

¹IDN., cn4, T.X, n.440; D.n.172.

²Ibid., T.XI, nn.442-443, with D.n.173. The scriptural passages cited are: "Deus charitas est" (I John, 1,6), and "Adolescentulae dilexerunt te nimis" (Cant.1,2).

³IDN., c.4, T.VII, especially nn.369-371; D.nn.147-150.

⁴IDN., c.4, T.XI, n.444: "Sic ergo prima solutio accepta fuit secundum amorem quo omnia amant Deum."

⁵Ibid., n.444. Cf., D.n.174.

object of charity and lovable" in that He is Himself the absolute beautiful and good, for this implies the object of love."¹ Saint Thomas goes on to explain Dionysius' metaphor, which expresses love, both that which is intrinsic as well as that which is extrinsic to God, as a movement arising from the good as mover.

Love indicates some kind of movement by which he who loves is moved, but the object of charity is that which moves by a movement such as the above. Now it is proper to God to move and to cause motion in creatures, and therefore it seems to be proper to Him to be lovable because He creates love in other beings. The second solution is that God is called both love and lovable inasmuch as He Himself loves with a movement of love of Himself and (this love) leads Him to Himself, for to will is a kind of movement. God wills His own good, and, in accordance with that will, inasmuch as He Himself is His own goodness which somehow moves His own will, He is also said to be an object of charity and lovable for Himself. Indeed, inasmuch as the very volition whereby He wills His own good is His own being (*esse*) and substance, God is His own love. Accordingly the first solution was based upon the love whereby all things love God: the second, on the contrary, was based upon the love whereby God loves Himself.²

Having established that God is a mover, inasmuch as He moves both Himself and His creatures to love, that He is the very movement of love because His volition or love of His own goodness is a kind of movement, and because He causes

¹IDN., c.4, T.XI, n.446: "Dicit ergo primo quod Deus est diligibilis et amabilis, inquantum est ipsum pulchrum et bonum in hoc enim importatur objectum amoris." Cf., app.54.

²Ibid., n.444; app.53.

love's motion in creatures, Dionysius goes on to propose another reason why God may be called love, viz., that all the effects, the properties and the whole process of love can be attributed to Him.¹

Love has three effects: it moves the lover to act; it converts the lover's acts to the beloved by way of his intention; all love manifests itself by outward signs to obtain a return of love. Saint Thomas points out that all three effects are found in God:

Accordingly he says, with reference to the first effect, that God is called love and charity inasmuch as He moves both Himself and other beings to an operation by means of love; with reference to the second, that again, in addition to the above, God is called love because He raises creatures to Himself, Who alone, in and by His essence, is the beautiful and good, in the sense that He is the essence of beauty and goodness. He says, too, that God is love inasmuch as He manifests Himself by means of Himself alone, i.e., by His own proper virtue.²

God's love manifests itself by His creative procession to win a return of love. Dionysius continues:

That manifestation is a beneficent procession from the solitude of His oneness, a simple loving movement which is per se mobile and also per se operative.³

Saint Thomas points out five properties of divine love

¹IDN., c.4, T.XI, n.447. Cf., D.n.176.

²Ibid., n.448; app.54-55.

³IDN., c.4, D.n.177; App.51.

manifested in the procession of that love to creatures. First, God's creative love, emanating from His absolute unity wherein He loves Himself, produces created loves which imitate His unitive virtue, for they unite each thing primarily to what is identical with it in substance, and then to what is closely joined to it in any order.¹ Secondly, love's movement is outward, in imitation of His progression into creatures, reversing the inward motion of the cognitive process. Thirdly, God is good simpliciter and love simpliciter; in imitation, love, the first movement of the appetite, is simple, i.e. uncomposed, as the first in any genus is simple. Fourthly, God is pure act, but moved by His good; in imitation, love is per se mobilis as proceeding in and from the appetite, "sicut motus naturalis simul ab intimo procedens."² Fifthly, God operated to create imitations of His goodness because the operation pleased Him; in imitation, love is per se operans, in contrast with the propter aliud of hope, for, "He who performs something out of love, performs it for its own sake inasmuch as this is pleasant to him,"³ as God freely moved to will and

¹IDN., c.4, T. XI, n.449. Cf., IDN., T. IX, n.421: "Bonum enim et unum in idem concurrunt." Cf., Boetius, De Consol. Phil., III, prosa xi, n.37: "Omnia igitur unum desiderant... Sed unum id ipsum monstravimus esse quam bonum."

²IDN., c.4, T. XI, n.449.

³IDN., c.4, T. IX, n.449.

to create.

The procession of God's love is uniquely excellent, too, according to Dionysius, as is proper to a love proceeding from the Trinitarian unity.

It pre-exists in the good whence it emanates in goodness to creatures, and returns again to the good. So divine love manifests its unique excellence in that it exists in itself without end or beginning, like an eternal circle, which goes round and round in an unswerving convolution, because of the good, from the good, in the good, and toward the good, ever proceeding from, yet remaining within that same good and ever reverted to it.¹

Since circular movement alone can be without end, circular motion belongs to the eternity of divine love, continually and uniformly arising from and tending to that good which is also the Transcendent and One God.² Then, lest anyone should consider this doctrine on love unorthodox, Dionysius appends, as concluding proof of his whole thesis on love, a few of the utterances of his teacher, Hierotheus. These quotations apply to the whole spiritual and temporal order, and give theology's judgment on love as taught by both Metaphysics and Faith.

Amorem, sive divinum sive angelicum sive intellectualem sive animale sive naturale dicamus, unitivam quamdam et concretivam intelligimus virtutem, superiora

¹Idn., c.4. T.IX, D.n.177; app.51.

²Ibid., n.449: "Et hoc est quod dicit, quod amor attribuitur Deo sicut quidam bonus processus cuiusdam segregatae, idest excellentis unitivae, quia quanto amor est perfectio tanto et unitio ex qua procedit est maior."

quidem moventem ad providentiam minus habentium,
coordinata autem rursum ad communicativam alternam
habitudinem in extremis, subiecta ad meliorum et
superpositorum conversionem.¹

According to Saint Thomas, this first citation from Hierotheus gives us the definition of love that is common to the supernatural as well as the natural order.² That there is love in the five orders of the divine, the angelic, the human, the sensitive - comprising man's lower animality as well as the animal order - and the natural order - common to vegetative and inanimate life - is plain from the presence of the necessary condition: "Love is the first motion of the will and appetite: wherever will and appetite occur, there is love."³

Wherever there is will and appetite love is a "unitive and concretionary virtue," for it is derived from love in the Divine Nature where the will loving, the good loved, and the movement of love are identified in the divine Essence. So the derived love, like its exemplar, is a unitive force, conjoining all that have the nature of what is identical or one in substance, what is similar or one in quality, what is equal or one in quantity. The term "concretionary" differs from "unitive" inasmuch as it implies that a distinction remains

¹IDN., c.4, D.n.180.

²Ibid., T.XII, nn.453-456. Cf., supra p.82; app.59, 61ff. We cite the Latin text because the meaning is more evident in the original than in the translation.

³Ibid., T.n.454.

in the units amalgamated, whether they be atoms in the substance or human persons in the state.¹ But we must keep in mind what this "virtue" means:

Sed virtus hic non accipitur nec pro passione nec pro habitu, cum amor non sit passio vel actus, sed accipitur communiter prout omne illud quod habet efficaciam ad aliquid producendum, potest dici virtus vel virtuosum, unde planius esset si diceretur unitio et concretio virtuosa..."²

The mode whereby this union takes place distinguishes knowers from non-knowers as regards appetite. For all beings with an intellect choose freely an affective union, and all animals are moved to an affective union with a good already conjoined, in a way, by the knowing faculty. Non-knowers, by a natural aptitude, blindly seek their good. Yet to all of these that unitive force applies.

... It moves superior beings to provide for the less-endowed, moves equals to a mutual exchange of communications with those of proportioned rank, and moves inferiors to turn to their superiors, submitting to them and attending to them as to their causes, and loving them, for the good of the inferiors depends on them.³

The second quotation divides these five loves, according to their object, into natural and supernatural loves, calling those natural whereby the goods of the sensible world are desired by any love whatsoever, but especially by

¹IDN., c.4, T.XII, n.455; app.62. Cf., supra, pp.45-49, 53-57, 81-82.

²IDN., c.4, T.XII, n.455.

³IDN., c.4, T.XII, n.456; app.64.

animal love; and he calls loves for "true goods which are known only by an intellect" supernatural.¹ Among the supernatural loves, human love ranks lowest, both in its mode of knowing and in its beauty or lovability. For, in angelic love, the agent knowing and the intellect loving are intelligent and intelligible in act; therefore the angelic intellect must have that added order to the intellect which is beauty, signalling its close resemblance to the original beauty of its exemplar - God. But the human mind, wrapped in matter, is not intelligible in act, and its love is mingled with earthly affection because of its dependence on the body. Angelic love is accordingly called wholly beautiful, for it has a "further proportioning within the order, which embellishes the order and makes it beautiful."²

The first quotation gave us the Christian hierarchy of loves considered as a progression descending from the divine love as principle. The second considered these same loves as a "procession arising from the natural loves"³, i.e. in the logical order, where the principle is the degree of abstraction or immateriality - and therefore of intelligibility and beauty - represented in the objects loved as well as in

¹IDN., c.4, T. XII, n.457.

²Ibid., app.65.

³IDN., c.4, T.XII, n.457.

the natures or subjects loving. This represents Plato's ascending dialectic of loves, but there is only an apparent contradiction with the theological and metaphysical, that is, the real order, as is plain when we resolve either progression using the object as measure.¹ Everything is loved on account of a good, created or uncreated, and the good loved, either as ultimate or as proximate end, defines love.² So we may divide all loves into two groups, one wherein love is had for the uncreated good, another, wherein the objects loved are created goods. But the uncreated good and the act arising therefrom is more excellent, and therefore principle, cause and measure of the corresponding created good and love.³ As Saint Thomas explains:

The cause of love is found in that which is above all things, to which cause the sum total of love from the universe tends, in modes that vary according to the nature of each and every creature, inasmuch as all things are directed to God Himself... And Dionysius does not merely affirm that the love which has God as cause is more excellent, but he even claims that the others are over-ruled by it, for the love which depends upon a created good is regulated by the love which depends upon the uncreated good.⁴

¹IDN., c.4, T.XII, nn.458ff; D.nn.182,183.

²Ibid., T.n.459: "ratio enim amoris est bonum quod vel est ultimus finis vel proximus."

³Dionysius calls divine love the "father" of all other loves (n.182). Saint Thomas translates father into principle, but a principle which contains the rationes of all other loves within itself. See n.459.

⁴IDN., c.4, T.XII, n.459; app.67.

"The love which depends upon a created good is regulated by the love which depends upon the uncreated good." Here we have the great principle of order for our world, as likewise for the universe. When created loves are ordered to divine love, there will be order or peace. The last quotation gives a picture of what that order was designed to be:

And so, restoring these loves to unity again, we say that there is one uniquely simple power, which, of itself alone, moves all things towards a uniting concretion, and which, starting from the absolute good, and extending thence to the remotest of beings, returns back again therefrom through all things, until it reaches the absolute good. Thus, reflecting itself from itself, by itself and through itself, it is ever and unswervingly restored to itself.¹

Of earth's creatures, only man can refuse to join the order of eternal resolution of secondary loves to the one primary love, wherein "Our very God, one uniquely simple power loves."² To dispose him for the unitive virtue that would keep him in God's universal order, Dionysius and his commentator wrote the Book of the Divine Names.³ With the same purpose Aquinas undertook all his philosophical and theological works. When we accept and implement their principle, and subordinate our secondary and potentially conflicting loves to the primary and beneficent love of God, across the earth we will have again the tranquility of order which spells peace.⁴

¹IDN., c.4, D.n.183; T.XII, nn.458ff.

²IDN., c.4, T.XII, n.460.

³IDN., c.3, T.I, n.233. Cf., supra, p.92.

⁴Ibid., c.11, T.I,II.

ON LOVE

PART III

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

We began our study with an investigation of the principles of love as found in the philosophy of Saint Thomas, to discover what role love should play in an order dominated by wisdom. We went from the great richness of his human science to his commentary on the Divine Names, wherein he manifested the correspondence between the supernatural and the natural order, between theology and metaphysics, that we might have the certitude and higher judgment of theology on our conclusions.

Metaphysics taught us that love pertains to appetite and that it is the first movement of a natural directive tendency in each thing for its perfective good. Among all orders of beings known by reason, through that tending of the individual creature to its proper good as perfective, the universe of creatures is oriented to the common good intrinsic to the universe, as likewise to the separated good that is God. Such order spells peace, the tranquility of order. In all the universe, only intellectual creatures are free to choose their loves, and thereby put themselves, along with all orders depending on them, outside of that good order. Therefore the intellectual creature has the problem and the responsibility of subordinating his loves, and, in consequence, his

operations for his proper perfection, to his love for the good that is his end.

In this portion of the universe that is our world, only man has the choice enabling him to disrupt the tranquility of universal order, with the consequent power to sow chaos among his human-kind, as well as in the lower orders naturally subordinated to him. He likewise has two potentially conflicting appetites, with the ensuing responsibility of subjecting his sensual to his rational loves, his concupiscences for accidental goods to his true human loves of benevolence or friendship, and his operations for his proper goods to his concordance with his fellows for the maintenance and the furtherance of the common good. If there is disorder in the terrestrial sphere, man is culpable.

Theology opened up to us a wider field that took in the order of grace both here and hereafter; it taught us that the note common to love in every order, natural or divine, is its unitive virtue. Stemming from that eternally uniform love wherein God loves Himself within His tri-une essence, the unitive virtue of God's love issued in beneficent creation, in order to reunite, by means of a return of love, all creatures with each other and with their divine source. Especially was that true for the intellectual creature, for

whom divine love had destined the beatifying vision of Himself in return for His creature's deliberate and ordered love. Again, only the intellectual creatures, angels or men, had the choice permitting them to put themselves, and all depending on them, outside of that order which spells peace. Therefore, if there is disorder where good order was prepared and intended, the culpability thereof rests with them, for they have the duty of knowing and choosing in accordance with their ultimate good end.

In our contemporary world, instead of the tranquility of order there is chaos, violence and confusion. The political, social, and even the spiritual well-being of the peoples of our earth seem everywhere to be in jeopardy. Yet modern philosophy is incapable of designating the very nature of good order, much less of offering directive principles, that, if applied, would restore peace. For the fount of wisdom where the solutions for our evils are to be found is still neglected. We refer to the philosophy of Saint Thomas, and we extend our accusation of neglect to many so-called Thomists and to religious groups protesting loyalty to the Holy Father's counsels, who yet get no closer to Saint Thomas' teachings than a watered-down commentary on his texts.

Accordingly our conclusions, like the many loves of Dionysius, reduce to one. The popes have pointed out that

our modern problems are rooted in theological or metaphysical errors. Our present Holy Father, in his encyclical Humani Generis, has reissued an earlier pope's directive to seek for light to solve our human ills in the perennial philosophy of Aquinas. Our study has shown us how apt his directive is. For, in the light of Saint Thomas' doctrine on love, it would seem that a great part of the disorder about us arises from a human failure to know and choose, and then to order man's properly human goods, to the good that is his end. Thus there has come about the enthronement of the love of concupiscence above the supernatural or reasonable love of friendship, distorting the appetite's movement, meant to implement the tranquility of order, into a cultivated and habitual movement of man's passions which would order our whole world to the Marxist deification of the concupiscence of collective man. To recognize the source of an evil facilitates its solution. We are convinced that Saint Thomas has the light to manifest and suggest principles of remedy in other disordered fields also.

Our conclusion, then, consists of one sentence. It is imperative that those who profess to be students of Catholic philosophy should return to the philosophy that

is our heritage and our pride, that is, to a study of the literal texts of Saint Thomas, wherein true principles of order are to be found, for only then can we claim to be Catholic philosophers.

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