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Saint Bonaventure's Theory of Light

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SAINT BONAVENTURE'S THEORY

OF

LIGHT

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the College

of

ARTS AND SCIENCES

of

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the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

by

Brother Hugh Martin, F.S.C.

SAINT BONAVENTURE'S THEORY OF LIGHT

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Chapter I: Life of St. Bonaventure

"Let us leave a Saint to work for a Saint". This is the tribute paid to St. Bonaventure by his friend St. Thomas Aquinas. According to the story that has come down to us the "Angelic Doctor" came one day with a brother Dominican to visit Bonaventure while the latter was occupied in writing the life of St. Francis of Assisi. Receiving no response when he knocked at the door of the cell, St. Thomas ventured to open it a little, and beheld Bonaventure raised above the ground in an ecstasy of contemplation. Profoundly moved by the spectacle he withdrew leaving the "Saint to work for a Saint."

"Divine Thomas Aquinas, who at that time was equally distinguished for virtue and knowledge...looking through the partly opened door saw him (i.e. St. Bonaventure) rapt in contemplation, and raised in a wonderful manner above the ground; then withdrawing he said to his companions: "Let us leave a Saint to work for a Saint". (1)

St. Bonaventure was born of Italian parentage an Bagnorea (2) near Viterbo in 1221. He was given the baptismal name of John by his parents, Giovanni de Fidanza and Maria Ritella. How it happened that he was subsequently called Bonaventure is not known with certainty though Wadding relates the tradition that St. Francis exclaimed "O Buona Ventura" after curing the young four-year-old babe of a grievous illness; (3) from which incident it is believed Bonaventure received the name which he was to distinguish

by his illustrious life. We do know that he was preserved from death by the prayers of St. Francis. He recounts this fact in his Legend of St. Francis ⁽⁴⁾ wherein he avers that he was eager to undertake the welcome task of writing the life of St. Francis.

"If I, who was snatched from the jaws of death by the prayers and merits of this one, as I have a recent memory of, should be silent about publishing his praise I fear I would be guilty of the sin of ingratitude." (4)

We have little precise data on the saint's life until the time of his entry into the Franciscan Order. Whether this was in the year 1238 or 1243 is still a matter of dispute. ⁽⁵⁾ (6) Gelesinus, Wadding, and the Bollandists prefer the latter date but Bonelli, Ignatius Jeiler and others uphold the former date as the more probable. At his entrance into the religious life we may presume that he had an education such as was customary in his age, namely the trivium (comprising grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) and the quadrivium (comprising arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). St. Bonaventure was a master of Latin and all his theological and philosophical writings are in that language. Some of his works present his thought in an excellent literary style, as for instance his Collationes in Hexaemeron ⁽⁷⁾ and his Itinerarium Mentis in Deo ⁽⁸⁾ which abound in fine comparisons and are graced with abundant quotations from the Scriptures. St. Bonaventure as a stylist was at his best in his mystical and ascetical works, for in these he gave his whole soul into his words and put all his sincerity and artistic talent into what he had to say. This is well exemplified in his Meditationes

(9)

Vitae Christi and in the De Profectu Religiosorum. (10) Probably he knew but little Greek since it was not until the Renaissance that Greek was taught to any great extent in the West. However, he must have had some acquaintance with it for in various passages he gives Greek equivalents of Latin words as when he says, "Graeci usiam, οὐσίαν, vocant". (11) Throughout his writings he manifests a rather thorough knowledge of the Greek philosophers but that would not mean that he read them in the original; in fact this was probably not the case, for not many scholars at Paris in the thirteenth century read the Greeks in the original, either because they were not familiar with that language or because Greek manuscripts were a rarity in the West. He could get a considerable knowledge of the greek philosophers from the works of Aristotle which were available in Latin translations.

His novitiate was occupied with the study of the rule and the Divine Office, and a preparation for ordination. In his Regula Novitiorum written later in life he makes some illuminating observations on the novitiate, its purpose, and practices. He begins his work with a serious consideration:

"In the first place you ought always consider to what you have come, and for what purpose you came. For what purpose did you come? was it not for God alone, that he might become the reward of your labor in life eternal."

And the saint goes on to speak of obedience:

"And you are not entrusting yourself to your own guidance presuming that you know what God's wills, but you committed yourself to your superior that he might rule you, and you gave him your hand in profession that he might conduct you

in the way of God." (12)

In the rule he speaks of how the novice should conduct himself at choir, at the chapter, at the table, and in the dormitory. As often as you awake "let the memory of God, and of his Passion, occur to you immediately, and thank him, for he watches over us when we sleep"...At meals "your eyes are not to wander about nor should you gaze here and there...you should be intent either on God or on the reading...Be not offended if there be some defect in the condiments, or the salt, or in the cooking." At spiritual reading, "read the lives and doctrines of the saints, that in comparison with them you may be always humble, that you may be instructed and ascend to devotion and progress in study." (13)

This little treatise gives an insight into St. Bonaventure's habits of life and into his manner of thinking. We may presume that he put into practice during his novitiate the rules he lays down for others later on. If it is true that a good novitiate makes a good religious St. Bonaventure must have acquitted himself well as a novice, for he was a holy Friar, as Wadding so often testifies. (14)

After Bonaventure finished his novitiate in the Roman province he was sent by his superiors to study at the University of Paris. The curriculum drawn up in 1215 gives a fair indication as to what studies were treated of in the Arts course during the time of St. Bonaventure:

"Instruction in Latin was limited to 'grammar', which is to be studied in the 'two Priscians' or at least one of them.

Logic forms the main subject of instruction. The old and new dialectic of Aristotle, i.e. the whole Organon together with the Isagoge of Porphyry, are to be read ordinarie; rhetoric and philosophy are restricted by way of a treat for festivals. In rhetoric the only books specified are the Barbarismus (i.e. the third book of the Ars Major) of Ronatus and the Topics; philosophy apparently includes the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle...and the subjects embraced in the quadrivium, i.e. arithmetic geometry, music, and astrology." (15)

His training in the liberal arts was now supplemented by a course in theology under the celebrated Alexander of Hales, the "Doctor Irrefragibilis", who at that time represented the Franciscans in the chair of Theology at Paris.

"Quant aux théologiens, gens d'age mûr, avancés dans leurs études, ils doivent avoir atteint l'âge de trente ans, avoir suivi le cours des arts pendant huit ans et ceux de théologie pendant cinq, pour obtenir la licence en théologie." (16)

Alexander himself had been a distinguished philosopher before entering the Order of St. Francis and after becoming a friar he continued to lecture with great distinction. Bonaventure was one of his pupils until the death of the master in 1245. Alexander must have had a high regard for his young disciple for Salimbene records of the young student: "He shone with so much innocence of character that that great master, Frater Alexander, would sometimes say of him that it seemed in him Adam had not
(17)

sinned. St. Bonaventure in turn admired the ability and knowledge of his teacher and in writing his own Commentary he professed to be a follower of the opinions he had learned from Alexander, and in his great modesty made no claim to originality but declares that he intends merely to disclose old and approved

(18)
 teachings. He refers to Brother Alexander as his father and
 (19)
 teacher.

In conformity with the practice then in vogue St. Bonaventure received no formal course in philosophy as such. Philosophical questions were treated as they came up in the study of theology. Scholastic philosophy was a development that took place largely in the thirteenth century, brought about by the introduction of Aristotle. William of Auvergne and Alexander of Hales aided in introducing the Philosopher in Paris. Albert the Great made an intensive study of him and the Dominicans in general favored the Peripatetic philosophy.

"Car la presence des Dominicains dans les facultés
 (a Paris) équivalait a l'introduction integral et system-
 atique de l'aristotélisme." (20)

Albert had great influence in fostering the new philosophy at
 (21)
 Paris. Alexander of Hales made notable departures from the Patristic system of theology. In his classes he no longer held solely to the method of teaching theology based on the outline of the Scriptures, explaining them with texts from the fathers. He built up his lectures on the Libri Quattuor Sententiarum of Peter Lombard which was to be the text book in the schools for the next three centuries. The method developed by this Franciscan Doctor became that of St. Bonaventure, Thomas, and Scotus and every theologian of note who wrote a Commentary on the Sentences.

"Though the scholastics may not have followed him

(scil. Alexander) in his love for multiplying authorities, creating difficulties, and bringing up new and endless matter for dispute, they held very closely to his method...This method is followed in the main by Albert and then by St. Thomas of Aquino." (22)

Indeed Bonaventure's Commentary is his greatest work. (23) The Commentary on the Sentences presented a scientific explanation of dogma and morals and discussed the philosophical implications of theology.

Besides Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure also had as teachers John of Rochelle, (24) Oudin Rigaud, and John of Parma--all Franciscans. Very likely he also studied under the Dominicans Hugh of St. Cher and also under Albert of Cologne, later known as Albert the Great. It was Albert who cooperated in introducing philosophy into the University of Paris as a faculty distinct from theology. (25) The course of studies undertaken by St. Bonaventure was destined eventually to confer on him a Doctorate:

"The famous University of Paris distinguished a twofold teachership in theology. After a five-year course, the student received the baccalaureate. As such he could lecture privately, i.e., under the supervision of a magister. Having lectured for a length of time to the satisfaction of the faculty, he received the degree of licentiate from the chancellor of the university, i.e., the permission to lecture publicly. It depended on the faculty of the Magistri whether or not he should be allowed to have a vote and a seat in the academic senate.

"Bonaventure lectured as early as 1245 in the convent school of the Friars. He received the licentiate in 1248, but the title of magister was unjustly denied him until 1257". (26)

Another part of the student days of the saint was devoted to

acquiring a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Throughout his writings we note his frequent quotations from the Sacred Text (27) and in his Commentary on the Sentences he discusses at length (28) the Biblical account of creation. Being naturally inclined by his pious habits, he became a diligent student of the Divine Word. His method for pursuing the study of the Scripture is given in his Collatinnes in Hexaameron:

"The manner of studying ought to have four conditions, namely; order, assiduity, completeness, and measure...

"The whole of Scripture is like a zither, and just as the chords by themselves do not make harmony but only when sounded with others, so one place in Scripture depends on others...

"Wherefore he who has Scripture is adept with words and even in elegant speech, as Blessed Bernard, who knew little but because he studied much in the Scriptures he spoke with great charm...

"Moreover to this knowledge man is not able to arrive by himself, but through others to whom God has revealed it, especially through the original writings of the saints, as of Augustine, Jerome, and the others. It is necessary therefore to betake oneself to the works of the saints. But since these are difficult, the Summae of the masters in which difficulties are elucidated, are necessary." (29)

His observations about study and scholarship in general present a portrait of the ideal Christian student. Wisdom should be sought above learning: "The appetite for learning ought to be moderated; wisdom and holiness are to be preferred (30) to it." The first lesson of wisdom is to know oneself, and the more a man advances in wisdom, the more he despises himself.

St. Bonaventure began his career as a teacher by expounding the Scripture. His exegesis is concerned more with the practical lessons to be drawn from the Divine Text than with a literal

interpretation of the words. One of his methods of explaining the words was that of using Scripture itself, quoting other texts to elucidate the point in question. In the Opera of St. Bonaventure we find commentaries on Ecclesiastes, the Book of Wisdom and the Gospels of Sts. Luke and John.. (31) The Bollandists take special note of Bonaventure's industry:

"The industry with which he devoted himself to the study of letters ought to be mentioned. For him there was nothing better than labor and diligence; nothing worse than inertia, sloth, and negligence." (32)

Several years after attaining the licentiate St. Bonaventure began his Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. (33)

At this time he was about twenty-seven years of age. The work is his masterpiece in theology and takes preeminence over all his other writings. The Commentary is divided into four books and they appear as "formidable looking" tomes in the Latin edition of Peltier. The third book is recognized by some as superior to all other Commentaries of Scholastic Theologians. "In the first, second, and fourth, Bonaventure compares favorably with the best commentaries on the Sentences while it is admitted that in the third he surpasses all others." (34) Throughout his discussions he is characterized by a certain moderation and modesty professing himself to be a follower of the solid opinions of his predecessors--especially those of Alexander of Hales.

"As I adhered in the first book of sentences to the common opinions of the masters and especially to those of

my father, Frater Alexander, of happy memory, so with the following...For I do not intend to advance new opinions, but to restate those common and approved. Let not anyone think that I wish to be a fabricator of new writings." (35)

Even in this, however, he is not without his individuality and develops some aspects of philosophy which can hardly be said to be borrowed from others. He surpasses Alexander in penetration, and in originality of expression. (36)

A further reason for Bonaventure's adhering rather closely to traditional views was the fact that he was still young--his Commentary was finished before he was thirty-five--and he had scant opportunity to develop a system of his own even if he had so wished. His busy and active life in later years precluded any revision of his works and deprived him of the new advances of scholastic philosophy which were so pronounced in the thirteenth century. His attitude towards Aristotle is that of the older school which looked upon the Philosopher with distrust.

Something must be said about the delay that took place before St. Bonaventure was given his Doctor's degree. Like the medieval guilds, the University of Paris was a corporation wherein the apprentices must first lecture under the eye of a doctor and be under his tutelage until the time when they too would become doctors. As there were three steps in the training of a craftsman; apprentice, journeyman, and master, so there were three steps in the training of a university professor; the faculty to lecture in private, the licentiate to lecture in public under the supervision of a doctor, and finally the doctorate

itself with full power to teach in one of the chairs of the university and the privilege of sitting in at the Council of the Administration. (37) It was the doctors themselves who voted on the admission of new members to their ranks conformably to the statutes of the University with its discipline and code of laws.

In the years when St. Bonaventure was lecturing as a licentiate, preparing for his final degree there was a sentiment of opposition to the mendicant orders, Dominicans and Franciscans, on the part of the secular clergy who to this time had dominated the great school at Paris. (38) Brought on, as it was, chiefly because of jealousy with which the seculars regarded the encroachments of members of these orders into the teaching chairs of the university, it manifested itself in the determined policy to henceforth exclude religious from professorships. So it was that the young Franciscan was unjustly held back from his degree for some years. That there was a certain incompatibility, as matters stood, in a Friar becoming a doctor of the university cannot be denied. Both the university and the Religious Order were institutions mutually exclusive. As Gilson says concerning this situation:

"Or, dans ce cas particulier, le fait pour un maître d'appartenir à deux corps constitués également fermés et exclusifs l'un de l'autre, ne pouvait manquer de susciter les plus graves embarras, un Docteur de l'Université de Paris appartenant à un Ordre Mendiant, c'était un être social hybride qui devrait respecter à la fois les règlements de sa corporation et la règle de son Ordre." (39)

Each had its rules and its superiors, and at times it was dif-

difficult to harmonize both. In times of a crisis the Religious would claim that their religious superiors took precedence over the authorities of the university. And well they might make this preference; they had the right but yet it opened them to the recriminations of the university officials who also had jurisdiction. A notable instance occurred when the university authorities decided to close down the schools of theology until they should have redress from the Parisian police who had infringed on the rights of the school. The mendicant professors continued to lecture much to the chagrin of the seculars who resolved thereafter never to admit on the faculty those who would not swear to observe its rules and statutes. (40) The discrepancy probably would never have been harmonized were there not a higher power which could intervene in the affair. This power was the Papacy.

The popes watched over the destinies of the University of Paris with fatherly care. This center of learning was without doubt the center to which the West looked in matters pertaining to knowledge, the sanctuary wherein many of the geniuses of the thirteenth century pursued their labors. The jurisdiction exercised by the Holy See over the university was quite considerable as will be seen from the following.

The crisis in the struggle between seculars and regulars was reached when William of Saint Amour, a secular priest and a master of the university, wrote a work, De Periculis Novissimorum Temporum, purporting to nip the evil in the bud. He attem-

pted to base an attack on the mendicant orders on reason by demonstrating that the mode of life of the Friars living in poverty on the alms of the faithful was contrary to religion and morality. William of Saint Amour was an able scholar and a man with ability but in this matter he was deceived and allowed his prejudices to master his better judgment. Associated with him in this combat were Odo of Douay, canon of Beauvais, John Belin, and John of Gectville, rector of the University. (41) Their attacks threatened not only the status of the new orders at the university but even their very existence, a circumstance which called into the fray the best talent that the mendicants could boast of for their defence. St. Thomas Aquinas was called to Rome on behalf of the Dominicans and by the power of his searching logic annihilated the arguments of his adversaries. (42)

For the Franciscans Bonaventure entered the lists. Refuting the argument of Saint Amour who insisted on the obligation of the poor, especially poor religious, to give themselves up to manual labor to earn their daily bread, Bonaventure points out, with the aid of the Gospel, that the contemplative life is superior to the active life. Man has a natural right to abandon his possessions for the sake of a higher good and here we have the foundation for the mendicant life. Involuntary poverty may be the occasion of evil but voluntary poverty is the source of all good for it frees the soul from care and directs it heavenward. His thoughts on this subject are found in a book he wrote on the occasion of the dispute, entitled Quaestiones Dis-

putatae De Perfectione Evangelica. He enumerated the three degrees of poverty, the first of which is not to wish to have anything unjustly; the second, not to wish any superfluity; and the third is to desire to be possessed of nothing.

"The third degree is to wish to possess nothing in this world and in all necessity to suffer many wants for God. This is the most efficacious remedy against avarice which as an unquenchable fire never says, enough." (43)

Some years later the feud against the Friars broke out anew, this time inspired by Gerard of Abbeville, who again attacked their theory of religious poverty. It was the cause which inspired St. Bonaventure to write a second work in defense of evangelical poverty, entitled apologia Pauperum, a work which is so masterful and so full of lucid reasoning that it became a standard reference in later doubts. Recourse was had to it when a dispute later took place about the true ideal of poverty in the Franciscan Order. "Those who later on maintained that the interpretation of the Curia had forced the order from the rule, were referred to the lucid explanation of Bonaventure in his Apologia Pauperum." (44) It was now time for the pope to step in and silence all the unjust opposition against the regular priests at the University of Paris. Alexander IV in 1256 condemned the libel of William of Saint Amour as wicked and defamatory and recommended the cause of the Friars to the king of France.

"We condemn that libel which begins: "Behold the watchers shout outside", and that which is entitled: "Brief Tracts concerning the Dangers of the New Times", as wicked, vile, and execrable, and the doctrines therein contained as mean,

false, and nefarious." (45)

After denouncing the errors in the writings of the Parisian Doctors he demanded a retraction. "Therefore we strictly command all the doctors or masters who have dared to deny these things, publicly to retract and renounce the same and to hold and proclaim the contrary. Should they refuse to do this they will be proceeded against by suspension, excommunication, and perpetual deprivation of their benefices." (46)

What especially concerned St. Bonaventure in this intervention of the pope was the stipulation made that Friars should henceforth be admitted as Doctors and Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure were designated by name.

"Furthermore let them receive into scholastic society and into the University of Paris the Friars Preachers and Friars Minors living at Paris, their masters and doctors and particularly and specifically Brothers Thomas of Aquin of the Order of Preachers and Bonaventure of the Order of Minors, doctors of theology, and let them receive these doctors as teachers." (47)

Bonaventure was able to exercise his newly conferred doctor's faculties for but a short while, however, for in that same year an event occurred in his order which was destined to alter his condition.

In 1257 John of Parma, the superior general of the Franciscan Order resolved to resign his position as superior. He was brought to this decision probably as a result of the protracted disputes that were then taking place among the different factions of the order as to what rule of St. Francis was enjoined.

ed upon his followers. (48) One group, the spirituals, maintained that the testament and practices of St. Francis should be continued in their entirety as an obligation binding on all.

On the opposite side were the relaxati who sought to introduce mitigations of various sorts which would especially affect the matter of poverty. But a goodly number of friars followed a middle course holding that the testament of St. Francis wherein he advocated a most exalted poverty was meant more as a recommendation for those who wished to follow it but was not intended to be binding on all. (49) They accepted the dispensations and mitigations that had been conferred by the popes up to that time,

which moreover were not opposed to the rule approved by Honorius III. "The rule full and entire but nothing more", was their motto. (50)

This group called themselves the "Brethren of the Community", and St. Bonaventure favored them with his whole heart.

John of Parma being unable to reconcile the three factions and being accused of severity yielded up his office at the General Chapter of Rome in 1257. Such was the esteem in which his sanctity was held by his brethren that when time came to select his successor no better way was found than for him to name the man best qualified to take up the duties of superior.

"Knowing of the virtues of Bonaventure of Bagnorea he did not long hesitate in proposing him to the assembly. All present readily agreed and elected him Minister General in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the thirteenth of his religious life when he was yet teaching at Paris." (51)

John of Parma thereupon named Friar Bonaventure of Bagnorea.

With this act Saint Bonaventure who was then but thirty-six and Doctor at Paris assumed the office of governing the order, never more to resume his professorship.

In 1259 Bonaventure composed his Itinerarium Mentis in Deum (52) at Mount Alvernia, the famous solitude of St. Francis, and in the following year he held his first general chapter at Narbonne. At this chapter the brethren requested him to write a life of St. Francis which should serve as an official version for the order and eliminate controversy over the manner of Living of the founder. (53) With this in view the saint repaired to Italy and visited the haunts frequented by Francis to become imbued with the spirit of the poor man of Assisi. After due preparation Bonaventure composed his Life of St. Francis which presented the subject in such a way as to bring out those points which could be imitated by the brethren, leaving the more exalted aspects without any elaboration. Yet the work was strictly true to fact and nothing significant was omitted. This biography became the sole approved work to the exclusion of all others. The many editions and translations of it are ample proof of its popularity. His work came out in two parts the Legenda Major S. Francisci and the Legenda Minor (54) both finished in 1261. They were accepted by the general chapter held in Pisa in 1273.

"Leonard Aretinus, an ancient author distinguished for learning and eloquence, having studiously perused the Legend replied to those who desired his opinion of the work: 'In this kind of writing nobody can surpass him'." (55)

Pope Clement IV by a bull, Summa Pastori, dated November 24, 1265, nominated St. Bonaventure to the archiepiscopal see of York in England but the saint was reluctant to assume the dignities and finally persuaded the pope to free him from the charge.

"No sooner had the holy man received these letters than he hastened to the feet of the pontiff beseeching him not to lay such a burden and so great a dignity on one so unworthy. He prayed with such efficacy and constancy that he finally prevailed upon the pope, who moreover admired the saint's integrity of soul and his noble contempt of dignity. By way of reply the pope quoted this passage from Ecclesiasticus: 'Remain in thy testament, converse in it, and grow old in the work of thy hands.'"

(56)

The duties of the superior general required in those troubled times a man of consummate tact and prudence, and Bonaventure could not well be spared. Upon his return to Paris in 1266 he convoked his third general chapter of the order wherein it was decided to destroy all biographies of St. Francis other than that of St. Bonaventure. For this act which if not brought about by Bonaventure, was at least done with his tacit permission the saint has been criticized by the Spirituals of his own order in the thirteenth century and by modern historians of the twentieth century. But if we consider the strife brought about by conflicting legends of the founder of the order we can understand this move.

At the general chapter of Assisi Bonaventure introduced the practice of saying three Hail Marys at nightfall in honor of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary for whom he had a great devotion. This custom developed into the Angelus. Mass was

(58)

to be sung in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary every Saturday. Another practice that the superior introduced, a custom still observed by Franciscans today, was that of inserting the name of their blessed founder St. Francis in the Confiteor; "et beatum patrem nostrum Franciscum."

In spite of his numerous duties Bonaventure was a prolific writer. In 1269 he wrote his apologia Pauperum (59) in defense of the evangelical poverty as practiced by the Franciscans. It was not his writings, however, that gave him his chief title to recognition in his own age but his ability as a preacher. Saint Bonaventure preached before Popes Clement IV, Urban IV, and Gregory XI, before different religious orders, and before the kings of France and Navarre, to mention some of his more celebrated audiences. The development of Bonaventure's sermons is usually based upon texts from Holy Scripture over which he had a prodigious command. The preacher is to give out the doctrine of Christ and not his own teachings and Scripture is the source book of this doctrine. The style of his sermons was thoughtful and spiritual, and not what might be termed a popular style abounding in vivid examples and applications. The learned must have fully appreciated the solidity of the saint's discourse, for he was, as we shall see, asked to speak at the Ecumenical Council of Lyons.

During the period of Bonaventure's generalship of the friars violent doctrinal controversies broke out between the theologians of the two mendicant orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans.

The Augustinianism of John Peckham, who represented the Franciscan school at Paris, came into conflict with the Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas, the leader of the Dominican school. Despite the doctrinal differences which separated the two orders, tradition always represents to us a genuine friendship existing between St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas. (60) The violence and tumult which sometimes characterized the debates in the schools was entirely foreign to the disposition of Bonaventure who was marked by his meek and conciliatory ways. One of the points wherein Peckham and Aquinas differed was the question as to whether there was one or several substantial forms in man. Peckham upheld the doctrine of multiple forms against the Angelic Doctor, (61) a doctrine which moreover was taught by Bonaventure himself.

(62)
 In his Breviloquium, St. Bonaventure remarks that philosophy is subject to theology. About the year 1270 pagan philosophy was making great inroads into Christendom even invading the University of Paris, heretofore the seat of orthodoxy. Mohammedan interpretations of Aristotle, especially Averroes', presented insoluble problems which contradicted the faith.

"Soon after the beginning of the thirteenth century the new Aristotle began to make its appearance in the schools of Paris...He was accompanied or followed by Arabic commentators and by independent works of Arabian philosophers, some of which at first claimed the sanction of Aristotle's name. Now the Arabic interpretation as exhibited by Avicenna and more decidedly by Averroës...emphasized and developed precisely the most anti-Christian elements of the teaching of the Philosopher." (63)

some teachers resorted to the doctrine of the double truth--a thing could be true in philosophy and false in theology and vice-versa. Bonaventure attributes these evils to the separation of philosophy from theology. Christ is our master and teacher, not Aristotle, not Plato. St. Augustine possessed the true wisdom because he was enlightened by revelation. Christ is our guide who will free us from the three evils threatening the schools: praesumptio sensuum, et dissensio sententiarum et desperatio inveniendi verum (the presumption of the senses, dissension of opinions, and the despair of finding truth). That is the pride which leads one to abound in his own wisdom and invent new doctrines, (an error which later led to the Protestant reformation); the dissensions which cause schools to rise up against each other; and finally the despair of finding truth in the apparent contradictions between faith and reason. (64)

In his conferences de decem donis Spiritus Sancti St. Bonaventure expressly enumerates the errors of the Averroists and finds a solution for them in Christ who is the author of being; therefore the world cannot be eternal. He is the ratio intelligendi; therefore there is no blind necessity, He is the order of life and there is no single acting intellect in all men. (65) The place of Christian philosophy is somewhere between blind faith and theology--a doctrine Bonaventure elaborated in the Hexameron (1273). (66) He criticized the system of Albert and Thomas because they regarded Christ as the center of their theology but left Him out of their philosophy.

In the Hexaemeron (67) he declares that in Scripture alone should one seek the source of knowledge. He enumerates four kinds of books in their respective importance: the Old and New Testament, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the Commentaries on the Sentences, and Summae Theologicae, and lastly works of secular authors and philosophers. (67) Since commentaries necessarily employ philosophical terms, we are inclined to peruse the books of philosophers and here consists the peril. For if it is somewhat dangerous to be obliged to read the exegetics of the Fathers and the commentators, still more so is one liable to err in delving into speculations of philosophers.

"Moreover to descend to philosophy is a great danger ...It is seen in Jerome, who after studying Cicero was without taste (i.e., for the scriptures); and so he was scourged before the judgment seat: this was done, however, for our benefit, that teachers might beware lest they too highly commend and prize the sayings of the philosophers." (68)

Masters should refrain from praising philosophers too highly lest their disciples be tempted to consult these sources of error. (69) "In ecclesia primitiva libros philosophiae comburebant."

In 1271 the cardinals in conclave at Viterbo found it impossible to decide upon a successor to the pontificate left vacant by the death of Clement IV. Thereupon they requested St. Bonaventure to nominate one whom he thought most suited and promised to elect him. Bonaventure named Theobald of Plaisance who was then at St. Jean d'Acres where he had joined the crusade. Theobald (70) elevated to the chair of Peter under the name of Gregory X. The following year a General Chapter of the Fran-

discans was held at Lyons where favorable reports as to the progress of the order were received. Not for long was Bonaventure to remain at the head of the order, for in 1274 Gregory X selected him for a higher dignity. Recognizing the great qualities of the superior and appreciating his business acumen he appointed the humble saint as Cardinal Bishop of Albano. This time the Bull, de nostrae promotionis, (71) was so urgent that no alternative was left for Bonaventure but to accept, much against his inclination. A somewhat humorous incident is related about the scene when the envoys came to present Bonaventure with the red hat, at a small convent at Migel, near Florence.

"With his customary humility he was washing and drying kitchen utensils with the other brethren according to the usage of the society, when the pontifical legates arrived bearing the cardinal's insignia. Not at all disturbed, he was unwilling to admit the legates until he had finished washing, so he directed them to hang the hat from the little twig on a nearby tree. Having completed his humble duties he said to his brethren: "After we have completed the duties of a Friar Minor, we assume this heavier charge; the former was salutary and safe. but this great dignity is difficult and dangerous." (72)

Bonaventure regarded himself as unworthy for such a dignity just as his holy founder St. Francis had considered himself to be unworthy of the priesthood.

One of the first acts of the new cardinal was to attend the General Council of Lyons held in 1274 where he took an important part. The object of the council was the union of the schismatic Greek Church, the deliverance of the Holy Land, and the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline. The union of the

Greek schismatics was brought about as a result of negotiations carried on by the Friars Minors with Michael Paleologus, the Greek Emperor. The Greeks were impressed by the learning and holiness of St. Bonaventure and were won by his kindly disposition.

"So favorably did Bonaventure impress them, that he won over almost all of the Greeks, and they gave him the name of Eutyches on account of his wisdom and learning." (73)

All present at the council admired the gifts of the saint who upheld so well the cause of the Mendicant Orders. By a special dispensation he had been allowed to retain the generalship of the Franciscans but now, on May 20, 1274, Jerome of Ascoli, later Pope Nicholas IV, was elected in his place.

On July sixth the union of the Greek Church was solemnly ratified. St. Bonaventure preached the sermon on the text; "Arise, O Jerusalem, and stand on high, and look about towards the East and behold thy children gathered together from the rising of the sun to the setting, by the word of the Holy One rejoicing in the remembrance of God." (Baruc. V, 5) This was his last public utterance. When he returned home he was worn out with fatigue and the strain of his arduous duties. Soon after he took sick and died on the fifteenth of July, 1274. He was fifty-three years of age, thirty of which had been spent in the religious life. Though a Cardinal at the time of his death his sole possession was his breviary and even that he regarded as his own but ordered that it be returned to the brethren.

He was buried on the day of his death in the Franciscan chapel at Lyons. Peter of Tarantaise, O.F., a pupil of Bonaventure and subsequently Innocent V, preached the funeral oration. In the next session of the council the pope ordered every priest in the whole world to say a mass for the repose of his soul. Saint Bonaventure was canonized on April 14, 1482 and elevated by Sixtus V in 1587 to the rank of Doctor of the Universal Church.

Saint Bonaventure is called the "Seraphic Doctor". His writings have a fervent tone to them and frequently climb to the heights of spirituality. The saint maintained his fervor and his spiritual outlook on life by his spirit of prayer. He lived a life of union with God and in all problems tried to see things as God beholds them as we can witness from his frequent recourse to Holy Scripture. "Instead of penances he recommended converse with God. Prayer it was that gave him that superior serene determination which marks his administration."
(78)

St. Bonaventure's works were published at Rome (1486-96) Mainz (1609), and Lyons (1668). The Franciscans of Quaracci, near Florence published an excellent edition of them, the last volume of which appeared in 1902. There is also an edition by A. C. Peltier (used as a source in this theses) printed in Paris in 1886. The chief works of the saint are the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, in four books. De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam, Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum, Breviloquium, De Resimine Animae, Apologia Pauperum, Legenda Sancti Francisci. On rote the Soliloquium, a work in the form of a dia-
theology he wo

logue between the soul and the inner man who attained a knowledge of the spiritual life by study and experience. Another valued work is De Sex Alis Seraphim, a manual for superiors.

* * *

Notes: Chapter I.

- 1 "D. Thomas Aquinas, qui eadem tempestate pari virtute claruit et doctrina...per rimulas ostii prospiciens, vidit illum in contemplatione raptum, et a terra mirifice sublevatum; tum retrocedens ad suos: Sinamus, inquit, Sanctum qui laborat pro Sancto." Lucas Waddingus, Annales Minorum, Quaracchi, Prope Florentiam, 1931, tomus 2, anno 1221 No. 20, p. 35.
- 2 "Hoc anno (scil. 1221) Balneoregio Hetruriae civitate, non procul a Monte Phiascono. vetustissima...natus est summo nostro bono et universae Ecclesiae splendori sanctus Bonaventura Joanne Fidantio patre et Ritelia matre, piis ac nobilibus parentibus." *ibid.*
- 3 cf. Wadding t.2, p. 35.
- 4 "Qui per ipsius invocationem et merita in puerili aetate sicut recenti memoria teneo, a mortis faucibus erutus, si praeconia laudis ejus tacuero, timeo sceleris argui ut ingratus." Legenda S. Francisci, Procl. Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae, ed. A.C.Feltier, Paris, 1864, t.14, p. 294.
- 5 cf. Wadding, Annales, anno 1243, t. 3, p. 94, n. 83.
- 6 Acta Sanctorum Julii, t. 3, a Joanne Bapt. Sallerio, Joanne Pinio, Guilielmo Cupero, e Societate Jesu, Venetiis, 1746, Die Decima Quarta Julii, p. 812, F, "De S. Bonaventura S. R. E. Cardinale."
- 7 Opera Omnia, t. 9.
- 8 Opera Omnia, t. 12.
- 9 *ibid.*
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 I Sent., 8, procl. t.1, p. 138.

- 12 "Primo semper debes considerare, ad quid veneris quare veneris, et propter quid veneris. Propter quid enim venisti? nonne solummodo propter Deum, ut ipse fieret merces laboris tui in vita aeterna...
 "Et quia non confidis tibi ipsi, ut praesumas te scire quid velit Deus, ideo commisisti te superiori tuo, ut ipse te regat, et dedisti ei manum tuam in professione, ut ipse te in viam Dei inducat...
 "Statim occurat tibi memoria Dei, et ejus passionis, cum gratiarum actione, quia ipse vigilat super nos, quando dormimus...
 "Non sint oculi tui gyrovagi; nec hinc inde conspicias...Tibi soli intentus sis, vel Deo, vel lectioni...nec indigneris si aliquis defectus sit in condimento, vel salis, vel cocturae...
 "Lege sanctorum vitam et doctrinam, ut in comparatione eorum semper humiliteris, et instruaris, et accendaris ad devotionem, et provoceris ad studium." De Institutione Novitiorum, I t. 12, pp. 292-7.
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 Wadding, Annales, t. 4, index.
- 15 Hasdings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, edited by F.M.Powicke and A.B.Emden, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936, v. I, P. 441.
- 16 Stephen D'Irsay, Histoire des Universités Françaises et Etrangères des Origins à Nos Jours, Auguste Picard, Paris 1933, tome I, p. 70.
- 17 "Tanta bonae indolis honestate pollebat ut magnus ille magister, frater Alexander, diceret aliquando de ipso, quod in eo videbatur Adam non peccasse." Salimbene, Catalogus, p. 664, quoted from Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, Paris, Librairie Philosophique, J.Vrin, 1924, p. 11.
- 18 cf. II Sent. Praelocutio.
- 19 II Sent. 23, 2 ad finem, t. 3, p. 151.
- 20 Stephen d'Irsay, *op. cit.* p. 169.
- 21 cf. Roger Bede Vaughan, C.S.B., St. Thomas of Aquin, Charles Van Benthuyssen & Sons, Albany, N.Y., 1874, p. 89.
- 22 *ibid.* p. 263.
- 23 Ludger Wegemer, "St. Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor",

Franciscan Studies, Jos. F. Wagner, N.Y., 1924, n. 2, p. 15.

- 24 cf. Vaughan, op. cit. p. 232.
- 25 cf. d'Irsay, op. cit. p. 167.
- 26 Wegemer, op. cit. p. 13.
- 27 e.g. I Sent. Proaemium, t. I, pp. 9-20; II Sent. 1,2,2,1 t. 2, p. 265; Expositio in Psalterium, t. 9, pp. 154-576.
- 28 II Sent. 1,1,1 et seq. t. 2, p. 239.
- 29 "Modus studendi debet habere quattuor conditiones. scilicet ordinem, assiduitatem, complacentiam, commensurationem." In Hexaemeron, XIX, t. 9, p. 122.
 "Tota Scriptura est quasi una cithara et sicut chorda per se non facit harmoniam, sed cum aliis similiter unus locus scripturae dependet ab alio." *ibid.* p. 3.
 "Unde que Scripturam habet, potens est cum eloquiis et etiam in venusto sermone, unde beatus Bernardus parum sciebat, sed quia in Scriptura multum studuit, ideo locutus est elegantissime...Ad hanc autem intellegentiam non potest homo pervinire per se, sed per alios, quibus Deus revelavit, scilicet per originalia Sanctorum, ut Augustini, Hieronymi, et aliorum. Oportet ergo currere ad originalia Sanctorum. Sed quia ista sunt difficilima, ideo necesse sunt summae magistrorum, in quibus elucidantur difficultates." *ibid.* p. 123.
- 30 "Appetitus igitur scientiae modificandus est; praeferenda est ei sapientia, et sanctitas." In Hexaemeron XIX, t. 9, p. 122.
- 31 cf. Opera Omnia, t. 11.
- 32 "Sed industria etiam commemoranda est quam ad litterarium studium adhibuit. Nihil potius ei fuit labore, et diligentia: nihil destabilius inertia, desidia, et negligentia." Petrus Galesinius, "Vita S. Bonaventurae", inserted in Acta Sanctorum Julii, t. 3, p. 845.
- 33 cf. Opera Omnia, t. 1-6.
- 34 Wegemer, op. cit. p. 15.
- 35 "Et quemadmodam in primo libro sententiis adhaesi et communibus opinionibus magistrorum, et potissime magistri et patris nostri bonae memoriae fratris Alexandri, sic in consequentibus...Non enim intando novas opiniones adversare, sed communes et approbatas retexere. Nec quisquam aestimet quod novi scripti velim esse fabricator."

II Sent. Praelocutio, (Quoted in De Wulf, History of Medieval Philosophy, p. 287, and in Ueberweg, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, but could not be located in Feltier's edition of the Opera.)

- 36 cf. Wegemer, op. cit. p. 17.
- 37 cf. Rashdall, op. cit. p. 410-11.
- 38 ibid. p. 375.
- 39 Gilson, op. cit. p. 18.
- 40 cf. Rashdall, op. cit. p. 378.
- 41 cf. Wegemer, op. cit. p. 22.
- 42 cf. Vaughan, op. cit.
- 43 "Tertius gradus est, nihil velle possidere in hoc mundo, et in omnibus necessitatibus multiplicem pati penuriam propter Deum. Hoc est efficacissimum contra avaritiam remedium, quae sicut ignis insaturabilis numquam dicit Sufficit." De Profectu Religiosorum, II, 45, t. 12, p. 403.
- 44 Wegemer, op. cit. p. 25.
- 45 "Nos libellum eundem, qui sic incipit: 'Ecce videntes clamabunt foris' quique secundum ipsius titulum, 'Tractatus Brevis De periculis Novissimorum Temporum' nuncupatur, tamquam iniquum, scelestum et execrabilem, et instructiones ac documenta in eo tradita utpote prava, falsa et nefaria de fratrum nostrum concilio auctoritate apost. reprobamus." Loco Citato, p. 169, Bullarium, Ord. Praedic. v. 1, p. 318. quoted from Vaughan, p. 363, op. cit.
- 46 "Domus nostris litteris in virtute obedientiae firmiter in praeceptis, ut omnes Magistros, Doctores et alios, qui sive in scholis, sive in praedicationibus, seu alibi praemissu dicere attentarunt, ex parte nostra monere procurant, ut infra certum terminum ab ipsis Archiepiscopis et Episcopo praefigendum eisdem, dictum suum in his publice revocent male se dixisse fatentes...Quod si non fecerint, ex tum contra eos ad suspensionis excommunicationes et perpetuae privationis beneficiorum Ecclesiasticorum sententias...efficaciter procedere non omittant." Wadding, Annales, t. 4, p. 35, n. 31.
- 47 "Secundo, quod fratres Praedicatores et Minores Parisius degentes, magistros et auditores eorum et specialiter ac

nominatim fratres Thomam de Aquino de Ordine Praedicatorum et Bonaventuram de Ordine Minorum doctores Theologiae ex tunc quantum in eis esset in societatem scholasticam et ad Universitatem Parisiensem reciperent, et expresse doctores ipsos reciperent ut magistros." Chartular. Univ. Paris. t. 1, p. 339, quoted from Gilson, op. cit. p. 20.

- 48 cf. Wadding, Annales, v. 4, p. 2, n. 2.
- 49 cf. Wegemer, op. cit. p. 28.
- 50 ibid.
- 51 "Non fuit ei diu cogitandum, qui exploratas habebat Bonaventurae Balneoregiensis virtutes, quare hunc unicum in medium proposuit. Facile omnes in eundem convenientes, elegerunt in Generalem Ministrum tunc Parisiis legentem anno XXXIV suae aetatis, et XIII monachus." Wadding, Annales, t. 4, p. 4, n. 4.
- 52 cf. Acta Sanctorum Julii t. 3, p. 850 D.
- 53 cf. Wadding, t. 4, p. 154, n. 137.
- 54 Opera Omnia, t. 14.
- 55 "Leonardus Aretinus, vetustus auctor, eruditionis et eloquentiae laude clarus cum legendam hanc studiose legisset sententiam rogatus dixisset: 'In illo Scribendi genere a nemine illum superari posse'". Wadding, t. 4, p. 155, n. 138.
- 56 "Sed non prius accepit has litteras Vir sanctus, quam concito gressu ad Pontificem abierit, oraturus ne tantum indignonus imponeret, aut sublimem conferret dignitatem. Atque adeo efficaciter et constantèr oravit, ut aegre haec audientem tandem vicerit Pontificem, qui ejus animi integritatem, et dignitatem nobilem contemptum admiratus, tandem subjunxit illud Ecclesiastice: Sta in testamento tuo, et in illo colloquere, et in opera mandatorum tuorum veterasce.(Eccl. 11, 21)" Wadding, t. 14, p. 283, n. 234.
- 57 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 28.
- 58 cf. Wadding Annales, t. 4, p. 331, b. 296.
- 59 Opera Omnia, t. 14.
- 60 cf. Wadding, t. 4, p. 155, b. 138.
- 61 cf. D. E. Sharp, Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford, Oxford

University, Press, London, 1930, p. 176.

- 62 Opera Omnia, t. 7.
- 63 Rashdall, op. cit. p. 353.
- 64 cf. Serm IV De Rebus Theologicis.
- 65 cf. De Donis Spiritus Sancti.
- 66 Opera Omnia, t. 9, pp. 61-5.
- 67 XIX, Opera Omnia, t. 9, pp. 121-6.
- 68 "Descendere autem ad philosophiam est maximum periculum... Notandum de Hieronymo, qui post studium Ciceronis non habet saporem; ideo flagellatus fuit ante tribunal: hoc autem propter nos factum est, ut magistri cavere debeant ne nimis commendent et appetantur dicta philosophorum." In Hexaemeron XIX, t. 9, p. 133.
- 69 In Hexaemeron, XIX, t. 9, p. 14.
- 70 "Ad hujus anni finem, suadente maxime sancto Bonaventura eligitur Pontifex Gregorius X missisque nuntiis evocatur e Syria." Wassing, Annales, t. 4, Argumentum, 330, p. 368.
- 71 cf. Wadding, Annales, t. 4, p. 427.
- 72 "Ex consueute humilitate cum ceteris Fratribus pro hujus Sodalitii more a prandio lavabat, tergebatque culinae utensilia in supradicto coenobio, quando Legati Pontificii advenerunt insigne deferentes Cardinalitium. Ille nequaquam propter hoc commotus, legationem plene admittere prius noluit, quam coeptum abluendi munus explesset; immo ad id usque tempus appendere jussit. Plene autem functus humilitatis officio inquit ad Fratres: "Postquam Fratris Minoris explevimus munia, experiamur ista graviora: salutaria haec et salubria mihi credite, Fratres, illa vero magnarum dignitatem ponderosa et periculosa." Wadding, t. 4, p. 428, n. 382.
- 73 "Cum his magna quaeque praestitit Bonaventura, ita ut omnium praesertim Graecorum animos sibi conciliarit, et magnum nomen Eutychii praeclarum sapientiae, eruditionisque elogium, publica eorundem acclamatione obtinuerit." Wadding, Annales, t. 4, p. 451, b. 399.
- 74 *ibid.* p. 452.
- 75 cf. Wegemer, op. cit. p. 36.

- 76 Wadding, Annales, t. 4, p. 434, n. 387.
- 77 *ibid.*
- 78 cf. De Sex Alis Seraphim, for points on prayer.

Chapter II: Influences on St. Bonaventure.

In studying the philosophy of St. Bonaventure one is able to perceive without difficulty a number of influences which worked upon him and which each in their turn modified his philosophical outlook. A man's thought is to some degree influenced by his environment, taking environment in the larger sense of referring to intellectual, moral, and physical factors of his surroundings. Perhaps we can more easily discern the influences on this philosopher because of his conservatism and his lack of any radical departures from his predecessors. Indeed he professes to be merely a recorder of those opinions which were in the orthodox tradition of his day and repudiates any attempt on his part to make any innovations. One would almost get the impression that he looked with disdain on the introduction of new theories into philosophy.

The character of St. Bonaventure inclined him to follow tradition. His orthodoxy in matters of faith carried over into matters of philosophy so that he was a firm supporter of the system of thought which had been in vogue for centuries. The Augustinian-Platonism which until the beginning of the thirteenth century had almost undisputed sway in the schools of Europe was championed by St. Bonaventure. Although in a formal statement St. Bonaventure declines all claim to any strictly new ideas in his writings (1) nevertheless he developed some doctrines

along new lines which are original with him. He interprets the thought of Augustine and other philosophers along the lines of his own system.

"St. Bonaventure demeure fidele à la tradition augustinienne. mais surtout il cherche son point d'appui sur un terrain que sa vie interieure lui a rendu familier." (2)

How thoroughly this system influenced his own thought and writings will be seen later. The orthodoxy of Bonaventure was closely allied to another trait of his character--his spirit of meekness and conciliation. The modest and kindly demeanor of the man made him a foreigner to all the rancor and bitter controversy that was later to prevail in the schools.

"There was no trifling and altercation in the schools in the age of Aquinas and Bonaventure. These came somewhat later after Bonaventure had gone." (3)

It was ever his policy to attempt to unite conflicting sides in disputes as we can note in his conduct as General of the Franciscans when he was confronted by rival factions within the order. He brought about among his brethren a spirit of harmony that lessened the gap separating the "spirituals" from the "relaxati". This same desire for unity and conciliation carried over to some extent into his philosophy where we perceive him attempting a compromise when confronted with conflicting opinions.

"On the delicate question of the distinction between the soul and its faculties, St. Bonaventure propounds

though not without hesitation, a sort of compromise between the old Augustinian and the new Thomistic theory. On the one hand, he does not allow with the Thomists that the three great faculties of the soul are superadded, distinct realities; but neither on the other hand, does he admit the identity of essence between the soul and the principles of action which emerge from the soul. Supporting the peripatetic ideology, he denies that we have any innate ideas, but we have an innate intellectual habit which he calls the naturale judicatorium." (4)

It must not be supposed however, that he was a mere eclectic in his philosophy, for he adhered to Augustinianism rather closely as is attested by his frequent quotations from the "Christian Plato"

One influence which probably did more to shape the course of Bonaventure's philosophy than any other was his adherence to the Franciscan School. Since his entrance into the order of Friars Minor he had been taught by Franciscan teacher, notably by Alexander of Hales, for whom he had great reverence. Gradually in the mendicant orders there developed schools or traditions of thought whose principles were adopted with a few exceptions by the members of the respective orders. (5) Thus we find the Franciscan and Dominican schools each upholding certain philosophical and theological doctrines which were more or less championed by the scholars of the two orders. There came to be a strong rivalry between the two schools and at the time of St. Bonaventure the Franciscan school was headed by our saint while the Dominican school was presided over by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Some of the doctrines of the earlier Scholasticism which the Franciscan school adopted might be informative:

"There is in the first place, the predominance of the notion of the good as compared with that of the true, and the corresponding primacy of the will over the intelligence in God and Man. Then there is the substantial independence of the soul in regard to the body, its individuality independent of its union with the body, and the identity of the soul with its faculties. Again, the "active" character of the soul's representative processes or in other words the absence of causal activity in the object of cognition and in consequence the special illumination theory, or the necessity of a direct illuminating act of God in certain of our intellectual processes. And finally the theory of the rationales seminales, or of germinal principles in primal matter, in all things accounting for the changes and evolution taking place therein. Besides these, there are the minimal yet positive, actuality of primal matter apart from all "informing" influences of a substantial form; The hylemorphic composition of immaterial spiritual substances; the plurality of forms in natural beings, especially in man, and the impossibility of an eternal creation." (6)

Since these tenets were upheld by the Franciscan School they are found in the system of St. Bonaventure. Among them we note the teaching in regard to the illumination of the intellect by God as a factor in the acquisition of intellectual knowledge. We shall see that St. Bonaventure had something definite to say about this question and we can trace its appearance in his philosophy to the Franciscan school which adopted it from earlier philosophers, notably from St. Augustine. The Franciscans nearly all belonged to the Augustinian tradition while the Dominicans led by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas took up the new Aristotelian theories.

St. Bonaventure owes to his great teacher, Alexander of Hales, the plan he used in composing his Commentary on the Sentences. In fact we might better say that it was in imitation of his teacher that he came to write it all. As was said above,

Alexander introduced the Sentences of Peter Lombard as a text book for scholastics. He helped to develop the form of writing the summa which was followed by many of the great theologians of the age. It is not certain that Alexander actually arranged his Summa in the form in which we have it today, because it was not published till 1475 in Venice when it came out in a folio edition. However Vaughan states:

"Alexander...puts questions, and in a greater proportion than the Lombard; these fall into membra and the membra into articles--each contains a series of reasons for or against the point in question. Then come the resolutions which seldom take any side absolutely, but are modified to meet the arguments which are stated on the other part." (7)

In the index volume of Feltier's edition of the Opera there is an index devoted to cataloguing the scriptural quotations used by St. Bonaventure throughout his writings entitled, "The Third General Index, or Where Sacred Scripture Occurs in the Works of Bonaventure." The index alone covers 190 pages of closely printed matter, thus showing the saint's prolific use of the Sacred Text. (8)

Holy Scripture, as we see, occupied a large place in the thought of St. Bonaventure. In the very first line of his Commentary on the Sentences, Book I, he quotes Scripture: "He searched the depths of the floods and brought to light hidden things." (9) And he goes on to explain it at great length. All through the Commentary in fact, (10) he has abundant recourse to Holy Writ and it is the final word for him. In his sermons too, Bonaventure shows a thorough knowledge of the Sacred Text and

often embellishes the discourse with the word of God. (11) All knowledge he refers to some useful purpose.

"And this is the fruit of all science, that in all things faith may be built up, God may be honored, morals set in order, and comfort enjoyed." (12)

The esteem of St. Bonaventure for Holy Scripture and theology is easily appreciated in reading what he had to say concerning them in his preface to the Breviloquium:

"Philosophy indeed treats of such things as are in nature or in the soul according to an idea naturally implanted or even acquired; but theology as a science founded on faith and revealed through the Holy Ghost, treats of those things that pertain to grace, and wisdom, and even eternal glory. Wherefore subordinating philosophy to itself and taking such things from nature as are useful, it makes a mirror through which it becomes a representation of the divinity, and erects a ladder which at the bottom touches earth and at the top heaven.

"Holy Scripture has in itself a profundity which consists in the multiplication of mystical knowledge." (13)

(14)

He gives directions for explaining the Scriptures. The teacher should bring out the hidden meaning from obscure passages using for this purpose other clearer passages. The implements to use are truth and good will. If the text expresses a doctrine on faith or charity, no allegorical interpretation is to be sought. When the text speaks of created things or the words of the Israelites, the hidden meaning is to be sought from other parts of Scripture. If a passage can be taken both literally and spiritually the exegete should determine whether it ought to be taken in both ways, or whether only a spiritual (or

figurative) interpretation is admissable as when it says the
 law of the Sabbath is eternal. (15) These rules he credits to St.
 Augustine. In his Collationes in Hexaemeron, (16) St. Bonaventure
 likens Holy Scripture to a zither. One string alone gives forth
 no melody; all must be made to harmonize. Similarly one passage
 from Scripture depends on another, and in explaining one we must
 quote many others. (17)

Scripture like all other studies, the saint referred to its
 ultimate end. He did not practice the dictum of knowledge for
 knowledge sake but he believed that all the labors of the intel-
 lect should contribute to make one better.

"For this doctrine exists that we may become good
 (ut boni fiamus) and be saved, and that not by a bare
 consideration, but rather through an inclination of the
 will." (18)

It was this trait in his writings that led the Scholastics to
 accord him the title to the 'Seraphic Doctor'. He displayed a
 burning zeal in all that he did and tried to refer everything
 to a spiritual motive. He believed in his exegesis that "the
 affections ought rather be moved to imitation than to argumen-
 tation; more to resolution than to reasonings; more by means of
 devotion than by definition." (19)

St. Bonaventure was recognized as the leading scholastic
 mystic in the thirteenth century. His writings on the subject
 of mystical theology are far above any other writings of his
 time. The thing that distinguishes his mysticism is his ortho-
 doxy and his solid principles, and that at a time when other

mystics adopted exaggerated views on secular learning. Richard of St. Victor, for instance, seeing how some philosophical theories were undermining the faith condemned philosophy ^{and} studies in general. On account of the errors of philosophers they condemned philosophy. Especially were they hostile to dialectics because of the sophistical use to which it was sometimes put. Bonaventure takes a saner view and though he himself was a great mystic, yet he upheld philosophy and promoted studies in the Franciscan Order. His mysticism did not interfere with his philosophy, rather we might say that it began where philosophy left off.

"This latter (scil. mystic theology) is a department in the supernatural order, and has nothing in common with philosophical research. To realize this, one has only to see that the "mystic ways", the raptures and ecstasies which encompass the union of the soul with God, and which are described in such glowing terms by a Hugh of St. Victor or a Bonaventure are essentially different from the analogical and negative knowledge of God, arrived at by philosophical speculations...If, then, the great leaders of medieval philosophy had their hours of mystic contemplation, we must not infer any real confusion of scholasticism and mysticism, but simply a co-existence of mystic knowledge and scholastic thought in the minds of certain doctors." (20)

He has a scholarly treatise on mystical theology in which he treats it under the three headings of the purgative way, the illuminative way, and the unitive way. In its ascent to mystical contemplation the soul prepares in the purgative way by rooting out vices. In the illuminative way it is lifted up towards illumination and "By groans and tears the soul is washed from the stains of sin." (21) In the unitive way the soul enjoys contem-

plation of God to whom it is united by divine love.

One can appreciate Bonaventure's mystical tendencies in reading the beautiful eulogy he has on mystical theology at the beginning of his treatise on that subject.

"That wisdom which is called Mystical Theology...is a reaching out of love toward God through the desire of love. As the east is distant from the west so does this incomparably surpass all the science of creatures. Doctors of this world teach other sciences, but this is taught to the soul not by mortal man, but by God alone immediately. The one is inscribed in the heart by divine illumination and celestial effusions; the other is written on parchment by goose quill and ink." (22)

Far from considering study as a hindrance to the contemplation of God, a viewpoint which others often took, St. Bonaventure believed that the imitation of the virtues of Christ, the taste for contemplation, and the conquest of souls were not hindered by deep science. On the contrary it is by acquainting ourselves with the Scriptures, by clarifying our interpretation of them and by gaining by continual study a deeper knowledge of the truths of faith that we will render our own life more conformable to that of Christ. (23) Our life will be elevated by the contemplation of truth to a point where it will be rendered more efficacious in the work of saving souls. Thus it is seen that Bonaventure connected his studies with his mysticism.

The spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi had a profound influence on the young disciple, Bonaventure, an influence that was both moral and intellectual. At the University of Paris St. Bonaventure had conducted learned discourses and was celebra-

ted for his science, yet he never lost his taste for contempla-
 (24)
 tion and his union with God. St. Francis had also gone about
 among men carrying with him his abiding sense of God's presence
 which he developed in solitude. The deep contemplation to which
 the ascetic attained in his retreat he was able to preserve
 when he went forth on his mission of charity. His frail body
 was the only link binding this ardent soul to earth. In his
Legenda Sancti Francisci, Bonaventure writes admiringly of the
 spirit of contemplative prayer of the poor man of Assisi. "Walk-
 ing and sitting, within and without, working and resting he was
 ever intent on prayer...The prayer of contemplation was indeed
 (26).
 a solace.

St. Bonaventure, himself, profited by the example of spir-
 ituality which he recorded in his Legend. On one occasion he
 sought out the solitude of Mount Alvernia where St. Francis had
 secluded himself often and there engaged in devout contemplation.

The attitude of St. Bonaventure with reference to the con-
 nection between contemplation and knowledge is noteworthy.
 Science is not acquired merely by the discipline of the schools,
 there is needed also that of the cloister. No mere superficial
 reading will suffice. Prayer is the guardian and companion of
 knowledge which keeps it from error and insures stability.

"Sans doute, beaucoup d'hommes ne prient pas, qui
 cependant connaissent: mais nous sommes assurés d'avance
 que leur connaissance est, soit erronée, soit incomplete,
 et qu'elle reste condamnée à ne jamais atteindre sa pleine
 perfection." (26)

Bonaventure restated the sentiments of the Neo-Platonists when he taught that a purification of soul was essential to the acquisition of superior knowledge. The best preparation for the contemplation of truth is segregation from the things of sense, the abandonment of pleasures, and the cultivation of an intellectual life. The senses tend to distract the mental faculties and dissipate its energy. The more the philosopher retrenches from the body, the more he gives to the mind. Purification was taught and practiced as far back as the time of Pythagoras who saw in it a means of promoting philosophy and clear thinking as well as religious advantages.

The emotional and volitional elements of philosophy made their impress on the whole of St. Bonaventure's system. Following the trend of the Franciscan school he gave a preeminence to the will over the intellect and to the good over the true. This is revealed in his habit of referring doctrine to life; his anxiety was to derive some practical value from the knowledge under consideration. That science which did not serve to make one better was vain and to no purpose. All through his works there is a savor of piety and devotion which is edifying to the reader. Gerson gives this tribute to the saint:

"If I am asked who seems more suitable among the doctors I respond without prejudice that it is Bonaventure since in teaching he is solid, and secure, pious, just and devout."

(27)

Notes: Chapter II.

- 1 II Sent. praelocutio, Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae, ed. A.C.Peltier, Ludovicus Vives, Paris, 1864, t. 2.
- 2 Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, Paris, Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin, 1924, p. 89.
- 3 "Non enim Aquinatis, et Bonaventurae aetate, Scholasticorum tricae, atque altercationes orsae sunt; sed aliquando post, quam Bonaventura hinc abiit." De Scriptis Sancti Bonaventurae, Diatriba Editorum Venetorum, 1751, Opera Omnia, t. 1, p. XXII.
- 4 M. De Wulf, History of Medieval Philosophy, tr. P. Coffey, Longman's Green, 1909, p. 287.
- 5 Hasdings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, edited by F. M. Powicke and A.B.Emden, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936, v.1, p. 349.
- 6 Berard Vogt, O.F.M., "The Origin and Development of the Franciscan School", Franciscan Studies, No. 3, Aug, 1925, N.Y. Jos.F.Wagner, p. 12.
- 7 Roger Bede Vaughan, O.S.B., St. Thomas of Aquin, Charles Van Benthuyssen & Sons, Albany, N.Y., 1874, p. 263.
- 8 Opera Omnia, t. 15, p. 9.
- 9 "Profunda fluviorum scrutatus est, et abscondita produxit in lucem". Job XXVIII, 11.
- 10 cf. Opera Omnia, t. 1. pp. 175, 363, 365, 465; t. 2, pp. 102, 217, 429, etc.
- 11 Opera Omnia, t. 12, 13, 14.
- 12 "Et hic est fructus omnium scientiarum, ut in omnibus aedificetur fides, honorificetur Deus, componantur mores, harriantur consolationes." De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam, Opera Omnia, t. 6, p. 505.
- 13 "Philosophia quidem agit de rebus ut sunt in natura, seu in anima, secundum notitiam naturaliter insitam; sed theologiae, tanquam scientiam super fidem fundata, et per Spiritus Sanctum revelata, agit et de eis quae spectant ad gratiam, et substernens sibi philosophicum cognitionem, et assumens de naturis rerum quantum sibi opus est ad fabric-

andum speculum, per quod fiat representatio divinatorum, quasi scalam erigit quae in sui infimo tangit terram, et in suo cacumine tangit caelum...

"Habet postremo ipsa sacra Scriptura profunditatem, quae consistit in multiplicitate mysticarum intelligentiarum." St. Bonaventura, Breviloquium, proaemium, Opera omnia, t. 7, p.244.

- 14 Acta Sanctorum Julii, t. 3, p.851 F, a Joanne Bapt. Sallerio, Joanne Finio, Guilielmo Cupero, e Societate Jesu, Venetiis, 1746, Die Decima Quarta Julii.
- 15 cf. Breviloquium, ibid. p. 247.
- 16 cf. In Hexaemeron, XIX, t. 9, p. 3.
- 17 cf. Ludger Wegemer, "St. Bonaventura, the Seraphic Doctor", Franciscan Studies, Jos, F. Wagner, N.Y., 1924, n. 2.
- 18 "Quia enim haec doctrina est ut boni fiamus et salvemur, et hoc non fit per nudam considerationem, sed potius per inclinationem voluntatis." Breviloquium, p. 246.
- 19 "...magis movetur affectus ad exempla, quam ad argumenta; magis ad promissiones, quam ad ratiocinationes; magis per devotiones, quam per definitiones." Breviloquium, p. 246.
- 20 M. De Wulf. Scholasticism Old and New, trans, by P. Coffey Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1910. p. 69.
- 21 "per gemitus et lacrymas anima a rubiginibus peccatorum abluitur". St. Bonaventura, Mystica Theologia II, 1, Opera Omnia, t. 8.
- 22 "Sapientia enim haec quae Mystica Theologia dicitur...idem est quod entensio amoris in Deum per amoris desiderium. Quantum distat ortus ab occidente, omnium creaturarum scientiam incomparabiliter praeexcellit. Nam alias scientias mundi doctores edocent, sed de hac a solo Deo immediate non a mortali homine spiritus edocetur. Ista divinis illuminationibus, et distillationibus caelestibus scribitur in corde, illa vero penna anseris, et atramento scribitur in pelle." Mystica Theologia, prologus, t. 8, p. 2.
- 23 cf. In Hexaemeron XIX, t. 9, pp. 121-126.
- 24 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 71.
- 25 "Ambulans et sedens, intus et foris, laborans et vacans orationi adeo erat intentus...Erat quidem oratio contemplandi solatium." Legendi Sancti Francisci, Opera Omnia, t. 14, p. 327.

- 26 Gilson, op. cit. p. 79.
- 27 "Si quaeratur a me quis inter caeteras doctores plus videatur idoneus, respondeo sine praëjudicio quod Dominus Bonaventura, quoniam in docendo solidus est, et securus, pius, justus et devotus." Gerson, Opera Omnia, v.1, p. 21, quoted from Turner, History of Philosophy, p. 335.

Chapter III: General Philosophical Outlook of St. Bonaventure

It has been said that St. Bonaventure tended to confuse theology and philosophy, that he did not preserve the due bounds that set off from one another these two great branches of knowledge. (1) Some critics hold this against his system. However, it can be affirmed that St. Bonaventure perceived very clearly the distinction between philosophy and theology. He could not have been ignorant of the fact that generations of men had grown up in the past guided by nothing but the sole light of reason. Long before the coming of Christ, in pagan Greece there were men who found leisure to devote themselves to the things of the mind and to speculate about many questions. Indeed in the pre-Christian era there were various systems of philosophy which were wholly divorced from supernatural religion and divine revelation. Plato and Aristotle, the great paragons of philosophy, were thinkers who had practically no mingling of religion in their systems. These systems were known to Bonaventure and to many thinkers in the middle ages, so that he surely could appreciate the different approaches of the two sciences to the quest of knowledge. St. Bonaventure in his De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam discusses the nature of philosophy and its divisions.

"The third light which enlightens for the apprehension of intelligible truths is the light of philosophical knowledge, which is said to be interior because it inquires after inner and hidden causes through the principles of natural

truth which are implanted in the nature of man. It is divided into rational, natural, and moral philosophy according as it deals with truths of words, of things, or of conduct." (2)

He rightly saw in philosophy the knowledge of the ultimate causes of things which man is able to acquire through the unaided reason. (3) Both philosophy and theology can lead man to certitude but the certitude presented by theology is the stronger of the two, for it reposes on the veracity of God, the highest of all motives. The believer adheres more intimately to the truth which he believes than the savant to that which he knows. The power of the will comes into play impelling a man to risk all to hold to his theological beliefs, but there is no such aid impelling a man to adhere to profane science. No one ever delivered up his life to defend a theorem in geometry. Yet the certitude afforded by the reason can be very compelling. The certitude by which we know the first principles cannot be shaken and it is not possible to withhold the adhesion of the mind from them. Bonaventure quotes a celebrated passage from St. Augustine showing that he appreciated the distinction between philosophy and theology: "What we believe we owe to authority, what we know we owe to reason." (4)

The method of theology is in opposition with that of philosophy. It seeks to arrive at the truth by having recourse to Scripture and Tradition. But the facts contained in revelation are for the most part not capable of rational demonstration. Theology takes its departure where philosophy leaves off.

"It begins from the highest, which is God, the most high creator of all things, and arrives at the lowest, which is infernal punishment. For that alone is perfect wisdom which begins at the highest cause, as is the first of causes, where philosophical knowledge terminates." (5)

philosophy building on knowledge of sensible things finally arrives at the knowledge of God, but theology proceeding from revelation descends as it were, from the first principle to its effects. (6)

Every thinker, the saying goes, is either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. In the days of Bonaventure there was considerable controversy between the disciples of these two sages. Platonism had permeated the philosophy of Europe by the middle ages, having been introduced largely through secondary sources, viz: St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, and the Liber de Causis. Moreover the fathers of the Church and the Neo-Platonists had contributed much to disseminate the doctrines of Plato throughout the Western World. St. Augustine had taken over the Platonic system and adapted it to Christianity and from his time on Platonic-Augustinian philosophy was in vogue among the scholastics. St. Augustine had more influence on European thought than almost any man in Christian times, so when he took up the philosophy of the Academy his authority went far to establish it generally. (7)

But in the thirteenth century another system of philosophy was coming into its own--the system of Aristotle. For many centuries almost nothing was known of the doctrines of Aristotle in Europe. Except for his logic most of his works had not been (8)

translated from the Greek. St. Augustine even seems not to have known Aristotle from original sources.

"Mit Aristoteles wurde er nicht genauer vertraut." (9)

Though he held him to be a great philosopher he considered him to be distinctly inferior to Plato. (10) The reason will be more apparent when we contrast the two systems. During the time of Bonaventure, however, translations of Aristotle were coming to the schools from the Arabians and were studied with great interest. Soon the translation was made from the original Greek instead of through the Arabian, which procedure was much more satisfactory as it was relatively free from error. When the true thought of Aristotle was in the hands of scholastic philosophers it made a more favorable impression on them than heretofore. Soon many began to adopt the system of the Stagirite despite some of its apparent contradictions with the faith. This brought about a condition of keen rivalry between the Platonists and the Aristotelians in the schools, a rivalry which became vigorous toward the latter years of St. Bonaventure's life, for many looked askance at the innovation.

"The others, far more numerous, felt a repugnance, which varied much according to each mind, against this damnable innovation, and they entrenched themselves more strongly than ever behind Platonic-Augustinian philosophy which, at that moment was the only traditional philosophy of the Church. The most remarkable personality which we find among this party is without doubt St. Bonaventure." (11)

The Dominicans and St. Thomas with them, realized that

Aristotle could never be put down in the schools and it would be harmful to the Church were Peripatetic philosophy discarded, so they set about Christianizing the Stagirite. (12) The Franciscans, and St. Bonaventure their leading scholar, seeing the heretical Arabian commentaries on the Philosopher leaned towards Platonic-Augustinianism. St. Bonaventure was not at all ignorant of the doctrines of the Philosopher for he frequently refers to the works of Aristotle in his Commentary. (13) He had during his studies at Paris Albert the Great as a teacher and from him doubtless got an insight into Peripatetic philosophy. At this time at the University of Paris not only the Organon but also the Physics and the Metaphysics of Aristotle were being taught by the masters, so that Bonaventure had ready access to the thought of Aristotle. How is it that the man was not more influenced by this philosophy? Why did he not become an Aristotelian as we know St. Thomas did? Gilson gives the following reasons:

"Ce n'est donc pas par ignorance de la reform aristotelicienne d'Albert le Grand que le jeune maître franciscain refusait de s'engager dans cette voie; si l'exemple d'un savant illustre, et que allait s'emparer immédiatement de l'esprit du jeune Thomas d'Aquin, ne l'a pas converti aux idées nouvelles, c'est que son orientation philosophique définitive était déjà trouvée et sa pensée déjà formée." (14)

It is not hard to see why Aristotle's thought made but little appeal to St. Bonaventure knowing as we do his character and habits of thought. As Ueberweg says:

"Bonaventure ist und will nichts anderes sein als ein Vertreter der alten Schule im Sinne Augustins und des Alexander Halensis, den er seinen Lehrer und Vater nennt, und dessen Fussstapfen er hauptsächlich folgen will. Neuerungen liegen ihm fern." (15)

Bonaventure was a mystic and an idealist, a strongly imaginative man. He dwelt in the realms of the spiritual and in the heights of contemplation.

"Wie die Viktoriner, ist Bonaventura Scholastiker und Mystiker zugleich." (16)

To such a thinker the matter of fact thought of Aristotle, with its secular tone and its worldliness would not have much attraction. The noble thought of Plato with its lofty edifice of truth and its spiritual flights was much more appealing. The system of Aristotle is plain and common-sense, having deep foundations; that of Plato beautiful and sublime with a lofty superstructure.

St. Bonaventure found himself confronted with the two systems of thought, mutually irreconcilable, in regard to the explanation of the universe. Aristotle sought a sufficient reason for things in the things themselves separated from God. The universe of Plato is introduced between God, and man as a medium for ideas. (17)

The reason that Aristotelianism succeeds so well in explaining terrestrial phenomena is because it turns the attention of the mind to this world below and adopts an earthly point of view. To Bonaventure as to many Churchmen of his day it seemed very pagan indeed.

"The most clear-sighted witness to this opposition between the peripatetic philosophy and Christianity is St. Bonaventure. According to this doctor, the fundamental error of Aristotle consists in his rejection of the Platonic doctrine of ideas." (18)

The beautiful thought of Plato, on the contrary, is the philosophy of the beyond "une philosophie de l'au-dela". (19) It puts the cause of things beyond the things themselves even to the excess of denying their substance. Platonism in connecting things with their first causes stresses the fact that the nature of beings is impossible to explain from the beings themselves. but we must mount up to a sufficient cause and transcend creatures and go to the ideas.

What especially must have displeased St. Bonaventure in Aristotle's philosophy was the abandoning of all mediation between God and finite beings. The God of Aristotle knew himself but had no concern with anything else for he had no knowledge of singulars. This was a fundamental error and from it flowed serious consequences for if God did not know creatures he could have no fore-knowledge of them; that is there would be no such thing as Providence guiding the affairs of men. The Arabian commentators of Aristotle developed the doctrine that all future contingent happenings and propositions were nonentites; that all future truths, on the contrary, had a necessary veracity. Future occurrences happened by a necessary design. This necessity could be the ordering of events either by chance or by fatality and since it was impossible to sustain the opinion that things happened by chance, the Arabians developed the theory of

a necessary fatalism as the guiding principle of all occurrences. The movements of the stars accounted inexorably for terrestrial happenings whence it followed that there could be no free will, no responsibility, no reward nor punishment, neither heaven nor hell.

"And since it is impossible to happen by chance, the Arabs posited a fatal necessity, i.e., the substances moving the world are the necessary cause of all things." (19)

Such doctrines going under the name of Aristotelianism would be little capable of drawing the enthusiasm of the seraphic St. Bonaventure to the system.

In his Illuminationes Ecclesiae in Hexaemeron, St. Bonaventure lists the errors of Aristotle and inveighs against them:

"For some deny being to the patterns of things, of whom the chief seems to be Aristotle, who in the beginning of his Metaphysics, and in many other places (Arist., Met. lib. 1, text. 25 et seq; lib XIII C) pronounces against the Platonic ideas. There he says, that he knows himself alone, and needs not the acquaintance of any thing else, and he moves by desire and love...From this he can know nothing in the particular...From this error follows another; that God has no pre-science, nor any providence, since he has not the reasons of things in himself through which he would know. Moreover they say (Arist. de Interp. lib. I) that there is no future truth other than necessary truth and contingent truth is not truth. From this it follows that all things happen by chance. But the Arabs bring in a fatal necessity." (20)

St. Bonaventure mentions that the doctrine of Jesus Christ is impugned "Through false opinions and through the arguments of Aristotle". (21)

On the doctrine of ideas Bonaventure esteems the position taken by the Platonists who thus avoided falling into many grave

errors in which Aristotle was engulfed. Although Plato, Plotinus, and Cicero had no other source of knowledge than that presented by their unaided reason, yet they saw in material things a divine presence. These philosophers, be it noticed, were all worshippers of ⁽²²⁾ ~~the~~ God--they were monotheists. Nevertheless though they were illuminated with true wisdom, yet being destitute of the light of faith they could not attain to a full and complete knowledge such as is had by those enlightened by revelation. Still they were better off than Aristotle with his blindness and error "caecitas vel caligo". "But still these were in error because they had not the light of faith"⁽²³⁾. Hence they possessed an edifice of truth disfigured and truncated. From this it appears that sublime as is metaphysics, nevertheless it is but the approach to a science more exalted yet and that is the science of theology which goes beyond the knowledge that philosophy can furnish and contemplates the Divine Trinity and the certain truths of Faith. The saint has a passage in the Hexaemeron where he gives his idea of the true metaphysician:

"The metaphysician, though he rises from the consideration of the principles of created and particular substance, to the universal and uncreated and to that being inasmuch as he has knowledge of the beginning, the middle and the ultimate end, nevertheless he does not rest in the knowledge of the Father, the Son, and The Holy Ghost.

For the metaphysician rises that he might consider that being in the relation of the principle originating all things; and in this he associates with physicist, who considers the origins of things. He rises to consider that being in the relation of last end; and in this he associates with the moralist...who reduces all things to one highest good as to the ultimate end, by considering happiness whether practical or speculative. But as he considers that being in the relation of typifying all things, he

communicates with no one and is a true metaphysician." (34)

Theology did not engulf philosophy in Bonaventure's thought for he clearly recognized the distinction between the two in the matter of knowledge of the existence of God. In the middle ages there certainly existed rational proofs of the existence of God because even Aristotle had furnished his celebrated proof of a prime mover. But did this certitude founded on natural reason satisfy completely all to which the intellect could attain? By no means, for there is over and above, the certitude afforded by faith. Suppose a pagan philosopher should be converted: his mind would be infused with the supernatural assurance of the existence of God which the waters of Baptism confer and which is far superior to the certitude furnished by the rational proofs of God's existence. This does not suffice, of course, to enable him to see God in his essence because for that the beatific vision is required, but it does go to show how reason and faith each have their place and one is an aid to the other.

"Even if man would have the natural and metaphysical science which reaches to the highest substances, and there man would descend that he might rest, it is impossible that he would not fall into error unless he were aided by the light of faith...Therefore this science casts down and blinds philosophers who have not the light of faith...those who wish to stand there (scil. on the natural plane alone) fall into darkness." (35)

St. Bonaventure divides philosophy into three headings.

"Philosophy enlightens one to know either the causes of being and then it is Physics; or the rules of thought

and then it is Logic; or the manner of living and it is Moral Philosophy...Rational philosophy is divided into grammar, logic, and rhetoric, of which the one is for expression; the second, for teaching; and the third, for persuading (ad movendum)...Natural philosophy is similarly divided into physics properly so called, into mathematics, and into metaphysics. Physics investigates generation and corruption, by means of the natural forces and seminal reasons; mathematics is the consideration of abstract forms, by intelligible reasons; metaphysics is concerned with the knowledge of all being which it reduces to one principle...Moral philosophy is divided into monastic, economic, and political philosophy." (26)

Bonaventure enunciates the familiar doctrine of the middle ages that philosophy is the handmaid of theology (ancilla theologiae) "Subordinating to itself philosophical knowledge, and ^{log}taking such natural things as may be necessary for fashioning a mirror through which it may become the image of the divine, it erects a kind of ladder which at the base touches earth, and at the top heaven." (27) Perhaps more than any other medieval scholar St. Bonaventure tried to reduce the sciences to theology and for this reason his method is often criticized. It is true that if philosophy is pure reason we would find but little philosophy in St. Bonaventure's writings, since he did not write any strictly philosophical work; but the philosophy and theology go together.

Gilson remarks on how profoundly the philosophy of the middle ages, as indeed all philosophy, has been influenced by Greek thought. It is impossible, he says, to open the Summae Theologicae or Commentaries on the Sentences without finding them replete with texts whose Greek origin is evident. The library of a medieval theologian contained first the Bible; then

Aristotle; and the commentaries on Aristotle; finally, if resources permitted, commentaries on the commentaries, as that of Jean de Jandem on Averroes. So much recourse was had to Aristotle and those holding very different opinions were sure to find in his vast works just the phrase they wanted to justify their position. It justified the adage of an ancient author, "The nose of authority is of wax; one can turn it to what side he wills."⁽²⁸⁾

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Notes: Chapter III

- 1 Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, Paris Librairie philosophique, J. Vrin, 1924, p. 93.
- 2 "Tertium lumen, quod illuminat ad veritates intelligibiles perscrutandas, est lumen cognitionis philosophicae, quod ideo interius dicitur, quia interiores causas et latentes inquirat, et hoc per principia disciplinarum et veritates naturalis, quae homini naturaliter sunt inserta. Et hoc triplicatur in rationalem, naturalem et moralem...Est enim veritas sermonum, veritas rerum et veritas morum." De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam, t. 7, p. 500, quoted from Philosophia S. Bonaventurae Textibus ex ejus Operibus Selectis Illustrata, ed. Dr. Bernhardus Rosenmoller, Typis Aschendorff, 1933, p. 7.
- 3 cf. II Sent. 1,1,12 concl. Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae, ed. A.C.Peltier, Paris, 1864, t. 2, p. 246.
- 4 St. Augustine, De Utilitate Credendi, XI¹, 25; quoted from St. Bonaventure, Breviloquium, 1, t. 7, p. 249.
"Quod credimus debemus auctoritate, quod intelligimus rationi."
- 5 "Incipit a summo, quod est Deus altissimus creator omnium et pervenit ad infimum, quod est infernale supplicium. Ipsa enim sola est sapientia perfecta, quae incipit a causa summa, ut est principium causarum, ubi terminatur cognitio philosophica." Brevil. 1, t. 5, p. 249.

- 6 cf. Breviloquium, 1, t. 7, p. 249.
- 7 cf. Friedrich Ueberweg, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, ed. Dr. Geyer, E.S.Mittler & Son, Berlin, 1928, v. II, p. 99 et seq.
- 8 cf. Hasdungs Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, ed. F.M.Fowicke and A.B.Smden, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936, v. I, p. 353.
- 9 Ueberweg, op. cit. p. 99.
- 10 Aug. De Civitate Dei, VIII, 12.
- 11 Etienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, tr. Edward Sullough, B. Herder, St. Louis, 1929, p. 16.
- 12 cf. Frederick Denison Maurice, Medieval Philosophy, Richard Griffin & Co, London, 1887, pt. 3, p. 172.
- 13 cf. Opera Omnia, t. 2, pp. 139, 235, 291, 576; t. 3, pp. 86, 264, 328, 535, etc.
- 14 Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, p. 14.
- 15 Ueberweg, op. cit. v. II, p. 387.
- 16 ibid. p. 99.
- 17 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 99
- 18 Etienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 14.
- 19 Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, p. 99.
- 20 "Nam aliqui negaverunt in ipsa esse exemplaria rerum, quorum principis videtur esse Aristoteles, qui et in principio Metaphysicae, et in fine et in multis aliis locis (Arist., Metaph., lib. 1, text 25 et seq.; lib. XIIIIC) execratur ideas Platonis. Unde dicit, quod solum novit se, et non indiget notitia alicujus alterius rei, ita movet ut desideratum et amatum. Ex hoc posuit, quod nihil, vel nullum particulare cognoscit... Ex isto errore sequitur alius error, quod Deus non habet praescientiam, nec providentiam, ex quo non habet rationes rerum in se, per quas cognoscat. Dicunt etiam (Arist., de Interp. lib. I) quod nulla veritas de futuro est, nisi veritas necessarium; et veritas contingentiam non est veritas. Et ex hoc sequitur, quod omnia fiant a casu. Ideo inducunt necessitatem fatalem arabes." In Hexaemeron, VI, t. 9, p. 61-2.

"...per falsas opiniones et per argumenta Aristotelis."
 In Hexaameron, I, t. 9, p. 19.

ibid. p. 66.

ibid.

"Metaphysicus autem, licet assurgat ex consideratione principiorum substantiae creatae et particularis ad universalem et increatam et ad illud esse, ut habet rationem principii, medii et finis ultimi, non tamen in ratione Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Metaphysicus enim assurgit ad illud esse considerandum in ratione principiae omnia originantes; et in hoc convenit cum physico, qui origines rerum considerat. Assurgit etiam ad considerandum illud esse in ratione ultimi finis; et in hoc convēnit cum morali sive ethico, qui reducit omnia ad unum summum bonum ut ad finem ultimum, considerando felicitatem sive practicam, sive speculativam. Sed ut considerat illud esse in ratione omnia exemplantis, cum nullo communicat et verus est metaphysicus." In Hexaameron, I, 13, 331, quoted from Rosenmöller op. cit. p. 10.

"Esto quod homo habeat scientiam naturalem et metaphysicam, quae se extendit ad substantias summas, et ibi deveniat homo, ut ibi quiescat; hoc est impossibile quin cadat in errorem, nisi sit adjutus lumine fidei... Igitur ista scientia praecipitavit et obscuravit philosophos quia non habuerunt lumen fidei...qui ibi vult stare cedit in tenebras." De Donis Spiritus Sancti, IV, 12.

De Reductioe Artium ad Theologiam, t. 7, p. 500.

"Ipsa substernens sibi philosophicam cognitionem, et assumens de naturis rerum quantum sibi opus est ad fabricandum speculum, per quod fiat representatio divinatorum, quasi scalam erigit, quae in sui infimo tangit terram, et in suo cacumine tangit coelum." Breviloquium, Proemium, t. 7, p. 244.

Etienne Gilson, L'Esprit de la Philosophie Medieval, J. Vrin, Paris, 1932, v. II, p. 208.

Chapter IV: Light, the Form of Bodies

When one reads the philosophical writings of St. Bonaventure one comes across the doctrine of light which is one of the characteristic teachings of Bonaventurian philosophy. He goes into a deep consideration of the different aspects of this theory and gives a prominent place to light in his system of thought. It is in fact one of the high points in his philosophy.

"Wie der Bischof von Lincoln, behauptet auch Bonaventura von dem Licht, dass es die Fähigkeit habe sich aus sich selbst zu vermehren, dass es nicht ein Körper, sondern etwas am Körper, nämlich die Form des leuchtenden Körpers, und zwar die vornehmste Form unter dem Körperlichen und eine forma substantialis sei, wie die Philosophen und die Heiligen sagen." (1)

The subject comes up for treatment in his Commentary on the Sentences where he introduces it, among other reasons, to account for the forms of bodies. To gain a fair idea of what his doctrine in reference to light was we will have to consider some of his speculations on matter and form.

Matter considered in an abstract way, appears to us as purely passive. Matter is an empty receptacle, a capacity of receiving, of undergoing, a mere potency to become something. Matter can be thought of as completely deprived of form but in the actual state we never find matter except as actuated by some form. Prime matter is a logical thing. All matter that is informed is circumscribed by place and endowed with the at-

tributes that constitute it as some object but it is no longer prime matter. By its own nature it is mere possibility. It becomes actuality by the form distinct from it.

"Prime matter can be considered as without form but it cannot exist deprived of all form." (3)

Prime matter, then, is from the moment of creation endowed with a form and is thereby determined; but can we say that it has been determined from the beginning to a perfect actuality? The problem resolves itself down to the question did God create all things in the finished condition in which they are now? or is creation a process of successive stages? St. Augustine answered (4) by saying that God created all things by one act, but in this act were implanted the rationes seminales which were to develop in due time into completely defined beings.

"All things in the beginning were in the seed, not as a mass of corporal magnitude, but by force and causal potency." (5)

St. Bonaventure likewise held that:

"Prime matter raw and unformed was created embodying the four elements mixed and confused. But from that matter in the interval of six days the genera of corporal beings were formed each according to its species." (6)

Hence he would say that corporal matter was created from the first day and during the successive days the distinction of bodies by means of their forms was made progressively as the scriptures affirm (under his interpretation). Matter was thus not deprived of all form nor yet constituted in all its forms.

The doctrine of St. Bonaventure on matter and form is difficult to find stated in definite terms but he appeared to view the first information of sensible things as producing objects having forms but not sufficient to satisfy their potency which demanded other ulterior forms. The ground was prepared for higher forms, for everything was then void and empty (inanis et vacua) (Gen. I, 2.)⁽⁷⁾ Matter Possessed at this stage a kind of heterogeneity or confusion. To Bonaventure matter was in the embryo stage in which none of the members are defined but from which they can all develop.

"Prime matter is produced neither under a privation of form, nor under a complete distinction." (8)

Matter could be determined only by its form and what such an informing principle was, must now be ascertained. Since the creator had by a simultaneous act conferred existence on the angels, on corporal matter, and on the empyrean, it can be supposed that the empyrean corresponds to the formal principle of bodies, as that which it contains corresponds to their material principle, and as the angels are the first representatives of the order of intelligent beings. The empyrean, however, is a perfectly homogenous⁽⁹⁾ light. Light ought then to be a definite form and of an actuality completely determined which confers on the matter of bodies its successive forms.

"Light is said to be the form which gives being in a luminous body, and by which a luminous body is chiefly active." (10)

Two distinct informations can be distinguished in corporeal matter: (11) the first confers on bodies the forms which make them elements or mixtures; the second is general and common to all bodies as such, and this form is light.

"Light is the common nature found in all bodies both heavenly and earthly, whether it be a substance of accident." (12)

St. Bonaventure treats of light from the first day of creation and discusses it what condition it was before the third day when light was made. It is corporal light that is to be understood during this period, as is commonly accepted, and not God himself, who is light. St. Augustine identifies the angels with the light created by God on the first day, but as this opinion seems far-fetched and moreover since it is not in accord with literal interpretation of the Scriptures, St. Bonaventure does not accept it. (13)

The light which he speaks of he terms corporal light but yet that does not mean that it is itself a body.

"Aber das geschaffene Licht, die "Forma substantialis nobilissima" ist im allem Sein, ist geradezu Grundform und Einheitsprinzip in dem mannigfachen Formenaufbau der Dinge, an dem Bonaventura im Gegensatz zur aristotelischen Lehre des hl. Thomas von der einen Form eines jeden Dinges festhielt." (14)

Even though physical light be analogous to the divine light, and light be more analogous to God himself than any other physical creature, yet it cannot be affirmed that there is any existing

body whose substance is light itself.

"Light and light-rays, if we consider strictly what originates from light, are neither bodies nor do they flow from bodies." (15)

No corporal being, and in the opinion of St. Bonaventure, no spiritual being either, was a pure form but was rather made up of prime matter and form united. God alone excepted, for he was pure form, or pure act, all other beings were composed of matter and form. God is properly light as St. Augustine says:

"God is properly light and whatever approaches ~~more~~ more closely to him has ~~more~~ the nature of light." (16)

That is to say all bodies are extended and extension supposes a material body. Hence no body could be a mere form without matter and since light was a form (and here is the kernel of Bonaventurian philosophy on light) no body could have as its essence a form purely luminous. Light is to be thought of as a form (17) actuating a body and not existing apart except in our thought.

The saint speculates on the nature of light which God made on the first day when he pronounced his command fiat lux. This light must be corporal in its nature as he says:

"On the contrary it is objected and is shown by the text that that light was corporal; first because before the formation of light it is declared that darkness was on the face of the deep. Therefore if by the deep is meant a corporal material, the light which was made by expelling darkness, was corporal." (18)

If God had created light on the first day, does it not seem

superfluous to create the sun, moon, and stars on the third day. To this Bonaventure responds that although the light on the first day illuminated perfectly, and sufficed at that time for the distinction of days, it pleased God for the greater perfection of the universe, and for its greater beauty, to fashion a light of greater splendor which would make the day brighter. Wherefore from this light, or luminous cloud he made the sun. (19)

Light, which is a simple form of bodies, is a substantial form and the most noble of all forms. The reason St. Bonaventure thought of light as a substantial and not an accidental form was based on the physics taught in his day by Roger Bacon and Robert Grosseteste, (20) at Oxford who viewed light as being eminently active. St. Bonaventure doubtless understood active in the sense Aristotle uses it when he distinguishes between potentiality and act, an active principle being one that informs prime matter. If light were an accidental form of bodies it could be separated from them and even when found united it would be in them only in the manner that science is in the intellect or heat in iron. This is St. Thomas's conception of matter, (21) but his Francis can friend differed from him on this point in holding that light is a true substantial form of bodies and according to their participation in the common form they are of a nature more or less noble. (22)

The most noble of all bodies (here is a bit of the traditional physics of Aristotle so popular in that day) is the empyrean and it is also the most luminous. Why the empyrean was

esteemed more noble than earthly bodies is quite apparent if one looks at it from the poetic standpoint. All the heavenly bodies were undoubtedly thought to participate in the divine and to have qualities unknown to this planet, and were thought to be a more subtle kind of matter. The earth at the lower end of the scale in the order of nobility is the most opaque, not being illuminated by its own light but shining in the reflected light of the sun.

However all bodies even the blackest piece of mineral share in the form of light for by much polishing and scraping they, too, can be made to shine.

"And the fact that all bodies participate in the nature of light is shown plainly enough, for there is hardly any opaque body which cannot by much scraping and polishing be made to shine, as appears when glass comes from ashes, and a carbuncle from the earth. Each of these have a position of importance, and it is highly probable that it cannot be disproved. If we wish to consider within ourselves which position is the more true, we shall find that both of them are founded on some truth. The truth is that light, which is the most noble of bodily forms as the philosophers and saints declare, and according to whose participation bodies are greater or less, that light is a substantial form." (23)

Here then, were two opinions prominent among the doctors of the schools: the one that light is an accidental form of bodies, the other that it is a substantial form. Confronted with this problem St. Bonaventure tried to take a middle course but ended up by being partial to the latter opinion along with Roger Bacon and Grosseteste and against St. Thomas. This, however, necessitated the doctrine of the plurality of forms. If

all bodies participate in the same substantial form of light it is necessary to posit a plurality of forms, a doctrine which was adopted by the Franciscan school.

This teaching on the plurality of forms as understood by St. Bonaventure deserves a little explanation. It must be noted in the first place that Bonaventure did not look upon a substantial form in the Thomistic habit of thought as a principle perfectly defining the object. He did not think of it as so limiting a subject as to preclude its deriving other perfections in addition to such as flowed naturally from its one substantial form. (24) It is true the word form, used by Bonaventure, is Aristotelian but the meaning which the Franciscan applied to it was not Aristotelian. He thought of a form as conferring a perfection or property on a being, and at the same time disposing the object which is informed to receive other substantial perfections besides those which it itself could confer. Not only did it not close the way to other substantial forms in the same being, but it even prepared for, and in a way required them. The two meanings for the word form--the defining principle of a being, and the intermediary of influences and perfections; accord with the general tenor and deep inspiration underlying the two systems.

Why did St. Bonaventure introduce the form of light into bodies? Probably he was led to this step by the consideration as we have seen from his writings, that all bodies possessed some of the properties of light. (25) From the stars down to

the blackest particle of earth there is in each body some brilliance which is either at once apparent or can be brought out by polishing and burnishing. Furthermore light itself is a very subtle substance approaching the spiritual in its properties of speed and activity. It is the medium of our chief source of knowledge for it is indispensable to sight, and it is by sight, our noblest sense, that we obtain the fullest sense knowledge. Hence it seemed to him logical to conclude that there must be in things some principle to explain the uniform presence of light--one of the substantial forms in beings. The substantial form of the body, which makes it such a being and which is the principle of its essence, is a principle, perhaps even the fundamental one, but it is by no means the only form. The form of light adds new perfections to the body which penetrate deeply into that very essence itself and hence light, too, is a substantial form. Without it, the body would be unintelligible because light acts a sort of intermediary between the soul and body and operates in the inferior operations of knowledge causing the senses to pass from potency to act.

"And Damascene said on this subject that light is from fire not as an effect or an accident but as a co-natural and consubstantial power. This power is not perceptible by the senses nor does it only operate on the sense of sight but causes all the senses to pass from potency to act, as Augustine declares (Aug., Genesim ad litteram, XV, 21, et XIX, 25)" (26)

The function of light is not to make a thing such a being; it is rather to complete the being by the influence which it

exercises on it. It conserves the other forms of the being and gives impetus to its acts:

"The form of light is not put in the same body with other forms as an imperfect disposition which is born to be perfected by an ultimate form; but it is there as a conservator of the other corporal forms, giving efficacy to its acts, and according to which the dignity and excellence of corporal forms are measured." (27)

It was objected that a substantial principle could not be composed of colors as light is, to which Bonaventure countered that light has not color as an intrinsic principle but only as an efficient principle or accidentally. A substantial form can be the efficient principle of accidents. But it is objected, light is a sensible form, to which the saint gives the answer that it is not seen by reason of its essence but by reason of its brilliance (fulgor), or color, inseparably concomitant to it, especially to a very bright (vehementia) light. To the objection that heat is not a substantial form of hot things and light should not be the substantial form of bright things either, St. Bonaventure gives the reply that the reasoning is not parallel because the form of heat is not of such great dignity and perfection as is the form of light. This is manifest from the fact that light is farther removed from the nature of opposition (contrarietatis), corruption, and change (alterationis). (28)

In the time of St. Bonaventure that absorbing question of our own day was also discussed and philosophers were asking how light was transmitted. The thirteenth century philosophy did not have the modern advances of the physical sciences to call

upon. They did not know that light travelled with a finite speed of 187,000 miles a second, nor did they know anything about polarized light, diffraction gratings, the spectrum, interferometers, or any of the other remarkable developments which are the common knowledge of physicists of today. Therefore we cannot expect too much of the medieval scholastics in their theories on light.

The means of propagation common among material things by informing matter with substantial form did not adapt itself to the explanation of the almost infinite diffusiveness of light. It required time for successive informations of matter but the speed of light was almost infinite. Moreover a light ray is not an emanation of the luminous substance, because that would have meant matter and form combined, but it was the form of the substance uncombined with matter. This is evident from the fact that light is inseparable from a luminous body. Also if light were matter and form it would mean that the shining body would lose some of its matter in the process of illuminating other objects, but this is not the case.

"The motion of light, which is through the egress of itself from the lucid body, is not properly a change of place, but more a generation and diffusion, which is apparent from the fact that it goes suddenly into a space no matter how large." (30)

If light were diffused how could it pass through the vacuum which surrounds the sun? This same objection is one of the obstacles to the acceptance of the wave theory of light in modern physics. For light to be transmitted by waves some medium must

be present to conduct the waves.

Thus with sound waves air or water or some material substance is the medium through which they pass. But in the empty regions of space, where there is no atmosphere, how could light waves be transmitted. Some modern scientists have attempted to solve it in much the same way as did St. Bonaventure in the thirteenth century. Knowing that wave transmission needs a medium and not finding any in space they denied that space was a vacuum. Ether was brought forth as the desired medium, though what ether is is a moot question. The theory called for a wave medium so they brought one in to supply the deficiency. In like manner when asked how it was possible for light to pass through the vacuum surrounding the sun, Bonaventure replied that there was no vacuum and quotes Aristotle and St. Augustine to support his contention. (31)

It was asked of St. Bonaventure whether the light ray was an active principle which acted upon bodies subjected to it. The ray of light, he answered, is not something added to a luminous body but is rather co-natural and consubstantial to it and cannot be separated therefrom. It is a substantial form which acts as a regulator and conserver of inferior beings. (32) Since it is not an accident it is not perceptible by the senses but its presence in beings is apprehended by observing the multiple activities which it controls. It is present in the minerals lying under the earth.

"The manifest influence is through a transparent body. The hidden influence is not only through a transparent body, but also through an opaque one, just as the virtue of the stars is in the minerals which are hidden in the earth." (33)

It is the principle whereby vegetative and sensible souls are educed.

"The light of the heavenly bodies is the principle whereby vegetative and sensitive souls are educed, which are substantial forms." (34)

"But light does more still. If you admit that it disposes bodies in view of receiving life, it is necessary to consider it as a sort of intermediary and link between soul and body. It would intervene even in the inferior operations of knowledge and would cause not only the sense of sight but even all other senses to pass from potency to act." (35)

This substantial form of light must not be identified with visible light such as is usually understood by the term light. The light that is perceptible by our sight, considered as traversing the air, is neither a substantial nor an accidental form. But if we consider light as the agent whereby colors are brought out we ought to think of light in that sense as an accidental form. Inasmuch as it is an external form capable of increase and diminution it is merely accidental, serving as an exterior instrument of that substantial form of light which is within the essence of bodies and which is not perceptible by the senses.

Notes: Chapter IV

- 1 Friedrich Ueberweg, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, ed. Dr. Geyer, E.S.Mittler & Son, Berlin, 1928, v. II. p. 388.
- 2 II Sent. 13, 2, 2, concl., Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae, ed. A.C.Feltier, Paris, 1864, t. 2, p. 554-5.
- 3 II Sent. 12, 1, 1, concl., t. 2, p. 526.
"Materia prima potest considerari informis; existere autem non potest omne forma spoilata."
- 4 Aug. De Genesi ad Litteram, I, 15.
- 5 "In semine ergo issa omnia fuerunt primitus, non mole corporae magnitudinâ, sed vi potentiaque causali." ibid. V, 23.
- 6 "Prima materia rudis atque informis, quattuor elementorum commixtionem atque confusionem tenens, creata sit: postmodum vero per intervalla sex dierum ex illa materia rerum corporalium genera sint formata secundum species proprias." II Sent. 13, t. 2, p. 520.
- 7 cf. Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, Paris, Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin, 1924, p. 261.
- 8 "Materia prima nec est producta omnino sub privatione formae, nec sub completa distinctione." II Sent. 2, Fund. t. 2, p. 536.
- 9 cf. II Sent. 13, 2, 2 concl. t. 2, p. 554.
- 10 "Dicitur lux ipsa forma quae dat esse corpore ducido, et a qua luminosum corpus principaliter est activam." II Sent. 13, 2, 2 concl. t. 2, p. 555.
- 11 cf. II Sent. 13, divis, textus, t. 2, p. 511.
- 12 "Item lux est natura communis reperta in omnibus corporibus, tam coelestibus quam terrestribus, sive sit substantia, sive accidens." II Sent. 12, 2, 1 arg. 4, t. 2, p. 524.
- 13 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 264.
- 14 Dr. Bernhard Rosenmüller, "Religiose Erkenntnis nach Bonaventura". pp. 224, Beitrage zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, Band XXV, Heft 3-4, Münster, 1925, p. 5.

- 15 "Lumen et radius, si nominetur illud praecise quod a luce habet ortum, nec est corpus, nec corpus defluxus." II Sent. 13,3,2 concl. t. 2, p. 558.
- 16 Aug. De Genesi ad Litteram, IV, 22.
- 17 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 264.
- 18 "Sed contra hoc objecitur, et ostenditur per textum, quod lux ibi praemititur quod tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi: ergo, si per abyssum intelligitur materia corporalis, lux, quae facta est ad expulsionem illarum tenebrarum, erat corporalis." II Sent. 13,1,1 Fund, t. 2 p. 546.
- 19 II Sent. 13,1, ad 5^m, t. 2, p. 548.
- 20 cf. D. E. Sharp. Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century, Oxford University Press, London, 1930, p. 33.
- 21 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theol. I Q 75, 5, ad 2^m.
- 22 Aug. De Genesi ad Litteram, op. cit.
- 23 "Et quod omnia corpora naturam lucis participant, hoc satis de plano ostenditur, quia vix est corpus opacum, quin per multam tensionem et positionem possit effici luminosum, sicut patet cum de cinere fit vitrium, et de terra carbunculus. Utraque autem harum positionem magnorum est, et quaelibet vilde probabilis, nec de facili improbari potest. Si autem interius considerari velimus quae istarum positionem fit verior, invenimus quod utraque harum fundata fuit super aliquod verum. Verum est enim quod lux, cum sit forma nobilissima inter corporalia, sicut dicunt philosophi et sancti, secundum cujus participationem, majorem et minorem, sunt corpora magis et minus entia, est substantialis forma." II Sent. 12,2,2, resp. t.2, p. 555.
24. cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 266.
- 25 II Sent. 13,2,2, resp. t. 2, p. 555.
- 26 "Et de hac dicit Damascenus, quod lumen quod est ex igne, non est aliquid ministeriale ipsius ignis vel accidentale sed virtus ei connaturalis et consubstantialis...et haec virtus non est sensu perceptibilis nec solummodo operatur in sensu visus, sed etiam facit ad educationem omnium sensuum in actum, sicut dicit Augustinus septimo super Genesim ad litteram." II Sent. 13,3,2, concl. t. 2.

- 27 "Forma autem lucis non ponitur in eodem, corpore cum alia forma, sicut dispositio imperfecta, quae nata sit perfici per ultimam formam; sed ponitur tamquam forma et natura, omnis alterius corporalis formae conservativa, et dans agendi efficaciam, et secundum quam attenditur cujuslibet formae corporalis mensura dignitate et excellentia." II Sent. 13,2,2, ad 5^m, t. 2, p. 556.
- 28 cf. ibid. ad 2^m, p. 555.
- 29 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 269.
- 30 "Motus luminis, qui est per egressum ipsius a corpore lucido, non est proprie loci mutatio, sed magis generatio et diffusio et hoc patet ex eo, quod fit subito in spatio quantumcumque magno." II Sent. 13,3,2, ad 1^m, t. 2, p. 558.
- 31 ibid. ad 5^m, t. 2, p. 559.
- 32 II Sent. 13,2,2, ad 5^m, t. 2, p. 556.
- 33 "Manifesta influentia est per diaphanum corpus, maxime quando sensu percipitur. Occulta influentia est non solum per diaphanum corpus, sed etiam per opacum, sicut virtus stellarum est in mineralia quae latent sub terra." II Sent. 2,2,1,2 ad 1^m, t. 2, p. 295.
- 34 "Lux corporis coelestis est principium educendi animam vegetabilem et sensibilem, quae sunt formae substantiales." II Sent. 13,2,2, fund. 4^m, t.2, p. 553.
- 35 Gilson, op. cit. p. 274.

Chapter V: Light and the Acting Intellect.

We have seen how St. Bonaventure's philosophy explained the substantial forms of material bodies and how he taught that light was a common form of all such bodies. The doctrine of light and illumination pervades the whole system of Bonaventurian thought and has a special significance when the question of the human intellect is discussed. Knowledge is explained by having recourse to light as one of the factors of intellectual cognition.

"Darum muss derjenige, der sich Rechenschaft von seiner Sicherheit gibt, zu dem Schluss kommen, dass Gott selbst unserem Verstande durch eine besondere Einstrahlung die unfehlbare Sicherheit mitteilt. Damit ist die Einstrahlungs- oder Erleuchtungstheorie Bonaventuras nach dem Vorgange von Augustin gegeben, der wiederholt sagt und beweist, dass das Licht das uns erleuchtet, ...Gott selber ist." (1)

Some of the ideas in connection with light come from St. Augustine who is ever the great exemplar and master for St. Bonaventure in matters of theology and philosophy. Alexander of Hales also influenced Bonaventure in this direction and finally many of the notions are original.

In the middle ages, as in all other periods of philosophy, the explanation of human knowledge was one of the prominent fields for study and investigation. The theory of Aristotle which ran counter to the traditional theory of knowledge handed down from Plato provoked even greater discussion on this important topic, so we may well suppose that there was considerable

speculation on this important topic, in the schools during Bonaventure's time. Being an exponent of the traditional theories he quite naturally wrote about his own views on the subject and in the Commentary on the Sentences we find a theory of knowledge worked out which corresponds in many respects to the Franciscan thought of his day but which has some peculiar aspects which deserve our consideration.

He accepted the distinction made among Scholastics between acting and possible intellect but he defined the terms in his own way. The Arabs and notably Avicenna interpreted the doctrine of the acting and possible intellect in such a way as to place the possible intellect in one substance and the acting intellect in another. The acting intellect resided outside the individual as a separate Intelligence; ⁽²⁾ an Intelligence which moved the celestial sphere immediately superior to the earth. This doctrine was not acceptable to St. Bonaventure because he would not admit that any intelligence could come between the human mind and God as an intermediary of ideas. ⁽³⁾ The human soul is of such a perfection that no created substance was capable of acting upon it so as to illuminate it intellectually. God himself acted upon the mind to impress ideas on the mind by a special illumination and he alone could be the acting agent which stimulated the intellect to apprehend truth.

Certain Augustinian philosophers advanced another theory on the acting intellect which though different from that of the Arabians yet led to the same consequences. If God was the source

of knowledge and the light of the mind, he must exercise this function by fulfilling the role of acting intellect. ⁽⁴⁾ In many passages, St. Augustine refers to God ⁽⁵⁾ as the light of the mind, the teacher of all truth; hence God himself must be the acting intellect and communicate all ideas to our individual minds. Such a doctrine would lead to a suppression of independent thought since God himself gives us knowledge.

A theory which identified the possible intellect with matter and the acting intellect with form appeared logical and would be of a nature to explain easily how in St. Bonaventure's system the human mind could be enlightened by a direct illumination from God. But this view had some difficulties to his way of thinking. According to the idea of Augustinianism there could be no element of pure passivity in the human soul, which evidently would not be the case if the possible intellect were identified with matter. Furthermore in that view of things all prime matter must contain possible intellect in so far as it is indetermined and every being composed of matter and form would have a possible intellect, which is absurd. An intellect would not merit the name of intellect if it were considered as matter, ⁽⁶⁾ for the intellect is essentially immaterial.

Though St. Bonaventure uses the Aristotelian terminology, yet he gives to the terms, acting and possible intellect, meanings quite different from those understood by St. Thomas, and this causes the two systems of philosophy to diverge more and more as the theories of knowledge are pursued to their conclu-

sions. In the Thomistic system the possible intellect does not turn towards the acting intellect by any initiative of its own but instead merely receives the intelligible forms tendered it by the acting intellect, which has abstracted them from sensible phantasms. The possible intellect then preserves these forms. But as St. Bonaventure looks upon the situation the possible intellect, due to the power conferred upon it by the acting intellect, turns to the sensible species and receives the intelligible form.

"The acting intellect is brought under the category of form, and the possible intellect of matter, for the possible intellect is ordained for receiving, and the acting intellect for abstracting. Nor is the possible intellect purely passive, for it can turn to the species existing in the phantasm and in so turning through the help of the acting intellect, is able to receive it and to judge of it. In like manner the acting intellect is not totally in act, for it cannot know anything by itself from the phantasm, unless it be aided by the species which when abstracted from the phantasm, can be united to the intellect. Wherefore neither the possible knows without the acting nor the acting without the possible." (7)

When St. Bonaventure says that the possible intellect is in the category of matter, he does not understand matter in the Thomistic sense, St. Thomas restricted matter to material being. Matter when united with substantial form constituted material bodies. In spiritual beings, as the angels, there was no matter but only potency and act. St. Bonaventure gives a wider meaning to matter; for him it is the equivalent of potency for St. Thomas, and he would say that even angels are composed of matter and form. In other words, he identified matter with potency, and

form with act.

St. Bonaventure thinks that the possible intellect, in virtue of the power communicated to it by the acting intellect, abstracts the intelligible from the sensible, but the possible intellect is not thereby to be confounded with the acting intellect, for it's able to perform this function of abstracting only dependently on the acting intellect. The acting intellect, on the other hand, is not completely independent because it can fulfill its operations only in collaboration with the possible intellect which receives the intelligible species.

"Similarly neither is the acting intellect able to perfect the operation of cognition, unless the keenness of the possible intellect be formed by the intelligible itself. From this formation it is in fuller actuality in respect to what it ought to know than it was when without the species." (8)

In one place Bonaventure says that the acting intellect abstracts and the possible intellect receives the species. But in another he explains how the possible intellect abstracts through the power obtained from the acting intellect (9) and thus renders the acting intellect more in act in reference to the object of knowledge than it was before.

According to St. Bonaventure, the acting and the possible intellects were not two substances or even two powers distinct from each other.

"And when we think of the acting and possible intellect, we ought not think of them as of two substances or two powers so separated that one can perfect its operation without the other, and that the acting intellect would know anything

without the possible, or that the acting intellect would know anything which the man possessing the intellect would not know. For it is vain and frivolous that my intellect would know anything of which I would be ignorant. But those two differences which enter into a complete operation of intelligence inseparably, are to be thought of as light and a transparent substance entering into the abstraction of color." (10)

He diverges from the view of St. Thomas who considered that the distinction between that which was active and that which was passive was sufficient to make them two different faculties. But Bonaventure thought that the interaction and interdependence between the acting and possible intellects did away with this distinction into two faculties. His attitude was somewhat influenced, no doubt, by his desire to avoid introducing the error of Avicenna into Christian philosophy--that is, the error which put the acting intellect outside of man as a sort of world-soul to which the possible intellect in each individual was subordinated.

"Drittens wenn es für alle Menschen nur eine Seele gäbe, würde der eine Mensch nicht glückseliger sein als der andere. Wenn wir die ewige Glückseligkeit nur durch die Tugend erreichen können, und es gibt viele, die in Glückseligkeit nicht erlangen. Wäre also die Seele aller Menschen nur eine, so würde niemand glückselig. Dazu wäre der Mensch umsonst geschaffen, die ganze Welt umsonst hervorgebracht.

"Weil dies alles falsch und gottlos ist, so ist es auch falsch und gottlos, zu sagen, dass mehrere Menschen nur eine Seele haben." (11)

St. Bonaventure wished to avoid the dualism of Aristotle who taught that there were two distinct faculties to the intellect. For this purpose instead of two faculties he considered the acting and possible phases of the intellect as two functions of

the same substance and two correlative aspects of the same operation.

"We ought to concede the proofs showing the acting and possible intellect to be two differentiations of the intellectual potency." (12)

In speaking of our knowledge of first principles he likened it to an act of vision. For an act of vision two elements are necessary, the presence of the visible object, and the light by which we see it. In the same way the first principles are innate in the sense that the natural light by means of which we acquire them is innate, but on the other hand, these principles are acquired in the sense that the species are acquired by sensible experience without which the first principles could not be formed. The first principles seem so obvious and were formed so easily that it is hard to imagine that they were not in the mind virtually from the first.

"The acting intellect is called a habitus constituted from all the intelligibles...But this manner of speaking is not consonant with the words of the Philosopher, who states that the mind is created as a tablet on which nothing is written." (13)

However, they would never have been formed without sensible experience which furnishes material on which to form them and conceive their terms. Unless objects were perceived first, one could not arrive at the conclusion that the whole is greater than the part, because one would not be able to conceive what a whole or a part was.

(14)

The certitude attached to first principles flows from this, that they are not mediate nor deduced from anterior truths but are formed by the direct concourse of natural light and sensible species. Hence the first principles are innate in one sense, but not in another. They are innate in the sense that the instrument by which they are attained is innate but their thought content as principles is not innate. The intellect then, is within and not outside of the individual. That is, it is not as Avicenna would have it when he speaks of the acting intellect.

St. Bonaventure taught that our intellect is a light coming from God through which we can know all things. This is a fundamental theme in his writings, for often does he insist on the illumination of the intellect as being an integral part of the general illumination of the universe by the substantial form of light. Many passages in Holy Scripture serve to support his view showing how man is enlightened from on high. In his Hexaemeron he applies the passage from St. James (I, 17) and explains that the light descending from the Father of lights enlightens the intellect.

"Wisdom is the light descending from the father of lights and shining into the soul; it makes it godlike, and the house of God, For it enlightens the intellect, inflames and rejoices the affections, and strengthens the operations."
(15)

To define just what is the content of the intellectual illumination is a difficult matter. To obtain knowledge it would seem requisite that there be some unchangeable object of

knowledge. Ueberweg-Geyer find fault with M. De Wulf and Grabmann for designating the theory of knowledge of Bonaventure as exemplarism contending that 'Illuminism' would suit better.

"M. De Wulf und M. Grabmann bezeichnen den erkenntnistheoretischen Standpunkt Bonaventuras als Exemplarismus. In dessen dürfte dieser Ausdruck nicht präzis genug sein, da er das Charakteristische und Unterscheidende der Lehre Bonaventuras nicht trifft; denn auch die thomische Erkenntnislehre erkennt den Grundgedanken des Exemplarismus in vollem Masse an. Zutreffender dürfte es daher sein, die erkenntnistheoretische Überzeugung Bonaventuras mit dem Namen I l l u m i n a t i o n e s--oder I r r a d i a t i o n e s--theorie zu belegen." (16)

But being exists in three modes; in ontological reality, in our mind where there is logical being, and in the mind of God who has the eternal ideas. (17) It would seem a fruitless search to seek the unchangeable in the first of these modes, for all material being which we can perceive is accidental and contingent. Neither has our mind anything of the immutable in it, for the weakness of our faculties and their limitations excludes all certitude having its ultimate source in our mind. The truth we seek is not a relative truth, for we would hardly be satisfied to know that we possessed knowledge that was immutable only relatively to ourselves. The immutability of truth ought to be absolute, but the truth in our minds, is so far as it is ours, participates inevitably in the fluctuations and changes occurring in the subject which supports it. What then remains as the ultimate source of truth, if not being such as it exists in the eternal thought of God? How the divine ideas and eternal reasons are accessible to us is a problem to be determined, but the

important thing for St. Bonaventure was that somehow or other we are able to see truth in the 'eternal reasons' and that our mind is really able to attain to truth.

"Wherefore since things have existence in the mind, in their proper nature, and in the eternal art, the truth of things according as they are in the mind, or in their own nature, does not suffice for certain knowledge since both of these are mutable. The mind must in some manner reach them as they are in the eternal knowledge." (18)

Just how is it possible to conceive any means of contact between the divine truth and human thought? It could not be such a contact as would give us the knowledge of the divine ideas instead of the knowledge of things, for that would mean that we would know the ideas of objects and not the objects themselves. One solution would be to suppose that the divine light was the total and sufficient cause of our knowledge; but that would leave out of the picture all reference to the reality of human science and its contact with material conditions. Such a theory would lead to far-fetched conclusions. Human science would be a gift of the divine Wisdom, supernatural in its principle, and belonging not to the order of nature but to the order of grace. Reason would be the same as revelation. Such consequences are manifestly not admissible.

In this difficult thesis on human knowledge St. Bonaventure voices his disapproval of the theories of Plato and Aristotle and seeks in the system of St. Augustine the true solution to the difficulty. Plato in supposing that all our knowledge comes from the eternal archetypes or ideas, opens the way to skepticism

since the world of ideas is closed to us, being veiled in the eternal mind of God, and we cannot attain to certitude, since we do not see the mind of God directly. Aristotle, on the other hand, rendered the attainment of knowledge impossible by declaring the sole principle by which we can assure its foundation to be inaccessible. The knowledge of the first principles and first causes was lacking in Aristotle's explanation. St. Augustine alone has received both the wisdom of Plato and the science of Aristotle through the gift of the Holy Ghost and in him alone is to be found the true solution.

"And therefore to Plato seems to have been given the word of wisdom, to Aristotle the word of knowledge. For the one was looking chiefly to what is above; the other chiefly to what is below. However both the word of wisdom and of learning, through the Holy Ghost, was given to Augustine, especially in the exposition of Scripture as appears from his writings." (20)

Bonaventure declares that man cannot acquire certitude without having recourse to the eternal reasons, not such as they are in his own mind but such as they are above him in the eternal truth. (21) The influence of God is necessary but not sufficient. The direct and immediate action upon the mind by the eternal reasons is a regulating action whose function is to render the knowledge of truth possible by fixing under an unchanging law the uncertainty always slipping from our thought. This rule is a fixing or retaining agent; it is a principle of fixation. Since our intellect participates in the mutability of our nature it must be the immutability of the divine essence itself which

confers on certain of our thoughts their character of necessity which we recognize them to have. (22) The eternal reasons also control and order the multiplicity of our sense experiences and direct them towards fixed centers which are the first principles of science and morality.

"A certain directive light and natural direction was given to the mind in its creation. There was even given to it an affection of the will." (23)

"Bonaventura sagte schon, die höhere Vernunft im Menschen könne allein und ausschliesslich von Gott erleuchtet werden, und die Engel könnten der niedern Vernunft die Wahrheit nur suggerieren...Dem Geiste (mens) nach kann der Mensch allein von Gott erleuchtet werden, wie Augustin an vielen Stellen beweist." (24)

"No created substance has power to illuminate and perfect the soul properly speaking. The mind is illuminated directly by God as Augustine in many places shows." (25)

No certitude is possible without the immediate collaboration of God in the act whereby we know. Since all thought depends on principles, and since the principles in turn are born in us, under the regulating action of the divine ideas, it follows that certitude which in itself seems so self sustaining must be referred back to the first principles and to the eternal reasons which constitute its foundation. However, the presence of the eternal reasons is not alone sufficient to explain the unchanging element in our thought, for this is also somehow implied in the very act by which we form our concepts. In the Commentary our author uses the Aristotelian expression abstraction to

designate the operation whereby the intellect builds up the intelligible from the sensible species. He attaches an identical meaning to the Augustinian term judicare.⁽²⁶⁾ But if he uses the term abstraction in the Augustinian sense of judgment it would depart from the meaning of Aristotle who sees in abstraction an act informing the possible intellect with sensible species which it renders intelligible. St. Bonaventure's abstraction would include the influence of the eternal reasons conferring on the species the element of immutability and necessity found in the universal. The idea of any body is a true idea because it is the result of abstraction, but this abstraction, however, results from the power of the intellect which sets aside all that is local, temporal, and changeable in the object to retain only what is eternal and immobile and spiritual. It is true that the formation of a universal idea presupposes the action of the eternal reasons, for no finite faculty in using its own powers could draw forth from the sensible, the immutable and necessary, which are neither in the object nor in the faculty.

"Nothing is immutable, incircumscribable, and interminable except what is eternal. But all that is eternal is God or in God. If therefore, whatever we judge certain we judge in this manner, it is evident that he is the reason of all things, the infallible rule, and the light of truth in which all things shine infallibly." (27)

Hence the immediate action of the eternal reasons is the basis and foundation of all the truth we know. The eternal reasons act in us, like the divine light itself, by means of

their mere presence and not in the manner of an object known in itself. But from this we are not to conclude that St. Bonaventure held the doctrine of Ontologism. He did not countenance the theory which held that we see all things in God in a way analogous to that of the Blessed in heaven, or to that in which Adam saw them before the fall, but which differs from those states merely by the different degrees of freedom possessed by the soul over the body. (The divine light is rather a means of knowing than an object of knowledge and we should not interpret authorities as saying that we see God's essence.)

"Whence if any authorities are to be found who say that man in the present life sees God, they are not to be understood as saying that man sees him in his essence but that he knows him by some interior effect.(28)

This light from God is something which cannot be discovered but which must be admitted if one wishes to explain the effects which flow from it. We must admit it just as we admit the presence of a deep spring, which indeed we do not see but whose waters we perceive flowing under our eyes. The indirect apprehension of a cause which is not perceptible but whose effects are recognized is designated by St. Bonaventure by the name contuitus. An intuition is a direct view of the essence of God which moreover is denied us. A contuition is properly speaking, the indirect intuition of an unseen cause by means of the effect seen. Though the divine light acts on us immediately, yet it is not perceived immediately. In the Hexaemeron he uses this word contuition in this sense:

"When he perceives these things, he rises to the divine intuition; when obtained, he says he has an intellection."
(29)

Material creation depends on God as on its creator and conserver; the human soul requires the grace of God which alone by its divine efficacy, can render man agreeable to God; but the soul considered as an image is in a state between the two foregoing. It requires in this character a coöperation from God more intimate than that demanded by the material universe, but less intimate than that of grace. (Such is the role played by the eternal reasons in the divine illumination of the intellect. They move the mind from within by a sort of hidden force.) This force applies itself to the human soul considered as representative of God, but is representative of God only in the measure (30) that it turns itself towards him and acts as a superior being. The illumination of the intellect is then, a moving force which applies itself to the superior part of the human intellect.

God illumines the soul because the soul is an image of himself and since the soul is always such an image it would seem that it ought always to be illuminated by the eternal reasons. But as the soul can pass through all degrees of perfection, so the illumination accommodates itself to the successive states of the soul and hence varies proportionally; since in this life, due to the fallen nature of man, the soul is not a perfect image of God, but it is deformed. In the state of innocence it would have had full access to the eternal reasons and would have seen them not in the mirror of the soul or of creatures but in full

view. In the condition in which we are in this world we will have access to the eternal reasons because we still are men, but now only as through a cloud, for the soul is deformed by sin.

"This light is inaccessible and yet near to the mind, even nearer than it is to itself. It cannot be bound and still it is most intimate." (31)

In this theory of knowledge proposed by St. Bonaventure, the two factors that must be accounted for are taken into consideration. On the one hand, he explains the universality and necessity of knowledge, by means of the eternal reasons, an infused light regulating and abetting the workings of the mind. The objectivity of knowledge, on the other hand, is insured by having knowledge terminate in the thing known, not in our idea of the thing. To accomplish this, Bonaventure makes the divine light serve as a means of knowing but not an object of knowledge. It is that by which we know, not that which we know. Gilson esteems St. Bonaventure's theory highly:

"Cette description de l'illumination par des raisons éternelles contient aussi la seule réponse complète que la philosophie puisse apporter au problème du fondement de la certitude, toute connaissance certaine requiert que l'intellect atteigne une raison éternelle ou idée divine non à titre d'objet connu, mais à titre de moteur et de régulateur de la connaissance... Les deux conditions que nous nous étions imposées pour résoudre le problème de la certitude se trouve intégralement respectées: la vérité divine communique à notre connaissance quelque chose de son infailibilité et de sa nécessité, sans que cependant la moindre intuition de l'essence divine rienne nous transformer dès cette vie en citoyens de l'au-delà." (32)

Notes: Chapter V.

- 1 Dr. P. Bonifaz Anton Luyckx, C.P., "Die Erkenntnislehre Bonaventuras", Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, edited by Clemens Baeumker, Band XIII, Heft 3-4, Münster, 1923, p. 67.
- 2 cf. In Hexaemeron, VI, Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae, Peltier, Paris 1864, t. 9, p. 62.
- 3 ibid. II, t. 9, p. 26.
- 4 cf. Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, Paris, Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin, 1924, p. 349.
- 5 Aug., Solil. I,1, c. 8; De Trinit. XII, 15; ibid. XII c. 1-7.
- 6 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 249.
- 7 "Appropriatur autem intellectus agens formae et possibilis materiae, quia intellectus possibilis ordinatur ad suscipiendum, intellectus agens ordinatur ad abstrahendum; nec intellectus possibilis est pure passivus; habet enim supra speciem existentem in phantasmate se convertere, et convertendo per auxilium intellectus agentis, illam suscipere, et de ea judicare. Similiter nec intellectus agens est omnino in actu; non enim potest intelligere aliud a se, nisi adjuvetur a specie, quae abstracta a phantasmate intellectui habet uniri. Unde nec possibilis intelligit sine agente, nec agens sine possibili." II Sent. 24,1,2,4, concl. t. 3, p. 175.
- 8 "Similiter nec ipse intellectus agens operationem intelligendi potest perficere, nisi formetur acies intellectus possibilis ab ipso intelligibili, ex qua formatione est in pleniori actualitate, respectu ejus quod debet cognoscere quam cum carebat specie." II Sent. 24,1,2,4, ad 5, t. 3, p. 177.
- 9 cf. II Sent. 24,1,2,4, concl. t. 3, p. 175.
- 10 "Et ita cum cogitamus de intellectu agente, et possibili, non debemus cogitare quasi de duabus substantiis, vel quasi de duabus potentiis ita separatis, quod una sine alia habeat operationem suam perficere, et aliquid intelligat intellectus agens sine possibili, et aliquid cognoscat intellectus agens, quod tamen homo, cujus est ille intellectus, ignoret. Haec est enim vana et friv-

ola, ut aliquid sciat intellectus meus quod ego nesciam; sed sic cogitandae sunt esse illae duae differentiae, quod in unam operationem completam intelligendi veniant inseparabiliter, sicut lumen et diaphanum veniant in abstractionem coloris." II Sent. 24,1,2,4, ad 5^m, t. 3, p. 177.

- 11 Luyckx, op, cit. p. 63.
- 12 "Concedendae sunt igitur rationes ostendentes intellectum agentem, et possibilem, duas differentias esse intellectivae potentiae." II Sent. 24,1,2,4, concl. p. 176.
- 13 "Uno modo, ut intellectus agens dicatur habitus quidam constitutus ex omnibus intelligibilibus...Sed iste modus dicendi verbis Philosophi non consonant, qui dicit animam esse creatam sicut tabulam rasam." II Sent. 24,1,2,4, concl. t. 3, p. 175.
- 14 cf. II Sent. 2,2,1 ad 4^m, t. 3, p. 186.
- 15 "Sapientia est lux 'descendens a patre luminum' et radians in animam, facit eam deiformam, et domum Dei. Illustrat enim intellectivam, inflamat vel laetificat affectivam, et roborat operativam." In Hexameron, II, t. 9, p. 26.
- 16 Friedrich Ueberweg, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie ed. Dr. Geyer, E.S.Mittler & Son, Berlin, 1928, v. 2, p. 394.
- 17 De Scientia Christi IV concl.
- 18 "Unde cum res habeant esse in mente, in proprio genere et in aeterna arte, non sufficit ipsi animae ad certitudinalem scientiam veritas rerum secundum quod esse habent in se, vel secundum quod esse habent in proprio genere, quia utrobique sunt mutabiles, nisi aliquo modo attingat eas, in quantum sunt in arte aeterna." De scientia Christi IV concl.
- 19 cf. De Rebus Theol. IV, 18-19.
- 20 "Et ideo videtur, quod inter philosophos datus sit Platoni sermo sapientiae, Aristoteli vero sermo scientiae. Ille enim principaliter aspiciebat ad superiora, hic vero principaliter ad inferiora. Uterque autem sermo, scilicet sapientiae et scientiae, per Spiritum Sanctum datus est Augustineo, tanquam praecipuo expositori totius Scripturae, satis excessenter, sicut ex scriptis ejus apparet." De Rebus Theol. IV, 18-19.

- 21 "Ad certitudinalem cognitionem necessario requiritur ratio aeterna ut regulans et ratio motiva." De Scientia Christi IV, concl.
- 22 cf. II Sent. 18,2,1, concl.
- 23 "Animae a conditione sua datum est lumen quoddam directivam et quaedam directio naturalis; data est etiam ei affectio voluntatis." I Sent. 17,1,4,concl. t. 1, p. 290.
- 24 Luyckx, op. cit. p. 65.
- 25 "Nulla enim substantia creata potentiam habet illuminandi et perficiendi animam, proprie intelligendo; immo secundum mentem immediate habet a Deo illuminari, sicut in multis locis Augustinus ostendit." II Sent. 24,1,2,4. t. 3, p. 174.
- 26 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 383.
- 27 "Nihil enim est omnino immutabile, incircumscripibile et interminabile nisi quod est aeternum: omne autem quod est aeternum est Deus vel in Deo; si ergo omnia quaecumque certius dijudicamus, per huiusmodi rationem dijudicamus, patet quod ipse est ratio omnium rerum et regula infallibilis et lux veritatis in qua cuncta relucent infallibiliter." Itinerarium, II, 9, p. 8.
- 28 "Unde si quae auctoritates id dicere inveniuntur, quod Deus in praesenti ab homine videtur et cernitur, non sunt intelligendae, quod videtur in sua essentia, sed quod in aliquo effectu interiori cognoscitur." II Sent. 23,2,3, concl. t. 3, p. 149.
- 29 "Dum haec ergo percipit, consurgit ad divinam contuitum, et dicit se habere intellectum adeptum." In Hexaemeron, V ad finem, t. 9, p. 61.
- 30 cf. Gilson, op. cit. p. 386.
- 31 "Haec est lux inaccessibleis et tamen proxima animae, etiam plusquam ipsa sibi ipsi; est etiam inalligabilis, et tamen summe intima." In Hexaemeron, XII, t. 9, p. 87 .
- 32 Gilson, op. cit. p. 387.

Chapter VI: Light, an Influence on Moral Acts.

Just as we investigated the action of the intellect in the act of knowing to find out how the operation is accomplished, so we will attempt to perform the same task in regard to the will to see how it functions. According to St. Bonaventure, man cannot attain to truth by his own unaided intellect. Now is it likewise true that he is unable to perform good actions by his own power, or must he rely on the direct concurrence of God? Does the divine illumination of the intellect have a corresponding analogy in the divine illumination of the will? Such was the problem St. Bonaventure set himself to solve and which puts virtue in full harmony with science in his system of thought.

"Bei Schöpfung der Seele ergießt der Verstand ein Licht, das ihm als natürliche Norm dient: so besitzt auch der affektive Teil einen Drang (pondus), der ihn beim Begehren leitet. Dieser Drang oder Trieb ist die Synteresis. Es gibe zwei Grattungen begehrenswerter Dinge: das Sittlichgute (honestum) und das Nützliche (commodum) die Synteresis aber zielt nur auf das honestum." (1)

He is not astonished that Aristotle should not have been able to find the correct solution to this difficult problem since the blindness which he suffered in regard to metaphysics closed to him the secrets of man's interior life. Bonaventure always looked upon Aristotle as a philosopher who rose but little above this world in his thought and who was particularly deficient in a comprehension of the immaterial and the spiritual. He probably arrived at this conclusion from a consideration of the Philos-

opher's theory of knowledge where our ideas are explained by referring them to reality and keeping in touch with the sensible at every step, while on the other hand, Plato wanders off into the world of ideas and the realms of the spiritual. At any rate what Aristotle could not accomplish in the explanation of human knowledge and volition other philosophers after him did, and these even without the aid of revelation. Plotinus thought that if the types of all things are in the mind of God, then the types of the virtues should be there too.

"It would be absurd according to Plotinus, if the types of other things are in God and not the types of the virtues. Therefore the types of virtues appear in the eternal light as the height of purity, the beauty of clarity, the strength of power, and the rectitude of diffusion. Concerning these Philo, the most eloquent of the Jews, had philosophical knowledge." (2)

(3)

According to Plotinus the divine intellect contained in itself the four cardinal virtues from which all others are derived. In his Hexameron, Bonaventure quotes a long passage from the De Virtutibus of Plotinus dealing with the different virtues and their relation to the divine mind. The final class are those virtues which are the exemplars of all others and are in the divine mind. The divine mind viewed in itself and in the brilliance of its light is prudence itself (prudentia est ipsa mens divina); considered in its purity, it is the essence of temperance; in its immutability and eternal sameness it is fortitude, and in its unswerving fulfilment of its works according to a perennial law, it is justice. Now just as the immutable and neces-

(4)

sary in our knowledge finds no sufficient explanation in our own faculties so these four virtues in the very modest measure in which we possess them find no sufficient reason in our will.

The conclusions of our intellect are rendered less valid because of the uncertainty and error inherent in our faculty of thought and this refers to both the speculative and the practical intellect. Neither is our disordered will, beset as it is by sense impressions and fleshly desires, in any position to permit of an explanation of what is necessary and universal in the laws dictated by conscience. Hence it must be the divine archetypes acting on our soul in the order of volition as in that of cognition that form the basis of moral judgment.

"As the sun crossing through twelve signs (scil. on the zodiac) gives life, so the sun of wisdom in the hemisphere of our minds...orders our life." (5)

The cardinal virtues introduce into the soul all other virtues and the other virtues are in fact referred to them, for patience depends on fortitude; humility on justice, and so with the rest. These four are the cardinal points of the moral world and direct our actions. We need the illumination of the virtues to dispose our faculties to perform the acts enjoined on them by divine law. Man possesses two chief faculties whose proper exercise constitutes his first and most important duty towards himself and these are his intellect and his will. Hence there must be some virtue to direct his intellect and that is his prudence. In like manner there are two virtues which regulate his

will--temperance, which moderates his desires, and fortitude which governs his faculty of self-defense. There remains justice which regulates one's relations with his neighbors.

The illumination of the will by means of the virtues is effected in the same way as is the illumination of the intellect by means of truth and it is directed towards the same end.

"The virtues are likened to the four influences of light...light cleans, illuminates, perfects, and fortifies; temperance cleans, prudence enlightens, justice conciliates, and fortitude strengthens." (6)

These virtues can be attained by human diligence without direct help from God:

"I say they are radically in our nature, for we have rectitude implanted in our nature, by which we are disposed, although imperfectly, for virtuous and honorable works." (7)

(8)

Many of the philosophers concur in this opinion for they admit that the soul at birth has no natural virtue inherent in it but the will has a capacity for acquiring virtue. In the second place, we are witnesses of the fact that this natural aptitude is perfected by exercise and is rendered easier when conscience bids us to act. The acquisition of the cardinal virtues supposes nothing above nature as is evinced by the fact that even men deprived of the light of revelation and the aid of divine grace are capable of acquiring them.

The intellect and its light are the seal left by God on his work and are the means whereby we can attain to that degree of

science which is necessary for us in our present condition. In like manner our will brings into the world with it an inclination divine in its origin. Here is the germ of the moral virtues which manifests to us something of the perfections of God himself. Both the intellect and the will of their own powers are capable only of a science of inferior things and of a virtue that is but temporal. In neither case do they arrive at the profound depths of science or to the heights of virtue. The acquisition of the habits (habitus) of the will would seem to be no more difficult than those of the mind for even creatures destitute of intellect appear to possess them naturally.

"Tels animaux excellent en générosité, tels autres en prudence, d'autres en douceur, d'autres encore l'emportent par la force; à moins donc que l'on ne veuille contester la supériorité de l'homme sur les animaux, on accordera sans doute qu'il ne puisse posséder ces mêmes vertus naturellement inées; à plus forte raison, qu'il ne soit naturellement capable de les acquérir." (9)

After solving the problem of the acquisition of the moral virtues St. Bonaventure was concerned with their value and the merit they were capable of gaining. In the domain of virtue as in that of knowledge the saint always looked upon the acquisition of our mere natural faculties as something incomplete, uncertain, and vain. To be brought to its full fruition and development it needed to be supplemented by divine assistance. Knowledge was rendered certain by the light from God on the intellect, and virtue is made durable and meritorious by the grace of God bringing our good actions to their full development.

The moral and natural virtues are but a vain thing unless God deigns to supplement them by the gift of the theological virtues.

"The second means is by a consideration of theology; for the view is thereby directed to divine grace. The knowledge of this grace is by means of the Catholic faith without which all human works are vain even though they seem praiseworthy; and in this consideration the adepts at philosophy fail." (10)

Such natural virtues ennoble us so that we perform moral acts due to the good habits they imply, but they are without any merit before God, since merit is a free gift from on high which comes not through nature but through grace. These moral virtues defined by the philosophers are naturally radicated in the soul, and the innate rectitude of the will confers a disposition however imperfect, for performing god acts. When this disposition is developed and confirmed by the repeated exercise of good acts, habits are formed which are none other than the cardinal virtues. Such virtues can be developed in another way when the three theological virtues inform the soul causing all natural virtues to develop and reach their perfection.

"And if a cardinal virtue, in so far as it is political having its origin in nature, is brought to a certain completeness by practice, it is brought to a greater completeness by grace. But it reaches its greatest perfection by the concurrence of both causes, namely grace and habit." (11)

The four cardinal virtues, then, of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance have their origin in two different causes; human effort and nature on the one hand, and the divine

liberality on the other. And it is only when these two principles are used that the virtues attain their full development. If we speak of the four cardinal virtues as they are understood by philosophers they take their origin in nature as the Philosopher himself says. But if we speak of them in so far as they are gratuitous and as understood in theology they are a gift of the divine bounty (a divino munere). One act is not sufficient to produce these virtues but it is accomplished only by repeated acts, as the poet says: "Drops of water hollow out the stone,
 not by force; but by often falling."⁽¹²⁾ We sometimes see a horse that walks well, but that aptitude is to be referred to training or to the care of the rider. So as St. Augustine says⁽¹³⁾ free will is likened to the horse, grace to the rider, and the good deed to the correct walking.⁽¹⁴⁾

Grace not only perfects our natural virtues, it even causes them to bloom where only the root existed or where there was no inclination at all.

"Grace existing in the soul can cause habits of virtue to sprout forth. And grace coming into the soul destitute of virtuous habits becomes their first principle."⁽¹⁵⁾

Just as many colors existing in a dark house are made luminous by a single light, and are informed, embellished, and brightened by it, so latent habits of virtue existing in the soul are brightened and beautified by a single grace. The infusion of grace and virtue is to be understood in this way. It is easy to understand how the latent habit of faith is informed by

the advent of light. And just as light and color are not one in essence but one by a certain sequence (perordinationem quamdam) so neither are actual grace and unformed faith (informis fidei) understood to become one. (16) As rain falling on soil planted with seeds causes them to sprout and produce plants which eventually bear fruit, so grace descending within the soul arouses the seminal reasons of the dormant virtues making them produce their fruits. Thus virtues rendered meritorious by grace and related one to another by charity enable the will of man to work together with the intellect illuminated by faith.

The doctrines of Bonaventure concerning the illumination of the intellect by divine light and the illumination of the will by grace, when taken together as part of his system, manifest a striking unity and seem to fit as integral parts of his whole system. Gilson admires the Bonaventurian concept of light as an explanation of knowledge and vblition which though quite different from that held by Thomists and many Scholastics, is nevertheless worthy of serious study.

"Que l'on compare maintenant cette doctrine bonaventurienne de L'illumination morale avec les doctrines correspondantes de l'illumination intellectuelle et de l'éducation des forms, on en pourra qu'être frappé de l'étroite parenté qui les unit." (17)

St. Bonaventure in thinking of nature views it as in a manner incomplete needing to be perfected and augmented by the divine influence. He makes a search within the creature for some innate gift that enables it to perform acts peculiar to its

nature from which it follows that he did not think nature itself to be a sufficient explanation of all its activity. It is because the intellect has not in itself the power to make things intelligible that it must rely on God to furnish the immutable and necessary elements of knowledge by a special illumination of the intellect. And it is also because the will has not the principles of the four cardinal virtues that they must be imprinted upon it by the divine archetypes. When the human soul enters within itself to produce its acts of cognition and volition it is not as if it were self sufficient but it is rather to turn to the divine help implanted there. Bonaventure as it were, finishes the work of nature by the illumination from God.

* * *

Notes: Chapter VI

- 1 Dr. P. Bonifaz Anton Luyckx, O.F., "Die Erkenntnislehre Bonaventuras", Beitrage zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, edited by Clemens Baeumker, Band XIII, Heft 3-4, Münster, 1923, pp. 306.
- 2 "Absurdum est enim, secundum dicit Plotinus, quod exemplaria aliarum rerum sint in Deo, et non exemplaria virtutum. Apparent ergo primo in luce aeterna virtutes exemplares, sive exemplaria virtutum, scilicet celsitudo puritatis, pulchritudo claritatis, fortitudo virtutis et rectitudo diffusionis. De quibus Philo, disertissimus Judaeorum, loquens ut philosophus, sapit." In Hexameron, VI, Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae, ed. A.C. Feltier, Paris 1864, t. 9, p. 62.
- 3 Plotinus, De Virtutibus.
- 4 cf. Opera Omnia, t. 9, p. 65.
- 5 "Sicut sol transiens per duodecim signa dat vitam, sic sol sapientialis in nostrae mentis hemisphaerio radians

- ...ordinat vitam nostram." In Hexaameron, VI, t. 9, p. 64.
- 6 "Virtutes enim configurantur quattuor lucis influentiis ...lux purgat, illuminat, perficit, et stabilit; temperantia purgat, prudentia illuminat, justitia conciliat, fortitudo roborat." In Hexaameron, VI, t. 9, p. 64.
- 7 "A natura, inquam, sunt radicaliter, quia plantatam habemus in nostra natura rectitudinem, per quam apta sumus, licet imperfecte, ad opera virtutis et honestatis." III Sent. 33,1,5, concl. t. 5, p. 59.
- 8 e.g., Aristotle: Ethica Nichomachia, II, 1, 1103 a 20.
- 9 Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, Paris, Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin, 1924, p. 409.
- 10 "Secundo modo est de consideratione theologorum, quia sic habet aspectum ad divinam gratiam, cujus gratiae cognitio est per fidem catholicam, sine qua omnia opera hominum vana sunt, etsi etiam videantur laudabilia: et in hac consideratione defecit philosophorum peritia." II Sent. 25, 1 dub. 1^m, t. 3, p. 198.
- 11 "Et si virtus cardinalis, in quantum est politica, ortum habens a natura, ducitur ad quoddam complementum ex assuefactione subsequente; ad majus complementum ducitur ex gratia superveniente; sed ad perfectum complementum ex utraque causa concurrente, videlicet gratia et assuefactione." III Sent. 33,1,5, concl. t. 5, p. 60.
- 12 "Gutta cavat lapidem non vi, sed saepe cadendo." quoted in III Sent. 1, 3, concl. ad 4^m, t. 5, p. 61.
- 13 Aug., de Verb. apost., serm. XII, c. 8.
- 14 III Sent. 33,1,5, concl. t. 5, p. 60.
- 15 "Ipsa enim gratia existens in ipsa anima potest facere germinare habitus virtutum. Ipsa enim gratia adveniens in animam carentem habitibus virtutum, se habet quasi originale principium illorum." III Sent. 23,2,5 concl. t. 4, p. 509.
- 16 cf. III Sent. 23,2,5, concl. t. 4, pp. 509-10.
- 17 Gilson, op. cit. p. 412.

Chapter VII: History of the Theory of Light in Philosophy.

The theory of light as found in St. Bonaventure's system takes on some developments not found in previous philosophy especially when he deals with light as a means of attaining certain knowledge. Nevertheless some vestiges of his theory can be traced in the writings of philosophers before his time, among these being St. Augustine, Alexander of Hales and Robert Grosseteste. It was the latter writer who afforded several important ideas to Bonaventure's theory and who influenced him to a great extent by his physics on the subject of light.

"Grosseteste denkt sich mit Basilius und Augustinus das Licht als eine ganzfeine körperliche Substanz (L. Baur, Die Philosophie des R. Gr., 80: *lux significat enim substantiam corporalem subtilissimam et incorporeality proximate naturaliter sui ipsius generativam*). Diese Lichtsubstanz ist aber Träger von Kraft und Kraftwirkungen. Das Licht hat die Funktion der Selbsterzeugung und Selbstvermehrung und der plötzlichen, zeitlosen, instantanen, nach allen Seiten oder in der Form der Kugel erfolgenden Ausbreitung, wie schon alhazen gelehrt hatte. Der Lichtpunkt ist ein Kraftzentrum von dem aus plötzlich eine möglichst grosse Lichtsphäre erzeugt wird (De luce, ed. Baur, 51,11: *Lux enim per se in omnem partem se ipsam diffundit, ita ut a puncto lucis sphaera lucis quamvis magna subito generetur, nisi obsistat umbrosum*. Ib. 51,23: *atque lucem esse proposui, cujus per se est haec operatio, scilicet se ipsam multiplicare et in omnem partem subito diffundere*). Weiterhin wird das Licht mit der ersten körperlichen Form oder mit der corporeitas identifiziert. Das Licht ist die erste Form die in der materia prima geschaffen wurde." (1)

St. Augustine very likely had a determining influence on Bonaventure in regard to his doctrine on light. The friar was a

close follower of St. Augustine and one of the doctrines that must have impressed him was that of divine illumination which holds a prominent place in Augustinian thought. In numerous passages Augustine calls God the sun of the soul; the light of the intellect, which affords us a view of the immutable truths e.g., "These cannot be understood unless they are illuminated by another as if by its sun." (2) "In a certain light of its own nature it beholds all things that it knows." (3)

"In the De Trinitate (CII, c. 1-7) he distinguishes the ratio inferior (quae intendit aeternis conspiciendis aut consulendis).

"These expressions and others like them had an important influence--historically--in the Middle Ages: the difficulty of interpreting them explains why advocates of opposing systems quoted them in turn, each in support of himself. It is certain that St. Augustine did not use them in an ontologistic sense,--as if our intellect directly contemplated immutable truths in the divine essence. It is no less certain that in several passages the illuminative action of God has reference to the creative act to which the soul and intellect owe their reality (e.g., De Civit. Dei X, 2). " (4)

In the Commentary, book two, distinction thirteen, Bonaventure seems to base much of his discussion on light on St. Augustine and he quotes frequently from his works notably from the De Genesi ad Litteram. Thus he considers Augustine's objection that light is more proper to spiritual than to corporal creatures (sicut dicit Augustinus). (5)

"God is most properly light and whatever approaches him more closely, has more the nature of light." (6)

But he understands differently than St. Augustine and inter-

prets the light created on the first day to be corporal. So we see that in this instance he disagreed with his master.

"The light which was created by God on the first day was corporal although Augustine understood otherwise." (7)

(8)

In article two St. Bonaventure discusses whether light is a body or the form of a body and quotes Augustine from the De Libero Arbitrio, (9) the Super Genesim ad Litteram, (10) and the Epistola ad Velusianum. (11) Each of these passages he treats as an objection to his opinion that light is not a body but a bodily form. But the objections are refuted by the authority of Damascene, (12) Aristotle, (13) and Augustine himself. (14) Hence by these authorities together with reasons of his own he justifies his conclusion that:

"Light conceived in the abstract is not a body, but a simple form; but taken in the concrete, it can be called a body." (15)

In perusing the different articles on light (there are three in II Sent. 13) together with the questions into which they are divided one is made aware of the fact that Bonaventure placed great value on the authority of St. Augustine since he quotes his opinion in practically every phase of the treatise. From this it seems safe to conclude that St. Bonaventure derived much of his theory of light from the philosophy of Augustine.

The account of creation in Genesis with the appearance of light and the creation of the sun, moon, and stars undoubtedly accounted for some of St. Bonaventure's principles on light for

he took care to make his philosophy conform with the Sacred Scriptures, for what the Scripture said overbalanced any other authority or evidence as we see in II Sent. 13,1,2 where after quoting Damascene, (16) Basil, (17) and Bede among the objectors he refutes them by referring to the Scriptures. At this point it is worth while observing that St. Bonaventure could have derived some of his ideas on light, especially light as the form of bodies, from these commentators on Genesis either by adopting their views or by discerning other points to the question which their thoughts would bring out.

Dionysius is quoted (18) among the objections in the discussion as to whether light is a substantial or an accidental form. (19) and finally Aristotle is quoted rather frequently, now among the objectors and now in support of the conclusion. In truth he is quoted more than any philosopher save St. Augustine. But the Scriptures are probably referred to most of all either by direct quotation or by allusion to them.

Alexander of Hales, the teacher of St. Bonaventure held that some of our knowledge, the first principles at least, comes to us by a special divine illumination. (20) He also taught the plurality of substantial forms and the hylemorphic composition of all finite beings whether material or spiritual. These are doctrines present in St. Bonaventure's system. Gilson declares that the doctrines of illumination and knowledge through the eternal reasons are part of the Augustinian tradition and were held by a number of the followers of St. Augustine particularly

those among the Franciscans.

"La theorie de l'illumination et de la connaissance dans les raisons éternelles apparaissait aux tenants de la tradition augustinienne, tels que Jean Peckham ou Mathieu D'Aquasparta, comme un dépôt sacré à la sauvegarde duquel le sentiment religieux se trouvait passionnément intéressé." (21)

St. Bonaventure taught but a few years at Paris but in that brief interval he made some disciples who developed his doctrines after him and who treated philosophical questions along lines that were in harmony with his general spirit, and which came to be designated as those of the Franciscan School. The first of these was Matthew of Aquasparta (1235?-1302), a master at Paris and Bologna, and later, like his predecessor Bonaventure, he became the minister general of his order and cardinal of the Holy Roman Church. Being thoroughly penetrated with the Bonaventurian system, he borrowed liberally from these ideas in his own writings. (22) His De Cognitione contains his psychology and his theory of knowledge. In the latter he approaches the Bonaventurian theory of illumination when he teaches that God not only creates the human intellect but he concurs in all of its operations by light which influences a certain light of our mind. (Lumen ergo illud, movendo nostrum intellectum, influit quoddam lumen menti nostrae.)

"That light by moving our intellect induces a certain light in our mind so that it sees because of the divine light objectively and, as it were effectively, but through this light and in this light it sees formally. This light is continued and conserved in our minds because of the divine presence." (23)

Cognition is a natural process though God cooperates by illuminating the mind.

"The intellectual operation is natural; moreover God aids and cooperates in the operations of creatures according to the measure and exigency of their nature as has been seen. And since a rational creature is the image of God or according to the image, the very reason of the image demands, that in its operations it acts according to the manner of the moving object; wherefore the mind was born to be moved and illuminated by that light." (24)

De Wulf gives a tribute to the style of Matthew of Aquasparta which does honor to him as a philosopher and which is so well put that it bears quotation. "We can form an estimate of his personality as a scholastic from some questions of his recently edited De Fide et De Cogitione Humana selected from his Quaestiones Disputatae. These reveal their author as a writer of undoubted talent, with a sober, clear, and manly style, and a depth and richness of thought which place him abreast of even (25) the best known among his contemporaries."

John Feckham was another disciple and pupil of St. Bonaventure and later occupied a chair in theology at Paris. Works attributed to him in various manuscripts are Quaestiones Disputatae, Quodlibeta, Tractatus Sphaerae, De Perspectiva, De Numeris, Super Ethicam. These works are as yet unedited, consequently not much is known about his doctrines. However, his view on illumination and light seems to coincide with that of Bonaventure and he refers to it as the "lumen increatum supersplendens" (26) and the "lumen intellectus creatum".

De Wulf enumerates among the early disciples of Bonaventure

besides Aquasparta and Peckham: William de la Mare, Brother Eustachius, and Walter of Bruges (Bishop of Poitiers) each of whom wrote some Questiones Disputatae. Among the later disciples of Bonaventure were Richard of Middleton, William of Palgar, Nicholas Ockam, Roger Marston, and Alexander of Alexandria (d. 1314), who made a compendium of Bonaventure's Commentary on the Sentences.

Of these Richard of Middleton was the most important. In 1281 he occupied the chair of the Franciscans at Paris. Although a faithful disciple of St. Bonaventure, nevertheless he renounced several of his master's doctrines in favor of the Thomistic Teaching. ⁽²⁷⁾ He holds the plurality of forms but discards the rationes seminales. After his time Bonaventurian philosophy lost its popularity due in part to the success of Scotism, and Franciscan students turned to the latter system. There seems to have been a revival of enthusiasm for St. Bonaventure provoked about the time of the six-hundredth anniversary of his death (1874), and shortly after a critical edition of his works was edited by the Franciscans of Quaracci (1882-1902) which drew from De Wulf the eulogium as being "a scientific monument of the highest excellence and a model of the best style of editing scholastic works." ⁽²⁸⁾ The edition referred to in this thesis is that of Peltier published at Paris in 1864, in fifteen volumes, which seems not to be embellished with the critical notes to be found in the Quaracchi edition.

One often sees the doctrines and the lives of the two great

contemporaries of the thirteenth century contrasted. Living at the same time, as they did, yet they represent two opposing developments of philosophical speculation among the scholastic thinkers. There is much room for contrast between the doctrines of St. Bonaventure and those of St. Thomas Aquinas. If it can be said that St. Thomas was an Aristotelian it cannot be asserted so categorically that St. Bonaventure was a Platonist, for his theory of knowledge is quite different from that of Plato. But yet these two systems--the Aristotelian and the Platonic serve to define to some extent the tendencies of the two thinkers.

"The essential Aristotelianism of the Angelic Doctor, the essential Platonism of the Seraphic, discovers itself to us as we read and compare them: but may have been scarcely known or confessed by either." (29)

St. Thomas was attracted by the solidity and basic foundations of the Aristotelian system which seemed to be more in contact with external reality, and were based more on the experience of the senses. This phrase to the logical mind of Thomas, was a great factor in favor of the Stagirite. St. Bonaventure, on the contrary, being of a mystical turn of mind was won by the nobility and the sublimity to be found in the Platonic system, especially after it had been Christianized by St. Augustine.

In the theory of knowledge the two doctors, Bonaventure and Thomas are at variance in the number of sources of knowledge they allow to the mind. Thomas admits of but one source--everything must come through the senses. St. Bonaventure admits many

sources for, though sensible phenomena are known through the experience of the outer senses, spiritual things can be known by means of inner experience.

"Bei Thomas kann und darf man offenbar diese Frage nur für die menschliche Vernunft als solche behandeln; nicht so bei Bonaventura, Thomas hat nur eine Quelle anerkannt, aus welcher die Vernunft alle Erkenntnis schöpft: nämlich die Sinne. "Nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu." Alle Erkenntnis ist bedingt durch die Erfahrung.

"Bonaventura hat nicht eine, sondern mehrere Quellen angenommen. Alles Sinnliche kommt in uns durch die äussere Erfahrung, also von unten her mittelst der Sinne. Alles Geistige wird uns bewusst mittelst der innern Erfahrung. So kommt Bonaventura zu mehreren getrennten, grundverschiedenen Quellen für die Betätigung des menschlichen Verstandes, eine für die niedere eine für die höhere Vernunft". (30)

The problem of knowledge is the fundamental problem of philosophy, and with the solution of that problem the system rises or falls. Hence it is that St. Bonaventure's treatment of this problem deserves full consideration in any discussion of his philosophy. There are three fundamental solutions of this problem in the whole history of philosophy: Empiricism, Idealism and Aristotelianism and under these three divisions all solutions may be included. Bonaventure rather closely approximates the Aristotelian solution, since he holds that all knowledge comes through the senses and that the acting intellect abstracts the intelligible species but in addition he brings in his doctrine of illumination whereby the mind is enlightened by God to attain to the immutable and necessary in knowledge, for of itself the mind partakes of the mutability of our natures.

(31)

(32)

Notes: Chapter VII.

- 1 Friedrich Ueberweg, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, ed. Dr. Geyer, E.S.Mittler & Son, Berlin, 1928, v. II, p. 373.
- 2 Aug., Solil. I, 1, c. 8.
- 3 Aug., De Trinit. XII, 15.
- 4 De Wulf, History of Medieval Philowophy, trans. by P. Coffey, Longmans, Green, & Co., London 1909, pp. 95-6.
- 5 II Sent. 13,1,1, ad 3^m, t. 2, p. 546, Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae, ed. A.C.Peltier, Paris 1864.
- 6 Aug. De Gen. ad Litt. IV, 22.
- 7 II Sent. 13,1,1, concl. t. 2, p. 546.
- 8 II Sent. 13,2,1, t. 2, pp. 551-3.
- 9 Aug., De Lib. Arbit. III, 5, 16.
- 10 Aug., De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 19, 25.
- 11 Aug., Epist. III a 1, 137,4,4.
- 12 Damasc. De Fide Orthod. I, 9.
- 13 Arist., De Generat. II, 53; De Anima II, 24.
- 14 Aug., De Gen. Ad Litt. XII, 76, 32.
- 15 "Lux secundum abstractionem concepta corpus non est, sed simplex forma; in concretionem vero accepta, corpus dici potest." II Sent. 13,2,1, concl. t. 2, p. 552.
- 16 Damasc., De Fide Orthod. II, 7.
- 17 Basilius, In Hexaemeron.
- 18 Dion. Areop., De Div. Nomin. IV post princip.
- 19 II Sent. 13,2,2, fund. t. 2, p. 553.
- 20 De Wulf. op. cit. p. 280.
- 21 Etienne Gilson, La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure, Paris,

Librairie Philosophique, J.Vrin, 1924, p. 372.

- 22 cf. De Wulf. op. cit. p. 290.
- 23 "Lumen ergo illud movendo nostrum intellectum influit quoddam lumen menti nostrae, ita quod per lucem divinam videt objective et quasi effective, sed per illud et in illo lumine videt formaliter; quod quidem lumen continuatur et conservatur in mentibus nostris ad praesentiam divinam." Matthaeus ab Aquasparta, De Cognitione, Quaracchi edit. p. 255, quoted in De Wulf, op. cit. p. 291.
- 24 "Operatio intellectualis circa naturalis est. Deus autem operatur et cooperatur in operationibus creaturarum secundum modum et exigentiam suae naturae, ut visum est. Et quia creatura rationalis imago Dei est vel ad imaginem, ipsa ratio imaginis exigit, ut in ejus operationibus cooperatur secundum modum objecti moventis, eo quod mens nata est moveri et illuminari illa luce." Aquasparta, *ibid.* p. 262, De Wulf, p. 291.
- 25 De Wulf, op. cit. p. 290.
- 26 *ibid.* p. 293,
- 27 *ibid.* p. 295.
- 28 *ibid.* p. 289.
- 29 Frederick Denison Maurice, Medieval Philosophy, Richard Griffin & co., London, 1857, pt. 3, p. 223.
- 30 Dr. P. Bonifaz Anton Luyckx, O.P., "Die Erkenntnislehre Bonaventuras", Beiträge zur Geschichte Der Philosophie des Mittelalters, Band XXIII, Heft 3-4, Aschendorffschen Verlagshuchhandlung, Münster, 1923, p. 137.
- 31 Itinerarium, II, 9, t. 8.
- 32 De Scientia Christi IV concl.

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