

THE DOCTRINE OF THE VATICAN COUNCIL ON THE END OF CREATION

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IN A previous article on the purpose of creation I set forth systematically the doctrine and terminology of St. Thomas, and indicated Suarez' complete agreement with him, with a view to showing how much modern theologians have lost in clarity and effectiveness by practically deserting these two recognized masters for the more subjective and anthropomorphic presentation of Lessius.¹ In the present article I propose to carry the discussion further by dealing with three points: (1) the logical inconsistency of those who follow the Lessian doctrine and terminology; (2) the theories of Hermes on the purpose of creation, as the necessary background for understanding the doctrine of the Vatican Council; (3) the doctrine of the Vatican Council, compared with that of St. Thomas and that of Lessius' followers.

THE LESSIAN VIEW

According to those who follow Lessius, the finite entity of God's extrinsic glory is the absolutely last end of every creature, the *finis qui simpliciter ultimus*; God Himself is only the *finis cui*, that is, the subject for whom extrinsic glory is acquired:

A philosophis et theologis duplex distinguitur finis ; nam bonum quod appetitur dicitur finis et persona cui appetitur. Illud vocari solet finis qui, hoc finis cui. . . . In omni operatione externa necessario intendit [Deus] aliquod bonum suum. Nullum autem est genus bonorum imaginabile quod possit Deus sibi acquirere praeter gloriam extrinsecam, quae etiam inter bona externa est praestantissimum.²

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the adherents of Lessius teach explicitly that the finite entity of extrinsic glory is the *bonum finale* which God acquires for Himself as an extrinsic good by creation. Since sound reason, epitomized in the doctrinal expositions of St. Thomas and Suarez, demonstrates conclusively that God can acquire

¹ THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, II (1941), 53-83.

² Lessius, *De Perfectionibus Moribusque Divinis* (Herder, 1861), pp. 512, 539.

absolutely nothing from the action of any creature, the followers of Lessius, in maintaining that the supreme and absolutely last end of creation is a creature which God acquires for Himself, deny logically that God is in any way intrinsically the end of creation. For the notion of an infinite and utterly transcendental entity being constituted intrinsically as an end, precisely and solely because by acting *ad extra* it acquires for itself a finite and extrinsic perfection, is a chimera; it is metaphysically impossible; it implies passive potency in God; it implies that there is a real relation between God as *finis cui* and the extrinsic glory which He is said to acquire:

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod movens et agens naturale movet et agit actione vel motu medio, qui est inter movens et motum, agens et passum. Unde oportet quod saltem in hoc medio conveniant agens et patiens, movens et motum. Et sic agens in quantum est agens non est extraneum a genere patientis in quantum est patiens. Unde utriusque est realis ordo unius ad alterum et praecipue cum ipsa actio media sit quaedam perfectio propria agentis, et per consequens id ad quod terminatur actio est bonum eius. Hoc autem in Deo non contingit, ut dictum est.³

As one among many examples of this logical inconsistency, let us examine the exposition of Lessius given by Ferdinand Stentrup, S.J.⁴ His thesis reads as follows: "Supremus creationis finis aliquo bono ipsius Dei, non autem interno sed externo, externa scilicet divinae gloriae manifestatione continetur." The author divides his thesis into three propositions: (1) The supreme end of creation is "aliquod bonum divinum." (2) The supreme end of creation is not the internal goodness of God. (3) The supreme end of creation is the extrinsic glory of God.

The author's proof of the first proposition, mainly from theological reasoning, demonstrates clearly far more than he wants to prove:

Ratio evidenter demonstrat Deum, sicut utpote esse subsistens, absolutum et primum principium est, ita quum sit bonitas subsistens, absolutum ideoque etiam ultimum et supremum finem omnium esse. Hoc enim affirmare idem est ac affirmare supremum creationis finem aliquo bono divino contineri. Sed hoc paulum enucleatius exponendum est. Quum ratio finis sequatur rationem boni, bonum absolute summum necessario est finis absolute ideoque supremus omnium

³ S. Thomas, *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 10.

⁴ *Tractatus de Deo Uno et Trino* (Oeniponte, 1895), th. 70, p. 250 ff.

finis; est autem Deus bonum absolute summum. Dubitatio igitur nulla esse potest de priore parte thesis, supremum nempe creationis finem aliquo bono ipsius Dei contineri.⁵

The author's conclusion is obviously a necessary understatement of what he has actually proved; for if he were to state explicitly what he has proved conclusively, namely, that the supreme end of creation is the intrinsic goodness of God, it would be glaringly evident that this proof is a flat contradiction of the two remaining propositions.

No one, of course, could possibly prove the author's second proposition, that the intrinsic goodness of God cannot be the supreme end of creation. Consequently, we should not be too surprised to find that his sole proof consists in the following amazing assertion:

Hoc autem bonum [i.e., the supreme end of creation] non posse esse bonum Deo internum probatum sane dedimus quum de voluntate divina disputabamus.⁶

This mere assertion of the author, which he offers as a proof, is doubly amazing, because in his treatise on the divine will in the very same volume he proves just the opposite in explicit terms:

Bonitas subsistens in se suae bonitatis rationem continet [therefore the intrinsic goodness of God] simulque est ratio omnis bonitatis ceteris convenientibus. Quare ipsa ad nihil refertur quod distinctum ab ea est; ad ipsam tamen omnia referuntur quibus ratio boni inest. Ergo ipsa simpliciter finis ac omnis boni finis est. Denique, illud est omnis boni finis quod omni bono bonum est. Atqui bonitas subsistens, quia supremus fons boni est, est omnis boni bonum.⁷

Having disposed of the intrinsic goodness of God as the supreme end of creation by denying what he had previously proved conclusively, the author proceeds to the proof of his third proposition, that the extrinsic glory of God is the supreme end of creation. Relying on the validity of his proof of the preceding parts of the thesis, and without giving any explanation or documentation from the official *Acta* of the Vatican Council, he asserts boldly that the Council defined, as a revealed truth to be believed by all, the proposition that the supreme end of creation consists, not in the intrinsic goodness of God, but in His extrinsic glory: "Eam omnibus credendam proposuit Ecclesia in

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Concilio Vaticano docens: [he quotes *Constitutio Dogmatica de Fide Catholica*, cap. 1, par. 2, and canon 5]."⁸

The argument from theological reasoning again maintains that the author's thesis is revealed truth:

Veritas haec revelata est simul scientiae objectum. Perfecto duo assignari possunt ad quae Deus creaturam ordinasse concipi potest, nempe, aut ad oblectationem aut ad externam gloriam suam. Atqui non potuit ordinare eam ad oblectationem suam; nam delectatio seu gaudium est Deo bonum internum; nullum vero bonum Deo internum potest esse finis creationis. Restat igitur ut gloria Dei externa finis supremus creationis affirmetur.⁹

The supposition underlying this proof is clearly the basic assumption of all those who follow Lessius, namely, that no being whatsoever acts except to acquire some good, and that, as a consequence, God creates to acquire extrinsic glory for Himself as the *finis cui*. Since God can acquire absolutely nothing and still remain an infinite being, it is an idle subterfuge to say that, although He can acquire nothing intrinsic, He can and must, in the hypothesis of free creation, acquire an extrinsic good. For as St. Thomas teaches with inescapable logic:

Finis ultimus propter quem Deus vult omnia, nullo modo dependet ab his quae sunt ad finem nec quantum ad esse nec quantum ad perfectionem aliquam; unde non vult alicui bonitatem suam communicare, ad hoc ut sibi exinde aliquid accrescat, sed quia ipsum communicare est sibi conveniens sicut fonti bonitatis. Deus igitur est maxime liberalis et, ut Avicenna dicit: 'Ipse solus liberalis proprie dici potest'; nam omne aliud agens praeter ipsum ex sua actione aliquid bonum appetit vel acquirit, quod est finis intentus.¹⁰

Deus qui est primum agens omnium rerum, non sic agit quasi sua actione aliquid acquirat, sed quasi sua actione aliquid largiatur, quia non est in potentia ut aliquid acquirere possit, sed solum in actu perfecto ex quo potest aliquid largiri. Res igitur non ordinantur in Deum sicut in finem cui aliquid acquiratur, sed ut ab ipso ipsamet suo modo consequantur, quum ipsemet sit finis.¹¹

It is obvious that the doctrine of St. Thomas just cited is in open contradiction with Stentrup's thesis. St. Thomas teaches that the intrinsic goodness of God is the absolutely last end of all things, precisely as the *fons bonitatis* for whom nothing can in any way be acquired, because, being infinite and in perfect act, He contains infinitely

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

¹⁰ *C. Gent.*, I, 93.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, III, 18.

all finite perfection and hence all the created goodness of His extrinsic glory. Furthermore, if the Lessian doctrine that a creature, extrinsic glory, is the absolutely last end of the world were true, St. Thomas' statement that the ultimate end of creation in no way depends on those things which are ordained to the end would be false; for extrinsic glory, as the end of creatures, does not consist in their mere existence but in their actions and operations; but these operations, in which extrinsic glory formally consists, are totally dependent in the order of finite causality on the beings themselves which are ordained to the end.

The same argument whereby Stentrup attempts to prove that the supreme end of creation is finite is used by all those who adhere to the false assumption that God must acquire something for Himself, if He creates. Examples could be multiplied.¹² One more will suffice for our purpose:

What is God's purpose when He thus creates everything out of nothing? We have stated it above in speaking of His love for creatures: it is His own glory or the free manifestation of His goodness. As a matter of fact, God in creating cannot pursue an end inferior to the supreme good, which is Himself; that would be unworthy of Him. It would be to subordinate His power, His wisdom, and His love to a good inferior to Himself. . . . Therefore, the end pursued by God can be nothing else but His external glory, which is nothing else than the manifestation of His goodness.¹³

To show conclusively the impossible position into which the application of this false principle leads, we need only ask its proponents this simple question: Is the extrinsic glory of God a good which is inferior or equal to His intrinsic goodness? If it is an inferior good, then their fundamental premise, that God's purpose in creating can be none other than Himself, is denied. Furthermore, their proof of this fundamental premise can no longer stand; for they maintain that if God's creative

¹² Cf. H. Pinard, "Création," *DTC*, III, 2167; Huarte, *De Deo Creante et Elevante* (ed. 2, 1935), prop. 4; Otten, *De Deo Creante et Elevante* (Chicago, 1924), th. 7.

¹³ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Dieu, son existence et sa nature* (3e éd.; Paris, 1919), p. 463. Cf. also p. 437, where the author states: "Le Concile exprime le motif de l'acte créateur en disant, 'sed ad manifestandam perfectionem suam per bona quae creaturis impertitur' (*DB*, 1783)." In the third part of this article we shall show that P. Garrigou-Lagrange has no foundation for this statement. This phrase from the Vatican does not denote the motive of the creative act of God, but the *finis operis*, extrinsic glory, unto which all creatures are ordained intrinsically by God.

purpose were any good inferior to His infinite goodness, He would necessarily be subordinated and subject to this good and hence would not be infinite in all perfections. If, on the other hand, they were to admit that extrinsic glory, which all theologians have always held to be finite and really distinct from God, is a good that is equal to God's intrinsic goodness, then pantheism follows of necessity; for pantheism is merely the confounding of the finite with the infinite, due to the inability or refusal to grasp and admit the transcendence of God and the analogy of being.

Therefore, in proposing the doctrine that the supreme end of creation cannot be the intrinsic goodness of God and is only His extrinsic glory, as a revealed truth defined by the Vatican Council, Stentrup would have to consider anyone who holds the opposite to be at least a material heretic. Consequently, he would have to condemn as formal heresy, not only the doctrine of such outstanding theologians as St. Thomas, Suarez, Billot, and Stuffer, but also his own doctrine, since in his treatise on the divine will he maintains vigorously and proves conclusively that the divine intrinsic goodness is, of metaphysical necessity, the supreme end of all finite being.

It is unquestionably sad to see denied explicitly in manuals of theology and philosophy a truth that all Catholics must hold, namely, that God Himself in His intrinsic goodness and not any finite and totally deficient imitation of this infinite goodness is the supreme and absolutely last end of every single creature and of the entire universe.¹⁴ It is truly deplorable when the definition of an Ecumenical Council is adduced in confirmation of a doctrine which in the opinion of two of the ablest theologians of the past century "should not even be considered,"¹⁵ and is "entirely untenable."¹⁶

Our main purpose in this article, therefore, is to show that the doctrine of the Vatican Council presents no foundation whatsoever either for the purely gratuitous assertion: "The Vatican Council

¹⁴ The fact that the extrinsic glory of God is held to be the *finis simpliciter ultimus mundi* by many authors is so well known that examples need not be cited.

¹⁵ Billot, *De Deo Uno et Trino* (ed. 7; Romae, 1926), p. 249; the whole citation is given *infra*, note 70.

¹⁶ Stuffer, "Die Lehre des hl. Thomas v. Aquin über den Endzweck des Schöpfers und der Schöpfung," *Zeitschr. f. kath. Theol.*, XLI (1917), 698.

defined as revealed truth that the supreme end of creation cannot be the intrinsic goodness of God and must be His extrinsic glory," or for the false metaphysical principle, which is the only basis of this gratuitous assertion: "God in freely creating must act to acquire some good for Himself; but He can acquire no intrinsic perfection; therefore He creates to acquire extrinsic glory." However, since the reason assigned by the Fathers of the Vatican Council for treating the purpose of creation in those very sections adduced in favor of their doctrine by Stentrup, Garrigou-Lagrange, and so many others was the false doctrine of Hermes and the semirationalistic school,¹⁷ it is of prime importance to know from first sources the precise nature of these errors. Hence, in the second part of this article we shall give a brief summary of Hermes' doctrine, contained in his *Einleitung in die Christkatholische Theologie*, and condemned in the Brief of Gregory XVI, *Dum acerbissimas*.

THE DOCTRINE OF GEORGE HERMES

George Hermes was born in the village of Dreierwalde in Westphalia, April 22, 1775. After his ordination to the priesthood, he taught theology at Münster from 1807 to 1820. Due to the extraordinary popularity of his lectures, he attained such fame that he was called to the University of Bonn, where he lectured and wrote until his death in 1831, four years before his condemnation by Gregory XVI.

Hermes' own description of the genesis of his idealistic philosophy provides us with the sequence of ideas that finally led him into those errors concerning the end of creation that drew the condemnations of the Councils of Cologne and of the Vatican.

Three fundamental concepts—the existence of God, revelation, and eternal life—occupied Hermes' thought from his earliest youth, almost to the exclusion of everything else.¹⁸ Upon reflection, he found himself tortured by doubts which he could not solve, especially concerning the existence of God. Without any previous training, he began to read theological works, but he discovered that they either presupposed the solution of his doubts or did not touch upon them at all (p. v). There-

¹⁷ *Acta Concilii Vaticani, Collectio Lacensis*, VII, 86.

¹⁸ *Einleitung in die Christkatholische Theologie*, (Münster, 1831), p. iv. The page references hereafter given in the text are all to this work.

fore, in his twenty-fifth year (1795), he began seriously to try to solve the problem of God's existence by his own reasoning powers, without the help of books or counsel. This self-imposed struggle soon became hopelessly involved in ever increasing doubts, until at last Hermes realized the need of systematic training in metaphysics. He turned first to the great Scholastics, but with a combination of ingenuousness and pride difficult to imagine, he rejects the entire Scholastic tradition with the following amazing assertion: "However unfamiliar with it I still was, and as yet incapable of knowing that it was to be rejected in its essence, nevertheless I recognized that the proof for the existence of God that I found in it was of its very nature invalid" (p. vi).

With the settled conviction that Scholasticism had nothing to offer, Hermes began to study Kant. He confessed that he learned much from Kant's philosophy; in fact, his esteem for this system was so great that he was on the verge of admitting that there was no solution to his problems, when gradually, by following the Kantian method, he perceived the growth within himself of the power to philosophize and to subject to critical judgment the errors he had derived from his early (Catholic) environment (p. vii).

Therefore, on the foundation of Kant, Hermes began to build his own systematic philosophy and theology. His absolutely fundamental principle, on which all metaphysics must be built, was the principle of absolute doubt even of the most evident truths, until one arrives at an absolute necessity for affirming truth; only by the exclusion of arbitrary methods and by adhering rigidly to this fundamental principle can the desired results be obtained (p. viii). His principle of absolute doubt leads Hermes to the denial of any objective validity whatsoever to our ideas; intellection is a mere natural subjective necessity whereby we appear to perceive an object outside the mind. But the intellect does not affirm the conformity between its ideas and what we perceive; this is the operation of an entirely distinct faculty called (theoretical) reason, whose function is not to understand, but to give a foundation to, the necessity by which our intellect appears to understand (p. 154).

The faculty of reason, therefore, necessarily affirms that our minds are conformed to objectivity, but this necessary affirmation of reason is likewise purely subjective, as the following statement of Hermes clearly proves: "Even when I am forced to affirm something, I cannot

deny the possibility that the object itself may be other than I affirm it to be, but I have not the power to affirm that it is otherwise, or even the power not to affirm it" (p. 187).

Finally, Hermes reaches the zenith of subjective idealism in his statement that these necessary and purely subjective affirmations of reason are the only certitude which we can attain; reason and reason alone, he maintains, gives us not only our subjective certainty of actuality, but also our own reality; and no one has any reality except that which he attains through the affirmations of reason (p. 188). Hence we can see the absolute justice of Gregory XVI in his severe strictures on Hermes:

. . . qui audacter a regio, quem universa traditio et SS. Patres in exponendis et vindicandis fidei veritatibus tramitem stravere, deflectens, quin et superbe contemnens et damnans, tenebrosam ad errorum omnigenum viam molitur in dubio positivo tanquam basi omnis theologicæ inquisitionis et in principio, quod statuit, rationem principem normam ac unicum medium esse, quo homo assequi possit supernaturalium veritatum cognitionem."¹⁹

Hermes' system, then, is a deification of reason. For he makes reason not merely the sole norm and criterion of truth but the creator of all truth, even of the truth of our own existence. Therefore, since no being has any objective reality except that which deified reason bestows upon it, and since, on Hermes' own admission, reason itself is a purely subjective necessity, we must renounce all hope of attaining objective certitude; it is simply not man's lot (p. 187).

In addition to theoretical reason, which concerns the affirmation of speculative truths, Hermes postulates another distinct faculty called practical reason. The function of practical reason is to impose an obligation upon the will with respect to necessary ends; its act is a categorical and ineluctable, though blind and subjective, command; it reinforces this command with the threat of disapproval in the event of disobedience; it is, therefore, the supreme law-giver (p. 206).

What, according to Hermes, are the principle duties and ends which practical reason dictates? They may all be reduced to one, the duty of loving and esteeming the dignity of man for its own sake; for when this duty has been imposed upon the will as the supreme motive of all

¹⁹ Breve *Dum acerbissimas*, in Bernasconi, *Acta Gregorii XVI* (Romæ, 1901-4), II, 85.

human endeavours, the will of man becomes holy, and holiness is the highest nobility; therefore, the primary end of man is his human dignity, which is most worthy of being loved and perfected (p. 212).

In Hermes' system, practical reason, conscience, the moral law, all duties, and finally, man's supreme end have no objective validity, but are mere subjective postulates. For although he speaks at great length about law, sanction, and moral obligation, nevertheless his denial of the essential requisite for true liberty, namely, a judgment that is objectively indifferent, reduces these terms to mere words deprived of their objective, essential, and traditional meaning. There are, then, only two ways of judging with certitude about truth and actuality: the first consists in the affirmations of theoretical reason, and the second lies in the suppositions of practical reason; besides these two, there is absolutely no other means of certitude (p. 256). It is not surprising that the Cardinal inquisitors appointed to examine Hermes' doctrine gave the following as their considered judgment: "evanescere auctorem in cogitationibus suis (Rom. 1:21), pluraque in dictis operibus contexere absurda."²⁰

Thus far, our summary of nearly three hundred pages of Hermes' cumbersome and repetitive attempt to elaborate a new philosophical foundation for theology reveals that, without yet arriving at his main problem, the existence and nature of God, he has settled finally and apodictically the exact nature of man and man's supreme end. Has he not solved his initial problem by equivalently denying the possibility of God's existence? What possible need can theoretical reason, endowed as it is with creative power, or practical reason, the supreme law-giver, have for an objective God, infinite, omnipotent, and utterly transcendent? The only logical answer, granted Hermes' premises, is: "No need whatsoever." It matters not that a subjective God is a contradiction; Hermes, once committed to the unintelligibility of pure subjectivism, remains logically unintelligible to the bitter end.

He can and must admit only a subjective God, who is just as much a creation of reason as Hermes himself, all other men, and all reality. But why should reason bother to create a God? Because, Hermes replies, reason is the purely subjective necessity whereby we are forced

²⁰ Bernasconi, *Acta Gregorii XVI*, II, 87.

to affirm the objectivity of ideas that have no objective validity; these ideas represent beings that are successive in duration, continually exercise mutual causality, and yet have no sufficient reason for their apparent being, either individually or collectively. Therefore, this primary postulate of reason, which forces us to affirm contingent being, demands as a second postulate that we be forced to admit an unique first cause of all contingent being (p. 365).

Once Hermes, through his theoretical reason, has created a first cause, he is immediately confronted with the problem of its nature and attributes. This problem, which had tortured him in his youth, is no longer difficult. Since God, as the unique first cause, is merely a subjectively necessary postulate in order to bolster up a primary postulate which is also subjectively necessary (i.e., the reality of contingent being), reason must postulate for its God those attributes alone without which the former two postulates could not stand (p. 366).

According to Hermes, therefore, God as the first cause must be the unique, eternal, absolute, and immutable creator of the changing world (p. 389). But reason does not postulate infinite perfection of intellect, will, or power in God (pp. 449, 455, 484). How the uniquely infallible faculty of deified reason could admit the contradictory possibility that an eternal and immutable being could be finite is a mystery whose revelation could only be accepted on Hermesian faith.

Having seen everything that theoretical reason can teach us about God, the question arises immediately: What can be known about God by practical reason? Nothing whatsoever about God's existence, Hermes replies; for practical reason forces us to hold as true and actual only: (1) our moral obligations and last end, and (2) anything else that is necessary to fulfill these obligations and thus attain our last end. But man's moral obligations and last end do not depend upon God, because practical reason itself is at one and the same time the legislator, law, and sanction, before we have any knowledge of God, and indeed independently of God (pp. 410, 206, 463).

However, once God's existence and attributes are postulated by theoretical reason, then practical reason teaches us a great deal more, particularly about God's relative attributes and the purpose of creation; for practical reason, precisely because its own categorical imperatives are in no way dependent on God, must demand of God a morality

in harmony with its own (p. 463). Indeed, Hermes adds—with a tortuous perversion of truth difficult to equal or parallel—if our moral obligations were to depend on God, practical reason would not be constrained to postulate moral attributes in God precisely in order to bring Him into harmony with its own moral imperatives, and consequently God would be a being without all morality. Furthermore, since in such an hypothesis we would know that the imperatives of practical reason have their origin in God and not in reason itself, we could not avoid attributing the moral order to the arbitrary restriction of our autonomy by God Himself, and thereby all duties would cease to have any moral obligation (p. 463).

The two moral attributes which practical reason must postulate in God, in order to make His morality harmonious with its own, are sanctity and benevolence; for, as we have seen above, the unique ultimate end that practical reason, independently of God's existence or of any knowledge of Him, proposes as the supreme end of all human endeavour is the dignity, perfection, and happiness of man. When man is motivated in all his actions by this end alone, he is holy; holiness consists in benevolence towards oneself and all men. Therefore, practical reason must impose the same motivation upon God; for reason, which is the sanction of law, charges us with the unholiness of guilt if we do not will absolutely for ourselves and others the greatest possible perfection and happiness as our last end. Hence it would be impossible to affirm either God's sanctity or our own moral obligations unless practical reason assumes that God, by the necessity of His nature, is constrained to will what we are bound to will by autonomous reason (p. 469).

Such a concept of sanctity obviously ascribes to God only liberty of spontaneity, even as it deprives men of true liberty of election. The denial of internal liberty of indifference to God in His actions *ad extra* is proved undeniably by Hermes' assertion:

In order to postulate God's sanctity, practical reason demands that God will all the goodness that He knows; but the goodness willed by God may well be limited, since it is entirely possible that the knowledge of God is limited, and hence He may not know all the goodness that beings outside Himself are capable of receiving (p. 469).

Quite clearly, then, the sole motive of God's creative will, His sole *finis operantis*, must be man and his ultimate perfection; this is stated in explicit terms by Hermes: "Since I am a being of reason and, as such, constitute an end unto myself, therefore I must be the end of God's will" (p. 479). In this brief sentence we have Hermes' complete doctrine on the purpose of creation: (1) the ultimate and sole *finis operis* is man's complete happiness; (2) the sole *finis operantis* is likewise man's complete happiness. There is absolutely no place in Hermes' system for the extrinsic glory of God as an end of creation.

Why cannot it be the *finis operantis*? The reason obviously is not the one that Catholic doctrine proposes, namely, that God cannot be motivated by any finite being without ceasing to be infinite;²¹ for Hermes holds vigorously that God's creative will is not only motivated but also determined by the finite goodness of man's complete happiness. His sole reason for denying that extrinsic glory is God's motive in creating lies in his chimerical and heretical notion of divine sanctity.

It is also impossible in Hermes' system for the extrinsic glory of God to be in any way the *finis operis* of creatures. He cannot even admit with St. Thomas²² and Suarez²³ that, although extrinsic glory is in no way either the *finis operantis* or the *finis operis simpliciter ultimus*, it is nevertheless the *finis quo ultimus operis* of creation. For such an admission, in view of his denial of God's infinity and of His liberty in creation, would necessarily make extrinsic glory the motive of God's creative will and thus destroy his chimerical notions of God's sanctity and of man's autonomy. Such an admission might logically lead to a denial of his fundamental principles, that reason creates God, that neither man nor God are intrinsically free in any action, and that man's *summum bonum* is not God, but himself.

We are now in a position to summarize briefly from his own writings those errors of Hermes which were the occasion of the definition of the Vatican Council concerning extrinsic glory as the end of the world: (1) God is not free in creating, but necessarily wills all the finite goodness that He knows; (2) the internal attribute that forces God to

²¹ Cf. Conc. Colon., *Coll. Lac.*, V, 291; S. Thomas, *C. Gent.*, I, 74.

²² *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 19, a. 1 ad 1m; *C. Gent.*, III, 17-18.

²³ *Disp. Metaph.*, disp. XXIV, sect. 1; *De Ultimo Fine Hominis*, disp. III, sect. 1.

create is His sanctity; (3) by creation God's perfection is increased (this error follows logically from the necessity of creation and was condemned explicitly by the Vatican Council); (4) the unique *finis operantis* and the unique *finis operis* of creation are identical and consist in man's complete happiness; (5) the extrinsic glory of God can in no way be the *finis operis* of creation.

However, the following points should be stressed: (1) Hermes was by no means in error in denying that extrinsic glory is the *finis operantis* of creation; in this simple denial he was in exact accord with Catholic doctrine, even though his reasons were absurd and heretical. (2) His heretical doctrine is the denial that the extrinsic glory of God is in any way the *finis operis* of creation. (3) His error of fact consists in this, that he attributed to the Church the false doctrine that extrinsic glory is the *finis operantis* of creation; for he thought that extrinsic glory could not be in any way the *finis operis* without being the motive of God's creative will.

Therefore, no Catholic theologian who knows the precise nature of the Hermesian errors and is well versed in the doctrine of St. Thomas will explain the Catholic dogma, "Si quis mundum ad Dei gloriam conditum esse negaverit: A. S.,"²⁴ in such a way as even to imply, much less propose explicitly, that the extrinsic glory of God is either the *finis operantis*, *ratio sufficiens creationis unice Deo digna*, the *finis ultimus ab ipso Deo intentus*, or the *finis operis simpliciter ultimus* of the world. Such an explanation is simply not Catholic; even Hermes, whose common sense was not entirely destroyed by his subjectivism, was able to point out the falsity of this explanation with the same argument used by St. Thomas,²⁵ as follows:

Although all agree that God did not seek His own advantage in creating, nevertheless there are theologians who assert that God's purpose in creating was His own glory. They prove this assertion as follows: 'God's perfections are manifested everywhere by creation; God, the most perfect being, certainly had the most perfect purpose; but He could have had no purpose more perfect than Himself.' To state the invalidity of this proof, I think it should be sufficient merely to remark that in this hypothesis we must conclude that everyone who does his work so perfectly that the product gives testimony to the perfection of the workman must act from a desire of glory (p. 471).

²⁴ Conc. Vat., sess. III, can. 5.

²⁵ *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 15 ad 14m; *C. Gent.*, I, 93.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE VATICAN COUNCIL

Having seen from his own writings the genesis, evolution, and final statement of Hermes' errors concerning the end of creation, we are now in a position to understand the condemnation directed against him by the Vatican Council, in the Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Filius*, and in canon 5 annexed to it. For purposes of clarity, we shall treat the Council's doctrine under the following headings: (1) *finis operantis*; (2) *finis operis simpliciter ultimus*; (3) *gloria Dei extrinseca*; (4) *finis cui*. Private judgment has no more guarantee of infallibility in the interpretation of conciliar decrees than it has in the exegesis of Holy Scripture, and hence our method of interpreting consists in the citation of those official documents wherein the intention of the Fathers of the Council is contained.

The Finis Operantis of Creation

The authoritative *Relationes* of the "Deputatio de Fide" show conclusively that the phrase "bonitate sua" in the first chapter, second paragraph, of the *Dei Filius*, designates the *finis operantis* of creation:

Secunda paragraphus huius capituli apponitur contra eosdem nominatim errores. . . . , sed etiam contra eos qui Catholicam Ecclesiam calumniantur propter doctrinam suam qua dicit mundum creatum fuisse propter gloriam Dei, quasi nempe, Deum sisteret suae propriae utilitatis et sui proprii commodi studiosum, quasi nempe, Ecclesia negaret finem operantis fuisse bonitatem suam, ut nempe bonitatem suam creaturis impertiretur.²⁶

Quoad iterum priorem partem [the same paragraph] attinet, scilicet, doctrinam ipsam qualis est in se, exponitur primo motivum creationis, scilicet 'bonitate sua.'²⁷

In these official statements of the meaning of the phrase "bonitate sua," it is clear that the calumny of Hermes is refuted and the doctrine of St. Thomas is affirmed:

Bonitas in Deo importat rationem finis in quo est plenissima perfectio; finis autem movet efficientem ad agendum; unde et bonitas Dei movet quodammodo ipsum ad operandum, non quidem ut ipse bonitatem acquirat, sed ut bonitatem suam aliis communicet. Ut enim dictum est, Deus non agit propter appetitum finis, sed propter amorem finis, volens communicare bonitatem suam quantum

²⁶ Simor, *Relatio, Coll. Lac.*, VII, 86.

²⁷ Gasser, *Relatio, Coll. Lac.*, VII, 109.

possibile est et decens secundum suam providentiam; et ideo sicut finis in omnibus operationibus est primum principium, ita divina bonitas est primum principium communicationis totius qua Deus perfectiones creaturis largitur.²⁸

Therefore, since the intention of the Council is so clear as to the meaning of the phrase "bonitate sua," it seems altogether reasonable to maintain that the proposition, "The *finis operantis* of creation is the intrinsic goodness of God," is a divinely revealed and defined doctrine. However, even though our contention be denied, no one can deny that this proposition is at least theologically certain; for it is an immediate conclusion from the revealed and defined truths that God's creative will is infinite and intrinsically free.²⁹ Being free, the creative will must have a motive in some good intellectually known; being infinite, it cannot be motivated by any except an infinite good. The truth of this proposition was affirmed apodictically by the Council of Cologne in its condemnation of Hermes, as follows:

Si id quod Deum ad creandum impulerit, seu finis operantis quaereretur, dicendum esset, nihil Deum quod ab eo distinctum sit impellere potuisse, quum, utpote sibi sufficiens, nihil sibi appetere possit. Quum porro Deum creasse et quum quidquid agit, ex amore bonitatis suae absolutae, eum agere pariter constet, recte dicimus Deum bonitate sua, ut libere mundum crearet, motum esse. Hoc etiam sensu S. Augustinus dixit: 'Quia bonus est, nos sumus.'³⁰

It is, therefore, surprising to find some Catholic theologians asserting that extrinsic glory, which they all hold to be finite, is the motive,³¹ the primary end,³² the sufficient reason³³ of God's creative act. Such statements have no basis either in revelation or in reason.

The Finis Operis Simpliciter Ultimus of Creation

The Vatican Council teaches that God is the absolutely last end of all creatures: "Eadem sancta mater Ecclesia tenet ac docet Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem, naturali humanae rationis lumine e rebus creatis certo cognosci posse."³⁴ It is quite true that the Council

²⁸ S. Thomas, *In II Sent.*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 1.

²⁹ Cf. *DB*, 1782, 1783, 1805.

³⁰ *Coll. Lac.*, V, 291.

³¹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Dieu, son existence et sa nature*, p. 437.

³² Pinard, *DTC*, III, 2164, 2167, 2191.

³³ Otten, *De Deo Creatante et Elevante*, th. 7, n. 83 *ad fin.*, p. 62; Huarte, *De Deo Creatante et Elevante*, prop. 4, n. 55 *ad fin.*, n. 56 *ad fin.*, pp. 69-71.

³⁴ *Conc. Vat.*, sess. III, cap. 2.

intended to teach directly, as revealed, the active potency of human reason to know with certainty that God is the first cause and last end of all things.³⁵ If, however, it is a formally explicitly revealed truth that man can with certainty know God as the end of all things, then, of necessity, it is a formally implicitly revealed truth that God is the end of all things. God, who is infinite truth, could not reveal the active potency to know with certainty something that is not true; hence, in testifying by His revelation to the active potency to know with certainty a definite object, God must guarantee the truth of the object that can be known. Therefore, since God is the end of all things without exception, He must be the *finis simpliciter ultimus*.

In addition to the argument we have just given, the intention of the Council to teach that God Himself is the last end of all things is perfectly clear from the following authoritative rejection of a proposed emendation:

Reverendissimus postulator vult, quod post verba ex Apostoli auctoritate sumpta ex epistola ad Romanos: 'Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur,' addantur etiam sequentia: 'Unde inexcusabiles sunt, qui cognoscentes Deum, non sicut Deum glorificant nec gratias agunt.' Causa, qua motus est reverendissimus postulator, ea est, scilicet, ut tali ratione cognitio naturalis non solummodo restringatur, ut ipse putat, ad cognitionem Dei theoreticam, sed etiam extendatur ad officia principaliora moralia. Sed sub hoc respectu emendatio ista superflua videtur, quia cum dicimus posse hominem cognoscere Deum rerum omnium principium et finem, utique simul etiam enuntiamus posse hominem intelligere et cognoscere officia principaliora moralia; nam nemo potest tendere in Deum tanquam in finem suum, utique naturalem qua auctorem naturae, nisi etiam cognoscat officia saltem principaliora erga Deum.³⁶

Furthermore, Cornely, referring explicitly to the Vatican Council in his commentary on the text cited by the Council (Rom. 1:20), makes this statement:

Neque vero sempiternam creatoris potentiam solam homo ex iis quae facta sunt colligit, sed similiter aeternam eius maiestatem, quatenus omnium rerum creatarum, non tantum est principium sed etiam supremus dominus . . . finisque ultimus propter quem omnes sunt et in quem omnes tendunt . . . quae omnia Apostolus, ne singula enumerare cogatur, nomine sempiternae divinitatis comprehendit. Iure igitur, his verbis nixa, 'Ecclesia tenet ac docet Deum rerum omnium principium et finem . . . certo cognosci posse.'³⁷

³⁵ Gasser, *Relatio*, Mansi, LI, 272.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 276.

³⁷ *Commentarius in Epist. ad Rom.*, pp. 83, 84; cf. also Lagrange and Boylan *in h. l.*

The Vatican Council, therefore, teaches that the *finis operantis* and the *finis operis simpliciter ultimus* are identical, namely, the intrinsic goodness of God; and in this teaching, as one would expect, the Council is in exact accord with St. Thomas:

Ad primum dicendum quod, licet nihil aliud a Deo sit finis Dei, tamen ipsemet est finis respectu omnium quae ab eo fiunt; et hoc per suam essentiam, cum per essentiam sit bonus; finis enim habet rationem boni.³⁸

Suarez teaches exactly the same doctrine as divinely revealed:

Primo agenti, nihil potest esse optimum et maximum bonum nisi eius intrinseca bonitas; ergo nihil potest esse ultimus finis actionum et effectuum eius nisi ipsemet ratione bonitatis eius.³⁹ Haec conclusio est simpliciter de fide, ut etiam ostendi in Disp. 24, Metaph., sect. 1, quia constat Deum esse finem ultimum creaturarum omnium iuxta illud Apocalypsis 1:8: 'Ego sum Alpha et Omega, principium et finis, dicit Dominus.'⁴⁰

Furthermore, in basing his note "de fide" on the text from the Apocalypse, Suarez is totally in accord with the traditional exegesis of this text.⁴¹

We have stressed at greater length than would ordinarily be necessary the fact that God's intrinsic goodness is the absolutely last end of all creatures, and therefore of His extrinsic glory, which is a creature, according to the official doctrine of the Church and of her greatest theologians, because there are modern manuals of theology and philosophy which deny this truth in explicit terms. Therefore we wish to make the following two points quite clear: (1) No Catholic may hold or teach that anything finite and distinct from God is either the *finis* of God in creating or the *finis simpliciter ultimus* of creatures; for the *finis simpliciter ultimus* is of necessity the first of all causes:

Finis inter alias causas primatum tenet et ab ipso omnes aliae causae habent quod sint causae in actu. Est igitur finis ultimus prima omnium causa. Esse autem primam omnium causam necesse est primo enti convenire, quod est Deus. Deus igitur est ultimus omnium finis.⁴²

But if the first of all causes be finite, it cannot be God; to deny that God is the first of all causes is open heresy.⁴³ (2) Much less may one

³⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 19, a. 1 ad 1m.

⁴⁰ *De Ultimo Fine Hominis*, disp. III, sect. 1.

⁴² *C. Gent.*, III, 17.

³⁹ *Disp. Metaph.*, disp. XXIV, sect. 1.

⁴¹ Cf. Allo, *S. Jean, l'Apocalypse*, on 1:8.

⁴³ Cf. *DB*, 1782, 1801, 1805.

hold and teach that the Vatican Council defined and proposed for universal belief the proposition, "The intrinsic goodness of God cannot be the supreme end of creation."

Gloria Dei Extrinseca

It is of great importance to note that in its final form the doctrine on this point, made definitive on April 24, 1870, is exactly the same as the doctrine proposed on December 10, 1869, to the Fathers of the Council for their approval, in the *Schema Prosynodale*. The truth of this statement is evident from the following citation:

Pariter vero illorum haeresim damnamus qui dixerunt Deum non potuisse non creare, sed creasse ita necessario sicut necessario seipsum amat, aut per creationem in Deo ipso aliquid perfectionis vel beatitudinis augmentum accessisse; aut mundum non ad gloriam Dei, voluntate libera a necessitate, creatum esse. Creavit enim Deus universa ex sua bonitate, non ad acquirendam vel ad augendam, sed ad manifestandam suam perfectionem per ipsa bona quae fecit suisque tribuit creaturis.⁴⁴

Authoritative "Annotationes" explain the intention of the authors of the text just cited from the *Schema Prosynodale*:

Excluditur falsa doctrina de fine creationis; error vero duplex indicatur: (1) vel enim dicitur, cum ipsa intrinseca vita Dei connecti creationem ita ut ex exigentia vitae divinae creatio sit necessaria atque adeo aliquid perfectionis et beatitudinis pro Deo ipso contineatur in creatione quod sine illa deesset; (2) vel affirmatur finem in creando fuisse tantummodo felicitatem et bonum creaturae, non autem Deum creasse nec potuisse creare mundum ad suam gloriam, quia hoc studium gloriae, aiunt, esset repugnans divinae sanctitati.⁴⁵ Prior illa sententia est manifesta haeresis. . . ; nec minus haeretica est et contra doctrinam praedicationis Ecclesiae, si altera sententia hoc sibi vult, finem, a Deo operi suo praestitutum, non esse manifestationem gloriae suae. Finis enim operis exprimitur dum in schemate dicitur mundum creatum esse in gloriam Dei.⁴⁶

The Fathers of the Council accepted the doctrine of the *Schema Prosynodale* as explained in the above citation; the only change they requested was that the positive doctrine be separated from the condemnations, by placing the former in chapters and the latter in

⁴⁴ *Schema Prosynodale*, cap. 13, *Coll. Lac.*, VII, 514; cf. *DB*, 1783, 1805.

⁴⁵ Cf. Hermes' doctrine on God's sanctity, *supra*.

⁴⁶ *Adnotationes in primum schema*, *Coll. Lac.*, VII, 540.

canons.⁴⁷ Thus we find that Bishop Gasser, in rejecting an emendation which proposed the deletion of the canon concerning the glory of God, explains the doctrine as pertaining to the *finis operis* of creation and not to the *finis operantis*:

Quod ad istam emendationem [quadagesimam quintam] attinet, vult quod eradatur omnino canon seu pars illa canonis quae agit de fine creati; nam utique de fine creati et non de fine creantis sermo est, quia dicitur in canone, 'aut mundum ad Dei gloriam conditum esse negaverit.' Ergo agitur de fine creati sive de fine creaturae; ergo vult quod eradatur canon iste. Maior pars, immo maxima pars Deputationis de Fide hanc emendationem omnino reiiciendam putavit, et quidem, ex causis quas iam attuli, ubi agebatur de fine creatoris, et quas deberem repetere multo magis hic ubi agitur de fine creaturae sive de fine creati.⁴⁸

Therefore, from the very beginning of the conciliar discussions to the final formulation of doctrine, we see that the Council intended to teach that the glory of God is the *finis operis* of creation and not the *finis operantis*; for the authoritative decision of the "Deputatio de Fide," as put by its official spokesman in the citation just given, was accepted with almost mathematical unanimity by the Fathers of the Council: "quadagesimam quintam, omnes, uno tantum vel altero excepto, reiecerunt."⁴⁹ Consequently, according to the express intention of the Vatican Council, it is a revealed and solemnly defined dogma that the glory of God is the *finis operis* of the world.

By the word glory, the Vatican Council understands extrinsic glory. Such was always the understanding of the Church's doctrine, not merely by the great Scholastic doctors and all theologians, but also by those who opposed this teaching, as we have seen in the case of Hermes. However, we can prove from the Acts of the Council that the word glory in canon 5 means extrinsic glory, and that by extrinsic glory the Council understands the finite manifestation of God's perfection and the finite communication of His goodness. For, according to the express declaration of the "Deputatio de Fide," the doctrine of the canons, expressed negatively in the form of anathemas, contains the same formal concept as the corresponding doctrine contained in the chapters:

⁴⁷ *Ratio in priore schemate dogmatico emendendo a Patribus deputatis servata, Coll. Lac.*, VII, 78.

⁴⁸ Mansi, LI, 198.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 199.

Sed secundo propterea attendendum fuit, ut in canonibus condendis, errores sub eo formali conceptu condemnarentur, sub quo formali conceptu in capitibus doctrina proponitur. . . . Deputatio suae obligationis esse novit canones apponere ideo ut vestro desiderio vestroque postulato satisfiat.⁵⁰

The only part of chapter I that corresponds to canon 5, and therefore, according to the express desire and postulate of the Council, contains the same formal concept, is the phrase “ad manifestandam perfectionem suam per bona quae creaturis impertitur.” From the authoritative reply, accepted by the entire Council, of Bishop Gasser in rejecting a proposed emendation (the twenty-fourth), we know that the phrase “per bona quae creaturis impertitur” is, according to the intention of the Council, exactly equivalent to the phrase “ad perfectionem suam communicandam”:

In hac emendatione proponitur addi debere vocem ‘communicandam’ post ‘manifestandam’; sed Deputatio hanc additionem non accepit, et quidem ex eo quia in sequentibus, ‘per bona quae creaturis impertitur,’ utique idem continetur quod auctor huius emendationis proposuit.⁵¹

Obviously, the “bona quae creaturis impertitur” are finite goods, and are therefore finite communications of God’s goodness; hence the parallel phrase “ad manifestandam suam perfectionem” similarly refers to a finite manifestation of God’s perfection.

However, we do not have to rely on our private interpretation of these two phrases; for Bishop Gasser, in the same *Relatio* just cited, gives us an authoritative interpretation that was accepted by the entire Council. The twenty-fifth emendation proposed that the phrase “per bona quae creaturis impertitur,” be deleted. Bishop Gasser replies: “Haec verba debent manere, quia designant finem creationis, qui descendit ex causa movente Dei.”⁵² Now, it is clear that an end of creation that is caused by the intrinsic goodness of God is necessarily distinct from God, and therefore is a finite communication of God’s goodness. Similarly, Bishop Gasser interprets the phrase, “ad manifestandam suam perfectionem,” in rejecting the twenty-fifth emendation, which proposed its deletion: “Tam videtis, Rmi. Patres, cur Deputatio de Fide hanc emendationem suam facere

⁵⁰ Simor, *Relatio, Coll. Lac.*, VII, 85.

⁵¹ Mansi, LI, 194.

⁵² *Loc. cit.*

non potuerit, quia in hac emendatione sermo est solummodo de fine movente, non vero de fine qui descendit ex causa exemplari."⁵³ Obviously again, an end of creation, proceeding from God as the exemplary cause, is necessarily finite, and therefore is a finite manifestation of God's intrinsic perfection.

Consequently, we have an authoritative interpretation of the entire phrase "ad manifestandam perfectionem suam per bona quae creaturis impertitur." It means the finite manifestation of God's perfection and the finite communication of His goodness. Since the corresponding canon contains exactly the same formal concept, it is clear that the "glory of God" in the canon means extrinsic glory. It is, therefore, a revealed and solemnly defined dogma that the extrinsic glory of God is the *finis operis* of the world. Consequently, every creature by its very nature tends toward that finite manifestation of God's perfection and that finite communication of His goodness which constitute the ultimate intrinsic and finite perfection of which each is capable.⁵⁴

Did the Vatican Council define only the fact that the extrinsic glory of God is the *finis operis* of the world, or did it intend to define precisely how extrinsic glory is the *finis operis*? It is evident from the Acts of the Council that only the fact is defined. Archbishop Simor, speaking officially as the representative of the "Deputatio de Fide," states explicitly that the authors of the canons exercised the greatest care and diligence so that they would not express any more than was absolutely necessary for the condemnation of error:

Cum, Rmi. Patres, postulaveritis ut propositae doctrinae catholicae adicerentur canones, atque in hisce canonibus errores oppositi doctrinae catholicae condemnarentur, habetis canones in hocce schemate. Nihil difficilius est quam canonem condere; in hisce canonibus condendis Deputatio summam adhibuit solertiam et diligentiam, primum ideo ne plus diceret quam dicere oportuit; scitis enim quod Ecclesia Catholica numquam dogmata vel in conciliis definiat nisi sit necessarium.⁵⁵

Bishop Eberhard of Treves, who was thoroughly familiar with the evasions and subterfuges of Hermesians in his own diocese, feared lest they would escape the condemnation, as we now have it in canon 5, by admitting that extrinsic glory is the *finis operis*, but only in a

⁵³ *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁴ *Cf. C. Gent.*, III, 18, 19, 20.

⁵⁵ *Coll. Loc.*, VII, 84.

secondary sense and subordinate to the beatitude of man. Therefore he proposed an emendation that would state that the glory of God is the primary end of the world as opposed to the secondary end, which is man's beatitude.⁵⁶ Bishop Gasser in his official rejection of Bishop Eberhard's emendation states:

Deputatio de Fide non potuit huic emendationi accedere, saltem maior eiusdem pars . . . quia Deputatio de Fide putavit, cum error iste sub anathemate proponatur, ergo tamquam haereticus proscribatur, sufficere dicere illi anathema esse qui negaverit mundum ad Dei gloriam conditum esse.⁵⁷

In the vote that followed, the Fathers of the Council rejected Bishop Eberhard's emendation: "Quadragesimam sextam fere omnes reiecerunt."⁵⁸

The official document entitled, "Ratio in schemate dogmatico emendando a patribus deputatis servata," pronounces the purpose of the Council in general and of the *Constitutio Dogmatica* in particular to be the following:

Ad obsecrandum desiderio plurium Rmorum Patrum placuit prooemium paulo amplius praemitti, quo post commemoratos Concilii Tridentini, ultimi oecumenici, laetos fructus, errores qui postea lapsu temporis nati et sparsi sunt, ob oculos ponerentur, atque ita tum finis Concilii Vaticani in universum, tum proprius Constitutionum dogmaticarum scopus indicaretur. Qui scopus esse non potest, ut fidei dogmata, de quibus agitur, plene declarentur, sed quatenus necessarium est ad fideles praemuniendos contra errores, qui hac nostra aetate maxime grassantur.⁵⁹

As we have seen, the necessity which prompted the Vatican definition was the widely propagated doctrine of Hermes, whose condemnation by the Brief of Gregory XVI had been no deterrent to those imbued with similar opinions, notably Günther. Hermes and Günther denied that the extrinsic glory of God is in any way a *finis operis* of the world. Therefore, to condemn this heresy, it was sufficient and necessary to define that extrinsic glory is a true *finis operis* of the world. This and this alone, according to the express intention of the Fathers of the Council, is all that is defined. Consequently, the assertion found in so many modern manuals of theology and philosophy that the finite entity of God's extrinsic glory was solemnly defined by the Vatican

⁵⁶ Mansi, LI, 107.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁵⁹ *Coll. Lac.*, VII, 78, 79.

Council as the supreme end of creation, the *finis simpliciter ultimus operis*, the *finis qui ultimus* of the world has no foundation whatsoever. It is unscholarly and perfectly gratuitous.

Furthermore, though it was beyond the clearly stated purpose of the Council to define precisely how the extrinsic glory of God is the *finis operis* of the world, we can say with certainty that the Council could not have taught that the extrinsic glory of God is the *finis simpliciter ultimus* of the world; for in so teaching, it would have contradicted its own doctrine that God Himself is the end of all things, and therefore is the final cause of extrinsic glory. It would likewise have contradicted the doctrine of St. Thomas and Suarez, according to whom God's intrinsic goodness, which only a pantheist would think of identifying with the totally finite entity of extrinsic glory, is the unique *finis simpliciter ultimus* of the world.

To show by an example how impossible it is for the extrinsic glory of God to be the absolutely last end of creation, let us consider the highest grade of extrinsic glory possible for men to attain, the beatific vision. The beatific vision is a created thing; excepting, of course, the hypostatic union, it is the highest finite manifestation of God's perfection, the highest finite communication of His intrinsic goodness, but it is not God; and therefore, as a finite, though supernatural, operation of a created intellect, it must have an extrinsic efficient and final cause, which can be no other than God. God, therefore, of metaphysical necessity, is the first final cause, the *finis simpliciter ultimus*, not only of the beatific vision, but also of every lower grade of His extrinsic glory. For all extrinsic glory in any grade whatsoever, as the end of creatures, consists not in their mere existence but in those operations which are the ultimate intrinsic and finite perfection of each. But every finite operation, every finite perfection is only good, and hence can only be desired as an end, because it is a participation of God's goodness. Hence, as St. Thomas points out, no operation can be the absolutely last end:

Dicendum quod obiectum operationis terminat et perficit ipsam et est finis eius. Unde impossibile est operationem habere rationem finis ultimi. Cum enim omnis operatio sit propter aliquod bonum verum vel apparens, nihil autem est vel apparet bonum nisi secundum quod participat aliquam similitudinem

summi boni quod est Deus, sequitur quod ipse Deus sit cuiuslibet operationis causa ut finis.⁶⁰

Cum enim finis dicatur quandoque res, quandoque adeptio rei, sicut avaro finis est vel pecunia sive possessio pecuniae, manifestum est quod simpliciter loquendo, ultimus finis est ipsa res; non enim possessio pecuniae est bona nisi propter bonum pecuniae.⁶¹

Ad decimum quartum dicendum quod communicatio bonitatis non est ultimus finis, sed ipsa divina bonitas ex cuius amore est quod Deus eam communicare velit.⁶²

The Finis Cui of Creation

God is the first final cause, the ultimate end of all finite being. Does this mean that He is the *finis cui* of creatures in the sense that He is the one for whom the finite perfection of His extrinsic glory is acquired? Is this the doctrine of the Vatican Council? Such an explanation of how God is the first final cause is totally incompatible with the solemnly defined dogma of God's utter transcendence; and its impossibility is shown conclusively by Billot:

At finis cui non pertinet ad causam finalem, sed omnino reducitur ad materialem, quia explicat rationem subiecti perfectibilis, quod seipso bono nequaquam perfectum est aut beatum esse potest; cui proinde desideratur et appetitur bonum quo indiget. Et hoc bonum concupitum, si sit concupitum tamquam finale bonum [i.e., finis qui ultimus], eo ipso excellens ac per omnia supereminens in appretiatione concupiscentis esse ostenditur; concupiscitur enim ut fons consummatae et ultimatae perfectionis.⁶³

Compare the following citation from Otten with Billot and with the next citation from St. Thomas:

Finis in bono finito et creato consistens non est Deo dignus. Atqui glorificatio Dei, ex creaturis habenda, est bonum finitum et creatum. Ergo.

Resp. Finis qui in bono finito et creato consistens non est Deo dignus, *Neg.* Finis cui primarius in bono finito et creato . . ., *Conc.*

Explic. Id quod Deus creando intendit, utpote a creaturis obtinendum, in se utique aliquid finitum et creatum est, cum in earum actibus consistat; hoc tamen, non propter ipsum, sed propter se intendit Deus. Neque illud primarie creaturis intendit sed sibiipsi, ideoque ipse est finis cui primarius creationis.⁶⁴

Since it runs counter to all the principles of metaphysics to reduce

⁶⁰ *In II Sent.*, d. 1, a. 1; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 105, a. 5.

⁶¹ *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 16, a. 3.

⁶² *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 15 ad 14m.

⁶³ *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Romae, 1905), p. 371. ⁶⁴ Otten, *De Deo Creatore et Elevante*, p. 63.

the infinite God to the level of a material cause, which is the most imperfect of all causes, it is a contradiction in terms to say that God is the end of creation because He acquires for Himself an extrinsic good:

Deo autem non potest aliquid acquiri ex actione cuiuslibet rei; est enim sua bonitas omnino perfecta. Relinquitur igitur quod Deus sit finis rerum, non sicut aliquid constitutum aut aliquid effectum a rebus, neque ita quod aliquid ei a rebus acquiritur, sed hoc solo modo quia ipse rebus acquiritur.⁶⁵

Therefore, God truly wills His extrinsic glory, not as the motive of His creative will nor as the supreme end of creatures, but only in as much as it is the communication of His goodness. God can be motivated by His intrinsic goodness, which is His sole *finis operantis*, to act *ad extra* only by giving, by an act of utter liberality. He simply cannot be motivated to an act of acquisition, because He possesses infinite goodness. Therefore, Billot is truly in accord with Catholic doctrine when he says, "In beneficiis nobis collatis divina gloria consistit."⁶⁶ And St. Thomas likewise:

Respondeo dicendum quod Deo reverentiam et honorem exhibemus non propter seipsum, quia ex seipso est gloria plenus, cui nihil a creatura adiici potest; sed propter nos, quia videlicet per hoc quod Deum reveremur et honoramus, mens nostra ei subiicitur, et in hoc eius perfectio consistit.⁶⁷

Unde patet quod Deus suam gloriam non quaerit propter se sed propter nos.⁶⁸

In conclusion, then, the doctrine of St. Thomas is in full accord with the teaching of the Vatican Council; it is the only rational explanation of the end of creation, because it never loses sight of the transcendence of God and the analogy of being; it is the only safe basis of asceticism, because it establishes with utter logical precision the fact that our wills, though free, are not autonomous, but rather, as finite, they are always totally dependent on God, the first efficient cause of all being and the first final cause of all good.

It is a very encouraging sign that, due in large part to the scholarly research of Stufler and also to the renewed interest in St. Thomas during the last fifty years, the anthropomorphic explanation of the purpose of creation is being rejected more and more in theological faculties throughout the world. It is interesting to note that the doctrine and

⁶⁵ *C. Gent.*, III, 18.

⁶⁷ *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 7.

⁶⁶ *De Virt. Inf.*, p. 394.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 132, a. 1 ad 1m.

terminology of St. Thomas is taught in the Jesuit theological faculty of Louvain, where Lessius himself once taught. Moreover, in the latest edition of his excellent treatise, *De Deo Creante et Elevante*, Fr. Charles Boyer, S.J., Prefect of Studies of the Pontifical Gregorian University, rejects the terminology of Lessius, which he had followed in the two earlier editions, and follows the position and terminology of St. Thomas.

In the field of asceticism, however, it will take much longer to eradicate entirely the unwarranted impression that in acting for God's greater glory we are paying to God a tribute which He desired to acquire for Himself through creation, and to instill the truth that in so acting we are freely cooperating, in the order of finite and secondary causes, whose every action is an effect of the first cause, in receiving from God the highest communication of His intrinsic goodness that He can give—a share in His divine life and happiness.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this article has been to demonstrate that the Vatican Council by no means defined that the extrinsic glory of God is either the absolutely last end of creation or the ultimate *finis qui* of creation, but rather defined only this: the extrinsic glory of God is a true end of creation. Hence I contend that the appeal to the Vatican on the part of so many manuals to prove their statement that the extrinsic glory of God is the absolutely last end of creation is groundless and should no longer be perpetuated.

With regard to certain other conclusions, both in this and in my previous article, I expect to be questioned. Therefore, in order to forestall some of the doubts which will probably occur, let me state briefly my position, as follows: (1) The exposition of St. Thomas is, to say the very least, superior to that of Lessius and most modern manuals. On this point, I think, there will be general agreement. (2) I have maintained that the difference in treatment is not a question of terminology; furthermore, it is not a question of different emphases. However, the real objective difference, in my opinion, in no way concerns the facts to be explained, but rather the explanation of these facts.

The facts concerning which all Catholics are unanimously agreed, are the following: (a) God's creative will, since it is infinite, can be

motivated only by His intrinsic goodness, which is therefore the sole *finis operantis* of creation, as the Council of Cologne solemnly decreed. (b) God Himself, intrinsically and objectively, not merely by extrinsic denomination and metaphorically, is the *finis simpliciter ultimus* of all finite beings. (c) God's extrinsic glory, a finite entity, not only multiple but actually multiplied with the existence of each finite being, is the created manifestation of God's intrinsic perfection and the created communication of His intrinsic goodness; as such it is the ultimate intrinsic *finis operis* of creation.

These are the facts which should be explained in the treatise on creation. If in the process of explanation any one of these facts is denied, it would seem obvious that the explanation itself is false. The question of a real difference of exposition, therefore, is not whether or not all authors of manuals sincerely intend to hold these three propositions; they do and they must, as Catholics. The question is solely this: Can the explanations of many manuals be reconciled, not according to the intention of the authors—concerning which I have never had any doubt—but according to what they say objectively, with these three propositions? Do these explanations, or do they not, at least imply that the extrinsic glory of God is the ultimate intention, the sufficient reason, the motive of creation? Is such an implication reconcilable with the first proposition? Do not many authors state explicitly in their explanation that the extrinsic glory of God is the *finis simpliciter ultimus* of creation, and do they not deny, some explicitly and others implicitly, that the intrinsic goodness of God can be the *finis simpliciter ultimus* of creation? Can these statements be reconciled objectively with the objective truth of the second proposition that they intended to explain?

Difference in terminology is not the solution of these queries. A difference that is purely one of terminology is merely a nominal difference and involves necessarily a different definition of identical terms, which are then applied to different objective realities; for example, the difference of terminology with regard to the various divisions of the supernatural. However, in our problem, the various terms are defined in exactly the same way by all Scholastics, but are applied to different objective realities. For example, according to St. Thomas, Suarez, Ferrariensis, Billot, Stuffer, Donat, and others, God's intrinsic good is

the *finis simpliciter ultimus* and the *finis qui* of creation, whereas, according to many manuals, in which these terms are defined precisely in the same way, the extrinsic glory of God is the *finis simpliciter ultimus* and the *finis qui* of creation. Therefore, unless one can show that the terms are defined differently, it is difficult to see how one can maintain that their application, in the one case to an infinite object, in the other to a finite object, constitutes merely a difference of terminology. This is not only my opinion, but also quite clearly that of Stuffer⁶⁹ and Bil-
lot.⁷⁰

3) The designation of the exposition of many manuals as "Lessian" may be questioned. It is quite true that Lessius never calls extrinsic glory the *finis simpliciter ultimus* of the world, but he is the first theologian of note, and also the first with whom I am acquainted, to apply the term *finis qui*, which he defined in precisely the same way as St. Thomas, Suarez, and the other great Scholastics, to extrinsic glory. Since, however, as I have already pointed out, both St. Thomas and Suarez have proved conclusively that the *finis qui* of creation according to their definition, which is identical with that of Lessius, is necessarily the *finis simpliciter ultimus* of creation, it is not surprising that so many authors use the two terms synonymously. Furthermore, the new element in Lessius' exposition, for which one will search St. Thomas in

⁶⁹ "Wer die in vorgehendem dargestellte Lehre des hl. Thomas vom Schöpfungszweck einer genauen Prüfung unterzieht, dürfte ihr wohl ohne Bedenken den Vorzug vor jener neueren Auffassung einräumen. Denn fürs erste, scheint die Behauptung dass nicht Gott selbst, sondern vielmehr ein endliches Gut, seine Verherrlichung, der absolut letzte Zweck der Schöpfung (*finis qui operis*) sei, ganz unhaltbar zu sein. . . . Wenn daher die genannten Theologen [Stentrup, Wilmers, Hontheim, Palmieri, Mazzella] in Übereinstimmung mit dem hl. Thomas die göttliche Güte als *ratio creandi* und *finis operantis* bezeichnen und ausserdem geben, dass Gott die geschaffenen Dinge nur wollen könne, insofern sie Nachbildungen seiner eigenen unendlichen Vollkommenheit sind, so können sie nur durch eine merkwürdige Inkonsequenz den *finis qui operis* in etwas Geschaffenes, in die äussere Verherrlichung Gottes verlegen. . . . Wie man auf ersten Blick sieht, weicht diese Auffassung vom Schöpfungszweck bedeutend von der Lehre des hl. Thomas ab. . . . Nur wenn man zur Lehre des hl. Thomas zurückkehrt und mit ihm betont, dass Gott bei der Erschaffung der Welt in keiner Rücksicht etwas empfangen, sondern vielmehr nur mitteilen und seine Güte vervielfältigen will, ist man imstande, das Dogma von der Verherrlichung Gottes als dem Endzweck der Schöpfung in wahrhaft befriedigender Weise zu erklären und begründen" (*Zeitschr. f. kath. Theol.*, XLI [1917], 698-99, 697, 700).

⁷⁰ "Duobus modis intellegi posset assertio qua Deus dicitur propter finem suae ipsius gloriae velle creaturas. Uno modo qui videtur esse in mente multorum, accipiendo hanc gloriam pro gloria quam Deus quaereret a creaturis, quaeque se haberet per modum cuius-

vain, is this: the extrinsic glory of God is an extrinsic good which He intended to acquire for Himself by creation. This statement, which occurs several times in his exposition, is unfortunate for two reasons. First, because it does not square with what Lessius himself says about God's immutability in many places, for example, "Tanta enim in ipso est omnis boni plenitudo ut nulla fingi possit accessio."⁷¹ Secondly, because this anthropomorphic statement of Lessius has been assumed by many authors of manuals as a fundamental principle in the explanation of the purpose of creation. Only the presumption that God really acquires an external good for Himself by creation can logically justify the following proof, which occurs frequently in so many philosophical and theological manuals: "Finis absolute ultimus mundi nequit esse nisi Deus ipse. Ergo aut est gloria interna aut externa. Atqui non gloria interna. Ergo gloria externa." To me, the conclusion seems to be a flat contradiction of the initial premise. The argumentation

dam accidentalis supplementi sive additamenti ad gloriam essentialem, qua est intra semetipsum ab aeterno gloriosus. Alio modo, pro ipsissima gloria Deo intrinseca, in esse diffusae, manifestatae, propagatae ad extra per quamdam similitudinis participationem; quae quidem diffusio eidem infinitae et ineffabili gloriae nihil prorsus adderet praeter meram relationem rationis ad participantes cognoscentes, laudantes creaturas. Et inter duos hos modos plus distat quam inter coelum et terram, ut cuilibet vel parum consideranti apparebit. Porro primus modus nequidem in quaestionem venire potest. Sic enim gloria quae est a creaturis se haberet ut ex qua ditesceret Deus, essetque Deo finis, sicut finis est mundanis hominibus qui suum in ea bonum reponunt et de quibus vere dicitur quod quaesitam a se mercedem, si forte accipiant, vani vanam accipiunt; quos culpat sermo sacer et vituperat sanctorum veridica auctoritas reprehendens eos de iis quoque quae faciunt caeteroquin praeclara et magna et iusta, nisi facienda haec essent fine veri boni, non ventositatis laudis humanae. Hic etiam modus poneret bonum laudis creatae *finem-qui*, id esset, qui esset intentus a Deo, dum Deus ipse non esset nisi *finis-cui*, cui scilicet vellet Deus eiusmodi bonum, id est sibi. Et hoc quid aliud esset quam ponere in Deo amorem concupiscentiae, eumque facere cupidum gloriae, cum tamen Augustinus dicat, et verissime, evidentissime dicat (*De Civit. Dei*, V, c. 14): 'tanto unumquemque esse Deo certiore, quanto est a cupiditate gloriae mundior.'

... Longe igitur alio modo intellegendum est, Deum ad finem suae gloriae condidisse mundum. Oportet enim ut finis divini velle sit aliquid Deo non extrinsecum sed plane intrinsecum; aliquid a Deo non acquirendum sed communicandum; aliquid denique ideo a Deo intentum, non ut sit Deo bonum, quasi ad eius beatitudinis quaecumque complementum faciens, sed e contra, quia est Deo bonum: bonum, inquam, quod est omnis boni bonum, bonum unde omne bonum, cui non additur quod sit ipsum bonum; denique bonum quod concedet liberaliter communicari ad extra quantum est possibile, quodque praecise quia ipsum concedet, fuit de facto in creatione mundi effusissima largitate communicatum" (*De Deo Uno et Trino*, 248-50).

⁷¹ *De Perf. Mor. Div.*, p. 35.

supposes that God, in acting *ad extra*, does so to acquire some good; He can acquire no intrinsic goodness; therefore He acquires extrinsic goodness, which is the *finis absolute ultimus*. Lessius, moreover, in his entire treatment of this question nowhere cites St. Thomas, whereas only a cursory acquaintance with many modern manuals is needed to prove that the authors themselves at least intend to follow Lessius, who is cited continuously. Therefore, it does not seem unfair to say that the exposition of Lessius is at least the occasion and basis of the development of the question in many manuals and that, in this sense, their explanation is justly called "Lessian." Such, certainly, is the opinion of Stuffer.

4) It may appear to some that my criticism of the manuals is too severe. To this I can only reply that my judgment has not been hasty, but is rather the product of five years fairly constant study of the entire problem. It is in no way intended to be a reflection on the ability of these theologians. One can make, and great theologians have made, mistakes on matters less difficult than the present problem. To me, however, this is a fundamental problem, whose correct solution has far-reaching ramifications, not only in Scholastic theology, but also in the practical sphere of ascetics. It is a matter, I think, in which the complete truth is the only possible charity. If, therefore, the exposition which I have criticized is as incorrect as I sincerely believe it to be, then the consequences of such mistaken notions concerning a fundamental dogma constitute too great a danger to the welfare of souls to permit of silence or compromise.