

## ST. THOMAS' THEOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION

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IN HIS *De gratia novi testamenti* St. Augustine collects his ideas on participation and turns them into a refutation of Pelagianism. The basic standpoint of the work seems to be the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation. Because the idea of participation comes from Plato, one is accustomed to consider it a purely philosophical notion and to suppose that any theory of participation will be a philosophy. It is surprising, then, to find the idea not only functioning in a strictly theological context but even denoting man's supernatural perfection as such. Now the grace of the New Testament, for St. Augustine, concerns what man can be by participation as opposed to what he can be by his own nature.

In the works of St. Thomas we find a perspective which is much more in line with our expectations. Here the fundamental dualism is that of being by essence and being by participation. Creatures are being by participation and God is being by essence. This is why Fr. Fabro and Fr. Geiger have been able to write sizable books on St. Thomas' theory of participation and give supernatural instances only an honorable mention.<sup>1</sup> Although they approached the subject in different ways, both authors have come to the conclusion that St. Thomas' philosophy is a philosophy of participation. What is more, Geiger explains how St. Thomas' philosophy of participation can meet modern requirements of method and universal viewpoint by rendering an epistemological account of itself and of the Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophies of participation which it rivals.

We shall see, however, that St. Thomas not only maintains the dualism of being by essence and being by participation but also the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation. The doubling of perspectives has something of the uncomfortable effect of a double exposure. If, however, we choose as our methodic base St. Thomas' teaching on man's universal capacity to know, we shall find that the two perspectives come into focus—an

<sup>1</sup> Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo s. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Turin, 1950); Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de s. Thomas* (Paris, 1942).

indication that the choice is not altogether arbitrary. The trouble with the previous studies is that the methodic base chosen was a doctrine about certain acts of the mind, abstraction and separation. The result was a complete oversight of the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation. No wonder, then, that Fabro and Geiger found a philosophy of participation. If we take the more radical standpoint of man's universal capacity to know, the Aristotelian "intellectus est quo est omnia fieri," we shall find a theology of participation. Let us examine, therefore, first the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation, then the dualism of being by essence and being by participation, and finally the standpoint which resolves the antithesis of the two viewpoints.

THE DUALISM OF WHAT MAN CAN BE BY NATURE  
AND WHAT HE CAN BE BY PARTICIPATION

It is characteristic of the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation that it becomes redundant in that perspective to speak of "supernatural participation." What man can be by participation is opposed precisely to what he can be by nature. By his own nature, man is limited to a human well-being, a human duration, a human intellectual light, a human nature, a human love and friendship, a human selfhood, and a human deed. By participation, however, man gains access to divine happiness, divine duration, divine light, divine nature, divine love and friendship, divine selfhood, and divine deed. Hence, while such a viewpoint centers on man, it is a theology in which every assertion about man is simultaneously an assertion about God.

Consider, in the first place, the account of man's destiny. If any theory asserting man's destiny to be happiness is eudemonism, then we should call St. Thomas a eudemonist. The egoistic connotation of eudemonism, however, becomes ambiguous when one places happiness on the intellectual plane. Indeed, the idea of participation turns St. Thomas' eudemonism into something analogous to altruism. Participation or communication in divine happiness, he teaches, is the foundation of charity.<sup>2</sup> We love God, ourselves, our neighbors, and our bodies

<sup>2</sup> Communication in divine happiness: *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 23, a. 1 c; a. 5; q. 24, a. 2; q. 25, a. 3 c; a. 6 c; a. 10; a. 11, ad 1m; a. 12 c; q. 26, a. 1 c; a. 2; a. 3 c; *De virtut.*, q.

because all of them communicate in one way or another in divine happiness. As Aristotle taught that human friendship was always based on some kind of communication in human life,<sup>3</sup> St. Thomas taught that charity was based on communication in divine life. So man's destiny is not conceived as any sort of happiness but as sharing the happiness of Another.

The point becomes clearer if we take into account what St. Thomas thought about divine happiness. The happiness attributed to God is defined "cognoscere suam sufficientiam in bono quod habet."<sup>4</sup> A being which lacks reason may be perfect in its own right, but it cannot be happy because it is unconscious of its own perfection. To be happy is to be perfect and know it. God's happiness, in other words, consists in being conscious of His own well-being. Our happiness, however, being a communication in God's, will not consist in being perfect and self-sufficient as God is nor will it consist in being perfect and knowing it as does His happiness, but rather in knowing that He is perfect and self-sufficient, in seeing that He has everything which could be desired, in being conscious of His well-being.

In terms of duration man's destiny is eternal life. Here, too, the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation is significant. By nature man is confined to time, but by participation he gains access to eternity. In the vision of the divine essence to which man is destined all is understood at once, not one thing after another as in the knowledge man attains on earth. The reason is that the being of the divine essence which man will contemplate is eternal. Now an action will be temporal and successive only if one of its factors is in time, either its subject or its object. The beatific vision will take

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2, a. 7, ad 7m. Participation in divine happiness: *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 25, a. 5, ad 2m; a. 10; a. 12 c; q. 26, a. 2; a. 3 c; a. 4 c; a. 5; a. 7 c; *De virtut.*, q. 2, a. 2 c; a. 4, ad 2m; a. 7 c. Participation in divine life: *In 3 Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2 sol.; a. 4, sol. 4; d. 28, a. 2, ad 2m; a. 3 sol.; ad 1m. Communication in divine life: *ibid.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2 sol.; d. 28, a. 5 sol.; d. 30, a. 1 sol. There are also statements about participation in divine happiness in the context of happiness itself: *In 1 Sent.*, d. 44, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5m; *In 2 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4m; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 1, ad 1m; *C. gent.* 1, 102, 3; *Compend. theol.* 255; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 26, a. 3, ad 1m; 1-2, q. 3, a. 1, ad 1m; cf. Leonine ed., vol. 13, Appendix, 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Eth. Nic.* 8, 9, 1159b 29-32, lect. 9; 12, 1161b 11, lect. 12. On Aristotle's vocabulary of participation, cf. M.-D. Philippe, "La participation dans la philosophie d'Aristote," *Revue thomiste* 49 (1949) 254 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 26, a. 1 c.

on the eternity of its object much as lower actions take on the temporality of their objects. These are the reasons why St. Thomas maintains that the vision of God is an action which takes place in the participation of eternity rather than in time.<sup>5</sup> In this he is following in the footsteps of St. Augustine and St. Albert the Great.<sup>6</sup>

His understanding of the matter, however, will prove to be somewhat more nuanced than theirs if we take into account his notion of eternity. It is a notion modeled on the Aristotelian notion of time. For Aristotle, time did not exist perfectly outside the mind but consisted in the apprehension of succession, the mental discrimination of the Before and the After. Outside the mind there existed only the Now of time, the changing Now.<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas' notion of eternity is set up in strict parallelism with that notion of time. As time consists in the apprehension of succession, eternity consists in the apprehension of what exists outside all succession. "Sicut igitur ratio temporis consistit in numeratione prioris et posterioris in motu, ita in apprehensione uniformitatis eius quod est omnino extra motum consistit ratio aeternitatis."<sup>8</sup> Eternity, in other words, is God's apprehension of the unchanging Now. Participation of eternity, in turn, would be our apprehension of the unchanging Now or of God's eternity. This would explain how St. Thomas could argue to participation in eternity from the fact that the vision of God will be a vision of eternity.

The vision of the divine essence in which man finds happiness and

<sup>5</sup> *C. gent.* 3, 61; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 3. In the context of the angels: *Declar. 108 dub.*, q. 48; *Quodl. 10*, a. 4 c; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 10, a. 5, ad 1m. In the context of hope: *In 3 Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 2, ad 1m; *De virtut.*, q. 4, a. 4, ad 3m; *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 67, a. 4, ad 2m; 2-2, q. 18, a. 2, ad 2m. Other terms substituted for "participare": *Compend. theol.* 150, 163, 184.

<sup>6</sup> St. Augustine: *Confess.* 12, 9 (*PL* 32, 829); *De Genesi ad litt.* 8, 24 (*PL* 34, 390); *De pecc. merit. et remiss.* 2, 24 (*PL* 44, 174). St. Albert: *In 1 Sent.*, d. 8, a. 8 (Borgonet 25, 231); a. 9 sol. (Borgonet 25, 233); *In 4 Sent.*, d. 46, a. 4 (Borgonet 30, 633); a. 7 (Borgonet 30, 636); *Sum. de creat.* 1, q. 3, a. 4 (Borgonet 34, 354); *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 23, memb. 1, a. 2, p. 1 (Borgonet 31, 173 f.).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. St. Thomas, *In Phys.* 4, lect. 23.

<sup>8</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 10, a. 1 c. Despite their disagreement on the meaning of this definition, both Cajetan and Ferrariensis take it for granted that the "apprehensio" here is ours. The analogy with time, nevertheless, seems to make more sense if we take the "apprehensio" as God's. Perhaps this would also help us understand how St. Thomas could make so much of Boethius' idea that God knows (future contingents) in His eternity. Cf. *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 14, a. 13, and parallels. Cf. Boethius, *De consol.* 5, prosa 6 (*PL* 63, 860 ff.).

eternal life is made possible for him by the light of glory. Here again the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation comes into play. By his own nature there is available to man only the light of reason, but by participation there becomes available to him the divine light itself. The light of reason is not sufficient to bring about the intellectual vision of the divine essence. Man's intellect must be perfected by a participation in the divine light itself. Thus St. Thomas requires for the beatific vision the light of glory, and he defines the light of glory as a participation in divine light.<sup>9</sup> The light of reason, moreover, is insufficient not only for the vision of the divine essence but also for the decision of faith which paves the way for that vision. Hence St. Thomas also requires a light of faith and terms it an imperfect participation in the divine light.<sup>10</sup>

Observe that the term "light" here refers not to daylight, as in the biblical metaphors, but to a phenomenon of intellectual experience, as it often does in St. Augustine. Intellectual light is of three kinds: the light that is manifest, the light that manifests, and the light that is the manifestation or illumination. In another terminology, they are the light that is the intelligible in act, the light that reduces the intelligible from potency to act, and the light that actuates the intellect.<sup>11</sup> In the beatific vision the manifest or the intelligible is the divine essence itself. There is no light that manifests or reduces the intelligible from potency to act, for the divine essence is already intelligible in act. The light of glory is the light that is the manifestation or illumination, the light that actuates the intellect.<sup>12</sup> Hence, the light of glory is the

<sup>9</sup> *C. gent.* 3, 53, 1; *Compend. theol.* 106; *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 5, a. 6, ad 2m; 3, q. 9, a. 2, ad 1m; q. 10, a. 4 c; q. 76, a. 7 c. Cf. *In 3 Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 1 sol.

<sup>10</sup> *In Ioan.* 1, lect. 4; *De verit.*, q. 14, a. 1, ad 5m; ad 8m; a. 9, ad 2m.

<sup>11</sup> The first definition, "[id] quod manifestatur," is contained in the citation of Eph 5:13, which appears in almost every discussion of light: *In 2 Sent.*, d. 13, a. 2 sol.; *In Ioan.* 1, lect. 4; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 67, a. 1, arg. 3; q. 106, a. 1 c; 1-2, q. 109, a. 1 c; 2-2, q. 171, a. 2 c. The fact that Eph 5:13 is often cited without further explanation or qualification seems to show that St. Thomas considered the words of the Vulgate an accurate definition. The second definition is the one that commentators usually repeat, "id quod facit manifestationem": *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 67, a. 1 c; 2-2, q. 171, a. 2 c. The third definition, and the one easiest to miss, is simply "manifestatio": *In Ioan.* 1, lect. 3, n. 1; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 67, a. 1 c; q. 106, a. 1 c.

<sup>12</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 12, a. 5 c: "Et hoc augmentum virtutis intellectivae illuminationem intellectus vocamus sicut et ipsum intelligibile vocatur lumen." The impossibility of light that manifests or reduces the intelligible from potency to act: *In 3 Sent.*, d. 14, a.

manifestation of the divine essence in the human intellect, and the light of faith is the imperfect manifestation of the divine essence or, if you will, the revelation of Primary Truth in the human intellect.

St. Thomas, however, speaks not only of a light of glory in the intellect but also of a light of grace in the essence of the soul. Sanctifying grace is conceived as the light of grace and as participation in divine nature. As the light of reason is the basis of the acquired virtues, the light of grace or the participation of divine nature is the basis of the infused virtues.<sup>13</sup> The parallel drawn between the light of grace and the light of reason makes it fairly clear that St. Thomas conceives sanctifying grace as a form of intellectual light. It is an intellectual light that perfects not the intellect itself but the underlying intellectual nature. It is the illumination of the soul's essence which prepares the way for the illumination of the mind in glory. In this way it is easy to see how St. Thomas could speak of grace as the inchoation of glory.

The identification of participation in divine nature and the light of grace becomes understandable if we consider what St. Thomas says about rational nature and the light of reason. Sometimes he designates the norm of morality as the light of reason, as when he is treating the question whether the will's goodness depends on the eternal law, and sometimes he designates it as rational nature, as when he is discussing the problem whether vice is against nature.<sup>14</sup> It is not hard to see that the two terms for the supernatural realization of the norm of morality correspond: the light of grace to the light of reason, and divine nature participated to rational nature. The dualism of what man can be by his own nature and what he can be by participation in divine nature is matched against the dualism of what man can do by the light of his own reason and what he can do by participation in divine light. If we may apply here the distinctions we made when discussing the light of

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1, sol. 3; *Quodl.* 7, a. 1 c; *De verit.*, q. 20, a. 2 c; *C. gent.* 3, 53. Cf. *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 12, a. 5, ad 1m.

<sup>13</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 110, a. 3 c. Other statements on grace as participation in divine nature: *De anima*, a. 7, ad 9m; *Compend. theol.* 250; *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 50, a. 2 c; q. 62, a. 1; q. 110, a. 4 c; q. 112, a. 1 c; q. 114, a. 3 c; 2-2, q. 19, a. 7 c; 3, q. 3, a. 4, ad 3m; q. 22, a. 1 c; q. 62, a. 1 c. Participation in divine being: *In 2 Sent.*, d. 27, a. 5, ad 3m; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 62, a. 2 c. Cf. supra n. 2 for texts on communication or participation in divine life.

<sup>14</sup> The light of reason as norm: *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 19, a. 4 c. Rational nature as norm: *ibid.*, q. 71, a. 2.

glory and the light of faith, we may interpret the light of grace as the manifestation of divine nature in created intellectual nature itself.

On account of grace the name of God can be predicated of rational creatures by way of participation. St. Thomas knows three usages of God's name: God by nature, God by participation, and God by opinion. Because it has these three usages and because the notion of God by nature is included in the notion of God by participation (someone similar to God by nature) and God by opinion (something mistaken for God by nature), St. Thomas thinks that God's name is an analogical term.<sup>15</sup> Analogy, in this connection at least, like univocity and equivocity, is a question of the *multiplicitas nominum*, a problem of how the various meanings of a word are related to one another—what we would call a semantic issue. It is a question of signification, not of predication; a question of meaning, not of truth and falsehood: the univocal name has a single meaning and the analogical name has a fundamental meaning whether they are predicated truly or falsely.<sup>16</sup> So analogy is participation's consequence in the realm of definition. God by participation, to be sure, is only metaphorically God.<sup>17</sup> But that does not mean that the participation is metaphorical. As soon as we have qualified the divinity as participated, we have transformed the metaphor into a simile. Because of man's literal participation in divine nature, he can be called, in a metaphorical sense, "God."

The dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation holds good for the will as well as the intellect. St. Thomas conceives charity as participation of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps one may legitimately ask whether St. Thomas shared the New Testament perspective of the Spirit as the eschatological gift or as the power that causes miracles and striking mental phenomena, the Pauline conception of the Spirit as the power and norm of Christian conduct, or the Johannine conception of the Spirit as the power within the Church which brings forth knowledge and proclamation of the Word. Statements about participation of the Holy Spirit are to be found both in the context of charity and in the context of the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup> In the

<sup>15</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 13, a. 10 c.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 1m.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 9 c.

<sup>18</sup> The context of the Holy Spirit: *C. gent.* 4, 17; 18; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 38, a. 1 c; *In Rom.* 5, lect. 1. The context of charity: *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 23, a. 3, ad 3m; q. 24, a. 2 c; a. 5, ad 3m; a. 7 c; *In Ioan.* 17, lect. 6.

context of charity we find the conception of the Spirit as the power and norm of Christian conduct, and in the context of the Holy Spirit we find the notion of the Spirit as the eschatological gift. The other two perspectives, however, are not as prominent. Since St. Thomas believed that the Holy Spirit was given only in charity and not in the charismatic gifts, we would not expect him to make much of the idea of the Spirit as the power which causes miracles and striking mental phenomena. Again, since he identifies the participation of the Holy Spirit as charity rather than wisdom, it is not surprising that he has comparatively little to say about the Spirit as the power within the Church bringing forth knowledge and proclamation of the Word. I do not mean, of course, that St. Thomas does not hand on the traditional statements embodying these two perspectives nor that his theory cannot be developed so as to account for them.

The Holy Spirit, St. Thomas tells us, is the mode in which God is in Himself as loved in lover, just as the Word is the mode in which He is in Himself as known in knower.<sup>19</sup> In all His creatures God is present as cause in effect, but in His rational creatures He can be present by grace as known in knower and loved in lover.<sup>20</sup> Wisdom is the mode in which God is present in us as known in knower. Charity is the mode in which He is present in us as loved in lover. This seems to be why St. Thomas calls charity the participation of the Holy Spirit and why he calls wisdom the participation of the Word.<sup>21</sup> Thus charity entails both the presence of the Holy Spirit as eschatological gift and a resemblance to the Holy Spirit which is the power and norm of Christian conduct.

The distinction between participation of the Holy Spirit and participation of the Word makes it clear why one cannot interpret the former as participation in active spiration of the Holy Spirit, as breathing the Holy Spirit with the Father and Son.<sup>22</sup> Whether St. John of the Cross identified such participation as charity, it is not my business to say. St. Thomas, however, did not conceive charity to be a sharing in the active spiration of the Holy Spirit, a breathing of the Holy Spirit with the Father and Son. Such a conception would make charity a

<sup>19</sup> *Compend. theol.* 46. Cf. *C. gent.* 4, 19; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 37, a. 1 c.

<sup>20</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 8, a. 3 c; q. 43, a. 3 c.

<sup>21</sup> The gift of wisdom is called participation of the Word in *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 38, a. 1 c. Cf. *infra* n. 24.

<sup>22</sup> *Spiritual Canticle* 38, 2-4 (Peers 2, 176 ff.).



resemblance of the Father and Son, that is of the Spirator, rather than of the Holy Spirit, whereas St. Thomas conceived charity to be a resemblance of the Holy Spirit. If we wanted to formulate St. Thomas' position in this language, we would have to say that charity is participation in the passive spiration of the Holy Spirit. Although St. Thomas himself does not use the vocabulary of participation in this case, we could say that wisdom rather than charity would be participation in the active spiration of the Holy Spirit. For St. Thomas maintains that wisdom must issue into charity because the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Word.<sup>23</sup>

Since men become adopted sons of God by partaking of the likeness of the natural and only-begotten Son who is "sapientia genita," the gift of wisdom in the human intellect results in participation of divine sonship by the whole human person.<sup>24</sup> The dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation here takes the form of the dualism of the human selfhood which man attains by nature and the selfhood which he can attain by participating in the divine selfhood of the Word. Men can be sons of God only in a metaphorical sense, it is true, just as they are gods only in a metaphorical sense, and on this account the natural Son is metaphorically called the "first-begotten."<sup>25</sup> That does not mean, however, that adoptive sonship or participation in divine sonship is a metaphor. As man can be metaphorically called "God" because of his literal participation in divine nature, so he can be metaphorically called "Son of God" because of his literal participation in divine sonship.

Man's participation in divine sonship can be compared with divine sonship itself on three scores. First, as divine sonship is the property of a divine Person, adoptive sonship is the property of a human (or, in general, a created) person, with the result that Christ cannot be an adopted son of God.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, where divine sonship is a relation to the Father alone, adoptive sonship is a relation to all three divine

<sup>23</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3m; a. 2 c; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2m.

<sup>24</sup> *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 45, a. 6 c. Participation in the divine inheritance: *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 23, a. 1 c; *In Rom.* 8, lect. 3; lect. 6; *In Ioan.* 13, lect. 2, n. 6. Participation in the natural sonship: *Compend. theol.* 215; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 3, a. 8 c; a. 5, ad 2m; q. 23, a. 4 c; q. 24, a. 3 c; q. 45, a. 4; *In Rom.* 1, lect. 3; *In Eph.* 1, lect. 1; *In Ioan.* 1, lect. 8, n. 2; lect. 11, n. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 41, a. 3 c.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 3, q. 23, a. 4 c.

Persons.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, adoptive sonship like divine sonship is an intellectual relationship, with the result that intellectual creatures alone can be adopted.<sup>28</sup> Adoptive sonship, in other words, would be an intellectual relationship of human persons to divine Persons. This, therefore, is the selfhood which man can attain by participating in the divine selfhood of the Son.

The dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation holds good in the realm of power as well as in the realm of knowledge. There it becomes the dualism of what man can do by his own power and what he can do by participation in divine power. By nature man is confined to a human deed, but by participation he can lay claim to a divine deed, the divine deed of salvation. By participation in divine power, Christ's human actions and passions became salutary for us.<sup>29</sup> It was because His human nature acted in virtue of His divine nature, "quae quidem virtus praesentialiter attingit omnia loca et tempora,"<sup>30</sup> that His deeds are the salvation-occurrence, that His actions and His fate were raised to the rank of the eschatological event.

The deed ("operatum") of Christ's divine operation is distinct from the deed of His human operation. The deed of His divine operation would be, for instance, the healing of the leper, whereas the deed of His human operation would be the touching of the leper. The two operations, however, concur in one deed, the healing of the leper, since each nature acts in communion with the other. Christ's divine operation uses His human operation by making it the doing not only of a human deed, the touching of the leper, but also of a divine deed, the healing of the leper. Christ's human operation participates in His divine operation's virtue by taking on His divine operation's intentionality such that it becomes the doing of His divine operation's

<sup>27</sup> *In 3 Sent.*, d. 4, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 1; d. 10, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 2; sol. 3; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 23, a. 2; q. 3, a. 4, ad 3m. Perhaps we can say that adoptive sonship is a single relation to several divine Persons in the same way that human sonship is a single relation to two human persons. Cf. *In 3 Sent.*, d. 8, a. 5 sol.; *Quodl.* 1, a. 2 c; *Quodl.* 9, a. 4 c; *Compend. theol.* 212; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 35, a. 5 c. For recent literature, speculative and historical, on the question of special relations to the divine Persons, cf. *Theology Digest* 4, no. 2 (Spring, 1956) 83 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 23, a. 3; 2-2, q. 45, a. 6 c.

<sup>29</sup> *C. gent.* 4, 36; *Compend. theol.* 212. Cf. *De verit.*, q. 29, a. 5 c; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 48, a. 6 c; q. 56, a. 1, ad 3m; q. 49, a. 1 c.

<sup>30</sup> *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 56, a. 1, ad 3m.

deed. His human operation, nevertheless, maintains its own identity, since it is only by doing the human deed that His human nature does the divine deed, only by touching the leper that it heals the leper. The significance of the idea of participation in divine operation or in the virtue of divine operation, then, is that Christ's human operation is the human doing of divine deeds.<sup>31</sup> In this way all Christ's human deeds are salutary for us, for by doing these human deeds He did the divine deed of salvation.

It was because His human nature participated in the virtue of His divine nature that Christ's actions and His fate were raised to the rank of the eschatological event. The salvation-occurrence is eschatological occurrence in that it does not become a fact of the past but constantly takes place anew in the present. Yet how can Christ's deeds be understood as an occurrence not only directed at man but actually reaching him and happening to him? For St. Thomas the salvation-occurrence reaches man and happens to him through the sacraments. It is because in the sacraments man participates in the power working salvation that the salvation-occurrence constantly takes place anew in the present. The sacramental character is conceived as participation in Christ's priesthood.<sup>32</sup> The power of the sacraments is conceived as

<sup>31</sup> The statements about Christ's human nature or human operation participating in the virtue of His divine nature or of His divine operation (with the exception of *De verit.*, q. 27, a. 4 c) are to be found in the discussion of the unity and plurality of Christ's operation: *In 3 Sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, ad 1m; *Compend. theol.* 212; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 19, a. 1. Cf. also *C. gent.* 4, 36, and *De unione Verbi*, a. 5. The terms to be defined are "operatio" and "operatum," "uti" and "instrumentum," "virtus," and "participare" as used of instruments. "Uti est applicare aliquod principium actionis ad actionem" (*Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 16, a. 2 c). "Operatio" here is operation in terms of the operative principle (*Sum. theol.* 3, q. 19, aa. 1 and 2). The distinction of "operatio" and "operatum" in this context, therefore, is the distinction of doing and deed (for St. Thomas' ordinary usage of those terms, cf. B. Lonergan in *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 8 [1947] 404 ff.). Thus we may understand "use" as the application of "operatio" to an "operatum." The instrument participates in the action of the principal agent in that it does the deed of the principal agent by doing its own deed—so much so that where the instrument has no deed of its own there can be no participation and no instrument (*Sum. theol.* 1, q. 45, a. 5 c). "Virtus intentionalis" (*De unione Verbi*, a. 5, ad 12m) is to be understood in terms of St. Thomas' etymological definition of intention, "in aliquid tendere" (*Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 12, a. 1 c), and thus would be in this context the tendency of doing toward deed. Cf. *infra* n. 36.

<sup>32</sup> *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 63, a. 3 c; a. 5 c; a. 6, ad 1m; q. 65, a. 3, ad 3m. Cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1 sol.; a. 2, sol. 2, ad 3m; *C. gent.* 4, 74.

participation in the virtue of Christ's passion.<sup>33</sup> The grace of the sacraments, in turn, is conceived as participation in the virtue of Christ's passion on the part of the man receiving the sacrament.<sup>34</sup>

These participations, like the participation in divine power enjoyed by Christ's human nature, are understood in terms of instrumentality and intentionality.<sup>35</sup> In his formal treatment of "intentio" in the *Prima secundae*, St. Thomas defined intention as "in aliquid tendere" and said that both the mobile's motion and the mover's action tend to something but the intentionality of the mobile's motion proceeds from the mover's action.<sup>36</sup> Here he seems to have given us a perfect description of the situation which obtains in the sacraments. The sacramental character seems to be the intentionality of Christ's priesthood in those who enjoy a role in the Christian cult. The virtue of the sacraments seems to be the intentionality of Christ's passion in the Christian cult itself. The sacramental grace, finally, seems to be the intentionality of Christ's passion left from the intentionality of the sacrament in the man receiving the sacrament. The passion's intent, accomplished in man by the sacramental grace, seems to be what St. Thomas means by participation in Christ's sacrifice.<sup>37</sup>

Christ's death and resurrection reach man and happen to him both

<sup>33</sup> Christ is contained in the Eucharist by essence, but in the other sacraments by participation of His power: *In 4 Sent.*, d. 10, a. 1 sol.; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 65, a. 3 c; q. 75, a. 1 c. The sacraments participate in the virtue by which Christ's humanity works our salvation: *De verit.*, q. 27, a. 4 c. The virtue of the sacraments derives from Christ's passion: *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 62, a. 5, and parallels.

<sup>34</sup> *In 3 Sent.*, d. 19, a. 3, sol. 2; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 4, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 6; d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 1, ad 1m; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 86, a. 4, ad 3m; and especially *De verit.*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 12m.

<sup>35</sup> The virtue of Christ's humanity is intentional according to *De unione Verbi*, a. 5, ad 12m. The virtue of the sacraments is intentional according to *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 2; sol. 4, ad 1m; *De verit.*, q. 27, a. 4, ad 4m. The sacramental character and the sacramental grace would seem to be intentional too, since St. Thomas treats them as belonging to the same order as the virtue of Christ's humanity and the virtue of the sacraments.

<sup>36</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 12, a. 1 c. St. Thomas is expounding here what we might call the analogy of intention, going from the intentionality of the mobile's motion to the intentionality of the mover's action to the intention of the will. The text is capital both because of its breadth of perspective and because it is the definitive formal treatment of intention. It is surprising, therefore, that Fr. Hayen does not discuss it in his classic *L'Intentionnel dans la philosophie de s. Thomas* (Paris, 1942).

<sup>37</sup> The distinction of "oblatio" and "participatio sacrificii" in *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 22, a. 6, ad 2m, seems to correspond to the distinction of "oblatio" and "consummatio sacrificii" in a. 5 c. Cf. also *ibid.*, a. 3, ad 2m.

now and at the end of the world. The result now, however, is liberation from sin, whereas the result then will be liberation from death. Christ's deeds, however, do not reach man and happen to him in exactly the same way when they liberate him from sin and when they liberate him from death. They liberate him from sin by way of instrumental causality, but they liberate him from death both by way of instrumental causality and by way of exemplary causality. Indeed, it is not hard to see how Christ's deeds enjoy a more realistic exemplarity on the bodily level than they do on the spiritual level, for the sinless Christ could not rise from sin though He could and did rise from death. St. Thomas, accordingly, speaks of a participation corresponding to the more literal exemplarity which he terms participation in Christ's bodily glory or participation in Christ's resurrection.<sup>38</sup>

Although the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation is Augustinian in origin, what we have found in St. Thomas goes well beyond what can be found in St. Augustine. For one thing, each instance of participation is modified by the general context of St. Thomas' system. Participation in divine happiness, in eternity, in divine light are to be understood in terms of St. Thomas' notions of happiness and eternity and intellectual light; participation of the divine Persons is to be understood in terms of St. Thomas' theology of the Trinity. Besides the development by association, however, there is also a development by sheer extension. St. Thomas is original, as far as I can tell, in extending the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation from the realm of knowledge to the realm of power. The result, as we have just seen, is that participation is assigned a role in the history of salvation.

#### THE DUALISM OF BEING BY ESSENCE AND BEING BY PARTICIPATION

When we shift our standpoint from the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation to the dualism of being by essence and being by participation, it is no longer tautological to speak of "supernatural participation." In the latter perspective all created things are being by participation and only God is being by essence. What man can be by nature he can be only by participation of

<sup>38</sup> Participation in Christ's bodily glory: *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 56, a. 2, ad 1m. Participation in Christ's resurrection: *ibid.*, a. 1, ad 1m (Leonine).

being by essence. The instances of participation which we have been considering take their place among myriad other instances. The natural and supernatural perfections of man become indistinguishable in terms of participation. In fact, man is no longer the focal point of our theology. He becomes one of the many instances of being by participation along with other creatures, rational and irrational.

There is a sense, nevertheless, in which man is the basis of the viewpoint of being by essence and being by participation. If one confines one's attention to St. Thomas' definitions of participation as "taking partially from another" or "receiving in a particular way what pertains to another in a universal way,"<sup>39</sup> one is liable to get the impression that the foundation of his thought on participation is no stronger than the etymology of the Latin word *participare*. If, on the contrary, one compares his account of participation with his account of abstraction and separation,<sup>40</sup> one will find that the foundation is not etymological but epistemological.

The intellectual activity in which participation is known seems to be the inverse of the intellectual activity of distinguishing one thing from another. The mind distinguishes one thing from another both on the level of apprehension and on the level of judgment. On the level of apprehension it is done by abstraction, by considering one thing without considering another with which it is one in reality, whereas on the level of judgment it is done by separation, by negating one thing of another with which it is not one in reality. There are two kinds of abstraction: the abstraction of the universal from the particular, as when you abstract animal from man, and the abstraction of form from matter, as when you abstract the form of a circle from the bronze in which it is realized. Abstraction is native to science, but separation is native to wisdom with its *via negationis*. As examples of separation one could adduce any of those negative judgments about God which pertain to the *via negationis*, judgments that God is simple, infinite, eternal, immaterial, incorruptible, immutable, and so forth, judgments

<sup>39</sup> *In 2 De caelo*, lect. 18; *In Boeth. De hebd.*, lect. 2.

<sup>40</sup> The principal account of participation is *In Boeth. De hebd.*, lect. 2, and the principal account of abstraction and separation is *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 5, a. 3. Compare the two abstractions of *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 40, a. 3 c, with the two participations of *In Boeth. De hebd.*, lect. 3.

by which we negate of God such things as composition, finitude, time, matter, corruptibility, and motion.

In the act of distinguishing one thing from another, the mind attains knowledge of what is by essence. It is in the converse act of uniting one thing with another that the mind attains knowledge of what is by participation. The participation of the universal by the particular is known in an intellectual activity converse to the activity of abstracting the universal from the particular, and the participation of form by matter is known in an activity converse to the activity of abstracting the form from matter. Plato had argued from the validity of science to the subsistence of universals and forms. Aristotle answered him with the distinction of "science in potency" and "science in act." The knowledge of universals and forms is only potential science, he maintained, while actual science is knowledge of particulars and of concrete composites.<sup>41</sup> St. Thomas answered Plato with the distinction of abstraction and separation and attributed Plato's doctrine of subsistent universals and forms to the confusion of the abstract and the separate. Both Aristotle and St. Thomas, then, reduce to participation of the abstract what Plato took for participation of reality, but St. Thomas simultaneously makes room for participation of the separate. For St. Thomas, in other words, besides the participation of the abstract known in the concrete consideration of science there is the participation of the separate known in the affirmative judgment of wisdom.

The various instances of participation that we uncovered when we examined the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation are known in the affirmative judgment of wisdom along with the other participations of God. To begin with, in this dualism of being by participation and being by essence, participation characterizes the destiny not only of man but of all creatures. Indeed, at times it would seem that it characterizes the irrational creature's destiny and that the rational creature's destiny would be something more than participation: intellectual creatures, we are told, attain the ultimate end by knowing and loving God, while other creatures attain it by partaking of God's likeness in being or living or knowing singulars.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Met. M*, 1087a 15.

<sup>42</sup> *De verit.*, q. 5, a. 6, ad 4m; q. 22, a. 2, ad 5m; *C. gent.* 3, 25; *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 1, a. 8 c.

But we read elsewhere that the perfection of the rational creature does not consist simply in a natural participation of divine goodness in being or living or knowing singulars as that of lower beings does, but in a supernatural participation of divine goodness, the beatific vision.<sup>43</sup> Elsewhere we find that the rational creature is destined to participate in divine happiness but the irrational creature is destined only to participate in divine goodness, not in divine happiness.<sup>44</sup> In every case the rational creature's destiny is contrasted with the irrational creature's destiny, but in no case is it contrasted by the fact that it is a participation of a higher being, for both rational and irrational creature are here conceived as being good by participation and are set off against what is good by essence.

The same situation obtains in participation of eternity. In the solution of the question whether eternity can be communicated to creatures or whether it belongs to God alone, we encounter many examples of participation in eternity besides the supernatural kind we found before. The earth, the eternal hills, the fire of hell, the angels in their natural condition, and the blessed in heaven all participate in eternity in different ways.<sup>45</sup> The only thing that distinguishes the supernatural participation in eternity from the others is the fact that it is the supreme participation in eternity that is possible. In the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation, on the contrary, the supernatural participation in eternity was the only one which could be discerned, because the contrast was between duration which could be attained by nature and duration which could not be attained by nature but only by participation.

There is also a natural participation of divine light. Because the intellectual power of a creature is not the divine essence, it must be a participated likeness of the primary intellect, an intelligible light derived from the primary light, whether we speak of natural intellectual power or of the supernatural intellectual power obtained in grace or glory.<sup>46</sup> Concerning St. Augustine's view that we know all things in the divine ideas, St. Thomas denies that we know in them as in an object of knowledge but admits that we know in them as in a source of knowl-

<sup>43</sup> *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 2, a. 3 c.

<sup>44</sup> *In 2 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4m.

<sup>45</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 8, q. 2, a. 2 sol; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 3, ad 4m; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 10, a. 3 c.

<sup>46</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 12, a. 2 c; q. 79, a. 4 c.



edge, for the light of reason is nothing but a participation of the uncreated light containing the divine ideas.<sup>47</sup> A while ago we were contrasting the light of reason which man possesses by nature with the intellectual light he can attain only by participation, but now we find that the light of reason itself is nothing but a participation in divine light.

We were also contrasting what man could be by nature and what he could be by participation of divine nature, but in St. Thomas' discussion of the divine ideas we find that all creatures, man included, are constituted in their respective natures by the way they participate the likeness of the divine essence. It is because God knows all the various ways in which His nature can be participated that there is a plurality of divine ideas.<sup>48</sup> This is how the divine essence can be exemplary cause of all things: in spite of all their differences from one another, all creatures are simply so many different participations of the one divine essence.<sup>49</sup> Grace, therefore, is not the only participation of divine nature. Every created nature without exception is a participated likeness of the divine essence.

Participation of the Holy Spirit through charity also becomes one of many instances, natural and supernatural, in the perspective of being by participation and being by essence. When St. Thomas is trying to explain certain statements from St. Augustine that would lead one to identify charity and the Holy Spirit, he says that the divine essence is charity in the same way that it is wisdom and goodness. We are said to be good with the goodness that is God and wise with the wisdom that is God because our own intrinsic goodness is a participation of divine goodness and our own intrinsic wisdom is a participation of divine wisdom. In like manner, we are said to love our neighbor with the charity that is God because our own intrinsic charity is a participation of divine charity.<sup>50</sup>

Participation in divine sonship through supernatural adoption becomes, in this perspective, simply the last degree of participation of the Word. There are three resemblances to the Word: the formal resemblance which all creatures possess since they were all made through the Word; the intellectual resemblance which only rational creatures

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 84, a. 5 c.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 15, a. 2 c.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 44, a. 3 c.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 2-2, q. 23, a. 2, ad 1m. Cf. *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, contra.

possess; and the resemblance to the Word in His unity with the Father which only those rational creatures possess that are endowed with grace and charity.<sup>51</sup> All creatures, in other words, partake of the likeness of the Word,<sup>52</sup> and all rational creatures partake of His likeness in a special way. The supernatural participation of the Word is only a more special participation, not the only participation, as in the case of the dualism of the selfhood man can attain by nature and the selfhood he can attain by participation in the divine selfhood of the Son.

Participation in the virtue of divine operation, too, becomes a general phenomenon in the dualism of being by participation and being by essence. In this viewpoint all creatures are instruments of divine power and, since the instrument always participates in the virtue of the principal agent, they participate in the virtue of divine operation.<sup>53</sup> What is more, this instrumental virtue or participation in the virtue of divine operation is conceived as an intentionality.<sup>54</sup> It is the intentionality of divine operation in the operation of the creature. Consequently, not only Christ's human operation but all created operation participates in the virtue of divine operation, and the participated virtue is always the intentionality of God's operation in the creature's operation.

The dualism of being by essence and being by participation, in short, is a schematic account of reality growing out of a schematic account of our intellectual activity. Since the same manifold, however, can be divided in different ways, one schematic account can cut across another. It has been proposed recently, for example, that the traditional scheme of potency, form, and act be derived from a division of cognitive activities into experience, apprehension, and judgment: potency being what is known in the intellectual pattern of experience, form what is known in apprehension, and act what is known in judgment.<sup>55</sup> St. Thomas derives the scheme of what is by essence and what is by participation from a scheme of intellectual activity formulated nowadays in the well-known slogan *distinguer pour unir*. We must see, though, whether there is a deeper foundation for his thought on participation, less arbitrary than a scheme.

<sup>51</sup> *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 23, a. 3 c. Cf. *ibid.* 1, q. 33, a. 3.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 3, q. 3, a. 8 c.

<sup>53</sup> *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 7 c.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 7m.

<sup>55</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight* (London, 1957) pp. 431 ff.

## RESOLUTION OF THE ANTI-THESIS

In terms of the affirmative judgment, St. Thomas distinguishes two kinds of communication: one kind known in affirming one predicate of many subjects and the other known in affirming many predicates of one subject.<sup>56</sup> The communication of divine nature in the Trinity is known in predicating one nature of three Persons, whereas the communication of the divine Person in the Incarnation is known in predicating two natures of one Person. The communication of divine goodness in creation, sanctification, and glorification is known, it would seem, in affirming the same predicate of several subjects, as is the communication of divine goodness in the Trinity, and not in affirming several predicates of the same subject, as is the communication of divine goodness in the Incarnation. The communication of divine happiness in glorification, for example, is known in affirming the same happiness of several subjects, God and self and neighbor and body.<sup>57</sup>

In reading St. Thomas it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the transitive and the intransitive usage of the term "communicatio."<sup>58</sup> In a transitive sense it refers to the way divine goodness is communicated, but in an intransitive sense it refers to the way one communicates in divine goodness. In the Trinity the Father transitively communicates His nature to the Son and the two transitively communicate their nature to the Holy Spirit so that all three Persons communicate intransitively in one nature. In the Incarnation the Son is transitively communicated to human nature so that divine and human nature communicate intransitively in a divine Person, and the Son communicates intransitively in divine nature with the other divine persons and in human nature with other men. In creation, sanctification, and glorification God communicates Himself transitively to others so that they communicate intransitively with Him in goodness, life, and happiness. Thus transitive communication issues into intransitive communication, and intransitive communication supposes transitive communication.

Participation is intransitive communication, although intransitive

<sup>56</sup> *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 3, a. 1, ad 2m.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 2-2, q. 25, a. 12, and parallels.

<sup>58</sup> For instance, in *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 32, a. 1, arg. 2, St. Thomas discriminates between the attempt to demonstrate the Trinity in terms of transitive communication and the attempt to demonstrate it in terms of intransitive communication.

communication is not always participation. For creatures, to communicate in divine goodness is to participate in divine goodness, and for rational creatures, to communicate in divine life through grace and to communicate in divine happiness through glory is to participate in divine life and in divine happiness. Yet for the divine Persons, to communicate in divine nature is not to participate in divine nature, and, specifically, the Incarnate Word's communication in divine nature is not a participation of divine nature. In fact, St. Thomas like St. Augustine considers it heresy to reduce the Incarnation to an instance of participation.<sup>59</sup> It seems, therefore, that we have here an implicit distinction between participation and pure communication. Wherever one takes from another there is communication, but only where one takes from another partially is there participation.

God and creature, then, are contrasted as being by essence and being by participation. When we examine the limit or boundary of participation, the supreme instance of participation, we find that being by essence is characterized by omnipotence and omniscience. In this way being by essence is that which comprises all, and being by participation is that which does not comprise all. The supreme instance of participation is the omniscience of Christ's human mind. If one restricts "omnia" to mean all things actual at one time or another and if one leaves out all things merely possible, then one can say that Christ's soul is omniscient but not that it is omnipotent. Christ's soul knows all things past and present and future, but it cannot do all things which are done in the past or present or future, since it cannot create and obviously it could not have created itself.<sup>60</sup> So even in the supreme instance of participation, one must restrict "omnia," and even at that one can attribute to being by participation only omniscience and not omnipotence. Being by participation, therefore, is that which comprises not all but some.

<sup>59</sup> *C. gent.* 4, 4; 6; 28; 34; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 16, a. 1 c; a. 3 c. The simple statement that it is not participation is found in *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 2, a. 10, ad 1m; q. 3, a. 8 c; *In Ioan.* 3, lect. 6, n. 4. Although Christ's Person does not participate in divine perfections but communicates in them fully, His human nature does participate and does not communicate fully: *De verit.*, q. 29, a. 1, ad 5m; a. 5 c; *Compend. theol.* 214; *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 7, a. 1, ad 1m; q. 9, a. 2, ad 1m; q. 10, a. 4 c; q. 16, a. 5, ad 3m.

<sup>60</sup> The principal text is *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2m. Earlier and less perfect treatments may be found in *Declar. 108 dub.*, q. 81; *In 1 Sent.*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2m; *In 3 Sent.*, d. 14, a. 4, ad 4m.

Precisely with respect to "omnia," though, there is a discrimination between the rational creature and the irrational creature. The rational creature alone has a direct orientation toward God, for other creatures do not attain anything universal but merely something particular by participating divine goodness in existing or in living or in knowing singulars. Since the rational creature knows the universal meaning of good and being, however, it has a direct orientation toward the universal origin of being. So the perfection of the rational creature does not consist simply in what belongs to it by its nature but also in what can belong to it by "a supernatural participation of divine goodness."<sup>61</sup> Supernatural participation is the achievement of "omnia" in that it consists primarily in understanding being by essence. Thus it is at once the supreme possibility of participation and a possibility only for the rational creature which is "quodammodo omnia" in potency.<sup>62</sup> It remains participation because it is not the comprehensive understanding of God or omniscience but only "quodammodo omnia" in act.

God's happiness, we saw, consists in omniscience, that is, in knowing that He has everything that could be desired, in knowing that He is absolutely self-sufficient or all in all. Our happiness, we found, will not consist in being perfect and self-sufficient nor in being perfect and knowing it, but rather in knowing that God is perfect and self-sufficient, in seeing that He has everything which could be desired, in being conscious of His well-being. Our happiness, however, will not equal His because we, not knowing all, will not understand how He is all in all as perfectly as He Himself does. As a matter of fact, to know all is to be the All such that God's knowledge of His own well-being is identical with His well-being. So although our happiness will consist in understanding being by essence, it will remain participation since it will not be omniscience, the exhaustive understanding of being by essence.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 2, a. 3 c.

<sup>62</sup> Aristotle described the agent intellect as "quo est omnia facere" and the possible intellect as "quo est omnia fieri" (*De anima* 3, 430a 10-17, lect. 10) and the soul as "quodammodo omnia" (*ibid.*, 431b 21, lect. 13). *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 14, a. 1 c, seems to indicate that "anima est quodammodo omnia" is true not only of the intellect itself but also of the intellectual nature, the essence of the soul, underlying the intellect. *C. gent.* 2, 47, 4, explicitly infers from these statements about the intellect a comparable "omnia" for the will.

<sup>63</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 2-4 and 42-44.

There is also a true sense in which God's eternity can be said to consist in omniscience, for it consists in His apprehension of all things past and present and future in the unchanging Now. In fact, it consists in His apprehension not only of all things which are at one time or another but of things which will never be at any time, since eternity encompasses and exceeds time. The All of which eternity is the apprehension is as immobile as Parmenides' Being. As time, then, is our apprehension of succession or of the changing Now, eternity is God's apprehension of His own uniformity or of the unchanging Now. The eternal life which has been promised us, in turn, will be our apprehension of the unchanging Now. Our eternal life, however, will not be eternity itself. We will not apprehend all things in time and out of time in the unchanging Now, but only some. Even Christ's human mind, we found, apprehends no more than all things past and present and future. Our eternal life, then, will be participation in eternity rather than eternity itself, though it will be the supreme such participation since it will be apprehension of the unchanging Now itself.<sup>64</sup>

The light of the agent intellect, "quo est omnia facere," is not capable of manifesting being by essence. Indeed, we found that the divine essence cannot be manifested at all, for it is already manifest or intelligible in act. The "omnia" which the light of the agent intellect can manifest is only all that is intelligible in potency. There is no room, then, for intellectual light that manifests where there is question of understanding being by essence. There can be light only in the sense of the manifest and the manifestation. The divine essence, being its own manifestation, is perfectly manifest in itself, but its manifestation in us by the very fact that it is in us and not in itself cannot be adequate. In this life its manifestation in our minds, the light of faith, is also imperfect in the sense that we are not enabled by it to perceive Primary Truth but only to assent to Primary Truth. In the next life its manifestation, the light of glory, will be perfect in the sense that it will enable us to perceive Primary Truth, but not in the sense that it will enable us to comprehend Primary Truth or become omniscient. Hence the manifestation of the divine essence in the human intellect is participation in divine light, imperfect now and perfect then, but it is the

<sup>64</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 5-8 and 45.

limit of such participation since it is the manifestation of being by essence and not simply of all that is intelligible in potency.<sup>65</sup>

As the possible intellect is "quo est omnia fieri" and the agent intellect "quo est omnia facere," intellectual nature itself is "quodammodo omnia." Being by essence, for this reason, can be manifested in the essence of the rational soul as well as in its intellect. Since St. Thomas seemed to conceive grace as an instance of intellectual light comparable with the light of reason, we found it necessary to apply to it the same distinctions we made when discussing the light of glory and the light of faith, namely, that there could be no question of light that manifests but only of light that is the manifest and light that is the manifestation where the divine essence is involved. Sanctifying grace was taken for the manifestation of divine nature in created intellectual nature. The perception of being by essence seems to require the manifestation of divine nature not only in the intellect but also, more radically, in intellectual nature itself. In this way grace is the beginning of glory, and glory the consummation of grace. Since the rational creature, however, can become only "quodammodo omnia" in act, the manifestation of divine nature there remains participation in divine nature. It is superior to all other participations of the divine essence, nevertheless, because other creatures express merely something that God knows and in no way all that He knows.<sup>66</sup>

Since the intellect is capable of all in some sense, the inclination following on the intellect, namely the will, is also orientated toward all. For this reason it is possible for being by essence to be in the rational creature as loved in lover. The mode in which God is in Himself as known in knower is the Word, and the mode in which He is in Himself as loved in lover is the Holy Spirit. Wisdom is the mode in which He is in the rational creature as known in knower, and charity is the mode in which He is there as loved in lover. Thus, charity is communication in the Holy Spirit and wisdom is communication in the Word. Wisdom, however, also involves communication in the breathing or active spiration of the Holy Spirit, it would seem, for wisdom issues into charity and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Word. This we found

<sup>65</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 9-12 and 46-47.

<sup>66</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 13-14 and 48-49.

developed in the doctrine that charity is founded on communication in divine life and happiness, that is, on communication in divine knowledge. Communication in divine love, therefore, belongs to communication in divine understanding as intellectual inclination belongs to intellect. It remains participation, however, even though it is the love of what is good by essence, because the essence of good cannot be adequately loved where it is not exhaustively understood.<sup>67</sup>

The participation of knowledge is summed up in participation of divine sonship or of the Word. All created things, we learned, are participations of the Word, for the Word is the expression of all that God knows and each creature is the expression of something that God knows. The rational creature, however, is open to participation of the Word in a fuller sense because like the Word it is intellectual. It can participate the Son by way of grace and charity, becoming like the Son in oneness with the Father. This is what is meant when it is said that the rational creature can become the adopted son of God. Adoptive sonship is an intellectual relationship of the human person to the divine Persons like the intellectual relationship of the Son to the Father, having for its basis the participation of divine nature and the participation of the Holy Spirit as the Son is one with the Father in divine nature and in the Holy Spirit, and having for the completion of its basis the participation of the eternal inheritance, that is, participation in divine happiness. The relationship is not, however, the relation of one who is being by essence to another who is being by essence, but of one who is being by participation to others who are being by essence, for the human person can never become the expression of absolutely all that God knows, since it is never more than "quodammodo omnia."<sup>68</sup>

We found that Christ's soul is omniscient if one restricts "omnia" to mean all things actual at one time or another and leaves out all things merely possible, but that even with this restriction Christ's soul is not omnipotent, since nothing requires an infinite intellect to be known but some things require infinite power to be done. Being by participation cannot do deeds which require omnipotence except as the instrument of being by essence. Among deeds requiring omnipotence, creation supposes nothing and thus does not admit of an instrument,

<sup>67</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 18-23 and 50.

<sup>68</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 24-28 and 51-52.



but restoration supposes something and does admit of an instrument. As instrument of His divine nature, then, Christ's human nature had power to restore all things in heaven and on earth. Christ's divine operation used His human operation by applying it to a deed beyond its own human deed, and His human operation participated in the virtue of His divine operation by taking on the intentionality of His divine operation such that it became the doing of His divine operation's deed, the restoration of all things in heaven and on earth. The virtue acquired by His human operation, however, was only a participation of the virtue of His divine operation, for, being instrumental, it was mere dynamism or intentionality and not dynamic form like his divine power and hence was power only for restoration, not for creation.<sup>69</sup>

Yet since it was power over all things, power to restore all things, St. Thomas speaks of it as the plenitude of priestly power and admits participation of that plenitude in the shape of the sacramental character. The character, we found, seems to be the intentionality of Christ's priesthood in those who have a role in the Christian cult. The intentionality of Christ's priesthood or of His passion in the Christian cult itself is the virtue of the sacraments, and the intentionality of Christ's passion left in the man receiving the sacrament is the sacramental grace. The virtue of the sacrament is no more than participation of the virtue of Christ's passion, since it looks to the salvation not of all but of the one receiving the sacrament. In the Eucharist, however, where Christ is contained by essence and not by participation of His power, the virtue of the sacrament is universal, and here it is none other than Christ's priesthood itself. Where in baptism, then, Christ's death and resurrection are applied to the one being baptized, in the Mass they are applied to the whole Church.<sup>70</sup>

In short, the antinomy of the two viewpoints, the dualism of being by essence and being by participation and the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation, can be resolved from the standpoint of man's universal capacity to know, the Aristotelian "quodammodo omnia." This is our methodic base for under-

<sup>69</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 29-31 and 53-54. On the power to restore all, cf. *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 13, a. 2 c.

<sup>70</sup> An account for texts cited in nn. 32-36. The plenitude of Christ's priesthood contained in the Eucharist: *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 63, a. 5, ad 1m. Christ's passion applied in baptism to the one baptized but in the Mass to the whole Church: *In Ioan.* 6, lect. 6, ad fin.

standing participation in the order of knowledge, and its objective correlative is the base for understanding participation in the order of power. My contention is that there subsists in St. Thomas' teaching not only the dualism of being by essence and being by participation but also the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation, and that those two viewpoints become coherent in terms of man's universal capacity to know. The final result is not the philosophy of participation which overlooks the dualism of what man can be by nature and what he can be by participation but a genuine theology of participation.