

Ars Christiane Philosophandi: John Paul II and Jacques Maritain on Christian Philosophy

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IN §76 OF *FIDES ET RATIO* (1998), Pope Saint John Paul II confirmed the legitimacy and the importance of “a Christian way of philosophizing, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith.”¹ The meaning and reality of Christian philosophy was long debated in the 1930s by eminent thinkers such as Emile Bréhier, Étienne Gilson, Maurice Blondel, and Fernand van Steenberghen.² More recently other authors have taken up the question anew, like Monsignor John F. Wippel,³

¹ Quotes from *Fides et Ratio* are from the official translation on the Vatican website, where the Latin can also be found.

² For a history of this question in the 1930s see Gregory Sadler, ed., *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation: The 1930's Christian Philosophy Debates in France* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 8–96, and for some of the speculative drama and a sampling of Thomists at key meetings of the French Société Thomiste in 1933, see Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 91–107.

³ John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 1–33, and *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 11–30. Wippel focuses on Gilson's views before giving his own reflections on the matter where he makes a distinction between the order of discovery which can be Christian and the order of proof which cannot be Christian. See, for example, *Metaphysical Themes II*, 24.

Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J.,⁴ Steven Baldner,⁵ and Nicholas J. Healy Jr.⁶ In this article, I will take up the thought of Jacques Maritain to offer an in-depth look at his doctrine. I argue that Maritain's teaching unfolds speculatively what John Paul II says *in nuce* about Christian philosophy in *Fides et Ratio*.⁷

The question of Christian philosophy is the question of whether or in what manner faith influences philosophy. *Fides et Ratio* allows for the use of the term "Christian philosophy" and is clearly concerned with clarifying its proper meaning so as not to be misunderstood.⁸

There are two basic concerns when considering the relationship of faith and philosophy: on the one hand and noted by *Fides et Ratio*, there is a concern about a philosophy separated from faith (rationalism) which is the staple of most modern philosophy, and yet, on the other hand and noted by the Congregation for Catholic Education's *Decree On The Reform Of Ecclesiastical Studies Of Philosophy*, there is a concern about a confusion of philosophy and theology (fideism).⁹ We need to have a philosophy that is not separated from faith nor confused with faith. Thinkers must be

⁴ Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., "Can Philosophy Be Christian? The New State of the Question," in *The Two Wings of Catholic Thought: Essays on Fides et Ratio*, ed. David Ruel Foster and Joseph W. Koterski, S.J. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2003), 3–21. Cardinal Dulles here reads John Paul II in line with Henri de Lubac on this question: "On the whole, [John Paul II's] positions coincide most closely with those of de Lubac, who sought to mediate between Blondel and Gilson" (18). For de Lubac's position, see Henri de Lubac, S.J., "On Christian philosophy," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 19 (1992): 478–506.

⁵ Steven Baldner, "Christian Philosophy, Étienne Gilson, and *Fides et Ratio*," in *Faith and Reason: The Notre Dame Symposium 1999*, ed. Timothy L. Smith (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), 153–66. Baldner sees many similarities between John Paul II and Gilson, while noting key differences.

⁶ See Nicholas J. Healy Jr., "*Præambula fidei*: David L. Schindler and the Debate over 'Christian Philosophy,'" in *Being Holy in the World: Theology and Culture in the Thought of David L. Schindler*, ed. Nicholas J. Healy Jr. and D. C. Schindler (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 89–122. Healy reads John Paul II in line with Schindler, who follows in his own unique way Gilson and Blondel, and argues that faith affects the nature of philosophy: "Christian faith permanently influences philosophy as such" (11).

⁷ This perhaps is less surprising when one realizes that Cardinal Cottier supervised the writing of *Fides et Ratio*—himself a follower of Maritain on this score (see Gianni Valente, "If Everything Is Grace, Then Grace Is No More," *30 Days*, 30giorni.it/articoli_id_3545_l3.htm). See Cardinal George Cottier, O.P., *Les chemins de la raison: Questions d'épistémologie théologique et philosophique* (Paris: Parole et Sagesse, 1997).

acutely aware of both of these possible errors, and so we need to protect both philosophy's integrity and philosophy's proper union with faith. It is precisely at this point where Maritain seems most helpful guiding us between these potential pitfalls. In fact, John Paul II cites Maritain as a significant example of how to philosophize in light of Christian revelation.¹⁰ Moreover, Maritain does well to apply the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas, to whom John Paul II is also dedicated.¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas provides the principles which Maritain interprets and applies to the question of how Christian revelation can influence philosophy. Consequently, the aim of this article is to explore the contribution and develop the argument of Maritain concerning the question of "Christian philosophy" in light of *Fides et Ratio*.¹² Therefore, first I will lay out briefly what *Fides et Ratio* says about Christian philosophy before, second, giving a fuller treatment of Maritain.

John Paul II and Christian Philosophy

Fides et Ratio sets out certain principles for a proper understanding of Christian philosophy. There are six main points. First, philosophy can legitimately relate to the Gospel in different ways (completely independent of the Gospel, Christian philosophy, and as used within theology), or in other words, philosophy exists in different states (*statibus; condicio*).¹³

Second, philosophy has a proper autonomy and is universally valid. This proper autonomy means that philosophy "must obey its own rules

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §74. To be fair, John Paul II cites other authors as models too. The clincher that Maritain is particularly helpful at unfolding *Fides et Ratio* on Christian philosophy is the speculative doctrine of Maritain.

¹¹ In *Fides et Ratio* §43, John Paul II affirms that "this is why the Church has been justified in consistently proposing Saint Thomas as a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology." In fact, John Paul II thinks so highly of St. Thomas's doctrine on faith and reason that he judges that "in his thinking, the demands of reason and the power of faith found the most elevated synthesis ever attained by human thought, for he could defend the radical newness introduced by Revelation without ever demeaning the venture proper to reason" (*Fides et Ratio*, §78). John Paul II personally attests that he is part of the Thomistic school when he says: "We in the Thomistic school, the school of 'perennial philosophy' . . ." (Karol Wojtyła, "The Human Person and Natural Law," trans. Theresa Sandok, in *Person and Community: Selected Essays* [New York: P. Lang, 1993], 181–85, at 181).

¹² For what I intend in developing Maritain's argument and why this is necessary, see note 31 below.

¹³ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §§75–77. Being completely independent of the Gospel is distinct from a separated philosophy insofar as the latter is a rejection of the faith and the former is ignorant of the faith.

and be based upon its own principles.”¹⁴ This means, for John Paul II, that philosophy “moves under the light of the intellect alone.”¹⁵ Moreover, this autonomy is opposed to a separated philosophy.¹⁶ A philosophy separated from faith is a philosophy which has rejected the faith; it is a philosophy that is rationalistic.¹⁷

Third, Christian philosophy is philosophizing in a Christian manner, that is, philosophizing in such a way that the Christian faith gives life to it: “The term seeks rather to indicate a *Christian way of philosophizing*, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith.”¹⁸

Fourth, Christian philosophy refers to the advances in philosophy caused by the faith in some way (that some advance was caused by the faith is seen if such an advance might not have happened without the faith). Faith causes this advance by helping or aiding philosophy: “The term Christian philosophy includes those important developments of philosophical thinking which might not have happened without the direct or indirect contribution of Christian faith.”¹⁹

¹⁴ See John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §79. See also §73: “Philosophy [is] pursued in keeping with its own rules [*suis servatis legibus*].”

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §9 (translation slightly emended). See John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), §17, where he characterizes natural law as “purely human [*simpliciter humanae*]” and based on premises given by man’s experience, i.e., human reason.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §75: “It is clear that this legitimate approach [to autonomy] is rejected by the theory of so-called ‘separate’ philosophy, pursued by some modern philosophers. This theory claims for philosophy not only a valid autonomy, but a self-sufficiency of thought which is patently invalid. In refusing the truth offered by divine Revelation, philosophy only does itself damage, since this is to preclude access to a deeper knowledge of truth.” See also *Fides et Ratio*, §§16, 45, 53, and 77.

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §45: “As a result of the exaggerated *rationalism* of certain thinkers, positions grew more radical and there emerged eventually a philosophy which was *separate from and absolutely independent of the truths of faith*.” On a separate philosophy being rationalism, see Baldner, “Christian Philosophy,” 158. In addition to damaging philosophy, a separated philosophy leads to a mistrust of reason (*Fides et Ratio*, §45), a loss of its proper goal, and a forgetfulness of being (§48). That a separate philosophy diminishes man’s capacity to know the world, see *Fides et Ratio*, §16.

¹⁸ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §76 (emphasis added). For Latin text, see the Vatican’s website.

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §76 (emphasis added). I have altered the official English translation from “would” to “might”; *contingissent* can be taken either way, but the more modest “might” fits better because it makes a statement about historical contingent realities. If meant speculatively, namely, that faith was *necessary* to know certain natural truths, then it would be problematic throwing into doubt

Fifth, there are two kinds of help that faith gives to philosophy, resulting in a Christian philosophy. The indirect or subjective help comes from faith purifying reason, while the direct or objective help comes from the content of revelation offering certain truths to man which reason is able to attain but might not have attained without this help: "Christian philosophy therefore has two aspects. The first is subjective, in the sense that faith purifies reason. . . . The second aspect of Christian philosophy is objective, in the sense that it concerns content. Revelation clearly proposes certain truths which might never have been discovered by reason unaided, *although they are not of themselves inaccessible to reason.*"²⁰ This last phrase means that the truths which revelation provides as objective help to philosophy are truths that reason is, in principle, able to attain. (This is more obvious in the Latin, which expresses this point positively: revealed truths, "which reason is able to attain . . .")

Sixth, philosophers have not entered into theology, for they do not begin with revelation and they do use the powers of reason alone or pure reason (*mera ratione*): "In speculating on these questions, philosophers have not become theologians, since they have *not* sought to understand and expound the truths of faith *on the basis of Revelation*. They have continued working on their own terrain and with their own *purely rational* method, yet extending their research to new aspects of truth."²¹ It is my contention that Maritain's teaching unfolds these basic points, as we will see next, and so serves as a helpful guide in understanding Christian philosophy.

Jacques Maritain—Nature and State

Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) wrote his first essay on Christian philosophy in 1931.²² He revised and expanded it in 1932 in an essay also

reason's natural capacity to know its proper object (we will consider this more below).

²⁰ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §76 (emphasis added).

²¹ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* §76 (emphasis added). This corresponds to John Paul II's characterization of natural law as being based on "purely human" things such as reason, and this is distinguished from theology. See John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, §17: "This is the document called *Dignitatis Humanae*, in which is expressed not only the theological concept of the question but also the concept reached from the point of view of natural law, that is to say from the 'purely human' position, on the basis of the premises given by man's own experience, his reason and his sense of human dignity."

²² Jacques Maritain, "La notion de philosophie chrétienne," presentation in the March 21, 1931, session, *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 31, no. 2 (1931).

entitled “La notion de philosophie chrétienne.”²³ Finally, in 1933, this was incorporated into his more well-known work *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*.²⁴ Even though he wrote his first essay on the subject in 1931, his thoughts on the nature of philosophizing as a Christian had already been developing.²⁵ He began his philosophical work with critical works on Descartes and the consequences from Descartes’s work in modern philosophy; specifically he argued against Descartes’ separation of faith or theology, on the one hand, from reason or philosophy, on the other.²⁶ From this he developed his understanding of philosophy as in some way Christian. As Frank Keegan writes, “if modern philosophy was criticized [by Maritain] because it was independent of faith and theology, and antagonistic to them as well, then Christian philosophy [according to Maritain] must have some more intimate relationship to faith and theology.”²⁷ Therefore early in his career he strongly emphasized philosophy’s great need of faith over against this rationalism, and only later on in this early period does he establish explicitly the autonomy of philosophy.²⁸ My focus will be on his more mature work beginning in 1931. I will use

²³ Jacques Maritain, “La notion de philosophie chrétienne,” *Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie* 36 (1932):153–86.

²⁴ Jacques Maritain, *De la Philosophie Chrétienne* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1933); reprinted in *Jacques et Raissa Maritain Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 5 (Fribourg: éditions Universitaires, 1982), 225–316, and translated as *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, trans. Edward H. Flannery (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955).

²⁵ For an exhaustive treatment of Maritain’s development of “Christian Philosophy” from 1910 to 1929, see Frank L. Keegan, “The Development of Jacques Maritain’s Conception of Christian Philosophy: 1910–1929” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1959). The following brief comments rely on this work.

²⁶ See Jacques Maritain: “L’esprit de la philosophie moderne: I—les préparations de la réforme cartésienne,” *Revue de philosophie* 24 (1914): 601–25; “L’esprit de la philosophie moderne: II—l’indépendance de l’esprit,” *Revue de philosophie* 25 (1914): 53–82; *Antimoderne* (Paris: Editions de la Revue des Jeunes, 1922); *Le songe de Descartes* (Paris: Correa, 1932). The last was translated as *The Dream of Descartes*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944). While it was published in 1932, some chapters were published earlier: “L’esprit de Descartes I,” *Les Lettres*, February, 1922, 175–204, and “L’esprit de Descartes I,” *Les Lettres*, March, 1922, 371–448. See notes 16 and 17 above for John Paul II on a “separate” philosophy.

²⁷ Keegan, “Development of Jacques Maritain’s Conception,” 77.

²⁸ Keegan outlines three periods of Maritain’s early work: 1910–1914 is the first period, 1918–1926 is the second period, and 1926–1929 is the third period. It is in the first period that the importance of faith is stressed and in the second that the autonomy of philosophy is outlined more explicitly. The years during World War I were left out due to Maritain’s lack of production during this time.

this work, which is characterized by Maritain as being the “doctrinal” or speculative viewpoint that complements the historical work of Gilson’s *L’Esprit de la Philosophie Médiévale*, as our guide into the question of Christian philosophy from the same speculative viewpoint.²⁹ My purpose in the remaining part of this article is to unfold the meaning of Christian philosophy with the help of Maritain’s distinction between the nature and state of philosophy. Maritain’s thought helps us navigate the middle way, between guarding philosophy’s proper nature and philosophy’s unity with faith, which was the aim of Maritain’s work on this question: “The notion of Christian philosophy carries a double consequence: it demands that we should recognize the subordination of philosophy to the superior orders of wisdom; and it demands that, in face of these orders of wisdom, we shall maintain and affirm the specific character, and the autonomous existence of philosophy in its own right and method.”³⁰ Therefore, first I will proceed to explain the distinction between nature and state. Second, I will focus on the autonomy of philosophy within a Christian philosophy and so focus on protecting the nature of philosophy. Third and finally, I will focus on the unity that philosophy has with faith by considering faith’s influence on philosophy as intrinsic.

Nature

In trying to understand Christian philosophy in light of Thomistic principles, Maritain finds the solution to how faith influences philosophy in the classical distinction between the order of specification and the order of exercise or between the nature of something—what it is in itself—and its state—the mode of being or exercise.³¹ When applied to philosophy this means we must distinguish between the nature of philosophy and its

²⁹ Étienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. A. H. C. Downs (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991). Maritain makes this connection in *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 4.

³⁰ Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1940), 101 [French: *Science et Sagesse: suivi d’éclaircissements sur la philosophie morale*, collected in *Jacques et Raissa Maritain Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 6 (1984), 9–250]. While subordination does not have the ratio of “unity” it is similarly opposed to a separated philosophy, because a separated philosophy denies this proper subordination.

³¹ While in the section that follows I closely follow Maritain’s argument in *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 11–33, I also expand his arguments and explanations, since his account is at times quite brief. I expand them in line with his own principles—first by using what he has said elsewhere, and second by referring to St. Thomas—Maritain’s prime teacher. See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 79–81, for his own brief summary of his conclusions.

state of being or its concrete exercise.³² I will consider first what “nature” in general means before, second, considering the nature of philosophy.

There are many ways in which “nature” can be understood, but we will limit this discussion to the pertinent meaning.³³ Much light can be shed on the meaning of “nature” by consideration of the two-fold meaning of “substance” or the distinction between essence (nature) and first substance because, in a way, this distinction parallels the distinction between nature and state. Thomas teaches us about this distinction especially in *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 1.³⁴ Thomas, following Aristotle, distinguishes between two meanings of the word “substance” according to whether it can be predicated of another (or not). Consequently, according to the first meaning, “substance” is that which cannot be predicated of another and therefore is a subject (*supposit*), and this is an individual or a particular within the genus of substance.³⁵ According to the second meaning, the form or nature, which can be predicated of another, is called “substance.” This

³² Ralph McInerny in re-articulating Maritain’s distinction here says: “Better to think of the activity of philosophizing . . . and to distinguish what characterizes it formally as such from what characterizes it as undertaken by so-and-so in such-and-such circumstances” (“Reflections On Christian Philosophy,” in *One Hundred Years of Thomism*, ed. Victor B. Brezik [Houston, TX: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1981], 63–73, at 65).

³³ For the various meanings of nature, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] III, q. 2, a. 1. In summary “nature” can signify at least six things: (1) the generation of living beings (the word “nature” is taken from the Latin word which means “being born,” (2) the principle of this generation, (3) any intrinsic principle of movement (because the principle of the generation of living beings is interior, this is a natural extended sense), (4) form (an intrinsic principle), (5) matter (an intrinsic principle), (6) essence (because the end of natural generation is the essence). The meaning we will be focused on is the last. See Lawrence Dewan, O.P., *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 206–8. See also ST I, q. 29, a. 1, ad 4, and Thomas Aquinas, *In III sent.*, d. 5, q. 1, a. 2.

³⁴ See: Thomas Aquinas, *De ente de essentiae*, ch. 3 (nos. 2–3); *Summa contra gentiles* IV, ch. 49; ST I, q. 29, a. 2; and Thomas Aquinas, *In V metaph.*, lec. 10 where Thomas initially distinguishes substance used in four ways before reducing it to first substance and essence. Thomas also lists different ways substance can be taken in *In VII metaph.*, lec. 2. See John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 198–208.

³⁵ “Individual” is a mode of being which means that it is said analogously. Hence, it is necessary to designate that by “individual” we mean in the genus substance. See Dewan, *Form and Being*, 229–47. First substance is also called hypostasis or supposit, or in the genus of rational nature—person. For the different names of first substance, see ST I, q. 29, a. 1, and Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet* II, q. 2, a. 2.

distinction is made to account for the fact that there are many things with the same nature, and so the distinction is between what is one and what is many. That which is one is called “common nature” and is what the definition signifies.³⁶ Now whatever is signified by the common nature of the thing is signified by the essence, so that the common nature and the essence are identical in intelligible content (*ratio*). However, this is not true of the individual substance, because otherwise there would be no distinction between the common nature and the individual substance (within the same species or nature); in fact, there is a difference of intelligible content between the common nature and the individual subsisting thing. What distinguishes them is what makes the substance an individual—namely, individual matter, and secondarily individual accidents.³⁷ Therefore, everything that is attributed to the nature is attributed to the individual substance but not everything that is attributed to the individual substance is attributed to the nature. Consequently, in material substances (where there are many individual substances existing in one species—that is, sharing one common nature) *nature is a formal part of the individual substance*.³⁸

In summary we can simply note with Thomas that nature used in this way is the “quiddity of a thing which its definition signifies.”³⁹ It follows that the “quiddity of a composite is not the composite itself,” because only the essential principles are contained in the nature or quiddity, and not what pertains to the individuation of the nature.⁴⁰ For example, “humanity” signifies only the essential principles of man while “man” signifies both these essential principles and what makes this an individual. Hence, we never predicate humanity of Socrates (“Socrates is humanity”) but we predicate of him “man” (“Socrates is a man”).⁴¹

³⁶ ST I, q. 29, a. 2. In this sense other terms can be used here like essence, *ratio*, or even form (as is used earlier in the text).

³⁷ Individual matter is matter designated by quantity. Quantity renders matter *this* matter, here and now, and this is necessary because matter is pure potency. Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 351–71, esp. 360–61.

³⁸ See *In V metaph.*, lec. 10, no. 903. Thomas again distinguishes between these two kinds of substance and lists three differences: particular substance (individual substance) is not predicated of anything inferior like universal substance (common nature) is; universal substance does not subsist except by reason of the singular substance which subsists *per se*; universal substance is present in many things while singular substance is separable and distinct from all. See Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 239n4.

³⁹ *In III sent.*, d. 5, q. 1, a. 3. See also *Quodlibet* II, q. 2, a. 2.

⁴⁰ *In III sent.*, d. 5, q. 1, a. 3.

⁴¹ “Man” signifies the individuating features in an indeterminate way so that “man”

Abstraction

Maritain notes that abstraction—the process by which man comes to know material things—is how we reflect on nature and consequently on the nature of philosophy.⁴² While it is unnecessary to go into detail concerning the different kinds of abstraction, the important point to stress is that the end result of abstraction is the nature insofar as we abstract the universal from the particular. This helps to delineate what we mean by “nature” more clearly, that is, what is contained in the notion of nature and what is not. Secondly, it helps us to see the difference between what is essential to nature and what is essential to existing thing.

St. Thomas is instructive on what it means to abstract the universal from the particular:

Likewise, the things which belong to the species of a material thing, such as a stone, or a man, or a horse, can be thought of apart from the individualizing principles which do not belong to the

does not exist, but *this* man, that is, with determinate features. See *De ente de essentiae*, ch. 2: “The term ‘man’ expresses it as a whole, because it does not prescind from the designation of matter but contains it implicitly and indistinctly, as we said the genus contains the difference. That is why the term ‘man’ can be predicated of individuals. But the term ‘humanity’ signifies the essence of man as a part, because its meaning includes only what belongs to man as man, prescinding from all [determination] of matter. As a result it cannot be predicated of individual men” (*On Being and Essence*, trans. Armand Maurer [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968], 44; translation altered at bracket).

⁴² Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 12. Some might think that abstraction does not allow us to know the thing as it exists, but for argument to the contrary, see Steven A. Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 88–89: “However incomplete our view is when we abstract nature as a whole (*abstractio totius*), we do in fact thereby acquire knowledge of a real principle in man—however true it may also be that *in the practical order* we will need the perfection of further guidance (in order to know how this principle actually exists within the given concrete order and in relation to the realities of grace and original and actual sin) to make prudential judgments with respect to action. . . . But, speculatively speaking, affirming human nature of each and every human individual *irrespective* his relation to grace or sin will be correct: whatever enhancements or deprivations pertain to the individual will not invalidate but only qualify the possession of the nature in question.” McInerny considers the objection that abstraction falsifies the real because it considers things in a way other than they exist. He notes, however, that this can be understood in two ways: first to consider something without something essential to it, and second, to consider something without considering what is peculiar to an instance of it. It is only in the first case that a falsification takes place. This is simply our way of knowing real things. See McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 201–2.

notion [*ratio*] of the species. This is what we mean by abstracting the universal from the particular, or the intelligible species from the phantasm; that is, by considering the *nature* of the *species* apart from its *individual qualities* represented by the phantasms.⁴³

The phantasms then are produced by the imagination, and they relate to the intellect as the material element by which the intellect understands, because it is the individual thing immaterialized but not yet universalized. This means that it is the thing existing in an immaterial way but not yet in a way that separates it from all its characteristics that are particular to this one thing (and not just the nature of the thing).⁴⁴ For example, if I have a phantasm of a man I have all the things that make this man, say Ryan. The likeness has black hair (even if its hairline is receding). It is on the shorter side and is scrawny, and so on. Now if I have another phantasm of Fr. Brown, it is short and stumpy, and so on. Now when the agent intellect acts on these phantasms (for we can have many phantasms that result in one intellectual species) and separates these from their individuating characteristics (and we are left with the intellectual species), we have simply the nature of man and not any of the characteristics that make these particular men unique. We have the form (of the whole) or the ratio or the nature of man.

The reason we can abstract the nature from the particulars is because the individual parts *are essential to this thing but not essential to the nature*. In other words, they are accidental to the whole, since they do not enter into the definition of the thing. It is accidental to the nature of man to have *this* body and *these* bones, but it is not accidental to the nature of

⁴³ ST I, q. 85, a. 1, ad 1.

⁴⁴ A phantasm is the likeness of the individual thing known produced by the imagination (after the work of the senses). It is a phantasm which the agent intellect acts upon. The agent intellect is the power by which forms are abstracted from their individuating (material) conditions. This means that the individual form is separated from what makes it individual, namely, matter. By so separating the form it is universalized and makes what is potentially intelligible actually intelligible; in other words, the agent intellect allows the passive intellect to receive the form of the thing in an immaterial way. For example, by abstracting the form of man we consider man universally. Man taken universally is, in other words, the nature of man, or man as such. By so abstracting, the agent intellect makes this form intelligible, since in its material conditions the form is unintelligible. What is received then in the passive intellect is what is called the intellectual species. The intellectual species is that *by which* the thing is understood. On abstraction in St. Thomas, see *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3, and ST I, q. 85, a. 1. For a review of the *De Trinitate* text, see McNerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 205–9, and Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 44–49, who focuses on separation especially.

man to have flesh and bones.⁴⁵ These are called parts of matter and are distinguished from the parts of the form or of the species. These latter parts are essential to the whole as such and so cannot be excluded from the abstracted nature. For example, it is not accidental for a triangle to have three sides, and so when the nature is abstracted from a triangle, it must include this part.

Nature of Philosophy

Maritain closely follows St. Thomas in determining the nature of philosophy inasmuch as he sees that just as powers are specified by their acts and acts by their objects so too will philosophy be specified by its (formal) object.⁴⁶ Among existing things there are those which are of their nature attainable through the natural faculties of the human mind, and this (taken as a whole) is the object of philosophy.⁴⁷ Elsewhere Maritain speaks of its formal object, here specifically metaphysics, not as God in his *deitas* as it would be for theology, but *ens secundum quod ens*.⁴⁸ *Ens* as such and taken as a whole is the object of philosophy. To be more explicit, the formal object is essentially different in the two sciences: for philosophy it is being and for theology it is God in himself.⁴⁹ Hence, philosophy is intrinsically

⁴⁵ See *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3. See also McNerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 208.

⁴⁶ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 13. See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 7.

⁴⁷ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 14. See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 97: "Speculative knowledge does not bear on the existential situation of man but on the nature of things: and as 'being' and 'intelligibility' are convertible, things must have, in their very nature, a natural intelligibility, and this natural intelligibility must be the specifying object of a form of knowing natural in itself." Maritain also points out that St. Thomas teaches that philosophy is, unlike theology, not one science, but many specifically distinct sciences, such that mathematics, philosophy of nature, and metaphysics are distinct philosophical sciences. See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 101n1, and *ST I*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2.

⁴⁸ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 24. Maritain continues: "It is a rational wisdom, and is natural in its essence. It is wholly resolved in natural and rational evidence. In itself it does not imply the divine communication and supernatural descent of the Godhead of which we have spoken, but only natural communication and that initial creative generosity, by which the supreme Intelligence enlightens every man coming into this world."

⁴⁹ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 104–5. See also Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 34: "In real fact, theology possess an object, a light, and a method that differ entirely from those of philosophy." See also Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. E. I. Watkin (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005 [French: *Introduction Générale à La Philosophie in Jacques et Raissa Maritain Oeuvres complètes* vol. 2 (1987), 19–272]), 84–85: "But if philosophy and theology are entirely distinct, they are not therefore unrelated, and although philosophy

a natural and rational form of knowledge *of ens* so that its highest form—wisdom—St. Thomas understands as “the perfect achievement of reason.”⁵⁰ The denial that philosophy is within the reach of the natural faculties or the natural capacity of the mind denies philosophy itself.⁵¹

The following text of St. Thomas text makes evident that the capacity of the intellect, and consequently the work of philosophy, is directly connected to the first principles of the intellect:

For there are in us by nature certain complex first principles which are known by all human beings. From these principles reason proceeds to know in act the conclusions which are potentially known in the aforementioned principles—either through our own discovery, or through somebody else’s teaching, or through divine revelation. In all these modes of knowing man is supported by the principles which are known by nature: either in such a way that the principles themselves are sufficient for acquiring knowledge through the assistance of the sense and of imagination, when we acquire knowledge through discovery or through teaching; or in such a way that the aforementioned principles are not sufficient to acquire knowledge, though, nonetheless, the principles guide in knowing such things, insofar as the latter are found not to contradict the principles which are known by nature. If this were the case [i.e., if the principles were contradicted], the understanding would in no way assent to those things, as it cannot dissent from the principles.⁵²

The capacity of the intellect, as we can see in this text, is determined by the first principles of the intellect.⁵³ When the first principles are sufficient for knowing something, then it is present to the mind and within the capacity of the intellect to know.⁵⁴ When the first principles are not sufficient

is of all the human sciences pre-eminently the free science, in the sense that it proceeds by means of premises and laws which depend on no science superior to itself, its freedom—that is, its freedom to err—is limited insofar as it is subject to theology, which controls it externally.”

⁵⁰ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 14. See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2. Maritain quotes “perfectum opus rationis,” but the Leonine has “perfectum usus rationis.”

⁵¹ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 14.

⁵² *Quodlibet* VIII, q. 2, a. 2.

⁵³ For an analysis of these first principles, see Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.

⁵⁴ For the distinction between something being present to the mind or not being present to the mind as the basis for faith and reason see *De veritate*, q. 14, a. 9: “Yet those things are said to be present to the understanding [*facultatem intellec-*

for knowing something, that thing can never be present to the mind and therefore can never be an object of philosophy (even though that which is beyond the capacity of the principles still depends upon them inasmuch as nothing can contradict them).⁵⁵ Thomas shows the great importance of the first principles for reason since they are both necessary for beginning but also for judging (completing):

For to understand is simply to apprehend intelligible truth: and to reason is to advance from one thing understood to another, so as to know an intelligible truth. . . . Reasoning, therefore, is compared to understanding, as movement is to rest, or acquisition to possession; of which one belongs to the perfect, the other to the imperfect. And since movement always proceeds from something immovable, and ends in something at rest; hence it is that human reasoning, by way of inquiry and discovery, advances from certain things simply understood—namely, the first principles; and, again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found.⁵⁶

This description of knowing through the principles shows how philosophy moves from the principles to conclusions (but always in light of the principles). Consequently, this description also reveals why the capacity of the

tus] which do not exceed its capacity, so that the gaze of understanding may be fixed on them. For a person gives assent to such things because of the witness of his own understanding and not because of someone else's testimony. Those things, however, which are beyond the power of our understanding are said to be absent from the senses of the mind. Hence, our understanding [*intellectus*] cannot be fixed on them. As a result, we cannot assent to them on our own witness, but on that of someone else. These things are properly called the objects of faith" (*Truth*, trans. James V. McGlynn, S.J., vol. 2 [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994], 249–50; all translation from *De veritate* is from this edition).

⁵⁵ For discussion concerning how the first principles are in the mind, see Dewan, *Form and Being*, 35–46. For an opposing view, see Rupert Johannes Mayer, O.P., "Abstraction: Apriori or Aporia? A Remark Concerning the Question of the Beginning of Thought in Aquinas, Aristotle, and Kant," *Angelicum* 87, no. 3 (2010): 709–46.

⁵⁶ *ST I*, q. 79, a. 8. See also *ST I*, q. 79, a. 12: "Man's act of reasoning, since it is a kind of movement, proceeds from the understanding of certain things—namely, those which are naturally known without any investigation on the part of reason, as from an immovable principle—and ends also at the understanding, inasmuch as by means of those principles naturally known, we judge of those things which we have discovered by reasoning."

mind is what is within reach of the first principles, namely, because it has both its source and, in a way, its standard in these principles. This is not to deny that the standard of knowing is real things, because these first principles are properties of being. When the first principles, in cooperation with the senses and the imagination, are sufficient to acquire knowledge, this is the work of reason.⁵⁷

The Work or Range of Philosophy

Philosophy, being wholly rational, never includes reasoning *from* faith within its proper work because faith is beyond the first principles and philosophy is always judged insofar as it is evident to reason.⁵⁸ In the words of Thomas:

A person gives assent to such things [that do not exceed the capacity of the mind] because of the witness of his own understanding and not because of someone else's testimony. Those things, however, which are beyond the power of our understanding . . . [are not

⁵⁷ Since the senses are necessary for man to know, they, in their own way, limit man's capacity to know by his own power. See *ST* I-II, q. 109, a. 1: "The human intellect has a certain form, viz., the intelligible light itself, which is of itself sufficient for the knowing of some intelligible, i.e., for knowing those to the knowledge of which we can come through sensible things. But the human intellect cannot know higher intelligibles unless it be perfected by a stronger light, such as the light of faith or of prophecy: which is called 'the light of grace' inasmuch as it is added over and above nature." Hence it is said that the natural object of the intellect is the essence of a material thing. See *ST* I, q. 84, a. 7: "Whereas the proper object of the human intellect, which is united to a body, is a quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter; and through such natures of visible things it rises to a certain knowledge of things invisible." For why the proper object of the human intellect is a quiddity of a material thing, see *ST* I, q. 12, a. 4: "For knowledge is regulated according as the thing known is in the knower. But the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower. Hence the knowledge of every knower is ruled according to its own nature. If therefore the mode of anything's being exceeds the mode of the knower, it must result that the knowledge of the object is above the nature of the knower."

⁵⁸ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 15. See also Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 84: "The premises of philosophy, however, are independent of theology, being those primary truths which are self-evident to the understanding, whereas the premises of theology are truths revealed by God. . . . Similarly the light by which philosophy knows its object is independent of theology, since its light is the light of *reason*, which is its own guarantee." See also Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself about the Present Time* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), 135–41, where Maritain argues that Thomas's *philosophy* has nothing theological about it.

assented to based] on our own witness, but on that of someone else.

These things are properly called the objects of faith.⁵⁹

Consequently, things can never be held in philosophy on the basis of the testimony of faith, but philosophy is of the realm of the purely rational, as is attested to by Steven A. Long:

But if natural metaphysical knowledge is possible, then to seek it by natural means (“purely rational”) is not unreasonable. And even inasmuch as reason is aided by revelation to avoid pitfalls, nonetheless that which is *proportionate* to natural reason is indeed *proportionate to it*. One may be helped by the inspiration of faith in rational inquiry, but in philosophy at the moment of demonstration either one’s premises do, or do not, include something knowable solely through revelation. *If* they do not, *and* they validly demonstrate, *then* we have purely rational knowledge.⁶⁰

Since philosophy is purely rational in this sense, it “depends on the same strictly natural or rational criteria.”⁶¹ As a result Maritain concludes that “Christian” when applied to philosophy cannot refer to its essence. *In its essence, “philosophy is independent of the Christian faith as to its object, its principles, and its methods.”*⁶² However, that philosophy’s essence is independent of the Christian faith does not entail what Maritain calls a “separated” philosophy, because a separated philosophy is speaking about it in practical terms—not about its essence. Moreover, the independence

⁵⁹ *De veritate*, q. 14, a. 9. Thomas goes on to describe two ways in which an object can be “of belief,” namely, inasmuch as the object is simply beyond the capacity of the intellect—and these are the mysteries of faith which man can only believe—and inasmuch as the object is accidentally believed, being above the mind of some men but in principle within the capacity of the intellect. So while the latter kind of objects can be both known and believed, they cannot be both known and believed by the same man at the same time. Proper knowledge of such things prevents believing it just as knowing by seeing something prevents one from knowing on the basis of another’s word. Faith, therefore, is the type of thing that *cannot* by its very nature enter intrinsically into philosophy, formally speaking, because it is of things *unseen*. As soon as faith enters into a philosophical *argument*—it is not philosophy.

⁶⁰ Long, *Natura Pura*, 218–19. See Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes*, 23–24, and *Metaphysical Themes II*, 24–25, who makes a similar point that at the moment of proof, faith cannot be necessary for holding one of the premises. See McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 6–26, for the classic Thomistic distinction between knowing and believing. For John Paul II on philosophy as purely rational see note 21 above.

⁶¹ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 15.

⁶² Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 15 (emphasis added).

of the essence of philosophy entails that in however way philosophy exists in practice it includes this essence or nature even if it includes more than this nature. We must remember that this is an abstract essence and so ought not to be confused with it as really existing; in other words, we ought not confuse the difference between nature and state.

State

In considering the state of philosophy we must consider the conditions of its exercise or the manner of philosophizing. The state of philosophy is its nature existing in a certain way. Philosophy can exist as a *habitus* of the mind in one of three states: pre-Christian, Christian, or anti-Christian.⁶³ When it exists in a *Christian* state by means of the change of man's state (through the elevation of nature by grace), it is aided by faith.⁶⁴ This aid comes in two forms according to Maritain: (1) from within as an inner strengthening or (2) from without as an offering of objective content.⁶⁵

Objective Aids

Within the realm of objective contributions Maritain proposes two things that aid philosophy. First, revelation offers data which is properly attainable by reason.⁶⁶ There are things explicitly revealed by the Chris-

⁶³ Maritain adds this basic point in his summary in *Science and Wisdom*, 79; see also 99–100. However, instead of “anti-Christian,” he lists “a-Christian.” This is difficult to understand since those who come into contact with the Gospel cannot be neutral with respect to the Gospel; there is either acceptance or rejection. Maritain does not seem to mean anti-Christian either, since he also argues for an anti-Christian philosophy in the following pages. The best reading I can give to it is to say that pre- and a-Christian are the same thing but one is actually before Christ and the other is after Christ. In other words, the a-Christian is one who has not explicitly come into contact with the Gospel after Christ has already come. Anti-Christian philosophy is a sort of Christian philosophy because it is intrinsically dependent upon the Christian faith for its positions. He notes one page earlier (98) that there are errors of which only an *anti*-Christian is capable. See the similar point by John Paul II that philosophy can exist in different states, including both independent from the Gospel and in a Christian state (note 13 above). Maritain does not consider philosophy's use within theology as another state of philosophy, even though he considers that such a use can result in philosophy being aided, as we will see below.

⁶⁴ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 18.

⁶⁵ For the same distinction in John Paul II, see note 20 above.

⁶⁶ Wippel's distinction between the moment of discovery and the moment of proof focuses on this kind of aid. For Wippel a Christian philosophy is at least a philosophy which can learn about natural truths from revelation and then work them out philosophically (*Metaphysical Themes*, 23–24, and *Metaphysical Themes*

tian faith that are *philosophically knowable* (revealed truths of the natural order) but were *not actually known* by philosophers explicitly—these are included within the *praeambula fidei*.⁶⁷ We can give four examples from Maritain: the doctrine of creation, God as subsisting Being itself, God as love, and sin as an offense against God.⁶⁸ Philosophy receives these

II, 24–25). For John Paul II's position that the objective contributions that faith makes to philosophy happens through content that is already in principle attainable by reason, see note 20 above.

⁶⁷ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 18. Some *praeambula fidei* were of course already known by philosophers, e.g., that God exists.

⁶⁸ In *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 19, and *Science and Wisdom*, 91, Maritain notes that, while Aristotle suggested that God is subsisting being itself, it was necessary for philosophy to be helped by Moses (Exod 3:14) for that doctrine to be made explicit and for Aristotle's principles to bear fruit. Maritain adds the example that God is love in *Science and Wisdom*, 91. It should be noted the doctrine "God is love" is of the natural order. Here is not meant Trinitarian love, for of course knowledge of the diversity of persons is beyond reason's grasp, but love as the first act of the will is signified. Since there is a will in God we can attribute love to him, and since everything that is "in" God or "attributed" to him *is* him (based on his simplicity), then we can say that God is love. See *ST I*, q. 20, a. 1. In giving examples in *Science and Wisdom*, 90, Maritain brings two sets of data together—the philosophically knowable but not actually known and the philosophical knowable that are known in a hesitant way, which we will consider next. He understands these examples as being of those things capable of being known to unaided reason but *either* not "formally conceived" or "not fully affirmed" without Christian faith. These kinds of examples then necessarily depend upon how well one thinks a philosopher has understood these truths. Since this is done to varying degrees and is impossible to measure, such examples will be better or worse because of this difficulty of judging. For example, if St. Thomas rightly attributes a doctrine of creation to Aristotle (or even Plato), then this will be a lesser example, and if he rightly judges that this doctrine is "fully affirmed" then maybe not an example at all. On the other hand, if this doctrine is denied entirely of the ancients, then this will be among the best of examples here. On whether St. Thomas himself attributed a doctrine of creation to Aristotle, see Mark Johnson, "Did St. Thomas Attribute a Doctrine of Creation to Aristotle?," *New Scholasticism* 63, no. 2 (1989): 129–55, and Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "Thomas Aquinas, Creation, and Two Historians," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 50, no. 2 (1994): 363–87. See also Gilson, *Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, 69, and the endnote 4 on 438–41. Gilson agrees with Maritain on this point that no doctrine of creation was attributed to Aristotle. For Maritain's expressed doubt about creation in Aristotle, see Jacques Maritain, *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2007), 367n1. In exploring which of the different aspects of the doctrine of creation are philosophically knowable, Wippel challenges the assumption that a cause of *esse* is necessarily a creative cause. Nevertheless, he concludes that in some texts Thomas does attribute a doctrine of creation to Aristotle, see Wippel, "Aquinas on Creation and Preambles of Faith," *The Thomist* 78,

doctrines, and the rest of the *praeambula fidei*, from Christian faith but examines them in its own (natural) order. It is not so much that these were totally new concepts, hinted at or implied by no philosopher, but rather that these concepts being revealed usually helps philosophers go from seeing something dimly, as in a shadowy twilight (as distinct from the total darkness found at night), to seeing something clearly, as in “the full light of day.”⁶⁹ In fact, if they were completely new concepts they would be unintelligible. Even essentially supernatural truths are prepared for by some natural truth (by God’s providence)—even if there are essential differences between the philosophic concept and the revealed concept. For example, the natural idea of the *logos* prepared for the understanding of the revealed *logos*.⁷⁰

The data offered by revelation which is attainable by reason includes, Maritain argues, *philosophically knowable* things which philosophers *knew well* but were very *hesitant about*.⁷¹ Revelation corroborates the truth of these things not as things explicitly revealed, but as fitting or harmonious with things revealed. For example, in the order of knowing the Christian sees reason divinely confirmed by the fact that the act of faith is eminently reasonable.

In the second place, philosophy is aided objectively when philosophy is involved with data that is essentially supernatural.⁷² This involvement happens when philosophy is used as an instrument within theology. From such work, philosophy’s field of inquiry is broadened.⁷³ For example, it is unlikely that philosophy would have come to the problem of the person without Trinitarian theology and Christology.⁷⁴ In addition, the philos-

no. 1 (2014): 1–36. For an argument that Aristotle held a doctrine of creation, see Michael Augros, “The Creator in Aristotle’s Metaphysics,” *The Aquinas Review* 17 (2010): 71–94.

⁶⁹ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 20–21 (quote from 21).

⁷⁰ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 20.

⁷¹ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 21.

⁷² Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 22.

⁷³ See Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 88: “Insofar as [philosophy] is the instrument of theology, it is led to define more precisely and with more subtle refinements important concepts and theories which, left to itself, it would be in danger of neglecting. For example, it was under the influence of theology that Thomism elaborated the theory of *nature* and *personality*, and perfected the theory of the *habitus*.” This objective aid is also described in Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 80: “Moreover, these *objective data* are also concerned with the repercussions of truths of the supernatural order on philosophical reflexion: and here the connexions and echoes really extend indefinitely.”

⁷⁴ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 23.

opher's experience itself is enlivened by being able to see the world as the work of God.⁷⁵

Subjective Aids

Philosophy is subjectively aided through an "inner strengthening."⁷⁶ This purification or perfecting of philosophy happens in three ways. The first kind of purification of reason happens through healing of the wounds of nature.⁷⁷ Human nature is wounded as a result of original sin, and these wounds are made worse through actual sin. Man is wounded through a loss, in some way, of the goods of nature. There are three goods of human nature: (1) its principles and properties, (2) its natural inclination to virtue, and (3) the gift of original justice.⁷⁸ Original sin leaves the first good entirely intact and destroys the third good completely. The natural inclination to virtue, the second good, is neither left entirely intact nor completely destroyed but is diminished. The diminishment does not take place at the root of the inclination, for this is left untouched, but the diminishment happens by means of obstacles.⁷⁹ This diminishment is called in the tradition a "wound."⁸⁰

These wounds affect the work of the intellect in differing ways. The intellect has a natural order to truth, and it is this inclination which is weakened through sin. This wound is called "ignorance."⁸¹ The inclination is further weakened the more one sins because human acts produce an inclination to similar acts.⁸² Insofar as the inclination to sin grows so does the inclination to truth diminish. But in addition to this, there is a myriad

⁷⁵ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 23: "The philosopher's experience itself has been revitalized by Christianity. He is offered as a *datum* a world that is the handiwork of the Word, wherein everything bespeaks the Infinite Spirit to finite spirits who know themselves as spirits. What a starting point!"

⁷⁶ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 18. For John Paul II on this inner purification, see note 20 above. Maritain describes this form of aid as a purification of the philosophical habits in *Science and Wisdom*, 80. See note 91 below.

⁷⁷ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 28.

⁷⁸ *ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 1.

⁷⁹ *ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 2, ad 1.

⁸⁰ *ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 3. Thomas receives this teaching from Bede. It should be noted that original sin first affects the essence of the soul and consequently its powers. See *ST* I-II, q. 83, a. 3. See Jacques Maritain, *Untrammelled Approaches*, trans. Bernard Doering (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 207–42, for his reflections on wounded nature.

⁸¹ For a detailed, if brief, account of this wound given by Maritain (of which St. Thomas says very little), see Maritain, *Untrammelled Approaches*, 213–19.

⁸² *ST* I-II, q. 50, a. 1.

of ways in which the wounds (and their deepening through actual sins) of the other powers—will, concupiscible appetite, and irascible appetite—indirectly affect the work of the intellect. For example, Thomas points out that chastity *most of all* (*maxime*) makes man fit for contemplation because sexual pleasure *most of all* (*maxime*) weighs man's mind down to sensible objects. More generally, he says that since a disordered concupiscible power especially (*maxime*) blinds reason, the virtue of temperance is especially helpful.⁸³ This is only a brief analysis of the ways in which sin affects the work of the intellect. Suffice it to say that the wound in each power of the soul in addition to the intellect—will, concupiscible power, irascible power—negatively affects, each in their own way, the work of the intellect.⁸⁴

Therefore, in addition to giving man divine life, grace is necessary to heal nature. This healing (which is not complete or total) helps the intellect both directly through the healing of the wound of ignorance and indirectly through the healing of the other wounds.⁸⁵ The *gratia sanans* does not replace the proper philosophical *habitus*, nor does it prevent even serious philosophic errors. However, it is clear that the more the philosopher is faithful to grace, the more easily he frees himself from difficulties that are a result of sin.⁸⁶

The second way Maritain offers that reason is perfected by faith is by way of the perfection of lower virtues by higher virtues. Philosophy, inasmuch as it is a perfection of the mind, is affected by higher virtues, for the higher virtues aid the lower virtues.⁸⁷ Above philosophy (in order of

⁸³ ST II-II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 3.

⁸⁴ See also A. G. Sertillanges, O.P., *The Intellectual Life: Its Spirit, Conditions, Methods*, trans. Mary Ryan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1998), esp. 17–29, for the role of virtues in the work of thinking.

⁸⁵ The indirect help here consists in the aiding of the whole moral life of man.

⁸⁶ This is why it is within the Catholic intellectual tradition that philosophy has been, and continues to be, at its strongest.

⁸⁷ See Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 26–27: “Now the higher virtues succor the lowlier in the proper sphere of the latter. The virtue of faith, for examples, enables the philosopher, who knows of the existence of God by purely natural means to adhere rationally to this truth with a sturdier grasp. Or to take another example, the contemplative *habitus* clarifies and soothes, spiritualizes the philosophic *habitus* within its own order. And in the light of theology, metaphysical truths take on a radiance so immediate and convincing that in consequence the philosopher's labors are blest with a new facility and fruitfulness.” See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 86–89, e.g., 87–88: “In the order of *formal* causality the subjective reinforcement deriving from superior planes of knowledge passes through the object and is explained in this order by the simple and luminous objec-

highest to lowest) are the theological virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and theology.⁸⁸ One example of this kind of perfecting is that faith allows reason to adhere more firmly to natural truths in a natural way. Therefore, metaphysical truths become more evident in the light of theology, and so in order for metaphysics to attain its *fullest* perfection, theology is necessary as it helps, precisely through this greater certitude, guide and confirm the work of reason.⁸⁹ Here we have a dynamic union among *habitus* (philosophy and theology) which provide a subjective reinforcement for philosophy by refining it.⁹⁰

tive light which thus passes from one *habitus* to another: the light which irradiates, for instance, at the level of the wisdom of grace or of theological wisdom the object which on an inferior plane belongs to the specific field of philosophy. So that henceforward the proper act of philosophising is the better accomplished on that object. And by this the vitality of the philosophical *habitus* is fortified, while at the same time a real motion or impression deriving from the *habitus* of faith passes also into it." See also the footnote to the text just quoted: "Cajetan and John of Saint Thomas teach that the superior Angel illuminates and fortifies the intellect of the inferior Angel by the mere proposal of the object. *A fortiori*, the putting of the object in a superior light will have an effect of inferior and vital reinforcement on the operative dynamism itself, when it is a *habitus* of the soul which is thus aided by a higher *habitus*. For then a 'physical' motion or impression of one on the other will take place. Evidently this sort of motion could not take place from one angel to another, but it would be ridiculous to conclude from this that it is equally impossible between the *habitus* of the same soul. On the contrary, thomist psychology maintains that the powers of the soul move one another (the *potentiae vegetativae* make use of *vires naturales* in a quasi instrumental way: the will moves the intelligence and the sensitive appetite, etc.). *Posse unam potentiam, vel habitum unius potentiae aliquam impressionem realem ponere per suam motionem in alia potentia vel habitu, valde commune est inter thomistas* (John of St. Thomas, Curs. Phil. De Anima, q. 12, a. 6)." The density of this point in Maritain calls for an in-depth study of the Thomistic tradition on powers or habits giving a "real impression" on other powers or habits.

⁸⁸ The gifts, while not virtues in every way, are at least similar inasmuch as they perfect man. See *ST I-II*, q. 68, a. 1.

⁸⁹ This does *not* mean that faith is necessary for philosophy *tout court*. Rather it means that while philosophy can attain any particular truth in practice, it needs help in order to attain all the truths perfectly.

⁹⁰ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 27. See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 81: "First of all it is quite clear that the views I advance involved the conception of a certain synergic and vital union of philosophy with faith and theology, and a declaration that this union is practically indispensable (as a condition, though not fully sufficing) for a development of philosophy in the strict and formal line of truth." See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 85–86. On the dynamic union of philosophy with faith in John Paul II, see the quote from §76 of *Fides et Ratio* with which the present essay opened: "a Christian way of philosophizing, a philo-

The third subjective aid to philosophy comes in the order of finality.⁹¹ Christianity changes the condition of philosophy in the human mind because there are two wisdoms above it (theology and wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit) just as to be a prince or a minister changes a man's state but not his nature. Philosophy is thereby ordered to a higher wisdom inasmuch as philosophy is insufficient to completely know the highest things.⁹² Through such an ordering philosophy is no longer so glorious and achieves a degree of self-detachment.⁹³ This humbling of philosophy makes it easier for philosophers to avoid having too much confidence.⁹⁴

The Reason for These Aids

Having seen how faith aids philosophy, we can inquire into the reasons for these aids. Faith is extremely helpful in aiding philosophy on account of sin and its wounding of nature, as we have seen.⁹⁵ Since the intellect and other powers of the soul are damaged through sin, it is clear that there is a great need for philosophy to be aided in order for it to reach its own natural capacities. Secondly, philosophy has a practical need for help simply because of the natural difficulty of philosophy: even if we had a nature without original sin (and did not need the wounds of sin to be healed) faith could still aid philosophy. This is especially true for metaphysics and knowledge of God, because these things are *by nature* very difficult. They are difficult because they are furthest from the senses and beyond our natural object in some way (quiddity

sophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith.”

⁹¹ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 27. The first and third subjective aids are described together by Maritain in *Science and Wisdom*, 80: “And from *subjective reinforcements* which also extend indefinitely philosophy receives the superior wisdoms, theological wisdom and infused wisdom, which rectify and purify in the soul the philosophical *habitus* with which they maintain a continuity not of essence but of movement and illumination, fortifying them in their proper order, and lifting them to higher levels.”

⁹² This does not mean that theology is necessary for philosophy, because there is only a natural longing to know its *proper objects* as well as possible. See Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 30. This means philosophy's natural order is to know being and being's principle (God) as well as it can; reason alone can know God only as the cause of creatures.

⁹³ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 27.

⁹⁴ While Maritain does not make this point directly, it is certainly an effect of this third subjective aid. See John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §76: “As a theological virtue, faith liberates reason from presumption, the typical temptation of the philosopher.”

⁹⁵ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 17.

of a material thing).⁹⁶ Lastly, the difficulty arises simply because so much effort and focus are necessary that other practical matters (earning a living, raising children, etc.) simply do not allow many to take up this long journey of knowing the highest things. As a result of faith, more people are able to overcome these obstacles and develop philosophical *habitus*.

We can summarize this section by simply noting that Christian faith helps philosophy both by objective material proposed and in the life of the thinker—especially in the intellect. Moreover, faith guides philosophy without violating its autonomy or destroying it because philosophy still follows its own proper laws and principles.⁹⁷ In fact, the *opus philosophicum* is entirely autonomous and is only regulated positively by reason.⁹⁸ Philosophy must follow its own proper order in answering questions raised by experience.⁹⁹

The Autonomy of Philosophy

In his foundational text *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, Maritain praises Maurice Blondel for his constant fight against a *separated* philosophy which in many places is identified with Cartesianism or rationalism.¹⁰⁰ In

⁹⁶ See note 57 above.

⁹⁷ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 29. On autonomy in John Paul II, see note 14 above.

⁹⁸ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 100. See also Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 84: “The *premises* of philosophy, however, are independent of theology, being those primary truths which are self-evident to the understanding, whereas the premises of theology are truths revealed by God. The premises of philosophy are self-supported and are not derived from those of theology. Similarly the light by which philosophy knows its object is independent of theology, since its light is the light of *reason*, which is its own guarantee. For these reasons philosophy is not positively governed by theology, nor has it any need of theology to defend its premises. . . . It develops its principles autonomously within its own sphere though subject to the external control and negative regulation of theology.” Within the passage just quoted, a note (*Introduction to Philosophy*, 84n2) reads: “Theology can turn the investigations of philosophy in one direction rather than another, in which case it may be said to regulate philosophy positively by accident (*per accidens*). But absolutely speaking theology can regulate philosophy only negatively, as had been explained above. Positively it does not regulate it either directly, by furnishing its proofs (as faith for apologetics) or indirectly, by classifying its divisions (as philosophy itself classifies the sciences).”

⁹⁹ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 103.

¹⁰⁰ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 8. Keegan notes in “Development of Jacques Maritain’s Conception,” 4: “It was against this background of criticism, both of Descartes and of Cartesian consequences in modern philosophy, that

Maritain's own words, a separated philosophy

cut[s] off reason in its own proper activities from higher sources of light, and, on the pretext that his object is purely natural, [looks] upon the philosopher himself as dwelling in a condition of pure nature; and again, on the pretext that his form of wisdom has no other inner criterion than reason alone, [sees] him as identified with Reason in itself, and as self-exempt from all need of natural or supernatural aids in the successful pursuit of his undertaking.¹⁰¹

Maritain also notes elsewhere that a Cartesian conception of philosophy includes receiving nothing from the outside.¹⁰² Hence, Maritain opposes this rationalist understanding of autonomy as receiving nothing from the outside or, in other words, he opposes understanding the autonomy of philosophy as absolute. There is no need that autonomy be *absolute*, for there are autonomous natures or virtues which exist in an ordered way or in differing degrees so that even those that have a lower degree remain autonomous while receiving from others—just as man is free (autonomous) while receiving from God. Against the need of the rationalist to have an absolute autonomy, Maritain affirms that autonomy of philosophy is strengthened by its union with faith within man.¹⁰³ At first glance, this

Maritain's conception of Christian philosophy was formed and brought to maturity." The "background" Keegan refers to is "Descartes' separation of faith and reason, [and] philosophy and theology." For Maritain's early work in this regard, see note 26 above. For John Paul II on a "separate" philosophy, see notes 16 and 17 above.

¹⁰¹ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 8. See *Science and Wisdom*, 106, where Maritain describes the Cartesian revolution as a proper aspiration for the autonomy of philosophy but an improper demand for absolute independence—separating itself from theology. See also *Introduction to Philosophy*, 85, where Maritain describes a separated philosophy: "In the seventeenth century the Cartesian reform resulted in the severance of philosophy from theology, the refusal to recognize the rightful control of theology and its function as a negative rule in respect of philosophy. This was tantamount to . . . claiming that philosophy, or human wisdom, is the absolutely sovereign science, which admits no other superior to itself. Thus, in spite of the religious beliefs of Descartes himself, Cartesianism introduced the principle of *rationalist* philosophy, which denies God the right to make known by revelation truths which exceed the natural scope of reason." Maritain notes in a note to this passage that "the result of [Descartes's] reform was the assertion of the absolute independence of philosophy in relation to theology."

¹⁰² Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 85.

¹⁰³ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 85: "The autonomy and liberty of speculative philosophy, far from being destroyed or diminished, are fortified by their union in

seems hard to understand; how could philosophy's autonomy become stronger if it was already autonomous? Thomas Joseph White, O.P., gives us an indication when he says: "But it is equally the case that [theological faith and human philosophical reason] also tend *precisely insofar as they mutually influence each other* to become each more themselves, in terms of their own inner tendencies and capacities."¹⁰⁴ This means that it is not so much in the order of specification that philosophy's autonomy becomes stronger, but in the order of exercise, insofar as the mutual influence of the two does not result in a mixing but in a proper preserving of grace and nature. In fact, Maritain envisages this explicitly in the practical realm, stating that this fortifying of philosophy within its union to faith should be understood "from the standpoint of the internal synergy of the soul in its vital movement towards truth."¹⁰⁵ He continues: "Philosophy discovers the sovereign rational truths, and the consubstantial thirst which makes it *naturaliter christiana*, by itself and within itself, in the immanence and interiority of its own proper life."¹⁰⁶ Faith strengthens autonomy and as a result, for Maritain as for White, makes philosophy be more itself. Faith makes philosophy more its own sovereign thing—more free to be itself—thereby making reason's inclination to know its proper object stronger, and strengthens reason's impulse to be philosophical (so it more carefully considers the evidence, it concludes only when there is sufficient evidence to conclude etc., including all the things that make reason reason well). Therefore, in practice, philosophy's proper autonomy is more protected in its proper unity with faith.

According to Maritain, for philosophy to be autonomous it must: (1) follow its own proper laws and principles, (2) follow its own method, and (3) judge things according to reason alone.¹⁰⁷ Granting then that

the living subject with the light of faith."

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Joseph White, O.P., "Engaging the Thomistic Tradition and Contemporary Culture Simultaneously: A Response to Burrell, Healy and Schindler," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 10, no. 2 (2012): 605–23, at 622. Before this point, White noted how these two orders are not meant to be separated.

¹⁰⁵ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 85–86.

¹⁰⁶ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 86.

¹⁰⁷ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 29: "It must be affirmed that faith guides or orientates philosophy, *veluti stella rectrix*, without thereby violating its autonomy; for it is always in keeping with its own proper laws and principles and by virtue of rational norms alone that philosophy judges things." The translator adds in the appendix, at 114: "Veluti stella rectrix: As a guiding star, that is to say, as an exterior and superior orientation." For the position that philosophy follows its own proper laws even when used within theology, see Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 35. See also: Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 101 ("The notion of Chris-

philosophy is autonomous, it follows that philosophy receives no *positive regulation* from outside of reason.¹⁰⁸ No positive regulation or government means two things: (1) that the premises or principles of philosophy are independent of theology (for of course philosophy is not sub-alternated to theology) and (2) that the light of reason is independent of theology.¹⁰⁹ The light of reason being independent of theology in the ontological order means that it is sufficient of itself to attain its object.¹¹⁰ Moreover, in practice, autonomy also means that philosophy, when not being used as an instrument of theology (but for its own purposes), ought to proceed from questions raised from experience and not by theology. That philosophy is distinct and follows its own procedure is seen insofar as the *praeambula fidei* (properly philosophical truths) are *presupposed* for the study of theology.¹¹¹ In other words, philosophy has its own order of procedure and its

tion philosophy . . . demands that . . . we . . . maintain and affirm the specific character, and the autonomous existence of philosophy in its own right and method"); Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 93 ("The Christian philosopher proposes and must propose the universe of speculative wisdom as it is in essence, a universe of purely rational knowledge and of *pure philosophy*, depending only on the primary evidences of intelligence and the senses"). For John Paul II on autonomy, see note 14 above.

¹⁰⁸ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 100.

¹⁰⁹ See Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 84n2, quoted in note 98 above. See further his *Introduction to Philosophy*, 84–85, quoted in note 49 above.

¹¹⁰ Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 84n1: "[The light of reason] is its own evidence and in philosophy is sufficient of itself. But this does not prevent it serving also . . . as the instrument of a superior light; neither, of course, does it imply that human reason is not subordinate in its very principles to the First Intellect." See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 84: "Philosophy can't be impotent in the face of its own proper object." See also *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 1, a. 1, sc: "The human mind is divinely illumined by a natural light. . . . Therefore, if this light, because it is created, is not adequate to know the truth, but needs a new illumination, the added light with equal reason will require another light, and so on to infinity—a process that can never be completed. And so it will be impossible to know any truth. Therefore we must depend on the first light, so that the human mind can see the truth by its natural light without anything being added" (in *Faith, Reason and Theology*, trans. Armand Maurer [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1987], 15–16). See also *ST I-II*, q. 109, a.1: "[Man] does not need a new light added to his natural light, in order to know the truth in all things, but only in some that surpass his natural knowledge." Concerning John Paul II's doctrine that the objective content that aids philosophy is attainable by reason, see note 20 above.

¹¹¹ See Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 87. For an exposition of the *praeambula fidei* see McNerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 26–32, John F. Wippel, "Philosophy and the Preambles of Faith in Thomas Aquinas," in *The Science of Being as Being: Metaphys-*

own work that is presupposed to theology. If it is presupposed, then this means that it cannot also at the same time and in the same way be dependent upon faith or theology. Yet, the only way philosophy can exercise this proper autonomy is by recognizing its proper subordination to higher wisdoms or, in other words, the proper autonomy can be exercised only when it is not an *absolute* autonomy, as we saw above. Philosophy must know its proper limits by knowing its own nature and its proper relation to faith.¹¹²

Maritain affirms a pure reason and a pure philosophy. Yet, none other than Ralph McInerny, a great lover of Maritain, objects to a “pure” philosophy. He notes that the defenders of it are those who think Christians are the only ones who come to philosophy with convictions and certainties about things.¹¹³ And David L. Schindler has been at pains, beginning with his doctoral dissertation, to show that philosophers who are Christian are not thereby unable to be critical thinkers simply because of this influence, for again, all have some sort of influence in their philosophy (and hence are not “pure”).¹¹⁴ Consequently, it seems difficult that Maritain (or John Paul II for that matter) could consistently hold to a notion of pure reason or pure philosophy. While this is not explicit in John Paul II or Maritain, it seems that we can have our cake and eat it too. Both insights can be affirmed if we keep in mind the distinction of nature and state. In order of exercise, McInerny and Schindler are exactly right. There is not—and there can never be—a *pure* philosophy, because there are always certain existential factors that will influence the philosopher. But in the order of specification, and this includes the formal argument, there is and always

ical Investigations, ed. Gregory Doolan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 196–220, and “Aquinas on Creation and Preambles of Faith,” *The Thomist* 78, no. 1 (2014): 1–36. For a defense of the *praeambula fidei* against modern tendencies, see McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei*. Their importance is summed up in a review of McInerny’s book by Thomas Joseph White, O.P.: “The study of the *praeambula fidei* guarantees a sense of the potential harmony between faith and reason, since it demonstrates that there exists for natural reason a final term (knowledge of the existence of God) which revelation both complements and completes” (*The Thomist* 71, No. 4 [2007]: 633–37, at 634).

¹¹² Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 106–7.

¹¹³ See McInerny, “Reflections on Christian Philosophy,” 67–70, and McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 107.

¹¹⁴ See David L. Schindler, “Knowing as Synthesis: A Metaphysical Prolegomenon to a Critical Christian Philosophy” (PhD diss., Claremont Graduate School), and “God and the End of Intelligence: Knowledge as Relationship” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 26 (Fall 1999), 510–40, at 513.

will be pure philosophy. In other words, when we look at philosophy's nature we are looking at a *pure* philosophy. Therefore, we can affirm with John Paul II and Maritain a pure philosophy in the formal order, and we can affirm with McInerny and Schindler that pure philosophy taken in the order of exercise is a myth.

Intrinsic Relation Between Faith and Philosophy?

Finally, we are able to see that Christian philosophy signifies not a simple essence but a complex reality—an essence in a particular state. While the expression “Christian philosophy” unavoidably lacks precision, it stands for something real.¹¹⁵ It is not a determinate body of truths; in the words of Maritain:

Christian philosophy is philosophy itself insofar as it is situated in those utterly distinctive conditions of existence and exercise into which Christianity has ushered the thinking subject, and as a result of which philosophy *perceives* certain objects and *validly demonstrates* certain propositions, which in any other circumstances would to a greater or lesser extent elude it.¹¹⁶

This agrees with Gilson, who says: “Though their relationship is intrinsic, the two orders remain distinct.”¹¹⁷ What does it mean to say that faith is

¹¹⁵ Maritain has some difficulty with the use of the term “Christian philosophy.” For such difficulties, see Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 78. For brief remarks that Maritain offers parenthetically about a better expression, see Maritain, *Untrammelled Approaches*, 421.

¹¹⁶ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 30.

¹¹⁷ Maritain explicitly notes this agreement citing Gilson's very words in *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 30. Maritain also cites Gilson in the preface to the effect that Gilson himself also judges the two to be in agreement. This agreement was with Gilson's early work (*Essay on Christian Philosophy* was written in 1933). This is important to note, since some have noted that Gilson, in his later work, takes on a more fideistic position reducing philosophy ultimately to theology. See: Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes*, 16–20, esp. 20; McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 134–44, esp. 139–40; Thomas Joseph White, O.P., *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2009), 116–20, 129–31. White specifically mentions that this shift in his position begins in 1950. Wippel's account focuses specifically on Christian philosophy itself, while McInerny and White focus more broadly on the relationship between philosophy and theology through discussing whether, in Gilson's view, the *esse-essentia* distinction can be demonstrated. Gregory Sadler provides a summary text of this early position of Gilson from *Bulletin de la Société française*

intrinsically related to philosophy and yet the two orders remain distinct? Maritain himself is not very explicit about the meaning of this intrinsic relationship even though he is clear that he does mean to account for it as intrinsic:

Philosophy receives from outside itself, that is true: but the gift received transfigures it interiorly, and strictly speaking is not received unless it is caught up in its very life. That is why we do not merely say that Christian philosophy is Christian in the cultural order, but also in its very function of philosophy. Not *specifically* (at least so far as speculative philosophy is concerned, which with the Christian as with the non-Christian is in itself pure philosophy, a purely rational discipline) but *intrinsically* and *vitally*.¹¹⁸

Despite the lack of development of Maritain on this point he does give a principle by which to understand his thought on the matter: "Philosophy is as affected by this Christian state as intimately as nature is affected by the state of grace."¹¹⁹ Now grace is an accident of the soul and inheres in the essence of the soul.¹²⁰ Therefore, since grace is accidental to the essence of man, so too must faith be accidental to the essence or nature of philosophy. Faith is accidental to philosophy simply because, if we recall what nature

de Philosophie, 39, quoted from Sadler, "Saint Anselm's *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* as a Model for Christian Philosophy," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 4, no. 1 (2006): 32–58, at 42: "If philosophical systems exist, purely rational in their principles and in their methods, whose existence is not explained without the existence of the Christian religion, the philosophies that they define merit the name of Christian philosophies. This notion does not correspond to a concept of a pure essence, that of the philosopher or that of the Christian, but to the possibility of a complex historical reality: that of a revelation generative of reason. The two orders remain distinct, even if the relation that unites them be intrinsic." See Gilson, *Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, 38; see also 40: "True philosophy, taken absolutely and in itself, owes all its truth to its rationality and to nothing other than its rationality." Later on, he takes Christian philosophy to be included in a broader notion of theology, with its work "transcend[ing] the distinction of scholastic philosophy and scholastic theology." See also Etienne Gilson, *The Philosopher and Theology*, trans. Cecile Gilson (New York: Random House, 1962), 198 (see also 101).

¹¹⁸ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 97–98. See McNerny, "Reflections on Christian Philosophy," 70–71: "So too Maritain, having provided a modal religious context within which philosophical thinking takes place, goes on to suggest that the objects of religious faith, believed truths, exercise an intrinsic influence on philosophical content, on philosophical truth."

¹¹⁹ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 97 (emphasis added).

¹²⁰ See *ST* I-II, q. 110, a. 2, corp. and ad 2, as well as a. 4.

signifies, faith is not included within the definition of philosophy; philosophy is still philosophy without faith. This is in the order of specification and is how the two orders (natural and supernatural) are distinguished. What about in the order of exercise? It is manifest that grace is not accidental to man, for it is essential to his life whether or not he has grace. Consequently, we must say that faith too is not accidental to the exercise or state of philosophy. This understanding of grace in relation to man is confirmed by Maritain himself:

[Grace] is accidental to the human essence taken in itself, but it is not accidental with regard to the earthly existence and conditions of life of mankind, with regard to the way in which man's activities develop and his achievements are built up.¹²¹

One might say, following Maritain, that just as it is essential for the way a man's life develops whether or not he has grace so it is essential for philosophy's concrete development whether or not it is influenced by faith. With grace and with faith, a man's life and his philosophy (all other things being equal) will be more perfect than without grace and faith. Therefore, it seems Maritain is saying that the intrinsic relation of faith to philosophy happens in the concrete situation in which philosophy is exercised. Faith is united to philosophy (or separated from it, for that matter) only in the soul of the believing philosopher. Consequently, while faith and philosophy are two distinct things, in the exercise of philosophy they are closely united in Christian philosophy.

Further clarity is helpful with regard to the difference between saying that faith (or grace) is accidental to the nature of philosophy (or man) and saying that it is not accidental to the exercise of philosophy (or this particular man). In the first case, we are speaking in the ontological order about the relation between two things (an accidental form and substantial form), and in the second case we are talking about the importance it holds for the individual man. This means that *something which inheres in a substance*—that is, exists as an accident—*can be absolutely essential for man's life!*¹²² Or,

¹²¹ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 98–99.

¹²² This preempts the contemporary misunderstanding that accidents are superficial or not important. The response here is that on the contrary accidents can be very important for the creature. Consider another example: the relation of creation is an accident and yet, obviously, without it no creature exists. Though I recognize that even this is disputed by some thinkers. Engagement with those thinkers is beyond the scope of this article.

in this analogous case, something which is accidental to philosophy in the order of specification can be something essential for the one who philosophizes. However, we must remember that here “essential” is not taken in the formal sense because we are not speaking in the order of specification but in the order of exercise. Consequently “essential” here means something like “of utmost importance” or in certain sense a “practical necessity.”¹²³ This follows our analysis of nature in the above section that the particulars or individual parts are *essential to this thing but not essential to the nature*.¹²⁴

It follows then that while the Christian faith affects the philosophical *habitus* intrinsically it does not affect it specifically.¹²⁵ No matter its state, philosophy entirely depends on reason and what matters is whether it is true. The goal is not for a philosophy to be Christian, but to be true. This means that philosophy can be Christian and still be bad philosophy. An integrated Christian thought requires philosophical wisdom, theological wisdom, and wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit. No one of them can replace the others.¹²⁶

The point of the distinction between nature and state, therefore, is to be able to say this: philosophy is the kind of thing which is the work of reason, though it is greatly aided by grace or faith—especially because of original sin. There is a natural structure which is not destroyed by the aid of grace (grace perfects and does not destroy nature). The balance that is therefore kept is between the integrity of this natural structure and the real help that faith is to philosophy. In other words, faith does not transmute philosophy. Philosophy has the same definitional content when it is considered in its pre-Gospel form and in its Christian form, even if philosophy is further perfected through its relation to faith. For *philosophy* to be Christian, it precisely presupposes *philosophy* in its integral natural structure. Philoso-

¹²³ The sense of “practical necessity” is that, while man is structurally capable of attaining every particular natural truth, he needs faith to practically attain more of them and attain them in a more perfect way.

¹²⁴ Recall p. 79 above.

¹²⁵ This means philosophy does not change in the order of specification or its nature.

¹²⁶ Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 34: “In real fact, theology possesses an object, a light, and method that differ entirely from those of philosophy. Rooted in faith, it conducts its reasoning on the authority of the revealed word and proceeds *ex causa prima*; its object is the revealed datum itself, which it seeks to elucidate rationally. When, therefore, a particular theological inquiry happens to provide an answer to a philosophic question, this answer is not given *philosophically*; the whole philosophic endeavor is to move along another plane. Philosophy, moreover, is not paralyzed but rather stimulated by this state of affairs.” See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 112. For John Paul II on this threefold wisdom, see §44 in *Fides et Ratio*.

phy existing in the mind is more than simply the nature of philosophy (and sometimes also less).¹²⁷

Conclusion

In this article, we first saw what Pope John Paul II taught on Christian philosophy and its key issues. We saw that when John Paul II spoke of autonomy he strongly opposed a philosophy that would be separated from faith, although he affirmed that philosophy moves “under the light of the intellect alone” (*sub intellectus solius lumine*).¹²⁸ Further, he affirmed that philosophy uses its own method and principles and is purely rational (*mera ratione*).¹²⁹ Yet, finally, even though philosophy is purely the work of reason, John Paul II affirms Christian philosophy—that is, affirms the influence of faith on philosophy. His language and doctrine are remarkably similar to that of Maritain, distinguishing first between different states of philosophy. Found among these different states is the Christian state, which is a way of philosophizing. John Paul II is also careful to show, albeit in a very brief way, how faith aids philosophy: both in an objective way through new content and in a subjective way through the purification of reason. In the end, we are left with what seems like a primer to Maritain’s doctrine on Christian philosophy.¹³⁰

Maritain himself distinguishes between the nature of philosophy and the state of philosophy, thereby giving a foundation for being able to distinguish between differing states of philosophy. Through this distinction, Maritain is able to show how in practice or in the exercise of philosophy faith intimately aids philosophy, while still preserving the distinct nature of philosophy. One could say that the definition or essence of philosophy does not change—its object and principles are the same—while faith helps the philosopher intimately with his task of thinking philosophically. In other words, faith helps the philosopher perfect his philosophy—though to be sure, not in such a way as to be able to go beyond what is already in reason’s capacity, which is to say that faith does not take philosophy

¹²⁷ Long gives this analysis with respect to human nature but I have transposed it to philosophy. See Long, *Natura Pura*, 85–86. Human nature or philosophy can be “less” due to the wounds of original sin.

¹²⁸ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §9.

¹²⁹ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §76.

¹³⁰ One could say, in a way, also Gilson’s doctrine, but John Paul II does not take the more historical route to establish Christian philosophy like Gilson does, but rather the more speculative route as Maritain does. Also, it is questionable to the extent that Gilson continued to agree with Maritain throughout his life. See note 117 above.

beyond what it is capable of *in principle* (without faith). If faith *does* add something to what philosophy or reason is *in principle* capable of, then we have obviously changed the capacity of reason; if faith is *in principle* necessary for the perfection of reason's natural capacity to understand anything attainable by the principles of reason, then this throws into question reason's capacity to know its proper object.¹³¹ Such a teaching would result in a destruction of our nature and that of philosophy.

After Maritain has shown the distinction between nature and state, he shows how in the Christian state philosophy is aided: as in John Paul II, both objectively through new content, and subjectively, through the purification of reason. The new content given through revelation, at least those revealed truths which are accessible to reason, is not new in principle. It is already content that is in the reach of reason's capacity, and yet this new content aids philosophy. The new content is an aid to philosophy because some truths are quite difficult to attain with great accuracy on account of their being most separated from matter, and therefore naturally difficult, or on account of the wound in our powers due to sin. Such truths being believed, the philosopher can then more easily and more resolutely seek to understand and demonstrate them. Though, as we have seen, there is even a way in which the content of revelation that is beyond the capacity of reason

¹³¹ This is where I see the principles and doctrines of the North American *Communio* school leading by the logic of their principles and explicit doctrine—however unintentionally—namely, to the destruction of reason on account of faith being necessary *in principle* for reason to know some natural truths; again this destruction happens despite the explicit desire to affirm a proper philosophical autonomy. For an indication of this, see Healy, “David L. Schindler and the Debate over ‘Christian Philosophy,’” 118 (see note 6 above for the text about revelation affecting the nature of philosophy) and 121: “Schindler would be the first to acknowledge that the love of God revealed in the Incarnation ‘adds’ something radically new to philosophy from outside its properly rational consideration of reality. In this respect, Schindler agrees with Gilson that Christian revelation has contributed, not just new inspiration, but also new content, to the philosophical enterprise.” It is helpful to consult David L. Schindler, “The Person: Philosophy, Theology, and Receptivity,” *Communio* 21 (Spring 1994): 172–90, and Schindler, “God and the End of Intelligence,” 511–19. This is a large and complex issue that is beyond the scope of this article and cannot be done justice in a footnote. Further study is warranted and would have to consider Schindler's teaching (1) on philosophy's anterior openness to revelation which may result in philosophy's being revised by revelation, (2) on philosophy as constitutively related to faith, and (3) on revelation as offering new content, in principle, to philosophy. I take up this deeper analysis in parts of chs. 3–4 of “Relation and Person: The Likeness and Unlikeness Between the Human and the Divine” (STD diss., Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception, 2019).

helps philosophy when it is used as an instrument of theology. Here, faith pushes reason to go deeper into the nature of things—though again not beyond what reason is already *in principle* capable of. Faith also purifies reason insofar as it perfects man's nature. This perfection happens insofar as grace *heals* nature so that the powers of nature can work more according to their natural capacities, and insofar as the supernatural virtues themselves perfect the natural virtues (theological wisdom perfects philosophical wisdom). Further, the philosopher knows his proper role through the manifestation of a higher science, and so he does not seek to know things *qua* philosopher which are in principle beyond his powers. Therefore, the aid of new content and the perfection of man obviously help philosophy attain its own perfection.

While philosophy is dynamically united to faith (*union synergique et vitale*), Maritain preserves the autonomy of philosophy in much the same way John Paul II does: by strongly opposing a separated philosophy and by seeing how philosophy operates under its own laws.¹³² This purely natural reason follows its own method and principles and has its own proper object. Finally, we were able to see how Maritain understands that faith is intrinsically related to philosophy, namely, in the order of exercise. This means that while faith is accidental to the nature of reason (order of specification)—and hence it is not necessary *in principle* that faith perfect reason's natural capacity to know what its principles extend to—faith, because it is of the highest import for philosophy, is not accidental to philosophy in the order of exercise. NV

¹³² *Science et Sagesse*, 89–90. Compare Maritain's French with John Paul II's Latin *vitaliter* in *Fides et Ratio* §76 (for the Latin text, see the Vatican website).