SENIOR THESIS

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On the Reductions of Secularism and the Fulfillment Found in Trinitarian Love

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I. - Introduction

a. Secularism and the Crisis of Meaninglessness

“We live today in a world full of ‘heresies’: arbitrary choices and arbitrary reductions. Not only is it truly a broken world, with a broken vision and a broken knowledge, but its deep tragedy lies in this: that each “fragment” resulting from that brokenness is affirmed and experienced as the whole truth, each “reduction” is announced as “wholeness.” Of this tragic reductionism Christians are more guilty than anyone else; for instead of healing it by the light and the power of the catholic, i.e., precisely whole, all-embracing and total vision, they themselves – for the sake of a superficial relevance – so often surrender to partial and broken “reductions” of “this world.” – Alexander Schmemann

Our world – the world of ‘freedom,’ choice, tolerance and varying shades of relativism – is currently faced with a crisis of meaninglessness. Allan Bloom has commented that we Americans practice “nihilism with a happy ending;”¹ we neglect to consider life meaningful, yet we manage to continue living, pretending to be content with mere pleasures while ultimately yearning for true joy. It may be only recently, however, that our society is beginning to sense the consequences of such meaninglessness: the economic crises, the decline in the birth rate, the accelerated descent of popular music into rap and techno, the degradation of virtue across the board, and ultimately, a wholesale lack of mission that results in an existential restlessness that scrapes at us from within.² America could corporately exclaim with St. Paul, “Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24).

The above quote by Alexander Schmemann, a Russian Orthodox priest and theologian, suggests that our world is plagued by no small number of heresies (“in the literal meaning of the Greek word “airesis” – choice, i.e., reduction; therefore, deformation”³), which is another way of saying that we find ourselves surrounded by a myriad of reductions and deformations. There is little doubt that these reductions and deformations are the root cause of this plague of meaninglessness. For all of the varying sources of this meaninglessness (relativism, the vice of sloth, the decline of culture, etc.),
we wish to highlight the reduction that is most significant within the modern worldview: secularism.

David L. Schindler writes:

The debate over secularism – over what it is and the sense in which it is a good or a bad thing – evidently hinges on the nature of the distinction between religion and the secular (God and the world, the Church and world)...secularism in the “bad” sense, at least as found in Western (e.g., American) liberal patterns of thought and life, consist above all in a (false) abstraction from God in our first and most basic understanding of the world: secularism consists in an abstract notion of the cosmos – of its space, time, matter, motion bodies, and persons.4

Could it be that our meaninglessness is a result of a secularist mentality, in which God must remain at a distance from the matter and purpose of our daily lives? It is now understood as an almost universal presupposition that matter is ‘simply’ matter – it can hardly be considered as incorporated into or even gesturing towards the transcendent. One can be ‘religious’ if he chooses, though such a belief is simply an addition to the matter of his life, with which God has little interpenetration. It is our suggestion that, until we overcome this ultimate separation of nature and grace, of God and the world, and even faith and reason (as we shall consider below), our disease of meaninglessness will persist; if the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is not allowed to reorder and transform human nature from the inside out – if heaven is held back – our culture will continue to be infected by the cancer of our ‘happy nihilism’.

b. Our Concern: The Vocation of Christianity and the Epistemology of Secularism

Schmemann states that secularism “is above all a negation of worship...the negation of man as a worshipping being, as homo adorans...”5 This is significant, as “the very notion of worship implies a certain idea of man’s relationship not only to God, but also to the world.”6 Because secularism separates the orders of nature and grace, it is implied that the world can communicate nothing of the divine and is simply world, simply
material, only bearing the meaning that we give it; “by…radically opposing the “natural” to the “supernatural, [we] make the world grace-proof…””\(^7\) The denial of transcendence as a property of the world and the affirmation of man as the one who bestows meaning upon the world meet in an elixir of secularism that, when drunk to the dregs, results in a veritable desert of meaninglessness; all is reduced to choice while torn from the openness to the transcendent, thereby isolating and reducing all possible purpose and meaning to the shallow conceptions of individual opinions, thus inaugurating a heightened existential restlessness.

In considering the latter half of Schmemann’s quote above (Of this tragic reductionism Christians are more guilty than anyone else; for instead of healing it by the light and the power of the catholic, i.e., precisely whole, all-embracing and total vision, they themselves – for the sake of a superficial relevance – so often surrender to partial and broken “reductions” of “this world.”), let us consider how Christianity’s vocation to the world can heal this gut-wrenching and contracepting split between nature and grace: how Christianity answers the devastating reductions of secularism.

Jesus Christ, true man and true God, came to give His body “for the life of the world” (John 6:51). He spoke of himself as the “light of the world” (John 8:12). Bede the Venerable comments on this passage, “where it is to be observed, He does not say, I am the light of Angels, or of heaven, but the Light of the world, i.e. of mankind who live in darkness, as we read, “to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death” (Luke 1:79).”\(^8\) The Lord’s desire for salvation was not directed towards a few chosen peoples, but rather the entire world; “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself…” (2 Corinthians 5:19), “For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight
the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for
the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth”
(Ephesians 1:9-10). Ultimately, this salvation would be accomplished through Christ’s
death on the Cross, the penultimate earthly expression of the divine, *kenotic* love of the
Trinity; the Son took upon Himself the sins and the dereliction of the world and offered it
to the Father, “for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to
reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood
of his Cross” (Colossians 1:19-20). This *kenotic* love, as written in the hymn of Paul’s
letter to the Philippians,

(“Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of
God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself [*kenosis*], taking
the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he
humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a Cross. Therefore God has
highly exalted him…” Philippians 2:5-9a)

is one of *outpouring* and *self-gift!* The Trinity is principally an *exchange of love* in which
the Father gives himself to the Son, and the Son to the Father; the Holy Spirit is the
manifestation of this love.

Just as creation and redemption occur through him [Christ Jesus] and for him
(Colossians 1:15-20), that is, because God the Father created the world (as related in
Genesis) *through* and *for* the Son, and because the Son redeemed the world *with* and *for*
the Father, the same Divine Love that unites the persons of the Trinity seeks to unite the
world and Christ: *through the Church*. The mission of Christ in bringing salvation to the
entire world is manifested in the Church, through, with, and in the Holy Spirit: “Go into
all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is
baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-
16), “You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father
upon you…” (Luke 24:48a), “Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20: 21-23),”God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5b).

Truly, this is a ‘great commission;’ consider Jesus’ words: “Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves” (Luke 10:3), “if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18); the call to love as Christ loves is no shallow responsibility. If the Church’s mission is to continue Christ’s love here on earth, to be the Seat of Wisdom who lifts Him up that he may draw all men to himself (John 12:32), this does not mean to simply gesture away from oneself towards an image of crucifix. Instead, we are called to manifest Christ in our very person: to be able to say along with St. Paul, “…I bear on my body the marks of Jesus” (Galatians 6:17b).

Here is found the locus of the Church’s identity: that, in loving the Son and recognizing that the apex of His love of the Father was realized on the Cross, she receives the Holy Spirit that she may witness and participate in that love and thereby effect the salvation of the world, truly living out her command to be the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13,14). The Church is the dwelling-place of Trinitarian love on the earth. Each church’s Tabernacle holds the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is surely the pinnacle of Love’s gift: “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23b). In our personally receiving the Eucharist and thereby becoming a sacrament in our selves, we
allow our former, fallen man to be crucified with Him, thereby participating and living in
the joy of His Resurrection; we constantly give witness to the kenosis of Trinitarian love,
consequently turning our faces and our persons towards the coming fullness of joy when
“night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their
light, and they shall reign for ever and ever (Romans 5:5-11, Revelation 22:5).

Out of this flows the Church’s mission to heal the world. (“Of this tragic
ger"""""“tastic reductionism Christians are more guilty than anyone else; for instead of healing it by the
light and the power of the catholic, i.e., precisely whole, all-embracing and total vision,
they themselves – for the sake of a superficial relevance – so often surrender to partial
and broken “reductions” of “this world.”) The ‘light and the power of the catholic, i.e.
precisely whole, all-embracing and total vision’ is exactly what is spoken of in the
paragraphs above. Secularism and its separation between nature and grace itself fades
into meaninglessness – the Incarnation of Christ is the ‘union in distinction’ of nature
and grace, God and man; “what therefore God has joined together, let no man put
asunder” (Matthew 19:6b). Because the Church’s life is Christ’s life through the gift of
the Holy Spirit, and because the world was created and redeemed in Christ – He
reconciles all things to himself – it is the Church who finds herself in the position to heal
and fulfill the reductions and heresies of the world, thereby establishing the Kingdom of
true Love upon the earth: the love that fills in all partiality with its fullness, that binds all
wounds and heals all infections, that all may know the love of God.

Hence the role of the Church in the world is not to be a kind of alternative society, shut off and
enclosed, a community or society preoccupied with its own internal affairs, a spiritual “society of
the perfect” that exists side by side with the secular order. The whole justification for her
existence lies in her communicating to the rest of mankind the universally valid truths concerning
God’s liberating and redeeming work with fundamental openness, which in itself is but the
continuation of God’s involvement in Christ for the sake of the world.
The purpose of this paper is to assess the ways in which secularism, the prevalent worldview in modernity, presupposes certain reductive epistemologies, that is, reductions in the considerations of how we know what we know. The philosophical and theological questions of epistemology are truly at the heart of existence and wonder, and serve as the foundation upon which one’s entire worldview rests. Herein lies the locus of the aforementioned issues of secularism – can we know and worship the one true God with, through, and in our materiality, or must we sever the continuity between our nature and God’s grace?

It has become apparent that, in considering the epistemological foundation upon which secularism is built, very much of our issue centers upon the relationship between faith and reason and their divergent ‘ways of knowing.’ Thusly, throughout the remainder of this paper, we have linked three separations in the modern world that epistemologically underpin secularism, each of which leads to the other: nature/grace -> reason/faith -> philosophy/theology. Part II of the paper will consider how these three separations began to take the mold of modernity during the late middle ages, with a general discussion about the degradation of philosophy at the outset. Part III will then entail a constructive meditation upon how secularism might be overcome and a healthy relationship between the three separations above might be achieved. The ethos that we hope permeates this paper is one of ultimate concern “for the life of the world” (John 6:51).
II - Developments in Knowing from Nominalism through DesCartes

a. Knowing and Wonder

“Ideas create idols; only wonder leads to knowing.” – St. Gregory of Nyssa

Our world has little ‘time’, ‘utility’, or ‘purpose’ for philosophy. Philosophy departments at universities are small and sadly insignificant in most academic atmospheres. If one chooses to study philosophy, they are struck with the task of forming a stammering, sad response to the all-too-common question of, ‘well, what are you going to do with a philosophy degree?’ It would not be our intention to claim such a question is ill-fitting or impertinent. Rather, the battle that ought to be fought is the consideration of the ‘whole’, the very worldview out of which the questioner is questioning: instead of trying to invalidate the questions which are being asked, let us seek to inquire why there are certain questions which are failing to be asked. For instance, in asking what one can do with a philosophy degree, we are speaking of the knowledge of philosophy as an instrumental good, or a good that is pursued in order that one may attain an apparently higher good (money, prestige, a product, etc.). Does this thereby reduce knowledge to mere utility? Or rather, can knowledge be sought as a good higher than any of these things?

These questions are so seldom asked. So much of modern academia has fallen into corruption – not because of the answers that it offers in response to those questions (for such answers can at least be argued for or opposed), but rather because there are critical questions that are not being asked or pursued. If a question is removed from the table of legitimate debate, the intellect is stunted: “the Aristotelian principle, eadem est scientia oppositorum – affirmations and their corresponding negations are one and the
same knowledge” is no longer applicable; if the very foundational knowledge of a question is thrown out, there can be no meaningful affirmations or negations. Our modern worldview enjoys a rather universally accepted claim to ‘neutrality’ and apparent ‘objectivity’ in all things. Nowhere does the obtrusive falsehood of this claim to ‘neutrality’ shine through more clearly than in the egregious outlawing of certain (rather critical) questions. Unless we recover the fullness of philosophical wonder, ideologies such as capitalism, Liberal democracy, and/or relativism – which, we would argue, ultimately contribute and culminate in our worldview of secularism – will continue to pare back the number of questions that are deemed apropos to ask.

“This sense of wonder is the mark of the philosopher. Philosophy indeed has no other origin.” “A name that would fit him [the philosopher] better, and have more seemliness, would be ‘lover of wisdom,’ or something similar.” Thomas Aquinas writes, in an epigraph from his commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics, “This is the reason why the philosopher may be likened to the poet: Both are concerned with the wondrous.” Our culture has, if any at all, a strange sense of wonder and wisdom. Wonder is often sadly dismissed as naiveté, a kind of handicap to a scientific and our exhaustively reductionistic view of the world. All is reduced to empirical and tangible fact, thereby considering any opening towards a metaphysical meaning or glimpse of Divine Glory is shattered and refused. Wonder is never claimed to be constitutive of the human being; it does not belong to man as such. Instead, being appreciative and receptive towards reality is only something one may ‘choose’ to do, and it is usually considered profoundly ‘useless;’ one can think of fine art, architecture, and the liberal and intellectual arts here – they serve no use according to our worldview, for the common
response to the real entails a denial that the arts are actually tapping into something profound. No – instead, they are simply ‘pie-in-the-sky’ expressions of opinion and feeling, all of which end up on the ‘value’ side of the Enlightenment ‘fact-value’ distinction, which is admittedly the wrong side to be on, for these ‘values’ are mere phantasms of opinion and subjectivity, severed from any kind of objective reality. This is no small concern, as its effects redound throughout human history! Ultimately, we wish to suggest that the denial of wonder as inherent to mankind is a veiled denial of creatureliness and, in the end, of contingency. One can only wonder at something bigger than oneself (or at one’s involvement in that transcendent reality) – the refusal to do so is, in the last analysis, a sad attempt at deicide: by elevating ourselves to be in utter control of reality, thereby opposing wonder, we cannot fail to reject the God of personal Love.\

The natural sciences have thereby overtaken so much of the meaning of ‘wisdom;’ today, a ‘wise person’ is commonly considered to be the one who can dominate his or her surroundings to the greatest degree, through science, technology, acquisition of money, power, fame, and license (which is commonly referred to as ‘freedom’). The natural sciences particularly accentuate the dominance that man can have over nature, and so thereby represent a profoundly practical and material kind of inquiry and acquisition of knowledge; there is usually an indespensible factual certainty that scientists aspire to achieve. Due to this kind of dominance, the modern conception of scientific inquiry is the very dagger used most commonly to commit the act of deicide. It is the very temptation to consider the modern ‘scientific method’ as the ‘Holy Grail’ of certain, demonstrative knowledge of the world that enables man to submerge wonder in the depths of insignificant, individual opinion, simply because wonder might gesture
towards a kind of knowing that is not certain and dominant. Wonder is therefore disengaged as a legitimate source of knowledge, for the knowledge gained thereby cannot be quantitatively assessed. Echoes of Cartesian rationalism and Baconian empiricism, which ultimately engendered this idolatry of the mathematical and scientific methods respectively, remain with us today.\textsuperscript{17} Ultimately, humanity is left standing atop the world with the ability to bestow and inflict the world with whatever meaning pertains to the subjective choice of the individual, essentially in the place of a god; scientific certainty is juxtaposed with the meaninglessness of opinion. What then is the result? All knowledge that cannot be assessed by the standards of scientific certainty are subjugated and relegated to the outskirts of relevance and meaning. The consequences are devastating: we are left to languish in a desert of meaninglessness, for, in fact, that which is most dear to us throughout our lives, like the love we have for a spouse, could never be quantified and thus must be discredited.\textsuperscript{18} Etienne Gilson states that “nothing was left but…the mere external frame of a world order carefully emptied of its intelligibility…[this is] inevitable and will always occur whenever a philosopher mistakes the empirical description of our ways of knowing for a correct description of reality itself.”\textsuperscript{19} Josef Pieper states, “that dimension of the world, however, toward which the gaze of the philosophizing person is directed is fundamentally inaccessible to, and removed from, every conceivable means of transforming the world, from all techniques and uses.”\textsuperscript{20} Gilson has thus led us to the heart of our considerations here: in this elevation and (without sounding too polemical) idolatry of empiricism (knowledge gained by observation, experience, or experiment), we ought to be careful not to commit to a ‘reduction’ in Schmemann’s view: this kind of active and dominating inquiry is only one
method of attaining knowledge; let us not mistake a ‘part’ for the ‘whole’, an ‘empirical
description of our ways of knowing for a correct description of reality itself,’ one method
for the method.

In seeking to correct the partial sight of our worldview, Schmemann claims that
our world has become so completely and hopelessly male, governed by pride and aggression,
where all has been reduced to power and weapons of power…to the refusal to willingly back down
or make peace in anything or to keep one’s mouth shut and plunge into the silent depths of life.21

It may be that this ‘plunge into the silent depths of life’ is precisely so much of
the missing component in our worldview’s conception of knowledge. The kind of
inquiry that contemplates and beholds must be recovered if philosophy can ever truly
consider, according to the whole, the nature of things.

Therefore, “in philosophy, man discovers what is humanly knowable about the
depths of being.”22 “Indeed, with philosophizing, nothing more is meant than the
contemplation of reality as a whole.”23 “It is thus the wondering person who alone
realizes that primordial relation to Being in pure form…”24 Aristotle, in his Metaphysics,
claims that the philosopher investigates Being as Being.25 To philosophize is thus to
consider the real, not only in terms of materiality, fact, or measurability (maybe not even
to limited to the terms of the mind, ala rationalism, or the terms of observational
experiments, ala empiricism), but rather, in beholding the real – being itself – in the
fullness of its depth and mystery (which, in its consideration of the ‘whole’, will include
materiality, but not limit it’s inquiry to it as such). Pieper remarks that, “provided he [the
philosophizing person] continues to inquire philosophically with complete openness, he
will ultimately arrive at a point where he cannot avoid raising very basic questions
regarding the world and human existence.”26 Philosophy means allowing the question of
‘what is the real?’ to pierce us; we cannot recoil from the abrasive shock that such
questions might bring, nor can we refuse their pervasive reach within the depths of our being. Ultimately, philosophy is the *maxime scientia veritatis*, the “science of truth”; no matter how shocking or surprising that truth turns out to be.

It is not our intention to offer a specific analysis of just what this ‘beholding of the real’ would look like in philosophical terms. Instead, let us simply acknowledge that, in considering how we know, there must be a marked receptivity to the whole: it is in this sense that knowledge attains a *personal* character – one that involves us not as much as *subjects* but as *persons* – one that cannot be reduced to mathematics or experiments; knowing itself must be rescued from the shipwreck of modern methods of knowing. We might suggest that we ought to look towards a true spirit of wonder and openness to the transcendent for such a reclamation, which would ultimately entail a real affirmation of creatureliness, an acknowledgement of the limits of reason, and the true possibility of a shattering, yet fulfilling revelation of God’s glory.

**b. Developments in Knowing**

“For the tension between faith and reason has sharpened into an opposition in the modern period and, despite all attempts to reconcile them, has finally snapped in many quarters and changed into a disconnected juxtaposition.” – Wolfhart Pannenberg

Such reductions in *knowing*, as mentioned above, are not without cause; these conceptions of knowledge have intellectual histories that can be traced and thus critically examined. The worldviews spoken of above are stubborn things, and though they determine how one approaches and interprets reality, they are often inconspicuous and hard to discern; they are like lenses through which we see, and as a consequence, we often forget are there. By investigating the intellectual history of our given worldview, we can begin to gather some important information that will aid us in growing out of our anachronistic perceptions, and give us greater sight into the fullness of truth. There is a
certain Hegelian dialectic throughout history that can shed light on how our ideas about knowing have developed and evolved. It is our hope that such an attempt can be fielded here, to however minimal an extent.

When we speak of knowing, and ultimately knowing God, we arrive at the meeting place of philosophy and theology. The following intellectual history will concern itself with both philosophy and theology, for prior to the modern intellectual project, the two interpenetrated and thus could not be separated. Only now, in the modern/post-modern era, has philosophy been characterized by isolation from transcendence and a shift towards the subjective self, and most theology has become disturbingly specialized and seems bear little interest to anyone who is not a theologian. Many philosophers claim agnosticism or atheism, while many theologians care little for philosophical thought. While it is true that even agnosticism presupposes a certain disposition towards belief in a deity, our concern is that, for those philosophers who are agnostic, they see their theological position as separate from, and irrelevant to, their philosophical enterprise! From the Greeks, to the Church Father, to the Medievals, there was no such separation.28

What accounts for this rather drastic shift in thought? Here we come to our main topic of investigation: the relation between philosophy and theology principally rests on the relation of reason and faith – each of which have their own ways of knowing! And it was this relation of reason and faith that was monumentally effected by the debates of the late medieval and the early modern periods.

In an essay titled ‘Theology and the Unity of Knowledge,’ Etienne Gilson defends his usage of theology to argue philosophically – “Now since natural theology is included
in metaphysics, it should be included in the philosophical approach to the problem.”

This statement is, at any rate, distinctly pre-modern. Metaphysics, which includes natural theology (the bottom-up approach to man’s knowledge of the transcendent, as distinct from the top-down approach of revealed theology) concerns itself with that which is beyond the material, that is, with the essences of things – “being as being.” We intend to argue that the death of metaphysics (and therefore any consideration of natural theology) that occurred in the late middle ages, drove a wedge between reason and faith, and led to various problems within both philosophy and theology; this error was not primarily concerned with the technical aspects of either discipline, rather, the problem consisted in epistemology – the question of how man knows.

From shortly after the death of Christ until the first half of the thirteenth century, Christianity was greatly informed and characterized by the most prominent philosophical pedigree of the epoch: Platonism. This especially held true for the Greek Church Fathers, who utilized so much of Plato’s work. Later, during the middle ages, St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), confident in the concordance of reason and faith, wrote his great synthesis of Catholic theology, the Summa Theologiae, working with the newly rediscovered works of Aristotle (most of Aristotle’s works were translated from Arabic into Latin around the middle of the thirteenth century, enabling the West access to the other major Greek school of philosophy). The influence of Aristotelian thought on the Western tradition did not simply begin and/or end with St. Thomas; there were others who had different intentions: “other philosophers, influenced by Aristotle’s greatest Arabic commentator, Averroes, taught Aristotle’s works without seeing the need for or
the possibility of consistently coordinating his scientific and logical conclusions with the truths of the Christian faith.”

Secularism is the worldview that dominates our modern/post-modern era; it is characterized by the separation of reason and faith, and of philosophy and theology, separations that flowed from the most significant and most devastating separation of all: the separation of the orders of nature and grace. Secularism actually has its origins in the relation between Mohammedan theology and Arabic interpretations of Aristotelian philosophy; it is to this relation that we must now turn. Avicenna (980-1037) and Averroes (1126-1198) were the most important commentators on Aristotle; Averroes, however, always took precedence: “For St. Thomas, as for all the schoolmen, Averroes was “the Commentator” on Aristotle and an inexhaustible source of information on philosophical subjects.” Despite the differences between the two Arabic interpreters of Aristotle, they both were rationalists and logicians who considered the philosophy of Aristotle to be superior even to Mohammedan theology. Concerning Averroes, T.J. DeBoer comments: “truth, in fact, has been given him in Aristotle; and from that standpoint he looks down upon Muslim theology…theology is repugnant to him…philosophy, however, is the highest form of truth, and at the same time the most sublime religion.” Avicenna’s mixing of Aristotelian philosophy and Muslim theology won him a condemning rejection written by the Islamic lawyer and theologian Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) titled, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*; his condemnation was met by Averroes own reply to Ghazali: *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*.

We see here, in the drama of these debates, some interesting developments; it seems that these events actually prefigure (and no doubt lead to) the modern categories of
knowledge! For instance, Al-Ghazali, who (usually) wrote from within the dominant school of Islam in the eleventh century: Ash’arism. This school “subscribed to a metaphysics of transient atoms and accidents…what humans habitually regard as sequences of natural causes and effects are in reality concomitant events whose constant association is arbitrarily decreed by the divine will. Between created things, there is no necessary causal connection – indeed, no causal interaction at all.”

Suddenly all causes and effects within nature are removed – God is the only cause of every sequence, as He directly maneuvered atoms (of which all creation was ultimately thought to be comprised of) to accomplish His Divine Will. In order to defend the God of Mohammeden theology, Al-Ghazali needed to oppose the Aristotelian emphasis on causality as present within nature: “causal action belongs exclusively to divine power.”

More pertinent to our concern, this very model was about to repeat itself in the west, only to break open all that was considered ‘standard’ in both theology and philosophy.

Let us compare a quote about William of Ockham (1288-1348), a western Franciscan monk, theologian, and philosopher, with that of the Ash’arism school above: “[Ockham] did not wish to conceive physical bodies as having an efficient causality of their own because the existence of an autonomous order of things, or order of nature, would have prescribed at least habitual limits to the arbitrary power of God.”

Just as Al-Ghazali was seeking to defend the Mohammedan faith against the encroachments of a secularist philosophical system that had little need for theology, so Ockham was defending the God of Christianity against those Aristotelian rationalists now present in the west, most commonly called ‘Latin Averroists’. The pattern that is played out here is of utmost interest: what contributed to the need for thinkers to defend faith from reason?
It would be presumptuous to think that we could list, let alone assess all the factors and elements that contributed to the massive shift in the consideration of knowledge that took place in the fourteenth century, with the turning point centered upon Ockham. Let us, however, consider two other major influences upon this divergence of faith and reason. Louis Dupre notes another critical actor in this narrative: St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). St. Francis, especially indicated by his popularization of the veneration of the Christmas crèche, was devoted to the Incarnational particularity of Christ, that is, the fact that the Second Person of the Trinity became a man, within time and space and among culture. This devotion and emphasis had a particular effect upon the ways of knowing:

Francis upset an intellectual tradition which he hardly understood and which he certainly had no intention of challenging. If the Image of all images is an individual, then the primary significance of individual form no longer consists in disclosing a universal reality beyond itself. Indeed, the universal itself ultimately refers to the singular. It would take thinkers, mostly Franciscans, over a century to draw the philosophical and theological conclusions inherent in Francis’s mystical vision. But in the end, the religious revolution begun in the twelfth century succeeded in overthrowing the ontological priority of the universal.

Within Greek philosophy, especially the Platonic schools of thought that were so influential before St. Francis, the universal form - that which rises above particularity - was always seen as preeminent. Now, with St. Francis gesturing towards the humanity and particularity of Christ like no one had done before, a veritable intellectual revolution had begun. This turn to the individual in St. Francis would lead William of Ockham to further and solidify the growing philosophy of nominalism (which we will soon consider) and thus to drive a wedge further and further between faith and reason, grace and nature.

Alongside the Franciscan school, let us now take a glance at the birth of Latin Averroism, the rationalists to whom Ockham was so opposed. The entire twelfth century saw a type of ‘renaissance’ in reference to the acknowledgement of nature and the
cosmos. M.-D. Chenu comments on this turn to nature prior to the in-breaking of Aristotelian philosophy: “To be sure, there was not yet the ferment produced at the end of the twelfth century and in the thirteenth by the discovery of Aristotelian and Islamic science; but already men were at work studying what the ancients had said about nature…”43 The Latin Averroists, however, sought something different than these. These rationalists did not simply wish to focus on nature within the context of creation, but rather to see it as possessing a certain type of autonomy from the divine. Siger of Brabant states, “at present we have nothing to do with the miracles of God, since we treat natural things in a natural way.”44 Maurer comments, “This separatist attitude, which divorced philosophy from religion, was something new in medieval thought, and it was bound to clash with the traditional view of the close connection and harmony of faith and reason.”45 These men, in imitation of Averroes, thought that “philosophy…is the highest form of truth…”46

To return to the very beginning of this historical circle, let us revisit St. Thomas Aquinas. Along with the Franciscan school and the Latin Averroists, there was another critical influence: the Scholastics. Scholasticism was born from the growth of the universities throughout the thirteenth century.47 These schools were consumed by the great philosophical and theological questions, “raising critical problems in minds anxious to preserve the Christian faith and the heritage of the Fathers of the Church.”48 Whereas the Latin Averroists wished to divorce philosophy from religion, the Scholastics, which included St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas Aquinas, sought to incorporate faith and reason, philosophy and theology; the greatest example here is the
synthesis of Christian theology with Aristotelian philosophy that so characterizes St. Thomas’ work (as mentioned above).\(^{49}\)

Now that the stage has been set with bit more clarity concerning the Franciscans, the Latin Averroists, and the Scholastics, let us reconsider William of Ockham. Father Servais Pinckaers, O.P., hardly exaggerates when he states: “With Ockham we witness the first atomic explosion of the modern era.”\(^{50}\) Ockham was the major catalyst for a growing philosophical movement in the late Middle Ages known as nominalism.\(^{51}\) While the French philosopher Roscelin is commonly considered to be the founder of nominalism, with the logician Abelard contributing to the movement, Ockham “gave new force and vitality to…nominalism.”\(^{52}\) Let us note that Ockham was a Franciscan; he was, therefore, extremely interested in the particular, the individual! “The Franciscan thinker [Ockham] perceived with characteristic sharpness how inconsistent the new philosophy of the individual had become with the fundamental epistemic principles inherited from Plato and Aristotle;”\(^{53}\) Nominalism was at least one attempt to offer a philosophical framework so as to resolve this inconsistency. The essence of nominalism can be characterized by its position on the ‘problem of the Universals’, which is often considered, probably due to the debates we are currently discussing, the most pressing philosophical issue of the Middle Ages.\(^{54}\)

To give a simplified sketch of the debate, let us consider the following: when someone speaks about ‘man’ or ‘humanity’, what is it that they are speaking of? Have you ever been introduced to ‘humanity’, or have you only encountered individual men and women? Nominalism denies that these universals (man, humanity, etc.) are real, “asserting that…[they] were merely words or names (nomina)” Boethius, St. Albert
the Great, William of Chapeaux, and St. Thomas Aquinas all avowed their own specifications of realism, which was the belief in the existence of these universals; there was a consistent acknowledgement that being and knowing were intimately related, that there was actually an essence of each particular man, a nature that was common to all that could be known.\textsuperscript{55} For the realist then, it is still true that we only encounter individual human beings, but we encounter them precisely as instantiations of a common human nature. Ockham, however, denies the existence of natures and essences; he states that, “since everything that really exists is individual, our general ideas cannot correspond to anything in reality, whence it follows necessarily that it is not their nature to be either images, or pictures, or mental presentations of any real or conceivable thing.”\textsuperscript{56} At first this may seem rather innocuous; many modern people have nominalist tendencies that are framed very much in this light. However, when one follows out the consequences of this reduction to the individual, we are led to a major epistemic reduction: a reduction in how we know that proves to be devastating.

Ockham considered that “the act of knowing…is the sole intellectual instrument of knowledge.”\textsuperscript{57} The basis of knowledge, for Ockham, is shifted: he divided knowledge into intuitive and abstractive knowledge: “an intuitive cognition is the immediate perception of a really existing thing…attended by a feeling of absolute certitude…abstractive knowledge, in the Ockhamist sense, [is] a cognition, from which nothing can be concluded concerning the existence, or non-existence, of its object.”\textsuperscript{58} Prior to Ockham, there was a certain kind of interplay between the act of knowing (the subject) and that which was known (the object). “Through [universals] the mind gains access to the rational core of its object. It does so by “abstracting” the intelligible
element from the sensuous \textit{phantasm}, but even more by “illuminating” this \textit{phantasm} with its own intellectual light.”\textsuperscript{59} Dupre goes on to quote St. Thomas in stating, “the intelligible species [abstraction, universal] is not what is actually understood, but that by which the intellect understands…”\textsuperscript{60} To put it simply, we encounter individual things in the world, yet since these individual things are instantiations of certain natures, the intellect acquires the nature and essence of the individual thing, resulting in a real knowledge of the thing encountered. It is through the universal nature that we know the individual, yet the individual inevitably leads us to the universal nature since it is an instantiation of it. But Ockham denies that these abstract natures can actually ‘illuminate’ the individual; they are ambivalent as to the very existence of the object to which it is concerned. Even intuitive knowledge, which is the encounter with a truly existing thing, “is an absolute reality (a quality of the mind) really distinct in place and subject from its object. When I see a star in the sky, for example, my vision of the star is a reality distinct from the star itself.”\textsuperscript{61} Thusly, while there was a very real and intimate relation between \textit{knowing} and \textit{being} prior to Ockham, there was now a chasm between the subject and the object of his knowing; the \textit{act} of knowing became prominent because, truly, only one’s sense perceptions (intuitions) could be trusted to meet the \textit{real}, the intellect was left muted.

Let us not forget the cause, in principle, for this reduction in knowing: the deepest impulse of nominalism was “the urge to protect the content of revelation from the unraveling effects of rationalism.”\textsuperscript{62} Here we return to the historical arc of which we mentioned above. Ockham wished to defend the omnipotence of God and His Divine Will against the rationalism of both the Latin Averroists, who wished to employ reason
alone, and the Scholastics, who wished to incorporate philosophical principles into theology. “In Ockham’s understanding, the determinism and necessary causes of Greek philosophy and science, which Aquinas sought to integrate with Christian faith, placed arbitrary limits on God’s infinitely free creation, and this Ockham vigorously opposed.”

For Ockham,

> The world was utterly contingent on God’s omnipotent and indefinable will. Hence man’s only certainty derived from direct sensory observation or from self-evident logical propositions, not from rational speculations about invisible realities and universal essences. Because God was free to create or determine things according to his will, any human claim to certain knowledge of the cosmos as a rationally ordered expression of transcendent essences was altogether relativized. God could have created things in any way he arbitrarily wished, without the use of intermediaries such as the celestial intelligences of Aristotelianism and Thomism.

In his theological approach, Ockham would emphatically stress a view of God that regarded Him as *almighty, omnipotent, and eternal*. Ockham would speak often of the unbounded *freedom* of the Divine Will as preeminent and, most importantly *separated from any semblance of His Nature*! The following is a rather disturbing quote from his commentary on Lombard’s *Sentences*:

> Every will can conform to the divine precepts; but God can command the created will to hate him, and the created will can do this (thereby refusing its own happiness and ultimate end). Furthermore, any act that is righteous in this world can also be righteous in the next, the fatherland; just as hatred of God can be a good act in this world, so it be in the next.

Pinckaers goes on to comment that, from a nominalist perspective,

> “hatred of our neighbor, theft, and adultery could become meritorious if God commanded them. Ockham did not recognize in human nature any law or order whatsoever that might determine the divine freedom and omnipotence…undoubtedly there was a customary order…but he believed we had no guarantee that the divine will might not change tomorrow.”

Such a theological position differed very much from St. Thomas and all previous Christian theologian’s understandings of the Divine Will and freedom. There is no doubt that such a possible as Ockham’s had pernicious results: “by one-sidedly emphasizing the idea of God’s omnipotence, the nominalist theology in the late Middle Ages had ruptured the intimate bond that had linked Creator and creation.” Therefore,
whether Latin Averroists were too idolatrous in their worship of reason (which was indeed the case) or if the Scholastics allowed their theology to be too influenced by rationalism (which was sometimes the case, at least in the lesser Schoolmen), the very image of God which Ockham tried to protect was problematic! It might be the case that any philosophical or theological system that spoke of God’s nature would cause an Ockhamian revolt!

“It was on the philosophical level that Ockham’s impact was to be most immediately potent, for in his emphatic assertion of nominalism, the growing medieval tension between reason and faith began to snap.”

We now come to our culminating point: in order to resolve the tensions between reason and faith, between philosophy and theology, and, ultimately, between nature and grace, Ockham reduced and modified the epistemology of each discipline! Nominalism reduced reason, and therefore philosophy, to intuitive perceptions and denied any opening within reason towards divine revelation; theology was thusly reduced to a reception of revelation based upon faith and grace alone, a reception in which the intellect must be checked at the door.

Maurer writes, “the beliefs held on divine faith are true, but because they lack evidence they are not, strictly speaking, knowledge or science.” Thus one’s faith is separated from one’s reason: belief has nothing to do with knowledge, and, because knowledge is restricted to that which one perceive by sense, has little to do with faith. Because faith was so separated from reason, theology itself had been reduced:

This formidable Franciscan [Ockham] creates space even more radically for the sole sovereignty of God when, sweeping away the entire Platonic and Aristotelian tradition, he directly opposes to the yawning abyss of absolute freedom a world which is fragmented into irrational points of reality. With this rupture within the tradition of a mediating or natural (philosophical) theology, every contemplative dimension of the fides quarens intellectum is in principle removed. Theology, which not closes itself in upon itself, must become fideistic and can ultimately be only practical.
Ultimately this reduction in theology would lead to the saddest and most profoundly devastating separation in Catholic since St. Thomas Aquinas: the separation between theology and sanctity.76 The divergence between Scholasticism and the Devotio Moderna spoken of in the next paragraph is an illustrative example of this critical tear is the life of the Church.

“Philosophy and theology can always be found therein in a state of more or less clear distinction, but never separated; when they did begin to resent their alliance as a suspicious promiscuity, the breakdown of medieval culture was at hand.”77 “Ockham’s way of philosophy was known as the via moderna, in contrast to Aquinas’s…via antiqua. The traditional scholastic enterprise, committed to joining faith with reason, was coming to an end.”78 The fruits of this breakdown succeeded in sparking the development of two separate enterprises: the Devotion Moderna and modern philosophy/rationalist Scholastic theology. ‘Modern Devotion’ was a movement that began in Germany in the fourteenth century; repulsed by the rationalistic Scholasticism of the day, this religious movement held a distinctly anti-intellectual character (though they certainly didn’t condemn the intellectual life).79 The important consideration here is that these Christians could consider the intellectual life as separate from (and not wholly necessary for) the imitation of Christ – reason as separate from simple faith. By rationalist Scholasticism we refer not to the time of St. Albert, Bonaventure, and St. Thomas Aquinas, but rather to the epoch after St. Thomas in which Scholasticism became weighed down with a host of intellectual quandaries proposed by a very many distinct and opposing schools. Gehard Groot (1340-1384) “considered the University of Paris as a place where a young man not only could not learn theology, but was practically bound to lose his faith, precisely because of
the theologians." Therefore the Devotio Moderna, reacting against the overly complicated nature of the language of Scholasticism, sought the simplicity of the Gospel. Because of the reductions inherent in Ockham’s theory of knowledge, it was much easier for the Scholastics and those of the Devotio Moderna to separate faith from reason. In addition, Nominalist philosophy paved the way for the developments of natural science; it also cannot be underestimated as to how effectively Ockhamian nominalism – and hence the death of medieval philosophy – opened up philosophy first to skepticism, and then to one man’s answer to this skepticism: Rene Descartes, the father of modern constructive philosophy.

Where does this leave us today? Firstly, let us consider how Ockham is preparing the philosophical climate for an atmosphere of skepticism. Gilson notes, “Medieval thought entered [skepticism] as soon as Ockham’s philosophy took deep root in European universities of the fourteenth century.” Due to his theory of knowledge (intuitive versus abstractive), the reduction of reason (the death of metaphysics), and the truly radical mistrust of the intelligibility of the world beyond its materiality, Ockham could remain skeptical about what he knew and how he knew it. It is this skepticism, we propose, that began the eradication of wonder from philosophy, spoken of above! If there is a blatant and presupposed mistrust of one’s encounter with the world, how can one truly wonder at anything? As mentioned above, the philosopher must overcome this skepticism, not for a fear of asking certain questions, but rather for questioning the epistemological reduction on which this skepticism is founded!

Secondly, let us further note how these developments spurred on secularism – the separation of the orders of nature and grace, a ‘negation of worship’ concerning all that is
natural – in the west. Dupre writes, “Christian theologians had always succeeded in maintaining the link between the forms and the realm of the divine through God’s eternal image, the divine archetype of all created reality. In late nominalist theology, the form lost this function and the link with the divine became a more external one.” For Ockham, it was only in theologically distinguishing God’s reality from empirical reality that “Christian truth could preserve its transcendent sacrosanctness, and only thus would the world’s nature be properly comprehended on its own terms, in its full particularity and contingency.”

Nature and grace can only be understood as wholly separate; anything less would result in a reduction of one or the other! Here we have it: the theological misunderstanding of Divine Freedom has severed the causeway between nature and grace, faith and reason, theology and philosophy: “The movement most responsible for the separation [of nature and grace] was the very one that had inspired the resistance against Aristotelianism, namely, nominalism.”

Finally, then, to return to the Devotio Moderna:

During this period of the rise of scholastic theology there were also shifting trends in Christian spirituality that made it harder for the two realms of life [mystical and dogmatic theologies] to communicate, let alone nourish each other. In much later medieval spirituality, the self comes to be construed more and more in terms of its inner life, its experiences and affectivity. Thus, participation in the mystery of God in Christ is likely to seem all the more purely a matter of the "private and particular".

Do we not carry this very notion of spirituality with us today? In these reductions in knowledge, advancements in secularism, the severance of the bridge between faith and reason, philosophy and theology, and the deficit of wonder in philosophy, we can trace the outline of our current worldview! It is in this late medieval age of flux and crisis, which was itself an image of the Mohammedan debates just a century or two before, that we can see our modern philosophical, theological, and devotional principles and positions
sketched! Von Balthasar has even states that, in reference to a more detailed analysis of
the theological positions and developments that occurred after St. Thomas, “along these
pathways, nothing new has appeared down to the present time.”

In the third and final part of this paper, it is our hope to consider, on a theoretical
level, where we ought to look to find a reclamation of the fullness of knowledge as
expressed through faith and reason. We hope to gesture towards an option other than the
dangerous fragmentation of existing secularism that might still (with a view to Ockham)
respect God’s freedom and nature as well as the emphasis on individuality, while also
allowing the imitation of Christ to involve the intellect (with a view to the Scholastics)
without collapsing into impersonal rationalism (with a view to the Devotio Moderna).

**III – To Know is to Love: Meditations on Philosophy, Theology, and Sanctity**

“Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of
truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth – in a word, to know
himself – so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of
truth about themselves.” – Pope John Paul II in Fides et Ratio

We began this study by commenting on an initial quote by Alexander
Schmemann, suggesting that the fulfillment to all reductions is found precisely in Jesus
Christ and His Church. Now that we have examined how wonder and openness to the
transcendent are strangely absent in our modern scientific worldview, cursorily observed
the late medieval developments in epistemology, and traced the troubled relationship
between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, and grace and nature that so extends
into our own epoch, let us now return to our constructive consideration: how might
Catholicism, as the fullness of the indwelling of the Logos among men, assume and
complete the deconstructions and reductions of our world? Our reflection here will be
twofold as we consider how Christ transforms the person and the very structures of knowing. First, we will consider how sanctity, as the response of humanity to the Love of God that is expressed par excellence in worship, serves to unify the person and make him whole; secondly, we will consider how Trinitarian love, taken as the reference point for the whole of theology, ought to characterize the relationship between faith and reason – this will occur by considering this relation not simply as faith-reason, but rather to envisage it as faith-reason-sanctity.

a. Sanctity and Worship: the Unification of the Person

“For the glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God. For if the manifestation of God which is made by means of the creation, affords life to all living in the earth, how much more does that revelation of the Father which comes through the Word, give life to those who see God...” – St. Irenaeus of Lyons

The redounding effects of secularism – the separation of nature and grace – are only suffered in the divergence of philosophy and theology because they are first suffered in man. Let us note that, as seen above, William of Ockham’s speculation about how man knows (intuitive and abstractive knowledge) led to the altered manifestations of that knowing in the disciplines of philosophy and theology. It is our suggestion, then, that the healing of the reductions in knowing will entail, primarily, the reclamation of a proper anthropology as offered by Jesus Christ, true God and true man, and His Church.

St. Clement of Alexandria, commenting on the effects of Baptism, writes:

Being baptized, we are enlightened; being enlightened, we are adopted as sons: being adopted, we are made perfect; being made complete, we are made immortal...washing, by which we are cleansed from the filth of our sin; gift of grace, by which the penalties of our sins are cancelled; enlightenment, through which that holy light which saves us in perceived, that is, by which our eyes are made alert to see the divine; perfection means the lack of nothing, for what is still lacking to anyone who has the knowledge of God?

In order to make us ‘alert to see the divine,’ these waters of baptism – which remove the stain of the sin of our first parents as well as bestow on us participation in the dying and
rising of our Lord Jesus Christ – cannot be asked to wash a certain part of our body or our being; no, “it is only when we give freely, totally, unconditionally, the self-sufficiency of our life, when we put all its meaning in Christ, that the “newness of life” – which means a new possession of the world – is given to us.” As is suggested above by the beautiful quote by St. Clement, baptism entails a transformation and completion of our person – which means that we cannot withhold any part of ourselves (whether it be our affection, our intelligence, our talents, our sins, etc.) from the radiant love of Christ! “You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead…do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his practices and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his creator” (Colossians 2:12, 3:9-10).

Upon being baptized, we are grafted onto the vine of the Church in which we are nourished by the remaining Sacraments – most emphatically by the Eucharist – and given the opportunity to “put on the new man” and be “renewed in knowledge” after the image of our creator by entering into the life of the Church, the life of the Bride of Christ. This life, which is truly Christ’s presence in the world, is manifestly one of love: “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7). And may we never forget that, the ultimate love ever manifested in this world was not the miracle at the wedding at Cana, or the healing of the blind and the crippled, but rather Christ’s ‘trampling down death by death’ on the Cross: “The ultimate beauty is that perfect self-giving revealed in the bleeding wounds of Christ: an endlessly drawing stream of life, a mutual ecstasy of selflessness pouring out from the Cross, pouring down into the world from the Trinity.” Ultimately, it is only in the total self-gift of Christ that
we can envisage our own response in love, the response of the Church to which we are grafted that is the essence of sanctity: the total relinquishing of all grasping towards pleasure or goods (Phillipians 2:6-7), the offering of ourselves as an oblation, as a sacrifice to be poured out upon the altar just as Christ was poured out up on the Cross (2 Timothy 3:6-8), the receptivity towards that which God gives, not to that which we want (Luke 9:23) – and all of this because the Church is to live and incarnate again and again the Cross of Christ, the Love of Christ, and therefore to be raised up with Him on the third day (Matthew 16:21):

If the cross – an instrument of shameful execution – has become the most holy symbol of our faith, hope and love, if the Church never tires of glorifying its unfathomable and unconquerable power, of seeing in it the ‘beauty of the universe’ and the ‘healing of creation,’ of witnessing that ‘through the cross joy has come into all the world,’ it is because, of course, through that same cross, which incarnated the very essence of sin as theomachy, this sin was overcome; because through the death on the cross, death, which had reigned in the world and would appear to have achieved its ultimate victory, was itself destroyed; and finally because from the depths of this victory of the cross radiated the joy of the resurrection.

It is in this love, this total self-gift, that the Christian can find the proper and complete healing of the effects of secularism. Why is this so? As St. Gregory Nazianzus the Theologian stated so long ago, “that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved;” because Christ assumed all of human nature and put to death the sin that so plagues it, there is nothing in man that was not saved! Now we are upon our main point: Christ assumed even man’s intellect and reason – He suffered and rose from the dead not apart from His intellectual capacities, but rather was fully present to them!

Raymond Gawronski, S.J. points out that, “von Balthasar has written that though the Church has sanctioned devotion to the Sacred Heart, there is no devotion to the sacred head except when it is bloodied and covered with thorns. The divine eros has reached down to us through the blood of that head and heart, drawing the best of us to
comtemplate – in awesome wonder – this work that God has made, this work that God has become.” Straying a bit from Balthasar’s immediate point, we might also observe that such an image elicits a poignant meditation: the mind of God in Jesus Christ was crowned and bloodied – how can the Christian, in offering himself to Christ just as Christ offered Himself to the Father, expect anything less? A.D. Sertillanges states that “Jesus Christ needs our minds for His work, as on earth He needed His own human mind.” Christ’s work reaches its pinnacle in the work of the Cross; thereby Christ doesn’t simply need our minds to entertain or dabble in some of the Divine Mysteries; rather, Christ asks that we offer our minds to him unconditionally, without reserving any partiality to the reductions of pride and power that so plague the world. We must allow His Cross to penetrate our minds as well as our hearts, our thoughts as well as our affections, our theological and philosophical positions as well as our morals; in short, we must allow the Cross to penetrate our entire being: “Here [in the Cross], Truth and Goodness are in fact one with Beauty, but that beauty is penetrating, not skin deep, deeper than the very blood in the marrow.”

Before we consider what this looks like in a practical sense, it is already apparent that the order of secularism – the separation of nature and grace, here within man – has been defeated through the Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Secularism is, as Schmemann suggests, a ‘negation of worship’: a denial that certain elements of God’s creation (or creation itself) can reveal to grandeur and glory of God. To return to our analysis of the developments in knowing, let us consider (in a very simplified manner) how, in the varying emphases of Ockham, the Latin Averroists and the rationalists, and those of the Devotio Moderna, each fell prey to a reduction in
knowing, and thus succumb to a ‘negation of worship’ - a limiting of just how far the
Incarnation might pierce our being. Ockham negated that creation and reason itself could
know anything about God, thereby removing creation and reason from true worship; the
rationalists limited worship to reason, thereby overpowering the experience of Christ and
His Grace; the Devotio Moderna rendered the intellect as accidental for worship, thereby
placing it on the arbitrary sidelines of Christian life.

Let us suggest, then, that in order to destroy any sense of secularism within
ourselves – to allow the radical extent of the Incarnation to transform our entire being –
we must come to the place where heaven meets earth, where worship is epitomized and
the Son of Man pierces the veil of our ignorance – where He offers to us His wise
‘foolishness’ in the place of our foolish ‘wisdom’ (1 Corinthians 2:1-16): the Eucharist.
It is in the ‘folly of the Cross’ – the sacrifice of the Son of God in love to the Father – that
we find the model of all Catholic intellectual activity: any hubris that is latent in the
scientia potentia est, the power of knowledge, is overshadowed and ultimately destroyed
by the power of self-sacrificial love on the Cross. For it only in emptying ourselves
(kenosis) that we can hope to receive Christ into ourselves; there can be no duplicity or
partiality towards Christ (Matthew 12:30), for one either destroys self-love and adopts the
self-gift of the Logos – which means a veritable intellectual revolution with the structures
of one’s mind, a complete transformation of one’s worldview – or one is sure to betray
Him who comes to give us His very mind: “But we have the mind of Christ” (1
Corinthians 2:16b).

In The Risen Christ, Caryll Houselander offers an interesting reading of the Road
to Emmaus (Luke 24:1-35): she suggests that these disciples “are scholars, they must
come to the point of communion with him through the travail of the mind. Step by step he [Christ] takes them back through the Scriptures, leading them to know him by thinking their own thoughts, by linking up the academic knowledge they have acquired in the past with the events of the day, and thrashing out the problem that is so baffling to intellectuals in all ages: the problem of suffering. But is it not an interesting consideration that, though “he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27b), they only had their eyes opened after the breaking of the bread! More than this, upon plumbing the depths of Scripture and theology on the road to Emmaus, the disciples faced a choice: they could either let Jesus’ explanation resound in their intellects alone, or they could say, “stay with us” (Luke 24:29b), thereby asking him to come into their homes – that place of intimacy in which one’s whole being dwells, not just the mind! Catholic intellectuals must ask Christ to ‘stay with them,’ to eat meals with them, to dwell with them, and this principally by asking Him to dwell in their ‘homes’ by the reception of Himself in the Eucharist.

To consider the practical incorporation of faith and reason, nature and grace, philosophy and theology with this self gift, let us know consider their relation.

b. Unity in Distinction – Faith, Reason, and Sanctity

“Faith is the gift that the finite reason makes of itself to the absolute.” – Hans Urs von Balthasar

Only now that we have established the reality of the intellect’s incorporation into our total self-gift to Christ (only because Christ first assumed the intellect and offered to the Father in His self-gift) can we venture to offer a meditation on the relation between the disciplines of philosophy and theology. To begin, let us propose our thesis:

philosophy and theology cannot be simply considered in a dialectic or a duality: they
must be considered as part of a Trinitarian formula of love and self-gift: philosophy, theology, and sanctity.

In a lecture delivered in 1965, the theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg writes, “Is it perhaps the case that even the tension between faith and reason is possible only on the presupposition of a unity which encompasses both, namely, the presupposition of the unity of truth?”

Certainly, if one holds the knowledge of faith in tension with the knowledge of reason, then it is presupposed that he or she is striving towards an ultimate union of truth. In the tension between faith and reason, there is no place for relativism: if there is no truth, searching for ways to achieve it are superfluous and meaningless – pouring over maps in search of a town whose existence you deny is, well, rather ridiculous! If the presupposed belief in the unity of truth is that which founds the modern tensions between faith and reason (such as those explicated in the ‘developments in knowing’ section above), is it truth that will also resolve these tensions? Can the final achievement of some knowledge settle the debate about faith and reason, philosophy and theology once and for all?

We wish to argue that, above all, the only way for faith and reason to be brought out of a sterilizing tension into a fruitful union is through love: “Truth and love are inseparable wings – for truth cannot fly without love – and love cannot hover without truth.”

The central point of Christian revelation, the point from which all proceeds from and ultimately returns to, is the Trinity. St. Irenaeus suggested that the understanding of the Trinity is “the rule of our faith, the foundation of the building, and what gives support to our behavior.”

The essence of the Trinity is love: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Von Balthasar writes, “the essential identity of the three “Persons” in
the Godhead is alone what guarantees the absolute name of Love to God and definitively rescues love...giving “strength” to those “in whose hearts Christ dwells...being rooted and grounded in love, ...that they may know the love of Christ which far surpasses all knowledge” (Ephesians 3:17-19).”

The resolving chord for which the dissonant nature of the tensions between faith and reason yearns is that of love: the Trinitarian, kenotic love characterized by self-gift and an emptying of oneself for the other.

The nature of love that is so critical to this meditation is spelled out by von Balthasar in a single sentence: “love consumes in order to transfigure, in order to preserve on a higher level.”

Faith and reason, then, as well as the orders of nature and grace, cannot simply be thrown together or expected to be unified naturally: they must be held together in a bond of supernatural love! The tensions of faith and reason, which appear to us moderns as a contradiction and to pre-moderns as a point of paradox, can only be resolved by being assumed into something that is capable of assuming and resolving both. Neither of these ways of knowing, namely faith or reason, are sufficient to serve as the principle with which the mystery of being is approached.

Existence is far more than an exercise of the intellect – for does our heart not long for eternity? Similarly existence is certainly more than an act of faith – for do we not long to fully see the divine? Whatever might actually be the principle of this mystery would assume faith and reason, transforming and fulfilling them both; it would heal them of their internal disorder and would thrust them on to their ultimate end. Love, we may suggest, is just this principle: “Indeed, for the world, love alone is credible.”

Thusly, to conceive of any kind of harmony between faith and reason from the outset, there must be an understanding that reflects Trinitarian love: faith, reason, and
sanctity: the self-gift of one’s entire person acts as the bond of unity between faith and reason. Let us remember that the person who was created with faith and reason, in offering themselves as a gift back to God (particularly in the Eucharist) has offered everything: their total gift includes their faith and reason! In emptying oneself, he or she receives the fulfillment of Christ, Him who emptied Himself first. Because “this love, which brings to ultimate perfection – in the double sense of an ultimate opening up to the infinite and a gathering together into a conclusion – is necessarily form-giving,” \textsuperscript{112} it will shatter the hardened, divisive edges of their faith and reason. Love, in assuming, healing, and forgiving all in mankind, generates a unity that enables one to adopt the mission of Christ and His Church: the call to love.

What consequences does this Trinitarian model have for the disciplines of philosophy and theology? To begin with philosophy, let us recall its definition offered previously: Philosophy, “love for wisdom” is, as the word itself says, an act of love. The true philosopher here loves, not his own act of knowing – which can transform itself into an addiction for sinful man – but the matter itself: the mystery of being, which discloses itself by concealing itself in all that exists.”\textsuperscript{113} Here, then, we must reject Ockham’s division of knowledge that so emphasizes the act of knowing; the main concern for philosophers, as lovers of wisdom, is the mystery of being, not of the actions he or she takes in knowing. Wonder, even towards the divine and the eternal, ought not to infringe upon divine freedom; instead, “the path to being, which is the path of reason in general, is the path to God.”\textsuperscript{114} The love which stands at the center of the philosophical act is all-consuming: in wonder and openness the mysteries of being are allowed to wash over us and fix themselves as the constant object of our vision.\textsuperscript{115} The critical thing concerning
reason, however, is the recognition of its paradox: “God is at the same time its object and its boundary, its supreme end and its question mark;”\textsuperscript{116} “its last step, according to Pascal, is to recognize its limitations.”\textsuperscript{117} Reason must know when to bow its head in reverence to those mysteries that it simply cannot know, while understanding that reason itself is a vast gift from God with which we discern God’s watermark upon all of creation! When encountered, the limits of reason do not simply dissolve one into silence; no, they call one to \textit{conversion}.\textsuperscript{118} Jean Danielou writes, “If limit problems [of reason] compel us to conversion, that is because they involve the being of a person, they engage his existence.”\textsuperscript{119} Here we see the \textit{person} being engaged, thereby involving the bond of union between faith and reason: \textit{love and self-gift}. “It is only through self-denial on reason’s part...that the Christian learns what “faith” means, the gift that the finite reason makes of itself to the absolute.”\textsuperscript{120}

Faith does not infringe or annihilate reason because, in fact, reason has given itself fully to the reality of God’s love – it has recognized its own limits (both in principle and as situated in a limited individual) and has offered itself on the Altar of the Cross, submitting itself entirely to the conversion that the fullness of Truth and Love bring; for “reason ambitions only a world; faith gives it infinity.”\textsuperscript{121} Theology as \textit{fides quarens intellectum} (faith seeking understanding) or as St. Ephraim the Syrian wrote, \textit{fides adorans mysterium} (faith worshipping or adoring mystery), ought to be no less an act of love than philosophy – no doubt, it should be an even more \textit{perfect} act of love!\textsuperscript{122} In his epochal essay titled “Theology and Sanctity,” von Balthasar follows the theologian Matthew Scheeben in using \textit{nuptial} language – the language of self-gift and of love – to define the essence of theology: “Theology, as dialogue between bride and Bridegroom in
the unity and communication of the Spirit, continually brings to light new modes of union and interpenetration.”

Von Balthasar comments elsewhere, “For in its greatest period theology cannot be considered apart from the innumerable commentaries on the Canticle [the Song of Songs – mystical love poetry usually considered as an allegory for Christ and the Church], as embodying the central mystery of all theology.”

Truly and without reservation, we must agree that it is “Precisely this sacrifice of the bride to the Bridegroom and together with the Bridegroom is the Christian surmounting and perfecting of the philosophical act.”

Herein, however, lies the paradox of theology, rather similar in form to that of philosophy: “Admirable and delicate is the balance of theological “reason”, whose “reasons” can never match the mystery.”

“Never, on pain of death, must theology part company with faith which sets it in motion and puts seal on its achievements.”

A full-fledged theological rationalism is absolutely destructive to theology and the life of the Church: “Theological science is a kind of wisdom,” says Chenu, thereby opening up theology to the entire person, not simply to the intellect. The warning against an overly emphatic theological rationalism goes hand in hand with the constructive assertion of a nuptial model for theological wisdom: one does not seek to know one’s spouse through a dry, exhaustive, and deductive analysis; rather, one knows one’s spouse as a dynamic encounter with one who is wholly-other, unlike myself and therefore an inexhaustible mystery before whom I must stand, receptive and open to the communication of their person.

All of the above is not to suggest that theology mustn’t employ the use of reason to elucidate the revelation of God in Christ, or that theological treatises are an offense to nuptial love. Rather, this very caveat speaks to locus of the paradox: how might one
explicate the doctrines of faith without dominating the mysteries held therein? Again, as we did in our consideration of philosophy above, let us turn to the necessity of conversion. Here is the key:

Prayer is the realistic attitude in which the mystery must be approached; obedient faith, the “presuppositionless”, is the attitude where theology is concerned, because it corresponds to the tabula rasa of love, in which the heart awaits all and anticipates nothing. This attitude, which is that of prayer, is never superseded or outdistanced by the attitude demanded by knowledge.\textsuperscript{130}

We return again to the person and his or her self-gift in love: only here, as in philosophy, is it that the paradox of theology can be navigated and properly respected. “[The saint’s] theology is an act of adoration and prayer;”\textsuperscript{131} theology is thus set securely upon the principle of love, which grants to it transformation and fulfillment that would never be possible otherwise.

Before we conclude this section, let us consider von Balthasar’s words concerning St. Anselm’s theological method:

Anselm does not distinguish between the natural and the supernatural, knowledge and faith, as between the profane and the sacred; for he learned by faith that reason too was created for the sake of faith, nature for the sake of grace, and that both form, by their interconnection, a single revelation of the incomprehensible love of the Trinity.\textsuperscript{132}

The love of the Trinity, as we hope to have expounded in however limited a manner, is the only true foundation for a harmonious relation between faith and reason. Moreover, just as the Holy Spirit is the bond of love and unity between the Father and the Son, we might say, analogously, that the sanctity of the Christian is that which bonds theology and philosophy to one another; just as the Three in One of the Divine Godhead form a ‘unity in distinction,’ so too do faith, reason, and sanctity all form a ‘unity in distinction.’ If these distinct ‘ways of knowing,’ namely, faith, reason, and sanctity, were collapsed into one another, the consequences would be devastating. However, the opposite danger, that is, exclusive separation of the three, must be equally avoided. The true unity of our
‘ways of knowing’ must be grounded in the locus of the *unum necessarum*, the ‘one thing necessary:’ the kenotic love of God.

**Conclusion**

*“Grace does not destroy, but builds upon nature.” – St. Thomas Aquinas*

If the current crisis of meaninglessness is to be overcome – if the world ever wishes to be healed of its infectious reductions – the very chains of secularism and our epistemological reductions must be loosed; the bonds which hold heaven back must be torn from our very bodies by the all-consuming, *kenotic* love of Jesus Christ. The very weapon which holds the key to the destruction of secularism is surely God’s love as expressed through the Incarnation: the act in which Love Himself assumed our human nature, enabling our very materiality to be a sacrament. It is only through this Incarnate Love that St. Paul could have exhorted the Romans “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1b); we may now offer our *bodies as spiritual worship* only because Christ offered His body first: “this is my body, which is given for you” (Luke 22:19!)

Let us, then, offer our entire selves to Christ in true worship, in imitation of His self-gift and in spite of the divisive cry of secularism. When we devote ourselves to this *sanctity* rooted in Trinitarian love, the unity of knowledge to which we aspire will center around God’s love within us. Through the Eucharist and God’s gift of participation in His divine nature, we can actually witness the bond of nature and grace in one another: in the Body of Christ, Christ’s presence on the earth! Such *sanctity* will, through the renunciation of self-love and the affirmation of a total self-gift, free *faith* and *reason*, *theology* and *philosophy* from their prisons of pride and self-sufficiency.
May the mysteries of God revealed in Jesus Christ spark such wonder and awe in us, that we, with St. Paul, might pray

with bowed knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now in him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:16-21).

2 We do not wish to make it seem like our age is somehow more dastardly than any other; surely “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). It may be true, however, that our time features a concentrated array of consequences as resulting from the worldview that the West has avowed of itself for hundreds of years.


4 “Creation and Nuptiality: A Reflection on Feminism in Light of Schmemann’s Liturgical Theology” *Communio* 28 (Summer 2001), 265.


6 Ibid., 119.

7 Ibid., 130.


11 ‘Neutrality’ here simply meaning the absence of any discernable position on an issue. Many people consider ‘religious people’ to be hopelessly biased and ill-neutral; as long as one fails to (overtly) make a claim of any binding truth, he or she can calmly rest in ‘neutrality,’ so many think. But the very failure to ever make a claim of binding truth is itself a very heavy non-neutral claim!

12 Political and economic systems have hierarchies of goods implicit in them; modern capitalism might elevate affluence while Liberal democracy favors ‘freedom’ and ‘equality’. Either way, these have the danger of becoming intellectually tyrannical systems which, without even acknowledging that they are doing it, proceed to inflict a kind of un-argued orthodoxy concerning the philosophical questions that are deemed proper to ask. For instance, might we ask the capitalist, ‘why is it a given that economic models must be based on constant growth and expansion?’ To the Liberal, ‘is ‘freedom’ truly worthy of such an elevated veneration?’ The ability to ask such questions of the systems would prove them to be healthy; when one cannot inquire in the pursuit of truth, the disease of tyranny is afoot. For such a study see Thomas Kalb, *The Tyranny of Liberalism* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2008).


15 1, 3 (no. 55). Quoted in Pieper, *For the Love of Wisdom*, 27.

16 It is a profound source of contemplation how God, within the Trinitarian exchange of Love, still ‘wonders;’ the Father takes glory and wonder in the Son, the Son takes glory and wonder in the Father, and the Spirit is the manifestation of that glory and wonder! (With all due respect for the ‘ever-greater’ dissimilarity of the *analogia entis*, the analogy of being, we only wish to consider that which is *analogous* to wonder in God.)

17 “Descartes was not only condemned to knowing all, but to knowing all with an absolute certainty...the young Descartes was following a...risky way: true knowledge is necessary; mathematical knowledge alone is necessary; hence all knowledge has to be mathematical.” Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 140. “Bacon’s method...starts from the observation of particulars and, by eliminative induction, builds up slowly and systematically to more and more general conclusions. Instead of reasoning deductively from the general to the particular, science should pass inductively from the particular to the general.” Garrett Thomson, *Bacon to Kant: An Introduction to Modern Philosophy* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2002), 122. Hereby we omit all the modifications upon rationalism and empiricism by later philosophers, simply citing the father of each method.

18 “But the one who causes the true light to disappear from the gaze of the contemplating (pure or theoretical) reason, subordinating the latter to the acting (practical) reason, is a leader of the blind, and – as Plato has prophesied – history will demonstrate where it leads them.” Hans Urs von Balthasar,

19 Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 71.

20 Pieper, For the Love of Wisdom, 111.

21 Schmemann, Celebration of Faith, 21.


23 Pieper, For the Love of Wisdom, 119.

24 Ibid, 57.

25 3.2.1003a21. Quoted in Pieper, For the Love of Wisdom, 120.

26 Ibid, For the Love of Wisdom, 127.

27 Aristotle, Metaphysics 2.1.993b19f. Quoted in For the Love of Wisdom, 113.

28 I only state this as the most general of comments; it is understood that the reader will take note of the vast difference between Greek and Christian theology.


30 Christian theology being informed by pagan philosophy ought not to be suspected as a ‘corruption’ of the truth or anything of the sort: such a reaction would be elicited by the very problematic pattern of thought that we are seeking to expose and alleviate here: the fact that reason might pose a threat to faith, or vice versa, thereby rendering the two separate. “We cannot but marvel at the seamless continuity that, for centuries, integrated the mystery of grace with those constructions of Greek philosophy.” Louis Dupre, Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008), 17. With that said, “yet a simple remark makes it evident that the Greek cosmos could not enter the Christian world of knowledge without undergoing deep transformations.” A Gilson Reader, 143. Greek thought would not be assimilated unless it was purified by the Logos so revealed in Jesus Christ and His Church.

31 “From the second century up to the first half of the thirteenth century, the only philosophical cosmogony known to Christian theologians was the myth developed by Plato in the first part of his Timaeus.” A Gilson Reader, 142.

32 “It is true that Thomas retained so many important elements of Aristotle’s thought that they cannot be numbered…” “While recognizing Thomas’s exegesis is profound and original, it must be said that he departed from Aristotle on some decisive points…he sought with Aristotle the truth, and this is why he did not hesitate to expand his perspectives, believing that in doing so he was being faithful to him.” Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., Aquinas’s Summa: Background, Structure, and Reception (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 76-77.


35 “Averroes had to defend Aristotle’s philosophy against two groups in the Moslem world. The first were philosophers like…Avicenna, who he thought had distorted the Aristotelian philosophy by mingling it with religious doctrines; for example, the doctrine of creation.” Ibid., 100.


38 Ibid., xxv.

39 Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 67.


41 St. Bernard of Clairvaux was a transitional figure in this turn to particularity: his commentary on the Song of Songs is an interesting in this development. “And yet, in the development toward that mystical naturalism Bernard remains a transitional figure. The essential object of his love was the divine Word, even though that Word had to be reached through Christ’s humanity. For Francis of Assisi and his followers, however, Jesus the human individual became the object of devotion. This turn to the individual removed whatever hesitations Western Christians might once have felt about expressing the God-bearing form.” Ibid., 36.

42 Ibid., 38.


“...it was from the time of Ockham that nominalism would play a central role in the evolution of the Western mind.” Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind, 202.
52 Ibid.
53 Dupre, Passage to Modernity, 39.
54 “It has often been said by historians, and not without good reasons, that the whole philosophy of the Middle Ages was little more than an obstinate endeavour to solve one problem – the problem of the Universals.” Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 3.
55 Tarnas, Passion of the Western Mind, 187.
56 Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 54.
57 Maurer, Medieval Philosophy, 281.
58 Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 55-56.
59 Dupre, Passage to Modernity, 39-40.
60 Summa Theologica I, 85, 2. Quoted in Dupre, Passage to Modernity, 40.
61 Maurer, Medieval Philosophy, 282.
63 Tarnas, Passion of the Western Mind, 204.
64 Ibid.
65 “In his handling of theological problems Ockham gives great weight to the first article of the Christian creed: I believe in God Almighty.” Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 50.
66 IV Sent. q. 14 D. Quoted in Pinckaers, The Sources of Christian Ethics, 247.
67 Ibid.
68 “A significant feature of Ockham’s critique of the Thomist conception of freedom was his rejection of natural inclinations outside the kernel of the free act... For St. Thomas the natural inclinations to goodness, happiness, being, and truth were the very source of freedom. They formed the will and intellect, whose union produced free will. According to him we are free not in spite of our natural inclinations, but because of them. For Ockham, on the contrary, freedom dominated the natural inclinations and preceded them, because of its radical indetermination and its ability to choose contraries in their regard. From this point of view, it could be said that freedom is more apparent when it resists natural inclinations.” Ibid., 244-245.
69 Dupre, Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture, 42.
70 Tarnas, Passion of the Western Mind, 206.
71 “Ockham left no bridge between human reason and divine revelation, between what man knows and what he believes.” Ibid., 207.
72 “Revelation offered certainty, but could be affirmed only through faith and grace, not through natural reason.” Ibid., 206-207.
73 Maurer, Medieval Philosophy, 266.
74 “What is left of metaphysics if we keep only what is immediately perceived by sense, external or internal, and deduced from it by the principle of contradiction only?” Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 79.
76 See von Balthasar’s “Theology and Sanctity” in Explorations of the Word Volume 1: The Word Made Flesh (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 181-209. “In the whole history of Catholic theology there is
hardly anything that is less noticed, yet more deserving of notice, than the fact that, since the great period of Scholasticism, there have been few theologians who were saints. We mean here by “theologian” one whose office and vocation is to expound revelation in its fullness, and therefore whose work centers on dogmatics,” 181.

77 Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 73.
78 Tarnas, Passion of the Western Mind, 207. “Ockham’s critique of form obviously spelled the end of the Greek cosmological synthesis. One might also assume it to be the end of medieval philosophy.” Dupre, Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture, 8.
79 Maurer, Medieval Philosophy, 308-309.
80 Ibid., 74.
82 [Ockham’s] uncompromising emphasis on the individual concrete things of this world, his trust in the power of human reason and logic to ascertain necessary entities and to differentiate evidence and degrees of probability, and his skeptical attitude toward traditional and institutionally sanctioned ways of thinking all directly encouraged the scientific enterprise.” Tarnas, Passion of the Western Mind, 207.
83 “Ever since the fourteenth century there had been men to criticize Aristotle, but Descartes’ ambition was quite different: it was to replace him.” Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 99.
84 Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, 72.
85 “But the Aristotelianism of the thirteenth century did not only enlarge the basis of theology, it was itself the start of the modern sciences of nature and mind as independent disciplines, and rightly so. It gave birth to modern “secularism”, and thereby introduced new tensions and set new problems to the Christian.” von Balthasar, “Theology and Sanctity,” 185.
86 Dupre, Passage to Modernity, 40.
87 Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind, 208.
88 Dupre, Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture, 22.
90 Here is the full quote: “We cannot pursue these paths here, but should note how trenchantly positions are held only fifty years after the death of Thomas: how small the steps are, and how internally consistent, from an ontological formalism (Scotus) to empiricism (Ockham), and from pure theological voluntarism and ‘positionism’ to a positivism which possesses no values, and from there, quite consistently, to materialistic atomism. Along these pathways, nothing new has appeared down to the present time.” Von Balthasar, The Glory of the Lord, 21.
91 That is, if faith and reason are distinct in a culture, it is only because the individual people in that culture find them to be so in themselves.
92 Alexander Schmemann, in the same essay from which we quoted to begin this paper, states: “Indeed the fundamental spiritual disease of our time, if one looks at it from a Christian standpoint, must be termed anthropological heresy. Its root is a deeply distorted understanding by man of his own nature and life.” Celebrations of Faith, 47.
94 Schmemann, For the Life of the World, 74.
95 The Catholic Imagination, Ed. Kenneth D. Whitehead (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2003), 45.
98 The Catholic Imagination, 46.
100 The Catholic Imagination, 44.


“So it follows that such a sharing of love cannot exist among less than three persons.” *De Trinitate*, III, 14; in *Richard de Saint Victor: De Trinitate*, ed. J. Ribaillier (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1958), 149.4-150.35. Quoted in *The Christian Theology Reader*, 111.


If this is anything less than clear, see Jean Danielou’s consideration of ‘limit problems’ in his work *God and the Ways of Knowing* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 52-55.

“Nature’s forms spring forth from creation, rising up and opening themselves in spirit and love to the infinity of fructifying grace; they thus receive from above their ultimate form, which recasts everything natural and reorders it.” Von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*, 126.

Ibid., 138.

Ibid., 128.


Ibid., 352. “Ultimately in the Christian sphere, [the movement from the absolute to the finite subject and back again] can free the relationship to the ground of being from all entanglement in nature and destiny, transposing it into the body of a highest personal freedom: then the idea of the creation finds space within this relationship and thereby also the idea of a personal love that is primarily God’s love for the creature, and at a second stage the answering love of the creature for God.” Ibid., 348-349.

“The only thing worthwhile is to hold oneself open to this mystery, and the mystery does not loosen its grip on the one who has once dedicated himself to it with all his love; he must yield up his eros to the ascent that purifies by passing through all the renunciations, for the one love for wisdom demands everything.” Ibid., 343.

Danielou, *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 50.


“But these limit problems, the thresholds of reason, are not characterized only by the fact that they are placed somewhat beyond its reach and so cannot be neatly defined. Another feature they possess is that they cannot be broached from the standpoint of straightforward discussion, but demand a total outlook, an existential conversion.” Danielou, *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 54.

Ibid.


Von Balthasar, “Philosophy, Christianity, Monasticism”, 368.


Ibid., 95.

Ibid., 106.

“This is why it [theology] cannot be expressed solely in the sleep and passionless form of the treatise, but demands movement, sharp debate (comboxio disputata) the virile language of deep and powerful emotion – the sort of language used by Augustine, Richard or Gerhoh, Bonaventure, Pascal or Kierkegaard – a dialectic pushed to the limit in order to rouse and inflame.” Von Balthasar, “Theology and Sanctity”, 205.

Ibid., 207.

Ibid., 206.

Ibid.
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