

It was to this very ancient idea that Aquinas turned in his Contra Gentiles. In terms of the functions and duties of the wise man he conceived his task in that work, and whether one turns to his overall plan or to its execution, one discovers that he operated ~~not~~ as a philosopher and yet not simply as a theologian. His purpose was to expound Christian truth, but Christian truths fell in three classes. Some, such as the existence and attributes of God, could be established from reason. Others were truths of faith, but for them at least probable ~~xxx~~ ⁿ argumets from reason were available; and such were the end of man, divine providence, divine law, and the grace of ~~of~~ God. Others finally depended solely on revelation and on their behalf reason could do no more than show that they did not involve contradiction; and such were the topic^s treated in the fourth and final book, the Trinity, the Incarnation, Original Sin, and the Sacraments.

Now I have gone back to this primordial notion of philosophy as love of wisdom, to its ~~xxxxxx~~ associations with Christianity and the Fathers, to its use by Aquinas, because I find it very relevant to my present task. For philosophy as love of wisdom is open-ended. It can operate under a moving viewpoint. It can begin within one system~~x~~ of thought and move through a succession of other systems to end with many more questions to be asked and many further answers to be discovered. It can distinguish the natural and the supernatural, ~~x~~ philosophy and theology, and still not insist on separating the two, but rather include both in a single view that relates without confusing and unites in a single consideration what is the concern not of two men but of each single man.

I have said that an open-ended approach is particularly relevant to my present task. For it has long been accepted in Catholic circles that philosophy dealt with naturally ~~known~~ known truths while theology dealt with supernaturally known truths. From this position it followed that philosophy could have nothing to say about supernatural religion, such as Catholics traditionally conceived their religion to be. Further, it followed that a philosophy of religion could treat of religion, not as it exists in this actual world order, in which the true religion revealed by God is supernatural, but only of the natural religions that theoretically ~~could~~ could exist in quite a different world order named the order of pure nature.

At the very outset then I feel myself confronted with a ~~two~~ dilemma or rather a trilemma. Is philosophy limited to naturally known truth? Is the Catholic religion grounded on supernaturally known ~~truths~~ truths? Or is that there can be no Catholic philosophy of religion?

An answer to these questions calls for no little explanation. I shall grant the cogency of the objection they raise against a Catholic philosophy of religion when philosophy is conceived ~~in~~ in accord with logical ideals. I shall whittle away the cogency of the objection when it is granted that philosophy may be conceived under an ideal that is not static and closed, as logic by itself would impose, but under an ideal that is ~~is~~ dynamic and open, such as arises when logic is given a place subordinate to the place and role of method. Finally, if I began from speaking of philosophy ~~as~~ as love of wisdom, it was precisely to argue from the outset for a basic viewpoint that is dynamic, ongoing, open.