

Revisiting Maritain's Moral Philosophy Adequately Considered

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Introduction

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE of the Catholic philosopher is fraught with a number of complications foreign to those experienced by his or her non-Christian counterparts. In this article, I would like to pose a single problem that might at first strike the reader as coming from another era but that I believe is important for philosophical reflection, namely Jacques Maritain's contested thesis concerning "adequate consideration" of moral philosophy. Maritain's two most well-known (and complete) treatments of this problem are found in his *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*¹ and *Science and Wisdom*.² In these works, he expresses the view that moral philosophy must be subalternated to theology in order to be a true science. This is due to moral philosophy's status as a *practical science* aiming to guide actions (if only from a distance) in view of the true human good. Developing John Poinsett's account of subalternation,³ Maritain concluded that, in isolation from certain theological data, moral philosophy⁴ cannot adequately address

¹ See Jacques Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, trans. Edward H. Flannery (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 38–49, 61–100.

² See Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, trans. Bernard Wall (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1944), 137–214.

³ See John of St. Thomas, *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, trans. Yves R. Simon, John J. Glanville, and G. Donald Hollenhorst (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955), 510–518 (q. 26, a. 2).

⁴ Precisely as a *philosophical-scientific* body of knowledge concerning practical principles and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. See Maritain,

matters ultimately bearing on the direction of human actions. Such data would include, for example, knowledge of man's true final end as attainable only in a higher, supernatural order, the state in which the human person was created and now exists as fallen and redeemed, and so on—in other words, data pertaining to the existential state in which man finds himself presently.

Commentators such as Ralph McInerny saw this position as an unfortunate blurring of the proper lines of natural and supernatural truths, likely to ignore things like the preambles of faith that are properly assigned to the practical order of natural reason.⁵ Other critiques of Maritain's position come from the perspective of contemporary discussions about the problem of "pagan virtues."⁶ Though a fruitful terrain for investigation, this route will not be my focus in this article.⁷

Instead, I will take as my point of departure a remark registered

Science and Wisdom, 162: "But the prescription of good acts [which purely philosophical moral science would do] is not enough to form a practical science, a true science of the use of freedom, a science which prescribes not only good acts, but which also determines how the *acting subject* can live a life of consistent goodness and organize rightly his whole universe of action. . . . On the plane of speculatively-practical science, as on the plane of practically-practical science, this is the object which moral philosophy sets before itself—so far as it is proper to a study which is not that of the *iudicium practicum* and of the *imperium*, but of general truths known and organized in the light of causes and principles and elaborated according to a speculative mode or according to a practical mode of definition."

⁵ Ralph McInerny, *The Question of Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1993), 55–69.

⁶ See Angela McKay Knobel, "Aquinas and the Pagan Virtues," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 51 (2011): 339–54. See also Brian J. Shanley, "Aquinas on Pagan Virtue," *The Thomist* 63, no. 4 (1999): 553–77.

⁷ An ultimate evaluation of these recent discussions must be adjudicated in light of Maritain's remarks concerning "inadequate" consideration of moral philosophy, as well as his remarks concerning the moral virtues when they exist as virtues in a state of being somewhat unstable dispositions enabling the accomplishment of nondifficult moral actions (*in statu dispositionis facile mobilis*). See: Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 166–67; Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 65; Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to the Basic Problems of Moral Philosophy*, trans. Cornelia N. Borgerhoff (New York: Magi Books, 1990), 94. To address the latter point adequately, one would need to undertake a careful study of Maritain in light of Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, and Charles René Billuart; see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'instabilité dans l'état de péché mortel des vertus morales acquises," *Revue thomiste* 43 (1937): 255–62. Also, an excellent response to Shanley and Knobel can be found in Thomas M. Osborne, "Perfect and Imperfect Virtues in Aquinas," *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 39–64.

in Denis Bradley's criticism of Maritain in his *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*.⁸ Although Bradley rejects Maritain's solution to this matter, I believe he quite insightfully touches upon the central point of the entire issue—namely, in these two disciplines (i.e., moral philosophy and moral theology), we are confronted by two unique and incommensurate formal objects. According to Maritain (and the Thomist school that he represents), moral theology is a unified science, at once speculative and practical (though primarily speculative), having the *Deity as such* as its formal object. Moral philosophy, in contrast, is a practical discipline concerned with human acts *considered as, free, human acts conforming to the natural rule of morality*.

The task of this article is merely to explain this distinction as clearly as possible. To Bradley, it was a “distinction without a difference.”⁹ To Maritain, however, it was pivotally important. On one side, there is moral theology, which really should be understood as a study of human acts *as revealing God, the Principle of Everlasting Life*. On the other side, there is moral philosophy, which is concerned with *human acts* considered precisely as *human acts*. Because such human acts are, in fact, enlivened by a supernatural existential state, Maritain believed it necessary to subalternate moral philosophy to theology. However, insofar as the formal object in question is *not* the *Deity* but *human acts* instead, the science remains proportionate to the light of human reason (and not reason as instrumentally illuminated by faith).

In what follows, I will focus on describing the character of these two sciences. Given that this lofty conception of theology is perhaps underemphasized today, I will stress Maritain's conception of theology. However, in so doing, I will explain the substantial differences between the formal perspective of theology and that of moral philosophy. I will close by indicating some of the issues that will need to be discussed in a future article, particularly regarding the technicalities pertaining to the relation between faith, theology, and moral philosophy in such an “adequate consideration” of the object of moral philosophy.

The Theological *Habitus*

At the very end of Bradley's monograph, he takes up the problem of the paradox of philosophical ethics for Thomists, stressing the incom-

⁸ See Denis J. M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 495–506.

⁹ Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*, 504–5.

pleteness of human nature and nature's inability *as natural* to sate man's natural desire for happiness.¹⁰ I believe that such reflections are quite important from a Thomistic perspective, given the dominating indifference of the will faced with any finite good. Natural felicity may be *true* felicity when achieved, but it is only a kind of "felicity in motion."¹¹ While Maritain's use of this expression is perhaps a bit flowery, it accords with the Stagirite's position that happiness must be an activity and Aquinas's distinction between perfect and imperfect happiness.¹² Speculative wisdom is indeed the highest form of natural virtue for an Aristotelian, but this is quite distant and mutable in comparison with true beatitude considered as the participated eternity experienced in the Beatific Vision of the Divine Essence. Without denying the possibility of natural metaphysical wisdom, Aristotle did not disdain to observe: "Hence the possession of it might be justly regarded as beyond human power; for in many ways human nature is in bondage."¹³

I have a great deal of sympathy and agreement with Bradley's conclusions in this regard. For my part, I believe that many insights can be derived from the distinction between the natural teleology of the human person and the supernatural end to which the human person is called,¹⁴ particularly in light of postmodernity's awareness for the open-

¹⁰ See Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*, 513–44.

¹¹ See Jacques Maritain, *Integral Humanism*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Scribner, 1968), 136–37. See also Maritain, *An Introduction*, 107–15.

¹² See: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1174a13–1175a22; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, qq. 3–5. Indeed, from a purely Aristotelian perspective, we should always remember that the Stagirite insists that the happiness for which we should aim is only as much as is possible for us humanly. The heights of contemplation are a quasi-divine and true end, but we are beset in many ways with limitations.

¹³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b29–30, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, trans. W. D. Ross, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Clearly, the reader can sense my sympathies for the excellent work of Lawrence Feingold, which has helped to invigorate the old, clear Scholastic distinction between the natural and supernatural orders; see Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010). This was a point stressed again and again throughout the career of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. That which is supernatural *quoad substantiam* is truly divine in a way that is incommensurable to anything created (or creatable). Indeed, it is even beyond a natural event miraculously accomplished by a supernatural agency. The theme is repeated in many places in his corpus, but an excellent précis of it can be found in Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Sense of Mystery*, trans. Matthew K. Miner (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2017), 199–216.

ness of human existence (a point that is important for Bradley as he closes his monograph). *Qua human*, our intellectual and moral lives are cultural and historical.¹⁵ However, as the reader will well note, it is far beyond the scope of this paper to argue on behalf of such agreement!

Among the critiques presented against Maritain's position, Bradley partially agrees with those registered in the 1934–1936 articles by Fr. Santiago Ramírez¹⁶ that such a “moral philosophy” makes no sense as a type of “philosophy.” The critique holds that the proposed solution problematically applies the method of subalternation—originally pertaining (i.e., in the *Posterior analytics*¹⁷) to speculative sciences of the natural order, such as astronomy and harmony—to practical sciences. For the non-Christian, there would be no science superior to the purely natural, philosophical point of view, thus preventing the reception of principles from a higher science. It would seem that an act of faith—an act that is moved by supernatural motives of assent—would be required to constitute the formal object of such a science.¹⁸ Bradley rightly notes that the matter hinges upon Maritain's

¹⁵ This theme continually recurs in Maritain's reflection on the natural law. For an important text, see note 56 below. One of the best formulations concerning this topic can be found in Anton Pegis's incredibly illuminating *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man* (New York: MacMillan, 1963). Equally excellent is Armand Maurer, *St. Thomas and Historicity* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1979). Both texts are worth reading, but see in particular Pegis, *At the Origins*, 47, and 52:

If man is a historical sort of being, indeed the only being in the universe that is historical by nature, this trait belongs to the soul before it belongs to man. History is the signature of the soul's intellectuality, for the human soul is an intelligence living by motion at the level of intelligibility found in matter. That is why it is a man, temporal spirit, engaged in an incarnated intellectual life. . . .

The human soul, which is a spiritual substance *as* the form of matter, is an intellectual creature destined by nature for a historical existence, for an incarnate and therefore temporal duration, in order to express and to realize the intellectuality proper to it. The human soul, in other words, is in an entirely unique way an intelligence that can *be* itself only by *enacting* within itself a personal history; it is the only intellectual creature that needs to experience a duration subject to time and motion in order to find and to build its very nature.

¹⁶ See Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*, 502–6.

¹⁷ See Aristotle, *Posterior analytics* 78b34–79a16 and 87a31–b17.

¹⁸ On this point, an insightful anonymous reader of this article remarked that this matter should be addressed at greater length in a companion article, one addressing the following question: “Whether the moral philosopher so

treatment of the distinction in formal objects between the sciences of moral philosophy and theology. So much should not be very surprising, given Maritain's vein of Thomism, which comfortably deploys distinctions taken from Cajetan and John of St. Thomas regarding the constitution of formal objects of the sciences.¹⁹

For the tradition of interpretation undergirding Maritain's position, a locus classicus regarding the nature of theological science is Aquinas's discussion in *Summa theologiae* [ST] I, q. 1, Cajetan's comments on these articles, and Poinot's disputation on the topic in *Cursus theologicus*, t. 1, q. 1, d. 2.²⁰ In the aforementioned question in ST, Aquinas establishes the status of theology as a science, its necessity, its separate nature from philosophical wisdom, and its primarily speculative character.²¹ In particular, this last point is reaffirmed in ST I, q. 1, a.7, ad 2, in which Aquinas repeats that all the conclusions of theology are comprehended under the formal aspect of the Divinity.²² Even moral theology is thus related to the Godhead as such, *not*

described ought also be a moral theologian and not allow even his audience the illusion of comfort that all has been existentially addressed in moral philosophy?" This matter is closely allied to our concerns in this article, but it does require specific technical discussions regarding the assent involved in the subalternation in question. As will be noted in the final section of this article, I intend to address this question in a future article.

¹⁹ I refer here to the notions of *ratio formalis objecti ut res (ratio formalis quae)* and *ratio formalis objecti ut objectum (ratio formalis sub qua)*, which come up throughout his treatments of the specification of the sciences in general (in many places throughout his corpus of works). For the most condensed exposition of this distinction, see Jacques Maritain, *The Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Imelda C. Byrne (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 125–35.

²⁰ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus* (Paris: Vives, 1883), 442–528 (*De scientia theologiae*, q. 1, d. 2). See also, the recent English edition: John of St. Thomas, *On Sacred Science*, trans. John P. Doyle, ed. Victor M. Salas (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2018). This debt is clear in *Science and Wisdom* and *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, but it is also *amply* attested to in his chapter "The Deposition of Wisdom" in his *The Dream of Descartes*, trans. Mabelle L. Anderson (London: Poetry Editions London, 1946), 46–82.

²¹ See ST I, q. 1, a. 4. As will be stated below, it is formally and eminently speculative and practical, a participation in God's own knowledge whereby he knows both himself and his works.

²² See ST I, q. 1, a. 7, obj. 2 ("Hence, all the things about which conclusions are reached in a given science are included under that science's subject. Now, in Sacred Scripture [*sic*] conclusions are reached about many things other than God, for example, about creatures and about moral matters pertaining to man. Therefore, God is not the subject of this science") and ad 2 ("To the second objection, it must be said that all the other things about which conclusions

the direction of human actions as such.²³ This does not mean that God is merely “kept in mind” in all of theology’s disquisitions or that theology considers revealed data in a purely philosophical light.²⁴

are reached in sacred doctrine [*sic*] are included under God, not as parts or species or accidents, but as ordered in some manner to Him”; my translations from the Leonine edition). We will not discuss in detail the distinction between formal revelation (i.e., as pertains to faith) and virtual revelation (i.e., as pertains to theological knowledge), though the topic will be operative in what follows.

²³ This point is succinctly and clearly explained in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “Du caractère métaphysique de la Théologie morale de saint Thomas, en particulier dans ses rapports avec la prudence et la conscience,” *Revue thomiste* 30 (1925): 341–55. A translation is to be published in a future issue of *Nova et Vetera* (English).

²⁴ It was against this that Maritain wrote persuasively in (e.g.) the chapter from *The Dream of Descartes* cited above in note 18. Likewise, see Jacques Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 268–69:

Now this God of faith, Deity as such, not seen, but believed, or attained to in the testimony of first Truth and by means of dogmatic definitions, is also the object of theology. Theology envisages it from the point of view of “virtual revelation,” as it is called; in other words, from the point of view of the consequences that reason, when enlightened by faith, can draw from formally revealed principles.

This is not the place to go into any lengthy development concerning the nature of theological wisdom. All that needs to be noted is that theology is quite a different thing from a simple application of philosophy to matters of revelation: that would truly be a monstrous conception; it would submit revealed data to a purely human light and subordinate theological wisdom to philosophy. There exists no genuine science or wisdom unless within the soul there be a genuine intellectual virtue proportioning the light of discrimination and judgment to the proper level of the object. To an object which is the depths of revealed divinity, insofar as it can be exploited by reason, there must necessarily correspond, as its light in the soul, not the light of philosophy, but a proportionate light, the light of supernatural faith taking up and directing the natural movement of reason and its natural way of knowing. Thus, theology is not a simple application of natural reason and of philosophy to revealed data: it is an elucidation of revealed data by faith vitally linked with reason, advancing in step with reason and arming itself with philosophy. That is why philosophy, far from subordinating theology to itself, is properly the “servant” of theology in the immanent use theology makes of it [i.e., not in purely philosophical disquisition]. Theology is free as regards philosophical doctrines. It is theology that chooses among these doctrines the one that will in its hands be the best instrument of truth. And let a theologian lose theo-

As a speculative *habitus*, theology is not coterminous with faith, for it proceeds in a discursive manner from principles to conclusions through the industry of human ratiocination.²⁵ However, while theological science *is* naturally acquired, it *necessarily* presupposes a higher, supernatural light (i.e., faith) in which its data are scrutinized and ultimately resolved in light of the Godhead, a light conferred through the infused virtue of faith. Lacking this light, theology becomes a corpse of statements regarding the Deity, no longer united in light of the supernatural principles that alone enable it to be a unique discipline about God's intimate, mysterious life.

No matter how lofty it may be, metaphysical knowledge of the First Cause cannot "demand" direct (i.e., nondiscursive, intuitive) experience of that Cause.²⁶ To know the First Cause with immediate evidence is no longer to know him *as Cause*. Instead, it is to know God according to the intimate reality of the *Deity as such*.²⁷ The

logical faith; he still can keep the whole machinery and conceptual organization of his science, but he keeps it as something dead in his mind; he has lost his proper light.

²⁵ Although there is a certain rationalistic tendency in the traditional presentations of this doctrine, an admirable (though introductory) account given by M. D. Chenu shows the vitality of such a conception of theological thinking in his little text *Is Theology a Science?* It should be noted that, for whatever might be said about the controversies surrounding Chenu and his critiques of Garrigou-Lagrange's Thomism, this volume finds Chenu still indebted to the spirit of Garrigou-Lagrange's spiritual theology, as becomes evident in a number of passages (*Is Theology a Science?* trans. A. H. N. Green-Armytage [New York: Hawthorn, 1959]). On the nature of theology, one can profitably read: Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The One God*, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1944), 39–93; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, trans. Patrick Cummins (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1950), 53–60. Also, see the text by Emmanuel Doronzo cited below, as well as Charles Journet, *The Wisdom of Faith: An Introduction to Theology*, trans. R. F. Smith (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1952).

²⁶ See the forceful defense of this traditional position in Garrigou-Lagrange, *Le sens du mystère*, 157–205.

²⁷ A profound reflection on this can be found in the chapter entitled "The Eminence of the Deity, Its Attributes, and the Divine Persons" in Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Sense of Mystery*, 171–197. Also, one can consult Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature*, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1949), 3–32, 224–45.

In words that recall Cajetan's own remarks as recounted by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, much light is shed on this point in the brief but profound text found in Emmanuel Doronzo, *Introduction to Theology* (Middleburg, VA: Notre Dame Institute Press, 1973), 48: "*Deity* means God considered in his most intimate essence, or according to what makes God to be God and distinguishes

words of Maritain express this well:

To know the First Cause in its essence, or without the intermediary of any other thing, is to know the First Cause otherwise than as First Cause; it is to know it by ceasing to attain it by the very means by which we attain it, by ceasing to exercise the very act which bears us up to it. The natural desire to know the First Cause in its essence envelops within itself the indication of the impossibility in which nature is placed to satisfy it.²⁸

It is natural for humans to desire to know the cause that explains a given effect—perhaps most especially when that effect is existence itself. However, it is beyond the nature (i.e., as apart from the gratuity of supernatural grace) of any created intellect, whether angelic²⁹ or human,³⁰ to have immediate experience of the Divine Essence. However, theology, if it is indeed rooted in the theological virtue of faith, does hold the promise of *intuitively seeing*³¹ that supernatural

him from all creatures. Hence, Deity is something different from and beyond all those divine attributes which are in some way common to creatures, such as being, one, true, good, intelligent, willing, potent, acting, etc. All such attributes are really found in creatures, although in God they are in an infinite manner proper to God, and, in this sense of infinity, they are proper to God. But infinity itself is a negative concept, that is, absence of limit in a positive perfection; hence it cannot be the intimate and proper essence of God. All the other positive attributes of God, as those we just mentioned, are only analogical concepts taken from creatures, and therefore they do not express the proper and inner essence of God. This essence, rather than being, unity, truth, goodness, intelligence, will, power, is *something above being, unity, truth, etc.*, which founds and explains all such attributes in an infinite and simple way. *That something is what we call Deity.*"

²⁸ See Jacques Maritain, *Approaches to God*, trans. Peter O'Reilly (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 110.

²⁹ See *ST I*, q. 56, a. 3.

³⁰ See *ST I*, q. 12, and I-II, q. 5, a. 5.

³¹ The distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition was at best inchoate in the works of St. Thomas. By the time of Bl. Duns Scotus, it began to play a pivotal role, one that would have significant outcomes in all of the *scholae* of the later middle ages and beyond, especially in nominalism. According to the position accepted by Maritain, the distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition can be simply understood as pertaining to the distinction between knowing something without or with the physical presence of that which is known. It is one thing to know intellectually a tree's essence; it is another for a tree to be present *here and now*. Intuitive cognition adds no

Godhead in whose Light it reasons. It is a science at once formally-eminently speculative and practical (though more speculative in character than practical), a science that is a participation in God's own knowledge, though, in this life, it looks to the Beatific Vision only in the mirror of faith. Indeed, it does so only in a human manner (*modo humano*³²), through the effort of human reasoning syllogistically connecting principles to conclusions, although in a manner that is objectively illuminated by faith.³³ However, because theological science presupposes the light of faith (in order to scrutinize its objects in a manner befitting theology's concern with the Deity as such), it knows that what is promised in faith is something to be lived in charity and ultimately *seen* directly in the Beatific Vision. Thus, just as faith "demands to be completed still further by the gifts of intelligence and wisdom, and becomes the disciple of love"³⁴ in mystical

quidditative note to what is known; it adds only attention to the existential presence of what is known. In our current state, such presence is known only through our senses. Indeed, this is what makes the external sense powers unique: they form no expressed concepts, something that *is* required for the imagination, memory, estimative/cogitative power, and intellect. Thus, short of the Beatific Vision (which is possible only with the light of glory elevating our intellects), we have no *strictly intuitive knowledge of God*. For some of the philosophical reasoning behind the Thomist position on these matters, see John of St. Thomas, *Material Logic*, q. 23, a. 1.

³² Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 232.

³³ Though it also must be said that theology *also* scrutinizes and defends its own principles in a theological manner, fulfilling the tasks of a true kind of wisdom: "Theology like every science *simpliciter dicta* knows its own principles by turning back on them. Even when the matter concerns a truth of faith theology knows it, not insofar as it is a mystery of faith which transcends theological science but insofar as it is an object to which this science returns to examine it, and explain it and make it more definite in the light of virtual revelation" (Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 236–37). While emphasizing the *sapiential* character of this kind of undertaking, Doronzo expresses this matter with helpful clarity, explaining both the illative-deductive scientific work of theology and its sapiential concern with both its own principles and the other, inferior sciences (*Introduction to Theology*, 21–24).

³⁴ Maritain, *Dream of Descartes*, 49. See also Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 268: "An essentially superhuman formal object; a human mode of knowing: here lies, as we may note immediately in passing, the reason why faith will perpetually strive to exceed its own way of knowing. That is why faith, as distinct from metaphysics, will of itself place in the soul, at least radically, an unconditional desire for mystical contemplation properly so called, which, although it is contained within its own proper sphere, faith is nevertheless not adequate to procure all by itself." He goes on to cite Aquinas, *De veritate* q. 14, a. 2; q. 18, a. 3, and q. 18, a. 3, ad 1.

experience, so too does theological science demand completion (so to speak) in supernatural adoration of God.³⁵

Theology is thus distinguished from faith, as well as from the quasi-experiential gift of wisdom.³⁶ Nevertheless, theology scientifically explains the nature of this experiential wisdom (insofar as its object is God known in himself), as well as the nature of the means by which one arrives at this experiential wisdom (insofar as contemplative wisdom experiences God here below)—though theological science is not itself that same mode of knowledge.

In his commentary on *ST* q. 1, a. 4, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange lays out a position that, as expected, follows Cajetan regarding the subject of theological science. The science is *formally and eminently* speculative and practical. As the simple perfections “in” the Godhead are formally and eminently one with the Deity as such, and as the human soul is formally and eminently sensitive, vegetative, and rational, so too does theology contain both the speculative and the practical order in a formal and eminent manner—both at once, but as a single, loftier reality. It cannot be practical in the strict, philosophical sense of a practical science. Practical knowledge perfects the intellect with regard to the directing actions to be done or artifacts to be made (in a broad sense—*agibile* and the *factibile*).³⁷ Inasmuch as we under-

³⁵ See Jacques Maritain, “No Knowledge without Intuitivity,” in *Untrammelled Approaches*, trans. Bernard Doering (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 345n49: “[In contrast to philosophical contemplation,] in theological contemplation the central concepts concern articles of faith—and that the light used by the mind is not only the light of reason but also, and primarily, that of faith—and finally that what accompanies this contemplation is not the natural love of God, but the love of charity, not a natural adoration, but a supernatural adoration inseparable from charity.”

³⁶ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3, and *ST* II-II; q. 45.

³⁷ Though one should be careful not to overstate the case here. The speculatively practical knowledge of moral philosophy is different from prudence, which rectifies the practical intellect with regard to counseling, judging, and (most especially) commanding the sorts of actions that should be done in the *hic et nunc*. Practical knowledge in its most practical manifestation is found in the command of prudence, which truly directs action. A similar point could be made with regard to art as well, though the case is slightly different. On this, see “Appendix VII” in Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 481–89. Some clear-headed reflections on these matters can be found in Philip Neri Reese, “The End of Ethics: A Thomistic Investigation,” *New Blackfriars* 95 (May 2014): 285–94. Note, however, that Reese seems to treat speculatively practical moral philosophy in a manner that is *slightly* too speculative, but that is a matter outside our immediate concerns.

stand the “practical” in this natural sense—which is the standard account of *phronesis* (*prudentia*) and *techné* (*ars*) as opposed to the purely speculative intellectual virtues—it is inappropriate to consider theology as being “practical” (at least according to Garrigou-Lagrance and the general Thomistic tradition). It is concerned not with actions to be done so much as the Godhead to be contemplated (through revelation, grace, the gift of wisdom, and in the light of glory).³⁸

The whole of the moral “part” of theology is about God.³⁹ It is not about moral acts *in themselves*. It is about *moral acts insofar as they are directed to the final supernatural end—namely, to the Beatific Vision*. Here too, in moral theology, our formal viewpoint is the Deity—God revealed as the Principle of the supernaturalized moral life. Yes, it is about “how God’s life is shared with man.” Nonetheless, the axis in theology is *always* God.⁴⁰ This point cannot be proclaimed too emphatically, for man—well accustomed to the difficult ways of the world and used to discoursing about matters much more quotidian—will always be tempted to make a theology (and an entire philosophy) that is made to man’s measure.

The “circuit” of theological wisdom retains the perspective of God’s intimate self-knowledge as revealed in faith and lived in hope and charity (as well as through the infused moral virtues and under the inspiration of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit). Thus, the lofty end of theology is the Beatific Vision, both *in via* (as lived in the life of grace that flowers in supernatural acts of love and of infused contemplation) and, ultimately, *in patria*. For, whatever might be said for this view (one with a long history in Christian spirituality), it certainly is the

³⁸ See Garrigou-Lagrance, *The One God*, 61. See also *ST I*, q. 1, a. 4.

³⁹ On this important point, see Garrigou-Lagrance, “Du caractère métaphysique de la Théologie morale,” 341–55.

⁴⁰ This point is well expressed in Doronzo, *Introduction to Theology*, 16: “This property of theology [its specific unity] follows from the specific and indivisible unity of its formal object, the concept of Deity, which is constantly and equally considered in all the parts and treatises of this science. In fact, such treatises may be given the following formal titles: On the One God; On the Trinity in God; On God creating and Elevating; On God sanctifying through grace; . . . On the sacraments, sanctifying instruments of God; On God the Rewarder, or the Last Things. This is the reason why the divisions of theology into its various parts or treatises is not an essential division, that is, a division into specifically distinct treatises. It is only an accidental division, that is, into integrative or complementary parts which make up one total and single science.”

view that was inherited by Maritain during his formation, which owed much to Garrigou-Lagrange.⁴¹

The *Habitus* of Moral Philosophy

In contrast with the theologian's concerns, the moral philosopher engages in a number of problems that are not of ultimate interest to the moral theologian, though the moral theologian may benefit from the development of such matters pertaining to moral philosophy. Certainly, "the Gospel . . . brings salvation and general freedom even to temporal realities,"⁴² for the supernatural order supervenes on the natural to perfect the latter. The supernatural is not a block extrinsically stacked upon the tier of natural finalities. For this reason, theologians (and the magisterium) have legitimate interests regarding temporal, political, and historical matters. All of this is pertinent to the order of salvation, but we must be careful not to confuse the unfolding of grace in history and the (often simultaneous) elevation of natural (and of *solely intra-historical*) finalities by grace.⁴³

It is helpful to consider the very mixed situation of the human agent and how we might consider even one and the same act. For example, in a given society that has reached a state of political and economic sufficiency, it might be judged cogent that, in certain clear-cut cases, workers' rights should take some determinate form within

⁴¹ This is quite evident when Maritain discusses these matters rather directly in a section of *Degrees of Knowledge* explicitly dedicated to Garrigou-Lagrange ("Mystical Experience and Philosophy," in *The Degrees of Knowledge*, 263–309). In spite of their sad falling out, he never lost respect for Garrigou-Lagrange. See Jacques Maritain, *Notebooks*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1984), 168–69: "I transcribe my notes of 1937 without attenuating anything in them; I insist only on remarking that our differences in political matters never diminished the affection and the gratitude which Raissa and I had for him [i.e., Garrigou-Lagrange]. (And he for his part, even when he found fault with me, did what he could to defend me.) This great theologian, who was little versed in the things of the world, had an admirably candid heart, which God finally purified by a long and very painful physical trial, a cross of complete annihilation, which, according to the testimony of the faithful friend who assisted him in his last days, he had expected and which he accepted in advance. I pray to him now with the saints in Heaven."

⁴² See *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, trans. Libreria Editrice Vaticana (Washington, DC: United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2005), §2.

⁴³ On this, see Jacques Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, ed. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 119–63.

the structures of society. According to the conception of theology noted above, this sort of concern would seem to be rather extrinsic to the lofty ends of the Beatific Vision, perhaps even bearing witness to the tenuousness of a monastic “otherworldliness” at the heart of such a view of theology. However, let us recall that Aquinas was willing to ask himself at (e.g.) *ST* I-II, q. 7, a. 2, whether or not the theologian should consider the circumstances of acts. The first of his reasons is most pertinent for my example. The theologian considers the circumstances insofar as they are related to supernatural beatitude.⁴⁴ A “theology of work”⁴⁵ can exist as a theological task *only* insofar as it has an eye toward grace, charity, mystical contemplation, and ultimately, the Beatific Vision. Insofar as it is truly a task of *theology*, it will not be primarily concerned with the progress of justice in human, cultural history—at least not as the ultimate concern that formally specifies and guides its reflections.

However, there is room for such a concern, and it is here that we find the true role for moral philosophy. We can (and should) inquire concerning such workers’ rights with an eye strictly focused upon the intra-historical finalities toward which they contribute: the progress of civilization and the amelioration of the human condition, at least inasmuch as that is possible.⁴⁶ Inasmuch as nature and temporal history *are in fact real and have intelligibility*—quite real indeed, the philosopher will argue—such matters will need to consider the good of the human agent *as a collaborator in human history*. History is indeed directed toward the Beatific Vision, but the order of nature is a unique order of reality, lived in the actions of the humans and

⁴⁴ See *ST* I-II, q. 7, a. 2, resp.: “I respond that it must be said that circumstances pertain to the theologian’s consideration for three reasons. First, indeed, because the theologian considers human acts inasmuch as man is led to beatitude through them. However, everything that is ordered to the end [i.e., all the means] must be proportioned to the end. Now, the act is proportioned to the end according to a kind of commensuration, which comes about through due circumstances. Whence, a consideration of circumstances pertains to the theologian” (my translation from the Leonine edition).

⁴⁵ A questionable expression at best, for it is not a science that is separate from theology itself (at least on the Thomistic view concerning the matter).

⁴⁶ The reader will likely note that this kind of caveat (i.e., “at least inasmuch as that is possible”) is a mark of the sorts of things that a Christian anthropology brings to bear on a full consideration of moral matters. The Christian, having pondered the words of revelation and accounts such as those concerning the tower of Babel, knows well the limitations of human historical achievements.

having its own inner practical (or intentional) consistency.⁴⁷ Supernatural life does not abrogate the civil and cultural life⁴⁸ that is the finest flower of human nature (for, the common good is more divine than the private).⁴⁹ This falls to the domain of philosophical ethics, which considers human actions with regard to the *temporal* common good, even if that temporal good is subordinate to a further end that is eternal and supernatural.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Indeed, history (as the intentional existence of *human actions, makings, and knowledge*) is found truly *in* the actions that are either potentially or actually undertaken by human persons—though this presence is intentional, not *in esse physico* or *ens naturae* (at least strictly speaking). However, the defense of this claim would require a discussion of moral being, practical signification, and many other matters that are outside the bounds of this article.

⁴⁸ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 179, 181–82, and 211:

But the natural and temporal ends of human life are not pure means in relation to the life of grace and glory. They are ends—intermediate or infravalent ends—and in this respect they are not specified by the supernatural last end. . . . And the last natural end of human life is not eliminated. It is realized *in excess* by and in the last supernatural end. . . .

It is clear that this phrase has to do not with the delimitation of a given material field in isolation from the rest of human conduct, but with the assignment of a formal point of view or formal aspect in accordance with which the whole matter of human conduct may be brought under consideration. The *convictus politicus* or *vita civilis* (that is, life in the order of temporal culture and civilization) like the acquired moral virtues is absolutely inseparable from human life in general and the whole order of the virtues. . . .

As grace does not destroy nature, nor supernatural life destroy “civil” life, when the soul has acquired the natural moral virtues, these natural moral virtues coexist in the just soul with infused virtues.

⁴⁹ See Aquinas, *In I eth.*, lec. 2, no. 30.

⁵⁰ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 117, 180n1. This theme regularly comes up in Maritain when he discusses the non-instrumental (“infravalent”) end uniquely characterizing the natural end of the human person (see: *Science and Wisdom*, 127 and 219; *Integral Humanism*, 136–37 and 167–77; *On the Philosophy of History*, 130–132; and Jacques Maritain, *Freedom in the Modern World*, trans. Richard O’Sullivan [New York: Gordian Press, 1971], 106–7).

In particular, consider Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 182 and 184: “Temporal life and temporal ends point out the formal aspect in which the whole field is considered, with all its concrete ends both natural and supernatural, and with all its actual order of virtues, whether acquired or infused. . . . And even when we are concerned with problems that in material terms are identical, *they still differ in their formal perspective of investigation and demonstration*. So that when dealing with moral philosophy adequately considered *we are dealing with a web of scientific conclusions different from* but subordinated to the conclusions of moral theology” (emphasis added).

The philosopher asks quite different questions from the theologian, for his or her gaze is directed ultimately on the meaning of human acts *as temporal human acts*. In moral philosophy, it is not *human act as supernaturally ordered to God* that is the perspective considered (as it is in theology). The moral philosopher considers human acts as temporal realities in relation to culture, history, political life, and so forth.⁵¹ Unless we are willing to reduce the questions of (e.g.) political rule to a kind of political theology, we require a manner of reflecting on human actions so that the primary, *formal* concern (i.e., the *formal light under which it is considered*) is not eternal happiness.⁵² The question “What is the correct manner to educate the youth in this kind of political regime?” is not one that necessarily should be answered from within theological science.⁵³ Yes, to address it correctly, the moral philosopher will need to reflect on the supernatural destiny of humanity, and hence, moral philosophy requires some sort of subalternation to theology. However, the matter does not have an immediate supernatural bearing. It is concerned with a human act pertaining to an intra-historical, sociopolitical act, ultimately to be elicited by *natural political prudence*.

⁵¹ For example, the philosopher turns his gaze toward wounded nature. “But he is interested in our wounded nature, like the novelist and unlike the theologian, for its own sake: and the notion of a wounded nature awakens in his wisdom other echoes than those that are stirred in the theologian. The same may be said of the notion of nature redeemed. In these notions he can study the problems which are his own, for instance of concrete psychology and of character, or the history of philosophy, or political philosophy, or the philosophy of the world and of culture, the historical development of the enigma of the human being and the phases of man’s factual situation which are typical for different moments of civilization” (Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 185).

⁵² Of course, the latter perspective is still the province of theology, which remains superior and will have to exert an external rule (like any super-ordinate wisdom does upon its inferior—as in the case of metaphysics vis-à-vis natural philosophy and the particular sciences). Also, it will need to exert an internal rule if moral philosophy indeed does subalternate itself to theology, accepting theological conclusions about these matters so as to constitute itself as a truly practical science. Nonetheless, the *Deity as such* (which illuminates, structures, and orders *all* of the theological science) will not be the formal perspective of such a separate *practical philosophy*.

⁵³ Technically, it is a question for political *prudence*. However, it bears witness to a domain of cultural and *intra-historical* moral facts that would be bleached out of view (or, at best, distorted as regards their *natural finalities*) if they were considered *only* as pertaining to the domain of the theologian.

In *On the Philosophy of History*, Maritain expressed all of this as follows:

And I would suggest that Christian moral philosophy is more disposed than theology to feel the proper importance of time and the temporal order. It is more disposed to see that they have their own finalities and their own created values, even though they are means in relation to eternity. Christian philosophy is concerned with the direction of human history, not only in relation to the work of eternal salvation, on which history has an impact, but also and primarily in relation to that very work accomplished in human history which is in itself terrestrial and immanent in time.⁵⁴

Adequate Consideration of Moral Philosophy: An Invitation

As is obvious at this point, I am supportive of the general élan of Maritain's broader proposals regarding adequate consideration of moral philosophy. However, I am not unaware of the difficulties it involves. First, it requires a careful explanation of the way that theological knowledge can become part of the demonstrative "warp and woof" of a philosophical science addressing the concerns of reason *as such* (and not *reason as instrumentally elevated by faith*, as it is in theology). A second, related point arises in light of the question of pluralism and the possibility of discussing matters of moral philosophy with philosophers who do not formally assent to matters of supernatural faith. Neither of these problems can be resolved in this article, though I intend to take them up in the near future.⁵⁵ For now, I will propose some partial reflections regarding the "way forward," assuring the reader that these important matters will not go unaddressed.

Joseph Owens once perspicuously argued that the moral universal of Aristotelian ethics is closely tied to cultural development—a point about which Maritain was quite sensitive.⁵⁶ Claims regard-

⁵⁴ Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, 39–40.

⁵⁵ They have been anticipated by Maritain, who *has* provided a good deal of technical explanation on this matter, especially in *Science and Wisdom*. However, the issues need concerted and organized treatment. Regarding how I intend to take up these matters in the future, see my remarks in note 18 above.

⁵⁶ See Joseph Owens, "The Ethical Universal in Aristotle," *Studia Moralia* 3 (1965): 27–47. See also, e.g., Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, 104–11 and Jacques Maritain, *Loi naturelle ou loi non écrite*, ed. Georges Brazzola (Fribourg, CH: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1986), 183–224.

ing moral universals are parts of traditions that incorporate within themselves sedimentations and strata of practical intelligibility. Here, the general framework of Alasdair MacIntyre's thought—that is, that the advance of discussion can be based upon the ability of one conceptual scheme to accommodate its own paradoxes as well as those of others⁵⁷—may well provide some a model by which the Catholic philosopher can engage with nonbelievers when particular historical/existential data must be considered (e.g., those related to the fallen *state* of the moral agent, the supernatural effects of grace active in the human person, etc.)⁵⁸

Note that I have *not at all* denied the fecund common ground of generally philosophical moral questions that are accessible to believer and nonbeliever, prescinding from any consideration of these aforementioned theological matters. However, when the Catholic philosopher passes to certain classes of existential questions, he or she is not permitted to wear the light laurels of an earlier state of pre-revelation cultural existence.⁵⁹ If he or she acknowledges the existence of *another, higher* wisdom—that of Beatific Wisdom and theological wisdom—he or she cannot but affirm the relation of philosophical disciplines and practical ends vis-à-vis those orders of wisdom. However, *for philosophers*, these premises can be accepted in a manner akin to that by which the physicist accepts mathematical concepts from the pure mathematician. Such an assent is more like an act of “trust” regarding the theological assertion, and it is one that is not the same as an assent of supernatural faith. One thus accepts “on trust” data from another science for ends that are not those of the higher science.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008).

⁵⁸ See the profound remarks in Maritain, *An Introduction*, 115–19, esp. 117–19. See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 98–99.

⁵⁹ See Maritain, *Dream of Descartes*, 68–69.

⁶⁰ For some length of discussion on this, see Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 188–209. A compact text that explains the issue, though needing further discussion, is found in 196n1: “Every subalternated science (other than theology) makes use of *credulitas humana* with regard to the subalternating science. It is not surprising that the communicated virtue of faith can produce an act of natural and human assent in the mind of the philosopher with regard to theological science, for this communicated virtue reaches its goal through an inference and through a judgment which is not the act of belief but an effect of the act of belief, as John of St. Thomas points out with regard to quite another problem (*Cursus theologicus*, vol. 7, disp. 2, a. 1, n. 27 and 28), which bears on a subject of the human order (‘the supernatural mysteries enclosed

Of course, in a pluralistic world, arguments with nonbelievers will greatly benefit from the humility that should be inspired by the methods proposed by MacIntyre. However, there is nothing necessarily “anti-philosophical” about the approach discussed above. Such is the paradox of the history of salvation, is it not? For the moral philosopher most especially, questions of final ends require some answer: yes, no, or “not important.” How to formulate those matters to those who do not accept the premises of the Catholic faith is no easy matter. Perhaps the remark is a bit too hopeful, but Maritain’s general recommendation rings true, I believe: “The theological truths received by moral philosophy adequately considered present themselves to the nonbelieving philosopher as superior hypotheses from which one starts to work.”⁶¹

In some cases, discussions with nonbelievers are perhaps less complicated. For example, there are many topics that are merely “expanded” by the demands that theology makes upon philosophical science. Consider the length and detail of Aquinas’s treatise on justice in the *Summa theologiae*, which contains much purely “natural” wisdom.⁶² Other topics, such as the effects of the Fall, will need arguments of a more rhetorical and dialectical character to be made to those who do not share the light of faith.⁶³ Here, the data of

in human life are known by faith, theology is the science of faith, therefore it is reasonable to trust theology on this question’). We should notice moreover that the conclusions of the theologian which proceed from faith, but through the medium of a natural *discursus*, are not an object of faith but of human science.” This matter will be central in a later article concerned with these matters.

⁶¹ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 197.

⁶² See *ST* II-II, qq. 57–122. Other examples could be cited at length, of course. However, the treatise on justice is a striking instance of such expansion and clarification concerning naturally knowable topics.

⁶³ This should not be surprising for any Aristotelian account of ethics, for the Stagirite himself was keenly aware of the limits and difficulties of moral-philosophical discourse, as amply evidenced in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Perhaps G. K. Chesterton provides a great example of how to present such a rhetorical argument, for example, in *Orthodoxy*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 1, ed. David Dooley (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 321:

This startling swiftness with which popular systems turn oppressive is the third fact for which we shall ask our perfect theory of progress to allow. It must always be on the lookout for every privilege being abused, for every working right becoming a wrong. In this matter I

anthropology likely can help provide telling parallels to the Christian account. The same would go for higher claims regarding the ultimate supernatural end of the human person, which has stimulated effects that are of keen interest to the sociologist and anthropologist.⁶⁴

It is part of the specific vocation of the philosopher to be concerned with realities that are not *directly* the province of the theologian *qua theologian*. Theological science should always have its eye toward eternity, toward the inner mystery of the Deity as such. That is *not* the formal object of the moral philosopher's science. This is not to reduce all theological speculation to a form of otherworldliness, but it is a recognition that there is an *extramundane, gratuitous, supernatural, divinizing* end to which all supernatural knowledge is ordered: the Beatific Vision. Perhaps—I repeat, *perhaps*—philosophers are temperamentally better suited to assert the rights of nature—not to usurp the supernatural, but to be clear concerning this pivotal point: nature, history, culture, and politics are true realities. There is an intra-temporal, natural finality to human life,⁶⁵ and the theologian

am entirely on the side of the revolutionists. They are really right to be always suspecting human institutions; they are right not to put their trust in princes nor in any child of man. The chieftain chosen to be the friend of the people becomes the enemy of the people; the newspaper started to tell the truth now exists to prevent the truth being told. Here, I say, I felt that I was really at last on the side of the revolutionary. And then I caught my breath again: for I remembered that I was once again on the side of the orthodox.

Christianity spoke again and said: "I have always maintained that men were naturally backsliders; that human virtue tended of its own nature to rust or to rot; I have always said that human beings as such go wrong, especially happy human beings, especially proud and prosperous human beings. This eternal revolution, this suspicion sustained through centuries, you (being a vague modern) call the doctrine of progress. If you were a philosopher you would call it, as I do, the doctrine of original sin. You may call it the cosmic advance as much as you like; I call it what it is—the Fall."

A task of a future article will be to distinguish this sort of argument from an apologetic argument concerning motives of rational credibility for assenting to truths of faith.

⁶⁴ See the profound remarks in the sections entitled "Signs and Indications Provided by Experience" and "The Sociology of the Last End" in Maritain, *An Introduction*, 115–29.

⁶⁵ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 211, 213, and 215:

As grace does not destroy nature, nor supernatural life destroy "civil" life, when the soul has acquired the natural moral virtues, these natural

deals with this temporality only in light of his or her own particular supernatural concerns. The ontological density of moral history—*qua historical and temporal*—remains on the philosopher's plane. It was for this reason that Maritain once wrote:

Were we to refuse thus to differentiate moral philosophy adequately considered from moral theology, we should, I believe, either be failing to form a sufficiently elevated idea of theology, or else subjecting philosophy to a certain violation of its inherent rights. Moral theology, in point of fact, is not just a superelevated moral philosophy; indeed, it is much more than that. And yet there ought to be a superelevated moral philosophy. In the first place, it is an essential requirement of human reason that a moral philosophy be set up which will stand as a counterpart of speculative philosophy in the primary division of finite knowledge. Then again, this moral philosophy would not be adequate to its object unless it were elevated, and the necessary and sufficient condition of this is subalternation to theology. Hence the practical philosophy adequately considered, the *ratio formalis sub qua* of which we have pointed out above.⁶⁶

moral virtues coexist in the just soul with infused virtues. . . .

To push the analysis further we would need to distinguish, in the soul itself and in the moral life of the person two zones or domains corresponding to the classical distinction between the spiritual and the temporal, between the kingdom of God and the “political” world or the world of culture. . . .

The initiative is with the acquired virtue in regard to its own ends which are civil and temporal; though the acquired virtue has need of the infused virtue so as to be borne beyond its natural point of specification (*ultra suum specificum*) as is proper in the case of a rightly directed ordered civil or temporal life, that is, a civil or temporal life referring indirectly to the supernatural last end. For of itself civil life belongs to the natural order. But this natural order of civil life is exalted by way of participation from the fact of its reference (which may be explicit or implicit “as life is lived”) to the supra-temporal ends of human persons; without such a reference the civil or temporal order has not the rectitude proper to it.

This remains, in my opinion, the great insight that undergirds Maritain's “integral humanism” and that lends it staying power in spite of whatever might justly be said to be its limitations. Though, as noted earlier, the Christian also has the sobering account of revelation to remind us of the limits of temporal progress. This is an important moral datum as well!

⁶⁶ Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 73.

In what we have discussed in this article, I have attempted to emphasize the loftiness of moral theology in Maritain's account. In so doing, I likewise have attempted to draw attention to the fact that this is *quite* different from a speculatively practical reflection on moral *human acts as such*, considered as acts ruled by reason's *natural finalities* (and not as *supernaturalized* human acts in tendency toward a supernatural terminus in the Beatific Vision). The sciences of theology and moral philosophy must not be confused, for their subjects are radically different: one is God in the inner mystery of the Deity (in which we participate through the life of grace and glory), and the other is the free human act as *free*, as *moral*, and especially as *human*. Also, I have taken for granted a general agreement that the supernatural order has repercussions on the natural order, both for good (in elevating the natural order itself) and for ill (insofar as defection from the supernatural end leads to wounds in nature itself). In so doing, I have at least opened a space for Maritain's "adequate consideration" of moral philosophy in light of theological data. What remains as a goal for a future article is the more detailed technical question of how a practical *philosophical* science can assent to revealed data without thus becoming part of theology. At this point of the discussion, we can say only that, if indeed such an assent is possible (as I intend to show it to be), it most certainly cannot consider the human act *sub ratione Deitatis* in the manner of theological knowledge.⁶⁷ N.V.

⁶⁷ I would like to thank James Bryan, Michael Krom, and an anonymous reader for helping me add precision to my thoughts on the matters covered in this article.