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The Concept Of Christian Philosophy

Wayne Lutz
Carroll College

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THE CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

by

Wayne Charles Lutz

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INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church has been accused of not being sufficiently interested in the things of this world. It is sometimes alleged that the natural is made slave to the supernatural, that the natural is denied its own rights. This is a mistaken notion. The Church has always recognized the natural; she has defended it against both those who have over emphasized it, and those who have proclaimed it corrupt or bankrupt. She has preserved the natural with the supernatural. Although the first purpose of her existence is to confer upon men a supernatural life in God and bring them to a supernatural end, the Church has recognized the natural faculties of man and demands the preservation of their integrity. The supernatural cannot operate in man without the natural. It is for this reason that the Church as always preserved purely human things. She takes man and his faculties and confers upon him a supernatural character, and thus enables him to act as a supernaturalized being, but she does not thwart his natural abilities. She makes him a superb warrior in the field of the natural.

The Church sees, then, the need for a philosophy that is true qua philosophy. Man's reason must have true principles if his actions are to be right. Much of the evil in the world today is caused, not by the perversity
of men's wills, but by mistaken ideas about God, man and the world. Let us be cautious, Philosophy is not a panacea for all the ills of today. The Christian religion has been given to dispel man's mind from the darkness of error and to strengthen his will for good works. Faith is necessary for salvation, saving man from corruption in this world and leading him to everlasting blessedness. However, Philosophy has its place in this divine order of things. God has given man the light of natural reason and also has deigned to bestow on those who will receive it the superadded light of Faith, not destroying reason but giving it added strength and a capacity for greater things.

The Church defends philosophy, seeing its great usefulness to lead men to Faith and to prepare the mind for fuller reception of revelation. Christianity is Christocentric. All things have meaning and value when they are referred and subjected to Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Philosophy is no exception. Is there a Christian Philosophy?

The purpose of this essay is to present the concept of Christian Philosophy. We will proceed by showing what is meant by philosophy, what is meant by theology, and finally, what is understood by a concept of Christian Philosophy. For this latter task we will be guided by two contemporary thinkers, Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain.
CHAPTER I

The Concept of Philosophy

Philosophy received its autonomy, distinguishing it from other sciences, especially religion, in Greek Philosophy. For nearly a thousand years from Thales of Miletus (624-550 B.C.) until the time of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) the nature of philosophy had not been accurately delineated. Aristotle did a great work in defining philosophy and separate it from other sciences. Aristotle, with his Socratic background, may be regarded as the master of his time in clarifying the concept of philosophy. He gave to philosophy its true subject which is contained in the answer to the question: what is being or reality? Aristotle called philosophy the "intimate knowledge of causes and reasons of things." It is in this that Aristotle made his profound contribution, viz., that the human intellect can and does attain a knowledge of reality as it really is.

St. Thomas, who revived Aristotelian realism, accepts his definition. To arrive at the first and universal causes St. Thomas recognizes Aristotles insistence of the human mind to attain a knowledge of reality. The human intellect seeks out the reasons and causes of things through its conception of being. Being is for St. Thomas whatever is,

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(2) Cf., Contra Gentiles, I, 1.
i.e., "quidquid est". The intellect naturally knows being, and whatever essentially belongs to being as such, and on this cognition the knowledge of first principles is founded. Metaphysics becomes fundamental in the philosophy of St. Thomas. The science of being having gained the first principles of all being, it is applied to every other branch of knowledge concerned with real being, actual or possible.

Modern Thomistic Philosophy follows Aristotle and St. Thomas formulating a definition which has become standardized: Philosophy is the science of beings in their ultimate reasons, causes and principles, acquired by aid of human reason alone. Jacques Maritain gives it in these words:

"Philosophy is the science which by natural light of reason studies the first causes or highest principles of all things—is, in other words, the science of things in their first causes, in so far as these belong to the natural order." (5)

It is well to note, first of all, that these definitions apply strictly speaking (simpliciter) to Metaphysics or First Philosophy. For it is Metaphysics which gives us a knowledge of absolutely first causes or principles. They do include the other branches in a qualified sense (secundum quid) as they investigate first causes of a particular order of being.

(3) St. Thomas, Contra Gentiles, II, 83.
(4) Cf. Olighti-Zybar, The Key to the Study of St. Thomas, St. Louis, Herder, 1929, p. 28
Philosophy is a science. It is a special science. This is fundamental to the concept of philosophy.

Of course this has been denied by Sensists, Empiricists, Positivists, and what have you. Practically speaking they are all synonymous, holding to the Philosophy of Naturalism which takes a very narrow view of the meanings of the terms, "science" and "scientific". "Science" according to this philosophy means the natural or physical sciences. Chemistry, anatomy and biology are the models to which every domain of knowledge must conform that aspires to be scientific.

They fashioned a new concept of science. Formerly it had always been held that each science, in its own field, according to its own methods, and in its own way might aspire to the attainment of truth. Naturalism, on the contrary, recognizes one domain of knowledge only, and one method only of arriving at truth, namely, by way of the physical sciences. Relying on facts, observation, experimentation and induction, these are to be the only methods employed in the pursuit of truth.

This is too narrow a view of science. Science is a systematic body of certain truths. To this concept of science Scholastic Philosophy conforms. Philosophy consists in knowing the causes of things. It devolves into causes and principles underlying the facts which physical science enumerate: "The search of causes is the chief business of philosophers, this knowledge of causes is certain and not
probable, but a knowledge compelling the assent of the intellect.  

And this certain knowledge of causes reduced to a system establishes philosophy among the sciences.

Philosophy is even more than merely a science among sciences; it is an extension of science and superior to the physical sciences. For philosophy accepts the conclusions of science and pushes further for ultimate explanations. Thus philosophy becomes a superior science with a right to judge the findings of other sciences in the light of its own principles. Philosophy governs the other sciences and directs them, yet remains independent from them. This does not mean that the other sciences cannot attain their own end without the aid of philosophy. The two fields remain distinct.

The autonomy and concept of philosophy is further clarified by looking to its material object. The material object of a science is that which the science considers. It is the thing or subject matter with which the science deals. Philosophy considers all things. It is concerned with everything, everything that exists, every possible object of knowledge. Nothing existing or possible to exist is foreign to its scope. It attempts to solve all vital

questions about God, man, and the world. Metaphysics or First Philosophy, which is at the head of philosophy and around which the other branches revolve, claims properly the material object of philosophy. Aristotle states:

"There is a science which studies beings inasmuch as it is being, and its essential attributes. This science is not to be confounded with any of the so called particular sciences, for each of these sciences does not consider in general being as such, but cuts off a certain part of being, and it is this part alone that it considers the essential attribute; such is the case of the mathematical sciences. But since we seek the first principles of being and the causes the most elevated, it is evident that there exists necessarily some reality to which in virtue of its proper nature these principles and causes appertain. If they, the philosophers who seek the elements of whatever is, seek for these same principles, the result will be necessarily be found to be the elements of being, not of accidental being, but of being as such. "(9)

This is being in general. It is centered about the simple concept of that which is. The most fundamental concept of reality. Thus Metaphysics becomes the fundamental department of philosophy, indeed, it is basic to all sciences. It is this First Philosophy which absolutely considers all things. The other departments of philosophy, as psychology, cosmology, etc., do not forsake the definition of philosophy. They consider different aspects of being and retain the name of philosophy and science because they deal with the first causes in a particular order of being.

To say philosophy alone investigates being and consequently

all beings does not give much form or definiteness to the subject of philosophy. This is established by its formal object, which is simply the aspect under which a subject is considered by a science. The formal object of philosophy is found in the definition in stating that philosophy studies being in its ultimate reasons, causes, and principles. Discovering first causes is the aim and function of philosophy. In everything which philosophy investigates it seeks for first causes. Other sciences have their particular aspect of study merely secondary or proximate principles. For example, Astronomy takes for its field of study the universe, but it does not have the answers within its scope nor does it investigate such problems as: What is the ultimate origin of the world? Is it eternal? Why is there order? Is it created? These are questions which go beyond the secondary considerations of Astronomy and for which philosophy seeks to answer. The answers give the ultimate principles of the universe and this is the domain of philosophy.

Again in this the superiority of Metaphysics among the sciences can be seen. For the highest causes of being as being lifts the human mind to the perfect Being, the supreme reality. It is this Being that furnishes us with the true reason of the universe and of all things which come within our experience. Thus Metaphysics gives the ultimate explanation of beings which is the purpose of philosophy.

As it is in regard to the material object philosophy, in its various branches, admits of different formal objects. Maritain mentions this succinctly:

"Strictly speaking, there is no one formal object of philosophy, since philosophy as a whole is not simply one, but a compound of several distinct sciences (logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, etc.), each specified by a distinct formal object (ens rationis logicum, ens mobile, ens in quantum ens,). But between the formal objects of the different philosophic sciences there is something analogously common—the fact they study, each in its own order, the highest and most universal causes, and treat their subject-matter from the standpoint of these causes. They may therefore say that the highest causes constitute the final object or the formal standpoint analogously common of philosophy taken as a whole." (11)

How does philosophy go about attaining a certain knowledge of the first causes of all things? The instrument is human reason alone. Philosophy does not use authority as does theology upon which to base its knowledge. (12) It establishes its principles on the power of the human mind to reason to certain conclusions and truth. The natural light of human reason is common to all sciences excepting theology. It is used in the physical sciences as well as in philosophy. Because

(11) An Introduction to Philosophy, New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1930, p. 108. (footnote no. 1)
philosophy does not rely on revelation or authority it is distinguished from religion. Also the light(lumen sub quo) which philosophy uses in its investigation differs from those of human science because it goes deeper into things. It transcends the more limited methods of experimentation and investigation which the sciences use. The medium of knowing in a science corresponds with the formal principle by which it attains its object. Philosophy does not use sensible experience as such, but relies on the natural power of the mind to know being as such.

The human mind is finite, having its limitation. Sometimes it must be content with probable solutions, but philosophy yields a greater number of certain conclusions than any other human science.

The term 'philosophy' itself gives us an indication of its end. It comes from the Greek words, "Philein", to love, and "Sophia", wisdom, thus, love of wisdom. Philosophy gives us wisdom because philosophy is wisdom. Mainly it is a wisdom not of action but of knowing. Since the intellect is the highest faculty man possesses and thinking is his crowning activity and philosophy furnishes the human mind answers to the deepest and most profound subjects of the universe, the wisdom contained in philosophy is man's greatest acquisition. The would be derogatory attack is purely useless speculation and hence not of much concern to man is purely the result of a distorted sense of values.
Moreover philosophy has its practical side even within its proper domain, in the branch called, ethics. Here man is given rules of conduct by which he is to reach his last end. The most important contribution of philosophy is in showing man that he has a destiny which reaches beyond this world. Philosophy furnishes man with the true meaning of life, saving him from darkness and despair.*

Philosophy holds the primacy among the sciences in the attainment of wisdom. All science professes knowledge or wisdom, this is the nature of science. Philosophy claims primacy because its object, being as being, is the first and formal object of the intellect, which is the faculty used in all sciences. "The general object of the intellect, the first object to which it attains and which is the reason for its knowing whatever other particular objects it may come to know, is being—not this or that being, but being as such, in all its fullness." (13)

Philosophy in another sense is the highest of wisdom in that it directs and governs the other sciences.

"St. Thomas in the prologue to his Commentary on the twelve books of Aristotle's Metaphysics, says that when many things are ordered to the attainment of one end or goal, that one of the many should be the regulator or ruler and the others the regulated.

* Of course we do not assert that man is saved by philosophy—Sanctifying Grace is an utter requirement.

or ruled. In the union of the soul and body, for instance, the soul commands and the body obeys; in society there are many individuals ordered to one end—and one rules and the others obey. In the realm of the sciences there are many sciences, and all are intended for one and the same goal; i.e., the perfection and happiness of men. It is only to be expected, then, says, St. Thomas, that one of the sciences should be first, regulative and ordinarive of all the others." (14)

It assigns to them speculatively their respective objects and ends (sapientis est ordinare). Jacques Maritain, in his chapter, "Philosophy and Special Sciences", offers this conclusion.

"Philosophy is the highest of all branches of human knowledge and is in the true sense wisdom. The other sciences are subject to philosophy, in the sense that it judges and governs them and defends their postulates. Philosophy, on the other hand, is free in relation to the sciences, and only depends on them as the instruments which it employs." (15)

Thus then is the concept of philosophy; a specific science giving certain knowledge of the causes and principles of all things through the medium of natural reason alone.

History of Philosophy shows that the term 'philosophy' was at first used to signify the sum total of the main branches of scientific studies. Since the enormous rise of special sciences it has been necessary to distinguish philosophy from them, and also, we must separate Metaphysics from the various branches in the field of philosophy which

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(14) Ibid., p. 94.
inspects being in a particular order. These various sciences constitute the entire body of what we call philosophy.

This brings us to a discussion of the divisions of philosophy.

Before Aristotle philosophy had not developed sufficiently to bring about any divisions in the field of philosophy itself; in fact, philosophy was identified for the most part with all scientific studies. Plato in his own works made no explicite distinctions in the different parts of philosophy, nor made each part subject of separate treatise. Yet the dialogues contain doctrines which may be classed under three heads: Dialectics, Physics and Ethics. Dialectics includes logic and the doctrine of ideas. Under the division of Physics is comprised Plato’s doctrine of ideas as they are reflected in nature. Thus he discusses here his cosomological theories of matter, space, etc. In his Ethics not only human conduct, but his politics, which he emphasizes so much.

Aristotle was the first to give definite division to philosophy. He made his division on the basis of whether the subject was speculative knowledge, pertained to conduct, or external production. Thus philosophy is divided into theoretical, practical, or poetical.

Under theoretical he discusses; A. Metaphysics, the study of being in its highest degree of abstraction.

Metaphysics is given the place of honour, calling it first philosophy or theology. B. Physics, the study of nature (ens mobile) and here is contained his cosmological doctrines. C. Mathematics, which considers immovable being, being not subject to change. Thus he distinguishes this order of being from that considered in physics.

Practical philosophy comprises, as does Plato's, his teacher, both politics and ethics.

Poetical philosophy treats of the external works conceived and produced by the human intellect. It is his theory of art. Aristotle does not place Logic within philosophy proper. It is a preparatory science, a vestibule of philosophy.

With Aristotle, as the Philosophus, par excellence, we have the end of the great contributions of Greek philosophy. But Aristotelianism was to be expurgated, refined and emphasized in the 13th. Century. The Patristic Philosophers, with St. Augustine, their crowning glory, emphasized Plato rather than Aristotle. St. Augustine speaks of Plato, "Vir, excellentis ingenii, et Platonis quidem impar, sed multos facile superans." Hence St. Augustine's division followed Plato; Ethics, Physics, and Dialectics. St. Augustine being primarily concerned

(17) "Philosophy", Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XII, p. 27.
with theology, considered only philosophical speculation useful which had definite reference to theology. However, he did recognize that the two sciences were distinct, and viewed the relationship in the light of these principles: "Credo ut intelligam", and "Intelligo ut credam." But he makes no attempt at defining a definite relationship between philosophy and theology.

The Scholastics retained the Platonic division and concept of philosophy of St. Augustine. The problem of the part of truth to be assigned respectively to philosophy and theology grew. St. Anselm recognized that they did not contradict each other yet each has its own sphere and tends to distrust reason without revelation.

St. Thomas revived Aristotelianism, giving it precise scientific form. St. Thomas divides the parts according as the order of being is presented to the mind. Thus there is the order of nature, the order of reason, and the order of external actions produced by human reason.

Ad philosophiam naturalem pertinent considerare ordinem rerum quem ratio humana considerat sed non facit; ita quod sub naturali philosophia comprehendamus et metaphysicum. Ordo autem quem ratio considerando facit in proprio actu, pertinent

(20) Gilson, ibid., pp. 33, ff.
ad rationalem philosophiam, cujus est considerare ordinem partium rationis ad invicem et ordinem principiorum ad invicem et ad conclusiones. Ordo autem actionum voluntarium pertinet ad considerationem moralis philosophiae. Ordo autem quem ratio considerando facit in rebus exterioribus per rationem humanam pertinet ad artes mechanicas." (21)

St. Thomas, then, divides philosophy under four large headings, Natural Philosophy, Rational Philosophy, Moral Philosophy and Philosophy of Arts. The first is speculative, the latter three are practical. His speculative philosophy is subdivided on the basis of three stages of abstraction: a. Physics, which is abstracting from movement; b. Mathematics, abstracting from intelligible quantity; c. Metaphysics, consideration of being in its most abstract form. Logic, Ethics and the Arts are the parts of practical philosophy.

In modern philosophy, Christian Wolff (1679-1754), an admirer and follower of Leibnitz, constructed a division of philosophy which has received much attention. Departing from the Aristotelian divisions on the basis of the degree of abstraction, Wolff looks at the material object which can be studied i.e., God, world of sense, and man. This view is due to the moderns emphasis on physical sciences. Wolff's scheme is this: 1. Logic, a separate introductory part; 2. Speculative philosophy divided into

(21) A quotation from St. Thomas given in "Philosophy", Catholic Encyclopedia, p. 27.

In contemporary philosophy there have arisen almost as many divisions as there are systems and attitudes towards philosophy. Thomism, which was encouraged and promoted by Leo XIII in his encyclical letter, "Aeterni Patris" (1879), remain close to philosophy as conceived by Aristotle and rounded out into a system by St. Thomas. It is well to note that due to the advance of the physical sciences throwing new light on philosophical speculations, some phases of philosophical investigation have become more limited.

We have said that philosophy is the science of the first causes of beings. Its place is first in the hierarchy of science which also deals with the ultimate explanation of all things. This is theology, not natural, which is a branch of philosophy, but supernatural theology. During the early period of Christianity and Christian Philosophy were hardly distinguishable, philosophy being absorbed into the all important truths of theology. The two sciences grew hand in hand so that it has been questioned whether Christian Philosophy can claim the name of philosophy in a proper sense. The problem revolves around the relationship of the two so some notion of theology becomes necessary. This will be the subject of our next chapter.
CHAPTER II

The Concept of Theology

It is the purpose of this chapter to present the nature of Sacred or Supernatural Theology. A notion of what is Supernatural Theology is of extreme importance to the understanding of why and how it has influenced Christian Philosophy, yet allowing Christian Philosophy to remain a natural discipline or human science. We will not be treating here formally that branch of philosophy called Natural Theology so whenever the term 'theology' is employed we are taking it to refer to Supernatural Theology alone. If, however we mention the philosophical science of God we shall prefix it with the qualifying term, 'Natural'.

We have just stated, in brief, the reason for treatment of theology in this essay, now we might make a short defense for the existence of theology itself. Is theology a superfluous science since we have a human science treating of God in philosophy? If man had but a natural end, there would be the theoretical possibility that the knowledge of the purely human sciences would be sufficient because they give man a knowledge of all things in the universe and even give him a certain knowledge of God, but are deficient for man's final end.

"It was, therefore, absolutely necessary for our salvation, that God Himself would have enlightened us by revelation. So, then, besides
philosophy, which is the production of human reason, theology, founded on revelation, is a sacred science, and necessary for eternal life."(22)

St. Thomas Aquinas treats of the necessity of theology and his complete passage is worth noting.

"It is written: (2 Timothy, iii, 16.): 'All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to repove, to correct, to instruct in justice.' Now Scripture, inspired of God, is no part of philosophical science, which has been built up by human reason. Therefore it is useful that besides philosophical science there should be other knowledge—i.e., inspired of God.

"It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God, besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason; 'The eye hath not seen, 0' God, besides thee, what things Thou has prepared for them that wait for Thee.'(Isaias lxiv. 4.) But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation, because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few and that after a long time, and with admixture of many errors. Whereas man's whole salvation, which is in God depends upon the knowledge of this truth. Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and surely it was necessary, that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was, therefore, necessary, that beside philosophical science built up by reason there should be a sacred science learnt through revelation."(23)

(23) Summa Theologica, I, q.1, art. 1.
The definitions of theology, which we are about to give and explain will refer to theology in general. They apply equally to the two divisions, Dogmatic and Moral Theology. In the later part of this chapter we will present a short exposition of what is contained under each in order to show a little more specifically the subject matter treated by theology.

Before going into the real definition of theology a short etymological explanation of the term may prove useful. It proceeds from the two Greek words, "Theos" meaning, God, and "logos", to be translated, word, doctrine, or science. Thus it is the science of God. Its early use was by pagan writers as Aristotle and Cicero in reference to discourses on the gods and their relations to the world. The early Fathers of the Church first used the term in a restricted sense, designating only that part of sacred doctrine which concerned itself with the divinity of God, the divine persons and the divinity of Christ; that which dealt with the human nature of Christ, Incarnation, and Redemption of mankind was called "Divine Economy". About the Twelfth Century its use broadened to contain all revealed teachings, not only of God, but even all things which are refered to Him.  

Theology is then, "the science of God or the truths about God put into system." Tanquerey defines it: a "supernatural science treating of God and creatures in so far as they are related to Him." The definition given in the Catholic Encyclopedia appears to be the better, "theology is defined as the science of God and divine things which is based on supernatural revelation." Newman's definition mentions nothing of the supernatural character and thus applies equally to Natural Theology. Tanquerey does not specifically mention supernatural revelation, but merely implies it in the terms, "supernatural science".

The first thing to be noted is that theology is a science, and specifically, it is supernatural, i.e., based on principles and facts which are acquired only with supernatural aid. These principles, from which flow the knowledge contained in theology, are articles of faith. That is, they are dogmas, truths or facts which God has designed to communicate to man by external words and signs, namely, revelation. These truths we have received through

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(26) Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae Fundamentalis, Tornaci, Desclee et Socii, 1907, p. 2.
Scripture, Tradition and the definitions of the Church. The Church in her divinely instituted position as infallible guardian and interpreter of the deposit of faith is the source of the truths to be taught in Theology. Now it has been questioned whether theology rates the name of science because of this position of authority the Church exercises over it, defining its truths externally to the science. Is theology then mere dialectic play, reasoning made to order? Authority does not destroy the nature of a science. This can be seen by way of analogy. Civil authority does not (should not) allow scientists of Sociology or Economics to teach freely principles detrimental to the social order, as free love, adultery, unfair business practices, etc. Even individual conscience exercises authority over a scientist who is incorporating new truths into a science. The authority the Church exercises over theology and the very content of theology, springs from the same source, God Himself, is merely that of greater degree. It does not destroy theology as a science.

Theology has its own certain principles from which it deduces conclusions by legitimate proofs; it is, therefore a system of conclusions inferred through demonstration from its own principles, and thus a science. For science

"is a series of conclusions deduced from certain principles and connected in logical order." Theology treats its object in a scientific manner. The truths, which it contains about God, are investigated and clarified. The word of God, from which these truths come, is subjected to analysis to discover the full meaning, also various texts of Scripture, which deal of the same subject, are collected and compared. Commentaries of the Fathers and definitions of the Church are used so that the divine Word is understood more clearly. Furthermore, it increases the knowledge concerning divine things by deducing from revealed truths other conclusions by the aid of principles taken from revelation itself, or even principles known with certainty by reason. Finally, these revealed facts and conclusions are grouped into an organic body so that it forms a true science.

It has been denied that theology is a science because its principles are not self evident, and cannot be demonstrated. There are many sciences which do not demonstrate their own principles, as St. Thomas affirms:

"We must bear in mind that there are two kinds of sciences. There are some which proceed from a principle known by the natural light of the intelligence, such as arithmetic and geometry and the like. There are some which proceed from principles known by a higher science; thus the science of perspective proceeds from principles established by geometry, and must be founded on principles established by geometry, and must be

established by arithmetic. So it is that sacred doctrine is a science because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely science of God and blessed. Hence just as the musician accepts on authority the principles taught by the mathematician so sacred science is established on principles revealed by God. *(31)*

It is not essential to a science that its principles be self evident, but the certainty of the principles what give worth to the science. *(The certitude given to theology by the authority of God will be the subject of a later paragraph.)* Furthermore, all sciences rest on Metaphysics whose fundamental principles are incapable of demonstration. Thus why should theology be denied the name of science.

What place should theology have among the sciences? Theology is the "Queen of Sciences", being nobler than any other science in its every aspect. Other sciences are its handmaids. "Wisdom sent her maids to invite to the tower." *(32)* "One science," says the Angelic Doctor, "is said to be nobler than another by reason of its certitude, or by reason of the higher worth of its subject-matter." *(33)* The principles of all natural sciences are discovered by unaided reason. Theology derives its principles from the All Knowing and All Wise God, who is

*(31)* *Summa Theologica*, I, q.1, art.2.  
*(32)* *Providence*, IX, 3.  
*(33)* *Summa Theologica*, I, q.1, art.5.
Truth itself and cannot err. The truths, considered and taught by theology, are of the supernatural order. Many of these, the human reason is powerless to perceive or comprehend in any adequate way, while human sciences treat only of things within reason’s grasp. The end of theology is to teach the knowledge of God and the means of our salvation. All other sciences are directed to that end in a merely secondary way. Thus theology, in regard to origin, object and end, holds the title and rank as the "Science of Sciences".

The subject of theology is God. The material object of this science is declared in the words of the definition, "God and divine things", or "God and creatures in so far as they are related to Him." This diversity of subjects is unified to make one object from the fact that all creatures have God as their first principle and last end. Everything is viewed in their relation to God. God is the primary object of theology, namely, God being that which by reason of itself is attained and to which the rest are referred. Creatures, especially rational creatures, are a secondary object comprising all other truths which are ordered or under the aspect of being related to God. The material object, as such, is, therefore, the same as that which is

the subject of Natural Theology. There is, however, a
world of difference between the two sciences. This world
of difference might be said to be the difference between
the natural and supernatural worlds. This difference is
established by the formal object.

To distinguish the formal object is a very important
point. It determines the science of theology placing it
in the realm of supernatural knowledge. In our definition
the words, "based on supernatural revelation" express the
formal object. Revelation being merely God speaking to
man, communicating truths about Himself which man cannot
attain by reason alone. However, this does not mean that
theology is restricted to the consideration only of truths
which are above the comprehension of a finite intellect,
for theology does discuss truths know through reason, but
it considers these truths only in so far as God has revealed
them. It follows that theology comprehends all those and
only those doctrines which are found in the source of faith,
namely, Scripture, Tradition and whatever the infallible
Church proposes to us. Although theology employs discursive
reasoning it is not a pure philosophical science but an
authoritative science basing its teaching on authority
rather than on intrinsic evidence.

(35) Cf. St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae, I, q.1, art. 8.; also
The principles, from which theology draws its knowledge, are
dogmas or articles of faith, and these are accepted on
authority, i.e. Faith.

Theology and Faith, however, are not to be identified,
for theology is distinguished from Faith, although it depends
on it. "Faith is like a fountain or foundation so that
theological conclusions cannot be established which do not
proceed from Faith." "Faith is a supernatural habit
disposing the mind to assent firmly on account of divine
authority to all things revealed by God." Theology,
on the other hand, takes these same truths of Faith
analyzes them scientifically, proves them and penetrates
as far as possible into their meaning. In Latin theological
terminology, theology "dissert" concerning divine things
Furthermore theology differs from Faith because of the
assent given to the truths. Theology accepts conclusions
partly by force of divine authority, and partly by the
strength of reason. The validity of the inference by
which the conclusion was arrived at calls forth the assent
in theology. Faith does not argue or discuss, but adheres
by simple act of the mind. While theology proceeds in a
scientific manner, by work of analysis and comparison,
synthesis and demonstration that such and such truths are
contained in the word of God or inferred from it.

(38) Cf. Ibid., p. 4.
Another aspect of theology is that it is both speculative and practical. A quotation from St. Thomas, who treats this in his usual clairvoyant fashion, will suffice.

"Every practical science is concerned with human operations; as moral science is concerned with human acts, and architecture with buildings. But sacred doctrine is chiefly concerned with God, whose handiwork is especially man. Therefore it is not a practical, but a speculative science.

"Sacred doctrine, being one, extends to things which belong to different philosophical sciences, because it considers in each the same formal aspect, namely, so far as they can be known through divine revelation. Hence, although among the philosophical sciences one is speculative and another practical, nevertheless sacred doctrine includes both, as God by one and the same science, knows both Himself and His works. Still, it is speculative rather than practical, because it is more concerned with divine things than with human acts; though it does treat even of these latter, inasmuch as man is ordained by them to perfect knowledge of God, in which consists eternal bliss." (39)

We have stated that theology is an authoritative science. It receives its first principles on authority. However, it has also been noted that this science employs argumentation. The authority for the first principles of theology is God. The articles of faith are things God has told us about Himself. It is evident that God did not give us theology in the form it now enjoys. It has gone through a long process of development. Whence, then, have the theologians taken the dogmas on which the science is based? The sources of these revealed

(39) Summa Theologica, I, q.1, art. 4.
truths are Scripture and Tradition. But, as we have said, theology is not simply an exposition of revelation, but confirms and defends dogmas or religious facts. In this latter it uses philosophy and human sciences. These, then, are secondary sources.

Sacred Scripture is the word of God or the collection of books, written under divine inspiration, having God as author, and as such, contain a divine message. But this is not the only source of revelation. We also have Tradition which contain doctrines revealed by God, but not placed in Scripture. These truths are transmitted by the divinely established teaching Church.

Although philosophy and human sciences are not necessary to establish the principles of theology, they are extremely useful in making it a scientific study. To mention only a few uses of philosophy, they are: for proving the existence and veracity of God, the necessity of some religion and the true Church, by deducing further truths from revealed doctrines, coordinating and connecting these in logical order, defending revealed truths against false systems, and showing that theological truths are not contrary to reason. St. Thomas says, "...as those things which belong to faith are not able to be proved by demonstration so also certain things contrary to these are not able to be demonstrated as false."
Due to the use of these sources, i.e. Scripture and Tradition, theology furnishes to mankind a greater certitude concerning its truths than any other science. "Although the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on revelation is the strongest." (41)

Because our intellect does not accept the principles of theology on their intrinsic evidence, as such truths are beyond the scope of the finite intellect, but rather on an extrinsic evidence, i.e. the authority of God, we should say a word in regard to certitude in theology.

The philosophic science of Epistemology enumerates the types of certitude and defines them thusly: 

- **Metaphysical certitude** is the unwavering assent of the mind to what things in their essence and nature must be. 
- **Physical certitude** is the unwavering assent of the mind to what expresses the order of nature and the consistency of natural laws. 
- **Moral Certitude** is the unwavering assent of the mind to what expresses the normal mode of human conduct.

Authority is a true source of certitude. It produces this unwavering assent of the mind. It might be said that authority, as extrinsic evidence to a truth, replaces and is substituted for intrinsic evidence. This is both true

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(41) St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, q. 1, art. 8.
and necessary in divine things, otherwise man would lack both knowledge and certitude concerning things necessary for salvation. To accept a truth on authority is an act of faith. For this act, although it comes from the intellect, is produced under the command of the will rather than by the intellect merely perceiving the intrinsic evidence and assenting to it. The intellect enters in, however, by judging that the truth presented to it is credible, i.e. it involves no contradiction and the authority is worth of belief. The will, accepting this judgment of credibility, sees that it is a good, and orders the intellect to assent to it. Glenn enunciates this formula of faith, "I believe because I will to believe; I will to believe because I realize that it is right and reasonable to believe." Faith, then, is not blind assent, but assent in the light of a judgment of credibility.

The more trustworthy the authority the greater is the certitude engendered. The certitude drawn from divine authority is the of the highest kind. God is absolutely trustworthy. Thus we can be absolutely sure of what He testifies. Metaphysical certitude is said to be based on the essences of things. Assent given account of divine authority is based on the Veracity of God. The essence of God and His Veracity are identical. Assent to divine testimony is the assent of metaphysical certitude.

The act of faith, produced under the influence of grace, may also be said to be a special type of moral certitude. The element of moral certitude is involved because of the fact that the will enters in the production of the assent. It is a special type because there is produced an absolute assent. There is a certitude within a certitude, a metaphysical within a moral. We do not wish to assert that all truths of theology are accepted with such absolute certainty. For we have already stated that Faith and Theology are distinct, but the principles of the science are articles of faith, which are accepted in this manner. Other truths, deduced from these principles, are accepted by varying degrees of assent in as far as they are more or less connected with revealed truths. There are six different types of propositions and their proportionate degree of certitude. The most remote of these, which is based on the common agreement of theologians, is said to be imprudent and rash to deny. Theology, then, for the most part, offers truths of which we can be more certain than those of any human science. The human sciences depend alone on the findings of the human mind which is weak and prone to error. Theology proposes truths received from the Divine Mind which cannot deceive nor be deceived.

The division of Theology into two branches, Moral and Dogmatic Theology, is based upon the fact that the science is both speculative and practical.
Dogmatic Theology is the speculative part treating of things to be believed.* It declares and demonstrates the individual dogmas of faith. These are substantially contained in the Apostle's Creed. Dogmatic Theology might be said to be nothing other than a scientific exposition of the Creed.

Moral Theology is the practical aspect, treating of God as our last end and of the means by which we may attain Him. Hence Moral Theology includes revealed doctrines concerning man's destiny and duty that are contained in the Word of God; the conclusions that are contained in revelation and the duties of man to human which are based on divine, natural or positive law, and the opinions of theologians concerning matters of controversy.

There is a branch of theology which is called Apologetics or Fundamental Theology. It is not theology, proprie dicta, but rather an introduction to theology. Its scope is to establish the true religion which is done in three stages: proving the existence of God and spirituality of the soul; the divinity of the Christian religion, and the authority of the Catholic Church.

A few words in conclusion about the usefulness of the study of theology may be helpful. For the clergy it is almost self evident that it is both useful and extremely necessary. But the study of this sacred science is indeed

* There are some practical aspects to dogmatic theology, but in general, it is what we must know and believe.
valuable for the laity, especially those who have the advantage of pursuing higher learning. The knowledge of theology is useful for the better understanding of the human disciplines. Truth is a complete whole and all sciences are intimately connected. The study of theology furnishes the weapons for the defense of faith. The knowledge of God and divine things is the foundation of sanctity. We must know God to love Him.

This brings us to a conclusion of the notion of theology. In the first chapter we proposed the concept of philosophy. We will now view philosophy in so far as it has been influenced by theology. Has the growth of Christian Philosophy and Catholic Theology, side by side, so influenced Christian Philosophy that it no longer retains the character of philosophy as such? In other words, has the natural absorbed the supernatural in such a way that Christian Philosophy has withdrawn from the sphere of natural science?

CHAPTER III
The Concept of Christian Philosophy

The term or expression "Christian Philosophy" has been and still is used widely and often in a very broad sense. It is employed to designate one or many systems of natural truths which have been produced within or in connection with Christianity. To accept the term in any scientific or strict sense problems of great importance immediately arise. The Christian is a believer; the philosopher is a thinker. The believer accepts truths in virtue of the authority of God revealing; the thinker accepts truths in virtue of the evidence perceived by his reason. Can there be any union of the two which produces a philosophy in the strict sense. In other words, is the term "Christian Philosophy" contradictory in itself and without any formal significance? The problem can be stated simply whether the concept of Christian Philosophy has any real meaning. As Gilson puts it with a somewhat historical attitude, "Of course we do not ask whether there were any philosophic Christians, that is to say, Christians who happened to be philosophers; the point is, were there ever any Christian philosophers." (45)

We know that Christianity has produced a body of doctrine, but can it be regarded as merely a philosophy under the guise of philosophy? Moreover, Christianity is accused by historians of having attributed nothing to the philosophic heritage of humanity. There are two main positions on this. First, the Rationalist who says that religion and philosophy are essentially different and there is no possibility of collaboration between the two. They are as different as religion and mathematics and certainly one would not speak of a "Christian mathematics". For these men the concept of Christian Philosophy is contradictory and impossible. The second position held by some neo-scholastics will not admit of the idea of Christian Philosophy in fear of ruining philosophy by admitting the influence of theology. They say the Christian "philosophy" means "true philosophy". It may be Christian because it is true but it is not true because it is Christian. There is a third position which interests us because it contradicts these other two. It is Augustinianism which would accept a Christian Philosophy if it would forget philosophy and become religious. This would deny Christian Philosophy its right to exist as philosophy.

The possibility of a philosophy in the true sense of the term being constructed in connection with revealed

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(46) Ibid., pp. 3-10.
religion must be resolved before the term "Christian Philosophy" can have any definite meaning. Without establishing philosophy as being connected with theology the expression "Christian Philosophy" has no positive significance. It is thus evident in its first conception that the whole question arises, and its solution is based on the relationship of faith and reason. And this relationship must be an intrinsic relationship, rising out of the source, object and end of these two cognitive principles, i.e. faith and reason. The problem of this relationship began as soon as revealed doctrine was carried outside the walls of Jerusalem.

St. Paul in his preaching ran up against the problem. Not being a philosopher but a believer, he tried no solution, but dismissed it by condemning the false wisdom of the Greek philosophers. This condemnation was not a condemnation of reason, because he recognized for reason some usefulness. In the Epistle to the Romans he affirms that the power and divinity of God may be known from created things. Thus he lays down the foundation of a natural knowledge distinct from Faith. For him, however, Faith is the superior wisdom and without it there is no wisdom.

With the growth of Christianity there was a contemporaneous growth of our problem of faith and reason.

The first stage may be characterized by the statement "primacy of faith". The period was one of extremism in theology. Revelation was substituted for all science. Philosophy was merged into it; it was given no existence of its own. The early Christian thinkers, however, recognized the validity of reason and used it defense and explanation of faith. But they did mistrust it so that its exercise was not allowed without strict control of revelation. St. Augustine was typical of this attitude. He struggled with the problem, but due to his theory of knowledge could not arrive at a satisfactory definition of the relation between faith and reason, theology and philosophy. St. Augustine's theory of divine illumination in both supernatural order of faith and the natural order of reason allowed for only a quantitative difference between faith and reason. Olgiati states it thusly, "The Augustinian theory of knowledge perforce weakened the distinction between the domain of revelation, and that of reason without marking any precise limits." Although St. Augustine's position was quite unsatisfactory, it did have its merits in proclaiming that the knowledge attained by human reason is from the same source as that of faith.

(49) Olgiati-Zybura, The Key to the Study of St. Thomas, St. Louis, Herder, 1929, pp. 143-144.
i.e., both have their foundation in the Divine Intellect. Thus faith and reason cannot contradict each other.

St. Anselm is another example of the primacy of faith over reason. Yet he shows a further development towards the solution of the problem by asserting a separate domain for reason. Reason stands alone, but is subject to faith in that it purposes to show the reasonableness of faith. His position might be defined by the axion "credo ut intelligam" or "fides quaerens intellectum". Olgiani notes that the 'intelligere' of St. Anselm must be qualified to mean a clearer and richer understanding of Faith. It "does not mean the absolute evidence of the philosopher." *(51)*

When it came time for St. Thomas to define accurately and for all time the relation between Faith and Reason there was being taught a Medieval Rationalism, founded by Averroes. Siger of Brabant was its foremost representative. These men went in the opposite direction of theologism. *(52)* This was a "primacy of reason". Holding to the absolute truth of revelation they formulated the theory of the double truth, saying that a truth in philosophy could be contradictory.

(51) Olginti-Zybura, The Key to the Study of St. Thomas, St. Louis, Herder, 1929, p. 147.  
* Gilson treats at some length this "Fides quaerens intellectum". This author seems to hold moreover that the "intellectum" is to be interpreted more along the lines of natural wisdom, "... was achieving a transfiguration of the Greek ideal of philosophical wisdom." Cf. Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages, New York, Scribner, 1938, pp. 16-27; and, The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, New York, Scribner, 1936, pp. 33-36.  
to a truth in theology and yet both truths could be accepted. Reason had its independent worth. This was a complete cleavage of Faith and Reason and resulted in cleavage of the mind also. The unity of truth was no longer recognized.

It was with these two opposing factors, Theologism and Rationalism, that St. Thomas had to deal. "Theologism would maintain that every part of Revelation should be understood, while Rationalism would uphold the view that no part of Revelation can be understood." St. Thomas saw some truth in each position, and he brought these together. The Theologist were right in affirming the agreement of faith and revelation and to use reason as a champion of theology. Nor were the Rationalists entirely wrong in holding the independent worth of reason and demanding for it respect.

St. Thomas Aquinas, the chief glory of scholasticism, is the first of the modern philosophers because to him is due the epochal achievement of having been the first to constitute philosophy in its own right, to give it full consciousness of itself, independence and autonomy, by establishing on fundamental principles the distinction between philosophy and theology, and assigning to each its proper domain and method." (54)

St. Thomas's distinction between Faith and Reason must be especially noted by us because it is on basis of

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(53) Cf. Gilson, Ibid., p. 69.
the concept of Christian Philosophy rests and has
worth as philosophy. There is a harmony of faith and
reason which prevents these two domains of knowledge from
contradicting each other. This is based on the absolute unity
of truth. Truth is conformity of intellect with reality.
And God is the source of all truth, whether it be natural
or supernatural. This is what gives oneness to truth.
We have two ways of attaining this truth which has its
source in God, either by direct communication from
God(revelation) or by that power God has given us to acquire
it by our natural faculties(reason). Newman rightly discourses;

"Truth is the object of knowledge of whatever kind; and when we inquire what is meant by
truth, I suppose it is right to answer that
truth means facts and their relations, which
stand towards each other pretty much as subjects
and predicates in logic. All that exists as con-
templated by the human mind, forms one large
system or complex fact, and this of course resolves
itself into a definite number of particular facts,
which as being portions of a whole have countless
relations of every kind, one towards another.
Knowledge is apprehension of these facts,
whether in themselves, or in their mutual positions
and bearings. And, as all taken together form
one integral subject for contemplation, so
there are no natural or real limits between
part and part; one is ever running into another;
all as viewed by the mind are combined
together, and possess a correlative character,
one with another, from the internal mysteries
of Divine Essence down to our own sensations
and consciousness..." (56)

The truths of faith and reason are necessarily in accord.

(56) *Idea of a University*, New York, Longmans, Green and
Co., 1893, p. 45.
They have the same author for their respective truths.

Revelation is true, therefore reason cannot contradict it.

Only the false can be contrary to the true. St. Thomas gives a philosophical proof of this harmony.

"The same thing which the disciple's mind receives from its teacher is contained in the knowledge of the teacher, unless he teach insincerely, which it were wicked to say of God. Now, the knowledge of naturally known principles is instilled into us by God, since God Himself is the author of our nature. Therefore the divine Wisdom also contains these principles. Consequently whatever is contrary to these principles is contrary to divine Wisdom; wherefore it cannot come from God. Therefore these things which are received by faith from divine revelation cannot be contrary to our natural knowledge."(57)

It is on the basis of this continuity in the province of truth which allows meaning to the concept that philosophy can be Christian. But the domain of faith is distinct from the domain of reason. It is on the strength of this distinction that a Christian Philosophy can remain philosophy. To state it in a very simple proposition, philosophy is philosophy. The two sciences, theology and philosophy, are sometimes co-extensive, but not co-intensive, i.e., treating of God and things necessary for salvation, and yet, they do not coincide. There are other truths which philosophy can and does consider. But even in regard to co-extensive truths there is a formal distinction. Theology views things in the light of revelation, philosophy in the light of human

(57) Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 7.; also, Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Louis, Herder, 1929, p. 43.
reason. The theologian believes, the philosopher understands.

it is impossible that a thing be known and believed at the same time, "impossible est quod de eodem sit fides et scientia." When a truth, which is believed, is presented to the intellect and the intrinsic evidence of the object is perceived, the truth is then known to be true and no longer believed to be true.* The object known is taken from the realm of belief and enters the realm of understanding.

The difference lies in the nature of the act of faith and that of reason. In faith, the will directs the intellect to accept, on the other hand, when the intellect apprehends the intrinsic evidence it assents to the truth necessarily; no act of the will is involved. Thus philosophy and theology, understood properly, cannot be confused. As soon as a truth in theology is understood it becomes philosophy, for according to the formal aspect of each science they remain distinct. "Theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinent differt secundum genus ab ilia theologica quae pars philosophia ponitur."

We have seen that faith and reason cannot be at odds.

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(58) Cf. St. Thomas, Quaer. Disp. De Veritate, Qu. XIV., Art. 9, ad Resp. and ad 6. (Quoted in, Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Louis, Herder, 1929, p. 42.)


* The object is then known to be true in virtue of the objective evidence naturally perceived. And is—at least at the time an by was of mental attitude so to speak—not formally known through the light of supernatural faith.

(60) Cf. St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, I., 9, ad 2m.
with each other when asserting truths proper to their particular domain because truth is one, there can be no such thing as double truth, nor can reason be merged into faith, because they are two distinct species of knowledge with their own proper function to perform. Thus it is plain that the two are distinct, but that does not mean that they are entirely unrelated. Theology is the superior science as we have shown in Chapter II. Wherefore, it exercises over philosophy a guidance or government. Philosophy, as the inferior science, acts as a handmaid to theology. This relationship is truly expedient, salutarv and in many ways necessary. Theology presupposes truths which must proceed faith, v.g., the existence of God, Veracity of God revealing, etc. Philosophy becomes an instrument of theology in Apologetics, giving some notion of the mysteries and refuting adversaries, showing that faith is not contrary to reason.

There are many advantages which Faith furnishes to philosophy. It is indeed expedient and even necessary that philosophy should received these aids if philosophy is to become comprehensive. A philosophy cannot claim to be Christian without recognizing and accepting these aids, nor can it expect to arrive certainly and securely to a full discovery of truth which will satisfy the ever gropings of the human intellect. Reason must recognize its weakness
when unassisted. One need not believe the doctrine of the Fall to profess the weakness of human nature. A quick glance at the history of human thought shows the many pitfalls into which the mind can fall. To argue from the glorious success of Greek Philosophy is certainly more a proof of reasons inaptitude alone to satisfy man's craving for truth than a proof against the need of guidance. If Aristotelianism had satisfied it would not have died to be resurrected by the faith of St. Thomas. Gilson expresses this admirably, "A man seeks truth by unaided reason and is disappointed; it is offered by faith and he accepts; and having accepted, he finds that it satisfies his reason." (61)

Among other things the very nature of human knowledge demands external help to perfect itself. Perfect human knowledge, says Aristotle, is to know the essence of a thing and from that arrive at its properties. In regard to the highest object of man's thought, i.e. God, this is impossible. Man must depend on sense knowledge and only infer things about God from these objects which are infinitely inferior to God, and cannot bring us to a knowledge of the Divine Essence. These things are not sufficient; man can not reject that which God has told him about Himself. (62)

It is fitting that God should reveal philosophical truths, otherwise, they would be exclusive, man, even the elite, would be able to attain them only after great deal of labor, and would be running the risk of being ignorant of some of the most vital ones. Also without faith to guide there would be much disagreement among philosophers, and this would lead to scepticism of philosopfic knowledge and science. Faith helps to overcome the "debilitas rationis", and is an indispensable moral support of reason.

As soon as one recognizes the "debilitas rationis" the following attitude becomes fallacious. If philosophy is to remain philosophy, it must suffer no restraint, neither from theology, i.e., dogmas and doctrines. Everything, which is outside of philosophy, must be kept out of the consideration completely, it destroys the essence of philosophy. This attitude forgets that the philosopher is a man, weak and prone to error. This is an exaggerated desire to preserve the purity of philosophy rather than the integrity of the man. The fallacy is stated admirably by Phelan in these terms, "The Philosopher is the Philosopher; the Philosopher is nothing but Philosopher; he is not a man." (64)

The Christian Philosopher is interested in a fuller

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(63) Ibid., I, 4.
(64) Jacques Maritain, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1937, p. 52.
and more accurate understanding of reality and specifically in those things which affect his eternal salvation. Thus everything is his system resolves around God and man's relation to God, v.g., St. Augustine, a great example of a Christian Philosopher, treats for the most part God and the soul. This is a great aid to philosophy in that it keeps it centralized. There is no wandering off into useless in the sense that a complete exhausting of reality is impossible and senseless to attempt it. Knowledge becomes vain without a practical end. Christian Philosophy in this way prevents the mistake which was so detrimental to philosophy made by the Sophists, for pedantic knowledge is not philosophic knowledge, as it is not scientific. This having a center of reference aids to order and unity of thought, and the order and unity is perceived more clearly as there is less to systematize and something around which to group the truths to show their interrelationship.

This guidance, which philosophy accepts from theology to construct a Christian Philosophy, must be external if Christian Philosophy is to remain philosophy. Theology must keep aloof from philosophy in the sense that none of its premises should be injected to establish philosophical truth, for, indeed, to do this would destroy philosophy as philosophy. The guidance given by theology
must be an extrinsic guidance. The two orders of truth in this way are kept distinct. The influence theology can and does give to a Christian Philosophy is that of a negative rule, consisting in the rejecting of philosophical truths which are contrary to theological truths. Whereby it exercises a great aid in keeping it from error in certain particular instances. There is a way that theology can legitimately regulate philosophy in a positive way, in that it can point out to philosophy where not to go in seeking truth.

"Theology can turn the investigations of philosophy positively by accident. But absolutely speaking theology can regulate philosophy negatively... Positively it does not regulate it either directly, by furnishing its proofs or indirectly by classifying its divisions." (65)

The philosopher with faith as a norm of judgment, a principle of discernment, can keep and purge rational truths of its errors. Philosophy thusly influenced by theology is externally dependent on theology, yet remains internally autonomous.

We readily see that the concept of Christian Philosophy can have no meaning without the Thomistic distinction of the natural from the supernatural, and the perfecting of the natural by the supernatural.

Scholastic Philosophy, today, profiting by historical clarification and the impetus of the Aeterni Patris, ably defends a Christian Philosophy, not only by

by philosophers among the clergy, who are primarily theologians, but by able laymen trained in both sciences, e.g. Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain. We will now consider the positions of these two men, Gilson and Maritain, who have exerted great effort clarifying the concept of Christian Philosophy. Although their positions on Christian Philosophy are fundamentally in agreement their different point of view reflects interesting and valuable contributions to Christian Philosophy in present day Christian thought.

Gilson, an eminent historian of medieval philosophy reflects the historical attitude towards what a Christian Philosophy must be. He sees the problem in the light of what Christian Philosophers have thought on the subject. It is along this line that he develops his position regarding a Christian Philosophy. He recognizes the many intellectual advantages the great Christian thinkers have received from Revelation. The principle of development of the character of Christian Philosophy is the "fides quaerens intellectum" or the "nisi credideritis, non intelligitis" of St. Augustine. The supernatural should always be an integral part of philosophical inquiry, and "if it is to faith that he (philosopher) owes this new philosophical insight he becomes a Christian philosopher."

Augustianism is for him the character and enduring model

of a Christian Philosophy. As he states in his Essay on the Future of Augustinian Metaphysics:

"... The supernatural order by which he (Augustine) had access to truth was for him always an integral part of his philosophical inquiry. It is grace which turns knowledge into wisdom and moral effort into virtue, with the result that instead of regarding Christianity as a belated crowning of philosophy, he sees in philosophy an aspect of Christianity itself since it is the way, the truth, and the life. Considered under this aspect Augustinianism is something more than a Christian Philosophy; it is its very character and enduring model. Beside it there are anti-Christian philosophies to be found, or philosophies compatible with Christianity; but to be Christian qua philosophy a philosophy must be Augustinian or nothing." (68)

Gilson, then, takes a broad view of the concept, giving his definition as such; "Thus I call Christian, every philosophy which, although keeping the two orders formally distinct, nevertheless consider the Christian revelation as an indispensable auxiliary to reason." (69)

Within this definition such philosophies as that of St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure can be included to be called Christian Philosophy, as indeed Gilson does and shows this when comparing St. Thomas and Bonaventure.

"They are both Christian philosophies and every threat to faith finds them united against it... The attempts sometimes made by their interpreters to transform their fundamental agreement into an identity of content are, from the start, futile and doomed to fail. For it is clear that since the two doctrines are ordered from different starting points, they will never envisage the

(68) Ibid., p. 308.
same problems in the same respect, and therefore one will never answer the precise question that the other asks. The philosophy of St. Thomas and the philosophy of St. Bonaventure are complementary, as the two most comprehensive interpretations of the universe as seen by Christians, and it is because they are complementary that they never either conflict or coincide." (70)

Gilson, then, draws his definition of a Christian philosophy from the historical construction more than from that of metaphysical understanding. By this generic definition Gilson places Augustanianism and especially the philosophy of St. Bonaventure among the Christian philosophies. However Thomism is to be chosen as the Christian Philosophy for the Church. "But, if we admit that a sole religion is bound to find expression in a sole magisterium, and ask which metaphysician can be regarded as the model and norm of a Catholic Philosophy whom could we choose but St. Thomas?" Thomism is completed. The framework for future progress is set up. But this does not exclude other philosophies from being Christian Philosophy. The doctrines do not contradict each other they complement and complete each other showing the infinite wealth of religious reality whose rational exploration they attempt." (72)

(72) Ibid., 309.
Maritain holds to a metaphysical concept of Christian Philosophy. It should be philosophy properly so called, being strictly the work of reason, "perfectum opus rationis". If it is true it will be in harmony with revealed religion. Truth of the system as philosophy is where Maritain puts his emphasis in his conception of a Christian Philosophy. Because of the fact that the theologian makes use of philosophic propositions to prove his own conclusions. "Therefore a system of theology could not be possibly be true if the metaphysics which it employed were false." Another essential character which he insists on is that of faith playing the part of an extrinsic regulative while philosophy follows a purely and strict philosophical method. He is anxious to safeguard the formal purity of its essence as philosophy. Thus Maritain considers Christian any philosophy that is true and therefore presents a "conception of nature and reason open to the supernatural." On the preservation of Christian Philosophy as a science he says, "Christian Philosophy, in itself and in its intrinsic structure of rational knowledge, is rigorously independent of the subjects own dispositions, and wishes to be regulated only by objective necessities and intelligible constraints."

(75) A Monument to St. Augustine, London, Sheed and Ward, 1934, p. 222. (Collection of Essays: "St. Augustine and St. Thomas")
(76) Ibid., p. 223.
For Maritain Thomism alone answers to the concept of Christian Philosophy. It possesses a true metaphysics arrived at by pure reason. Faith and reason have been given definite limits, leaving philosophy to develop itself along purely philosophical lines with faith standing by as an ever ready guide, but not entering into its construction or texture. In short, Thomism is the Christian exercise of reason without reason being debased or becoming proud. Maritain would prefer that other systems be termed Christian wisdom in the more general sense of a way of life while Christian Philosophy be reserved to the realm of a speculative science professing metaphysical truths.

The positions of Gilson and Maritain do not contradict each other, nor do they entirely agree.* Their difference exists fundamentally in the fact that Gilson's definition is generic while Maritain's is specific. Gilson the historian wishes to keep whatever history has contributed to Christian thought. Maritain, the metaphysician, wishes to keep Christian Philosophy true as philosophy.

Although both concepts offer valuable contributions to Christianity it seems to the writer of this essay that


* To see that Gilson and Maritain recognize their disagreement, Cf. Gilson, Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, pp. 36-37, and note 14, p. 429 with Maritain, A Monument To St. Augustine, p. 222, note 1.
Maritain's more exacting demands for a Christian Philosophy is more in conformity with what is needed today. And, indeed, a Christian Philosophy is needed as Chesterton remarks:

It is a fundamental point of view, a philosophy or religion which is needed, and not any change in habit or social order. The things we need most for immediate practical purpose are all abstractions. We need a right view of the human lot, a right view of human society."(78) And certainly, in the face of so many opposing "isms"

Christian Philosophy should be able to claim for itself the name of science, to be able to fight opponents on their own ground, while still living and spiritualizing itself in contact with the living faith and experiences of the Christian soul. In this age of great advancement in the natural science and their philosophical counterparts, Christian Philosophy must meet the challenge they have made to the supernatural. Thus there is required a philosophy which recognizes the supernatural not as an opponent, but as its crowning glory and the ultimate purpose of its existence. We have a Christian Philosophy which is stamped with universality; it is not the philosophy of a race, nation, or period; it is perennial, being ever true; it has continuity and modernity because truth is modern and it is ready to absorb the new when it is true(it is, then, eternal). Leo XIII, a great scholar and lover of

(78) Heretics, New York, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1930, p. 140.
truth recognized the existence of a Christian Philosophy, par excellence, in the work of St. Thomas. He dedicates His Encyclical, Aeterni Patris, to the revival of Thomism. The impetus given by Leo XII has produced a sort of "Scholastic Renaissance" adding another note to this ever true system, making it progressive and alive—alive with the Christian spirit.
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