

A MODERN SCHOOL OF THOUGHT ON THE SUPERNATURAL

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THE question of the relation between the natural and the supernatural has occupied theologians of all ages.¹ In our own days, its discussion has been particularly active; for it is generally acknowledged to be "the great theological question of modern times."² Because of the Church's tolerance of speculative discussion within the limits of her definitive pronouncements, widely variant solutions have been offered, which depend directly upon philosophical systems and upon particular theological points of view. The names of Rousselot, Maréchal, and De Broglie have been associated with one such attempt at solution. Its major outlines will be sketched in this article. For the moment, the purpose is simply expository. Although reference will be made to certain central points on which criticism has been focused, the formal task of critical appraisal of their views will be left to future articles.

MODERN INTEREST IN THE PROBLEM

Jean Rivière has recently asked: "Would it be extraordinary or only paradoxical to advance the assertion that the doctrine of the supernatural is as important as it is poorly understood, or vice versa?" He adds the comment:

The whole economy of Christian dogma centers about this notion; all our spiritual life is nourished at this reality. But this notion and this reality are not made very luminous for the mind nor captivating for the heart by the maze of technical precisions and distinctions contributed by the professional theologians, whether in their learned treatises *de ente supernaturali* or in their manuals of more popular character. Yet, this doctrine, more perhaps than any other, belongs to that class of teaching which plunges its roots in the deepest soil of human religion and of divine revelation.³

¹ "Immanence," *DAFC*, II, 605.

² P. Descoqs, S.J., *Le mystère de notre élévation surnaturelle* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1938), p. 5. We here wish to recognize that much of our inspiration and many of our answers to the difficulties of those we criticize were taken from this opuscle and from personal letters from Father Descoqs.

³ "Notre état surnaturel," *Nouvelle revue apologetique*, I (1939), 105.

Moreover, this question of the relation between the two orders is "one of the most important questions in any preliminary introduction to Christian apologetics."⁴ Again, there is great stress today on the human, on human values, and on "the free exercise of man's spiritual powers which must be protected from tyrannous encroachments. The human personality must be enthroned in a unique sacredness."⁵ But this concern for human values must be governed by the central Christian truth:

By the fact of the Incarnation the problem of life has been posited in new terms. Individuals, it is true, may decline to accept them, but they remain for all that the only valid statement of the problem. The problem is not: how to be human, but: how to be human divinely. Man's aspirations after self-completion must carry him to the acceptance of the divinizing grace of Christ, or they are doomed to sterility. Historically, man's nature has been opened to a share in divinity; it cannot close itself, and it attempts to do so at peril of self-destruction. The naturalist idea, the idea of human nature as an entity self-sufficient and all-sufficient, is not only a profanation of the love of God for man; it is an unreality, a contradiction, that nullifies its own affirmation of nature by its denial of anything more than nature. All its achievements, in spite of their multitude and magnificence, have brought it no nearer to its own ideal of humanism; they are but the Augustinian *splendida vitia*, and their net result has been to make of human life the shell of emptiness that we hear rattling all around us. It is certainly no accident that the century and half which has witnessed its domination should have culminated in military barbarism, that makes humanity its victim.⁶

Little wonder, then, that the study of the relation between nature and grace, of the point of insertion of the latter into the former, of the "frontier zone" between the two orders,⁷ has always been, and is now, "one of the questions which have most completely preoccupied those theologians who constitute what we might call *la grande tradition de l'école*,"⁸ which emphasized, in Christian and Catholic spirit, the fact that progress of all kinds could be integrated into the total purpose of the supernatural life.

⁴ "Le rapport de la nature et du surnaturel," *Revue apologetique*, V (1908), 513.

⁵ J. C. Murray, S.J., "Towards a Christian Humanism: Aspects of the Theology of Education," *A Philosophical Symposium of American Catholic Education* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1941), p. 109. ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁷ The expression is from E. Rolland, "Le surnaturel et Malebranche," *Archives de philosophie*, XIV, cahier I (1938), [2].

⁸ Dom Mark Pontifex, "The Natural and the Supernatural," *The Downside Review*, No. 174 (1940), 186.

EVOLUTION IN TERMINOLOGY

In order to be fully understood, modern theories of the supernatural would have to be grasped as a phase in a long history of development in terminology and in doctrine. However, it is not possible here to do more than indicate the fact that there has been such a development.

The old Greek philosophers, from whom Christian philosophy and theology borrowed so much terminology, had no word for the supernatural as we know it, since revelation had not been given to them. Nevertheless, the Greek "was human enough to aspire after the salvation of his humanity through a deification; *σωτηρία* and *θειωσις* were to him correlative terms."⁹ In fact, according to W. Schmidt, "even the early primitives who believed in a reward in the world beyond conceived their recompense as an existence in the company of the supreme being, where death, sickness, and suffering would have no part, but where delights of all sorts would be enjoyed."¹⁰ But Hellenism made an advance, in that "this aspiration [for salvation through deification] becomes formal. Reserved to some hero of Homer or Hesiod, divinization is, at least in its broadest sense, the end proposed by the various pagan mysteries, insofar as that immortality which was promised to the initiate comprised a happiness equal to that of the gods."¹¹ Moreover, this aspiration "affirmed itself in the clearest possible manner among the philosophers either as a divine assimilation resulting from a life purified and guided by wisdom, or even, as with Plotinus, as an ecstatic union of the soul with the One."¹² The realization of that ideal was, however, left to the sole effort of man, and as such was condemned to remain forever inoperative. "Nowhere better than here does St. Paul's message to the Athenians find its application: 'What you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you' (Acts 17:23). This God after which Hellenism was groping was proclaimed in the good news announced by Christ, when He, as it were, lent His hand to steady mankind in its hesitating and ineffectual march toward Him."¹³

Furthermore, even in the Christian tradition, the word "super-

⁹ Murray, *art. cit.*, p. 112.

¹⁰ *Origine et évolution de la religion*, trans. Lemonnyer (Paris, 1931), p. 339, cited in *Nouv. rev. apol.*, I (1939), 106, note 1.

¹¹ A. Festugière, *L'Idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Évangile* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1932), p. 138.

¹² Rivière, *art. cit.*, p. 106.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

natural" does not exist in its technical sense until relatively modern times. As Abbé de Broglie observes: "The word *supernatural* does not belong to the language of the Gospel; it is a theological term of later origin."¹⁴ The word *supernaturalis* appears for the first time in the Latin translations of Pseudo-Dionysius made by Hilduin,¹⁵ and by Scotus Erigena.¹⁶ For a long time after, theologians did not know the word. Peter the Lombard does not use it.¹⁷ Only with St. Thomas does its usage become general. And, as is usual, only later still does the word find its way into ecclesiastical texts; we meet it for the first time in the decrees of the Council of Trent and in the twenty-first and twenty-third propositions of the Bull of Pius V condemning Baius.¹⁸

For St. Thomas, God is the supernatural Truth: "contemplatio patriae, qua supernaturalis veritas videtur";¹⁹ He is supernatural cause, i.e., "rebus naturalis causa essendi";²⁰ He is the supernatural principle,²¹ "the agens supernaturale"; and He is such by essence, and

¹⁴ *Le surnaturel* (Paris), p. 13. Cf. also Lange, *De Gratia* (Freiburg im Br.: Herder, 1929), pp. 168 ff.

¹⁵ G. Théry, O.P., *Études dionysiennes, Études de philosophie médiévale*, XVI (Paris: Vrin, 1932), I, 138, note 1: "Dans la langue d'Hilduin, ce mot *supernus* traduit généralement *ὑπερκόσμιος*, qu'il rend aussi par *supernaturalis*." Father Théry promises an edition of Hilduin in the near future.

¹⁶ De Lubac, S.J., "Remarques sur l'histoire du mot 'surnaturel'", *Nouvelle revue théologique*, LXI (1934), 225-50, 350-70. Our citation is from p. 225. We shall use this article extensively in developing the notion of the supernatural as it is understood in the modern schools.

¹⁷ Of course, the matter in hand has been treated by Peter Lombard (employing the classical text of St. Augustine: "Posse habere fidem, sicut posse habere caritatem, naturae est hominum; habere autem fidem, sicut habere caritatem, gratiae est fidelium") and by many others who did not use our modern terminology. Many of Peter Lombard's disciples followed out his early speculations, without using proper phraseology, and at times made astonishing progress in the doctrine. "De là sortit leur théorie de la convenance morale entre la nature humaine et la destinée surnaturelle. Cette théorie alla fort loin. Elle fut poussée si avant par certains des théologiens augustiniens qu'on les accusa de tomber dans la doctrine condamnée d'une exigence réelle et stricte d'une surnature par la nature. Il est probable que, à le bien prendre, ils ne méritent pas un tel reproche. Mais le seul fait qu'ils y donnèrent occasion atteste leur souci de découvrir un lien intelligible entre l'ordre de la nature et celui de la grâce" (Wehrlé, *La méthode d'immanence* [Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1911], pp. 29-30).

¹⁸ A. Deneffe, "Geschichte des Wortes *Supernaturalis*," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, XLVI (1922), 337-60; citation p. 342.

¹⁹ II-II, q. 5, a. 1 ad 1m.

²⁰ *De Potentia*, q. 6, a. 1.

²¹ II-II, q. 6, a. 1.

not only when He produces certain kinds of effects which today we call supernatural.²² St. Thomas speaks also of “substantiae supernaturales” and of “substantiae supermundanae” in the same sense as of pure spirits and “formae separatae.” Metaphysics, he says, which is only another name, corresponding to another aspect of *theologia* or *scientia divina*, is distinguished from *scientia naturalis*, because the objects of the former study are “res transphysicas et divinas.”²³ Among the objects of theology, he enumerates not only God and the angels, but also, on occasion, faithful to his Dionysian influence and inspiration, even the human soul, which transcends nature by its purely spiritual side. God alone is for him doubly supernatural, for He is not merely “substantia separata” but also “esse separatum.”²⁴

Furthermore, when St. Thomas speaks of natural beatitude and refers to the doctrine of Aristotle, he assimilates the natural to the terrestrial, understanding thereby not the happiness which accrues to separated souls, but the happiness which men can realize here below.²⁵

²² “Perfectiones et formae, quae proveniunt ab agente supernaturali infinitae virtutis, quod Deus est, excedunt facultatem naturae recipientis; unde anima rationalis, quae immediate a Deo causatur, excedit capacitatem suae naturae, ita quod materia corporalis non totaliter potest comprehendere et includere ipsam . . . quod non contingit de aliqua aliarum formarum quae causantur ab agentibus naturalibus” (*De Virtutibus in Communi*, a. 10). Cf. the same meaning in Henry of Ghent, when he says that the human actions of Christ are natural actions, “nonobstante quod agens sit supernaturale” (*Quodlib.*, XV, q. 3, cited by De Lubac, *art. cit.*, p. 229, note).

²³ *In I Metaph.*, Prooem.; cf. also II-II, q. 9, a. 2; *In Lib. Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 3, where St. Thomas uses the following expressions interchangeably: “essentiae separatae”; “substantiae immateriales, incorporeae”; “formae immateriales”; “substantiae supernaturales”. He says also: “Potest [sc. intellectus creatus] per gratiam elevari, ut cognoscat substantiam separatam subsistentem, et esse separatum subsistens” (I, q. 12, a. 4 ad 3 m).

²⁴ I, q. 12, a. 4 ad 3 m.

²⁵ I, q. 62, a. 1; q. 88, a. 1; I-II, q. 3, a. 5; cf. De Broglie, “Autour de la notion thomiste de la béatitude,” *Archives de philosophie*, III, cahier 2 (1925), pp. [199 ff.] One might raise the question whether the rare texts of St. Thomas in which certain historians and theologians (v.g., Rousselot in *Intellectualisme de s. Thomas*) see the description of an extra-terrestrial natural beatitude are interpreted faithfully, or whether St. Thomas intended to describe, for example, the natural elements of a beatitude which is supernatural in its principal object; these elements, in fact, are called “praemium accidentale” by St. Thomas himself (*De Malo*, q. 5, a. 1 ad 5 m); “béatitude secondaire” by one of his recent interpreters (J. Le Tilly, O.P., in II-II, q. 17, a. 2: *Somme théologique, l'espérance* [Paris, 1930], pp. 200–201); “visio vespertina” by St. Augustine, who supposes the “visio matutina”; and “beatitudinis accessoria” in the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, (P. I, a. 12, n. 13).

After St. Thomas,²⁶ who put the word into current theological circulation with several different meanings,²⁷ examples of a second acceptance of it, namely, as indicating extraordinary effects due to causes

²⁶ Here is an interesting fact to note: "Dans les annales mêmes de la pensée thomiste, deux hommes se rencontrent qui ont clairement aperçu que la question épineuse sur laquelle avaient travaillé leurs devanciers ne pourrait être résolue d'une manière plus décisive que lorsqu'elle aurait été posée dans des termes moins abstraits. Cajétan dans son *Commentaire sur la Somme théologique*, Suarez dans ses traités *De la grâce et de la fin dernière*, ont marqué, qu'il y avait intérêt à laisser de côté la considération des hypothèses et des possibilités liées au concept de la nature humaine prise en soi pour se placer dans l'ordre de la réalité originairement donnée et historiquement développée. L'un et l'autre distinguent avec un soin qui est une nouveauté la nature naturelle et la nature surnaturalisée. De la nature en tant que nature pure, ils nient qu'elle puisse renfermer une tendance vers le surnaturel. Au contraire, de la nature primitivement surélevée, qui est la nôtre, ils admettent qu'elle reste effectivement coordonnée à un ordre transcendant et qu'elle postule rigoureusement la béatitude surnaturelle. Bref, pour construire leur théologie, ils opèrent un changement de perspective, qui leur permet d'aller à la fois mois loin et plus loin que leurs prédécesseurs. D'un côté, ils reconnaissent plus expressément la disproportion d'une nature créée avec l'ordre surnaturel qui suppose une participation à la réalité incréée. D'un autre côté, ils professent que la nature humaine telle qu'elle se trouve donnée en fait est en quelque sorte nécessitée par une vocation obligatoire à sortir des limites de l'ordre naturel. . . . Que la méthode d'immanence trouve dans la théologie de Cajétan et de Suarez ou des indications stimulantes ou des justifications anticipées, c'est ce qui ne peut faire aucun doute pour un observateur attentif. . . [But this method was] beaucoup moins scientifique [than that of their predecessors]. Sans doute, les opinions émises par S. Thomas et par ses premiers disciples procédaient d'une pensée principalement conceptualiste et statique. Mais elles accusaient en même temps chez leurs auteurs une conscience très nette des conditions requises pour qu'un système ait une valeur universelle et démonstrative. En un mot, le Docteur angélique et les héritiers directs de sa pensée avaient entrepris de faire oeuvre philosophique tandis que le cardinal dominicain et le jésuite espagnol avaient surtout réussi à faire oeuvre historique et théologique. Or, les données concrètes empruntées à l'histoire sainte ne sauraient suffire à constituer une métaphysique. Et, en matière d'apologétique le point de vue de la théologie révélée ne peut sans inconvénient être introduit à titre prématuré. Si donc Cajétan et Suarez étaient plus voisins de la réalité vivante, les premiers thomistes étaient plus fidèles à la méthode philosophique. Dès lors le progrès désirable devait consister à mettre sur pied un système qui conciliât la rigueur scientifique avec la vérité concrète.

[As we hope to show briefly later on] "C'est vers ce résultat, nous semble-t-il, que l'apologétique moderne a été acheminée par l'effort dont M. Blondel a été le principal initiateur. Il s'agissait de faire pénétrer la philosophie dans l'histoire, sans que la philosophie cessât d'être une spéculation technique et distincte; et il s'agissait inversement de réintégrer l'histoire dans la philosophie sans que l'histoire perdît rien de son caractère concret et original" (Wehrlé, *La méthode d'immanence*, pp. 31-33).

²⁷ Cf. III, q. 76, a. 5, where the word occurs with two different meanings in the same line. St. Thomas is speaking of the Eucharist and says: "Quia enim modus essendi, quo Christus est in hoc Sacramento, est penitus supernaturalis, a supernaturali intellectu, scilicet divino, secundum se visibilis est."

other than purely natural ones, become legion. Soon Leibnitz and Malebranche are using it in this sense.²⁸ Today the meanings given to the word by naturalists, rationalists, positivists, etc., are almost as many and as varied as the men who use the term, and the views they represent. But within the Church, the word came to have a definite, technical sense, largely as a result of the Baian controversy. This fact is too well known for us to delay on it here; current treatises *de ente supernaturali* are dominated by the concept of *donum indebitum* that received its present sharpness in consequence of Baius' confusion of the orders of nature and of grace. It is, however, important to note that the Baian controversy not only resulted in a new precision in the use of the term supernatural; it also created a set of emphases in the handling of the doctrine itself. What Baius had confused, Catholic theologians were at pains to distinguish. Their emphasis naturally fell on the distinction between nature and grace, and on the radical discontinuity of the two orders. But this necessary emphasis on the transcendence of grace left in relative obscurity the other aspect of the total doctrine of the supernatural—the fact that grace, remaining an utterly gratuitous gift, does actually perfect nature. Similarly, emphasis on the fact that nature has no slightest claim to this gratuitous perfection served to shadow the complementary fact that nature is somehow open to its reception. As we shall see, the recent tendency is towards a readjustment of these emphases.

We might also mention here the vogue of a relatively new terminology. We have become accustomed to speaking of the supernatural order, a supernatural economy, our supernatural destiny.²⁹ We use the term, "the supernatural," where the older theologians used the term, "grace." The old term, "donum gratiae," is frequently translated, "supernatural elevation." And it has been suggested that "these new formulae necessarily betray at least some new aspects current in the doctrine itself."³⁰ As a matter of fact, there does exist a real terminological problem, since "the very notion of the supernatural is at the bottom of so many complex problems, and must necessarily be modelled, at least to a certain extent, on the correlative notion of nature, which is itself in constant evolution."³¹

²⁸ Cf. Rolland, *art. cit.*, *passim*.

²⁹ De Lubac, *art. cit.*, p. 242.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

A CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

Beneath all fluctuations in terminology, though related to them, there has been in recent years a change in the perspective in which the doctrine of the supernatural is viewed. The fact of the change will be evident from a survey of recent controversies, which testify to a reaction in certain quarters against hitherto prevailing emphases—a reaction which in turn has given rise to a habit of thought and expression that is gaining prominence. In an article published in 1936, entitled, “*Reflexions à la suite d’un débat*,” in which the author summarizes the lengthy debate on the notion of a Christian philosophy, we read this paragraph of introduction:

For about five long years, everyone thought it his duty to give an answer to the mooted question, is there a Christian philosophy? and in what sense? and under what conditions? Then the fashion changed; but it was not a case of a mere change of fashion. An essential problem was at stake, one which has been a burning question for centuries, and which will be such for centuries to come; one which under diverse terms reveals in turn each of its multiple aspects; it is the problem which ever tries our souls. Yesterday it was the problem of immanence;³² today the debate on humanism and the quest for a philosophy of the human person; yesterday the discussion of the term ‘Christian Philosophy.’³³

And we might add: and today again the controversy on the natural desire of seeing God, and on the new practical apologetics which had its beginning in the doctrine of immanence so popular in the early part of the twentieth century.³⁴ The conclusion of the author of the article is: “Always, at bottom, it is the same problem. On a beau venir en retard: on le retrouve toujours actuel.” The problem is none other than that of the relations between the natural and supernatural orders. Briefly, let us indicate several of the forms in which it has appeared.

³² For a brief summary of the controversy, cf. bibliography *apud* Wehrlé, *La méthode d’immanence*.

³³ De Lubac, *art. cit.*, p. 225.

³⁴ According to Father Dezza, S.J., Rector of the Gregorian University, in a conference delivered in Rome, Oct. 14, 1941, “the fundamental affirmation of modern thought is the doctrine of immanence, and in face of such an affirmation we justly and of necessity retain our position of absolute intransigence, without weakness and without compromise. Truth demands it” (from an off-print of the conference published in the United States, p. 5). Earlier (p. 3) he refers to the movement mentioned in the text of our article and characterizes it thus: “There was that French philosophy which endeavored to justify Catholicism according to the character of immanence of modern thought . . .”

First, we might refer to the many books, articles, conferences, and congresses which were consecrated to the discussion of the problem of integral Christian humanism. Again, there was the heated debate which raged, in France especially, for eight or nine years on the distinction between the notions of individual and person; it is not unfamiliar to readers who have followed even *a longe* current philosophical and theological literature. How often the names of Gillet,³⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange,³⁶ Maritain,³⁷ Vialatoux,³⁸ Henri Simon,³⁹ Lemarié,⁴⁰ Denys de Rougemont,⁴¹ Mounier,⁴² Duthoit,⁴³ Gilson,⁴⁴ Blondel,⁴⁵ Fessard,⁴⁶ to mention but a very few, come to the fore in leading articles in many publications! And then the "Cours et conférences" of the *Semaine sociale de France* (held each year somewhere in France on the burning question of the hour) of 1937 at Clermont-Ferrand, consecrated to the study of the human person and all its allied applications to the various philosophical and theological

³⁵ Cf. *Revue des jeunes*, June, 1925, pp. 469 ff.; *Semaine sociale de Lille*, 1932, Compte rendu, pp. 180 ff.; *Semaine sociale de Rheims*, 1933, pp. 561 ff.; *Culture latine et ordre social* (Paris: Flammarion, 1935), *passim*, but esp. pp. 23-39.

³⁶ *Passim* in his long list of publications.

³⁷ Cf. *Trois réformateurs*, pp. 26-37; "Notes sur la personnalité," *Le roseau d'or* (1931), pp. 171-91; *Du régime temporel et de la liberté*, pp. 54-64; "L'Idéal historique d'une nouvelle chrétienté," *Vie intellectuelle*, Jan., 1935. Finally, on Dec. 9, 1934, he gave a conference to the students of the *Groupe Laënnec*; "Réflexions sur la personne humaine et la philosophie de la culture" (*Cahiers Laënnec*, Sept., 1935, pp. 15-43). In *Les degrés du savoir* he treats at great length of person and personality (cf. for his development pp. 457-68, 845-55); but this discussion does not concern us here and now.

³⁸ "Réflexions sur l'individu et la personne," *Chronique sociale de France*, May, 1936, and ff. nos.

³⁹ *Destins de la personne*, Cahiers de la nouvelle journée, XXXI (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1935).

⁴⁰ *Essai sur la personne* (Paris: Alcan, 1938).

⁴¹ *Politique de la personne* (Ed. "Je sers", Paris, 1934).

⁴² *Révolution personaliste et communautaire* (Paris: Aubier, 1935); cf. also "Manifeste du personalisme," *Esprit*, Oct., 1936.

⁴³ "Au service de la personne humaine," *Semaine sociale de Clermont-Ferrand*, pp. 39-98, and many other articles and references in the same *cahiers*.

⁴⁴ *L'Esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (éd. 1), chap. x, esp. pp. 200 ff.

⁴⁵ *L'Être et les êtres* (Paris: Alcan); "Les équivoques du personalisme," *Politique*, March, 1934, pp. 193-205. (There is a good article by P. Archambault which shows well the evolution of the various terms: "Destin d'un mot," *ibid.*, pp. 154-65.) Cf. also various articles in *Esprit*, *Europe*, *Revue du siècle*, *Vie intellectuelle*, and many other magazines and periodicals from 1934 to 1940.

⁴⁶ "*Pax Nostra*": *Examen de conscience internationale* (Paris: Grasset).

sciences. The results appeared in book form in March, 1938.⁴⁷ Then too, there was an entire volume of *Archives de philosophie* dedicated to the same subject in 1939.

As for the problem of Christian philosophy, it was perhaps Blondel who gave impetus to a host of works which appeared on the subject. Not that it became a new issue with him, for it was a question which "in one or other form constantly preoccupied the writers in the Middle Ages, and divided into two irreconcilable camps Augustinians and Thomists."⁴⁸ Blondel's position is dictated by his initial contention that, if we begin with the fact of the "inquiétude humaine," we can establish the intrinsic possibility of the intuitive vision, the only possible term which can fully satisfy the desires of man's nature. He understands, of course, that human nature can never by its own power attain the proposed end, but merely tend to it by an ever inefficacious desire. This argument, drawn from the appetite for beatitude to prove God's existence, is admittedly the foundation of all of Blondel's philosophical research. The influence of the argument cannot be emphasized too much. It is in fact the point of departure and the basis of the whole modern neo-Thomistic, or rather neo-Augustinian movement, launched some time ago by Father Rousselot, S.J., under the influence of the doctrine of Blondel's *L'Action*.⁴⁹ And the problem it raises is fundamental: "What is interesting and of importance in the so much discussed problem of our natural desire of seeing God is not to know whether man, transplanted to an order of nature which has really never existed, would have been capable of such a desire. Such an unimportant question would certainly not have held the attention of theologians for so long, if the solution offered did not affect the more

⁴⁷ "La personne humaine en peril," *Semaines sociales de France, Clermont-Ferrand*, 29th session, 1937 (Paris: Gabalda; or, Lyon: Vitte et Chronique sociale de France, 1938).

⁴⁸ P. Descoqs, S.J., *Praelectiones Theologiae Naturalis* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1935), II, 311.

⁴⁹ Paris: Alcan, 1893; cf. also *Le problème de la philosophie catholique*, Cahiers de la nouvelle journée, XX (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1932); "La philosophie chrétienne existe-t-elle comme philosophie?" *Bulletin de la société française de philosophie*, 1931; and finally the oft repeated allusions to the problem in his great work, *L'Être et les êtres* (Paris: Alcan, 1935). To get some idea of the vast amount of literature that has appeared in recent years on the subject, and of Blondel's attitude to it, cf. Descoqs, *Praelectiones Theologiae Naturalis*, II, 271-72, 311, etc.

serious problem of the relations between human nature and the supernatural."⁵⁰

The last and most modern movement which is a sign of the times, and one closely connected with the question of our natural desire of seeing God, and which stems naturally from the same, is the new practical apologetics, "the apologetics of the sign,"⁵¹ as it is sometimes called, or the "surnaturel anonyme,"⁵² as others call it. Taking at random one of the most recent exponents of this somewhat new thesis, we quote the following passage as typical; we give it in the original French because of the originality of the expression:

Qu'est-ce que le surnaturel, s'il existe? Non pas le surnaturel défini, qui ne me sera connu dans son essence spécifique que par la révélation, mais le surnaturel anonyme, forme pure, simple hypothèse à vérifier (cette vision de la signification du signe, connue à l'avance par l'homme dans le vide de ses misères, de ses espoirs, de ses désirs). C'est un surcroît de force et de lumière ajouté par Dieu à mes forces natives ou naturelles. . . . Il y aura miracle, par exemple, à partir du moment où, ayant épuisé toutes mes puissances personnelles, je prierai Dieu d'ajouter à mes moyens un supplément qui me permette de me dépasser, et où je serai exaucé. Je commence donc par expérimenter en creux chez moi la valeur possible et par conséquent l'idée de l'intervention positive de Dieu. C'est en prenant possession de mes limites que j'en reconnais l'au delà. Le doigt de Dieu commence ou le mien finit, à la condition que j'aie l'humilité à la fois de reconnaître que mon doigt s'arrête très vite, et de souhaiter qu'il y ait au delà un autre doigt qui commence, comme dans la fresque de la création de l'homme au plafond de la Sixtine.⁵³

⁵⁰ E. Brisbois, S.J., in a masterful article, "Le désir de voir Dieu et la métaphysique du vouloir selon s. Thomas," *Nouv. rev. théol.*, LXIII (1936), pp. 978-89.

⁵¹ Masure, *La grand'route apologetique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1939), chap. v, "L'Apologetique du signe." The expression as quoted in our text is from p. 45. Cf. also Rabeau, *Apologetique* (Paris; Bloud et Gay, 1930); Claeys-Bouúaert, "Raisons personnelles du croire," *Nouv. rev. théol.*, LX (1933), 117 ff.; L. Koesters, *The Church: Its Divine Authority*, trans. Rev. Edwin G. Kaiser (St. Louis: Herder, 1938), *passim*, esp. pp. 16, 18, etc.; Tiberghien, "La méthode apologetique," *Nouv. rev. apol.*, I (1939), 21-31; A. Cotter, S.J., *Theologia Fundamentalis* (Weston: Weston College, 1940), pp. 487-502.

⁵² Masure, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47. All of Masure's works are intriguing and captivating, though always quite different and filled with French overtones. Reviewing Masure's *The Christian Sacrifice*, trans. Illtyd Trethowan (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1944), Father Martin D'Arcy, S.J., has an interesting comment to which we subscribe: "It [the book] belongs to that genre of theological writing in which the French are so pre-eminently gifted. At the opposite pole to the text book it gives formulas and syllogisms new significance; it lifts the mind on tiptoe with expectation of new discoveries, and the language

The apologetic formula of Cardinal Dechamps, formerly so much discussed, would be for these recent thinkers quite exact: "There are but two facts to be verified, one within us, the other without. They seek out each other in order to embrace, and you yourself are the witness of both."⁵⁴ An addition is made to Dechamps' formula by the author we last quoted above: "Of these two facts, one is within, the other without. That may stand. But they are not, as it were, two equal values which make contact; the second is a fullness which comes to fill up the former which was only a void, which was, consequently, if you like the expression, a mere nothing, but which delineated, which at any rate made a bid for the other without ever having a right to its possession."⁵⁵ Rousselot suggested another correction. For him the interior *fait* is the subject himself, in so far as he has the "eyes of faith": the subject is "voyant" rather than "vu."⁵⁶

Modern apologetics, these thinkers say, must cease to be cramped, merely defensive, exterior; for doctrine inspires little security or confidence when it is reduced to self-defense; and we can sign the death warrant for a creed or a doctrine when its defenders (as Henri de Man remarked apropos of Marxism) "show themselves more preoccupied with proving that the doctrine is still alive than with winning the world to their cause."⁵⁷ Any apologetic which is content merely with extrinsic arguments, without emphasizing how satisfying for the soul is the message itself, cannot convince the mind. It would seem that one of the traits of our present generation is the lack of curiosity and interest in the demonstrations of Christian truths, and its consequent

is almost too eloquent and hypnotic. Even if the reader is not sure at the end that he has understood Masure completely, he knows that he has benefited by the book, and lastingly benefited" (*Dublin Review*, July, 1944, p. 73). Another reviewer says just about the same in substance: "The artistry of Canon Masure has contrived to produce a delightful and attractive book on the Redemption and the Mass; but it must be admitted, I think, that he has not succeeded in giving a clear statement of his theological thesis. While one may be prepared to grant the claim of the publishers, that his treatment 'gives life to the bare bones of theology,' the fact remains that it is these 'bare bones' that the theological student is chiefly interested to see; he wants to examine the anatomy which underlies the living flesh. And in this respect the manuals must be allowed to have the advantage of Canon Masure, after all" (*The Clergy Review*, Aug., 1944, p. 382).

⁵⁴ Cited by Masure, *op. cit.*, p. 46; Cf. also pp. 22, 83, 84, *et passim*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁵⁶ "Les yeux de la foi," *Recherches de science religieuse*, I (1910), 244, note.

⁵⁷ *Au delà du Marxisme* (Bruxelles, 1927), p. 20.

special predilection for books which expose and clarify the substance of those truths.⁵⁸

The feeling is current today in certain quarters that the old apologetic has really submerged theology and dogma. We hear it said that the apologist, in his desire to pass from the natural to the supernatural, from reason to faith, must do more than merely show an extrinsic link between the two. Religion is too often set forth merely as a system of truths and of precepts thrust upon man, following certain proofs of historical facts. Such a religion relegates dogma to the limits of cognition. It is a kind of superstructure which, to preserve its supernaturality, becomes almost superficial, regarded more and more divine in proportion as it is severed from every human tie. As if God were not the author of nature and of grace, and of nature in view of grace!⁵⁹

The new apologetic stresses the fact that our faith is essentially the "good news" brought by Christ to the world. It is the only truth in matters religious, and truth and life are one and the same thing. Life is light! When apologists fail to show how this truth is a source of life, the only source which will fructify unto life eternal, they fail in their duty. The new school contends, moreover, that a profound psychological study of human nature, with its aspirations for the divine and the transcendent, is imperative, lest the supernatural be nothing more than an unwelcome addition to the natural. By this method they claim proof for the verity of the Catholic religion as the only religion which adequately answers humanity's aspirations, and is its proper ennoblement and perfection.

⁵⁸ Cf. the excellent article of P. Charles, "La théologie dogmatique, hier et aujourd'hui," *Nouv. rev. théol.*, LVI (1929) pp. 800-317; also the remarks of Erich Przywara, S.J., on the movement and tendencies of Catholicism in Germany at the end of the twenties: "Le mouvement théologique et religieux en Allemagne," *Nouv. rev. théol.*, *ibid.*, pp. 660-66. He asserted that the emphasis was upon "l'estime de l'élément dogmatique de la religion; et ceci ne va pas sans une certaine désaffection pour les considérations exclusivement morales ou apologetiques. La cohérence interne de la vision du monde que propose la foi sera à elle-même sa garantie. . . ." (p. 667). And again: "En théologie, on se met à discuter une conception de la foi qui n'a plus rien à voir avec le 'syllogisme de la foi,' mais est toute surnaturelle; et conséquemment on prône une théologie qui est aussi éloignée que possible d'une méthode apologetique, historique ou dialectique, et qu'on pourrait caractériser comme une contemplation de l'essence des réalités théologiques."

⁵⁹ Maritain remarks in the same tone: "Il y a une erreur qui consiste à méconnaître leur distinction [sc. between nature and grace]. Et il y en a une autre qui consiste à méconnaître leur union" (*Clairvoyance de Rome* [Paris, 1929], p. 222).

A THREEFOLD PROGRAM

These currents of thought may well indicate a reason for the strange and surprising evolution of the concept of the supernatural and of all that it implies. Certain recent thinkers object to the so-called "extrinsécisme radicale"⁶⁰ engendered by an inveterate fear of immanentism. They decry what Dechamps called the "doctrine of the simple juxtaposition of nature and grace."⁶¹ They maintain that a fear of Baianism and of immanentism and of their resulting attitudes have created innovations in habits of theological thought and language. They take exception to a view of man's supernatural elevation as something almost abnormal; they fear lest the queen of sciences become "une théologie séparée";⁶² and they fear, too, that an older generation of theologians was content with merely superimposing, as it were, a supernatural world upon a seemingly purely natural one,⁶³ with the consequent danger that Christianity might take on an aspect of artificiality, and an irreconcilable dualism make its way into all domains, even into that of asceticism and spirituality, where, for instance, we find St. Ignatius being accused of basing his Spiritual Exercises on a purely natural motive and foundation.⁶⁴

These recent thinkers would, of course, admit that the theses formulated against Baius and the immanentists were never actually pushed to exaggerated conclusions. However, perhaps perceiving more deeply the crux of the problem, they undertook definitely, as they hoped, to rid the word supernatural of all exaggerated material attachments. By a sustained effort they would seek to break away from misleading imaginative habits of thought, and cease to look upon the human soul as a closed nature, after the manner, for instance, in which material objects are presented to us. Hence their first resolve was to aim at a *more profound rediscovery of the mind*.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Rousselot, "Les yeux de la foi," *op. cit.*, p. 362.

⁶¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 364.

⁶³ Rimaud, "Nos préoccupations philosophiques," *Etudes*, CCXIV (1933), 145-60, especially p. 151.

⁶⁴ The charge has been fully refuted by H. Watrigant, *La méditation fondamentale avant S. Ignace* (1907), and by L. Peeters, *Vers l'union divine par les Exercices de S. Ignace* (2nd ed., Louvain, 1928).

⁶⁵ Masure says: "We never live our rational contingency in a separated state, all by itself. In practice, we always immerse it in our religious faith. It is the result of a necessary and legitimate precision of our reason. It is an instrument of rational thought. It is indispensable to our logic. It is not practically lived as such" (*La grand' route apolo-gétique*, p. 124).

A second difficulty, they claimed, was the deep-rooted tendency to consider man's supernatural finality as just another gift among many gifts, though assuredly the greatest of them all. Such was the precise fault and weakness of the old commodious but artificial classification, which was prompted by the antiquated method of mere extrinsic denomination. Consequently, a second cardinal agendum of this new school was to be an effort of philosophic renovation aiming at a *rediscovery of finality*, by which the dynamic unity of the whole structure of philosophy and theology, the orders of nature and supernature, would be clearly affirmed.

A third complaint leveled against the older school was that it relegated too far to the background the intrinsically divine character of man's supernatural end, as well as of the state of grace leading to that end. It insisted—so the complaint runs—too much on the gratuity of grace—an essential characteristic of the gift indeed, but one which is after all only an extrinsic denomination. Preoccupied with the desire of demonstrating against Baius that grace is a superaddition (*surcroît*), theologians passed over the best refutation of his position, by failing to emphasize that this addition, which perfects nature, is the very life of God Himself. Since the time of Baius, in fact, it has not been customary to emphasize that aspect of the supernatural which reveals it as the perfection of nature; yet this aspect should at all times be in the forefront of speculation on the problem of the relations between nature and grace. A divorce, they say, resulted between theology and mysticism, owing to the inordinate desire to orientate theology along polemical lines. In their turn, the new school, desirous of returning, or advancing, to a more complete understanding of the supernatural, would seek for a theological renaissance, a return to scriptural and patristic sources of faith, and a *renewal of mystical theology*. Their main concern would be with the concrete psychology of grace and faith; they would extricate themselves from the abstract logic which might tend to belittle the affective aspects of the supernatural life, and stress only the intellectual aspects, even to the point of unreal separation.

With this threefold program—rediscovery of the mind, rediscovery of finality, and renewal of the mystical aspects of theology—the new school of philosophers and theologians meant to rectify the viewpoint that had hitherto been accepted.

ROUSSELOT

If it is true to say that Paris, or France, has staged the première of every great change in the world, it is probably equally true to say that Frenchmen have always been in the vanguard of philosophical and theological speculation; it is a "genre of writing for which they are pre-eminently gifted."⁶⁶ The present instance bears out the truth of the contention; for Frenchmen played prominent rôles in the new movement. There was Blondel, with his vast philosophic speculation, stemming from his important contribution in *L'Action*; Laberthonnière, with his equally important, if questionable and excessively polemic, contributions; and especially Rousselot, Maréchal, and De Broglie. These latter were the leaders, and with them we shall mainly concern ourselves; but they had capable colleagues, such as Masure and Tiberghien, and others.

According to the view of one who has watched the evolving panorama with careful and discerning eye these many years, and who is entirely conversant with all the literature of the subject, in German, French, and English: "All the modern literature on the subject manifestly depends on the celebrated thesis of P. Rousselot, *L'Intellectualisme de St. Thomas*, in which the author clearly and trenchantly expounds this guiding principle, which can be labelled revolutionary in both theology and philosophy, that the intellect of man, as such, is not the faculty of being, in the traditionally accepted meaning of that formula, but rather 'the faculty of the divine.'"⁶⁷ Or, to put it in modern phraseology, as I frequently heard it stated by my former French professors, both those favorable and those inimical to the movement: "Homo est capax entis quia est capax Dei."⁶⁸ Rousselot himself puts it thus: "If the soul is *πάντα πωσ*, it is because it is *θεός πωσ*, and not vice versa; because man does not understand reality except insofar as he desires God."⁶⁹

It is admitted by all that Maréchal and De Broglie are closely linked with Rousselot. It was common knowledge, as we studied and discussed their ideas in French schools, that their basic principles and

⁶⁶ M. D'Arcy, *Dublin Review*, CCXIII (1944), 73.

⁶⁷ Descoqs, *Le mystère de notre élévation surnaturelle*, p. 8; cf. Rousselot, *L'Intellectualisme* pp. 62, 81.

⁶⁸ So far as we are aware, this Latin phrase is never used by Rousselot himself; it is the coinage of his followers.

⁶⁹ *L'Intellectualisme*, p. 38, and *passim*.

tenets were interdependent. Descoqs, who knew them all, says, for instance: "A new form of the argument from the necessary and eternal truths, drawn from man's judgment as such, was proposed by certain modern Scholastics, Fathers Maréchal and De Broglie, following the lead of Father Rousselot."⁷⁰ Later he shows the logical concatenation of their ideas and objectives: "The general thesis of the whole treatise, enunciated by Rousselot himself, is that, for St. Thomas, man's intellect is essentially the faculty of the real, but it is the faculty of the real only because it is the faculty of the divine."⁷¹ Or again: "The faculty of the divine—what is the meaning of that phrase? It is the possibility of the mind to incorporate into itself, as it were, the absolute by intuitive vision, which vision really defines the mind, and results in the power of the mind to attain contingent being in a definitive and decisive manner."⁷² In other words, "mind as such is capable of knowing all things only because it is capable of seeing God as He is in Himself. Hence it follows that the intuitive vision is in a certain manner postulated by the very nature of the intellect; for it seems that we are so constituted that we cannot rest until we have grasped God, and the grasp of Him is effected by the mind."⁷³

In 1924, Guy de Broglie published an article which gave added impetus to the whole movement.⁷⁴ He held the thesis of Rousselot on the nature of the intellect, and its tendency to the vision of God, but argued that there was no right to that vision, nor exigency for it, in the order of existence. For him, the principle, "Desiderium naturae non potest esse inane," would mean only that every desire of nature could be satisfied. This position would safeguard the absolute gratuity of the supernatural vision of God, but leave room for a purely rational proof of the possibility of that vision—and therefore also of its intrinsic intelligibility—as likewise of the whole order of supernatural elevation.

The same position, with only the slightest variations, was taken about the same time by Maréchal, in the now famous Volume Five of his great work, *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*. Consequently, one is justified in linking together these three great authors, forming, as they do, a definite school of thought. Of the trio, Rousselot, alike

⁷⁰ Descoqs, *Praelectiones Theologiae Naturalis*, I, 114; II, 225 ff.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, II, 225.

⁷² Rousselot, *L'Intellectualisme*, p. 62.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁷⁴ *Recherches de science religieuse*, XIV (1924), 193–246. He wrote two other articles clarifying this draft: *ibid.*, p. 481–96; XV (1925), 5–54.

philosopher and theologian, is the *inspirateur*, Maréchal the philosopher, and De Broglie the theologian.⁷⁵

The body of Rousselot's doctrine is contained in his masterful thesis, *L'Intellectualisme de St. Thomas*, defended at the Sorbonne in 1908, the same year that he was raised to the priesthood. Rousselot was deeply versed in the modern philosophers; he "sought in them their partial truths, their new viewpoints, with a view to understanding them, as he later hoped to bring them to understand him."⁷⁶ He was gifted with an inexhaustible mental curiosity, anxious to probe the mentalities of his contemporaries, who were caught in the maelstrom of modern and other erroneous philosophies of religion. He followed carefully the heated debates about Christian immanentism, and he was influenced in great part by Blondel's *L'Action*. Blondel himself had come to grips with the ultra-immanentism and mystical pantheism of Spinoza and Schleiermacher,⁷⁷ and with the subjectivism and rationalism of his own professor, Ollé-Laprune. But Blondel himself became tainted with the very ideas he was criticizing, and the ideas of the professor appear in the pupil's works. There are passages in Blondel's volume on Ollé-Laprune in which he seems implicitly to deny the radical distinction between the natural and supernatural orders.⁷⁸ For Blondel, there was neither real continuity nor formal incompatibility between the natural and the supernatural; their real synthesis was effected only in actual practice. But he insisted that "the gratuitous gift of grace, free in its source, becomes for the recipient inevitable, imposed, and obligatory,"⁷⁹ although it remains "both in-

⁷⁵ Whatever criticisms may be directed against their positions, it remains true that all three men deserve the highest respect for their contributions to theological science. In this connection, after defending Rousselot from the charge of a love of novelty, De Grandmaison says: "Whatever judgment one may feel it necessary to pass on his works (many of which have been questioned by theologians of repute), those least partial to the author must acknowledge that the state of affairs was not the same after his intervention as before it. The lively recollection [of what he did] has in the highest degree the value of intellectual stimulation, which is indispensable to the progress of theological studies" (Preface to *L'Intellectualisme*, pp. xxix-xxx). ⁷⁶ De Grandmaison, *op. cit.*, p. xiv.

⁷⁷ Cf. "Immanence," *DAFC*, II, esp. col. 570.

⁷⁸ *Ollé-Laprune* (Paris; Bloud et Gay, 1923), *passim*. Although in his later works and in re-editions of his earlier ones (e.g., *L'Action*, [Paris: Alcan, 1927], 2 vols.) Blondel tries to get closer to traditional Scholasticism he seems to adhere to fundamentally the same positions, based on the same principles, that he held in 1893.

⁷⁹ "Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière d'apologétique," *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, 1896, p. 601.

dispensable and inaccessible to man."⁸⁰ For him, faith promises gratuitously to bestow on man what reason can only postulate, though invincibly.⁸¹ Blondel insisted that it was through the study of man's activity, that constant and central fact of our lives, that we shall finally arrive at a conciliation between the free and the necessary, between autonomy and heteronomy, between nature and grace. Only through the study of our activity shall we finally perceive the identity of our spontaneous will and our reflective will,⁸² for man's activity surpasses man, outstrips him; and every effort is put forth to allow him to see that he may not, must not confine himself to that activity.⁸³ Thus, studied from the viewpoint of human activity, the idea of God is called by Blondel a necessary idea, in this sense that it is "brought to consciousness by the very dynamism of our interior life."⁸⁴ Following Blondel, we should have to say that this idea is not only necessary but also in some way efficacious,⁸⁵ since it excites in us the aspiration for continued perfection. This leads Blondel to his final conclusion: "Il est impossible que l'ordre surnaturel soit sans l'ordre naturel auquel il est nécessaire, et impossible qu'il ne soit pas puisque l'ordre naturel le garantit en l'exigeant."⁸⁶

The Faculty of the Divine

This was the Blondel whom Rousselot attentively studied. Pascal, Newman, and St. Augustine seem also to have been his *livres de chevet*. When we consider his inspiration, his own ideas become clearer; and we are not surprised to find him arriving at his somewhat startling definition of the intellect of man as the faculty of the divine—the principle which becomes the rallying cry of the new school of thought.

Did Rousselot really give out his dictum as a definition, or merely as an axiom to guide further speculation? There is no agreement on

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, *passim*, especially p. 608.

⁸² *L'Action* (1st. ed.), p. 321.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

⁸⁴ Cf. the whole Fourth Part, especially pp. 324–29.

⁸⁵ "Lettre," *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, 1896, p. 606.

⁸⁶ *L'Action*, p. 462. In this connection the following paragraph is interesting; it is taken from Katherine Gilbert, *Maurice Blondel's Philosophy of Action* (University of N. Carolina Press, 1924): "As apologetic, the philosophy of Modernism, which is essentially the philosophy of Blondel, his master Ollé-Laprune, his friend and disciple Laberthonnière, and of Loisy and LeRoy, in France, has been popularly opposed to Neo-Thomism. The authorities of the Catholic Church fancied the teachings . . . subversive to the fundamentals of Catholic faith. . . . They . . . found it necessary to excommunicate many of the

the matter. De Grandmaison,⁸⁷ De Broglie,⁸⁸ Masure,⁸⁹ and Lebretton⁹⁰ all offer somewhat discordant observations on the point. What an author thought and had the intention of saying, and what he did not want to say but what his text as such can say and actually may say, even against his intentions, are two different things. These two viewpoints for interpretation are beyond our scope here. Rightly or wrongly interpreting the text, we read merely what Roussetot himself said in the text already quoted: "What defines the mind is its possibility of incorporating into itself, as it were, the absolute by intuitive vision." And if we hark back continually to Roussetot himself in our

leaders of the movement. The rumor was circulated that Blondel himself shared in the Pope's displeasure, and that the reason for a failure to republish *Action* was the Pope's interdiction. This rumor in regard to Blondel is, however, false. . . . When the Archbishop of Aix was moved by the attack on Blondel to inquire of the Pope what he thought of the assailed metaphysic, the Pope replied: 'I am sure of his (Blondel's) orthodoxy, and I charge you to tell him so.' (These personal facts are from a letter of M. Blondel's.)"

⁸⁷ "It goes without saying, although the fact has been contested, that, if P. Roussetot defines intelligence as 'the faculty of the divine,' this is not an axiom which he posits at the outset, or which he attributes to St. Thomas, as evident in itself and first in the order of discovery. It is 'the most profound notion at which one can arrive,' and the culminating point, from which—once it has been arrived at—all the rest assumes its true perspective, and is correctly situated" (Preface to *L'Intellectualisme*, p. xxiii). Roussetot explained his position on the matter in the article, "Métaphysique thomiste et critique de la connaissance," *Revue néo-scholastique*, XVII (1910), 504, note 2.

⁸⁸ De Broglie thought it necessary to remind Descoqs of the correct meaning of the phrase on two occasions during their heated discussions. He writes: "In P. Descoqs' view, the thesis that says that intelligence can be called the sense of the divine is supposedly a principle that its defenders enunciate a priori, and consequently apart from any previous consideration that might limit or render more precise its meaning. So understood, it is clear that one might draw from it any conclusion one wished—naturalism, ontologism, pantheism. . . . But, far from being an absolute and primary point of departure for speculation, the formula in question constituted for P. Roussetot a point of arrival, a *synthetic résumé*, in which he condensed—it may be in paradoxical and questionable form—a complex ensemble of truths of reason and of faith, relative to the supreme object of our natural desire" (*Nouv. rev. théol.*, LXV [1938], 1155). Later he returns to the same charge, to the same effect: "He [Descoqs] evidently supposes that, in declaring a certain definition of intelligence to be good, Roussetot considers other definitions to be deceptive, and wishes to *exclude* them. . . . When his [Roussetot's] philosophy mentions the aptitude for the beatific vision as *defining* intelligence, this is to signify that we have to do here with a manner, irreducible to any other manner, of characterizing both the incomparable excellence of this faculty and the supreme ideal toward which it aspires. . . . Otherwise to interpret his doctrine is to fall into an obvious misunderstanding" (*Nouv. rev. théol.*, LXVI [1939], 436).

⁸⁹ *La grand' route apologétique*, pp. 54–55, a very long footnote.

⁹⁰ "Roussetot," *DTC*, XIV, 134–39, especially 137.

discussion of the three representatives of the school, it is because Rousselot, "gifted with a rare intellectual power, synthetized in himself currents of kindred ideas hitherto scattered; he remains their most qualified representative."⁹¹

The principles enunciated in their central theses, whether by Rousselot, Maréchal or De Broglie, are fundamentally philosophical; but they have most direct and definite application to theology, since the former is the handmaid of the latter. It has often been asserted that the two major problems of philosophy are simplified by the hypotheses of the new school—the criteriological problem, and that of the implicit proof of God's existence from the analysis of man's judgment (Maréchal) or from our desire for happiness (De Broglie). The question is: Is our mind as such oriented *de se* towards the vision of God? Is it capable of apprehending and possessing God as He is in Himself? Shall we say that the mind as such has for its formal object *l'être qui n'est qu'être*, or merely, as we are accustomed to say in traditional Scholastic terms, *l'être qui est être*? If we take the former view, would the gift of grace and glory, regardless of how gratuitous we may say they are, be anything more than a normal prolongation of nature, and consequently not supernatural in the proper sense? If, on the other hand, the very nature of the mind and its internal and essential finality imply that this vision is a term necessarily possible, to which the mind is intrinsically, dynamically ordered, what are we to say about the gratuity of the supernatural order? We agree, of course, that many problems would be simplified, if not altogether solved, in such an hypothesis. The popularity which these theories have enjoyed during the last quarter of a century might thus be explained. The whole criteriological problem, and all its unanswerable difficulties would be immediately solved or abolished.

A second success would be scored in natural theology; for there would be no more need to seek a proof or demonstration, strictly so called, of God's existence. In this new perspective, the principle of causality, which would be the instrument of such a demonstration, would imply, would posit of itself—none the less formally because implicitly—God Himself, Pure Act, *a se*, infinite in perfection. Now let us examine each of these problems very briefly.

⁹¹ Descoqs, "Réponse au R. P. de Broglie," *Nouv. rev. théol.*, LXVI (1939), 404.

MARÉCHAL'S CONCEPT OF DYNAMIC COGNITION

It would seem that to understand what was implied in Rousselot's theory from the criteriological viewpoint, together with its application in theodicy, one would have to study Maréchal, who took up where Rousselot left off.⁹² Maréchal's main concern was the fundamental problem of the possibility of metaphysics, which had of late been relegated to an unimportant place in philosophy. With St. Thomas as his guide, but with some inspiration from Kant, Fichte, Blondel, and especially Rousselot, who emphasized so much the dynamic, teleologic, creative element in the inner activity of man, Maréchal tries to establish his thesis. And his chief merit seems to lie in the synthesis he made of St. Thomas' system of the a priori of man's sensitive and intellectual functions.

He argues against Kant that the phenomenal has a meaning only if the noumenal is its guarantee, because the relative is always measured by the absolute. But the novelty of his theory of cognition, inspired by Rousselot's central doctrine, does not lie so much in his "critique transcendentale de l'objet,"⁹³ as in his "critique métaphysique de l'objet."⁹⁴ It is his much spoken-of theory of dynamic cognition. The crown and climax of this dynamism of cognition, centered in the judgment, is God as the primary and universal subsistent truth. Here Maréchal seems to be weaving into his theory some ideas of Augustine's profound theology, earlier accepted by Rousselot. Objectively, he would say, every true cognition tends to God. Thus the desire for God is the active dynamic element of cognition: "l'homme n'intelligé les choses qu'en tant qu'il désire Dieu," as Rousselot had stated it.

Now to define the intellect by the divine, and therefore to give it the divine as formal object, is to say equivalently that every affirmation of being implies a relation to the infinite, and in order to affirm the existence of the finite, one must postulate the whole of being. In other words, no object of thought would be possible for our mind, unless it be related and referred to the total unity, to the Absolute, to God Himself;

⁹² *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, V, is devoted to this question; two articles supplement its treatment: "Le dynamisme intellectuel dans la connaissance objective," *Revue néo-scholastique*, XXIX (1927), 137-66; "Au seuil de la métaphysique: Abstraction ou intuition," *ibid.*, XXXI (1929), 27-52; 121-47; 309-42.

⁹³ *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, V, 15-28; 385-430.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15; 231-372.

and the internal proportion to the absolute, known as such, would become an essential of every certain judgment. In such a theory, it would seem that the existence of God need not be proved at all; it needs only to be posited and affirmed. Such an apprehension would not belong to the field of abstract thought, but should be known by the internal dynamism of our intellect, which makes us tend toward Him, apprehend Him, as the necessary term of our natural inclination. In other words, that which makes us affirm God is the consciousness of our natural appetite of the absolute and of the divine. In such a system, what is the value of the logical order? It seems of little value, except insofar as it is supported, justified in advance, as it were, by the knowledge of a transcendent order of intelligibility and of the intellect itself. The line of demarcation between the logical and ontological orders would scarcely be perceptible. Instead of demonstrating God's existence, we would be reduced to showing that He is merely implicated and involved, or better, implied, in a never satisfied tendency toward a truth that is ever eluding our grasp. And even to show that, we have no other means or instrument than the principles of analysis and synthesis, both of which, if they are to have objective validity, would have to imply God's existence, and hence would have no worth as objective truth, except in so far as they logically presupposed the subsisting absolute as *natura prius*. But enough of this until we discuss it more fully in a future article.

Another inevitable consequence of that mentality which admits and affirms the existence of God from the nature of dynamic cognition, and even affirms the metaphysical possibility of the beatific vision as rationally demonstrable, is that the entire modern problem of Christian philosophy is *eo ipso* settled once and for all. The very relations between the natural and supernatural orders seem turned topsy-turvy; for if the mind as such, and by its very essence, is ordained to the beatific vision—even though insistence is laid on the fact that mind does not demand that vision—the whole philosophical axis is bent out of center. Then, without doubt, a Christian philosophy, in the full sense of the term, can be styled possible.⁹⁵ Merely to raise the question is to solve it!

⁹⁵ "Since *pure* philosophy recognizes itself, even *de jure*, impotent to give itself the fullness of thought, love, and life that its ultimate ideal implies; because it catches a glimpse of what is, and always will be, lacking to it (since it is a congenital insufficiency), and of the

DE BROGLIE AND THE NATURAL DESIRE OF SEEING GOD

Probably the most brilliant interpretation of the theory of the intellect as being the faculty of the divine was proposed by De Broglie. We shall give no more than the briefest possible outline of his method in this present article of introduction.

If we believe the learned professor of the Institut Catholique de Paris, the simple analysis of our natural appetite for happiness can lead us to discover with absolute certainty that "the beatific vision is certainly possible in itself, since our inclination cannot be without object,"⁹⁶ and that this appetite has for its unique term the supernatural beatific vision. Of course, the *de facto* existence of this beatific vision and of man's elevation to the supernatural order should remain always and exclusively an object of faith:

The principle, "desiderium naturae non potest esse inane," is valid, when there is question of the desire for the beatific vision, only in the order of essences, as if it merely meant that every desire of nature could be satisfied. That is why God's fulfilment of this desire is absolutely gratuitous. Nevertheless, we can rightly maintain that the nature of this beatitude, the *quid est* of the supernatural order, grace and glory, the conditions under which the vision of God is possible, together with the consequences necessarily flowing therefrom, derive from reason alone. In other words, in the order of essences, the intuitive vision of God is the only possible end of a created intellect. And this fact suffices to demonstrate the possibility of the existence of such a final end. (Treatises on the beatific vision and on the light of glory belong properly to the realm of natural reason and not to that of pure faith, as one tends to believe today.)⁹⁷

As a consequence, our intellect, tending of itself to the divine, to the intuitive vision, will be specified by this end, which is *de se* supernatural. And the natural can be conceived only in relation to grace. Our intellect is activated, in accord with its natural ontological exigencies, then only when it is in the state of grace and glory; in that

fact that what is lacking to it coincides with the essential promise of Catholic faith (the intuitive possession of God), it is, and knows itself to be, positively open to the supernatural Christian *surcrot*, naturally desirous of obtaining it from the pure and free generosity of God, intrinsically completed by the leaven of a higher specificity—in a word, it is, and knows itself to be, intrinsically and specifically Christian" (Romeyer, "Autour du problème de la philosophie chrétienne," *Archives de philosophie*, X, 4 [1934], p. 42).

⁹⁶ "De la place du surnaturel dans la philosophie de St. Thomas," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XIV (1924), 213.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

state alone does it show forth its proper and full intelligibility. So every metaphysical study of the intellect should be transposed to the supernatural order. From which a necessary conclusion would follow, and De Broglie himself has formulated it for us:

Thus we may conclude that if we wish to establish a coherent theory of the relations between the natural and the supernatural, we must invert the perspective generally taken by moderns. These latter speak about nature as if it were, by full right, primary in the order of intelligible objects—primary, I mean, not *quoad nos*, but *quoad se*. . . . On the contrary, we rather incline to believe that creatures are all the more one and intelligible in proportion as they are nearer to God. Hence, if we must establish a hierarchy among the objects of divine thought, we should first conceive of the creature in the state of divine adoption.⁹⁸

By way of final conclusion we might merely observe that in such a theory our elevation to the supernatural order would not be much of a mystery at all, since a strict mystery implies a double obscurity and supernatural transcendence, that of the *an est* and that of the *quid est*. But the intrinsic possibility of a strict mystery cannot be known except by divine revelation. It is this very possibility which is supernaturally transcendent to our reason, because the essence of that mystery supernaturally transcends our human reason.

De Broglie has colleagues who arrive at the same conclusion by indirect argumentation. Blondel, for instance, in his philosophy of *L'Action* makes capital of the state of man's anxiety and of the incompleteness of his nature, which can secure its happiness and perfection only outside itself in a transcendent reality. Rousselot in a more metaphysical manner starts from the nature of man's mind, his spiritual faculty, which as a result is styled the faculty of the divine, whose unlimited object must necessarily encompass God Himself in His substantial reality. They would have it that the human intellect and will naturally desire to grasp, without any intermediary, God, Infinite Reality, as He is in Himself. And they conclude to this natural and immediate corollary, that the immediate possession of God is possible. They are, however, forced to admit that, if it is possible that God should give Himself to a creature as an object of immediate perception, no creature can demand that this perfection be granted. So they recognize the possibility of a gratuitous super-

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

natural destiny, since the supernatural for them is by definition that which cannot be demanded by a creature. Their contention touches the possibility of a supernatural order, merely considered as our end and destiny, without affirming the existence or the nature of that end. And in such an hypothesis, they assert, they are not at all at variance with either Pius IX's condemnation of Frohschammer or with the text of the Vatican. Without entering into further discussion at present we might admit that this indirect form of argumentation does not fall under the condemnations of the *magisterium* with the same evidence as do those other modes of procedure which pretend to establish directly either the fact of the mystery or its intrinsic possibility. Nevertheless, the definition of man's mind as the intuitive faculty of the divine, in spite of all the verbal distinctions that are made to save it, seems to imply, in its very internal logic, no line of clear demarcation, no essential distinction between the natural and the supernatural. It would seem that a theory that wishes to define the intellect (Roussetot), and to construct a system of metaphysics beginning with the vision of God (De Broglie) as the constituent element of thought (Maréchal), and therefore in function of the supernatural order, cannot but logically result, in the last analysis, in the suppression of the whole supernatural order. Therefore, whether the main philosophical ideas be expressed in the perspectives of Maréchal, or De Broglie, or Roussetot, they really add up to the same conclusion.

ROUSSELOT'S THEORY OF FAITH

In Roussetot's treatise on faith, "Les yeux de la foi,"⁹⁹ the threefold program of our modern school—rediscovery of mind, rediscovery of finality, and renewal of the mystical aspects of theology—finds its natural culmination. The basic principle of Roussetot's theory of faith is philosophical; for he himself rightly says that "the problem of the act of faith, which is not at all apologetic but purely theological . . . , will depend for its solution upon a religious philosophy, namely, upon a theory of the relations of the natural to the supernatural."¹⁰⁰ Chenu makes the same point:

⁹⁹ *Recherches de science religieuse*, I (1910), 241-59; 444-75; cf. also "Remarques sur l'histoire de la foi naturelle," *ibid.*, IV (1913), 1-36.

¹⁰⁰ "Les yeux de la foi," p. 241.

There is perhaps no psychological problem which involves in its material, in its treatment, in its solution, so many psychological and religious elements as the problem of faith. Under this aspect alone, even before we consider its moral value, it presents a problem freighted with the highest human interest. And when the philosopher studies the question, it is his entire conception of the life of the mind and his interpretation of intellectual behavior which color his study. This new type of knowledge and intellectual attainment is both dependent on, and superior to, evidential knowledge, in keeping with one's theory of science.¹⁰¹

Faithful, then, to his principles of intellectualism, of dynamism, and of the absolute value of man's affirmation in a judgment, Rousselot develops his treatise on faith, in which there is always "the same care to indicate the parallelism between the development of a human act and the dynamic development of the process of faith."¹⁰² His theory is clearly an outgrowth of the philosophical notions that have occupied us throughout this article. The tendency of his system is to reduce the act of faith to an extreme simplicity; his system "fuses the preambles of faith with the very act of faith itself, both being under one and the same influence of the infused virtue of faith."¹⁰³ He seems to exaggerate the power of the virtue of faith. He was struck by the fact that St. Thomas, when he wishes to show how grace affects credibility, uses as an example the *habitus fidei*, and explains its influence by "certain sympathetic or antipathetic reverberations in the affective realm, such as occur in the case of a virtue that is not intellectual but purely affective and voluntary [for example, chastity], when confronted with things that are appropriate or offensive to it."¹⁰⁴ Rousselot calls this process "le rôle sympathique de vertu."¹⁰⁵

The originality of his theory about the sympathetic character of the virtue of faith appears in high relief when, instead of admitting a merely indirect and dispositive influence of that virtue, he explains it by the very nature of man's intellect, which, according to his theory of intellection, as already explained, is a kind of sympathy, a love for being. And thus it happens that the *habitus fidei*, insofar as it resides in the intellect and perfects that faculty by co-operating with it, acts

¹⁰¹ "La psychologie de la foi dans la théologie du xiiième siècle," *Etudes d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale du xiiième siècle*, II (1932), 163.

¹⁰² Lebreton, "Rousselot," *DTC*, XIV, 136.

¹⁰³ Harent, "Foi," *DTC*, VI, 260.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 161.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Harent's explanation of this "sympathy," *ibid.*, col. 239 ff.

per modum amoris. That sympathetic influence, Rousselot maintains, "should not be restricted to certain particular cases of intellection, but is rather the necessary sequence of a general law of the intellect."¹⁰⁶ And lest we object that psychological experience does not testify to the truth of the proposition that knowledge is love, Rousselot seeks refuge in the unconscious: "The fact that we are unconscious of this sympathy does not prevent it from being real. The affirmation of being, which seems at times imposed upon us from the outside, through the medium of external objects, is really the expression of that irresistible allure by which God creates and preserves man's intellectual soul, by attracting it and directing it to Himself."¹⁰⁷ If we do not perceive this "moment sympathie," it is because it is "immersed in the field of the unconscious; and that is why the affirmation of being seems, to superficial consciousness, to be effected *per modum rationis*."¹⁰⁸ In another context he continues: "All vision is vision of love, and is defined in potential being by an appetitive habit, whether conscious or not. Human reason, enchanted, so to speak, charmed, fascinated by the God Who made it capable of Himself, is nothing more than a pure love of the Supreme Being."¹⁰⁹ And finally: "Our conclusion, therefore, is this: since to see, one needs eyes, and since to perceive the things beneath the discursive aspect of being, one needs this natural sympathy with the totality of being, which is designated intelligence, so to believe, one must acquire a spiritual sympathy with the object of belief, which we rightly call the grace of supernatural faith."¹¹⁰

As a corollary to the above doctrine, it would follow that the same grace, which revelation tells us is absolutely necessary for the act of faith, is also, in Rousselot's explanation, absolutely necessary that man may be convinced of the preambles of faith, at least of the fact of revelation, of the Church, and of the obligation to believe.

Because there are historical and exterior proofs for religion, which language can express, all reducible to a logical and coherent summary, and under this form proposed to all, one has no right to conclude that man can, without the illumination of grace, perceive them synthetically as proofs, or give them an assent really certain. In order that the proofs of religion may be individual and communicable, two

¹⁰⁶ "Les yeux de la foi," *op. cit.*, p. 461. ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 461-62.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 461; the expression, "moment sympathie," is Rousselot's; it can hardly be translated.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 453-54.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 469.

conditions are necessary for their perception: presentation of the object, and the possession of a spiritual faculty which can grasp that object. In both cases, one element is of no value without the other. . . . The second element is necessarily a supernatural light. . . . One cannot make a reasonable judgment about Christ, His Church, the Scriptures, except with the help of God's grace. . . .¹¹¹ "Natural reason is incapable of perceiving with certitude the proofs of faith."¹¹²

All of Rousselot's assertions stem from this principle: "Man can perceive objects in their supernatural formality only by means of a supernatural faculty."¹¹³

While paying high tribute to Rousselot's inventive genius and penetrating speculative powers, we must at the same time admit that his theories, especially as they apply to the treatise on faith, are in great part open to severe criticism. We believe with De Grandmaison that "in the course of time, Father Rousselot would partially at least have modified his ideas, after he saw what his colleagues had to say in criticism, and after testing them in the classroom"; that "he would in any case have clarified and recast them, enlarged them by evaluating complementary points of view."¹¹⁴ But it was not in the plan of Divine Providence that he should live to answer his critics, and to clarify or rectify confusing notions either in his own mind or in the minds of his readers.

THE FORMAL OBJECT OF A SUPERNATURAL ACT

A final word. In reading Rousselot, Maréchal, and De Broglie, one suspects that another principle, a complementary notion to their basic principle which defined the intellect as the faculty of the divine, has guided much of their philosophical and theological speculation—the principle of the specification of a supernatural act by a special supernatural object. The whole question is one of capital importance today and deserves close study, since it affects the entire question of the relations between the natural and supernatural orders. If space allowed, we might discuss it at some length. Now a passing reference must suffice.

Summing up his comments, for example, on natural faith, Rousselot draws this conclusion: "To adhere to objects of revelation, under the

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 473.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 468

¹¹⁴ De Grandmaison, Preface to *L'Intellectualisme*, p. xxx.

formal aspect of natural being, is to affirm implicitly that they belong to the natural order, and consequently need not be considered. In simpler terms, to affirm the truths of faith, without having been touched by a divine relish for them, means to accept these truths in a different sense than that in which God proclaimed them."¹¹⁵ And in a note to the above passage he adds:

The Scholastic dispute about the formal object of supernatural virtues is one of those controversies which one might be tempted to neglect as too subtle and deprived of practical interest, whereas, in fact, it expresses in strictly technical terms the central problem of the knowledge of faith, and sets off in vivid relief the main issue. I believe that it should be said, regarding the formal object of faith, that in considering representation as such, there is no difference between the attitude of the believer and the unbeliever towards the Christian mysteries; but that if one considers both what is represented and the manner in which one gives assent, the supernatural faculty defines (*défini*) a new formal object. But in the case of one who has the virtue of faith, provided it has been sufficiently presented, representation and assent go together.

In the theory of Rousselot and his followers, it would seem, then, that they would logically admit no purely natural act and would therefore have to hold that all spiritual acts attain a formal supernatural object. We do not wish to infer that these men must hold, by the logic of their theory, the theory of the special formal object distinct from the corresponding natural act. If no act of intelligence can beget certitude except inasmuch as it expresses the desire of God, the supernatural end, then it follows that there can be no really human act which does not attain a supernatural formal object. Of course, this latter use of supernatural is not a little ambiguous, because in the logic of the system it turns out to be something which is practically due to nature, hence natural or connatural. There are many today, we believe, who hold the theory of the special formal object without any prejudice whatsoever to the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders, whereas it appears that Rousselot and his followers do so only by an equivalent denial of an essential distinction between the two orders. But this subject will need further discussion at another time.

¹¹⁵ "Les yeux de la foi," *op. cit.*, p. 469.

CONCLUSION

In the physical and applied sciences startling discoveries are almost everyday occurrences. The same cannot be said of theology. No new, wide, and lightsome avenues are daily made accessible to the labyrinthine ways leading to the mysteries which enshroud the eternal truths revealed by God. Especially is this true about the profound mystery of God's own life and man's share in that life here below, which we commonly call the problem of the relations between the natural and supernatural orders.

Theological developments and the progress of dogma, like the decisions of the Holy See, which is the guardian of these eternal truths, are always very slow and deliberate, a painstaking and logical fruition of long growth and intellectual advance. The history of dogma has witnessed to no sudden "find," made overnight, and destined to endure. It would rather aver that such so-called discoveries were always short-lived and unenduring, a fad for a day, often doomed to die with the death of the discoverer, if not before.

A new impetus was given to Catholic speculation by the genius of the myriad-minded Rousselot along with his many followers. The three-fold program of this progressive school of theology—a rediscovery of the mind, a rediscovery of finality, a renewal of the true mystical aspects of theology—centering around Rousselot's celebrated dictum or definition of the mind of man, was, we agree, "revolutionary both in philosophy and in theology."¹¹⁶ And few movements have enjoyed such enthusiastic and widespread popularity. It has already survived the premature and untimely death of its much regretted author and *inspirateur*, and flourishes today among the many followers who have wrought betimes a superstructure which the original architect might not recognize as his own, except for the foundation supporting the entire edifice.

The future alone can tell what the fate of such a theoretical speculation might be, and what mark it shall leave upon subsequent Catholic thought, whether it is to perdure, or vanish as suddenly as it came. At any rate it is certain that Rousselot has done much to advance the state of the problem. Abreast of his times, a modern in advance of

¹¹⁶ Descoqs, *Le mystère de notre élévation surnaturelle*, p. 8.

his age, he must have sensed that the problem of the natural and the supernatural comprised two essential parts: the total transcendence of the supernatural, but also (and this is the part that was so often overlooked) the element of perfection for nature. Since the time of Baius, it has been the fashion not to emphasize this latter characteristic. Thus the somewhat plausible charge of "extrinsécisme radical" against the so-called "traditional" view. As regards the problem of faith, though not finding a final solution, he clarified the issues. He was wrong in emphasizing the unity of the intellectual and affective aspects to the point of confusion. But he was in reaction against the prevailing tendencies to emphasize the distinction between the two aspects to the point of unreal separation. Perhaps Rousselot had started along the correct path, but his conclusions led him too far afield.

As he wrote, Rousselot was always aware of what Newman expressed thus: "To write theology is like dancing on a tight rope some hundred feet above the ground. . . ."¹¹⁷ In spite of that, he was willing to break ground in order to advance the knowledge of God, and better to prepare modern minds to receive the supernatural ray of divine faith. Nor was he blind to his own shortcomings. "L'imperfection de mon essai," he says, "ne m'échappe point; ce sera déjà quelque chose qu'une ébauche utile."¹¹⁸ And that justified all his labor and striving.

¹¹⁷ Cited by Rousselot, "Remarques," *Rech. de sc. rel.*, IV (1913), 8.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.