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978-0-521-02938-4 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 30 - The Gospel of Grace,
(1a2ae. 106-114)

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The *Summa Theologiae* ranks among the greatest documents of the Christian Church, and is a landmark of medieval western thought. It provides the framework for Catholic studies in systematic theology and for a classical Christian philosophy, and is regularly consulted by scholars of all faiths and none, across a range of academic disciplines. This paperback reissue of the classic Latin/English edition first published by the English Dominicans in the 1960s and 1970s, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, has been undertaken in response to regular requests from readers and librarians around the world for the entire series of 61 volumes to be made available again. The original text is unchanged, except for the correction of a small number of typographical errors.

The original aim of this edition was not narrowly ecclesiastical. It sought to make this treasure of the Christian intellectual heritage available to theologians and philosophers of all backgrounds, including those who, without claiming to be believers themselves, appreciate a religious integrity which embodies hardbitten rationalism and who recognise in Thomas Aquinas a master of that perennial philosophy which forms the bedrock of European civilisation. Because of this the editors worked under specific instructions to bear in mind not only the professional theologian, but also the general reader with an interest in the 'reason' in Christianity. The parallel English and Latin texts can be used successfully by anybody with a basic knowledge of Latin, while the presence of the Latin text has allowed the translators a degree of freedom in adapting their English version for modern readers. Each volume contains a glossary of technical terms and is designed to be complete in itself to serve for private study or as a course text.

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JOANNES HISLOP O.P.

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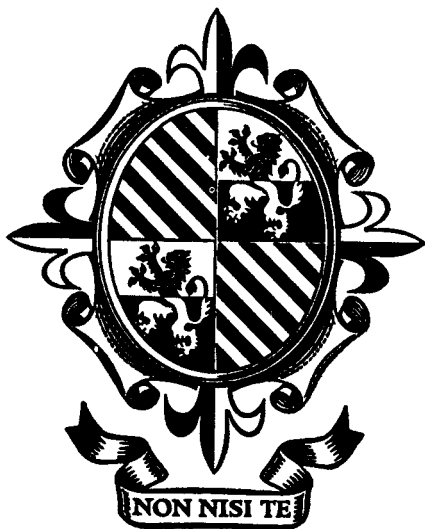
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**SUMMA
THEOLOGIAE**

Latin text and English translation,
Introductions, Notes, Appendices
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IN AN AUDIENCE, 13 December 1963, to a group representing the Dominican Editors and the combined Publishers of the New English *Summa*, His Holiness Pope Paul VI warmly welcomed and encouraged their undertaking. A letter from His Eminence Cardinal Cicognani, Cardinal Secretary of State, 6 February 1968, expresses the continued interest of the Holy Father in the progress of the work, 'which does honour to the Dominican Order, and the Publishers, and is to be considered without doubt as greatly contributing to the growth and spread of a genuinely Catholic culture', and communicates his particular Apostolic Blessing.

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VOLUME 30
THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

(1a2æ. 106–114)

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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION

THE LATIN text here printed has been generally modified to correspond to that of the Leonine edition on which the translation is based. John Orme Mills, O.P., and James Nichols, O.P., are thanked for their help.

FOOTNOTES

Those signified by a superior number are the references given by St Thomas, with the exception of no. 1 in each article, which refers to parallel texts in his writings. I have made use of the valuable edition of this part of the *Summa* by T. A. Deman, in vol. 14 of the *Deutsche Thomas-Ausgabe*, which provides an unusually wide range of cross-references, as well as an abundance of historical information. The footnotes signified alphabetically are editorial references and explanatory remarks. Apart from offering some primary information, the remarks draw attention to points of theological interest, in a suggestive rather than strictly exegetical way, and indicate some possibilities for further study.

GLOSSARY

This is intended to be neither exhaustive nor definitive, and should be regarded as a beginning rather than an end. In general, only those senses of words are reviewed which are relevant to the present volume; further guidance may be found in the lexicons of Schütz and Deferrari (the latter largely dependent on the former). Some topics, which may be traced through the Index, are dealt with more fully in the editorial notes.

APPENDICES

The first three appendices discuss topics which seemed to require fuller notice than could be provided in footnotes. The fourth appendix is a brief running commentary on 1a2æ. 114.

REFERENCES

Biblical references are to the Vulgate; the Psalms are numbered according to both the Vulgate and the Hebrew division of the Psalter. The English translation follows St Thomas's Latin (which is not always that of the

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Clementine Vulgate), using as far as possible the English of the Revised Standard Version. Patristic references are to Migne (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). In connection with references to the *Gloss*, it may not be inappropriate to mention: B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (2 ed. 1952); Z. Alszeghy, *Nova Creatura La Nozione della grazia nei commentari medievali di S. Paolo* (Rome 1956); *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2 ed. Lampe (1969).

Abbreviations to St Thomas's works are as follows:

Summa Theologiae, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a, 3, 2 ad 3. 1a2ae. 17, 6. 2a2ae 180, 10. 3a. 35, 8.

Summa Contra Gentiles, *CG*. Book, chapter; e.g. *CG* 1, 28.

Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum, *Sent.* Book, distinction, question, article, solution or *quæstiuncula*, reply: e.g. III *Sent.* 25, 2, 3, ii ad 3.

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INTRODUCTION

WE may begin these remarks on St Thomas Aquinas and the theology of grace with an early text from the *Quaestio Disputata de veritate* (xxiv, 14):

Thus if we were to speak of God's grace not as some habitual gift but as God's very mercy itself (*non aliquod habituale donum, sed ipsam misericordiam Dei*) by which he works from within the movements of the mind and ordains external affairs to man's salvation, in this sense man cannot perform any good work without God's grace. But in the mode of speech common today people use the word 'grace' for a habitual justifying gift.

For the first sense of *gratia* he refers to Augustine's *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*; but he says that in the common usage of his time *gratia* is used to refer to some habitual gift justifying its possessor, that is to say, something 'entitative' or perhaps we may say 'ontological', what he will call in a later question of the *De Veritate* (27, 1 ad 3) *esse spirituale gratuitum*.

It is not too difficult to document this common usage and the ontological preoccupation it reflects. As early as Peter Lombard's *Sentences* we find a discussion of grace, in the context of Adam's state before and after the Fall (II, 24-9), in which he maintains that grace is a *virtue*, not a *motus vel affectus animi*. His reason for this is that the mind's movement arises from free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) in such a way that grace must be prior to it, and the only sort of priority he is able to envisage is that of virtue to act. Lombard, we see, is already using psychological terms for his analysis, but it would be a mistake to read into the terms the Aristotelean precision of later writers. In fact his argument to show that the priority of grace can only be defended by recognizing its ontological embodiment in the soul proceeds more convincingly by way of the metaphors he uses than in the terms of an unreflective Aristotelean psychology.

Philip the Chancellor (fl. 1220-35) seems to have been the first to propose the definitive Aristotelean solution with which we are familiar, making use, no doubt, of the new texts of Aristotle now available. In his *Summa de Bono* he writes:

But we must note that what God first regards with the eye of his mercy is the very essence of the soul . . .; secondly in the natural order the powers themselves with which the soul is provided for its operations.

On the basis of this distinction between essence and powers of the soul Philip distinguishes between grace and the virtues. Grace is explicitly

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entitative: *Sed primum ens in creatura rationali, quo vivit per Deum, est gratia*. St Bonaventure takes as the starting-point for his discussion of grace what he calls the *communis opinio* that grace is primarily concerned with the *substantia* of the soul while the virtues are primarily concerned with its powers. But in accordance with his generally ‘personalist’ view he finds it unintelligible to suppose that grace can be discussed without an immediate reference to the powers by which the soul turns to God. It is only in an appropriated sense, then, that he can accept the common opinion, since for him the actual conversion of the soul to God and its continuing communion with him are intrinsic to grace. The proper sense of the common opinion is the sense in which St Albert and St Thomas take the Aristotelean position. St Albert’s confident Aristoteleanism further defines the common opinion by a distinction of ‘habits’: grace is a *habitus faciens esse bonum* which by way of the infused virtues perfects the soul with a view to actions (*In II Sent.* 26, A, 2), i.e. it is an ‘entitative’ rather than an ‘operative’ habit.

These very sketchy indications have been provided to show the common assumptions shared by Thomas at the beginning of his theological career. Like Bonaventure and Albert he too puts forward his early views on grace by way of commentary on Lombard’s discussion of Adam before and after the Fall; and he too is concerned to establish the priority of grace by locating it as an ontological priority to action: *agere sequitur esse*.

Grace is either uncreated, God himself graciously giving, or it is the created gift, superadded to natural human powers, which makes the acts of those powers meritorious (*In II Sent.* 28, I, 1 ad 1). This created gift is a formal perfection of the essence of the soul, not merely by appropriation, but properly speaking:

It follows, then, that the first gift freely (*gratis*) bestowed on man should have the effect of raising the very essence of the soul to a kind of divine Being (*quoddam divinum esse*), so as to be fit for divine operations. (*II Sent.* 26, I, 3)

This fitness for divine operations is not that given by a virtue, but an information of the virtues *per modum originis* (*ibid* 5, ad 2 & 5); and it is consequently unique, just as the essence of the soul is unique though the powers are multiple. The virtues share in the *ratio merendi* because they arise out of a single grace just as the powers share in the existence of the soul because they arise out of its unique essence (*ibid* 6).

Having thus emphasized the habitual perfection given to the essence of the soul by grace, difficulties arise concerning the process of justification. St Thomas relies on the distinction between uncreated and created grace

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to deal with them.¹ If by grace we mean divine Providence itself, then it is clear that without divine grace man cannot prepare himself for *gratia gratum faciens*, which we may conventionally translate ‘sanctifying grace’; for his will must be moved, whether by admonition or sickness or something of the sort, all of which are subject to divine Providence: they can be called *gratiae gratis datae*, a technical expression which he was to use in a quite different sense in his later writings. Without this kind of *gratia gratis data* man cannot prepare himself for grace, even if this term is applied to his own act of free choice (*ipse actus liberi arbitrii*) which God produces in us and by which we prepare for sanctifying grace (II *Sent.* 28, 1, 4). It is by his free choice alone that a man can prepare himself for sanctifying grace (*ibid.*).

At this stage of his theological thinking, then, St Thomas was still dominated by the general movement of theological thought in his time, away from the exterior act to the essence of the soul. The term ‘grace’ carried for him two sharply distinguished senses: firstly, the *gratuita Dei voluntas*, and secondly the *donum gratuitum* (*De Veritate* xxvii, 5 ad 1; cf IV *Sent.* 17, 1, 2, ad 2 & 3). The primary locus in what we may call ‘salvation history’ for his discussion of grace was, in accordance with Augustinian tradition, the Genesis narrative. It would be difficult to defend his early views from the charge made by Harnack that all the medieval theologians were semi-Pelagian in their treatment of grace.

Among the many new factors which played their part in St Thomas’s reformulation of his theology of grace was, it seems, his discovery of what since the Renaissance we have learned to call ‘Semi-Pelagianism’, though St Thomas always uses the term *Pelagiani* to refer to all St Augustine’s opponents (see Appendix 2). A major discovery he made about this time was the chapter of Aristotle’s *Eudemian Ethics*, known in the late thirteenth-century translation as the *Liber de Bona Fortuna*. The importance of this discovery for St Thomas was that it allowed him to recognize the limitations of rational deliberation in the process of free choice. The argument that held his attention was that rational deliberation alone as the origin of free choice could only lead to an infinite regress; in the last resort the act of rational deliberation itself must be excited by an exterior principle.

While the two factors just noted might be regarded as contributing to his sharper awareness of the problems peculiar to the theology of grace in an analytic sense, we must also take account of the general shift in consciousness which allowed him to adopt a more commanding vantage-point from which to review the theology of grace as a whole. In the *Summa contra Gentiles* (1259–64) he discusses grace in Book III, the

¹St Thomas never seems to use the expression *gratia creata*; the nearest he comes to it is II *Sent.* 26, 1, 1

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purpose of which is to consider God's perfect authority or dignity so far as he is the end and governor of all things (III, 1). Grace is considered as an aspect of God's special rule over intellectual creatures, who need his special Providence because of the perfection of their nature as free agents and because of the dignity of their end. The form taken by this special Providence with respect to the intellectual perfection of the nature is Law; but Providence must also play a special part with respect to the unique end of intellectual natures: man needs divine assistance, *divinum auxilium*, in order to achieve beatitude (III, 147). It is important to note that it is in this context of Providence and finality that St Thomas now situates grace. While he was writing the *Summa contra Gentiles* he was also composing his major commentary on the *de Divinis Nominibus* of Pseudo-Dionysius; and his theological conception of grace finds its place in a larger context, Dionysian in pattern, of return by assimilation to a source. In the chapter of the *contra Gentiles* (III, 150) in which he identifies the *divinum auxilium* with grace, he cites the opening of *Ephesians* (I, 5);

Who has predestined us to the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he has graced us in his beloved Son.

It is tempting, but probably misleading, to ask whether it was the renewed appreciation of the movement of thought in *Ephesians* which led to the exploitation of the Dionysian procession of *amor* or *eros*, or vice versa. In the growth of a mind like St Thomas's, intellectual and religious insight proceed jointly in an interplay more complex than any dialectic.

In the *Compendium Theologiae*, probably a little later than the *Summa contra Gentiles*, he once again discusses grace in the context of Providence. In chapter 147 of Book I he relates this account of grace to the articles of the Nicene Creed, *De quibusdam articulis fidei qui sumuntur penes effectus divinae gubernationis*. The articles he finds relevant are *Et in Spiritum sanctum, Dominum, et vivificantem . . . et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam . . . remissionem peccatorum*. The government of all things, and especially of rational creatures, is, he says, referred to in the Creed when we confess that the Holy Spirit is God and gives life, for it is proper that God should order all things to their end, and that he should move them. Now just as the movement derived from the soul is the life of the body, so the movement by which God moves the universe is a kind of life of the universe. Further, since the whole meaning of the divine government arises from the divine goodness, which is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, it is right that the effect of divine Providence should be attributed to the Spirit. Moreover it is God who gives faith; and since the Church is the *congregatio fidelium*, so the Church too is an effect of divine government.

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The ‘communion of saints’ refers to the grace which God communicates to man, and by which their sins are remitted: hence the ‘remission of sins’.

In the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Compendium Theologiae*, then, works of St Thomas’s early maturity, we find a theology of grace which has been unified as an aspect of an inclusive cosmic order of procession and movement from a single originating source and of return to that source by way of a style of assimilation proper to intellectual creatures. We shall leave open for the moment the question whether this sort of metaphysical unification succeeds in bringing to light the essential gratuitousness of grace, or whether it does not rather subordinate God’s free gift of himself in grace to the determinate structures of an intellectual pattern derived from an archaic cosmology. First it seems desirable to make some remarks about ontology in general, and the appropriateness of such a term for describing what is widely supposed to be a characteristic of the thought of St Thomas in particular, namely his philosophy of *esse* or Being.

It seems that the term ‘ontology’ first made its appearance as a description for a branch of metaphysics at the beginning of the seventeenth century, though it was in the writings of Christian Wolff, the thinker from whom Kant was released by Hume, that it acquired some philosophical respectability, even if only as a way of denominating a style of philosophical thinking which ought to be rejected. For our present purposes it is sufficient to note that the ambivalence of the term has persisted even in its unreflective use in some modern theology. For some modern theologians to describe a view as ‘ontological’ is to condemn it (one may compare the dismissive use of the term often to be observed in remarks about the so-called ‘ontological argument’), and the suspicion of ontology (although the term itself may not be used) can lead to such arbitrary interpretations of St Paul, say, as that of E. Schweizer, who can disburden himself of quantities of texts on the ground that they are clear instances of Stoic ‘materialism’. At any rate the term ‘ontology’ is not found in the writings of St Thomas. And if the term ‘ontological’, then, is to be used to describe St Thomas’s style of thought or any part of it, it seems desirable to particularize, especially since I wish to argue that his later theology of grace was ‘ontological’ in a sense different from that of his earlier theology.

Let us agree that any use of the modern term ‘ontological’ to describe his style of thought must refer to his philosophy of *esse* or Being. If, however, we use this modern term we do so not only for reasons of convenience—to have an adjective at our disposal, say—but also because it allows us to consider his philosophical project as one of many philosophical projects, some of which may also be called ‘ontological’, others not. To make a very simple point: *esse* is an infinitive, ‘being’ a participle; philosophies based on either of these two terms used nominally are likely

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to be different. In fact I should like to suggest that St Thomas's earlier ontology was based on *ens*, the participle, his later ontology on *esse*, the infinitive.

But what is meant by saying that a philosophy is 'based' on some term? To answer this question, especially in England today, we must first note that the philosophical project can be conceived of analytically, or again as an endeavour of total comprehension. If St Thomas's effort at philosophical understanding undoubtedly falls into the second of these two categories, it is not because his philosophy can be described as 'systematic'. St Thomas's philosophical thinking in his theology is systematic, firstly in a superficial sense, that it is manifestly argumentative and cast in easily recognizable forms; secondly, in a deeper sense that it sketches a unified world-picture of the sort we have already remarked earlier in this paper. But in a deeper sense still it is not systematic, in that the unifying theme of its effort at comprehension is one which is open to indefinite variation—the metaphor from music is intended to be explicit. We may compare St Thomas here with a modern philosopher who can certainly not be described as an ontologist, and who abandoned what might seem to be the most ambitious attempt at philosophical system of his earlier years for what might seem the most ambitious attempt to destroy system: I mean the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*. It is not unfair, I think, to say that *meaning* is the unifying theme of Wittgenstein's philosophy, both in the early and in the late period; and it is in the sense that *meaning* is the unifying theme of the *Investigations* that I should like to suggest that *esse* is the unifying theme of St Thomas's later philosophical thinking in his theology.

To say, then, that his later philosophy is 'based' on *esse* is to say that *esse* is its unifying theme: that comprehension here is not domination of the many by the one which is the intellectual grasp of the philosopher's mind, but by surrender and consent of that mind to an indefinitely variable and varying many, among which is the philosopher's mind itself. For a systematic philosophy, even in the restricted sense suggested above, the universe is a bounded whole; for a 'thematic' philosophy the whole is not simply un-bounded, but the boundaries are open to indefinite revision. Moreover, the community of the indefinite variety of all that is in *esse* is not only trans-generic in the sense that *ens* is found in all the genera (substance, quality, quantity and so on); it is trans-generic in the more fundamental sense that it is quite unlike the community of genus at all. For while the community of genus is subordinate and quasi-material, awaiting the formal determination of specific difference, the community of *esse* is superordinate and quasi-formal, the community of whatever has already achieved its appropriate differentiation as this or that discriminate

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individual; as he puts it in the *Summa Theologiae* (1a. 4, 1 ad 3): *ipsum esse est actualitas omnium rerum, et etiam ipsarum formarum*. Or again (1a. 8, 1) corp.): *Esse autem est illud quod est magis intimum cuilibet, et quod profundius omnibus inest, cum sit formale respectu omnium quae in re sunt*. *Esse* is the unifying theme of St Thomas's philosophical thinking in his theology because it allows him to enter by an intellectual glimpse into the superordinate and indefinitely extensible community of all that is. Thus what has been called 'the analogy of Being' corresponds to the indefinite variety of language-games in the later Wittgenstein. The point may be made in a non-philosophical way, and in regard to beauty rather than Being, by recalling G. M. Hopkins's phrase, 'God's better beauty, grace'. The believer's awareness of all that is, is not merely additively wider than the non-believer's; it is the awareness of a wider superordinate community, a more complex differentiation, where the possibility of a more ambitious variety is always involved as the background and context of any and every particular achieved realization. Perhaps rather rashly we might describe the thematic (as opposed to the systematic) unity of St Thomas's philosophical thinking as a kind of celebration of the music of Being, a music never dissociated from its freely composing musician. At any rate, it is in this sense that we should wish to call St Thomas's later theology of grace 'ontological'.

Since this cannot pretend to be anything like a full account of his theology of grace, I shall merely mention here that grace is treated of in many contexts in the *Summa Theologiae* as well as in its formal analysis in the *Prima Secundae*. These include the invisible missions of the Persons of the Trinity (1a. 43, 3), the grace of the angels (1a. 62; cf 57, 5), the image of God in man (1a. 93), the grace of the first man (1a. 95), the New Law of the Gospel (1a2ae. 106-8), the theological virtues in general (1a2ae. 62), and in particular (2a2ae. 1-46, especially on charity 23-7), the grace of Christ (3a. 8), the Redemption (the Passion, 3a. 46-9; the Resurrection, 3a. 53-6, and the Ascension, 3a. 57), and the grace of the sacraments (3a. 60, 62). Perhaps two of these subordinate treatments of grace—the grace of Christ and the New Law of the Gospel—call for some remark here.

In a most beautiful passage of Augustine's *De Prædestinatione Sanctorum*, a treatise which, together with the *De Dono Perseverantiæ* (both 428/9), form a kind of 'Point of View for my work as an author' (Kierkegaard), Augustine writes of Christ as the *præclarissimum lumen prædestinationis et gratiæ* (15, 30; PL 44, 981). He goes on (15, 31; 982):

Let there become manifest to us, then, in our Head, the very source and spring of grace, from which it pours forth through all his members according to the measure of each. From the beginning of his faith each

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man becomes a Christian by that same grace by which that man from his first beginning became Christ (*Ea gratia fit ab initio fidei suae homo quicumque Christianus, qua gratia homo ille ab initio suo factus est Christus*).

A single divine initiative of grace, founding a regime of grace, unites Christians and Christ as members to Head. This text, naturally enough, seems both to fascinate and trouble St Thomas, and he returns to it several times in the Christological treatise of the *Summa* (3a. 2, 10; 7, 13 ad 1; 23, 4 ad 2; cf 2, 11 *sed contra*; 24, 1 ad 3; 2 *sed contra, corp.*, ad 1; 3 *sed contra*). He has finally, with some regret it seems, to distinguish between the grace of union by which Christ is natural Son, and habitual grace by which a Christian becomes adoptive son. Christ's predestination (St Thomas has of course to deal with the Vulgate *praedestinatus* of Romans 1, 4) is the *exemplar* of our own. As becomes clear from St Thomas's account of the causality of Christ's Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, 'exemplar' acquires the strong sense of 'exemplar causality', that is, a causality which is both efficacious and symbolic or significant; and it is in this sense too that the sacraments are means of grace. For just as Christ's humanity is conjunct instrument, *instrumentum conjunctum*, of his divinity, so the sacraments are *instrumenta separata* (cf 3a. 7, 7 ad 1; 64, 3; 64, 4).

He is of course relying here on St John Damascene's treatment of the 'energies' (*operationes* in the Latin translation) of Christ in chapter 15 of Book III of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*, not directly on Apollinarius (see, e.g., A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, London 1965, p. 228). The text *humana natura in Christo est divinitatis instrumentum (organon)* occurs about 30 times in the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*. But the point here is that he is not merely adopting an Aristotelean theory of causality, but that his 'ontology' (in the sense indicated above) has to take account of the tradition of the Greek Fathers. It was shown many years ago by I. Backes (*Die Christologie des hl. Thomas und die griechischen Kirchenväter*, Paderborn 1931) that he was uniquely well-informed, by medieval standards, in the Greek patristic tradition; he made, for instance, remarkably good use of some three or four short texts from Cyril of Alexandria. His ontology has to allow for both Augustinian 'spiritualism' and Greek 'physicism'. However, it is only fair to say that he does not develop what might be called the 'Christomorphic' potentialities of the theology of grace.

There is another aspect of St Thomas's Christology which is important for his theology of grace. The first 26 Questions of the *Tertia Pars* deal with what he calls the *ipsum incarnationis mysterium*; Questions 27-59 (including, then, the questions on the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension) with the Saviour's *acta et passa*, that is, with the historical career of

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Jesus culminating in his glorification. Unlike the later scholastics, St Thomas finds the *mysteria vitae Christi* matter not only for piety, as, say, in the Rosary, but also for theological reflection. But the pattern of metaphysical origination and historical realization—as it were the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of theological space—is characteristic of his mature achievement. The theological locus is not just an extensionless point—the Incarnation, say, as the ‘intersection of the timeless with time’; the dimension of metaphysical origination only acquires its full depth when it is allowed to exhibit the transcendent significance of a coherent historical process conceived of as the expression of an eternal divine purpose.

The same pattern is exhibited at the end of the *Prima Secundæ*, where three Questions (106–8) on the New Law lead directly into the formal treatment of grace in Questions 109–14. ‘Law’ for St Thomas bears a wider range of senses than we ordinarily allow it; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that we do not try to unify the different senses of the word as St Thomas did, but are content to let it have its discriminated senses in contexts felt to be simply diverse. In its highest sense as *lex æterna*, law for St Thomas is identical with divine Providence in one of its aspects. As the source of cosmic order this eternal law may be compared to such archaic concepts as *rta* or *Tao* or *logos*, though all these latter notions seem to lack the crucial reference to divine will and purpose. As is shown by their capacity to discriminate between good and evil, rational creatures reflect this eternal law in their very natures as rational (natural law), and creatively particularize it (human law). Yet since God wills for man a supernatural end he has to direct him to it by a divine law, which is distinguished according to two ‘states’ of mankind: to the childish or imperfect state there corresponds the Old Law, to the adult or perfect state there corresponds the New Law (1a2æ. 91, 1–5). There is a single order of salvation, disposed in two stages, two regimes or economies—perhaps the best translation of St Thomas’s *testamentum*.

Now according to St Thomas, ‘before all else the New Law is the very grace of the Holy Spirit, given to those who believe in Christ’ (1a2æ, 106, 1). Thus at this extreme reach of God’s providential purpose, the two aspects of his Providence—his divine law and his grace—coincide. Grace is primary and predominant in the New Law, and all else in it must be considered either as disposing men for grace or concerned with the exercise of grace. Grace is primarily an inward reality, but as St Thomas says with a reference to the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel (cf his full-length commentary on this, *In Ioannem* 1, especially *lect.* 8), ‘men obtain this grace through the Son of God made man; grace first filled his humanity, and thence was brought to us. . . . Thus it is fitting that the

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grace which overflows from the incarnate Word should be carried to us by external perceptible realities; and also that certain external perceptible works should be brought forth from this interior grace, by which flesh is made subject to spirit' (108, 1). However 'interior' grace may be, the theological ontology of grace has to allow for the evangelical truth that it is communicated to us through Christ's flesh and blood. It will not do, I suggest, to try to dissolve *sarx*, say, into 'the historical condition of humanity' or something of the sort; history is not a substitute for biology but its transfiguration.

Having introduced grace, then, as the dominant characteristic of an epoch in which God's plan for humanity finds its historical culmination, and allowed for its multiple realization as *esse*, St Thomas feels bound to explore its transcendent significance; it is not surprising, therefore, that he should begin his formal treatment of grace with a question *de necessitate gratiae* (109), in which grace is surveyed from the point of view of its ultimate origination. Here he explicitly invokes and applies the Aristotelean doctrine of the Prime Mover. It is in fact movement—change and its initiation—from which St Thomas starts here in order to locate grace in a metaphysical pattern; for movement in what is moved requires some definite form of actuality in the thing moved fitting it for specific movement. There is thus an order of nature in which all created things move and change in dependence on the Prime Mover, yet with an intrinsic spontaneity guaranteed by their own natural forms; and there is an order of grace in which certain created things—spiritual beings—are moved to an end beyond the scope of their natural powers, yet still with a kind of intrinsic spontaneity in virtue of some supplementary inner form which perfects their natural powers. If this last phrase inevitably suggests what has often been offered as the essence of Thomist teaching on grace, *Gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit* (1a. 1, 8 ad 2), we should remember that this continuity of nature and grace in the creature rests for St Thomas on a unity of divine purpose realized in time, and on the identity of the God who is Creator and Consummator at once. *Vult ergo hoc esse propter hoc: sed non propter hoc vult hoc* (1a. 19, 5): the sequential order of history as a whole exhibits the transcendent unity of God's plan; no single element in that historical order determines the plan extrinsically. We should note too that for St Thomas it is impossible to prove that the world had a beginning, so that creation in or more accurately of time is a matter of faith alone (1a. 46, 2). Some further implications of these views will be discussed later.

Against the background of his earlier views, it may now, I hope, be seen that St Thomas's fundamental option in his later theology of grace is for a priority of movement to form. This option allows him to embody in a

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unified whole his discoveries of Semi-Pelagianism and of the profound receptivity of the human will even in its self-determination, as seen in the arguments of the *Eudemian Ethics*. The priority of grace in justification and in the range of problems treated by the scholastics under the heading of 'preparation for grace' does not need to be artificially contrived but follows immediately from the fundamental theological option. It is impossible here to analyse the detail of his treatment. A few remarks about his account of merit may perhaps be permitted.

His basic principle is that on account of the infinite disproportion between man and God, man can only have merit, that is, a right to a reward from God, on the presupposition that God has so ordained it. Man's free self-realization according to his God-given nature entitles him to the fulfilment of that nature in God's plan (1a2æ. 114, 1). But God has ordained man to an end which transcends his nature, so it can only be in virtue of some further gift, the assistance of grace, that man may merit or deserve this transcendent fulfilment (114, 2). Because the free human act under grace can be regarded as proceeding from both human freedom and from the grace of the Holy Spirit moving this freedom, we have to distinguish the meritorious character of the act accordingly; and it is only the free human act as moved by the Spirit which can be called meritorious in the strict sense (*de condigno*, 114, 3). The process of human self-realization finds its consummation in a fulfilment which is infinitely beyond its reach, only because the ultimate Origin and End of this action, what one might call its deep metaphysical sense, are the same. And yet this ultimate metaphysical sense is truly the sense of the free human action; the world of human origination is contained within a purposeful order of divine origination and consummation. St Thomas is only spelling out the detailed consequences of the Greek doctrine of the divine image in man, taken from Damascene (*de Fide Orthodoxa* II, 12; PG 94, 920), himself dependent on Gregory of Nazianzus, a doctrine under the sign of which he had placed the whole of the *Secunda Pars* in the Prologue to that Part. If God's purpose is the transcendent sense of human destiny, it is a sense and meaning which is authentically embodied in humanity both as structure and as process.

If a theology of grace may be said to fulfil three functions, moral, existential and metaphysical, it is clear that while St Thomas is strong on metaphysics and is in fact strong on morals too, he is not very satisfying existentially, in the sense of offering a personal reading of the human condition. Relying rather on the work of Ebeling and E. G. Rupp than on my own sketchy reading of the young Luther, I might suggest that it was Luther who peculiarly excelled in this existential function, and indeed made it seem for many the unique function of a theology of grace.

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As Congar has put it, St Thomas's theology is 'sapiential' in type, rather than 'historical'. It is worth recalling that some recent studies in New Testament Christology (cf e.g. P. Lamarche, *Christ Vivant*, Paris 1966; R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, London 1965) might provide a useful background for this distinction. The 'sapiential' perspective of the final stages of New Testament Christology does not exclude history, but rather reviews it from a transcendent vantage-point reached by reflection upon the key or paradigmatic history which is the career of the historical Jesus, seen as the nucleus of saving history. The Qumran writings indicate a parallel fusion of Old Testament apocalyptic and wisdom traditions, here perhaps on the way to gnosis.

What is undoubtedly true is that theology-as-wisdom (cf 1a. 1, 6; CG I, 1) is supported by a metaphysical system, derived notably from Aristotle and the Pseudo-Dionysius (for whom Luther expressed his contempt in the *de Captivitate Babilonica*). Even if sapiential theology can be accredited by New Testament precedent, it might still be a valid objection to St Thomas's version of it that the structure he has set up to support it eventually takes the place of the spiritual or pneumatic wisdom itself. This criticism would, I think, bear rather on his successors than on St Thomas himself. A careful and sympathetic reading of his own writings shows, I believe, that his metaphysical reflection, animated by a thematic ontology, was not a way of tying up the variety of the real world but of disclosing it or releasing it. He was a serious thinker whose reflection in his theology did not consist simply of 'applying' the views of earlier thinkers but of re-creating them. In a similar way, today one might read, say, Freud, either so as to equip oneself with a set of ready-made categories with which to dispose of the infinite labour of understanding human personality, or for a fundamental contribution to that labour accepted as one's own personal task. When St Thomas speaks with what seems a totally unconcerned confidence about 'nature' and 'natures', he is not, I suggest, unaware of the dangers of pure Aristoteleanism; he was, after all, a severe critic of Siger of Brabant. Aristotle's *Physics* had been for him a means of disclosure of the real, but the real for him was a world which depended for its *esse* on the free decision of its Creator; its contingency was not only a consequence of its finitude, but also of the mystery of God's providential plan.

There is one irreducibly crucial point at which any sapiential theology must allow itself to be judged, and that is what we have called above the identity of God as Creator and Consummator, Beginning and End. It seems to me that theology must assert this identity if it is to be theology at all, and yet that it may only do so as Christian theology if it continually reminds itself that the God about whom it makes its assertions is a hidden

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God, only to be felt for by a continually renewed discovery in Christ and his Spirit, a continual rebirth. St Thomas's metaphysical theology seems to make the identification of Origin and Goal in God too easy, to be in this sense a *theologia gloriae* rather than a *theologia crucis*. And yet it is not only the fairly reliable tradition which recounts his saying at the end of his life, 'All I have written is straw,' which inclines me to suppose that he was continually aware of the way in which his theology was suspended on God's gift of himself in Revelation and in his abiding Spirit: in his own account of the way in which the gift of wisdom is associated with charity (2a2æ. 45) we may see some explicit recognition of the fragility and precariousness of any theology. Perhaps this is only to say that St Thomas's theology of grace commends itself because in the last resort it is the theology of someone who was in a special sense a saint.