

Durham E-Theses

St. Bonaventure and Contemplation: The Soul's Pursuit of Its Philosophical and Theological End

Charles J. Rennie

How to cite:

Rennie, Charles J. (2026) St. Bonaventure and Contemplation: The Soul's Pursuit of Its Philosophical and Theological End. Doctoral thesis, Durham University.

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a <https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/16597/> is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

St. Bonaventure and Contemplation:

The Soul's Pursuit of Its Philosophical and Theological End

Charles J. Rennie

Abstract

This study offers a new perspective on the internal coherence of Bonaventure's philosophical and theological synthesis by viewing it through the lens of contemplation. It is argued that Bonaventure's understanding of contemplation is twofold: philosophical and theological. By considering the way in which Bonaventure relates both forms of contemplation to our unified pursuit of wisdom and the pursuit of our own perfection, we are able to arrive at a better understanding of how he relates nature to grace and philosophy to theology, as well as how he situates his (in)famous doctrine of illumination in relation to both within his overall system of thought. And vice versa, when we properly understand how he relates these things, we are able to arrive at a better understanding of the nature and task which Bonaventure ascribes to contemplation.

Contrary to the more common narrative in Bonaventurian studies, it is argued here that Bonaventure fully distinguishes these two forms and degrees of contemplation, such that each is sufficient unto its own end but also maintains an ordered relation of the former to the latter. Elucidating both, their distinction and relation, sheds new light upon the much-debated question of how he understands the relation of nature to grace and of philosophy to theology. According to Bonaventure, just as nature is elevated and perfected by grace, so also is philosophical contemplation elevated and perfected by means of theological contemplation. And the soul that pursues God is gradually elevated and perfected by degrees through the exercise of both. In the end, the utility and coherence of this approach is demonstrated by how Bonaventure structures his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, which is an intricate philosophical and theological guide to the contemplative's twofold, though unified, pursuit of wisdom.

Durham University

**St. Bonaventure and Contemplation:
The Soul's Pursuit of Its Philosophical and Theological End**

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Supervised by
Rik Van Nieuwenhove
William Crozier

by
Charles J. Rennie

Durham, UK
2026

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Abbreviations	v

Introduction

I. Bonaventure on Nature and Grace	1
1. Bonaventure and the Franciscan Ideal	2
1.1 <i>The Active and Contemplative Life</i>	7
1.2 <i>The Contemplative Life: an itinerarium mentis</i>	9
2. The Work of Creation: Charting the Course	10
2.1 <i>The Macrocosm: The Perfection of Matter through Form</i>	10
2.2 <i>The Microcosm: The Perfection of Nature through Grace</i>	15
3. Contemplation: The Means to Perfection	25
3.1 <i>Toward a Definition of Contemplation</i>	26
3.2 <i>Nature and Grace: Philosophical and Theological Contemplation</i>	32
4. An Outline of the Chapters	32

Metaphysical Foundations

II. The Created Order: Philosophical Foundations	38
1. The Place of Order in Bonaventure's Thought	39
1.1 <i>The Number Three</i>	39
1.2 <i>The Terms of Order</i>	42
1.3 <i>Hierarchy</i>	44
1.4 <i>The Circle</i>	51
1.5 <i>Reduction</i>	55
1.6 <i>Two Orders of Reflection</i>	58
2. The Order of Being: Created and Divine	59
2.1 <i>The First Principle of Created Being</i>	60
2.2 <i>The Vestigial Character of all Created Reality</i>	61
2.3 <i>The Transcendentals</i>	63
2.3.1 <i>The One</i>	64
2.3.2 <i>The True</i>	66
2.3.3 <i>The Good</i>	70
2.4 <i>Trinitarian Appropriations</i>	72
III. The Created Order: Theological Foundations	76
1. The Divine Order of Persons	79
1.1 <i>The First Person</i>	81

1.1.1	The Father <i>as Father</i>	82
1.1.2	The Father <i>as Innascible</i>	85
1.2	The Second Person	88
1.2.1	The Son <i>as Son</i>	89
1.2.2	The Son <i>as Image</i>	91
1.2.3	The Son <i>as Word</i>	94
1.3	The Third Person	98
1.3.1	The Perfection of the Divine Order	99
1.3.1.1	The Perfection of the Divine Will (<i>perfectio voluntatis</i>)	100
1.3.1.2	The Perfection of the Divine Emanations (<i>perfectio emanationis</i>)	100
1.3.1.3	The Perfection of the Divine Love (<i>perfectio dilectionis</i>)	104
1.3.2	The Spirit <i>as Holy Spirit</i>	107
1.3.3	The Spirit <i>as Love</i>	108
1.3.4	The Spirit <i>as Gift</i>	110
2.	The Intrinsic Order of Creatures	112
2.1	The Created Vestiges of the Trinity	113
2.2	The Created Image of the Trinity	114
2.3	The Created Likeness of the Trinity	116

Epistemological Foundations

IV.	Wisdom: Philosophical and Theological	120
1.	The Pursuit of Wisdom	121
1.1	The Nature of Wisdom	122
1.2	The Possibility of Philosophical Wisdom	126
1.2.1	The State of the Question	126
1.2.2	Philosophical Wisdom as the Perfection of Philosophical Science	130
1.2.3	The Fourfold Wisdom of the <i>Hexaemeron</i>	132
1.2.4	A Twofold Reading Strategy: Philosophical and Theological	137
2.	The Limitations of Philosophical Wisdom	141
2.1	The Moral Limitations of Its Subject	141
2.2	The Formal Limitations of Its Object	144
3.	The Perfection of Theological Wisdom	146
3.1	The Perfection of Man's Pursuit	147
3.1.1	Materially: The Perfection of Its Object	147
3.1.2	Formally: The Perfection of Its Mode	150
3.2	The Perfection of Man's Capacity	153
3.2.1	Theology as Wisdom	153
3.2.2	Theology in the Subject	156
3.2.2.1	The Pursuit of Holiness	156
3.2.2.2	The Gifts of the Holy Spirit	159
V.	Light: The Certitude of Knowledge	161
1.	The Necessity of Divine Illumination	162

2. The Pursuit of Wisdom, the Perfection of Man, and Divine Illumination	166
2.1 <i>Philosophical Certitude and Divine Illumination</i>	168
2.1.1 The Image of God and Natural Illumination	168
2.1.2 The <i>Primum Cognitum</i> and the Doctrine of Analogy	182
2.1.3 Philosophical Wisdom and the End of Philosophical Contemplation	190
2.1.4 Bonaventure and Aquinas: A Brief Comparative Analysis	193
2.2 <i>Theological Certitude and Divine Illumination</i>	201
2.2.1 The Objective and Subjective Principles of Theology	202
2.2.2 The Image of God and Supernatural Illumination	204
2.2.3 Theological Wisdom and the End of Theological Contemplation	208
3. The Christological Source of Divine Illumination	210
3.1 <i>The Philosophical Illumination of Christ</i>	210
3.2 <i>The Theological Illumination of Christ</i>	212
 Contemplative Application	
VI. Philosophical and Theological Contemplation in the <i>Itinerarium</i>	215
1. The Historical Context of the <i>Itinerarium</i>	215
2. The Formal Structure of the <i>Itinerarium</i>	220
2.1 <i>The State of the Question</i>	223
2.2 <i>A Summary of Our Proposal</i>	233
3. The Material Content of the <i>Itinerarium</i>	235
3.1 <i>First Trajectory: Philosophical Contemplation</i>	235
3.1.1 Chapter One	236
3.1.2 Chapter Three	238
3.1.3 Chapter Five	240
3.2 <i>Second Trajectory: Theological Contemplation</i>	241
3.2.1 Chapter Two	242
3.2.2 Chapter Four	244
3.2.3 Chapter Six	246
4. The Christological End of the <i>Itinerarium</i>	247
4.1 <i>The Means of Contemplation</i>	247
4.2 <i>The Object of Contemplation</i>	249
4.3 <i>The Subjects of Contemplation</i>	250
4.4 <i>The Perfection of Contemplation</i>	251
5. Conclusion	252
Appendix: What Constitutes the Father <i>as Father</i> ?	257
Works Cited	265

Acknowledgments

“Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips” (Prov. 27:2). I am thankful for Bonaventure, on account of whom I am more catholic, though no less Reformed, than I was when I began. I am immensely thankful to all those who in one way or another assisted me in my research. Having now completed it, the words of Philip L. Reynolds ring true: “If Bonaventure seems to be a difficult author today, it is chiefly because he is incorrigibly medieval. It is difficult to regard him, as many regard Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, as a ghostly colleague in a modern department of philosophy. It takes a certain sympathetic effort to put one's self into a position where one can see the point of his teaching.”¹ I am thankful to both Rik Van Nieuwenhove and William Crozier who guided me through both my doctoral studies and Bonaventure's incorrigibly medieval thought-world. I am thankful for their patience and constant encouragement. I am especially grateful for Rik's own research on contemplation in the thought of Thomas Aquinas that frequently helped to shape and challenge my own thinking. Among those that assisted me in other ways, I am thankful for my church, for their patience and encouragement, and for granting me more than one research sabbatical. Among those that made sacrifices unto that end, I am thankful for Sal Pezzino, Aaron Askam, Luke Henson, Jonah Luebke, Kendall Oliver, and Seth Pedersen. I must also acknowledge the generosity of the 3535 Foundation for making the sabbatical financially possible, without which I might not have finished, and for the much-appreciated hospitality of John and Roberta Giarrizzo. Last but most certainly not least, I am thankful for the perseverance and patience of those that made the greatest sacrifices, my wife and children, and for Jonathan Paul, the best of friends.

¹ Philip L. Reynolds, “Bonaventure's Theory of Resemblance,” *Traditio* 58 (2003): 254.

Abbreviations

All references to Bonaventure's Latin works refer to the Quaracchi, 1882-1902, 10 volume critical edition. Volume and page number are indicated in closed brackets. E.g., volume 5, page 60, left column would be cited as follows: [V, 60a].

All English Bible quotations are taken from the *New King James Version*, unless otherwise noted.

I

Introduction: Bonaventure on Nature and Grace

It is well known that, for St. Bonaventure, “every creature is constituted in being by the efficient cause, is patterned after the exemplary cause, and is ordained to the final cause.”¹ And as such, the rational soul not only has its *being* from God as its efficient cause, but also has its beatific *wellbeing* and perfection in a gradual return to God as its final cause, the path of which is illumined through the things he has made as its exemplary cause. Therefore, Bonaventure concludes that “unless a person can consider how things are originated, how they are led back to their end, and how God shines forth in them,” they will not attain the end for which they were created.² To this end, we were created, not only *to be* in the world, but to be in the world *in a way* that pursues our perfection in God. And contemplation, according to Bonaventure, is one of the chief means by which this end is sought and obtained.

This study considers anew the internal coherence of Bonaventure’s philosophical and theological synthesis by viewing it through the lens of contemplation. Contemplation, according to Bonaventure, is a mode of knowledge whereby the soul exercises a degree of rest in proportion to its apprehension of the presence of God through and in the things he has made, as if through and in a mirror (*speculum*). By considering the different ways in which Bonaventure employs this concept of contemplation as the chief means in our unified pursuit of wisdom, both philosophical as well as theological, we arrive at a better understanding of how he relates nature to grace and philosophy to theology, as well as how he situates his (in)famous doctrine of illumination in relation to both within his overall system of thought. And vice versa, when we understand how he relates these things, we are able to arrive at a better understanding of the nature and task which

¹ *Breviloquium*, II.1.4 [V, 219b], trans. Dominic V. Monti (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2005), 62.

² *Hexaemeron*, III.2 [V, 343a], trans. Jay M. Hammond, *Collations of the Hexaemeron: Conferences on the Six Days of Creation* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2018), 112.

Bonaventure ascribes to contemplation. It is argued that Bonaventure conceives of two distinct *kinds* of contemplation, one which proceeds in a philosophical way and another that proceeds in a theological way. Philosophical contemplation endeavors to contemplate God according to his *essential attributes*, as the first and highest being, according to the extent in which he may be known *through* creatures. Theological contemplation, however, endeavors to contemplate God according to his *personal properties*, as our last and highest end, according to the ways in which he may be known *in* creatures.

Contrary to the more common narrative in Bonaventurian studies, it will be argued here that Bonaventure fully distinguishes these two forms and degrees of contemplation, such that each is sufficient unto its own end but also maintains an ordered relation of the former to the latter. Elucidating both, their distinction and relation, will shed new light upon the much-debated question of how he understands the relation of nature to grace and of philosophy to theology. According to Bonaventure, just as nature is elevated and perfected by grace, so also is philosophical contemplation elevated and perfected by means of theological contemplation, even as the soul that pursues God is gradually elevated and perfected through the exercise of both. In the end, the utility and coherence of this approach shall be seen in how Bonaventure structures his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, which is an intricate philosophical and theological guide to the contemplative's twofold, though unified, pursuit of wisdom.

1. Bonaventure and the Franciscan Ideal

Giovanni Fidanza, otherwise known as Bonaventure or the seraphic doctor, was born between 1217-1221 in Bagnoregio, Italy.³ He died on July 15, 1274, around 53-57 years of age, while officiating at the Council of Lyon. He was born to Giovanni and Ritella Fidanza. We know little

³ For a fuller treatment of Bonaventure's life, including the disagreements over precise dates, see J. Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1964), 3-9, 171-177; Fernand van Steenberghen, *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century* (NY: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1955), 56-58; Ian P. Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University, c.1100-1330* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 87-169; Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan & F. J. Sheed (NY: Sheed & Ward, 1938), 1-86; Efreem Bettoni, *Saint Bonaventure*, trans. Angelus Gambatese (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1964), 1-26; Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 3-22; Jay M. Hammond, "Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master," *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 179-226.

to nothing of his childhood, except that he was spiritually bound to St. Francis of Assisi from an early age. As a child, he grew ill and was thought to have been healed from afar by St. Francis. As a means of devotion, in his shorter (*minor*) biography of Francis, Bonaventure recounts his own debt of gratitude to the Poverello. He writes, “When I was very sick, my mother made a vow on my behalf to the blessed Father Francis, that I should be snatched from the jaws of death and restored to the strength of life unharmed. Which, since I have a vivid memory, I now confess with true confession, lest by withholding so great a benefit, I might be accused of the crime of ingratitude.”⁴ Though he had never met him, a love for Francis was instilled in him from his youth, and his mother’s vow would later be fulfilled around 1243, whereupon he entered the Franciscan Order.

Prior to this, between 1236-1242, Bonaventure had been studying the liberal arts at the University of Paris, which had become the center of learning in Europe. But there was something else that drew Bonaventure to the Franciscan friary in Paris in 1243. Alexander of Hales, whose reputation was already well established as a Master theologian, entered the Order of Assisi in 1231, creating “quite a sensation at the time.”⁵ Upon his entry into the Order, Alexander had already received a chair of theology at the University of Paris, making him the first Franciscan Master of theology. Indeed, his teaching presence at the friary in Paris was one of the major reasons why Bonaventure was drawn not only to the study of theology but also into the Order itself.⁶ He writes:

I confess before God that the reason which made me love most of all the life of blessed Francis is the fact that it resembles the beginning and the growth of the Church. The Church, indeed, began with simple fishermen, and was enriched later with most illustrious and learned doctors. Thus you may understand that the religion of blessed Francis was established, not by the prudence of men, but by Christ, as shown by God Himself. And because the works of Christ do not fail but ceaselessly grow, it is God who has accomplished this work, since scholars have not been reluctant to join the company of simple men, heeding the word of the Apostle (1 Cor. 3:18). *If any one of you thinks himself wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may come to be wise.*⁷

⁴ *Legenda Minor Sancti Francisci*, “De Transitu Mortis,” lectio octava [VIII, 579a], *Voto enim ...*

⁵ Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 6.

⁶ *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 1-2]; d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 547b].

⁷ *Epistola ad magistrum innominatum* or *Epistola de tribus quaestionibus*, n.13 [VIII, 336]. Translation from Bougerol, *Introduction*, 5.

Alexander was, for the young Bonaventure, an attractive example of what he considered the Franciscan ideal, that is, the exemplary pastor-scholar, the wise man who had abased himself for the sake of the gospel and, therefore, a model of evangelical perfection. Bonaventure was greatly influenced by Alexander up until his death in 1245. He would later speak of Alexander with much affection, perhaps second only to Francis himself, as “my master and father.”⁸

Entering the friary as a Master of Arts, Bonaventure became a student of Alexander and began lecturing on the literal sense of the Bible as a Biblical Bachelor (*baccalarius biblicus*) by 1248, in which period his biblical commentaries, at least upon the Gospel of Luke, would have been written. By 1250 he was beginning to lecture upon Master Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* as a Bachelor of the Sentences (*baccalarius sententiaris*). It was during this period that he would have produced his magisterial *Commentary on the Sentences*. In 1253, following in the footsteps of his master, Bonaventure finished his studies as a formed bachelor (*baccalarius formatus*) of theology and was given the title Master of Sentences (*magister sententiaris*), presiding as an authority over lectures and disputations. Bonaventure’s three known disputations on the knowledge of Christ, on the mystery of the Trinity, and on evangelical perfection were all produced between 1253 and 1257. Appointed to the Franciscan chair of theology, he was not formally recognized as such by the University until 1257 on account of the internal strife between the secular masters and the mendicant orders and because William of Middleton still occupied the Franciscan Chair. But from 1253 onward he was, in effect, a regent master of theology until being elected Minister General of the Franciscan Order in February of 1257.⁹

The Franciscan order had grown by the thousands by the middle of the thirteenth century, but it had its humble beginnings in the simple and sincere gospel-life of Francis of Assisi. Poverty may come to mind, but poverty was only one manifestation of a deeper vision centered on Christ’s self-emptying love. Francis envisioned a religious order, having papal approval, that was devoted to a certain way of living in this world, a life of love moved by and conformed to the example of their crucified Savior. They were to be a brotherhood of servants who, like Christ and for the love of Christ, denied themselves and identified with the poor and downcast, that they might fill “up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (Col. 1:24).

⁸ *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 1-2]; d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 547b].

⁹ For a useful summary of these events, see Randall Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey of the Soul into God: Context and Commentary* (Cambridge University Press, 2025), 28-29.

Poverty was not an end in itself, but if the love of Christ compelled them to sell what they had and give it to the poor, seeking their treasures in heaven where Christ is seated, then they would love poverty as well. The same may be said for all earthly possessions, honor, and glory, even mortal life itself, for to love Christ over life itself is to be fully conformed to his image. As David Burr remarks, “That was at times Francis’s intention. Twice he attempted to seek martyrdom at the hands of the Moslems, and when five Franciscans actually achieved it in 1220, Francis was reported to have exclaimed, ‘Now I can truly say I have five brothers!’”¹⁰

With the emergence of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century, a new way of being in the world emerged. Emmanuel Falque remarks that “Saint Francis and Dominic broke down the walls of the cloister and consecrated the world as the new space of the presence of God.”¹¹ For St. Francis especially, the entire created order became the new sacramental space in which God may be experientially known, loved, and praised, as he famously expressed in his *Canticle of Creation*. In it, Francis sings from the hymnal of creation, inasmuch as the book of creation testifies to a Creator who is near to those who know *how* to read and, therefore, *how* to make good use of sensible things.¹² According to Bonaventure, Francis demonstrated how “to ascend in an orderly progression from the sensible realm to the intelligible, from the lesser to the greater,” in that “he considered the primordial source of all things, ... calling creatures, no matter how small, by the name of brother or sister, because he knew they had the same source as himself.”¹³ In this, Francis became not only the model for the Order’s conception of the active life, by virtue of his conformity to the flesh of Christ, but also the ideal contemplative who was unusually disposed to sense and experience the intimate and immediate presence of God through and in the things he has made.

What is difficult to ascertain is Francis’s attitude toward the pursuit of academic learning and formal theological study.¹⁴ This becomes a question with significant implications at the time

¹⁰ David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 2, citing *Passio Sanctorum Martyrum*, in *Analecta Franciscana*, 3:593.

¹¹ Emmanuel Falque, *God, the Flesh, and the Other*, trans. William Christian Hackett (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 169; cf. *Legenda Sancti Francisci*, IV.1-2 [VIII, 513], trans. Ewert Cousins, in *The Soul’s Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, (London: SPCK, 1978), 207-08.

¹² *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, I.7 [V, 297-298], trans. Zachary Hayes (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2002), 51.

¹³ *Legenda Sancti*, II.8 and VIII.6 [VIII, 509—510, 527-528] (Cousins, trans., 197, 254-55).

¹⁴ For the claim that Bonaventure’s scholasticism was incompatible with Francis’s original vision, see John Moorman, *Source for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1940), 141. Randall Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey*, 35-41, surveys a number of other scholars: Paul Sabatier, Philotheus Boehner, Jacques-Guy Bougerol, and Kent Emery.

of Bonaventure's appointment as Minister General, but a potential tension had existed from the beginning. Although Francis was not opposed to theological study, he considered it dangerous insofar as it might promote arrogance and pride; and, if treated as an end in itself, it would most certainly distract his disciples from the more spiritual work of prayer and an active life of charity. According to Bonaventure's recollection, "Blessed Francis said he wanted (*volebat*) that his brothers should study (*studerent*), as long as they first practiced what they taught. For to know (*scire*) much and to taste nothing, what is it worth?"¹⁵ As a collage of new circumstances gradually introduced changes within the Order in the early thirteenth century, theological study became a growing necessity.¹⁶ The need for leadership within a growing religious order, and the need to be seen as useful and, therefore, legitimate by the Papacy, and the demand for able preachers all required men of wisdom and ability. But it was not readily apparent how such positions of leadership, counsel, and influence were in keeping with the Proverello's humble vision of the gospel life.

By the time Bonaventure became Minister General in 1257, he not only inherited the so-called Mendicant Controversy with the secular clergy in Paris, but he also inherited the question that concerned many within the Order itself: Does the academic study of Scripture, much less philosophy, and the high honors of the Masters, encourage or discourage the faithful and humble observance of Francis's vision of evangelical perfection? J. Guy Bougerol helpfully points out that Bonaventure had already, in some ways, settled this question sometime between the years 1253 and 1257. In a *Letter to an Unknown Master*, he sought to answer this criticism: "I say, therefore, in accordance with the Gospel, that the ambition and pomp of such a title [Master] is worthy of condemnation, and not at all of desire, but that the burden of it must be assumed."¹⁷ As Alexander had so admirably demonstrated, although the honor and ambition of the title must not be pursued, the nature and ends of the task that belongs to it, which is communion with God through knowledge and love, is not only a necessary evangelical and therefore Franciscan pursuit, it is an eminently human one. Why? Because the nature and ends of the contemplative endeavor, as Bonaventure understands it, are coordinate with the nature of man and the ultimate end for which we exist.

¹⁵ *Hex.*, XXII.21 [V, 440b] (Hammond, trans., 388).

¹⁶ Burr, *Spiritual*, 1-42.

¹⁷ *Tribus quaestionibus*, n.11 [VIII, 335]. Translation from Bougerol, *Introduction*, 7-8.

1.1 The Active and Contemplative Life

Although Francis offered words of caution to his disciples with respect to the potential perils of pursuing formal theological studies,¹⁸ the primacy of the contemplative life presented no necessary tension with Francis's humble vision of the active life. Indeed, Bonaventure maintained that both contributed to a distinctively Franciscan way of being in the world. Some of Bonaventure's earliest remarks on the relation between these two lives show up, not surprisingly, in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* as he considered the two traditional representatives, Martha and Mary.¹⁹ Martha protested that her sister left her to attend to the activity of hospitality while Mary sat contemplatively at Christ's feet. Jesus replied: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42). Mary chose the good life, which, according to Bonaventure, is "the blessed life (*vita beata*), which consists in [the soul's] adherence to God, which the contemplative is free to enjoy."²⁰ It is the better part, because it will not be taken away. By way of implication, Bonaventure concludes that the active life, which Martha had chosen, "will be taken away, for the multiplicity of labor passes away, but the unity of love remains. And this is the cause for why Mary's part is simply more desirable, for the contemplative life begins here and has its end (*finitur*) in the future."²¹ The contemplative life has an eschatological dimension, an already and not-yet, that culminates in the soul's consummate rest in the beatific vision of God; the same cannot be said of the active life in and of itself, noble as it may be. The contemplative life is centered upon the knowledge and love of God and, thus, is focused upon the celestial; the active life is centered upon the love of neighbor and, thus, is focused primarily upon the terrestrial.²²

Bonaventure is adamant, however, that the active life is not on this account to be despised and should even occasionally be preferred in this life.²³ This side of Christ's return and the blessed

¹⁸ *Hex.*, XXII.21 [V, 440b].

¹⁹ Cf. Luke 10:38-42; *Commentarius in Evangelium S. Lucae*, X.65-80 [VII, 272a-277b], trans. Robert J. Karris, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 3 vols. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2003), 2:993-1012.

²⁰ *S. Lucae*, X.72 [VII, 274b] (Karris, trans., 2:1002).

²¹ *S. Lucae*, X.74 [VII, 275a] (Karris, trans., 2:1004).

²² *III Sent.*, d.27, a.2, q.4 [III, 609-611].

²³ Cf. *S. Lucae*, IX.62 [VII, 236b].

state of glory, there is a reciprocal relation between the active and contemplative lives, so that “it is necessary for spiritual men sometimes to go out, sometimes to come in, sometimes to ascend, sometimes to descend,” though there is always a priority given to the contemplative life, for a person cannot truly descend to one’s neighbor unless they have first ascended to God.²⁴ By the soul’s adherence to God through love, the contemplative learns “to possess nothing in this land except neediness alone.”²⁵ Especially as Minister General, Bonaventure understood the inherent dangers of university life. The pursuit of knowledge could easily become an occasion of intellectual pride and arrogance—that is, if knowledge becomes an end in itself.²⁶ But the contemplative life, to be truly contemplative, requires and promotes humility. The contemplative desires above all to be a lover of God rather than the world and self and, therefore, will be disposed toward the humble life of the Poverello, which in turn will further dispose her soul to pursue above all a unitive life with God. And yet the contemplative life, as such, led neither Francis nor Bonaventure to despise this world, much less their neighbor, but rather perfected their ability to see the transcendent presence of God within the world as the threefold cause of all things and, therefore, to see all things as they really are in relation to him. Efrem Bettoni expresses Bonaventure’s vision well: “The fundamental significance and teaching of the Franciscan life is precisely this: to recall men to this continual contemplation of God which is the knowledge and the peace to which every man must aspire, for it is the very purpose of his existence. This is what St. Bonaventure wished to save of the Franciscan ideal at all cost.”²⁷ Through the spectacles of contemplation, creation could be read anew, and thus every creature would be loved anew, not for their own sake but for the Lord’s sake. In this way, Bonaventure maintained that contemplation was of first importance for the formation, perfection, and preservation, of a distinctively Franciscan and eminently human way of being in the world. Bettoni adds:

St. Bonaventure clearly understood that the ignorant and illiterate could arrive, as did St. Francis, at the highest contemplation, for it is above all the work of grace and prayer. At the same time, however, he affirms just as unequivocally that besides the way of ascetic heroism, not possible to all, there is the discipline of the intellect. The work of the thinker

²⁴ *S. Lucae*, IX.75 [VII, 275b-276a] (Karris, trans., 2:1007); *Itin.*, I.9 [V, 298]; *III Sent.*, d.27, a.2, q.4 [III, 609-611].

²⁵ *S. Lucae*, IX.73 [VII, 236b] (Karris, trans., 2:1003).

²⁶ *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti*, IV.12 [V, 475b], trans. Zachary Hayes, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008).

²⁷ Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 18.

must be an ‘itinerarium mentis,’ that is, an intellectual striving toward the peace of contemplation: a theory and, at the same time, a way of life that justified before all his confrères the support which he gave to study, without betraying in the least the substance of the ideal of St. Francis of Assisi.²⁸

1.2 *The Contemplative Life: an itinerarium mentis*

Appointed Minister General in 1257, Bonaventure shifted his focus to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Order. Seeking inspiration and direction, Bonaventure journeyed to Mount Alverna (or La Verna), situated in the center of the Apennine Mountains in Italy, from where Francis had purportedly received his stigmata years before. Moved by the example of Francis whose every experience of contemplation was a sigh for ecstatic peace, he writes,

I was moved by divine inspiration and withdrew to Mount Alverna since it was a place of quiet. There I wished to satisfy the desire of my spirit for peace. And while I was there reflecting on certain ways in which the mind might ascend to God, I recalled, among other things, that miracle which the blessed Francis himself had experienced in this very place, namely the vision of the winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified. As I reflected on this, I saw immediately that this vision pointed not only to the uplifting of our father himself in contemplation but also to the road by which one might arrive at this experience.²⁹

From this experience, Bonaventure wrote what would become his most popular work, the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (1259), which is translated *The Journey of the Mind (or Soul) into God*. The life of the contemplative is an *itinerarium mentis*. And in this way, the *Itinerarium* was written to remind those who were pursuing academic studies what ought to be the proper end and use of all their learning. As a masterful blend of university learning and Franciscan piety, the *Itinerarium* is “an invitation to a deeper spiritual life ... a general portrait of how the immediate learning experiences of university students should be understood at their more lasting, deeper, and more tested levels.”³⁰ It is a contemplative guide that seeks foremost to align the academic life of the university with the contemplative ideal of St. Francis, so that all of their learning, both philosophical and theological, would advance a particularly Franciscan, and eminently human way

²⁸ Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 19.

²⁹ *Itin.*, prol., 2 [V, 295] (Hayes, trans., 37).

³⁰ Stephen F. Brown, “Introduction,” in *The Journey of the Mind to God*, trans. Philotheus Boehner (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), xi.

of being in the world, namely, in constant and close communion with God who is everywhere present through and in creatures.

2. The Work of Creation: Charting the Course

In the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure sets forth a contemplative itinerary for the soul's gradual ascent to and deepening communion with God, insofar as he may be known *through* and *in* the things he has made. As such, creatures and the work of creation serve as an intelligible medium and guide for the soul's contemplative endeavor. And thus, Bonaventure's understanding of the work of creation needs to be considered, especially how it charts a course for mankind, which we are intended to follow in pursuit of our own perfection. In addition to getting our bearings, mapping out the course at the outset of this study has the advantage of introducing the way in which Bonaventure understands the relationship between nature and grace. This is especially significant because how we understand Bonaventure at this precise point will greatly influence how we interpret him throughout.

2.1 *The Macrocosm: The Perfection of Matter through Form*

In his second *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure inquires whether God created the material world at once in a state of perfect actuality.³¹ It is made clear from the context that the impetus for this question is the juxtaposition of two things: the scriptural account of creation in Genesis 1:1-2 and a well-known interpretation of that text advocated by St. Augustine. The Genesis account begins with these words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2). But despite the plain reading of the text, Augustine maintained that God, literally and actually, produced all things simultaneously in a state of formal perfection. And thus, Bonaventure's primary concern in raising this question is hermeneutical, namely, to demonstrate how to read and interpret the book of Scripture in dialogue

³¹ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2 [II, 295-98].

with the great tradition, but secondarily to show how a proper interpretation of the book of Scripture has implications for how we read and interpret the book of creation.

Before offering his own interpretation, Bonaventure charitably summarizes various arguments in favor of Augustine's interpretation taken both from authority and from reason.³² Three arguments from reason are proposed which correspond to the threefold causal source of all things. Presupposed in each of the arguments is the principle that the perfections of a cause are in some way manifest in its effect.³³ And "because all things flow from the first and most perfect Principle, who is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-beneficent, it was most fitting that they should come into being in such a way that *their very production* might reflect these same three attributes or perfections."³⁴ As such, Augustine maintained that an instantaneously perfect creation would have been more consistent with the perfect power, wisdom, and goodness of its Creator than if creation had been formally perfected over the course of time.

Each of these may be expanded upon. If certain effects proceed from an efficient cause that is itself perfect in power, they will proceed in a way that manifests all that his power is able to do. Moreover, a power that is able to produce all things simultaneously perfect is more perfect than a power that successively perfects its creation over a period of six days. And so, it seems that God must have instantaneously created all things formally perfect and in a state of perfect actuality.

It may be similarly argued with respect to perfect wisdom. According to Aristotle, perfect wisdom necessarily effects perfect order, and confusion is opposed to order. Thus, effects which proceed from an exemplary cause that is perfect in wisdom will proceed according to a formal distinction and order that manifests that perfection. And so, it seems that God did not create all things in an initial state of confusion but rather instantaneously in a perfect state of formal distinction and order.

Likewise, effects which proceed from a final cause that is perfect in goodness will proceed in a way that manifests the perfection of that goodness. And that which instantaneously proceeds fully formed with respect to its own created perfection more greatly manifests the perfect goodness of its cause than that which initially lacks the full actuality of its being. And so, it likewise seems

³² Arguments from authority: Gen. 2:4; Job 40:15; Ecclesiasticus 18:1. Cf. *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2, ad 1-3 [II, 297-298].

³³ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2, ad opp. 4 [II, 295].

³⁴ *Brev.*, II.2.2 [V, 220a] (Monti, trans., 63). Emphasis added.

that God must have instantaneously created all things “good,” that is, in a state of formal perfection.³⁵

In the body of Bonaventure’s response, precisely because the *manner* in which God created the world in the space of six days is an article of the faith rather than reason (cf. Heb. 11.3), he criticizes those who, like Augustine, follow a “philosophical way” (*viam philosophicam*), by allowing reason to govern and ground their interpretation of Scripture, instead of allowing Scripture, being “captivated under the light of faith” (*prout sub lumine fidei captivatur*), to elevate reason and inform what is most reasonable. Proceeding therefore in a “theological way” (*viam theologicam*),³⁶ reasoning from faith, Bonaventure proceeds to argue that the plain reading of the text accords best, not only with the letter, but also with reason itself; the Lord most perfectly manifests his power, wisdom, and goodness, not by perfecting all things simultaneously, but by perfecting them successively over the span of six days.

Bonaventure readily concedes that the undifferentiated primal matter of all those things that “were to be” was itself simultaneously, instantaneously and entirely created *ex nihilo*, thereby manifesting God’s perfect power notwithstanding the initial formlessness of that matter. “In the beginning God created The earth was without form Then God said, ‘Let there be ...’” (Gen. 1:1, 2). In other words, the actual and specific forms of corporeal creatures were not created instantaneously and simultaneously from nothing but rather were brought forth and perfected, fashioned and formed, subsequently and successively from that primal matter. And although God’s perfect power could have been manifest in the simultaneous and instantaneous production of forms (*productione formae*), Bonaventure maintains that it is manifest even more so in their subsequent and successive eduction from that primal matter (*eductione materiae*). His reasoning is this: The greater the capacity that any matter has to receive a multiplicity of particular forms, the more capable it is of declaring the power of the efficient cause that eventually produces them. And yet, the more potent the matter, the less formed (*informitas*) and the more unactualized that matter will be. Therefore, if matter ought to be produced according to its capacity to manifest the perfection of God’s power to educe from it all manner of forms, it was befitting that he should produce it, inasmuch as possible, in an unformed state, in order that it should be perfected through a

³⁵ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2, ad opp. 4-6 [II, 295].

³⁶ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2 [II, 296b, 297a].

subsequent distinction of forms — for he “made it unformed in order to form it, and imperfect in order to perfect it.”³⁷

Bonaventure maintains that the reasonableness of this interpretation is even more evident with respect to the manifestation of God’s perfect wisdom and goodness, which are more clearly seen through his subsequent and successive (*decursus*) works of distinction and adornment. He writes:

It must be said that God intended to manifest his *power* more in the production of *being* from *non-being* than afterwards in its formation; for in the latter, he more greatly manifests wisdom and goodness. And, that the perfection of *power*, *wisdom* and *goodness* might be manifested singly, distinctly, and appropriately in the production of his effects, it pleased the divine author to begin with the work of *creation*, and afterwards to subjoin the work of *distinction*, and lastly the work of *adornment* and decoration. And in the first, *power* is manifested, in the second *wisdom*, and in the third perfect *goodness*, although all are manifested in each of these.³⁸

Bonaventure notes that the Lord has not only manifested his perfect power in creating *being* (*esse*) from *non-being* (*non-esse*), and no less according to a form of matter most capable of doing so; he has also manifested his perfect wisdom in the clear establishment of an order and arrangement of beings, as well as his perfect goodness in his adorning and perfecting each thing relative to its own nature and distinction within that overall order of being.³⁹ Bonaventure does not dispute the fact that God could have created all things simultaneously in a state of complete order and perfection, but he further argues that God’s intention was not foremost to manifest all that he is capable of doing but to educate his rational creatures in a way that he could not have done had he not spread out his work of ordering and perfecting, distinguishing and adorning, over the course of six days. Thereby we are taught that both perfection and order are given to matter by God himself.⁴⁰ “Thus, although he could have immediately perfected matter, he nevertheless preferred to create it under a certain formlessness and imperfection, so that matter, by reason of its imperfection, might cry out to God to perfect it.”⁴¹ In this manner, the perfect power, wisdom, and goodness of God, *and*

³⁷ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2, fund. 4 [II, 296a] and ad 4-6 [II, 298b], *sed dum fecit informem*, ...

³⁸ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2, ad 4-6 [II, 298a], *dicendum, quod Deus potentiam* ...

³⁹ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2, fund. 3 [II, 296a].

⁴⁰ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2, ad 4-6 [II, 298b], *perfectionem et ordinem a se materiae dari*. ... *Et quia ex illa dilatione homo erudiebatur*

⁴¹ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2 [II, 297a], *Sic cum posset statim perficere materiam* ...

the rational creature's dependence upon the same, are arguably more clearly manifest in the distinguishing and adorning work of the six days than if it had been simultaneously produced in perfect actuality.⁴²

The effectiveness of this approach is strengthened by Bonaventure's ironic appeal to the authority of Augustine, wherein he proceeds to confirm a literal interpretation of Genesis by demonstrating its ability to ground Augustine's spiritual reading of the text. He argues that many of the conclusions that Augustine put forth as the literal meaning (in his *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*) are indeed valid, but only in the threefold spiritual sense (i.e., allegorical, anagogical, and moral) and only if they be grounded in the literal sense propounded by Bonaventure. Accordingly, the *allegorical* sense retains the substance of Augustine's application to world history; inasmuch as the world was *literally* ordered and distinguished over the course of six days, we are *allegorically* taught that the total length of world history hastens according to six ages, which are prefigured in the text and lead and guide mankind to their ultimate sabbath rest.⁴³ Similarly, Bonaventure argues that Augustine's suggestion that the distinction of the days literally signifies the perfection of the knowledge of the blessed angels more properly belongs to an *anagogical* reading of the text.⁴⁴

However, of greatest interest here is the significance which Bonaventure attributes to what he identifies as the *moral* sense of the text. In the same way that the literal sense grounds and signifies the spiritual senses in the book of Scripture, the *literal* way in which creation formally attained its created order and perfection signifies the *moral* way in which the rational creature is likewise to seek its final form (or formation), its order and perfection, in relation to God — or so he applies Augustine's interpretation. Again, Bonaventure concedes that God would have created all things simultaneously perfect had he created according to his total ability, but he has instead freely condescended to the creature's capacity. The manner in which the macrocosm received its perfection was intended to serve as an analogy for how human persons, as a sort of microcosm of the whole, should likewise seek after their own perfection. In other words, the Lord has formed all things in a manner most suitable to the moral education of rational creatures, to teach us *likewise* to cry out to God for our beatific perfection. And the manifestation of his power, wisdom, and

⁴² *Brev.*, II.2.5 [V, 220].

⁴³ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2 [II, 297a], ... *secundum quod plane adaptat Augustinus* ...

⁴⁴ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2 [II, 297b]. Cf. *II Sent.*, d.13, a.1, q.1 [II, 312].

goodness in the work of creation is itself a sort of guide, an itinerary leading us back to God, as if day by day through a hierarchical order of being that leads us back to the fontal source from which, and through which, and for the sake of which we and all things derive our being.

2.2 *The Microcosm: The Perfection of Nature through Grace*

In order to more fully explore this analogy, the connection that Bonaventure draws between the original moral condition of man and the original metaphysical formlessness of primordial matter must be considered more closely. What, according to Bonaventure, was the metaphysical status of the initial formlessness of matter? *Matter*, he notes, can be understood variously: “either as to *essence*, or as to *incomplete being far from completion*, or according to *incomplete being near completion*, or *simply as to complete being*.”⁴⁵ Taken abstractly in the first sense, matter is related to form as potency is related to act. As such, matter considered abstractly and essentially as *potency for the sake of form* is itself formless according to every mode of potentiality. However, Bonaventure notes that matter, with respect to its *being* in nature, never exists apart from form, and “in this way it is not only inconsistent, but even impossible, for formless matter to exist through the absolute privation of form.”⁴⁶ Instead, the original condition of that formless primordial matter is to be understood in the second sense, as incomplete being that was far from completion (*esse incompletum et a completionem remotum*). As Cullen remarks, “Things have the stability of existing from matter, since it confers a foundation for the substantial form, but it is the substantial form that confers being,” and in this regard primordial matter was far from possessing complete being.⁴⁷ Bonaventure explains: “The matter of corporeal things was not created under a complete diversity of forms, but the form which it had, called *formless matter*, did not give it complete being, but rather consisted of a disposition towards further forms.”⁴⁸ He notes that our language is necessarily strained here, such that the matter in question can only be described in a stammering way, for

⁴⁵ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.2, q.1, ad 6 [II, 303b], *Aliter posset dici, et quasi in idem redit, quoniam quadrupliciter potest intelligi et esse unitas in materia: aut quantum ad essentiam . . .*

⁴⁶ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.1 [II, 294a]; cf. ad 1-2 [II, 294b], “For formlessness never exists except through some form, nor potentiality except through some act,” *Nunquam enim informitas est nisi per aliquam formam, nec possibilitas nisi per aliquem actum*.

⁴⁷ Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 46. Augustine similarly referred to so-called unformed matter as “almost nothing,” *Confessions*, XII.15.22.

⁴⁸ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.3 [II, 300a].

neither our words nor our imagination can explain it perfectly.⁴⁹ Thus, he paradoxically refers to its *form* as *formless matter*, by which he means a form that lacks the ability to give matter complete being but nonetheless consists in an imperfect being that has a maximum degree of potentiality and a certain innate fecundity to receive all manner of forms.⁵⁰

Embedded in this idea of matter's primal fecundity is Augustine's doctrine of seminal reasons, which Bonaventure describes as an active power divinely implanted in matter — the essence of forms existing potentially and incompletely in matter, and thus capable of being educed, actualized, and perfected by the operation of nature.⁵¹ The initial formlessness of primordial matter, being incomplete and very far from completion, was a veritable seedbed containing the seminal principles of all that would subsequently be formed and perfected, with the sole exception of spiritual substances. In order to elucidate his point, Bonaventure helpfully employs the analogy of an embryo; although a single embryonic seed possesses an incomplete being relative to its final perfecting form, it is naturally ordered to its own perfection by means of certain inherent seminal principles existing in the potency of its matter. Similarly, although the primordial seedbed possessed an incomplete being relative to those things that would be produced from it, it was nonetheless inherently disposed and ordered to its own perfection through the actualization of its many potencies. However, the analogy breaks down because, as Bonaventure admits, the embryo is “near completion” and able to bring itself to perfection “by the force of its own nature,” whereas primordial matter was “far from completion” and unable to bring about its own perfection. This is an important distinction. Bonaventure emphasizes that its formlessness was of such a nature that it was still wholly dependent upon the divine power and operation for its formal perfection.⁵² In other words, by reason of its own constitution, it intrinsically desired the completion and perfection

⁴⁹ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.3 ad 2 [II, 300b].

⁵⁰ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.3 ad 4 [II, 301a], *quae formam habebat maxime ad multa possibilem*.

⁵¹ *II Sent.*, d.18, a.1, q.3 [II, 440], “It is sufficiently certain that the seminal reason is an active power, implanted in matter; and that active power is established to be the essence of the form, since form is made from it by means of the operation of nature, which does not produce anything from nothing: it is quite reasonably stated that a seminal reason is the essence of the form to be produced, differing from it in terms of complete and incomplete being, or in terms of being in potentiality and being in act,” *Ad praedictorum intelligentiam est notandum*....

John Francis Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), 266, “Concreated in matter by God, seminal reasons are in act regarding matter itself, but in potency regarding the forms to be produced from it.” Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 48–49, remarks on one of the purported implications of the doctrine of seminal forms, i.e., the idea that any given substance has a plurality of substantial forms, “The range of opinions has run the whole gamut of options. ... But he does consistently seem to take a plurality of substantial forms as a given.” However, we would agree with the assessment of Quinn; Bonaventure only intends by it the idea that lesser forms dispose a thing to receive higher forms.

⁵² *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.3 [II, 300a-b]; d.12, a.1, q.1, ad 1–2 [II, 294a-b]; d.12, a.2, q.3, ad 1 [II, 306a-b].

of form but was unable to perfect itself, as if to elicit within it the desire to “cry out to God” for its metaphysical perfection.

Bonaventure draws from this an analogy to the original moral constitution of man. Bonaventure explains: “Just as the corporeal nature existed without form ... [until] the divine goodness bestowed form upon that which was formless, so also the soul of man is not able to be [fully] formed by means of itself, unless God should pour his grace into it.”⁵³ As Kent Emery Jr. observes, the analogy that is being drawn is highly suggestive: “On the one hand, according to the analogy with prime matter it would seem that the potency of human nature is not fully actualized until its perfection in grace; on the other [hand], human nature, like prime matter, has a certain ‘unformed’ mode of existing *per se* before receiving the infusion of grace.”⁵⁴ According to this analogy, then, how does Bonaventure conceive of Adam’s original “unformed” mode of existence, and by what means was he perfected?

This question is more fully answered in relation to another: Whether Adam was simultaneously constituted in grace and in nature.⁵⁵ In his response to this question, Bonaventure maintains that it is more likely than not that Adam had a natural mode of existence both logically and temporally prior to his being perfected in a state of grace. In other words, Adam’s state of innocence may be distinguished according to two moments (*in statu innocentiae distinguuntur duo tempora*). “For there was a time in which he existed only in a state of nature, and there was another time in which he existed in a state of nature and of grace.”⁵⁶ Notwithstanding his more peculiar temporal distinction (*in tempore*), and notwithstanding the modern debates over the utility of a notion of pure nature (*puris naturalibus*), Bonaventure notes that it was common among his own contemporaries (*opinio communior et probabilior*) to acknowledge a logical distinction at the very least. Nevertheless, his position has generated no small amount of controversy today, the purported significance of which often varying according to the differing views on how Bonaventure purportedly relates nature and grace elsewhere.⁵⁷ To what extent did Bonaventure affirm a notion

⁵³ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2 [II, 297a], *sicut natura corporea ...*

⁵⁴ Kent Emery Jr. “Reading the World Rightly and Squarely: Bonaventure’s doctrine of the Cardinal Virtues,” *Traditio* 39 (1983): 196.

⁵⁵ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 702-704], *Utrum homo simul tempore conditus fuerit in gratuitis et naturalibus.*

⁵⁶ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 703b], *quoddam enim fuit tempus, ...*

⁵⁷ For a negative and critical account of the concept of “pure nature,” namely that it purportedly represents a movement toward naturalism and a denial of the supernatural or at least a view of nature apart from God, see Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (NY: Herder and Herder, 1967), who argues that

of pure nature, or a historical moment in time in which Adam was created in a state of nature only, and unto what end did he affirm this distinction?

Let the modern reader note well that Bonaventure is not affirming a notion of human nature, or of *pure nature*, that connotes an absolute privation of all divine gifts or a sort of independence from God, i.e., wherein *nature* is conceived in terms of man's essential faculties and properties

in order to safeguard the integrity of human nature, man's *natural* desire for God must be intrinsically supernatural, which ironically obliterates any real distinction between nature and grace and makes everything of grace; John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Renewed Split in Modern Catholic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), radicalizes de Lubac's argument and offers an uncharitable account of Bonaventure as one of the originators of a concept of nature that is independent of God and, thus, accuses him of semi-Pelagianism (pp.95, 102-103). Harrison Perkins, *Righteous by Design: Covenantal Merit and Adam's Original Integrity* (UK: Mentor Imprint by Christian Focus Publications, 2024), uncritically adopts and appropriates the interpretation of de Lubac and Milbank, at least insofar as it concerns Bonaventure, in order to argue that Bonaventure taught that Adam was created without original righteousness and, furthermore, had to merit sanctifying grace by works first performed from pure nature.

Christopher M. Cullen, "Bonaventure on Nature before Grace: A Historical Moment Reconsidered," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85.1 (2011): 161-176, offers a positive account of Bonaventure's understanding of "pure nature," but one that is still somewhat sympathetic to Milbank's concerns. Kevin E. Jones, "Bonaventure on Habitual Grace in Adam," *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2008): 39-66, concedes to Cullen's thesis that Bonaventure taught a notion of "pure nature" but argues that it was early in his career and was, because it conflicted with his developing ideas about the relationship between nature and grace, later abandoned altogether, however implicitly.

For a positive account of "pure nature" that is akin to the one presented here, albeit from a Thomistic perspective, see Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2004); Steven A. Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2010); Bernard Mulcahy, *Aquinas's Notion of Pure Nature and the Christian Integralism of Henri de Lubac: Not Everything is Grace* (NY: Peter Lang, 2011). Steven A. Long cogently points out that de Lubac's misunderstanding of "pure nature" stems from a deficient concept of nature that had become common in his own day, conceived as an autonomous sphere with its own objects and ends without any reference to God. Long attributes this view of nature not only to the typical Enlightenment thinkers but also to the intellectual legacy of Luis de Molina; "What is arresting about the Molinist account is not the emphasis on circumstance [as the determining factor of free agency], which is but an ineffective brake placed on the turning of the wheel, but the logic of the turning of the wheel itself, in the direction of separating human agency from divine causality" (p.40). He concludes, "The convergent effect is that of secular and intra-Catholic tendencies of thought each of which tend toward making the natural realm—and particularly the natural realm of human agency—an utterly separate jurisdiction sealed off from providence. In this light, the continued insistence upon the nature/grace distinction could seem to be an insistence upon maintaining an artificial and destructive divorce between God and the world, and *a fortiori* between God and the human world" (p.41). Critical of the conclusions, but not the concepts or categories, de Lubac sought to reassert the theocentric character of the natural order, which is admirable, but did so in a way that falsified nature itself, by reducing it to a "vacuole fit only for supernatural beatitude even apart from grace and revelation," which "paradoxically completed the ontological evacuation of nature to which de Lubac was in part responding" (p.43). A similar solution that is grounded upon the same misunderstanding shows up in both Hans Urs von Balthasar's and Karl Barth's understanding of nature and grace and is likewise the faulty assumption upon which Cornelius van Til's so-called presuppositional apologetics is built. In any event, this is not the same nature/grace distinction with which either Bonaventure or Aquinas were working. Long explains: "Nature is not merely a negative concept, a sort of empty theological Newtonian space providing a hollow 'place' or vacuole for grace. And precisely insofar as human nature has an ontological density and proportionate end, just so far is the knowledge of these *essential* to the work of the theologian. This is precisely why St. Thomas held that grace presupposes nature—not as an empty placeholder, but with its own created perfection positively ordered toward God within natural limits while being capable with divine aid of elevation to divine friendship and the beatific vision" (p.2).

entirely naked and void of every aspect of the gift of original righteousness and virtuous habits, even those pertaining to the perfection of human nature *qua nature*.⁵⁸ Rather, he affirms that within the initial constitution of man there is a logical, and even temporal and therefore real, moment wherein Adam was created according to “a nature already perfected” (*naturae iam perfectae*), in a state of natural perfection, before being more fully formed in a state of supra-natural perfection.⁵⁹ This, he maintains, was in order to manifest more clearly both the graciousness of grace and the way in which grace perfects nature by ordering and elevating it to its supernatural end.

Bonaventure argues for the probability of this view on the grounds that it accords best with the orders of wisdom, justice, and goodness. Because the divine wisdom is most manifest in the distinguishing works of God over the course of six days, and because gratuitous being (*esse gratuitum*) is of a different genus than natural being (*esse naturale*), it was most fitting that man’s original perfection relative to the orders of nature and of grace should likewise be distinguished. “Just as the elements of the world were created and distinguished before they were adorned in time, for the sake of commending the order of wisdom, so also should it be done concerning man, who is a miniature of the world (*minor mundus*).”⁶⁰ Here, and elsewhere, Bonaventure draws upon a correspondence between the four basic elements of the world (earth, water, air, and fire) and the four cardinal virtues (temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude).⁶¹ Again, Bonaventure’s position is not that God first created Adam with a human nature utterly naked and devoid of every kind of gift or grace, lacking even a natural integrity or a perfection in proportion to his natural existence. On the contrary, the analogy which Bonaventure draws suggests a different sort of relation. Just as God created and distinguished the four elements of the world before adorning and perfecting that world, so also God created and distinguished Adam in a state of natural integrity, according to the four cardinal or natural virtues, before adorning and perfecting his nature with the supernatural or theological virtues. Implicit within Bonaventure’s argument is the well-established idea that, although all of the virtues have their root and origin in God’s benevolence, the so-called

⁵⁸ This misreading of Bonaventure has already been noted with respect to Harrison Perkins, *Righteous by Design*, 191-192, who interprets Bonaventure along Pelagian lines, reading him anachronistically as though agreeing with the later position of Bellarmine and in substantial disagreement with Aquinas. In all fairness, this misreading of Bonaventure was already present within the Reformed Tradition; cf. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 1992), 1:462-464.

⁵⁹ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 703b]. Cf. Aquinas, *Quodlibet* I, q.4, a.3.

⁶⁰ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 703b], *Ordo sapientiae hoc requirebat*, ...

⁶¹ *Hex.*, VI.20-21 [V, 363b], “These [virtues] are of such nobility that the arrangement of the world corresponds to them.” (Hammond, trans., 166).

supernatural or theological virtues, and most especially the grace of charity, are that which give ultimate form and meritorious being (*esse meritorium*) to the so-called natural or cardinal virtues. “For when we possess these other virtues without grace and charity, which is their life, they are formless; but when grace is poured upon them, they gain form: they are adorned and become acceptable to God.”⁶² And so it was fitting according to the order of wisdom that just as God created primordial matter in a kind of formless state before being fully formed and perfected in being, he likewise created Adam in a kind of formless state before being fully formed and perfected — and this also, unto the end that he should be intrinsically disposed by means of the natural virtues to cry out to God, in order to be further formed and perfected in a state of grace by means of theological virtues.

This interpretation is further corroborated from what Bonaventure calls the order of justice. As a general rule (*legem communem*), a person must first be prepared and disposed for sanctifying grace before it be infused within them. “And therefore, man was not concreated in nature and in grace, but grace was deferred until man in some way disposed himself to receive it through an act and use of reason, so that Augustine's statement about the first man would be verified: ‘He who created you without you, does not justify you without you.’”⁶³ Bonaventure’s point is most certainly not that Adam had to merit God’s grace, which would be entirely contrary to the analogy at hand. It has already been noted that the formlessness of the initial primordial matter was of such a nature that it was wholly dependent upon the divine power and operation for its formal perfection. Being naturally and intrinsically disposed for form, by reason of the seminal reasons implanted within it, and yet unable to form itself, elicited from it an inchoate desire to “cry out to God” for its metaphysical perfection.⁶⁴ By analogy, nature cannot merit grace, nor can man by means of the

⁶² *Brev.*, V.4.6 [V, 257a] (Monti, trans., 186).

⁶³ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 703b].

⁶⁴ This idea has been called “obediential potency.” Cf. *I Sent.*, d.42, a.sole, q.4 [I, 756-759]; d.44, a.1, q.1, ad 3 [I, 782-783]; Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, q.1, a.10, ad 13. Steven A. Long, *Natura Pura*, comments: “It is this conception of obediential potency that expounds acts of infused virtue as truly acts of the human agent, without thereby implying that human nature can perform supernatural acts apart from divine aid.” (33). With respect to the modern detractors of the notion of “pure nature,” he continues, “Had they but seen, Gilson and de Lubac, would have realized that St. Thomas and his commentators were, in their exposition of obediential potency, describing the contours of the very mystery that they themselves sought to understand. For man’s nature is not transmuted but elevated, and so must first be *elevable* by divine grace: the very meaning of specific obediential potency as opposed to generic obediential potency. Here again one discerns the need not alone for historical erudition, but for scientific penetration of natural distinctions—a cautionary tale for those for whom theology and philosophy have become mere ancillary functions of historical erudition” (33). The elevation of human nature by grace does not cease to be *human nature*, as water transmuted into wine, and as de Lubac misinterprets it, but remains what it is only *perfected*.

natural virtues merit the supernatural virtues or the supernatural objects and ends to which they are ordered; grace cannot be merited, for grace is itself the principle of merit, even for Adam. Nevertheless, Bonaventure notes that by the same analogy Adam was naturally disposed for grace though not yet ordered by grace.⁶⁵ The general principle which Bonaventure takes for granted is the idea that lower forms dispose a thing to receive higher forms, and in some way mediate their reception.⁶⁶ Constituted as a rational creature, as evidenced “through an act and use of reason,” and constituted in a state of natural virtue, Adam was thereby prepared and disposed to receive a higher form of virtue; being naturally disposed to receive supernatural virtue, but unable to obtain it by his own natural operation, elicited within Adam an inchoate desire to cry out to God for the perfection that comes from grace alone — unto the end that the graciousness of God’s gift should be more clearly manifest.

The same may be observed even more clearly relative to what Bonaventure calls the order of goodness. Because the graciousness of the theological virtues is manifest in how they order the soul to a good that is above (*super*) every natural (*naturalis*) good, it was most fitting that grace “should be given in such a way that it would be known from the very order in which it is given (*ordine dandi*) that it is the gift of *gratuitous being* (*esse gratuitum*).”⁶⁷ Therefore, in order to magnify the goodness of God and the gratuity of his grace, it was fitting that grace should be given *in such a way* that most clearly demonstrates its ability to perfect nature by elevating and ordering it to an end, a good, that is itself beyond the order of nature and therefore unattainable by natural means. Within the overall order of goodness, the natural virtues order the soul in relation to natural goods and the supernatural virtues order the soul, including its natural virtues, in relation to supernatural goods (i.e., ends outside and above the order of nature). And so, *to manifest more clearly* the necessity of sanctifying grace to elevate human nature and order it to its supernatural end, Bonaventure concludes that there were two successive moments in Adam’s original constitution that correspond to his created telos and inherent orderability within the natural and supernatural orders respectively.

⁶⁵ Had he not been, then the superadded grace would not only have operated *above* nature but would have also been *against* nature, which is what properly constitutes not only a marvelous work but also a miraculous work, such as the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam; cf. *II Sent.*, d.18, a.1, q.2, ad 5 [II, 437b-438a].

⁶⁶ *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.3 [II, 300a-b]; cf. d.12, a.1, q.1, ad 1-2) [II, 294a-b]; d.12, a.2, q.3, ad 1 [II, 306a-b].

⁶⁷ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 703b], *et ideo sic debuit dari, ...*

Bonaventure argues for the *probability* of two distinct *temporal* moments in the history of Adam's creation, but even if a *temporal* distinction seems improbable to the reader, the actual significance of his argument lies in that which the temporal succession *manifests*, namely, the relation between nature and grace. In his succinct treatment of the virtues in his *Breviloquium*, he speaks of the soul as having two faces, the inferior (*inferiorem*) and the superior (*superiorem*). The metaphor seeks to capture the soul's ability to be well-ordered in relation to *both* the things below *and* the things above, to temporal and natural goods as well as to eternal and supernatural goods.⁶⁸ "The soul," he adds, "must be set aright in its lower face through the four cardinal virtues," whereas its upward face, ... being the image of the Trinity, must be set aright through the three theological virtues."⁶⁹ Both so-called faces are directed toward their own proper objects and ends, corresponding to nature and grace respectively. Whereas the cardinal virtues order the soul in relation to man's natural end relative to things below, the theological virtues further order the soul, including the cardinal virtues and all things below, in relation to man's supernatural object and end above.

On the one hand, the natural virtues are sufficient for their own objects and ends; on the other hand, they were not sufficient for Adam to merit or obtain his ultimate and supernatural end. Unto this end, nature must be elevated and perfected by grace. Concerning the first, Bonaventure notes that "in the act of granting natural life, the productive principle, because of its own supreme perfection, conveys life not only in its first grade of actuality, which is life as such, but also in the second grade of actuality, which is operation. ... Furthermore, these operations differ by virtue of their different objects, and so such a diversity of activities requires different habits."⁷⁰ In other words, the cardinal virtues perfect the natural powers of the soul, the life of which is manifest through its various operations which are themselves distinguished according to their distinct objects and ends. Prudence perfected Adam's speculative and practical intellect in relation to the

⁶⁸ *Brev.*, II.9.7 [V, 227b], *quoniam cognitio veri est duplex*: ..., "Truth may be known in two ways: either as truth in itself, or the truth as good; the latter is either eternal and above the soul, or temporal and inferior to it" (Monti, trans., 88).

⁶⁹ *Brev.*, V.4.4 and 5 [V, 256b] (Monti, trans., 185). Cf. Augustine's *de Trinitate*, XII.4.4 and his *Soliloquium*, I.8.15, as well as in Aristotle's *de Anima*, III.8. Cf. Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 199-207; R.W. Mulligan, "Partio Superior and Partio Inferior Rationis in the Writings of St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 15 (1955): 332-349; R.W. Mulligan, "Ratio Superior and Ratio Inferior: The Historical Background," *The New Scholasticism* (1955): 1-32; Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 380-382.

⁷⁰ *Brev.*, V.4.3 [V, 256a] (Monti, trans., 184).

truth of speech, of things, and of morals.⁷¹ Fortitude perfected his irascible appetite, subjecting his will to the rule of reason and preserving him in a state of immortality.⁷² Temperance perfected his concupiscible appetite, also subjecting his will to the rule of reason and preserving him in integrity and in a relative state of impassibility. Justice or righteousness ordered all of these powers in relation to everyone's due and in relation to a natural knowledge and love of God in proportion to his natural faculties; for this reason, justice is sometimes called "the rectitude of the will" (*rectitudo voluntatis*).⁷³ Christopher Cullen remarks, "Yet these gifts, while being actual graces, still do not elevate man to the supernatural order and the beatific vision. They stand beside nature (as 'praeternatural' gifts), bringing human nature to its perfection or, more precisely, its natural powers to their highest actualization," albeit, within the order of nature. Although these virtues are rooted in actual grace, sufficient for their own objects and ends and sufficient to perfect us within the limitations of our natural life, they nevertheless do not elevate nature or raise us to our supernatural and ultimate beatific end. As Cullen notes, they are "*praeter naturam*, not *super naturam*."⁷⁴

Bonaventure notes that the cardinal virtues, when considered in relation to their own proper objects and end, may be said to have within themselves their own proper *form* and *being* whereby each virtue may be distinguished from the others.⁷⁵ However, insofar as the cardinal virtues are in and of themselves unable, apart from the theological virtues, to order and perfect us in relation to our ultimate and supernatural end, they can also be considered *formless* and incomplete in being. In this way, Adam's prelapsarian nature was first created formless, even if only for a moment, in order that it might be formed or perfected in form by the divine infusion of the supernatural theological virtues. By these, the operations of all of the other virtues are themselves ordered and subordinated to man's higher end and are, therefore, made acceptable to God. Cullen's comments are especially helpful: "All other virtues are related to charity as matter to form. This relation so obtains because the other virtues are inchoate and potential until properly ordered to man's true final end. It is only by being so ordered by charity that all other virtues become actual and true

⁷¹ *Brev.*, V.4.4 [V, 256b]; *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*, 4 [V, 321a], trans. Zachary Hayes, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1996), 41-43.

⁷² *Brev.*, V.4.4 [V, 256b]; *III Sent.*, d.44, a.1, q.3, [I, 786].

⁷³ *Brev.*, V.4.4 [V, 256b].

⁷⁴ Cullen, "Bonaventure on Nature," 168, mistakenly attributes the endowment of these virtues to the second moment of man's prelapsarian nature, though he concedes that they alone did not establish Adam in a state of grace.

⁷⁵ *III Sent.*, d.27, a.1, q.3, ad 1 [III, 598a], *Si loquamur de virtutibus quantum ad esse*,...

virtues. Virtues are able to subsist without charity, but in such a formless state that they cannot be a means of acquiring merit.”⁷⁶ As such, the theological virtues, though especially charity, graciously order and sanctify the whole life of the soul and all of its operations to an end that is itself above nature (*supernaturalis*), thereby elevating and perfecting the form of the natural virtues, causing them to operate in subordination — the ends of which become means — to that higher end.⁷⁷ Herein also lies the prelapsarian principle of merit with respect to the things above. Grace was for Adam the principle of merit because it orders the whole soul, all of its virtues and operations, to God as its chief end and highest good.

In summary, primordial matter was created formless unto the end that it would cry out to God, as it were, in order to be formed and perfected. Bonaventure maintains that the Lord literally and historically proceeded in this manner in order to teach us to do the same, to cry out to God to be formed (or reformed) and perfected by his grace, so that the graciousness of grace may be the more *manifest*. “God did not decree to bring man to the perfection of glory by something that would arise from the principles of nature, but by a gift added to natural ones, so that from this man would be more grateful to God and would attribute the work of his entire salvation to God.”⁷⁸ And in contending for the probability of two moments within the production of man’s prelapsarian nature, Bonaventure is simultaneously affirming both the integrity of human nature with respect to its own natural objects and ends as well as the necessity of grace in order to elevate and perfect that nature with respect to an end that is above both the soul itself and beyond its own natural operations. Human nature is intrinsically *ordained* and *orderable* to a supernatural end, for the soul “does not find rest except in the infinite Good,” but it is only ever *ordered* to that end by *supernatural* grace.⁷⁹ The rest of this study will seek to demonstrate that Bonaventure carefully distinguishes the orders of nature and of grace in order to manifest more clearly the particular way in which the two are related. Nature anticipates grace and grace presupposes nature, so that that which is inchoately attained in nature awaits its perfection in grace. Indeed, the whole of creation

⁷⁶ Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 161. Cf. Emery, “And as created light, the image of God’s diffusive goodness, binds together and energizes being in every degree, and is the common form of all bodies, so the virtue of charity binds together and energizes the diverse virtues of the moral life, and is the common form of them all” (“Reading the World,” 211). See especially, *Brev.*, V.4.6 [V, 256b-257a] (Monti, trans., 186).

⁷⁷ *Brev.*, V.4.3 [V, 256b], *et respectu finis* ..., “one of these is concerned with its end as such, the other with the means that lead to it” (Monti, trans., 185).

⁷⁸ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.1, q.1 [II, 696a], *non decrevit Deus hominem perducere ad perfectionem* ...

⁷⁹ *Brev.*, IV.6.5 [V, 247a] (Monti, trans., 152). A substantially similar relation between nature and grace, and natural and supernatural ends, can be found in Aquinas, *Questiones disputatae de veritate*, q.14, a.10, ad 2; *ST I*, q.62, a.2; *I-II*, q.3, a.8.

awaits its perfection in the perfection of man, in nature and grace, so that all of the works that came forth from God (*exitus*) might return, by means of man, through whom all things are ordered to God.

3. Contemplation: The Means to Perfection

With Bonaventure's concept of the relation between nature and grace in mind, we are now in a position to consider his particular understanding of contemplation as one of the principal means whereby we are to pursue our perfection, in nature and grace, and ultimately our beatific rest in relation to God. Not only does the manner in which God created the world and formed it in the space of six days teach us *that* we too must seek a fuller and progressive formation from God, it also sets a pattern *by means of which* we should seek God through and in the things he has made. Bonaventure writes: "There is a sixfold vision, which corresponds to the works of the six days [of creation]; through these, the lesser world (i.e., man⁸⁰) is completed, just as the greater world was in six days," culminating with perfect beatific rest on the seventh.⁸¹ In other words, creation itself is intended to be the created medium to guide our contemplative endeavor with respect to both the order of nature and the order of grace.⁸² The first concerns the contemplation of God "through nature" (*per naturam*), that is, "what our understanding (*intelligentia*) can reach by itself" or by its own natural operations.⁸³ And given his understanding of the relation between nature and grace, we may accurately expect the second, which he says is "through faith" (*per fidem*), to perfect what is inchoate in the former by extending the soul's reach and elevating its powers to contemplate God as he has supernaturally revealed himself in Scripture, so that, being "taught by the Scripture"

⁸⁰ *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 703b], ... *sic etiam fieret circa hominem, qui est minor mundus.*

⁸¹ *Hex.*, III.24 [III, 347a] (Hammond, trans., 123). Cf. *II Sent.*, d.12, a.1, q.2 [II, 297a], *Cui etiam senarius numerus attestatur* ..., "Likewise, the number six is attested to because time is [needed] to merit by means of the world age of the present life, so that afterwards rest may be given to man, for the perfection of merit cannot be attained fully without the consummation of final grace, after which no evening follows. And therefore, the seventh day does not have an evening assigned to it in Scripture."

⁸² Cf. *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 5a], *Fecit igitur Deus hominem* ..., "Therefore, God has made man upright, as he made him converted to himself. For in man's conversion to God he was not only rectified to that which is above, but also to that which is below."

⁸³ *Hex.*, III.24, 25 [III, 347a] (Hammond, trans., 123).

(*per Scripturam erudita*), the soul may more fully and perfectly apprehend and contemplate his trinitarian presence in creation.⁸⁴ First, however, a definition of contemplation must be attempted.

3.1 *Toward a Definition of Contemplation*

A concise definition of contemplation is more difficult to ascertain than one might expect, especially given the frequency with which the word appears and the primary significance it enjoys in Bonaventure's system of thought. Jean-Francois Bonnefoy, in his exceptional treatise on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, remarks that "one might be surprised, by browsing the imposing mass of theological or mystical works of St. Bonaventure, to find no study on contemplation, no definition or description suitable for all forms of this exercise."⁸⁵ But as difficult as it may be, the basic idea seems to be that of rest, or what he quintessentially calls the "quiet of contemplation" (*contemplationis quietem*).⁸⁶ Accordingly, contemplation may be defined best in relation to other cognitive acts. Whereas rational investigation follows a discursive way of reasoning that seeks the knowledge of one thing relative to another, and meditation refers to an especially prolonged and concentrated investigation into a specific matter, contemplation is the relative completion of both, whereby the soul attains and rests in that which was ultimately sought. "No one arrives at contemplation except by means of penetrating meditation, a holy life-style, and devout prayer."⁸⁷ In other words, the labor of the discursive mind finds its rest in the contemplative mind.⁸⁸ Bonaventure frequently speaks of a fixed (*fixus*) contemplative gaze that is suspended in contemplation (*intelligentiae per contemplationem suspensa*), whereby the intellect possesses a simple intuition

⁸⁴ *Hex.*, III.24, 26-28 [III, 347a-b] (Hammond, trans., 123).

⁸⁵ J.-Fr. Bonnefoy, *Le Saint-Esprit et Ses Dons selon Saint Bonaventure* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1929), 194.

⁸⁶ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b] (Hayes, trans., 49). The only time that Bonaventure explicitly gives a definition of contemplation, it is taken directly from Richard of St. Victor. In a post-Pentecost sermon, Bonaventure says: "Whence Richard, in the first book of *On Contemplation*, says: 'Contemplation is the unimpeded penetration of the mind with uplifted admiration into the spectacles of wisdom,'" *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, Sermon 41.3, trans. Timothy J. Johnson (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008), 441; *XIV Post Pent. Sermo 1*, 3 [IX, 408a], *Contemplatio est libera mentis perspicacia in sapientiae spectacula cum admiratione suspensa*, quoted from *Benjamin Major*, I.4. Cf. Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Major*, in *The Classics of Western Spirituality: The Twelve Patriarchs; The Mystical Ark; Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. Grover A. Zinn (NY: Paulist Press, 1979), 158.

⁸⁷ *Itin.*, I.8 [V, 298a] (Hayes, 53).

⁸⁸ Cf. *Dominica XIV Post Pentecosten Sermo 1* [IX, 409a]; Augustine, *de Trinitate*, XV.25.45.

(*simplici intuitu*) and comprehensive insight into the irreducible presence of God through and in the things he has made.⁸⁹

Thus, it is through contemplation that the faculties of the soul, and therefore the soul itself, most fully attain their object and end and, therefore, their rest in knowing and loving God and everyway he is manifest through and in his creatures. As it shall later be shown, this rest may be understood both relatively and perfectly. The faculties of the soul may enjoy a relative rest in the contemplation of God insofar as he may be known and loved by purely natural means. But because such an apprehension does not fully possess God in himself, the soul simultaneously cries out for the further perfection of that knowledge and love and, therefore, for a more perfect rest, whereby the soul is elevated by means of grace to that which is above and beyond nature alone.

Regardless, both degrees of contemplation presuppose that God is in some way present *to us*, that is, to our intellect and will, in order to be known and loved. The significance of this point is made clear in the second book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, where Bonaventure asks whether Adam, in the state of innocence, was able to know God just as he will be known in the state of glory.⁹⁰ In his response, he distinguishes the various ways and degrees to which the knowledge of God is attainable relative to the different states of man (innocence, grace, and glory). Bonaventure identifies four possible modes of knowing God: (i) through faith; (ii) through contemplation; (iii) through theophanies (*per apparitionem*); (iv) through clear vision.⁹¹ But regardless of the mode of knowing or the state of the knower, in order for knowledge to be possible at all the object of knowledge must be present to the mind of the knower in some way. Bonaventure is quite clear, however, that God is not present to the intellect in an identical way in every mode of knowledge or in all three modes of being. We may know God, he says, either through his being present *to us* (*mihi*) or through his being present *to another* (*alii*).

This last distinction is significant, for by it Bonaventure distinguishes the knowledge of faith, simply understood, from the knowledge of contemplation. Through faith, God is made present to our minds by means of his presence *to another*. Surely Christ, the proper object of faith, is made present to the believer through his invisible mission, informing the mind through the impression which Scripture leaves. But Bonaventure's point is that faith lays hold of truth *as*

⁸⁹ *Hex.*, XII.11 [V, 386a]; *Commentarius in Librum Ecclesiastes*, IV.5 (v.4) [VI, 38a], *Haec contemplatio est liber ac perspicax et defixus intuitus*.

⁹⁰ *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 542-548].

⁹¹ *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 545a].

revealed and, thus, as that which is believed on the basis of the authority of another. The mysteries of the faith, the Trinity and incarnation for instance, are not realities immediately present to our senses, the doorways to our mind, or to the natural powers of reason alone, but must be made present by the supernatural revelation of God's mind to our mind, upon whose knowledge and authority alone faith rests. But the knowledge of contemplation is different. As we shall see, contemplation may follow a natural or supernatural path, the latter of which certainly presupposes the knowledge of faith. But in either case, contemplation is unlike faith simply understood in that it denotes our apprehension of God insofar as he is in some way present to us, that is, through and in the things he has made. In other words, although contemplation is like faith in that it is not itself an exercise of discursive reasoning, it is unlike faith in that contemplation is the relative completion and culmination of such a process, whether it be philosophical or theological, whereby God's presence *to us* is apprehended and discerned *by us* through and in the things he has made.

In this limited sense, contemplation entails a mode of knowledge that is not unlike theophany and vision, wherein God's presence is made known to the soul, not only through his presence *to another*, but in some way *to us*, even if still mediated through and in creatures. That being said, contemplation must still be further distinguished.⁹² The Lord has at times made himself known by means of a symbolic presence (*signo proprio*) in the form of an apparition or theophany; but this, he says, is a special grace (*gratiae specialis*) only given to a few. Of greater interest is how Bonaventure proceeds to distinguish the knowledge of God through contemplation from the knowledge of God through clear vision (*apertam visionem*). The latter has reference to the beatific vision itself in the state of consummate glory, wherein God is immediately present to us in himself and clearly seen face to face in his own light. There is no greater mode of knowledge, and Bonaventure considers it both contrary to both reason and Scripture to suppose that the soul would ever be able to attain *ultimate* rest in anything less than this. Indeed, this would have been the reward of Adam's merit had he remained faithful; more importantly, this is now the Christian's entire reward in glory through Christ's merit alone.⁹³ And because the rest attainable in this life

⁹² *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 545a-b].

⁹³ This conclusion is echoed in his *Collations on the Seven Gifts* wherein he distinguishes between philosophical knowledge, theological knowledge, the knowledge of grace, and the knowledge of glory. The first two are gifts of God in the broad sense, the knowledge of grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit properly speaking, and the knowledge of glory, wherein the soul ultimately finds its rest, is not only a gift but a reward. *Donis Spiritus*, IV.4 [V, 474a-b].

through contemplation is a foretaste of the beatific vision in glory, Bonaventure sometimes refers to the beatific vision as the perfect form of contemplation (*perfecta contemplatio*).⁹⁴

Insofar as both concern the knowledge of God as man's end, the contemplation of God possible for the wayfarer and that which is obtained by the glorified saints in heaven may be said to differ in degree of perfection, for that which is begun in this life reaches perfect consummation in the life to come. "Concerning the last knowledge, the knowledge in glory, ... [t]his knowledge is begun in contemplatives, it is made everlasting in the departed; it is brought to consummation in the risen."⁹⁵ But more precisely, as it concerns their respective modes of knowledge and of the knower, they differ in kind. By distinguishing these two, and by assigning the latter exclusively to the blessed in heaven, Bonaventure more frequently than not narrows his concept of contemplation to a mode of knowing that is suitable to this life, i.e., to a mode of knowledge that is common to the state of innocence as well as the state of grace, differing only in their degree of perfection. As such, it may be observed that contemplation is a mode of knowledge whereby the soul exercises a degree of rest in proportion to its apprehension of the presence of God through and in the things he has made, as if through and in a mirror (*speculum*). And precisely for this reason, the contemplation of the wayfarer is only ever *mediocrem*, lacking consummate perfection.⁹⁶

Wherefore, in the state of glory alone will God be seen immediately and in his own substance, so that nothing will be obscure (*obscuritas*). But in both the state of innocence and the state of fallen nature, God is seen by a mediating mirror (*speculo*). But these differ because in the state of innocence God is seen through a clear mirror (*per speculum clarum*), for no cloud of sin was in the soul at that time. But in the state of misery God is seen through an obscure mirror (*per speculum obscuratum*) on account of the sin of the first man. And thus, he is seen now through a mirror and in an enigma (*per speculum et in aenigmate*).⁹⁷

By means of contemplation, God is present to the mind through and in his effects, as if apprehended through and in a mirror. The analogy of a mediating mirror is frequently employed by Bonaventure throughout his works. Inasmuch as a mirror produces a reflection of an object, an

⁹⁴ *Hex.*, XX.9-10 [V, 427a] (Hammond, trans., 346).

⁹⁵ *Donis Spiritus*, IV.25 [V, 479a-b] (Hayes, trans., 104); cf. *Brev.*, V.6.7.

⁹⁶ Rapture, which is an ecstatic mode of excessive sweetness that touches only a few (2 Cor. 12:2), is a privilege that transcends the experience of the wayfarer *as wayfarer*. Cf. *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 544]; d.35, a.sole, q.1 [II, 774b].

⁹⁷ *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 544b-545a].

object may also be *reflected upon* by means of a mediating mirror.⁹⁸ Bonaventure sometimes expresses this mode of reflection with the concept of *contuitio*. *Contuitio* is the act of co-intuiting the presence of God through and in the creature; it is the mind's awareness of God's presence through and in the things he has made. As we shall come to see throughout this study, *contuitio* refers to a contemplative awareness of the divine order through and in the mirror of the created order. J. A. Wayne Hellmann states that "*contuitio* is a co-recognition, a co-knowledge of one object together with another, so that one cannot recognize one without also recognizing the other. *Contuitio* is a realization of order. The realization of the order is a simultaneous realization of both the created and uncreated, since the one order cannot be seen without the other."⁹⁹ Hellmann helpfully points out that "in every creature there is something of God, and this something is *ordo*; this represents the underlying structure of everything. This is Bonaventure's basic insight."¹⁰⁰ Creation is a book of mirrors and, because it comes from God, it reflects and expresses an ordered relation of all things to its divine author. When it is read in a certain way — that is, contemplatively — created things become for us a ladder (another one of Bonaventure's favorite metaphors) by which the soul may gradually ascend to God.

Bonaventure most clearly expresses this idea in his *Itinerarium*, wherein he puts forth a threefold way of ascent to God corresponding to the threefold existence of things: in matter (i.e., actually in things), in understanding (i.e., intentionally in the mind), and in the eternal art (i.e., eternally in God).¹⁰¹ All things reflect their maker, but some things do so more fully according to their degree of participation in and metaphysical proximity to God. The soul, therefore, must begin its ascent with the lower and more remote things, contemplating God by the mirror of his vestiges, i.e., corporeal and sensible beings existing outside the mind. But as the external world of intelligible things comes to exist immaterially within the rational soul, the contemplative is led to a higher degree of contemplation, wherein God may be contemplated by the mirror of his image,

⁹⁸ Randall Smith comments on the relative insignificance in the *Itinerarium* between Bonaventure's use of *speculatio* in contrast to his use of *contemplatio*: "Some of the commentary on the *Itinerarium* focuses on how *speculatio* should be distinguished from *contemplatio*. The sources Bonaventure is working with talk about 'seeing' God through the things that are made, so it made sense for him to use related terms. ... The key point is that Bonaventure uses the term *speculatio* because he wants to communicate the image of 'seeing through a mirror,' dimly at first, and more fully in time with God's help and the proper discipline of the mind and soul," *Bonaventure's Journey*, 111, 113.

⁹⁹ J.A. Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, trans. J.M. Hammond (Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2001), 15.

¹⁰⁰ Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 14.

¹⁰¹ *Itin.*, I.2-3 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 47).

insofar as the mind is able to enter into itself and reflect upon the presence and activity of God within itself. In this way the soul may also be led higher, above itself and beyond itself, to contemplate God himself, by the light shining upon the mind from above, inasmuch as is possible for the wayfarer. This, for the most part, constitutes the structure of his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. Bonaventure envisions three successive degrees of contemplating God through and in the things he has made, beginning with the various ways in which God is reflected in the world of things existing outside of us, which leads to an intermediary journey inward to consider God as he is reflected in the way the world comes to exist within us, until we are led beyond and above ourselves to consider the First Principle of all things himself.

The soul's contemplative journey into God, as presented in the *Itinerarium*, presupposes that God is present *to us* both *through* and *in* the things he has made and, therefore, may be rationally investigated and contemplatively known “as *through* (*per*) a mirror and as *in* (*in*) a mirror.”¹⁰² In this, Bonaventure adds an important distinction that effectively doubles the threefold structure of the *Itinerarium* and forces us to distinguish two modes, as well as degrees, of contemplation. Whether a person is contemplating God by means of the vestiges outside of them, or the image within them, or the divine light shining upon them from above, Bonaventure notes that each of the three levels of ascent to God “may be doubled depending on whether we consider God as *through* a mirror (*per speculum*) or as *in* a mirror (*in speculo*).”¹⁰³ Near the end of the *Itinerarium*, he explains more clearly that these two modes of contemplation apprehend God according to two different orders of reality: “The first of these concerns the essential attributes of God; the second concerns the properties of the persons. ... The first method fixes our attention primarily and first of all on Being Itself (*ipsum esse*) The second method fixes our attention on the reality of the Good (*ipsum bonum*).”¹⁰⁴ What Bonaventure intends by this distinction and its significance for our understanding of his concept of contemplation is the principal focus of this entire study and awaits its fuller treatment. But some explanation is presently warranted, even if only partially and as a means of introduction.

¹⁰² *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b] (Hayes, trans., 49). Cf. *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, q.3 [I, 74b], *Ad intelligentiam praedictorum notandum, quod aliud est cognoscere Deum in creatura, aliud per creaturam*.

¹⁰³ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b] (Hayes, trans., 49).

¹⁰⁴ *Itin.*, V.1-2 [V, 308] (Hayes, trans., 111).

3.2 *Nature and Grace: Philosophical and Theological Contemplation*

Bonaventure illumines the entire contemplative endeavor with an analogy that brings us back to the original work of creation and its relation to man's pursuit of beatific perfection: "Thus, it is necessary that these three principal levels of ascent be increased to six. Just as God completed the entire world in six days and rested on the seventh, so the microcosm (i.e., humanity) ought to be led in a most orderly way through six levels of illumination to the quiet of contemplation."¹⁰⁵ As the created order was perfected over the span of six days, so also the rational soul is perfected by means of three ascending stages of contemplation (without, within, and above) relative to two ascending orders of reality (nature and grace). Not only does each stage of contemplation elevate and perfect the former, in accordance with Bonaventure's understanding of the relationship between nature and grace, and the perfection of nature through grace, we shall come to see that God may be contemplated by means of the created order at each of the three stages of contemplation (without, within, and above) according to two distinct orders of knowledge: natural and supernatural — which is to say, one and the same book of creation can be read both philosophically and theologically relative to two different but related orders of reality. And just as nature is perfected by grace, and natural reason by graced-reason, so also philosophical contemplation is perfected by theological contemplation, and through both the soul is increasingly perfected in communion with God with whom it and its contemplative endeavors find ultimate rest.

4. An Outline of the Chapters

It will be argued in what follows that according to these two modes of contemplation, the book of creation, or what Bonaventure calls omniform wisdom, can be read in two distinct but related ways, philosophically and theologically, according to two distinct but related orders of reflection, nature and grace respectively. By reading Bonaventure in this way (chs. 2-3), four unique contributions to Bonaventurian studies will emerge. First, this particular understanding of contemplation will support the further claim that Bonaventure advocates a much more affirming

¹⁰⁵ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b] (Hayes, trans., 49).

view of philosophy, as epistemically distinct and yet organically related to theology, than is often allowed (ch. 4). Second, this particular reading of Bonaventure encourages a more nuanced understanding of his doctrine of divine illumination, wherein the distinction and relation of philosophical and theological knowledge, and the epistemic conditions that are necessary in order to ground each, is more carefully observed (ch. 5). Third, it will be argued that this particular reading strategy can be effectively applied to the *Itinerarium*, which will not only produce a distinct understanding of its structure but will also serve to confirm our overall proposal (ch. 6). Fourth, through the occasional comparison with Aquinas, this study will demonstrate that their differences are not half as pronounced as they are often portrayed and, thus, that a more catholic reading of St. Bonaventure, namely, one that is less idiosyncratic and more relevant to the catholic tradition as a whole, even the Reformed, seems warranted.

Chapters 2 and 3 will consider how Bonaventure's twofold understanding of the created order, according to nature and grace, provides the twofold intelligible medium for the soul's contemplative endeavor. As outlined in the *Itinerarium* and explained above, there are two principal modes of contemplating God, as he is manifest *through* and *in* creatures relative to two different orders of reflection. Chapter 2 begins with Bonaventure's general concept of order itself, insofar as the very intelligibility of things presupposes an intelligible order. The chapter then proceeds to consider Bonaventure's first order of reflection, what he calls the essential order or the created order existing among beings. Bonaventure maintains that relative to this order of things the essential attributes and being of God may be contemplated *through creatures*, according to a natural, even philosophical, apprehension of the uncreated cause of all created beings.

Chapter 3 introduces Bonaventure's second order of reflection, what he calls the order of persons, whereby God may be more perfectly contemplated *in creatures*, according to a supernatural, even theological, apprehension of the Trinity as the end to which all things are intrinsically ordered. Accordingly, the chapter begins with an account of Bonaventure's doctrine of the Trinity, as supernaturally revealed in Scripture, and then proceeds to show how, for Bonaventure, the intrinsic order of the divine persons is similarly and variously reflected *within* every created effect, as the ultimate end according to which each thing is intrinsically ordered. In sum, one and the same book of creation can be read both philosophically (chapter 2) and theologically (chapter 3) relative to two different but related orders of reality and their corresponding modes of contemplation.

Chapters 4 and 5 seek to address the relevant epistemological issues. Chapter 4 argues that this particular interpretation of Bonaventure, namely his twofold understanding of the created order and their corresponding modes of contemplation, leads to a particular understanding of the way he relates philosophy and theology relative to the soul's unified pursuit of wisdom. The conclusions that will be drawn are already anticipated in his doctrine of Adam's twofold creation. Even apart from grace, Adam was capable of rising by means of the natural virtues from a knowledge of created beings, which are connatural with the human mind (*quae homini naturaliter*), to a properly philosophical knowledge of uncreated *being*.¹⁰⁶ For even if he were left to the limitations of his natural powers, the judgment of reason would have still remained in him, by which he would have been capable of a natural or philosophical knowledge and love of his Creator, proportionate to what is attainable within the limits of his natural powers alone. *Through creatures*, and apart from any dependence upon the grace of faith or theology, Adam would have been capable of a philosophical knowledge of God insofar as he is the principle of all being.¹⁰⁷ But, as Steven A. Long points out, "to desire, know, and love God as principle of all being is something quite different than to desire, know, and love God as object of supernatural beatitude."¹⁰⁸ As such, the perfection of Adam's philosophical knowledge, by means of philosophical contemplation, though sufficient for its own limited ends and within its own order, would have awakened and elicited within his soul an inchoate desire or disposition for a more intimate relation and union with God, unattainable by his own natural operations, which only a properly theological knowledge could provide. For although Adam was not *naturally ordered* to this higher end, Bonaventure maintains that he was *naturally ordained* and *orderable* to it. Bonaventure is clear that only divine grace can effectively elevate the soul and thus actually order human nature to its supernatural object and end and thus perfect it through a more intimate and ultimate, even theological, knowledge and love of God. Before such a union can be had, the supernatural virtues had to be freely given and aroused within Adam by the introduction of a supernaturally revealed object, which God provided, not only by means of walking with Adam in the Garden, but also by means of a supra-rational command superadded to the natural law written on his heart, represented by the tree of knowledge, together with a supra-natural reward superadded

¹⁰⁶ *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*, 4 [V, 320b] (Hayes, trans., 41).

¹⁰⁷ *II Sent.*, d.28, a.2, q.3 [II, 688-690].

¹⁰⁸ Long, *Natura Pura*, 47.

to his own natural end, represented by the tree of life.¹⁰⁹ And it is according to this grace-infused knowledge and love of God whereby Adam would have been elevated and perfected according to a more perfect mode of contemplation; illumined with the faith-infused knowledge of “the properties of the persons,” namely the supernatural revelation of the Trinity, and of his supernatural reward and the way of obtaining it, Adam would have thereby been enabled to apprehend an even more intimate, personal, and trinitarian, presence of God *in* the created order. By means of this more perfect, even theological, mode of contemplation, Adam would have been led into a more intimate, perfect, and full, communion with God as his highest and ultimate end. In this way, nature is perfected by grace, natural knowledge is perfected by a graced-knowledge, and philosophy and philosophical contemplation is perfected by means of theology and theological contemplation.

Chapter 5 picks up on a particular epistemological issue that is well-known but hotly debated in Bonaventuran studies, namely the doctrine of divine illumination whereby we are principally guided and motivated toward our contemplative end. It will be argued that Bonaventure’s understanding of illumination must likewise be located and understood within this twofold schema. Understood within a larger metaphysics of light, Bonaventure contends that an extrinsic influence of the divine light must be implicated in our cognitive processes in order to intrinsically move and direct us to our end, naturally and supernaturally conceived. However, Bonaventure applies this differently with respect to philosophical and theological contemplation. By situating the doctrine within the twofold schema of nature and grace, not only does a coherent understanding of the doctrine of illumination emerge but the coherence of our larger proposal concerning the distinction and relation between philosophical and theological contemplation will be further corroborated.

Chapter 6 brings the study to its conclusion by demonstrating how the proposed interpretation of Bonaventure’s understanding of order, and particularly the relation between nature and grace, as expressed through the lens of philosophical and theological contemplation, is manifest in the order and structure of one of his greatest works, the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*.

¹⁰⁹ Adam could not have known God as Trinity, neither could he have known not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, nor could he have known that eternal beatific life in communion with the triune God would have been his reward on the condition of his perfect obedience, from nature or natural reason alone. All of these things were supernaturally revealed by way of covenant, beyond what could be known or obtained by his own natural powers alone. And thus, the true apprehension of all of these supernatural things required that the soul be elevated and ordered by means of the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

It will be argued that a close reading of the *Itinerarium* not only supports our larger proposal, but our larger proposal itself also offers a new reading of the *Itinerarium*. Again, Bonaventure conceives of two modes of contemplation, one that follows a philosophical path and another that follows a theological path. The one is presupposed by and perfected in the other, and when taken together these two contemplative paths constitute the principal means by which we pursue our own perfection and end. Just as nature is presupposed by and perfected in grace, philosophical contemplation is presupposed by and perfected in theological contemplation, and the soul that pursues God through them is itself perfected by means of both.

PART II
METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS

II

The Created Order: *Philosophical Foundations*

There is a place for everything and everything is to be *understood* in its place. For Bonaventure especially, the intelligibility of all things depends upon the order inherent to reality itself. The intelligibility of things presupposes an intelligible order. If all things were an incidental aggregate of materials and chaotic forces, there would be no “cosmos;” there would be plurality without unity, parts without the whole. The so-called natural sciences, for instance, could never exist under such a condition, for the scientist classifies things according to common natures and specific differences, so as to know one thing *relative* to other things or as one thing hierarchically ordered to others. Plurality is unintelligible apart from an underlying unity. But where there is both, there is order — a *universe*. If order did not exist outside of us, reason within us would have no way of reflecting upon reality. This is so because it is the task of reason to discover and reflect upon the objective order and relations existing in the world around us. Therefore, our ways of knowing aim to mirror, or reflect, the very structure of reality itself.¹

Ontology grounds our epistemology. Order establishes intelligibility, wherein one thing may be known relative to another, such that the knowledge of one thing may also lead to the knowledge of another. Knowledge, as such, consists in an apprehension of the order within creation itself and, ultimately, how that order in some way participates in and leads us to a knowledge of the divine order from which it originates, after which it was patterned, and to which it has been ordered.² In order to demonstrate this, we must briefly consider the concept of order (*ordo*) itself. This will serve the greater end of demonstrating how God, according to Bonaventure, may be known and contemplated by natural means, that is, *through* our knowledge of the created order, which is the medium for Bonaventure’s contemplative endeavor. We begin with the place of order in Bonaventure’s thought.

¹ Cf. *Hex.*, IV.2 [V, 349]; Rik Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 42-43; Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 10.

² *Hex.*, III.2 [V, 343a].

1. The Place of Order in Bonaventure's Thought

We begin with a consideration of Bonaventure's concept of order (*ordo*) itself. From his general understanding of order will emerge a certain way of viewing the cosmic order in relation to the divine order from which it emanates. Just as an effect emanates from its cause, the created order mirrors and reflects the perfection of the divine order from which it emanates. To know what a thing is, therefore, is to apprehend it within its order of relations; contemplation especially consists in the apprehension of all things in relation to God as both their first principle and their ultimate end. As such, the created order serves as the intelligible medium for Bonaventure's contemplative endeavor. And the rational creature, as we shall come to see, is uniquely capable of *reflecting upon* this intelligibility and thereby bringing all things back to God through knowledge and love.

1.1 The Number Three

Even a cursory reading of Bonaventure will reveal his fondness for patterns of three. While this may at first appear arbitrary, he contends that it reflects an order and perfection intrinsic to and communicated by the structure of reality itself. Numbers bespeak order and proportion; in this way, all things involve number. And according to Bonaventure, the number three is the first number to denote the highest perfection of order, for it has within itself a beginning, a middle, and an end (*principium, medium et ultimum*).³ And therefore, no less than three terms will be discernible wherever there is order.⁴

³ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.4 [I, 58a], *Et hoc est quod dicit Philosophus in principio de Caelo et mundo ...*; cf. Aristotle, *De caelo*, I.1. Also, *Itin.*, II.10 [V, 302b] (Hayes, trans., 77); Boethius, *de Institutione Arithmetica*, whom Bonaventure seems to be referencing. Cf. Luke Togni, "The Hierarchical Center in the Thought of St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2018): 140.

⁴ Alexander of Hales: "perfection refers to that which lacks nothing with respect to the parts pertaining to its own harmony," *Dicitur perfectum cui nihil deest de partibus sibi convenientibus* (*Summa* II-I [n.91]).

The perfection of the number three may seem like a novel idea to us, but it is not original to Bonaventure.⁵ In addition to Alexander of Hales, the most notable among his sources is St. Augustine and his treatise *De Musica*. In it, Augustine explores the arithmetical basis upon which musical patterns are composed, though, as Alexander Schaefer points out, Augustine was aware that the particular speculations found in that chapter have metaphysical implications for the very structure of reality itself.⁶ In search for an arithmetical basis for order, Augustine begins with the assertion that every ordered series must have a principle or beginning. But a beginning, to be a beginning, must be “the beginning of something,” which establishes a second term. Similarly, a complete or perfect order must have an end, a *telos* or ultimate term. But an end cannot be an end “unless it is the end of something.” In other words, the beginning and the end, to be what we call a beginning and an end, must in some way be both distinct from and related to one another. To this relation Augustine adds another distinction, namely, that you cannot “go from the beginning to the end without going through the middle.”⁷ So he concludes that for there to be order, not lacking anything necessary to establish the unity of its terms, “it must consist of a beginning, middle, and end.”⁸

Augustine then endeavors to show that the first numerical instance in which a beginning, middle, and end are attained is with respect to the number three. In the first place, three contains within itself a perfect relation between one and two. The number one itself merely denotes the beginning term of an order that is lacking a middle and an end, and the number two itself denotes something similar to that of one. It might be expected that two denotes at least a beginning and an end, but Augustine reasserts the axiom that “nothing can attain its end except through a middle.”⁹

⁵ For the historical sources behind this concept, see Alexander Schaefer, “The Position and Function of Man in the Created World According to Saint Bonaventure,” *Franciscan Studies* 21, no.3/4 (September-December 1961): 233-382. The notion that, if two extremes are united, there must necessarily be an intermediary that unites them, goes as far back as Orpheus, as may be seen in the ancient Orphic fragments, and Pythagoras similarly taught that the number three, although it is indivisible, expresses within itself a beginning, middle, and end. But in addition to the more ancient sources, Schaefer retraces Bonaventure’s sources to Alexander of Hales, John of Damascus, Gregory of Nazianzus, Nemeseus of Emesa, and of course Augustine himself (pp.266-279), as well as the Neoplatonic tradition mediated through the influence of Richard of St. Victor and Pseudo-Dionysius, through which Bonaventure especially came to associate the perfection of three with the specific notion of perfect order (pp.279-302).

⁶ Schaefer, “The Position and Function of Man,” (1961): 274.

⁷ Augustine, *De musica*, I.XII.20. For the English translation, see Saint Augustine, *On Music*, trans. Robert Catesby Taliaferro, in *The Immortality of the Soul; The Magnitude of the Soul; On Music; The Advantage of Believing; On Faith in Things Unseen*, ed. Hermigild Dressler, O.F.M. (Washington, D.C.: CUP, 2002), 195.

⁸ Augustine, *De musica*, I.XII.20 (Taliaferro, 196).

⁹ Augustine, *De musica*, I.XII.21 (Taliaferro, 197); cf. Bonaventure, *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 4 [II, 42a], *Si ponere est extrema componibilia, ergo et medium*.

In other words, where there is no middle term, neither will there be an end term. Instead, the number two can only denote another beginning, but not without a relation. Because the number two is the sum of one and one, it denotes a second beginning that is itself *from the first*; two denotes the *beginning of addition* or the *origin of combination*, and “therefore it is this first beginning from which [*a quo*], but the second through which [*per quod*], all numbers are found to be.”¹⁰ This conclusion naturally leads him to the number three, which proceeds from the additive relation of one and two.

Three is the first whole number consisting of a beginning, middle, and end and is the first number to establish perfect order.¹¹ Augustine points out that the number three proceeds in perfect order from the additive relation of the two preceding numbers, which cannot be said of any other ordered sequence.¹² This is suggestive to Augustine of an unparalleled harmony of relations among the first three numbers, a harmony that “tends to a greater unity the more compressed and the more closely connected it is,” as when “the means agree with the extremes, and the extremes with the means.”¹³ And this proportion is achieved *first* and in the *highest* way in the number three. It establishes the *highest* perfection of order insofar as no subsequent number establishes a greater degree of harmony and unity between the extremes and the means. In this ordered sequence of relations, the extreme terms, the beginning and the end, correspond to *one* and *three*, whereas *two* most perfectly unites the extremes insofar as it stands in equal proportion to both terms: one is exceeded by two just as two is exceeded by three. Schaefer notes here that “the sum of the extremes is, in this sentence, equal to the twice-mentioned middle term; the result of the addition is four in both cases, a fact which manifests the complete balance and agreement.”¹⁴ Therefore, three is the first and greatest number to achieve a most perfect intrinsic order, wherein a unity in plurality and plurality in unity is found.

¹⁰ Augustine, *De musica*, I.XII.21 (Taliaferro, 198).

¹¹ Whereas the number one is an indivisible unit ($1 \div 1 = 1$), and the number two constitutes a second beginning and, therefore, the beginning of diversity, the number three reconciles unity and diversity in an indivisible harmony.

¹² Augustine, *De musica*, I.XII.22. In the order 1, 2, 3, the addition of the first two leads perfectly to the third. But the same cannot be said in any subsequent order; in the sequence 2, 3, 4, the addition of two and three is five rather than four which comes next in the order of things. Cf. The Fibonacci sequence.

¹³ Augustine, *De musica*, I.XII.22 (Taliaferro, 199).

¹⁴ Schaefer, “The Position and Function of Man,” (1961): 276. Cf. Augustine, *De musica*, I.XII.23.

1 is exceeded by 2
proportionate to the way
2 is exceeded by 3

with such harmony that

The extremes combined
together produce four ($1 + 3 = 4$)
just as
The twice-mentioned middle
produces four ($2 + 2 = 4$)

Alexander had discerned from Augustine's meditation that there are extended metaphysical implications for all reality, created and uncreated. Bonaventure followed these two great masters in maintaining that, because the first and highest perfection of an order consists in three, there must be neither fewer nor greater than three persons in the Godhead, in whom exists all perfection eminently.¹⁵ And because there may be degrees of perfection to any order relative to the degree of unity and harmony between its means and extremes, Bonaventure maintained that the divine order not only manifests the highest perfection of order, a most perfect plurality in utmost simplicity, but is also the archetype and exemplar of all created reality. And thus, as an effect emanates from its cause, the created order mirrors and reflects, to varying degrees of relative perfection, the absolute perfection of the divine order from which it emanates.¹⁶ J.A. Wayne Hellmann writes, "The basis of order," and therefore of the intelligibility of all things, "is the number three, and any mention of order will in some way be an expression of the number three." Therefore, Bonaventure's fondness for patterns of three is no mere pedagogical technique, any more than order itself is a mere logical construct imposed upon reality. "Rather," as Hellmann suggests, "it is the inner structure of all reality. All of existence shares in some way in perfection, and perfection is the actualization of order. Thus, in God, the most perfect, as well as in the imperfect creature, the order of the number three is to be found."¹⁷

1.2 *The Terms of Order*

Drawing upon the aforementioned background, Bonaventure defines order (*ordo*) in this way: "all order necessarily consists of a lower and a higher and a middle" or again, "wherein there is perfect order, therein is a relation of beginning, middle, and end."¹⁸ And to know a thing is to know its terms of order, its beginning and end, its point of origin as well as its point of perfection

¹⁵ *I Sent.*, d.2, a. sole, q.4 [I, 56-58]; *Hex.*, VIII.12 [V, 371a]. Cf. Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in I Sent.*, 28, 5, d, *prima autem perfectio ordinis* Cf. Schaefer, "The Position and Function of Man," (1961): 274n140; cf. pp.273-279.

¹⁶ A cause cannot give what it does not already have in a more eminent way. Every effect bears something of its cause, for every causal agent acts according to its nature and, therefore, brings about an effect that reflects that nature in some limited way.

¹⁷ Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 12.

¹⁸ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 2 [II, 41b], *omnis ordo habet de necessitate infimum et summum et medium*, and *Hex.*, XI.7 [V, 381a], *ubi est perfectus ordo, ibi est ratio principii medii, et ultimi*. Cf. *II Sent.*, d.11, a.1, q.1, resp. [II, 277b].

or consummation. But without a middle term uniting the two extremes, in which there is no opposition but something common to both extremes, there would be no discernible relation between the beginning and the end. “Where a combination of the extremes is established, there is also a medium.”¹⁹

Bonaventure employs an array of terminology in a variety of contexts in order to convey this idea. For instance, because God manifests his wisdom in the order and arrangement of the created order, and because all order necessarily consists of a lower (*infimum*), a higher (*summum*), and a medium (*medium*), Bonaventure concludes that the perfection and order of the universe necessarily requires three kinds of substances: spiritual, corporeal, and the human being which is a composition of both and is, therefore, a medium uniting the two extremes.²⁰ In another context, Bonaventure defends the appropriateness of God using angels as his ministers for the sake of our salvation; he refers to the lowest (*postrema*), middle (*media*), and highest (*summa*), ascribing to the angels the middle place between God and man.²¹ Similarly, when discussing the intrinsic order of the divine persons, Bonaventure again asserts that where “there is perfect order, therein is a relation of beginning (*principium*), middle (*medium*), and end (*ultimum*);” thus, there must be three persons, otherwise there would be in God distinction without order, which is confusion and disorder.²² Whatever the context and whatever the exact terminology, Bonaventure is operating on the same assumption, that there is an intelligible order inherent within and among all things, whether uncreated or created — the latter being patterned after the former. And to know a thing is, therefore, to apprehend it within its order of relations; and contemplation especially consists of our apprehending all things in relation to God, “from whom every good thing originates, through whom every good thing is exemplarily produced, and toward whom every good thing is ultimately directed. This is the ineffable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”²³

¹⁹ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 4 [II, 42a], *Si ponere est extrema componibilia, ergo et medium.*

²⁰ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 2 [II, 41b], *sed sapientia artificis manifestatur in ordinis perfectione ...*

²¹ *II Sent.*, d.11, a.1, q.1 [II, 277b], *Nam, hic est ordo ... Nam, hic est ordo, quem divina lex ... decens fuit, ut Deus hominen adiuveret et custodiret per Angelum.*

²² *Hex.*, XI.7 [V, 381a], *Item, a parte ordinis sic Cf. Hex.*, VIII.12 [V, 371a]; *Quaestiones Disputatae de Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.4, a.2, fund. 2 [V, 84b], trans. Zachary Hayes, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2000), 196. *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi*, q.1, ad 6 [V, 6a], trans. Zachary Hayes, *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2005), 80.

²³ *Soliloquium*, prol., 1 [VIII, 28b], trans. F. Edward Coughlin (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2006), 218.

1.3 Hierarchy

Especially relevant for the subject of contemplation is Bonaventure's appropriation of the concept of hierarchy and his utilization of the correlative schema of *exitus/egressio et reditus/reductio*, that is, emanation and return. Within the Neoplatonic tradition the cosmos was thought to have emanated (*exitus*) from the One ultimate Cause of all things in such an orderly and hierarchical way that it is able to return (*reditus*), or lead us cognitively back (*reductio*), to its source.²⁴ According to Proclus, a cause cannot give what it does not have, and therefore an effect will in some manner correspond to the nature of its producing cause. This means that, because an effect emanates from its cause, the cause necessarily gives something of itself to its effect, for which reason it must also be said that the effect, though distinct, continues to participate in its cause.²⁵ In other words, a cause and effect are always united according to some similarity through which the effect continues to participate in its cause.²⁶ Similarity, however, is not identity but presupposes a degree of dissimilarity and distinction. In a Neoplatonic hierarchical ontology, the cause is always greater in perfection than its effect, and the degree of perfection in the effect, which is derived from its cause, corresponds to the degree of its participation.²⁷ Within this ontological chain of being, each being-produced depends upon and participates in the likeness of the producing-being immediately preceding it. It necessarily follows from this that the more prior a cause, the greater its goodness and perfection, and the more similar it is to the One.

A Neoplatonic cosmology, therefore, consists of an extended and unbroken causal series. Thus, within the Neoplatonic tradition not all things are in immediate relation to the First Cause, as they are in the Christian tradition, but are nevertheless hierarchically and essentially ordered to the One. The important thing here is that not all beings participate fully or equally in the goodness and perfection of the One but are more or less perfect and more or less good, that is, more or less

²⁴ Neoplatonic themes were appropriated by the Christian tradition through Pseudo-Dionysius, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, and Alexander of Hales among others. See C. E. Rolt, "Introduction," in *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and The Mystical Theology*, trans. C. E. Rolt (Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004), 1. Adriaan Peperzak, "Plotinian Motifs in Bonaventure's *Itinerary of the Mind to God*," in *Christian Spirituality and the Culture of Modernity*, ed. Peter Casarella and George P. Schnier (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 50-62.

²⁵ Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. VII, trans. Thomas Taylor (1792; repr., Lydney, UK: Prometheus Trust, 2019), 5; cf. prop. XXX (Taylor, trans., 22).

²⁶ Proclus, *Elements*, prop. XXIX (Taylor, trans., 22). Cf. Schaefer, "The Position and Function of Man," (1961): 297.

²⁷ Proclus, *Elements*, prop. XXVIII (Taylor, trans., 21).

similar to the First Cause in its goodness and perfection, relative to the ontological and hierarchical status of each within the chain of being. Accordingly, all things exist on a hierarchical scale of being, relative to each thing's distance from and, therefore, likeness and participation in the One First Cause. And inasmuch as all things emanate from (*exitus/egressio*) the overflowing goodness of the One, all things by nature also desire to return (*reditus*) and are especially able to lead us back (*reductio*) to their principle and source.²⁸ This *reductio* is a spiritual movement made possible within a hierarchical ontology, or metaphysical ladder of being, that supplies the contemplative mind with the intelligible order through which it may be gradually led back to the One First Cause of all.²⁹

Bonaventure and his contemporaries inherited a version of this cosmology that had undergone intellectual development foremost in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius. The Dionysian corpus was introduced to the Western Church through Eriugena's Latin translation in the ninth century and later commended in the twelfth century through the emerging mystical theology of the school of St. Victor.³⁰ No less for Dionysius than for Proclus, it is this hierarchical ontology that characterizes the order (*ordo*) of the universe and determines its various degrees of reality, or the various degrees to which the goodness and perfection of God are *realized* and reflected in each thing relative to the varying degrees by which they participate in the First Principle. As Denys Turner points out,

Today we lack the conceptual schemas which enable some ancient and mediaeval writers to think systematically in such terms, for we have abandoned that picture of an hierarchical 'chain of being' and its attendant scale on which the ancient and mediaeval thinker held every kind of being was placed; nor do we know of any account of the principles governing the relations of superiority and dependence between degrees on this scale.³¹

In addition to the difficulty it poses to the modern mind, Neoplatonism poses other difficulties for Christian theology. Dionysius was not unaware of the need to purge it of its particularly pagan elements. As noted above, in a purely Neoplatonic cosmology, the universe is thought to be an

²⁸ Allan Armstrong, "Foreword," in *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and The Mystical Theology*, trans. C. E. Rolt (Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004), ix.

²⁹ Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. XXXIII (Thomas Taylor, trans., 24); cf. prop. XI-XIII, XXXVII.

³⁰ Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 102-104.

³¹ Turner, *The Darkness*, 28.

extension of the divine being, such that each being emanates from the One with decreasing proximity, constituting an amassing chain of mediation through pre-existing creatures, so that the existence of lower beings is mediated through higher beings within a downward flowing causal chain beginning with the One. In a Christian cosmology, however, *all things* are created immediately by God, not by an extension of his essence but by a free outpouring of his will, proceeding not from any pre-existing thing but from nothing (*ex nihilo*). Every created being possesses an equally immediate dependence upon God who, as their first and ultimate principle, remains within himself in the complete otherness of his uncreated being-beyond-being.³² Thus, for the Dionysian appropriation of Neoplatonism, the utter transcendence of the Creator does not prevent his radical immanence within creation; it establishes it. Turner remarks that “between each being and God there is nothing,” that is, “each being, at whatever point it is placed on the scale of beings, and in whatever relations of dependence it may stand to those ontologically higher than it, is in an absolutely *direct* and unmediated relation of existential dependence on God.”³³ Nonetheless, the equally immediate existential relation of every creature to God, though it necessarily requires a significant recasting of the traditional Neoplatonic cosmology, does not itself preclude the presence of a hierarchy of created beings ordered with respect to their degree of participation in and expressive proximity to the triune God who created them.

At first glance, the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* appears to remove the very foundation for such a hierarchy of created beings by replacing Proclus’s continuous causal chain with what Turner has called “the doctrine of creative immediacy.”³⁴ In what, then, does Bonaventure ground his appropriation of a hierarchical ontology? It is important to recall the axiom above, that a cause cannot give what it does not already have according to a more perfect or eminent manner of being. As such, an effect will always to some degree express the nature of its producing cause, and thus creatures will always express the nature of their Creator, the divine exemplar, according to one degree of similitude or another. The doctrine of creative immediacy does not preclude the possibility of a hierarchy of creatures that express varying degrees of likeness to the Creator and Cause of all. Though all things sustain an immediate relation of existential dependence upon God, reality itself shows that not all things participate in the same degree of similitude to God. A living

³² Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, IV.13 [712B] and II.5 [641D, 644A-B].

³³ Turner, *The Darkness*, 31.

³⁴ Turner, *The Darkness*, 31.

creature more fully realizes and expresses the perfections of God than does a lifeless stone, but even so there are varying degrees to which the goodness of life is realized within the order of being. A rational being realizes a greater degree of likeness and ontological nearness to the *living* God than does a mere sentient being, and a sentient being more perfectly than a vegetative being. In this way, Dionysius could affirm that some things express and participate in God more or less, thus hierarchically, according to each thing's ontological proximity and likeness to the Cause of all. Thus, within a hierarchy of being, a creature may be considered ontologically near or distant from God relative to the extent it expresses his perfections by way of some created similitude. "Surely it is truer to affirm that God is life and goodness than that He is air or stone."³⁵ But Dionysius, in order to express the inherent limitation of such an affirmation, simultaneously denied that God's relation to creation is mediated by distance, notwithstanding the relative nearness of each thing to its maker. Thus, through affirmation *and* denial, Dionysius paradoxically maintained both that "the Trinity is nigh unto all things, and yet not all things are nigh unto it."³⁶

Bonaventure was not unique in his adoption of the fundamental tenets of a hierarchical cosmology. The cosmic order consists of a hierarchical order of being caused by a creative outpouring of God that simultaneously "affirms a continuity with the First Principle (*primo principio*) and a leading back (*reductionem*) into [God], not like a thing distant [from God]."³⁷ Under the auspices of a Christian doctrine of creative immediacy, Bonaventure conceptually affirms the *exitus/egressio et reditus/reductio* schema and the correlative concepts of both a cosmic hierarchical order of being as well as the epistemological role it plays in the mind's contemplative ascent and return to God.³⁸ The Neoplatonic notion of a cosmic hierarchy consisting of a chain of beings ordered according to their relative perfection, each united to their adjacent members by virtue of some similarity of nature, was well established in the scholasticism of the thirteenth century.

Although the extent of Bonaventure's use of hierarchy is both unique and complex, often identifying hierarchies within hierarchies or concentric relations of order within the overall order of being, his identification of three kinds of beings within the overall order of being was not at all

³⁵ Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*, III [1033D] (Rolt, trans., 198).

³⁶ Dionysius, *Divine Names* [680B] (Rolt, trans., 81); cf. *Hex.*, XXI.2 [V, 431].

³⁷ *Hex.*, XXI.18 [V, 434a] (Hammond, trans., 368). Cf. *IV Sent.*, d.3, p.2, a.1, q.2 [IV, 78-80]; *Brev.*, V.1 [V, 252].

³⁸ *Brev.*, I.2.5 [V, 211a-b] (Monti, trans., 32). Cf. Augustine, *de Trinitate*, XV.4.6.

peculiar: there are those which are purely spiritual or incorporeal, those which are purely corporeal, and those which are a composite of both natures. Inasmuch as the concept of order must entail a lower (*infimum*) and a higher (*summum*), some beings are more and some are less removed from God in likeness; the Lord has made some nearer to nothing and some nearer to himself in dignity.³⁹ The more that something participates in its first cause, by way of a higher degree of similitude to its divine exemplar, the more perfect and noble that thing will be. Thus, because God lacks all corporeality, a purely spiritual being is the highest substance among created things. Bonaventure adds, “This is what we call angels, for angels do not have a body.”⁴⁰ Following the same reasoning, those substances that are purely corporeal are the lowest among created beings, for they least express a likeness to God. And once again, Bonaventure appeals to the philosophical principle that there can be no unity among the extremes except through a middle term, such that the mean agrees with both extremes, and the extremes with the mean — otherwise there would be diversity without unity, order, and beauty in the universe. “If it is established that extremes should be combined, there must also be a medium,” that is, a creature that is both spiritual and corporeal.⁴¹ As such, human beings are composed of both a body and a rational soul, a corporeal and spiritual nature, and thus have a central place within the cosmic hierarchy of beings, uniting the lower corporeal creatures and the higher spiritual creatures in a harmonious and uninterrupted chain of being proceeding from and participating in God as their origin and exemplar.

It may be recalled that for Proclus this order of being consists of an unbroken *causal chain* and harmonious arrangement precisely because each member was thought to be produced and caused by the being immediately preceding it. Bonaventure, however, maintained that because the universe was brought into being from non-being, from nothing, God must necessarily be the whole and immediate cause of each thing’s existence.⁴² Nonetheless, as Schaefer points out, although “the original notion of *order* has been changed,” no longer grounded upon an *essentially* ordered causal series, “the other idea of *similarity* between adjacent members, in which Proclus had seen the essential bond for his causal series, was fully retained and still considered to be necessary for true continuity.”⁴³ Thus it may be asked, if it is not by virtue of an essentially ordered causal series,

³⁹ *Brev.*, II.6.3 [V, 224a]; *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 2 [II, 41a].

⁴⁰ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 4 [II, 42a].

⁴¹ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 4 [II, 42a].

⁴² *Brev.*, II.6.3 [V, 224a]. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.44, a.1, q.3 [I, 784b]; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1, ad opp. 9 [V, 61a].

⁴³ Schaefer, “The Position and Function of Man,” (1961): 301-302.

upon what does Bonaventure ground his notion of a harmonious ladder of being that retains a continuity capable of leading the rational mind from the lowest to the highest, from one degree of similitude to another, all the way back to the first principle, origin and end of all? How does he ground the unity of the whole? An answer is provided for us in two places, approached from different but mutually informing perspectives.

In the first place, Bonaventure speaks to this issue in his *Breviloquium* from the perspective of God as the immediate cause of all. Because all things have been produced from nothing, the Creator necessarily acts from himself, in accordance with himself, and because of himself. “Hence,” he concludes, “this Principle must have, in respect to any creature, the role of a threefold cause: efficient, exemplary, and final. ... For every creature is constituted in being by the efficient cause, is patterned after the exemplary cause, and is ordained to the final cause.”⁴⁴ The doctrine of creative immediacy not only necessitates that all things be produced by God and for God, it also necessitates that the order of the cosmos be grounded upon a doctrine of exemplarity, which will prove significant for Bonaventure’s understanding of contemplation. Because all things were created from nothing, and because God acts from himself, he necessarily acts in accordance with himself. In the *exitus-reditus* schema, the first phase of emanation necessarily proceeds from God as the divine exemplar so as to be patterned after the divine order, achieving “a harmonious congruent gradation of disparate beings,”⁴⁵ manifesting the power, wisdom, and goodness of its triune Creator.

In the second place, Bonaventure speaks to the same issue from the perspective of the created order itself.⁴⁶ He argues that a harmonious arrangement of otherwise disparate beings is necessary for the perfection of the universe, a perfection measured by its ability to manifest the power, wisdom and goodness of God, that is, the triple perfection of the first cause in and through an ordered multiplicity of hierarchical effects.⁴⁷ Bonaventure presents an argument for each as it pertains to this threefold perfection. As it respects the divine power, the more that a cause is able

⁴⁴ *Brev.*, II.1.4 [V, 219b] (Monti, trans., 62).

⁴⁵ *II Sent.*, d.9, a.1, q.8, ad 2 [II, 256a-b], *Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod convenientia* ..., “To that which was objected, that harmony creates beauty, it may be said, just as Augustine has said, that harmony not only arises from equality but also from a congruent gradation of disparate things.”

⁴⁶ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2 [II, 41-43].

⁴⁷ Bonaventure makes distinctions. When God is the subject, in order to maintain the gratuitous nature of his creative act, Bonaventure is careful to speak only of what is fitting (*decuit*) for the manifestation of his power, wisdom and goodness. However, when creation itself is the subject, Bonaventure speaks more definitively of what is necessary (*necesse*) for its own perfection.

to produce many diverse and distant (*in amplitudine ambitus*) effects while retaining a unity between them, the more its power is manifest. There is no greater manifestation of creative power than in the production of two kinds of creatures so diverse and distant as those which are purely spiritual and those which are purely corporeal. The power of God would not be manifest fully (*plene*), however, unless he were also to create a creature in which these two extremes were united. Thus, it is necessary for the perfection of the universe, relative to the full manifestation of his power, that he create a man composed of both natures, spiritual and corporeal, and thereby unite the lower order of creation with the higher through the middle.⁴⁸

Similarly, although God is the whole and immediate cause of the entire cosmos, it befits the manifestation of his wisdom to arrange all things in sufficient order (*in sufficientia ordinis*), “and every order (*ordo*) necessarily consists of a lower (*infimum*), a higher (*summum*), and a medium (*medium*).” If there is a lower corporeal nature that is relatively “nearer to nothing,” and a higher spiritual nature that is relatively “nearer to God,” the full manifestation of God’s wisdom in the perfection of order (*in ordinis perfectione*) requires that there be a middle creature composed of each.⁴⁹

He argues similarly regarding the more complete manifestation of divine goodness. In all three arguments the human creature is at the center of the created order as the mean or middle that unites two extremes and in the creation of whom is the fullest (*plene*) manifestation of God’s power, wisdom, and goodness. This conclusion is well stated in his *Breviloquium*:

Since in producing things the First Principle is supremely powerful, wise, and good, and since it manifests these attributes in some way in everything it has made, it was fitting that it manifest them most impressively in its final and most noble effect. This is humankind, whom God produced last of all creatures so that in this effect there might appear and shine forth in the most excellent way the consummation of the divine works.⁵⁰

Bonaventure retains the idea that order requires that every mean has something common with its extremes, so as to bond or unite the extremes in hierarchical fashion. Although this is no longer argued for on the basis of a continuous causal chain emanating out from the One through successive degrees of mediation, Bonaventure judges that such hierarchical continuity necessarily

⁴⁸ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 1 [II, 41b].

⁴⁹ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 2 [II, 41b].

⁵⁰ *Brev.*, II.10.2 [V, 228a] (Monti, trans., 90).

proceeds exemplarily from One who acts in accordance with himself and is, therefore, necessary for the perfection of the universe and the *plene* manifestation of God's threefold perfection. The point here is no less than this: because the metaphysical order serves as the intelligible medium for Bonaventure's contemplative endeavor, the continuity within the hierarchical ordering of reality, patterned after its divine exemplar, is absolutely essential in order to form an intelligible ladder, so that "through these successive levels, comparable to steps, the human intellect is designed to ascend gradually to the supreme Principle, which is God."⁵¹ Through the metaphor of a ladder, Bonaventure does not intend to imply that God is contained within or even atop the created order itself. There is no equality to be found between the craftsman and his artifacts; there is an infinite number of steps between God and creatures no matter the degree of similitude.⁵² Even so, "it is in harmony with our created condition that the universe itself might serve as a ladder by which we can ascend into God. ... In order to arrive at that First Principle which is most spiritual and eternal, and above us, it is necessary that we move through the vestiges which are corporeal and temporal and outside us. ... And this will bring us to rejoice in the knowledge of God and to stand in awe before God's majesty."⁵³

1.4 The Circle

If Bonaventure's use of hierarchy drew upon the Neoplatonic idea of *exitus*, that all things emanate from God as their principle or origin, he often employs the imagery of a circle to signify the corresponding idea of *reditus*, that all things desire to return to him as their end. Because all things proceed from God as their principle and according to God as their exemplar, they must also exist for God as their end. Like an arrow shot toward their teleological destination, all things are

⁵¹ *Brev.*, II.12.1 [V, 230a] (Monti, trans., 96).

⁵² *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 72b], "Between God and creatures things are not common univocally, but analogically ... as in the relation of an exemplar to what imitates it," in *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, trans. R. E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone (NY: Franciscan Institute, 2013), 76. See chapter 5 of the present work.

⁵³ *Itin.*, I.2 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 47). I have rendered *corporalis* as *corporeal* instead of *bodily* in order to make the contrast more explicit.

governed by an intrinsic gravitational-like desire to return to him in a complete and perfect circle.⁵⁴ Bonaventure attributes his appropriation of this idea to Dionysius. “All things desire (*appetunt*) the good as their beginning (*principium*), as their cohesion (*continentiam*), and as their end (*finem*). As their beginning, they exist from him; as their cohesion, they are saved through him; as their end, they are inclined toward him.”⁵⁵ Thus, he adds, “divine love [creates and moves all things] according to a certain endless cycle [proceeding outward] from the Good, through the Good, and [back] toward the Good,” for it is the nature of perfect love to bring about a union or cohesion between a principle and its end.⁵⁶ His use of the circle-imagery is, therefore, intended to denote order.

According to Bonaventure, there is a circular movement inherent within the created order itself (from him, through him, and toward him) — a movement that corresponds to Bonaventure’s metaphysical understanding of all reality as it relates to the emanation, exemplarism, and consummation of all things.⁵⁷ It was noted above that exemplarism determines the manner in which all things emanate forth from their origin, namely, patterned *through* him and in accordance with him as their divine exemplar. For this reason, all things manifest his power, wisdom, and goodness. And for the same reason, exemplarism also determines the means *through the illumination of which* all things are led back to their consummation and end, “as if in an *intelligible* circle, to its beginning, in which it is perfected and beatified.”⁵⁸ How this is so will become increasingly clear throughout this study, but especially in chapter 5. Let it suffice to say that exemplarism is not only the means through which God *manifests* his glory in and through creatures but also the means through which rational creatures are *illuminated* and led back to God as their beatific end.⁵⁹ The *exitus et reditus* schema most explicitly highlights emanation and consummation, but exemplarity is nonetheless implicated in both extremes as the necessary mean

⁵⁴ See *I Sent.*, d.40, a.1, q.2, ad 1 [I, 705b], *est ordo duplex* ..., “order is twofold: one, *the disposition of things* in the universe ...; the other, *the direction of things to their end*.” Cf. *II Sent.*, d.1, p.1, a.1, q.1, fund. 5 [II, 15a]; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.3, a.1 [V, 70b]. Cf. Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love* (1997; repr., San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2012), 235.

⁵⁵ *I Sent.*, d.45, a.2, q.1 [I, 804b]; cf. Dionysius, *Divine Names*, IV.4. In other places, Bonaventure appropriates a similar idea that is thought to be taken from Alan of Lille, that God “is an intelligible sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere,” *Itin.*, V.8 [V, 310a]; cf. *I Sent.*, d.37, p.1, a.1, q.1, ad 3 [I, 639b]; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.5, a.1, ad 7-8 [V, 91b].

⁵⁶ *I Sent.*, d.45, a.2, q.1 [I, 804b-805a]; cf. Dionysius, *Divine Names*, IV.14.

⁵⁷ *Hex.*, I.17 [V, 332b].

⁵⁸ *Brev.*, II.4.3 [V, 221b] (Monti, trans., 71).

⁵⁹ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.2, q.1 [II, 44b], *in cuius manifestatione et participatione* Cf. *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, ad 1 [II, 42a]; Shaeffer, “The Position and Function of Man,” (1961): 310.

upon which the two corresponding movements turn, closing the circle and uniting the two extremes. As Schaefer points out, “exemplarity, ... linked with the first phase, remains present throughout the circle, and determines the manner of the return.”⁶⁰

How Bonaventure understands the actual *reditus* of irrational creatures draws us nearer to the subject of contemplation and further elucidates the significance of our own place in Bonaventure’s conception of the cosmic order. It is clear that all things participate in God as their principle insofar as all creatures have proceeded *from* God. What is not immediately clear, however, is how purely corporeal creatures are able to return *to* God “as if in an intelligible circle” so as to participate in God himself as their ultimate end. With this question in mind, Bonaventure anticipates an objection: since corporeal creatures are incapable of knowledge and love and, therefore, lack a spiritual capacity for God (*Dei capax*), it would appear that they are unable to return to God so as to possess him as their end. Although the objection raises a legitimate question, its conclusion is unacceptable to Bonaventure inasmuch as it would entail a lack of harmony in the order of the universe.⁶¹ In his reply, Bonaventure notes that creatures may participate in God and, therefore, possess him as their end in one of two ways, either as those that have been created with the natural ability to participate in him (*nata participare*) through knowledge and love or as those that exist to serve those that so participate (*serviunt participantibus*). This twofold distinction corresponds to the two extremes of the cosmic hierarchy: spiritual and corporeal creatures respectively. Bonaventure insists that both are made to participate in God (*ipsae tamen aliquo modo participant*), though not in the same way. Spiritual creatures, such as angels, are able to do so immediately; corporeal creatures have been designed to do so mediately, namely through man, insofar as they fulfill their God-appointed service unto mankind. We have already observed that mankind is the metaphysical mean in whom the spiritual and corporeal realities are united. As spiritual and intellectual beings, we are most like the angels in our natural ability and desire to participate in the goodness of God himself as our ultimate and immediate end. Thus, “the First Principle, out of its supreme benevolence, made the rational soul capable of enjoying eternal happiness. ... Now, eternal beatitude consists in possessing the supreme good, which is God.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Alexander Schaefer, “The Position and Function of Man in the Created World According to Saint Bonaventure,” *Franciscan Studies* 20, no.3/4 (September-December 1960): 264.

⁶¹ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, ad opp. 1 [II, 41a].

⁶² *Brev.*, V.1.3 [V, 252b] (Monti, trans., 170). Cf. *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8, ad 7 [V, 115b], “Therefore it follows that eternal life consists in this alone, that the rational spirit, which emanates from the most blessed trinity and

But as corporeal beings, we are also unlike the angels insofar as we come to know and love God mediately, as corporeal reality confronts us through our corporeal senses.⁶³ As such, Bonaventure frequently refers to human beings as a microcosm, for inasmuch as the five senses correspond to the different kinds of bodies in the corporeal world, the senses are like five doorways through which the macrocosm is cognitively able to enter the soul.⁶⁴ Accordingly, the senses are ordered to the sensible order, and the sensible order is ordered to God through the human soul. Precisely because all of creation manifests its divine exemplar, Bonaventure can say that corporeal things were made to serve mankind in the attainment of their ultimate end in God. Like many signs and sacraments through the contemplation of which God's nature and presence is made known to those who have eyes to see, "as from an effect to the cognition of its cause," corporeal reality serves humankind by illumining our way and leading us back to the divine archetype of all things.⁶⁵ Bonaventure summarizes this point nicely in his *Breviloquium*:

It is therefore undoubtedly true that we are the goal of everything that exists, and that all corporeal beings were made to serve humankind, so that through these things humanity might ascend to loving and praising the Creator of the universe whose providence disposes of all. Therefore this physical machine of corporeal beings is like a dwelling fashioned by the supreme architect to serve human beings until such a time as they arrive at that dwelling not made with hands ... in heaven.⁶⁶

Through man's *reditus* "every nature may be led back (*reducatur*), as if in an intelligible circle, to its beginning, in which it is perfected and beatified."⁶⁷ In other words, even the corporeal creatures are ordered to God, albeit through their sacramental service to mankind in his contemplative end.⁶⁸

We are again reminded of the pivotal role that Bonaventure ascribes to us within the order of creation. In the *exitus* of all things, it has been observed how human beings maintain a central place within the created order, uniting both spiritual and corporeal realities. Likewise, human beings have been given a central place in the *reditus* of all things, through whom alone the lower

is a likeness of the trinity, should return after the manner of a certain intelligible circle — through memory, intelligence, and will — to the most blessed trinity by God-conforming glory" (Hayes, trans., 266).

⁶³ Bonaventure refers to the five physical senses as the doorways through which the world of things first enters into the soul; cf. *Itin.*, II.4 [V, 300b].

⁶⁴ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b]; II.2-3 [V, 300a-b]; *II Sent.*, d.29, a.2, q.2 [II, 703b],

⁶⁵ *Itin.*, II.3 [V, 300a-b] (Hayes, trans., 67); cf. I.10 [V, 298b].

⁶⁶ *Brev.*, II.4.5 [V, 222a] (Monti, trans., 71-72).

⁶⁷ *Brev.*, II.4.3 [V, 221b] (Monti, trans., 69-70, emphasis added); cf. *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, ad 1 [II, 42a].

⁶⁸ In this way, Bonaventure can speak, in a certain sense, of the rational creature as the end of all the lower creatures; cf. *Brev.*, I.1.2 [V, 210a].

corporeal creatures are brought back to God, thereby uniting the two extremes in perfect harmony in relation to their ultimate end.⁶⁹ What begins to emerge here with greater clarity is how contemplation also plays a central role, not only in our own return to God, but in the *reditus* of all things. While the initial *exitus* phase, or the act of creation itself, establishes the metaphysical preconditions for contemplation, the *reditus* phase is by means of contemplation itself, through which all things are brought back to God as if in an intelligible circle. Thus, the way of consummation is through a contemplative *reductio*, “that is, to be illumined (*illuminari*) by spiritual rays of light (*radius spirituales*) and to be led back (*reduci*) to the Most High.”⁷⁰

1.5 Reduction

The *reditus* or return and consummation of all things is through *reductio*. Reduction (*reductio*) refers to a scholastic method of reasoning that seeks to “retrace” our knowledge of reality to its ultimate and irreducible principle and end.⁷¹ As an intellectual and spiritual exercise, the concept of reduction will feature prominently in our examination of the actual practice of contemplation. But it is introduced here both because reduction presupposes a metaphysical order that may be intelligibly retraced and because it sheds further light upon Bonaventure’s unique conception of that order.

Reductio is an intellectual exercise that presupposes that the object being reduced is in some way dependent upon or participates in one thing or another within a particular metaphysical order of things.⁷² Bonaventure identifies five things that might be reduced to the substance in which they participate: principles, perfections, operations, similitudes, and privations.⁷³ Putting

⁶⁹ Cf. Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in II Sent.*, d.1, 26.

⁷⁰ *Hex.*, I.17 [V, 332] (Hammond, trans., 83).

⁷¹ Joseph Ratzinger, translated and quoted in Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, writes: “In its concrete conceptual sense, the word *reductio* is borrowed from the Arabic neo-Aristotelianism of Averroes, in its systematic utilization it receives its particular expression from the neo-Platonism of Pseudo-Dionysius. The concept of *reductio* comes from Averroes’ and Aristotle’s axiom that in each genus there is a first and supreme which serves as measure for all remaining essences of the same genus” (p.18n.34).

⁷² *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.3, a.1 [V, 71a], *Sciendum est igitur, quod ...*, “It should be recognized, therefore, that our intellect resolves an object of knowledge totally when it reduces it into the understanding of that which exists and that by which it exists” (Hayes, trans., 165).

⁷³ *II Sent.*, d.24, p.1, a.2, q.1, ad 8 [II, 562b], *Quaedam reducuntur sicut principia, quaedam sicut complementa, quaedam sicut viae, quaedam sicut similitudines, quaedam sicut privationes.*

the differences among these distinctions aside, J. Guy Bougerol observes that “in each case there is some reality which cannot subsist of itself and is not sufficient to itself, but which must be distinguished from the substance to which it is bound, because it is not this substance and yet depends upon it.”⁷⁴ For instance, the presence of an operation depends upon a power, and a power depends upon a substantial source; the operation of the substance is not the substance *per se* but depends upon it and cannot be understood fully apart from it. And so, the one may be reduced to the other.

The act of reduction seeks to retrace a thing's dependence to that upon which it ultimately and irreducibly depends, i.e., to that which sufficiently grounds the object's existence and, therefore, its intelligibility. A contingent being is not wholly intelligible through itself; it does not have within itself a full explanation for why it exists as it does.⁷⁵ Zachary Hayes notes that “at the cognitive level, reduction means — among other things — that all imperfect forms of being must be reduced to more perfect forms logically, since they are grounded ontologically in the more perfect. One cannot recognize a limit as a limit unless one is somehow beyond the limit; hence, one cannot know a limited good as limited except through reduction to an unlimited good in the same order.”⁷⁶ This leads to a threefold reduction. Something may be understood in relation to its efficient cause, as when a thing of art is reduced to the power or fecundity of the artisan. The same thing may also be understood in relation to its final cause, as when a thing of art is reduced to the good and beautiful. But the same may also be understood in relation to its exemplary cause, as when a thing of art is reduced to the truth of the thing in the mind of the artisan. According to Bonaventure, creation was produced according to this threefold causality: efficient, exemplary, and final. “As a result, every creature must bear within itself this threefold relationship to its first cause. For every creature is constituted in being by the efficient cause, is patterned after the exemplary cause, and is ordained to the final cause.”⁷⁷ Thus, if a thing is to be fully understood, it must be understood in relation to that upon which it ultimately and irreducibly depends, that is, in relation to God. Therefore, he concludes that “unless a person can consider how things (*rebus*) are

⁷⁴ Bougerol, *Introduction*, 76. Cf. Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 346-347.

⁷⁵ Gregory F. LaNave, “Bonaventure's Theological Method,” in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff (Boston, MA: Brill, 2014), 114.

⁷⁶ Zachary Hayes, “Introduction,” in *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Zachary Hayes (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000), 28.

⁷⁷ *Brev.*, II.1.4 [V, 219b] (Monti, trans., 62).

originated, how they are led back (*reducuntur*) to the end, and how God shines forth (*refulget*) in them, one cannot have understanding (*intelligentiam*).”⁷⁸

In addition to being a logical investigation into the metaphysical conditions that ground reality and, therefore, our knowledge of it, contemplation transforms reduction into a spiritual exercise.⁷⁹ Paul Rorem helpfully points out that while the “re-” that is prefixed to “reduction” seems to convey a backwards or regressive movement, what can be easily missed is its upward and progressive connotation as well. This is most readily observed when we remember that Bonaventure’s concept of reduction was borrowed from John Scot Eriugena’s Latin translation of the Greek text of Dionysius’s *Celestial Hierarchy* and its use of the *anago* word family. In summary of Eriugena’s own explanation for his Latin rendering of this prominent Dionysian concept, Rorem explains that Eriugena “used the Latin prefix *re-* to translate the Greek *ἀνά* (‘up’), meaning that *reductio* was used to translate ‘anagogy,’ literally, ‘uplifting.’ Thus could Eriugena translate ‘anago’ as *reducere*, meaning ‘upward leading’ (*reducuntur id est sursumducuntur*) and explain it accordingly: ‘*re-* is very often put for ‘upwards.’”⁸⁰ His point is that if *re-* translates *ἀνά*, then reduction does not merely consist of a backward movement but also an upward movement. *Reductio* is for Bonaventure the way of consummation, that is, the spiritual and contemplative means by which all things return to God.⁸¹ It is the soul’s “technique of the return to God.”⁸² Just as the creative *exitus* of all things results in a hierarchy of beings of increasing “distance” from God, metaphysically speaking, the *reditus* of all things, which Bonaventure’s contemplative

⁷⁸ *Hex.*, III.2 [V, 343a] (Hammond, trans., 112).

⁷⁹ Hayes, “Introduction,” “The all-pervasive argument is that of the Bonaventurian reduction whereby the mind attempts to trace reality to its ultimate source and goal. Reduction can be seen at two levels. The first, and perhaps the most obvious, is the level of logical analysis and argument; here reduction is realized in the cognitive order. Reduction at this level, however, is intimately related to an ontological reduction, which is the real return of creatures to God through grace” (p.27).

⁸⁰ Paul Rorem, “Dionysian Uplifting (Anagogy) in Bonaventure’s *Reductio*,” *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012), 184-185. Cf. Frederick William Danker, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 61. In the first place, *anago* denotes an action whereby something in a lower place is elevated to a higher place. Thus, it is *to lead* or *to bring up*. Thus, it conveys an analogical sense.

⁸¹ R. E. Houser contends that Gilson’s understanding of *reductio* in Bonaventure is in fact a reductionism in the modern sense of the term. Houser contends that Bonaventure’s notion of reduction is “a positive kind, where analysis of one thing opens the mind to another, not the negative reduction which eliminates one in favor of the other.” R. E. Houser, “Bonaventure’s Three-fold Way to God,” *Philosophy* 6 (1997): 97.

⁸² Marie Dominique Chenu, *Introduction à l’étude de Saint Thomas d’Aquin*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1954), 162, quoted in Bougerol, *Introduction*, 75.

reduction aims to achieve, both requires and effects man's increasing "nearness" and interior ordering of the soul to God.⁸³

1.6 Two Orders of Reflection

Bonaventure's concept of reduction not only presupposes a metaphysical and, therefore, intelligible order capable of leading rational souls back up to God as their principle and end, but it also helps to shed further light upon his unique understanding of that order — a distinction upon which our thesis wholly depends. We find in the works of Bonaventure two primary forms of contemplative reduction that correspond to the twofold manner in which the metaphysical order of things may be perceived. On the one hand, he speaks of an extrinsic or vertical hierarchical order *among* beings (*ordo essentialis*),⁸⁴ wherein each thing may be considered relative to other things (*de ordine rerum ad invicem*) and ultimately to the first principle from which all things emanate. On the other hand, he also speaks of a horizontal hierarchical order that is intrinsic to or within each thing itself, wherein each thing may also be considered relative to the intrinsic order of its own being and to the ultimate end for which it is thereby ordered (*de ordine rerum ad finem*).⁸⁵ These two ways of speaking about the metaphysical order of things provides two vantage points from which it may be considered and contemplated, "depending on whether God be considered as the alpha [i.e., first principle] or as the omega [i.e., ultimate end], or ... as through a mirror or as in a mirror, or ... [as] related to another with which it is connected or should be considered according to its own purity."⁸⁶ Here, Bonaventure describes two paths of reduction

⁸³ Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000), 17.

⁸⁴ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.1, q.2, ad 3 [I, 471a]: *Si ergo videmus in ordine causarum, ...*; cf. Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 25.

⁸⁵ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.2, qq.1-2 [II, 43-47]. For instance, Bonaventure can answer the question whether man is inferior to the angels differently depending upon which of these two vantage points is under consideration and which path of reduction is followed. According to the first, when man's place is reduced relative to the place of angels within the overall order of being, man is judged to be inferior. From such a vantage point, the being of angels is "nearer" to God in likeness than the being of man. According to the second form of reduction, when the place of mankind is reduced according to its ultimate end, relative to the ultimate end of the angels, man is no longer judged to be inferior. Both are spiritual creatures, and both are able to obtain their end in God immediately. But mankind holds a more central place than the angels relative to the return of all things to God. The point here is that we find in the works of Bonaventure two forms of reduction that correspond to a twofold manner in which the metaphysical order of things may be brought under consideration.

⁸⁶ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b].

insofar as all things may be reduced to God and contemplated from two distinct vantage points, according to two different orders of reflection.

Concerning the first, our knowledge of every relative perfection *among* created things is reduced to God as the Alpha of every being and first principle of every perfection. When God is considered in this way, as *through* a mirror, Bonaventure notes that the soul progressively rises above the entire order of created *being* in contemplation of the existence and essential attributes and perfections of the divine *being*, insofar as he is the irreducible causal explanation of every other *being*. The knowledge of creatures is hereby reduced (traced back) to the essential unity (*essentiae unitatem*) of the divine *being* and essence (*circa essentialia Dei*) that alone is able to provide sufficient explanation and ground for the essence and existence, even intelligibility, of all else.⁸⁷ Bonaventure notes how this first form of reduction is particularly helped by philosophy (*sicut philosophia ad praecedentem*), in contrast to the second form that will require the additional help of Scripture or theology.⁸⁸ These distinctions will become more clear as we proceed. The second form of reduction, which retraces the order intrinsic to each thing back to God as their Omega and end, will be considered in the next chapter, wherein it will be argued that it proceeds in a properly theological way. Conversely, however, the first form of contemplative reduction is properly speaking philosophical, inasmuch as it pertains to a “philosophical movement”⁸⁹ that arrives at a knowledge of God through creatures — a knowledge that does not *de jure* (i.e., by absolute necessity of its subject matter) depend upon the light of faith but pertains to what may be deduced by the light of reason.⁹⁰ And it is to this order of reflection that we now turn.

2. The Order of Being: Created and Divine

⁸⁷ *Itin.*, V.1-3 [V, 308].

⁸⁸ *Itin.*, IV.5 [V, 307a].

⁸⁹ Jay M. Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*,” in the Appendix of J.A. Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure’s Theology*, trans. J. M. Hammond (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2001), 221.

⁹⁰ Although this is yet to be proven and will require further explanation, this first form of reduction, which is in view here, is progressively worked out in chapters 1, 3, and 5 of Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium*, and most thoroughly in chapter 5.

Order is not something invented or imposed upon the world by the human intellect but is inherent to all reality by virtue of its ordained relation to its Creator according to three orders of causality: efficient, exemplary, and final.⁹¹ The intelligibility of all things is established and preserved insofar as all things proceed from God and are ordered in relation to God as to their First Principle — an order that may be discovered and known, a harmony and beauty that may be perceived and delighted in — so that the universe may be read like a book, and those who know how to read may be led from the lower things to the higher things, gradually ascending in contemplation of him from whom, through whom, and for whom all things exist. “For unless a person can consider how things are originated, how they are led back (*reducuntur*) to their end, and how God shines forth in them, one cannot have understanding.”⁹² In what follows, we will begin to consider how, according to Bonaventure, the divine order is reflected *through* the created order, and how such an understanding of the created order serves as the metaphysical basis for a philosophical contemplation of the divine order. Our burden here is to show how the divine being grounds the philosophical intelligibility of the so-called order of being — the trinitarian and theological dimensions of which will be taken up in the next chapter.

2.1 The First Principle of Created Being

Some elaboration of what was introduced above is now in order. Bonaventure maintains the divine order may be contemplated *through* the created order as through a mirror (*per speculum*); he explains, “knowing God through a creature ... is being lifted up from knowing the creature to knowing God, as by a ladder connecting the two.”⁹³ Once more, this means that relative to the order between things (*de ordine rerum ad invicem*), that is, the relation between things within the hierarchical order of created being (*ordo essentialis*), every relative perfection among created things may be reduced to God as the Alpha, or first principle, of every perfection. As a result of this form of reduction, which retraces the causal order (*ordo causarum*) or the essential order (*ordo*

⁹¹ *Brev.*, II.1.4 [V, 219b] (Monti, trans., 62). Cf. *Hex.* IV.2 [V, 349a-b], *Et istae ... philosophi ...*, “And these ... the philosophers did not invent, so that they would exist; but because they already existed in truth, they came to attention in the soul, according to Augustine” (Hammond, trans., 130).

⁹² *Hex.*, III.2 [V, 343] (Hammond, trans., 112).

⁹³ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.3 [I, 74b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 80); cf. *III Sent.*, d.31, a.2, q.1, ad 5 [III, 682a-b].

essentialis) back to its source, Bonaventure contends that the essential attributes and existence of God may be contemplated, not absolutely or according to his own essence, but *through* creatures, insofar as he is first (*primum*) in relation to the hierarchical order among things (*de ordine rerum ad invicem*). Because created *being* differs *essentially* from the uncreated *being*, Bonaventure is not suggesting that the two share in the same mode or order of being. *Being*, for Bonaventure, is fundamentally of two sorts, either that which exists from itself, according to itself, and for its own sake (*esse ex se et secundum se et propter se*), or that which exists from another, according to another, and for the sake of another (*esse ex alio et secundum aliud et propter aliud*).⁹⁴ In other words, *being* is either *ens per se* or *ens per aliud* — either absolute, necessary, and irreducible or else dependent, contingent, and reducible.⁹⁵ All created being is dependent and contingent and therefore reducible, precisely because it has its being from, through, and for another; thus created *being* can never be first in the order of causality.⁹⁶ “By reason of this,” Bonaventure concludes that God, who alone exists from himself, according to himself, and for himself,

is the universal efficient, exemplary, and final cause of all things as he is the “cause of existence, the basis of understanding, and the rule of life.” Therefore, he is omnimodous (*omnimodum*), not as though he were the essence of all things, but as the most excellent, most universal, and most sufficient cause of all essences whose power, because he is supremely unified in essence, is supremely infinite and multiple in its effects.⁹⁷

2.2 The Vestigial Character of all Created Reality

⁹⁴ *Hex.*, I.12 [V, 331a-b].

⁹⁵ *Itin.*, III.3 [V, 304a].

⁹⁶ Though he expresses himself in different terms, Bonaventure’s distinction is not incommensurate with Aquinas’s distinction between *esse* or *ens commune*, which signifies the *actus essendi* as a common feature of all reality that is abstracted by the mind from all of the diverse conditions of participated existence (*ens per aliud*), and the divine being, whose *actus essendi* is uncommon, of itself (*ens per se*), and unlike any other participated existence. And precisely because God has his existence from himself (*ens per se*), the divine being is not included within Bonaventure’s concept of *ens per aliud* any more than Aquinas’s concept of *ens commune* but stands apart as the common cause of all that they signify. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*) I, q.3, a.4, writes: “Therefore that thing, whose existence differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another. ... so that which has existence but is not existence, is a being by participation.” In other words, insofar as *ens commune* signifies participated being (*ens per aliud*), it reveals (analogically, not univocally) a first being who is the principle and cause of all other beings (*ens per se*). Thus, for both there is an analogy of being between God as the common cause and *ens commune* or *ens per aliud* as that which is caused. In other words, insofar as *ens commune* and *ens per aliud* both signify participated and caused being, created being analogically reveals the first being, who has being from, through, and for itself (*ens per se*) and is, therefore, the principle and cause of all other beings.

⁹⁷ *Itin.*, V.7 [V, 310a].

Along traditional Augustinian lines, Bonaventure maintains that there are two ways in which the hierarchical order among created beings reflects and leads back to their divine principle, exemplar, and end: either as vestiges or as images. Even so, Bonaventure notes that the two are not mutually exclusive, for an image may be considered in two ways, either insofar as it too is a vestige, as we shall presently consider, or as it is a created likeness of the Trinity, which shall be considered in the next chapter. *Vestigium* is an essential attribute of all things, even more manifestly in spiritual things which are also images, because something is a vestige of God insofar as it manifests unity, truth and goodness, which are found in all things that have *being*, but eminently in the divine *being* in whose oneness, truth, and goodness all things participate. Although the term *transcendentia* was not yet commonplace with Bonaventure, it is nevertheless the transcendentals that he has in mind.⁹⁸ “For unity, truth, and goodness, in which a *vestige* consists, are the most universal (*maxime universales*) and intelligible conditions [of being].”⁹⁹ These three do not limit *being* according to its supposit, but only according to reason — a formulation he inherited from Philip the Chancellor.¹⁰⁰ In other words, all three are essentially identical and, therefore, really convertible with one another and with *being* itself (*ens se*).¹⁰¹ In this way, Bonaventure emphasizes “the vestigial character” of *all* created reality, i.e. of all things that have *being*.¹⁰² The transcendentals are the general and universal conditions of all things that point beyond the particular things in which they are found. As the common determinations of being or essential attributes of being, they especially lead to a knowledge of those essential attributes of God that are really identical with God and common in God and, therefore, may be applied without distinction to all three persons of the Trinity. “Since the First Principle is the most exalted and

⁹⁸ Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer, “Die Philosophie Bonaventuras und die Transzendentalienlehre,” *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 64, no. 1 (1997): 49, “Bonaventuras Lehre von den *transcendentia* oder Transzendentalien hat bisher in der Forschung kaum Beachtung gefunden. Der Terminus *transcendentia* — eine Neuprägung des 13. Jahrhunderts, für den im 16. Jahrhundert der Ausdruck «Transzendentalien» gebildet wurde, der heute rückblickend auch mit Bezug auf das Mittelalter verwendet wird — ist aber bei Bonaventura noch nicht geläufig.” In at least one place, Bonaventure does refer to *ens* and *una* as transcendentals; cf. *IV Sent.*, d.49, p.1, a.1, q.1, fund.2 [IV, 1000a]. He more commonly identifies the transcendentals according to their *conditiones generales*; cf. Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and Transcendental Thought: from Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2012), 148-149.

⁹⁹ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 73a].

¹⁰⁰ Aertsen and Speer, “Die Philosophie,” 51.

¹⁰¹ *Brev.*, I.6.2 [V, 215a]; cf. *I Sent.*, d.1, a.1, q.1, fund. 2 [I, 32a]; d.24, a.1, q.2, arg. 1 [I, 423a]; *II Sent.*, d.37, a.2, q.3, fund. 3 [II, 874a]; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1, ad 14 [V, 67a]; Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and Transcendental Thought*, 148.

¹⁰² Aertsen and Speer, “Die Philosophie,” 56.

utterly perfect, it follows that in it are found the highest and most universal properties of being to the highest degree. These are the one, the true, and the good.”¹⁰³ As such, a person is able to rise above a consideration of the multiplicity of beings which possess unity, truth, and goodness *per aliud* by reducing and resolving all things in the contemplation of that *being* who is unity, truth, and goodness *per se*.¹⁰⁴

2.3 The Transcendentals

Vestiges are related to God as to their creative principle and cause.¹⁰⁵ As such, all created beings manifest God’s presence as their first and ultimate cause, which is threefold. “A creature is called a vestige based on properties which point to God as triple cause: efficient, formal, and final cause; for example, the properties of one, true, and good.”¹⁰⁶ Bonaventure is making the claim that this threefold causality is manifest most clearly in the three general conditions of *being* which, though they are convertible with *being* itself, may be conceptually distinguished in a threefold manner. He further maintains that the notion conveyed by “one” refers to *being* as countable (*connumerabile*), inasmuch as a particular being may be divided from others while remaining indivisible in itself. Hence, “one” largely signifies *being* by way of the negation of division. Following the formulation offered by Philip the Chancellor, Bonaventure likewise extends this Aristotelian negation of division (*indivisio*) to the true and the good as well.¹⁰⁷ Thus, “true” refers to *being* as cognizable (*cognoscibile*), insofar as a thing is indivisible from its proper species or specific nature (i.e., its form).¹⁰⁸ Similarly, “good” refers to *being* as communicable

¹⁰³ *Brev.*, I.6.2 [V, 215a].

¹⁰⁴ *Hex.*, I.12 [V, 331].

¹⁰⁵ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 24a]. Cf. *Christus unus omnium magister*, n.16 [V, 571b], trans. Zachary Hayes, “Christ, the One Teacher of All,” in *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 35.

¹⁰⁶ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 73b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 78).

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1961), 633, “Hence the essence of oneness consists in being indivisible, i.e., in being an individual thing, and in being inseparable [i.e., not separated from itself] either as to place or to form or to thought, or to being a whole and something determinate” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, bk.X, ch.1, 10052a1-18; cf. bk.IV, ch.2, 1003b-1004a9). Philip was the first to apply this negative definition to the “true” and the “good.” *Truth* is the indivisibility of that which is (*id quod est*) and being (*esse*); *good* is the indivisibility of act and potency. Philip’s systematization of the most general determinations, based on the concept of *indivisio*, is reproduced and expanded upon in the *Summa Halensis*, the formulation of which can be clearly observed in Bonaventure. Cf. Aertsen and Speer, “Die Philosophie,” 52.

¹⁰⁸ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, dub.4 [I, 60], *secundum id in quo est*.

(*communicabile*), to the extent that a thing is indivisible from the end or the act that is its completion or perfection.¹⁰⁹

The important point here is how the conceptual distinctions among the transcendentals, and in the essential constitution of all things, manifest their threefold divine cause. The *vestigium* is that property of a created thing that is reducible to God as its efficient cause, exemplary cause, and final cause. Because God is supremely one and indivisible, as that being by which he is what he is, creaturely oneness may be reduced to God as the efficient cause and root principle by which the multiplicity of all created things possess their individuated being. Moreover, because he is supremely true and cognizable, as that being according to which he is what he is, the truth of created things may be reduced to God as the exemplary cause according to which all other things possess the truth of their being. And likewise, because he is supremely good and communicable, as that being for the sake of which he is what he is, creaturely goodness may be reduced to God as the final cause for the sake of which all created things exist and are ordered. It will be argued in what follows that God is first in every way — first in the order of being, first in the order of understanding, and first in the order of living. Therefore, Bonaventure’s first mode of contemplation, *per speculum*, consciously and explicitly fixes its gaze upon the essential being and attributes of God analogically reflected *through* the transcendental conditions of the created order.

2.3.1 The One

Bonaventure’s most extensive treatment of God’s unity is found in the first article of the second question of his *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*. The fact that God is one is not only clearly testified in the book of Scripture but may also be deduced from the book of creation.¹¹⁰ In the first place, it is self-evident that all contingent beings (*ens per aliud*), by definition, depend upon a necessary first being (*ens per se*) and are reducible to it. In the second place, it is self-evident that every individual creature possesses unity in itself, insofar as each thing

¹⁰⁹ *Brev.*, I.6.2 [V, 215a]; cf. Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis (SH)* 1, P.1, In1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C2 (n. 73), 113-16, in *A Reader in Early Franciscan Theology: The Summa Halensis*, trans. Lydia Schumacher and Oleg Bychkiov (NY: Fordham University Press, 2022), 145.

¹¹⁰ Exod. 20:2, Deut. 6:4 and 32:39, and Psalm 80:10; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1, fund. [V, 59a].

is simultaneously indivisible in itself and distinct (i.e., divided) from others.¹¹¹ For this reason, there is also an order among the multiplicity and diversity of creatures, whereby each thing may be known in distinction from and relative to other things within the hierarchical order of *being*. There is “not just any sort of diversity among creatures, but rather a diversity with order and connection and an inclination to unity; and thus a diversity in unity.”¹¹² And so, it may be asked, what is the ground of this unity? Bonaventure concludes that the unity and order among creatures necessarily “infers a unity in their cause. ... So it is that the supreme wisdom and power and goodness — though they are one — are not sufficiently manifest through one effect. Therefore, they imply a diversity in the effects caused by them.” In other words, the *relative* unity that each thing possesses in itself and the order that exists among otherwise diverse and distinct creatures is necessarily rooted and grounded in the absolute unity of their first and ultimate principle, so that every perfection among creatures may be posited properly and eminently in the simplicity of the uncreated creative essence. Order in the universe could not exist — unity among the diversity — unless all of its plurality be reducible to one irreducibly simple and self-diffusive being that exists *per se*. As that being that just is that by which he is what he is (*ens per se*), the unity manifest within the diversity of the created order is reducible and retraceable to God as the efficient cause and root principle by which all things exist and have their being (*ens per aliud*).¹¹³

“One,” therefore, is not only the negation of multiplicity, it is also the principle of multiplicity; because God is supremely one, in whom all multiplicity and division must be negated, the same must also positively imply a supreme power and fecundity as the principle of all things.¹¹⁴ Bonaventure positively and affirmatively concludes that the first principle, by reason of it being first, must be “supremely one; and for this reason it is supremely simple and immense; and for the same reason it is eternal, unchangeable, and necessary For this reason, it is in this principle, in as far as it is first, that all beings and all knowledge come to rest.”¹¹⁵ Again, “Because the one principle from which the multitude among things originates is the absolutely First Principle, it is

¹¹¹ Cf. Alexander of Hales, *SH* 1, P1, In1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C1 (n. 72), 112-13 (Schumacher, trans., 139), “The negation is of the opposite meaning, which is ‘division’ or ‘multitude,’ when we refer to a being ‘undivided.’ The consequent effect is to distinguish [this being] from other [beings]: indeed, unity distinguishes ‘one’ from another, and therefore [that one] is referred to as ‘separated from other [beings].’”

¹¹² *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1, ad 10 [V, 63] (Hayes, trans., 146-147).

¹¹³ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1 [V, 61b], “And therefore it is necessary that all be reduced to one final end and one first principle, otherwise an infinite series would arise. Therefore, the very universe of beings testifies that God is one” (Hayes, trans., 143).

¹¹⁴ *I Sent.*, d.24, a.1 [I, 421-422].

¹¹⁵ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8 [V, 114b] (Hayes, trans., 263-264).

therefore productive and capable of an infinite and immense fecundity.”¹¹⁶ Because God is most simple, he is also most powerful; and so, his *power*, as in the common reference to his “power, wisdom, and goodness” manifest through the multiplicity of creatures, is itself a manifestation of his absolute oneness.

2.3.2 The True

A similar sort of *reductio* could be demonstrated with respect to the true. Precisely because every effect is a vestige of *one* divine origin, the same must also be the eternal exemplar according to the truth of which every effect has been patterned and produced. *Truth* may be understood from an ontological as well as an epistemological perspective. R. E. Houser notes that “all truth is relational, but epistemological and ontological truth involve different relations.”¹¹⁷ Bonaventure lists three possible relations: “Truth may be understood in relation to the *subject* that it informs, the *principle* that it represents, or the *intellect* that it arouses.”¹¹⁸ In other words, *truth* may either denote the creative knowledge of the divine intellect upon which the existence of created things or subjects ontologically depends and according to which they are formed, or it may denote the created truth of things themselves according to which they are principles of knowledge whereby they make themselves known to us, or it may even denote the truth whereby the human intellect is informed and according to which the truth of things (i.e., subjects) may be apprehended and known. The latter two relations primarily have in mind an epistemological notion of truth, either as it regards the created intellect’s assimilation to the truth of the thing that informs it or insofar as the truth of the thing is itself assimilated to the divine intellect as its exemplary principle. But a proper understanding of either one of these notions involves a certain ontological and transcendental notion of truth that signifies a certain intrinsic relation within each subject or thing, whereby each thing is inherently intelligible. “Truth,” understood in this ontological sense, is “*interchangeable with being (convertitur cum ente)*, as when it is said that every being is true. And so *vanity (vanum)*, its opposite, is called *non-being (non-ens)*, as when we say that a fantasy

¹¹⁶ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.1, in corp. [II, 40a]. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.1, “The more prior a being is, the more it is fecund and the principle of others” [I, 53b]; *I Sent.*, d.27, a.sole, q.2 [I, 468-474], wherein he attributes this axiom to the *Book of Causes*, which he and others had mistakenly attributed to Aristotle.

¹¹⁷ R. E. Houser, “Bonaventure’s Three-fold Way,” 106.

¹¹⁸ *I Sent.*, d.8, p.1, a.1, q.1 [I, 151a].

(*chimaera*) is a *non-being*.”¹¹⁹ Understood in this way, truth and being are convertible, and yet the saying “every being is true” is not a tautology. As we have already observed truth adds to being the notion of *being cognizable (cognoscibile)* or intelligible, inasmuch as a being is indivisible from what it is. In other words, the truth of a thing is that thing’s specific nature or essential form *according to which it is what it is*.¹²⁰ For example, human-ness is the essential form according to which a particular person may be distinctly cognized relative to the distinct form or truth of other things. Because the intrinsic *form* of a thing is the act according to which it possesses its distinct nature, it is also the *truth* according to which that thing may be cognized in distinction from others.¹²¹

When the ontological and transcendental status of *truth* is considered, its order and relation to oneness also becomes clear; truth presupposes and is a function of unity. Unity refers to the indivisibility of a being whereby it has an existence of its own in distinction from other things. Truth presupposes unity, for it is the property *according to which* a being with this sort of indivisible existence may be rationally distinguished from other things. In other words, truth is a function of unity inasmuch as unity denotes *that* a thing is distinct from others, whereas truth denotes *how* or *according to what* that indivisible thing may be distinguished relative to others; things are knowable insofar as they exist distinctly.¹²² And therefore, it logically follows that, if something is indivisible in itself and distinct from other things (i.e., unity), it will be thereby distinct according to an intrinsic form or specific nature (i.e., truth). Wherein there is unity, there is a corresponding truth of that thing; the truth of a thing proceeds necessarily upon the presupposition of its unity.

If, however, the unity of created things is ultimately derived from another, as was shown above, then we must also ask, “What is it that grounds the truth of created things?” This question reminds us that *being*, for Bonaventure, is fundamentally of two sorts: that which is from itself, according to itself, and for the sake of itself (*esse ex se et secundum se et propter se*) or that which

¹¹⁹ *Commentarius in Librum Ecclesiastes*, Intro., q.2 [VI, 7a], trans., Campion Murray (Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), 81.

¹²⁰ *Brev.*, I.6.2 [V, 215a].

¹²¹ Cf. *Hex.*, XII.3; *I Sent.*, d.8, p.1, a.1, q.1, fund. 3 [I, 151].

¹²² Cf. Alexander of Hales, *SH* 1, P.1, In1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C2 (n. 73), 113-16, “‘True’ refers to how one thing is distinguished from another. ... Insofar as a being is considered as absolute, undivided in itself, and separated from other [beings], it is delimited by ‘oneness.’ However, insofar as a being is considered in relation to another [being] in terms of its distinctness, it is delimited by ‘truth,’ for ‘true’ stands for the ability of a thing to be detectible. However, insofar as [a being] is considered in relation to another [being] in terms of agreement or order, it is delimited by ‘goodness,’ for ‘good’ stands for the ability of a thing to fit into an order” (Schumacher, trans., 141, 142-143).

is from another, according to another, and for the sake of another (*esse ex alio et secundum aliud et propter aliud*). Because every creature possesses its being through another (*ens per aliud*), all things necessarily depend upon and are thereby reducible to the one who is absolutely first (*ens per se*), not only in relation to the unity of things but also in relation to the truth of those things. It has been argued that no created thing (*ens per aliud*) possesses its unity (i.e., its indivisible existence) absolutely *of or from itself*. Consequently, it must also be maintained that no created thing, considered as such, possesses the truth of what it is *according to itself* but does so by participation in another. Therefore, as it concerns such things that neither possess being from themselves nor the truth of what they are according to themselves, there must be an extrinsic cause that grounds and measures their veracity, namely, as a true or perfect representation of that *according to which* they have been formed and after which they have been patterned.

The point being made here is frequently illustrated with an analogy taken from the world of art. The form of a sculpture, according to which it is intelligible as a sculpture of this or that kind, owes its existence to the human mind of its artisan. As a sculpture, it possesses a truth according to the form of a sculpture. But it ultimately owes the truth of its form to the pattern in the artist's mind, according to which it was produced. As such, the veracity of the truth of the sculpture itself depends upon and is measured by how well it imitates and expresses the exemplary form or truth of that thing in the mind of the artisan. This way of speaking makes use of *exemplary* causality, which refers to an *extrinsic formal* cause. In this illustration, the production of an artifact presupposes and is caused by the expressive truth and exemplary similitude of that thing in the artist's mind, "and," Bonaventure adds, "this similitude expresses the thing better than the thing could express itself, because the thing itself receives from [its exemplar] the ground (*ratio*) of its own expression."¹²³ And such is the case, Bonaventure maintains, not only with respect to the artist and her artifacts, but also with respect to God and his work of creation, wherein all things were made according to the exemplary truth and pattern (or ideas) of things preexisting in his own mind.

Bonaventure notes that someone may cognize an object in two ways, either through another (*ens per aliud*), so as to depend upon an extrinsic cause, or through oneself (*ens per se*), through an entirely intrinsic act. Following the analogy of the artist, Bonaventure maintains that, because God exists from himself and according to himself, he does not derive the exemplary idea of things

¹²³ *I Sent.*, d.35, a.sole, q.1, ad 3 [I, 602a], ... *et secundum hanc est perfectior cognitio, et hac cognoscit Deus.*

from another or according to another, but from himself and according to himself.¹²⁴ As such, created beings are true, not *according to themselves*, but according to the extent they conform to and imitate the exemplary truth of things in the divine intellect, which is identical with the divine essence understood according to its own expressive imitability.¹²⁵ The truth of things is therefore reducible to God who is *truth* itself. He is *truth* itself because he alone possesses being *per se* and *secundum se*. And therefore, because he himself is the truth according to which he is what he is, he is simultaneously the exemplary truth or art according to which the truth of all things have their being. Here, it is worth quoting Bonaventure at length,

The divine intellect is the supreme light, the full truth, and pure act. So, as the divine power to produce things is sufficient in itself to produce everything, so the divine light and truth is sufficient in itself to express all things. And since this expression is an intrinsic act, it is eternal. Because an expression is a form of assimilation, the divine intellect — expressing all things eternally in its supreme truth — possesses from eternity the exemplary Ideas of all creatures. And these are not something distinct from God but are essentially identical with the divine nature.

Indeed, because the divine intellect is expressive precisely as the supreme light and as pure act, it is expressive in a way that is supremely brilliant, most express, and most perfect, and therefore with a full equality and according to a full intentional likeness. Hence, the divine intellect knows all things most perfectly, distinctly, and completely.¹²⁶

Bonaventure draws a link between unity and truth. Because God is irreducibly *one*, he is therefore supremely powerful in his ability to produce all things. It follows from this that he is also irreducibly *true*, and, therefore, supremely wise in his ability to express whatsoever is within his power to produce.¹²⁷ In other words, because he is from himself, he knows all things in knowing himself and produces all things according to himself. And for this reason, the veracity of the truth of all things is reducible and retraceable to God himself, who is the uncreated truth according to which the created truth of all things is fully measured and finally resolved.¹²⁸ And therefore,

¹²⁴ *I Sent.*, d.39, a.1, q.1 [I, 684-686].

¹²⁵ *Scientia Christi*, q.3 [V, 14b], “In knowing itself, the divine wisdom knows all material things in an immaterial way, and divisible things in an indivisible way, and plurality in a single act, knowing and producing all things while remaining one in itself” (Hayes, trans., 107); cf. *I Sent.*, d.8, a.1, p.1, q.1, ad 4 [I, 152].

¹²⁶ *Scientia Christi*, q.2 [V, 9a] (Hayes, trans., 90-91).

¹²⁷ Again, divine truth is a function of divine unity; cf. *I Sent.*, d.39, a.1, q.1, ad 5 [I, 686b], *scire est actus ut habitus* ..., “*to know* is an act as a habit, which signifies a perfection of a power.”

¹²⁸ *I Sent.*, d.8, p.1, a.1, q.1, ad 4 and 7 [I, 151b], *Omnia enim vera sunt* ..., “For all things are true and are brought forth to express themselves by means of the expression of that greatest light, so that if it were to cease its [exemplary artistic] influence, nothing else would continue to be true. Therefore, no created truth is true by means of its own essence, but by means of its participation [in uncreated truth itself].”

because he knows all things in knowing himself and every way he is imitable in his creatures, in accordance with which all things have been made, he is also the eternal truth in relation to which all things derive their intelligibility.

This last remark highlights one of the foremost epistemological implications that arise from our consideration of the metaphysical-transcendental foundations of truth, an implication no less that informs Bonaventure's understanding of contemplation. For now, we will only acknowledge the connection, which is twofold: Because the truth of all things is reducible to God as the irreducible source of truth itself, God may be known and philosophically contemplated through our knowledge of creatures. Moreover, Bonaventure concludes from this that God is no less the principle of knowing than he is the principle of being. However, this does not mean that God or divine truth itself is the only (*sola*) or bare (*nuda*) or whole (*tota*) ground of knowledge, for our knowledge of God is mediated *through* truth of things themselves, which are the immediate and proper principles of all our knowledge. Instead, his point is that our knowledge of things will not be fully and completely resolved until it be known in relation to God.¹²⁹ Insofar as we apprehend the truth of things in their own right and according to their created causes, we are able to achieve a scientific knowledge of those things. But only when the soul is elevated by means of contemplation to apprehend the truth of things in the light of God's wisdom, as their exemplary cause, are we able to attain wisdom, that is, a sapiential knowledge of those same things.¹³⁰

2.3.3 The Good

Once again, a similar sort of *reductio* could be demonstrated with respect to the *good*, for just as every created effect is a vestige of its one divine origin and the truth of its eternal exemplar, so also are all things a reflection of its goodness, as the end for the sake of which every created effect exists and is ordered.¹³¹ As a vestigial and transcendental characteristic of all reality, whatsoever possesses *being* possesses *goodness*.¹³² It may be recalled how Bonaventure adopted

¹²⁹ Cf. *I Sent.*, d.28, dub.1 [I, 504a-b], *Alio modo contingit aliquid intelligere praeter alterum, intellectu resolvante, et iste intellectus considerat ea quae sunt rei essentialia, sicut potest intelligi subiectum sine propria passione. Et hoc potest esse dupliciter: aut intellectu resolvante plene et perfecte, aut intellectu deficiente et resolvante semiplene. Intellectu resolvante plene et perfecte, non potest intelligi aliquid, primo ente non intellecto.*

¹³⁰ Cf. *Christus unus*, n.18 [V, 572a]; *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 14b].

¹³¹ Order can be understood in two ways; the order among things in the universe may be appropriated to wisdom, but the ordination of things to their end is to be appropriated to goodness. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, dub.4 [I, 80].

¹³² Cf. *I Sent.*, d.1, a.1, q.2, fund. 2 [I, 32a]; d.1, a.1, q.3, ad 3 [I, 35b]; d.46, a. sole, q.4, fund. 1 [I, 827b].

Philip the Chancellor's transcendental description of the good as the indivision of a thing's act and potency, or the indivision of a thing and the act whereby its created potential is actualized and its nature is brought to its relative perfection.¹³³ This means that every created thing possesses a goodness that is relative to what it is, namely, the degree to which its created potential, relative to what it is, is actually and fully realized.¹³⁴ A thing is said to be good insofar as there is no division between *that which is* and the good *for the sake of which it is*, relative to the truth of *what it is*. In this way, *goodness* presupposes and is a function of both *unity* and *truth*.

Everything exists for the sake of something, some purpose or end, and therefore possesses goodness to the extent each thing actually obtains the purpose for which something of its kind exists. The goodness of a thing is, therefore, understood relative to its final cause. Because a saw is made for the sake of cutting, it is said to be a good saw insofar as its potential for cutting is actually obtained, i.e., it has a serrated blade, a sturdy handle, and is sharp. And because *good* is said in relation to a thing's good purpose, for the sake of which it is to be used to its fullest potential, goodness is likewise said to be diffusive and communicable (*communicabile*) by virtue of its usefulness.¹³⁵ For this reason, some things, because they possess greater actuality and therefore communicate a greater good, are said to possess a greater goodness than other things. But no matter how good a thing may be within the order of being, if it does not exist for its own sake (*propter se*) as an end in itself, then neither will it possess its goodness for its own sake (*propter se bonum*) but rather for the sake of another.¹³⁶ In other words, because no created thing exists for its own sake, all created things necessarily possess their goodness for the sake of another and, therefore, obtain their ultimate end, purpose and perfection, in relation to another. All created things are themselves signs that, in limited and finite ways and to varying degrees, communicate the supreme goodness of another, for the sake of whom they exist and in relation to whom, and for the enjoyment of which, they are ultimately to be used.

¹³³ Cf. Alexander of Hales, *SH* 1, P1, In1, Tr3, Q2, M1, C2 (n. 88), 139-41 (Schumacher, trans., 154).

¹³⁴ *Brev.*, I.6.2 [V, 215a]; cf. Alexander of Hales, *SH* 1, P.1, In1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C2 (n. 73), 113-16 (Schumacher, trans., 145).

¹³⁵ "Goodness is bound to communicate itself," *I Sent.*, d.1, a.2, q.3, ad 3 [I, 41b]; "It belongs to goodness to communicate itself in a most high manner," *I Sent.*, d.2, a. sole, q.2, fund. 1 [I, 53a]; "The divine nature is most good because most actual and, therefore, most able and willing to communicate itself," *I Sent.*, d.9, a. sole, q.1, fund. 4 [I, 180a]. Bonaventure refers to this principle as "self-evident," *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1, ad opp. 7 [V, 60b] (Hayes, trans., 142).

¹³⁶ *I Sent.*, d.1, a.3, q.2, fund. 1 [I, 39-40].

There must be a first in the order of final causality. This sort of reduction may be illustrated with respect to rational creatures.¹³⁷ Bonaventure notes that the soul of man has a capacity or potency for something greater than itself. He reasons that we have the rational potency to know the truth of all things, and therefore the intellect cannot be perfected unless it knows that truth according to which all things are known. Similarly, nothing can sufficiently complete (*finire*) the soul except the good *for which* it exists. And because we have the affective potency to love every good, the will cannot be perfected unless it loves that goodness for the sake of which all other things possess their goodness. As with unity and truth, the relative goodness of all things is dependent upon and reducible to a being that exists for its own sake, who just is the goodness for the sake of which he exists and, therefore, also provides the ultimate explanation and end for which all else exists. “Just as God is said to be the Truth of every truth, that is, from whom every truth possesses its truth, so he is the Good of every good, from whom every good possesses its goodness.”¹³⁸ Both *truth* and *goodness*, which are really convertible with each other and are identical with the divine essence, are the measure of the perfection of all things. Whereas the truth of things is measured in relation to their exemplary cause, the goodness of things is measured in relation to their final cause. All things within the order of *being*, that is, of beings *per aliud*, are reducible to God who is *being per se*, that is, *of* or *from* himself, *according* to himself, and *for* himself.

In this section we have considered Bonaventure’s first mode of reduction wherein the essential order (*ordo essentialis*) among created essences (*de ordine rerum ad invicem*) is traced back to God as the first principle and cause that grounds the existence and intelligibility of all things. We have noted the primary role of *being*, and its common transcendental conditions or essential attributes, as the primary means by which the soul is led back (upward) to a knowledge of the essential being and attributes of God which are common to all three persons of the Trinity. As *ens per se*, God is first in every way — first in the order of being, first in the order of understanding, and first in the order of living.¹³⁹ Therefore, Bonaventure’s first mode of contemplation, *per speculum*, consciously and explicitly fixes its gaze upon the essential being and attributes of God analogically reflected *through* the transcendental conditions of the created order.

¹³⁷ *I Sent.*, d.1, a.3, q.2 [I, 40-41].

¹³⁸ *I Sent.*, d.45, a.1, q.2 [I, 800a], sicut dicitur Deus verum

¹³⁹ Cf. *Itin.*, I.14 [V, 299b]; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, VIII.4.

2.4 Trinitarian Appropriations

One further consideration relative to this form of reduction requires our attention, a consideration that will by design point us in the direction of Bonaventure's second form of reduction in the next chapter. The particular consideration in view here is the doctrine of trinitarian appropriation, namely, "that even though all the essential attributes apply equally and without distinction to all the persons, yet oneness is appropriated to the Father, truth to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Spirit."¹⁴⁰ Because the transcendental determinations of *being* are convertible, they are equally and indivisibly reducible to the essential being of God as that first principle which grounds the essence and existence and, therefore, intelligibility of all things. In other words, the determination *unum* is essentially and indivisibly reducible to God as the effective cause, *verum* to God as the formal or exemplary cause, and *bonum* to God as the final cause. Jan Aertsen explains,

As it flows from the divine cause, created being acquires a threefold 'impression,' by which it is disposed to stand in a relation of conformity to the cause. *Unitas* is the disposition by which it stands in a relation of conformity with the efficient cause: Just as the efficient cause is one and undivided, so every creature has undivided being. *Veritas* is the disposition by which being stands in conformity with the exemplary cause: Just as the exemplary cause is the first art (*ars prima*) of truth, so every creature is an imitation of the divine art and therefore possesses truth. *Bonum* is that in virtue of which being is in conformity with the final cause: Just as the final cause is the supreme good, so every creature has an inclination to the highest good.¹⁴¹

But what is more, because there exists an order of relations within the indivisibility of oneness, truth, and goodness, these common transcendental determinations are also suggestive of a corresponding order of relations within the indivisible being of God. In other words, the transcendental determinations of created *being* are vestiges of the Trinity in the created world and,

¹⁴⁰ *Brev.*, I.6.1 [V, 214b] (Monti, trans., 44-45).

¹⁴¹ Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and Transcendental Thought*, 145. Aertsen also notes Bonaventure's dependence upon Alexander of Hales and the *Summa Helensis* (p.142-148).

therefore, may be appropriated to each of the divine persons respectively.¹⁴² Bonaventure clarifies that such appropriations are not proper but only suggestive:

Now, these are said to be appropriated, not because they are proper [to these persons], since they are always common [to them all], but because they lead to a better understanding and knowledge of what is proper, that is the three persons themselves. ... Thus it follows that these three qualities, as being perfect and transcendental, are attributed to the First Principle to the highest degree, and, as having orderly reference, are attributed to the three persons.¹⁴³

Aertsen helpfully summarizes Bonaventure's rationale: "These determinations are supremely ascribed to the supreme principle because they are perfect and general; they are appropriated to the three Persons because they have order."¹⁴⁴

To what order is Bonaventure referring? "This triple indivisibility," he writes, "has a logical ordering in that the true presupposes the one, and the good presupposes the one as well as the true."¹⁴⁵ We have already had occasion to show that, for Bonaventure, the first and absolute oneness of God positively entails his supreme power and fecundity as the efficient cause of all created multiplicity. Similarly, the first and supreme truth of God positively entails his supreme wisdom as the exemplary cause of all created multiplicity, that is, by virtue of him knowing himself and every finite and limited way in which he is able to be imitated in creatures, *which presupposes his supreme power*. Moreover, the first and supreme goodness of God entails his supreme beneficence as the final cause of all created multiplicity, that is, by virtue of his diffusive goodwill in freely creating and ordering all things in such a way that they may find their end in him, *which again presupposes his supreme power and wisdom*. Thus, "these attributions are based on a logical order: [just as the] will presupposes knowledge, and both will and knowledge presuppose power and strength. ... This makes clear what the appropriations are, to whom they apply, and why."¹⁴⁶ By virtue of their order one to another, it follows that supreme oneness would be appropriated to

¹⁴² Bonaventure, in *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.2 [I, 73b], makes a further distinction between a shadow and a vestige. He is prompted to do so because the two terms seem to be used distinctly by Lombard in his *Sentences* (*I Sent.*, d.3, ch.1, n.7-9). While shadows lead only to the knowledge of God's common attributes, and in an indeterminate way, vestiges likewise lead to knowledge of God's common and essential attributes but which may also be appropriated to the persons of the Trinity (*communia ut appropriata*). Ordinarily, however, Bonaventure does not make use of this fine distinction but speaks more generally of vestiges.

¹⁴³ *Brev.*, I.6.1-2 [V, 215a] (Monti, trans., 45-46).

¹⁴⁴ Aertsen and Speer, "Die Philosophie," 58.

¹⁴⁵ *Brev.*, I.6.2 [V, 215a] (Monti, trans., 45).

¹⁴⁶ *Brev.*, I.6.5 [V, 215b] (Monti, trans., 47).

the Father, supreme truth to the Son who proceeds from the Father as his Word and wisdom, and supreme goodness to the Holy Spirit who proceeds from both as their Love and Gift.¹⁴⁷

Again, the quasi-trinitarian order within the transcendental conditions of being does not properly reveal a knowledge of the persons to whom they are attributed but is nonetheless suggestive of an analogous order of relations within the indivisible being of God. That Bonaventure can explicitly appropriate the transcendental *trinity of relations* to the specific persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit respectively presupposes a certain knowledge of the *trinity of persons* by means of divine revelation and, therefore, properly belongs within the domain of theological contemplation; but, that he can more generally appropriate the transcendental *trinity of relations* to an analogous *trinity of relations* within the indivisible divine being, still falls within the purview of philosophical contemplation — hence its inclusion in this chapter. Thus, Aertsen can say, “In contrast to the *trinitas personarum*, the *trinitas appropriatorum*, as a trinity of appropriated transcendental determinations, represents an object that can be grasped by natural reason without faith.”¹⁴⁸ That being said, it is precisely here that reason strains in anticipation of what only faith can more fully and properly apprehend according to a more perfect form of reduction. This will be taken up in the next chapter.

Insofar as the metaphysical order is laid open to natural reason, this first form of reduction leads the soul from created beings to the first and ultimate principle, insofar as the essential perfections of the divine being and attributes are manifest *through* creatures. We have referred to this form of reduction as the philosophical way, because it pertains to what may be known of God naturally. In other words, the soul is led from a knowledge of creatures, relative to the extrinsic relations within the order of being, to an essential knowledge of God as the first and ultimate principle of all. However, even as the trinitarian appropriations anticipate, a fuller and proper disclosure of this first principle awaits Bonaventure’s second form of reduction and its more elevated form of contemplation. It is to this that we now turn our attention.

¹⁴⁷ *Brev.*, I.6.3 [V, 215a].

¹⁴⁸ Aertsen and Speer, “Die Philosophie,” 58-59. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.4 [I, 76b].

III

The Created Order: *Theological Foundations*

In order to situate Bonaventure's contemplative practice relative to his unique understanding of the metaphysical and cosmological conditions that make it possible, we began in the previous chapter with an introduction to his concept of order (*ordo*). It was argued that in order for anything to be *intelligible*, and therefore contemplated, there must be an intelligible *order* among and within the reality of things themselves. Ontology, the way things really are, grounds Bonaventure's epistemology, how the reality of things may be known. In other words, our ways of knowing and contemplating aim to mirror (reflect upon) the very structure of reality itself; to know a thing is, therefore, to apprehend it within its order of relations. And as an effect in some way participates in its cause, the created order itself mirrors and reflects the perfection and unity of the divine order from which it emanates. The point we have been laboring to make is this: the metaphysical and cosmological order serves as the intelligible medium for Bonaventure's contemplative endeavor.

Contemplation, therefore, is most formally practiced by means of *reductio*. The metaphysical order of things establishes an order of intelligibility, wherein one thing is known relative to others and may ultimately be reduced to a knowledge of its divine principle and cause. In other words, the divine being grounds the intelligibility of the created order and thereby enables it to serve as the medium in and through which God may be contemplated. The scholastic practice of reduction presupposes that in order for a thing to be fully understood, it must be understood in relation to that upon which it ultimately and irreducibly depends. In other words, the method of *reductio* seeks to reduce our knowledge of things to that upon which the essence and existence of those things ultimately depend, as when we truly know an effect by knowing it in relation to its cause. And because creation was produced according to a threefold causality (efficient, exemplary, and final), Bonaventure maintains that "every creature must bear within itself this threefold relationship to its first cause. For every creature is constituted in being by the efficient cause, is

patterned after the exemplary cause, and is ordained to the final cause.”¹ Thus, creation is most fully understood when it is contemplated in relation to that upon which it ultimately and irreducibly depends, that is, in relation to God. And as it applies to contemplation, reduction is not merely an intellectual exercise but is a spiritual means by which the soul is lifted above creation, and even above itself, that it might be led back *up* to God through knowledge and love. Reduction is the way of consummation, the spiritual and contemplative means by which all things return to God.

As we have already noted, we find in the works of Bonaventure two primary forms of reduction that correspond to the two different ways in which the metaphysical and cosmological order of things may be perceived. In the previous chapter, we considered the relations that exist among or between things insofar as each thing is ordered relative to all other things (*de ordine rerum ad invicem*) within the vertical hierarchical *order of being* or *essences*. In what follows, we shall consider the intrinsic relations that exist within things themselves, insofar as each thing is intrinsically (*in sua puritate*) ordered to its end (*de ordine rerum ad finem*) within what he calls the order of persons — by which Bonaventure intends an intrinsic order of relations within things that reflects the intrinsic order among the divine persons.² Corresponding to these two orders of reflection Bonaventure speaks in his *Itinerarium* of two grades or degrees of contemplating the invisible and eternal qualities of God (*gradus contemplandi Dei invisibilia et aeterna*),³ “depending on whether God be considered as the alpha or as the omega, or ... as through a mirror or as in a mirror, or [as] related to another with which it is connected or should be considered according to its own purity.”⁴ Here again, Bonaventure describes the two paths of reduction insofar as God, and the divine order as such, may be contemplated relative to these two vantage points. Although God is one, it was pointed out in the previous chapter that the divine order may be considered both *through* and *in* creatures, or *per speculum* and *in speculo*, relative to these two forms of reduction or degrees of contemplation. Thus, according to these two modes of contemplative reduction, the same object is known in two ways: God, either as that *being* which explains and grounds the entire order of created beings or as the end for the sake of which all things are ordered “in their own purity.” In both of these ways, the divine order is contuited (*contuitio*),

¹ *Brev.*, II.1.4 [V, 219b] (Monti, trans., 62).

² *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.2, qq.1-2 [II, 43-47]. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 471a], *Si ergo videmus in ordine causarum, inter quas est ordo essentialis, ... ordo personarum ...*

³ *Itin.*, V.1 [V, 308].

⁴ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b].

that is, simultaneously known either *through* or *in* the created order according to increasing degrees (*gradus*) of perfection.⁵ And as such, the created order itself contains intimations of the divine mystery that, though partially apprehended by means of philosophical contemplation, is not fully apprehended until the soul, aided by revelation, is enabled to see the world in a more theocentric way by means of theological contemplation. Whereas the first, as was observed in the previous chapter, leads to a philosophical or natural knowledge of God's essential attributes, the second, which we now aim to explain, considers the deeper theological and trinitarian dimensions of every created thing in relation to their ultimate end. In both cases, Bonaventure rejects any notion that God may be contemplated immediately and directly this side of glory but instead affirms that the metaphysical and cosmological order serves as the intelligible medium for the soul's contemplative endeavor. That being said, whereas the first way is laid open to natural reason, the second way requires the supernatural assistance of graced-reason.

And thus, the latter form of reduction, wherein the divine order may be contemplated *in* the created order as *in a mirror (in speculo)*, facilitates a higher form of contemplation than the former. Again, "to understand this matter one must realize that knowing God *in* a creature is different from knowing God *through* a creature." He explains: "Knowing God through a creature ... is being lifted up from knowing the creature to knowing God, as by a ladder connecting the two," whereas "knowing God *in* a creature is knowing his presence and influence in the creature."⁶ With respect to the latter, Bonaventure has in mind a form of reduction that begins with a faithful knowledge of God as the end or Omega of every creature and resolves to know more fully how his trinitarian presence and influence in them points toward that end. This form of reduction provides the basis for a higher form of contemplation, through which the *reditus* of all things is most perfected this side of glory. In other words, this form of contemplation follows a path of reduction that resolves all things in the ultimate end and desire for which all things are intrinsically ordered, which is no less than the trinity of persons (*circa propria personarum ... defigit aspectum in ipsum bonum*).⁷ This chapter aims to show that this higher form of contemplation seeks to reduce the end and desire of all things to the Highest Good, which, for Bonaventure, is inchoately grounded in

⁵ *Itin.*, VII.7 [V, 312a].

⁶ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.3 [I, 74b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 80); cf. *III Sent.*, d.31, a.2, q.1, ad 5 [III, 682a].

⁷ *Itin.*, V.1-2 [V, 308]; cf. VI.1 [V, 310b], *Sicut autem visionis essentialium ipsum esse est principium radicale et nomen, per quod cetera innotescunt; sic contemplationis emanationum ipsum bonum est principalissimum fundamentum*.

the fecundity of the Father, is perfected in the internal processions of the Son and the Spirit (*ordo personarum*), and is manifest in their external processions relative to creation (i.e., his “presence and influence” in creatures).⁸ As such, the intrinsic order of each individual creature does in some way manifest *in itself* a certain relation to the intrinsic order of persons in God himself, through the contemplation of which the soul is led into greater conformity to, participation in, and union with the divine order and triune life of God. We may refer to this second way of contemplation as theological, because it follows a “theological movement”⁹ that necessarily presupposes a working knowledge of God as Trinity that *de jure* (i.e., by absolute necessity of its subject matter) depends upon and presupposes the light of faith.¹⁰ And as such, we begin by considering the order of relations intrinsic to God himself whereby he exists most perfectly as an end in himself. In the second part of the chapter, we will proceed to consider how the trinitarian order of persons, as apprehended by faith, is variously reflected in his created effects.

1. The Divine Order of Persons

Bonaventure is clear that “the trinity of persons (*trinitas personarum*) is not in any way knowable *through* a creature (*per creaturum*), that is, by ascending rationally from a creature to God.”¹¹ In other words, although a person may arrive at a trinity of appropriations (*trinitas appropriatorum*) by means of philosophical reduction, we cannot be led by the same method to an actual knowledge of the trinity of persons. In fact, there is nothing entirely like the intrinsic order of the Trinity within the created order, whereby a person could *reason* from a knowledge of creatures to a knowledge of the Trinity itself apart from supernatural revelation. Knowledge of the trinity of persons must be revealed by God and received by faith, which is the cognitive domain of Christian theology alone. Nevertheless, as Gregory LaNave points out, “To know God as creator enlivens in the soul a desire to know him better—that is, to know him as revealer and, finally, as the Beloved

⁸ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 471a], *Si ergo videmus in ordine causarum, ...*

⁹ Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” 221.

¹⁰ Again, although this has not yet been proven, this second form of reduction is progressively worked out in chapters 2, 4, and 6 of the *Itinerarium*, and most thoroughly in chapter 6.

¹¹ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.4 [I, 76b].

[Trinity] with whom one may be united.”¹² Thus, in the same way that theology begins where philosophy ends, so that faith may be said to perfect reason and theological wisdom may be said to perfect philosophical wisdom, Bonaventure’s second form of *reductio* advances and perfects the first. Whereas the philosophical way proceeds from a knowledge of the creatures to a knowledge of God as their first principle *as cause*, the theological way begins with the revealed knowledge of the first principle *as Trinity* and proceeds to contemplate him in his creatures as the end and desire for whom all things have been intrinsically ordered.¹³ Bonaventure asserts that “he who contemplates this [God], in as far as it is the first principle that he contemplates, finds the rest and the final end of his desires, which are not [fully and perfectly] brought to their end unless the first principle is clearly contemplated as both three and supremely one.”¹⁴

In summary, the first form of reduction retraces a knowledge attainable through the created order to a knowledge of the first cause and ultimate principle. The second form of reduction begins at this summit (*summo*) and proceeds on the basis of a more penetrating knowledge of that first principle, i.e., the knowledge that, though this principle be one in relation to the created order, it exists in three persons. By reason of God being first in the order of being, he must be supremely one and simple. But, as was anticipated by the trinity of appropriations, divine simplicity does not preclude an intrinsic order of relations existing in the unity of the divine essence.¹⁵ Rather, “true faith prescribes that we maintain that within the one [divine] nature there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Of these, the first proceeds from no other; the second, from the first alone through generation; the third, from the first and second through spiration or procession.”¹⁶

In this section, Bonaventure’s theological understanding of the intrinsic order of persons (*ordo personarum*) existing in the unity of the divine essence will be summarized. This will enable us to consider the uniquely Bonaventuran claim that the divine order of persons is to varying degrees imperfectly reflected, as though in a mirror (*in speculo*), in the intrinsic nature of every creature (*in creaturis*) — a metaphysical claim that grounds a distinctively faith-informed *reductio* and establishes the intelligible medium for a theological form of contemplation.

¹² Gregory F. LaNave, “God, Creation, and the Possibility of Philosophical Wisdom: the Perspectives of Bonaventure and Aquinas,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 818.

¹³ *Brev.*, I.1.3 [V, 210].

¹⁴ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8 [V, 114b] (Hayes, trans., 264).

¹⁵ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8 [V, 112-115].

¹⁶ *Brev.*, I.2.2 [V, 210b] (Monti, trans., 29).

1.1 The First Person

The firstness or primacy of the Father features prominently in Bonaventure's trinitarian theology and grounds the claim that, by means of theological contemplation, all knowledge may be reduced to the Father as the fecund principle of all things. Just as there is an absolute first among essences, relative to the order of *being*, there is in another respect a first among persons, relative to their order of relations. Just as the order of essences can be reduced to God as its first principle, so also can the intrinsic divine order of persons be reduced, so to speak, to that divine person who is the principle and origin of the others. Bonaventure writes, "Just as there is one first essence relative to the order of essences, from which and with respect to which the others exist, so also there is one [divine] person relative to the order of persons, from whom and with respect to whom the other [divine persons] exist. And in this one is the complete establishment of origin, because he is from no other; and this is the person of the Father."¹⁷

On numerous occasions, Bonaventure employs the axiom, "The more prior a being is, the more it is fecund and the principle of others."¹⁸ A principle cannot be the source of what it does not in some way already possess, and thus the more prior the principle the more fecund it must be. As we have seen, this holds true with respect to God as the irreducible First Principle of all created beings; as such, all three persons possess an absolute fecundity to create, for it is *equally* true of all three that there is no essence prior to the divine essence (*privationem anterioris*).¹⁹ But Bonaventure presses this axiom further. Because the Father, relative to the intrinsic order of the divine persons, is most prior with respect to personal origin (*privationem originis*), in that he alone is not from another (*innascibilitas*), he must also possess a special fecundity or fountain fullness that is peculiar to his own person to generate the Son and spirate the Spirit. "And, in a certain way," he adds, "this sort of fontality is the origin of the other fontality. For, since the Father brings forth the Son, and through the Son, and together with the Son brings forth the Holy Spirit, God the

¹⁷ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 54b], *sicut in essentiis una est essentia prima ...*

¹⁸ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.1 [I, 53b]. It was derived from the Book of Causes, mistakenly thought to be written by Aristotle, though more likely written by Proclus.

¹⁹ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8, ad 4 [V, 115a].

Father through the Son with the Holy Spirit is the principle of everything created; for if He did not produce them from eternity, He could not produce through them (*per illos*) in time.”²⁰

The assertion of the Father’s special fecundity is neither unique to Bonaventure nor particularly controversial in and of itself. Aquinas, for instance, affirms that a certain fecundity to generate and spirare is included in the notion of paternity, which itself signifies in God the principle of origin relative to the Son and the Spirit.²¹ And a principle, to be principle, must possess a certain fontality. However, it will be argued in what follows that Bonaventure is unique both in the extent to which he put the idea to theological use and in the way he epistemically grounds the concept, not only in the Father’s paternity but also in his innascibility or unbegottenness.

1.1.1 The Father as *Father*

Because Bonaventure’s understanding of innascibility is not without controversy, but also because we do not wish to exaggerate the uniqueness of Bonaventure’s formulation, and because his position is most frequently contrasted with Aquinas, it will be useful to begin by expressing those points wherein these two do agree. Bonaventure is uncontroversial, insofar as he takes his definition of a divine person from Boethius, wherein a person is a hypostasis of a rational nature according to a distinct property (*hypostasis proprietate distincta*). And because a personal property in God always signifies a relation of origin,²² he writes, “each are called [persons] according to an *intrinsic* relation and a substance that is not common but *proper*.”²³ Accordingly, Bonaventure and Aquinas both agree that paternity is the peculiar personal property of God the Father. Bonaventure notes that the name “Father,” which signifies his paternity, can be understood insofar as it is a personal property of the Father himself (i.e., relative to the subject in whom the paternity-relation is found) or insofar as it signifies a subsisting relation in the divine essence (i.e., relative to the person or term to whom the subject relates). Of these two ways of understanding paternity, both agree that paternity principally and properly signifies a relation of the Father to the Son. And because the personal properties do not inhere in God as accidents but as the divine essence itself,

²⁰ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8, ad 7 [V, 115b] (Hayes, trans., 266). Cf. Janet C. Kvamme, “The Fontalis Plentitudo in Bonaventure as a Symbol for his Metaphysics” (PhD diss., Fordham University, New York, 1999).

²¹ *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 2b], *Nam paternitas importat fecunditatem* ...; cf. Aquinas, *ST I*, q.33, a.4, ad 1.

²² *I Sent.*, d.25, a.1, q.1, ad 8 [I, 438a]; cf. Aquinas, *ST I*, q.28, aa.2-3; q.29, a.4.

²³ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.2, ad 9 [V, 67a]; *I Sent.*, d.25, a.1, q.2 [I, 439-441]. Cf. Alexander Hales, *SH*, I, q.56, m.3; Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.25, q.1, a.1; *ST I*, q.29, a.1; Boethius, *De Trinitate*, c. 6.

and because the divine persons are identical with their relative properties, both maintained that paternity properly signifies a subsisting relation, i.e., a relative and personal mode of subsisting that is really identical with the divine essence.²⁴

Differences arise, however, in response to the question whether the Father, relative to our mode of understanding, generates because he is a Father or is a Father because he generates.²⁵ For a full explication of these differences, which although real are not nearly as pronounced as they are often portrayed in the secondary literature, I refer the reader to the Appendix. In summary, because a person acts through its form, Bonaventure notes that it is the opinion of some that he generates because he is a Father. This is the position of Aquinas, who asserts that the paternity-relation must be the reason for the act and not the other way around.²⁶ And inasmuch as “Father” signifies paternity, and “paternity” presupposes (*quasi praesupponendo*) a paternal-fecundity, Bonaventure likewise agrees that it may be said that he generates because he is Father.²⁷ However, whereas Aquinas’s position unequivocally prioritizes the idea of subsisting relations, placing the Father’s paternal relation conceptually prior to generation would, in Bonaventure’s opinion, seem to posit a paternity that is conceptually prior to the filiation of the Son, who is himself constituted *this* person by the act of generation, and therefore conceptually prior to the paternal-relation itself.²⁸ It must be acknowledged that Bonaventure is equally concerned to preserve the

²⁴ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 472b]; d.22, a.sole, q.4 [I, 398a-b]; d.26, a.sole, q.2 [I, 456-458]; q.4, ad 5 [I, 461b], ... *proprietas personalis, faciens personam esse personam*; d.28, a.sole, q.2, ad 2 and ad 3 [I, 500b], *quia paternitas et filiatione opponuntur relative*; d.33, a.sole, q.2 [I, 575b], ... *relatio ratione comparationis ad subiectum transit in substantiam, et ideo proprietas est divina substantia ... sed vera distinctio*; *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 2b], *Nam paternitas importat fecunditatem quasi praesupponendo et praeintelligendo, licet principaliter imponatur ab habitudine. Dicitur enim paternitas habitudo Patris ad Filium; Misterio Trinitatis*, q.3, a.2, ad 11-12 [V, 78a]; q.2, a.2, ad 10 [V, 67a]; *Brev.*, I.3.5 [V, 212a], “It is through these relations that the divine hypostases are made known to us” (Monti, trans., 34).

Moreover, a divine person is identical with its relative property, for whereas a difference between a particular relation and its subject would necessarily imply composition, the difference between a particular relation (e.g., paternity) and its term (e.g., filiation or passive generation), which is signified by the relative properties respectively, only implies a relative distinction without any composition whatsoever; cf. *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.3, a.2 [V, 75b-76]. Cf. Russell L. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University: The Use of Philosophical Psychology in Trinitarian Theology among the Franciscans and Dominicans, 1250-1350*, 2 vol. (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 1:51-79, notes the substantial unity, and yet differences, between Bonaventure and Aquinas in how they articulate the ontological status of relations in God. On this particular issue, he writes: “Thus, Bonaventure’s theory is very similar to Aquinas” (1:69).

²⁵ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2 [I, 468-472]; *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 1-3].

²⁶ Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.27, q.1, a.2.

²⁷ *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 2b-3a].

²⁸ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, in corp. [I, 469b] and ad 3 [I, 472b]; cf. Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.26, q.1, a.2, ad 4, *quia hoc quo pater habet paternitatem, filius habet filiationem, quae etiam est relatio*; d.27, q.1, a.2, ad 4. Cf. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions*, 1:74n53.

intelligibility of the persons as subsisting *relations*. This is why Bonaventure remarks that it is the common opinion that the Son possess both of these, “that he is” and “that he is a Son,” through generation. The Father and the Son are both constituted as such in relation. And if that whereby the Son has filiation is also that whereby the Father has paternity, which for the former is through the act of generation, then it must be concluded that “just as passive generation relates to filiation, so active generation to paternity.”²⁹ And therefore, he concludes, it is more consistent to say that the act of generation is the reason for paternity, and not the other way around.³⁰ In other words, Bonaventure maintained that it is better to say that the Father is a Father because he generates.

But, if the act of generation is conceptually prior to the paternal relation according to which the Father is constituted as Father, then “through what,” if not through the paternal fecundity itself, does the act of generation proceed? In response, he asserts that a hypostasis must be *conceptually* understood prior to the act of generation. But since the person of the Father is distinctly constituted as Father by reason of generating, there must be something proper to his hypostasis, other than paternity itself, that *logically* grounds the very act of generation. And so, he concludes, “According to our manner of understanding, the reason for distinguishing [his person] is *inchoately implied* (*inchoatur*) in his innascibility (*innascibilitate*), and therefore he generates, not by reason of a prior distinction based upon *paternity*, but in some manner by reason of a prior distinction based upon *innascibility*.”³¹

Bonaventure’s sole intention here is to reduce (*reduci*) our understanding of the Father to the irreducible principle that grounds that understanding, at which point the entire inquiry, “He is who he is, by reason of what?” may be brought to rest. In summary, Bonaventure argues that generation is *conceptually* prior to paternity, and innascibility is *conceptually* prior to the act of generation. Generation is the conceptual reason for the Father’s paternity, whereas innascibility is (according to its consequent understanding) the reason for the act of generation. And therefore, Bonaventure prefers the opinion that he is Father because he generates, and he generates because he is the innascible God. Beyond this, no further reduction according to our understanding is either

²⁹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, in corp. [I, 469b], *Nam communiter dicitur, ... ita activa ad paternitatem.*

³⁰ This in no way implies that the divine relations are acquired through an act, for not only are the intrinsic acts eternal, the personal properties are really identical with the divine essence and, therefore, not “acquired” in any sense. Nevertheless, paternity is in the Father through an eternal act; cf. *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 2 [I, 470a].

³¹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 1 [I, 470a], *tamen secundum rationem intelligendi ... modo innascibilitate.*

possible or necessary. In other words, there is no need to posit the question, “By reason of what is he innascible?” The innascibility of the Father is *conceptually irreducible*.

1.1.2 The Father as *Innascible*

Grasping why this is so will bring us nearer to the subject at hand, which is Bonaventure’s claim that, by means of theological contemplation, all knowledge may be reduced to the Father as the fecund principle of all things. And in order to arrive at this conclusion, we must elaborate upon Bonaventure’s understanding of innascibility. Strictly speaking, the Father’s innascibility or “unbegottenness” does not signify a negation, but rather a relative privation.³² As a negation it would simply mean “not a son” or “not engendered,” which could equally be predicated of the divine essence as well as the Holy Spirit. A privation, however, may signify either the want of something that a thing should have, and thus imply an imperfection in that thing, or the want of something that may be found in another of the same genus, without necessarily implying any imperfection in either. Innascibility is ascribed to the Father in the second sense. All agree that innascibility properly and principally signifies the privation of a relation to a prior (*privationem habitudinis ad prius*) within its own genus.³³ In order for innascibility to be a property proper to the Father alone, its signification must be peculiar to his person and not possessed in common with another. Within the genus of person, it not only signifies that the Father is not-generated, which may also be said of the Holy Spirit, but that he is *not from another*. As such, innascibility is principally and properly a privation of both possible relations of origin; he is without principle because he is not from another. Put another way, there is no divine person logically prior to himself within the order of persons. In this, all agree.

But Bonaventure is characteristically compelled to go further. He argues that in order for innascibility to be a property and not merely a notion of the Father, it must actually posit something positive, a nobility, in the subject of which it is a property.³⁴ In this particular case, although innascibility properly and principally signifies a privation of a relation of origin within the order

³² *I Sent.*, d.28, a.sole, q.1 [I, 496-498]; d.13, dub.7 [I, 241a].

³³ *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 2b]; cf. *I Sent.*, d.28, a.sole, q.4, in corp. [I, 503], although unbegotten means “ungenerated,” insofar as generation is a prime emanation, the negation of generation thereby excludes every sort of emanation. Thus, it more generally means “not from another.” Aquinas, *ST I*, q.33, a.4.

³⁴ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 470b]; d.28, a.sole, q.1 [I, 496-498]; *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 2b].

of persons, he argues that it also posits something according to its consequent understanding (*ex consequenti intellectu*).³⁵ As a consequence of having no origin, he must also be the principle of the origin of all others. But by reason of what is he the principle of others? Bonaventure concludes that it is by reason of his being first, and being first is a positively noble status insofar as the more prior a being is the more it is fecund and, therefore, the more it is the principle of others. To be the principle of others presupposes a certain primacy within a particular genus. Although innascibility properly signifies a privation, it consequently posits a certain primacy in the Father as the principle without principle and thus the origin of origins within the order of persons. In his *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, Bonaventure notes that a being may be said to be first in two ways, either with reference to the privation of a prior or the privation of an origin. Because there is order in the Godhead without succession or duration, all three persons are equally first according to the former sense. The Father, however, is uniquely first according to the latter sense, for he alone has no origin.³⁶ Consequently, innascibility signifies an irreducibly supreme and incommunicable, peculiar and proper, fecundity and fontal plenitude to generate the Son and spirate the Spirit. For this reason also, unity or oneness, along with power, are most especially appropriated to the Father, for from the first and highest principle flows all power.³⁷ And thus, Bonaventure maintains that “because innascibility signifies primacy (*primitas*), it follows that it also signifies a fountain fullness (*fontalis plenitudo*) in the Father in both modes of emanation.”³⁸ In other words, he who is Father because he generates is supremely and irreducibly fecund to do so, not only because he possesses a paternal fecundity, but also because he is supremely and irreducibly first and, therefore, the first principle within the order of persons. In this way, Bonaventure aims to bring an irreducible and logical end to the inquiry. “Beyond this there is no positing the question, ‘By reason of what is he innascible?’ For innascibility signifies a primacy, and that which is first is irreducible.”³⁹

³⁵ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 470b].

³⁶ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8, ad 4 [V, 115a].

³⁷ *Brev.*, I.6 [V, 214b-215b].

³⁸ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.2 [I, 54a], *Ratione primitatis persona ... fontalis plenitudo in Patre ad omnem emanationem*. In one place, Bonaventure attributes his concept of fontal plenitude to the great Doctors, by which he almost certainly means the Greek Fathers; *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 470b], *Quod autem movet ad hoc dicendum, primum est antiqua positio magnorum doctorum, qui dixerunt, quod innascibilitas in Patre dicit fontalem plenitudinem*. Cf. Kvamme, “The Fontalis Plenitudo,” 130. In another, he attributes the idea to Augustine; cf. *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 470b]; Augustine, *de Trinitate*, IV.20.9.

³⁹ *I Sent.*, d.27, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 470b], *et ultra non est ponere ...*

To Bonaventure's assertion that a pure privation cannot be a proper notion and therefore must also posit something positive, Aquinas replies: "Nor does it follow ... for primary and simple things are notified by negations; as for instance, a point is defined as what has no part."⁴⁰ Bonaventure does not entirely disagree; innascibility principally and properly signifies a privation of relation no less than a point properly signifies a negation of parts. But Bonaventure maintains that to be a property, proper to the Father, it must also posit something, even if indirectly by way of consequence. Interestingly, he frequently uses the illustration of a point to clarify his meaning. A point — not according to its proper meaning, which is the negation of parts, but in *consequence* of its proper signification — inchoately posits a certain fecundity with respect to the production of an infinite number of lines, for "the first in a genus is the principle of the others, and that which is simple is first relative to the many, ... possessing an infinite power, just as a point is with respect to lines."⁴¹ Moreover, if innascibility were to convey nothing more than a pure privation, namely the privation of a relation to a prior, it still could not be a *proper and peculiar* notion of the Father, for the same sort of privation can be predicated of the divine essence, which is not from another and relative to which there is nothing prior within the genus of essence. Thus, something further must be posited by the Father's innascibility, even if only in consequence of its proper signification.

As we have seen, both Bonaventure and Aquinas affirm that a certain fecundity of nature is already presupposed in the Father's paternity. For this reason, Aquinas also objects that, if innascibility also conveyed such a fecundity, it would no longer be a property distinct from paternity.⁴² However, Bonaventure maintains that although innascibility and paternity both signify the fecundity of the Father, they do so differently. His point seems to be this: Paternity presupposes that the Father, who is the principle of others, possesses a certain paternal fecundity or fecundity of nature; but it is not thereby revealed to be a peculiar and incommunicable property of the Father. Innascibility, however, further manifests that he who is the principle of others is the principle *without principle* and is, therefore, the irreducible first principle in the order of persons. And because being first cannot be communicated to another, the *consequent understanding* of

⁴⁰ Aquinas, *ST I*, q.33, a.4, ad 1.

⁴¹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 471a].

⁴² Aquinas, *ST I*, q.33, a.4, ad 1.

innascibility additionally posits an irreducibly supreme and incommunicable, peculiar and proper, fecundity and fontal plentitude in him who is the principle without principle.

In this way, Bonaventure brings about an irreducible and logical end to the inquiry. In his own words:

When, however, I had said that the Father generates because he is the innascible God, ... it was not because innascibility conveys more of the reason for generating (*ratio generandi*) than paternity, or that its proper meaning is as great as paternity, but because it is more irreducible (*sed quia magis est ibi status*), beyond which it is not possible to inquire further. For if it were asked, “Why does the Father generate?” and the response was given, “Because he is a Father, that is, fecund with a fecundity of nature,” it might still be doubted and asked, “Why is his power more fecund than others?” To this it may be responded, “His is [most fecund] because he does not have his being from another.” ... And therefore I had said that the Father generates because he is the innascible God, not in order to assign the proper reason (*propriam rationem*) for generation, but merely to bring a [logical] end to the inquiry.⁴³

Bonaventure’s inquiry into the innascibility of the Father does not presuppose a manner of subsisting prior to or separate from the Son whom he begets. Rather, he is particularly interested in the *kind* of relation that exists between them.

All things considered, the firstness of the Father features prominently in Bonaventure’s trinitarian theology and serves to distinguish him from Aquinas. And because the Father is the origin of origins, without origin, the ultimate end of contemplation is the return of all things to the Father in knowledge and love, that is, through the Son and in the Spirit. “For this reason,” writes Bonaventure, “it is in this principle, in as far as it is first, that all beings and all knowledge come to rest.”⁴⁴ In other words, even the intrinsic order of persons may be reduced (*reduci*), so to speak, to the one who is the principle and origin of the others; that is, all of the properties of the others may be led back to him who is supremely first and, therefore, first principle within the order of persons.⁴⁵

1.2 The Second Person

⁴³ *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 3a-b].

⁴⁴ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8 [V, 114b] (Hayes, trans., 264).

⁴⁵ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 470-472].

Perfect order entails a first, second, and third. Therefore, the firstness peculiar to the Father necessarily implies the existence of a perfect order in God relative to a second and a third person. As first, the Father is necessarily the principle without principle, in whom there is a most perfect fecundity and liberality that must be in act, lest there be an unrealized mode of perfection in God.⁴⁶ “Therefore,” Bonaventure writes, “if it is necessary to affirm the highest actuality and power in the first principle because it is first, then it is necessary to affirm the truth of an eternal production, and hence the completion of a perfect trinity.”⁴⁷ Bonaventure refers variously to the only two possible intrinsic modes of emanation, or immanent acts of procession, as productions of nature and of will (*naturae et voluntatis*), or as emanations by way of word and of love (*verbi et amoris*) or by way of nature and of liberality (*naturae et liberalitatis*) respectively.⁴⁸ And because there are only two possible modes of procession, “the highest perfection, fontality, and fecundity necessarily demands [both].” Moreover, because a most perfect emanation would not be possible except through the production of equals — all three persons must necessarily be consubstantial, coeternal, and coequal, the whole essence being communicated in the eternal acts of procession. As such, the consequent relations from both forms of emanation must be the sole principle of distinction in God.⁴⁹ And what we shall now see is that, just as the firstness of the Father features prominently in Bonaventure’s trinitarian and contemplative theology, so also does his understanding of the Son as the middle or center of both the trinity of persons as well as their relation to creation.

1.2.1 The Son as *Son*

For Bonaventure, the natural fecundity of the Father is the reason for his communicating the whole divine nature to another.⁵⁰ Accordingly, the second person is constituted *as the Son* by an eternal act of generation. “And generation is an emanation according to a conformity of nature,

⁴⁶ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.2, fund. 4 [I, 53a].

⁴⁷ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8, fund. 2 [V, 113a] (Hayes, trans., 261); q.8 [V, 114a-b], “The primacy of the first principle, therefore, demands the most perfect trinity in order, origin, and distinction” (Hayes, trans., 263); q.8, fund. 1 and 8; *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, qq.2-4 [I, 53-58].

⁴⁸ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8 [V, 114a]; *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.4, fund. 2 and in resp. [I, 56b, 57a]. Though it is true that Aquinas favored *intellect* and *will*, he too affirmed that the Son proceeds by way of *nature*; Aquinas, *ST I*, q.41, a.2.

⁴⁹ *Hex.*, XI.11 [V, 382a].

⁵⁰ *I Sent.*, d.6, a.sole, q.1, ad 4 [126b].

... [that is,] a production of something similar to oneself in substance and nature.”⁵¹ As a form of emanation or procession, generation is a principle of distinction, namely, between the one actively generating and the one passively generated. But generation also implies a certain agreement in nature, such that the distinction in view must pertain to something other than the divine nature itself, namely, the supposita or subsisting relations within the indivisible divine essence common among them.⁵² “To generate,” therefore, can be taken in a relative sense, denoting a relation of origin of one person from another and, thus, the relation of the only begotten Son who eternally proceeds from the Father according to a conformity of nature.⁵³ Bonaventure notes that a generation of “something similar to one’s self in substance and nature” can occur in at least three ways: by way of an impression, as when a signet is impressed upon the wax; by way of development, as when a complete substance is developed from another; and by way of production, as when a living being produces an offspring from out of its own substance and nature. The latter, being more perfect than the others, is found in both God and creatures, though differently. Whereas the creaturely mode of generation consists of an action that results in a *new* relation and thereby involves change, divine generation consists of an eternal act or emanation that constitutes a personal relation without mutation (i.e., begotten, not made).⁵⁴ Thus, divine generation does not entail movement (*motum*) or an action, and therefore a change, but a “being in act.” The Son is always and eternally being generated and the Father is always and eternally generating; the Father never ceases to generate and the Son never ceases to be generated, lest they cease to be the Father and the Son.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.1 [I, 181a], *et generatio est emanatio secundum conformitatem naturae ... est similem sibi in substantia et natura producere*.

⁵² *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.2 [I, 183].

⁵³ *I Sent.*, d.7, a.sole, q.1 [I, 134-137].

⁵⁴ *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.2 [I, 183a], *Generatio in creaturis dicit emanationem per modum actionis sive mutationis, in Deo emanationem per modum relationis*; cf. *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.1 [I, 230-232]; the general notion of a procession entails two things, an originating principle (that from which a thing proceeds) and a terminus (that to which a thing proceeds). For instance, a ray is said to proceed from the sun and a flower from a tree. Whereas all kinds of procession entail a certain relation of origin, or a relation between a thing’s originating principle and the terminus of its procession, processions among creatures also entail movement, and therefore always involve a mutation or change, at least in time and space. The divine processions, however, merely signify a relation of origin in God between a principle and a term, but not as though the persons proceeding are moving toward a location or received in an object as its term; rather, the persons proceeding are the terminus of their respective processions, such that the act whereby they proceed is terminated in a person that is constituted in relation to their particular principle of origin. Understood in the passive sense, the eternal processions just are the persons of the Son and Spirit respectively (cf. *I Sent.*, d.13, dub.8 [I, 241]; d.13, a.sole, q.2 [I, 232-234]).

⁵⁵ *I Sent.*, d. 9, a.sole, q.4 [I, 187a] and dub.3 [I, 189a].

In mapping out the similarities and dissimilarities between the creaturely and divine modes of generation, Bonaventure notes that, although the act of generation always terminates in a substance, a substance may be considered differently either with respect to the hypostasis produced or with respect to the common nature or form that the one generating communicates. And because the common nature or form of a creature is numbered, individuated, and multiplied in each supposit that it generates, the act of generation serves as a principle of distinction, not only with respect to persons generating and generated, but also with respect to the common nature that is no less generated and multiplied in each individual.⁵⁶ For this reason, the creaturely act of generation is both an originating principle, establishing a relation of origin, as well as an initiating principle, establishing a temporal beginning whereby a common nature is generated and particularized in a new and numerically distinct person. But in God, because the divine nature is neither numbered nor multiplied among the persons but remains most simple and indivisible, the act of eternal generation is both a principle of distinction, distinguishing the persons and their relations of origin, as well as a principle of communication, but *without initiation*, communicating the whole divine essence without in any way implying or necessitating a new temporal beginning.⁵⁷ Insofar as the divine persons are relations of origin subsisting *in the one divine essence*, which is neither multiplied among the persons, the Father's eternal act of generation terminates upon the person, as the Son generated from the Father, and not upon the nature itself. The divine essence itself is not begotten through generation, which for Bonaventure is the sole principle by which the Father and Son are distinguished. The divine nature, however, being common to both and therefore communicable, although it is not generated as such, is wholly and perfectly communicated to the Son in generation without distinction.⁵⁸ Thus, "everything which the Son has, whether essential or personal, he has from the Father,"⁵⁹ and everything the Father has to give, he communicates to the Son from his whole self (*ex se toto*).⁶⁰

1.2.2 The Son as Image

⁵⁶ *I Sent.*, d.5, a.2, q.1 [I, 117b].

⁵⁷ *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.3, ad 3 [I, 185b].

⁵⁸ *I Sent.*, d.5, aa.1-2 [I, 111-119]; d.9, a.sole, q.3 [I, 184-185]; d.13, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 233b]. For a possible confusion over this point relative to interpreters of Augustine, see Lewis Ayres, in his exposition of Augustine on the Trinity in *Nicaea and its Legacy* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 378.

⁵⁹ *I Sent.*, d.7, dub.7 [I, 145b], *Nam omne quod habet Filius, sive essentiale sive personale, habet a Patre.*

⁶⁰ *Hex.*, XI.11 [V, 381-382]; *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.1 [I, 181].

Bonaventure further elaborates upon the Son's connaturality and consubstantiality with the Father by exploring the significance of the other names ascribed to him in the Scripture, especially as the divine *Image* (Heb. 1:1-3; cf. 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15) and *Word* (John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). What significance, if any, do these names add to that which is signified by the designation of *Son*? The response that Bonaventure gives varies, but generally speaking *Son* signifies his personal origin in relation to the Father in the order of nature, whereas *Image* additionally signifies his expressed likeness in the order of form, and *Word* includes both of these and adds the notion of his expressing likeness in the order of reason or understanding.⁶¹

He especially develops his understanding of the Son as *Image* in distinction 31 of the first book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*. Bonaventure asserts that, although *Son* and *Image* are not absolutely synonymous, nevertheless that by which he is constituted as *Son*, namely his eternal generation, is the same by which he is also constituted as *Image* and *Word*.⁶² And yet, whereas *Son* principally signifies his procession from the Father by way of nature, *Image* additionally infers that he is thereby the perfectly expressed communication, or the emanating expression and similitude, of the Father's nature.⁶³ And although we have been created in the image of God, it is still more properly and perfectly ascribed to the divine Son, for something may be an image either according to a diversity of natures or according to an identity of natures. Bonaventure illustrates the first with an emperor and his currency; although we may say that the image imprinted on the coin is like that of the emperor himself, it would not be equally proper to say that the emperor is like the image on the coin on account of their diversity of natures. The case is different, however, with regard to the emperor and his son, who possesses a common and identical nature. Thus, whereas the image of God *in man* signifies an expressed creaturely likeness to God according to a diversity of natures, the image of God *in God* signifies an emanating expression of the Father whose likeness is perfectly expressed in the Son according to an absolute identity of nature.⁶⁴

Again, Bonaventure maintains that both names, *Son* and *Image*, signify a relation of origin to the same producing principle, namely the Father generating. Both infer a relation to only one

⁶¹ *Brev.*, I.3.8 [V, 212a]; cf. *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, q.3 [I, 488a-b]; dub.2 [I, 491b]; d.31, p.2, a.1, q.2 [I, 542b].

⁶² *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.3 [I, 542b], ...*et eo quo filius, eo est imago, et eo ipso verbum.*

⁶³ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, q.3 [I, 488b], ... *imago, quae dicit modum expressum emanandi.*

⁶⁴ *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.1 [I, 540a].

active principle — the Father, according to whose image he is.⁶⁵ And Bonaventure argues from this that, although the whole divine nature is likewise communicated to the Holy Spirit, *Image* is properly ascribed to the Son alone, for unlike the singular relation that may be inferred from the proper notions of *Son* and *Image*, the Holy Spirit signifies a twofold relation to the Father and the Son. That being said, Bonaventure argues that *Image* unlike *Son*, additionally infers a consequent relation to a third person. What he has in mind is this: As *Image*, the Father's nature is most perfectly communicated and expressed in the highest degree and in every manner in the person of the Son, which includes his power to spirate another according to a fecundity of will.⁶⁶ In other words, in consequence of his being the expressed Image of the Father, the Father's fecundity to produce a third person, according to a liberality of will, is likewise communicated to and expressed in the Son. Thus, "*Son* is said solely in relation to the Father, whereas *Image* is said principally in relation to the Father but also signifies a consequent relation to another person."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.2 [I, 541]. Even where there is a father and mother, the father is the sole *active* and, therefore, producing principle. Moreover, this does not preclude us from speaking of the Holy Spirit as the Image of God in a less proper sense (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18).

⁶⁶ *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.2 [I, 541-542]. That being said, not absolutely everything the Father is, as Father, is communicated to the Son, for some things are peculiar and distinguishing properties of the Father himself. In particular, Bonaventure asks whether the Father's power to generate is communicated to the Son (*I Sent.*, d.7, a.sole, q.2 [I, 138-140]; cf. *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 183b]). He notes that some, in order to preserve the omnipotence and essential equality of both persons, posit a similar power to generate in the Son, which he could but has freely chosen not to exercise. Yet, if this were the case, there would be an unactualized potency in God, which would entail an imperfection in the Son and, if subsequently actualized, would entail the new existence and beginning of another divine person — which renders the proposition absurd on both accounts. Bonaventure argues that it is neither possible nor fitting for the Father to communicate the power to generate to the Son. It would be impossible, because the Father possesses the fecundity to generate by reason of his innascible paternity and consequently his primacy; and *primacy* of generation cannot be communicated to one who is thereby generated. This does not preclude the Father communicating to the Son his fecundity of will or the power of spiration. Because the Son is generated according to a conformity of nature and not spirated according to a liberality of will, he may share in the Father's primacy with respect to his fecundity of will, whereby the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as though from one principle — again, not by way of generation, but by way of spiration (*I Sent.*, d.7, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 140b]). Neither would it be fitting for the Father to communicate the power to generate to the Son, precisely because the act of generation, and its consequent relation, is the sole principle of distinction between the Father generating and the Son generated, apart from which the Son could not be adequately distinguished from the Father (*I Sent.*, d.7, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 140b]); furthermore, the Son is the perfection of the Father's generative fecundity.

None of these distinctions in any way imply an inequality or impotency in the Son. Both the Father and the Son are subsisting relations within the undivided divine essence; and although there is a real distinction between the persons, there is a real identity between the persons and the divine essence. "The Father and the Son do not participate in the essence as if in a diverse thing but are the essence itself" (*I Sent.*, d.10, dub.5 [I, 207a]). And thus, because the power to generate just is the divine essence subsisting as the Father in relation to the Son, and because the power to be generated just is the divine essence subsisting as the Son in relation to the Father, it is the same divine power and omnipotence whereby the Father begets and the Son is begotten, i.e., the same divine power perfected in act relative to their distinct relations (*I Sent.*, d.7, dub.7 [I, 145b-146]). Cf. Aquinas, *ST I*, q.42, a.6, ad 3.

⁶⁷ *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.2 [I, 542b], *Sed filius dicit solum respectum ad Patrem*, ...

Image especially highlights the second and middle (*medium*) position of the Son within the divine order of persons. It was noted in the previous chapter that “all order necessarily consists of a lower and a higher and a middle,” and again, “where there is perfect order, there is a relation (*ratio*) of beginning, middle, and end; otherwise disorder would occur in the Divine.”⁶⁸ And without a middle term that unites the two extremes, having something in common with both, there will be no discernible relation between the beginning and the end. Thus, “where a combination of the extremes is established, there is also a medium.”⁶⁹ The Son, therefore, who is the expressed Image of the Father, “is the center (*medium*) of the Persons: for if [the Father] produces and is not produced, and [the Spirit] is produced and does not produce, necessarily, there is a center (*media*) who is produced [i.e., his principal relation to the Father] and produces [i.e., his consequent relation to the Spirit].”⁷⁰ As the *Image*, he is the center of the divine order and life, through whom the Father expresses himself to the Spirit,⁷¹ and through whom the Spirit is in a manner of speaking also reducible to the Father.⁷² As *Image*, the Father from whom He proceeds is perfectly expressed and, consequently, so also is the Spirit who proceeds from them both.⁷³

1.2.3 The Son as *Word*

The Son, who is the expressed Image of the Father, is also properly called the Word, which he maintains is the most comprehensive of the three names, even if not the most proper.⁷⁴ *Word* principally signifies the same relation to the Father as that signified by *Son* and *Image*, including

⁶⁸ *Hex.*, XI.7 [V, 381a] (Hammond, trans., 217), *ubi est perfectus ordo, ibi est ratio principii medii, et ultimi; alioquin inordinatio accideret in divinis*; cf. *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 2 [II, 41b], *omnis ordo habet de necessitate infimum et summum et medium*; d.11, a.1, q.1, resp. [II, 277b].

⁶⁹ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 4 [II, 42a], *Si ponere est extrema componibilia, ergo et medium*.

⁷⁰ *Hex.*, I.14 [V, 331b-332a], *Istud est medium personarum necessario ...*

⁷¹ *I Sent.*, d.12, a.sole, q.3, ad 1 [I, 224a], *Et sic Pater mediante Filio producit Spiritum sanctum ...*; cf. *Hex.*, I.12, [V, 331b], *Hae tres personae sunt aequales et aequae nobiles, quia ...*

⁷² *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, dub.7 [I, 552a], *Quod obiicitur de Spiritu sancto, ...*

⁷³ *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.2 [I, 542a-b].

⁷⁴ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, dub.2 [I, 491]. Given that *Son* is most proper, Bonaventure asks, in his *Commentarius in Evangelium S. Ioannis*, c.1, n.6 [VI, 247b], why John refers to the *Word* rather than the *Son*. He answers: “It has to be said that the word Son only expresses a relationship with the Father while the term Word refers to relationships to the speaker, to what is being said by the word, to the voice that embodies the word, and to the teaching that is learned by another through the medium of the word. And since the Son of God had to be described in these sentences not only in relationship to the Father, from whom he proceeds, but also to creatures, which he made, and to the flesh which he took on, and to the teaching that he communicated, he had to be described in a most excellent and fitting manner with the term Word. For that term relates to all these matters, and a more appropriate term could not be found in the world,” trans., Robert J. Karris, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2007), 62.

his consequent relation to the Spirit, but additionally and more comprehensively signifies a consequent relation to creatures as their exemplary cause.⁷⁵ *Word*, therefore, is a partial synonym with the other two names insofar as that by which he is constituted as *Word* is the same as that by which he is constituted as *Son* and *Image*, i.e., the Father's act of generation. He writes: "A word is that which emanates from a mind through a mode of conception. Therefore, *word* signifies that which is being conceived, and *being conceived* and *being generated* signify the same thing."⁷⁶ However, *Word* reminds us that the Son's conception, though according to the order of nature, is nevertheless not carnal but intellectual and spiritual. He explains that "the generation of the Son from the Father is similar to the production of knowledge from the mind, and knowledge proceeds from the mind according to a reckoning of an exemplar, because an exemplar is the reason for cognizing," as well as "the reason for exemplifying."⁷⁷ As a mental-word proceeds immanently within the mind, the procession of the *Word* is by virtue of the Father speaking himself to himself and expressing within himself his own perfect knowledge of himself. In this way, the Son *as Word* immanently proceeds from the Father no less according to a mode of nature than does the Son *as Son*, not as an exemplified proceeds from an exemplar, as in creation, but as the Exemplar himself. A mental-word is conceived in the act of knowing as an expressive similitude of the thing known, conceived by the force of the spirit of the one understanding, and is that according to which he intuitively himself or another. In this case, the divine Word is that by whom the Father most perfectly intuitively himself and all things in relation to himself. "The mind, therefore, by speaking itself within itself, conceives another that is similar to itself in all things, and that which is conceived is a Word."⁷⁸ And therefore, for this same reason, because the Son is the Word by whom the Father most perfectly speaks and expresses a concept entirely similar to himself, the Father's fecundity of will and its consequent relation to the Spirit, is no less expressed in the Son *as Word* as it is in the Son *as Image*.

Word, therefore, is capable of containing within itself the significance of the other two names, *Son* and *Image*. But *Word* points even further to a consequent relation to creation, not in such a way that necessitates any actual creature but nonetheless implies that when the Father fully

⁷⁵ *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.2 [I, 542b].

⁷⁶ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, q.1, fund. 4 [I, 481a].

⁷⁷ *I Sent.*, d.6, a.sole, q.3, fund. 2 and in corp. [I, 129a-b].

⁷⁸ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, q.1 [I, 482b]; cf. q.2 [I, 485a-b], "A word is spoken or generated when a similitude or image of anything known is conceived in the mind, and the word is related to that which the conceived similitude is related."

expresses himself in his Son *as in a Word*, as the manifesting exemplar or exemplative similitude himself, he also necessarily expresses in that self-same Word the reason for exemplifying all other things (*ratio exemplandi cetera*), and thus all of the manifold (limited and finite) ways that he is able to express himself in creatures as well, if he so wills.⁷⁹ In Bonaventure's own words,

The Father from eternity begot a Son similar to himself and speaks (*dixit*) himself and a likeness of himself, similar to himself, and with this, all that he is capable of. He expresses (*dixit*) all that he is able to do, and most of all, what he wishes to do, and he expresses all things in him, namely, in the Son or in that very center (*medio*), as if in his Art. ... For the Father, as it has been said, begot a likeness of himself, that is, the Word coeternal with him, expressing a similitude of himself and, as a consequence, all that he is capable of doing. Therefore, the Word expresses the Father *and the things that were created through him*.⁸⁰

Bonaventure is clear that this in no way implies an eternal creation. There are two ways *to speak a word*. A word may either be spoken to oneself and within oneself, as a word that is thought and thereby immanently conceived in the mind, or else it may be spoken to another, as a word that is pronounced (*verbum prolatum*) and thereby transiently expressed and terminated in an external effect. According to the first way of speaking, the Father eternally conceives all things in one Word, for, in understanding himself, he also understands himself as the principle of other potential things. Thus, "he conceives or generates one Word, which is an imitative similitude of the Father *and* an exemplative similitude or operative similitude of all things. And in this way [the Word] is a sort of medium, just as it is said that the Father works through the Word." Speaking in this way, the eternal Word also expresses a consequent relation to creatures, though not actually, for the Word expresses many possible things that God does not actually will to create, but rather

⁷⁹ *I Sent.*, d.6, a.sole, q.3 [I, 130b]; fund. 3 [I, 129a], *Item, quod est imago in producto* ..., "For that which is an image in the thing being produced is also an exemplar in the one producing. For when the thing produced represents that which is being expressed, it is called an image; and similarly, when the one producing represents that which is being expressed, it is called an exemplar. Therefore, since the Son proceeds as Image, for the same reason he proceeds according to a mode of exemplarity;" cf. *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, q.3 [I, 488a-b], *Et rursus patet ordo in dicendo* ..., "And again, the order in speaking is clear, and even the rationale for the different modes of speaking is clear. For wisdom or knowledge speak first in the understanding; then Son, which itself conveys an emanation or conception; then Image, which conveys an emanating expression; and in the third place, Word, which conveys all of these and adds to it the idea of that which is expressing and manifesting;" cf. *I Sent.*, d.36, a.2, q.1 [I, 623-624].

⁸⁰ *Hex.*, I.13, 16-17 [V, 331b; 332a] (Hammond, trans., 80, 82, *modified and emphasis added*). Cf. *Hex.*, IX.2 [V, 372-373], "... because the Word expresses the Father, and itself, and the Holy Spirit, and all other things as well" (Hammond, trans., 193).

habitually, through a manner of dispositive exemplarity (*per modum exemplaritatis dispositivae*).⁸¹ That is to say, creatures are in the Word as an effect is habitually and dispositively in its cause or principle, inasmuch as every way in which God *can* speak his mind and transiently express himself in limited and finite ways in his creatures is also expressed in the Word. Thus, all creatures exist according to the pattern of things eternally conceived in the Word, in whom all things are more perfectly expressed than they are in themselves.⁸² Nevertheless, only the second way of speaking, as a *verbum prolatum*, presupposes the actual existence of those things, and only insofar as he has freely willed to create them. In this way, the Word is the center (*medio*) and medium, not only of the trinity of persons, but of God's creative activity, as the eternal Art and exemplary cause of all that God wills to create. Like so many created words filling the pages of a book, all actual creatures proceed from the Father as through the Uncreated Word, as the temporal termination and effects of the Word's eternal procession, and as the exemplified from its exemplar, as if to speak and reveal his mind in and through the things he has made. The Son, *as the Word and exemplary principle of all things*, is therefore the fount of all created wisdom and the ultimate principle of all knowledge.⁸³

Just as the firstness of the Father features prominently in Bonaventure's trinitarian and contemplative theology, so also does his understanding of the Son as the middle or center of both the trinity of persons as well as their relation to creation. It was pointed out above that, because the Father is the originating principle of all things, the ultimate end of contemplation is the return of all things to the Father in and through our knowledge and love of God, which is made possible through the Son and by the Spirit respectively. And we are now in a better position to begin to see the metaphysical reason for why all things, according to Bonaventure, must return to the Father

⁸¹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, qq.1-2 [I, 481-486], ... *concipit sive generat unum Verbum ... dicitur Pater operari per Verbum* [I, 485b]; cf. *II Sent.*, d.1, p.1, dub.2 [II, 36b], *Dicendum, quod praepositio ... sed etiam exemplaris*, wherein Bonaventure asks in what way creatures exist in the Word from all eternity, as in their principle. He replies, "... According to a third mode it can imply a *habit of cause*, and in this sense, it may be said to be in the principle, that is, in the Son. For, in the Son, to create is to be spoken, according to that which is spoken in the Psalm, 'In wisdom You have made them all, O Lord,' not so much to note the efficient cause but the exemplary."

⁸² *Scientia Christi*, q.2, ad 9 [V, 10].

⁸³ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.sole, q.3, ad 1 [I, 488b]. The whole Trinity is the ultimate principle of knowledge, but the Word properly has within his own person the relation of expression; cf. *Hex.*, XI.13 [V, 382]; *I Sent.*, d.6, a.1, q.3 [I, 129]. For this reason, truth and wisdom are most especially appropriated to the Son, for in him the truth of all things is most perfectly expressed, not in themselves but in their Exemplar, through whom and according to whom they have their being.

through the Son, for inasmuch as the Father has made all things through him, all things must also return through him by means of contemplation.

The relation between the Father and the Son is the metaphysical basis for all other relations. Zachary Hayes states it wonderfully:

Since the relation between the Father and the Son is the first and primal relation, it is the real basis for any other relation. So it is that, as the Word is the inner self-expression of God, the created order is the external expression of the inner Word. It follows, then, that the created universe possesses in its inner constitution a relation to the uncreated Word; and since the Word, in turn, is the expression of the inner trinitarian structure of God, that which is created as an expression of the Word bears the imprint of the trinity as well.⁸⁴

All of our knowledge is ultimately reducible to the Father as the originating principle of all things, but only because all things have proceeded from God as an exemplified proceeds from an exemplar, otherwise there would be no metaphysical basis for our knowledge of the creature to lead us back to the knowledge of God, and therefore no metaphysical basis for contemplation. But precisely because the Son, *as the Uncreated Word*, expresses both the Father and a consequent and exemplary relation to creation, we may be led back to God, even to the knowledge of the Father, as we contemplate God in and through the things he has made. Bonaventure maintains that, by means of theological contemplation, all knowledge may be reduced to the Father through the Son, as to the originating principle of all things through the exemplary principle of all things, according to whom the truth of things is expressed and in relation to whom all things are most fully known. In the final analysis, because all things are expressed or spoken through the Word, all things must also be known, and therefore contemplated, in relation to that same Word.

1.3 *The Third Person*

Perfect order requires a third, a last or terminus (*finientis vel terminantis*), by means of which the intrinsic order of divine persons perfectly and completely terminates (*terminantis complementi*). This peculiar honor, of being the one “to terminate the [order of] divine persons,

⁸⁴ Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 60.

just as it is equally the honor of the Father to originate and of the Son to represent them,” Bonaventure ascribes to the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵ One of the chief goals in what immediately follows will be to demonstrate why the description of perfecter and completer is, according to Bonaventure, particularly fitting for the third person and, in the end, why this is significant for his understanding of contemplation.

1.3.1 The Perfection of the Divine Order

That which has already been said regarding the nature of the divine processions in general applies equally to the procession of the Spirit in particular. We need only remember that the divine emanations are relations of origin and as such are the only principles of distinction within the divine being, for the simple and undivided divine essence is wholly and perfectly communicated in both acts of procession. The processions serve, therefore, as intrinsic principles of distinction, not as it regards initiation but only as it regards origination. As that wherein a relation of origin is established, they are both active and passive. Actively understood, the divine processions refer to the immanent acts of the Father and of the Father and Son respectively, *from whom* the Son and Spirit proceed. Passively understood, the divine processions refer to the persons themselves, Son and Spirit, as the intrinsic subsisting perfection of their relative modes of proceeding. In any case, the eternal processions are principles of distinction as it regards origin without inception, for they are immanent acts within, and intrinsic modes of perfection of, the simple and undivided essence and being of God.

Within the economy of redemption, the third person of the Trinity is revealed variously as the Holy Spirit or Breath of God (Matt. 28:19; John 20:22), as Love (Rom. 5:5; 15:30; Titus 3:4-5) and therefore as the Bond or Communion of God (1 Cor. 12:4-31; 2 Cor. 13:13; Eph. 2:18), as well as the Gift of God in whom all good things are given (Luke 11:13; John 7:39; Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17). Presupposing the revealed data, along with the fact that Scripture speaks of the Spirit being *given* by both the Father and the Son (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13), Bonaventure concludes, “It may be said, as has been proved, that in the divine there is to be posited a third person proceeding through a mode of liberality, which is called Gift.” The reasoning here is clear enough, for a *gift* proceeds in a different manner than a son, image, and/or word. Whereas

⁸⁵ *Hex.*, I.12 [V, 331].

the latter proceed by way of nature, a gift proceeds by way of will, namely, the goodwill of the giver, just as love proceeds in a spiritual way from the goodwill of the lover. And so, a third person is to be posited, who proceeds according to a liberality of will. But more than just posited, Bonaventure argues for the necessity of the Spirit and his mode of proceeding:

And the reason for this is [the necessity that there be in God] the perfection of love, the perfection of emanation, and the perfection of will, which, being most liberal, is not able not to produce a person, just as that nature which is most fecund is likewise not able not to produce a person. And this is the proper reason for this emanation.⁸⁶

1.3.1.1 The Perfection of the Divine Will (*perfectio voluntatis*)

We have already observed that the reason for the Son's procession by a way of nature is itself reducible, in its full and final analysis, to the Father's fecundity of nature, according to which he cannot not produce a second person, lest there be any imperfection in God — for the Son's own person is the terminus and subsisting mode of perfection of the Father's generative fecundity. Similarly, Bonaventure argues that the reason for the Spirit's procession by way of will is itself finally and fully reducible to the Father and Son's liberality of will, according to which they cannot not co-produce a third person, lest again there be any imperfection in God — for the Spirit's own person is the terminus and subsisting mode of perfection of the Father and Son's common liberality. It is in this way that the Spirit completes and perfects the order of divine persons, for Bonaventure maintains that the Spirit's procession by way of will is likewise necessary in view of the completion and perfection of both the divine emanations and the divine love.

1.3.1.2 The Perfection of the Divine Emanations (*perfectio emanationis*)

As it concerns the completion and perfection of the divine processions, it will be helpful to recall a few things that have already been stated. Every agent acts according to either nature or will. Accordingly, there may be posited in God two possible immanent acts of emanation, either by way of nature according to a most high fecundity or by way of will according to a most high

⁸⁶ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.1 [I, 195b], *Dicendum, quod, sicut probatum est ... est ratio propria huius emanationis.*

liberality.⁸⁷ The procession of the Son is the subsisting perfection of the one, and the procession of the Spirit is the subsisting perfection of the other. And because the fecundity and liberality of God are completely perfected in these two processions, there neither need nor can be other persons emanating besides these two, lest there be anything superfluous in God.⁸⁸ Bonaventure writes,

The persons are not distinguished except according to their modes of emanating; and again, a fecund principle does not permit a person to produce by one or the other kind of emanation unless that fecundity [of nature or will] be, according to our mode of understanding, prior to its corresponding emanation. Hence, the first person, because he is innascible and inspirable, generates and spirates; the second, because he is inspirable though generated, does not generate but does spirate; but the third, because he is spirated and proceeds from one generated, he neither generates nor spirates. And therefore, it is impossible that there be more than three [persons].⁸⁹

The Spirit does not possess a liberality of will to produce another person, just as the Son does not possess a fecundity of nature to generate, precisely because the Holy Spirit's person is no less than the subsisting perfection and completion of that liberality, just as the Son is the perfection and completion of that fecundity.⁹⁰ And because *will* logically presupposes *nature*, and therefore the emanation of the Spirit according to will presupposes the emanation of the Son according to nature, the emanation of the Spirit most perfectly and completely manifests the perfection and completion of the divine emanations.⁹¹ "And therefore," Bonaventure maintains that it may be reasonably

⁸⁷ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.1, ad 3 [I, 196]; in fund. 4, Bonaventure speaks interchangeably of a procession by way of nature and a procession by way of cognition or intellection [I, 195a]. Cf. *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.8 [V, 114a]; *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.4, fund. 2 and in resp. [I, 56b, 57a].

⁸⁸ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.1, ad 4 [I, 196b]. This is also why God can freely will (or not will) creatures and not out of any necessity or as an extension of his own being or as a means of obtaining his own perfection or beatitude. For he is perfectly complete in himself.

⁸⁹ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.4 [I, 57a-b], *quae non patitur personas distingui* ...; in fund. 4, he writes: "If by reason of primacy there is also fecundity, no person can produce by any kind of producing whereby that person is produced, because he would not then be prior with respect to that manner of producing. Therefore, because two persons emanate according to two ways of emanating, and there are not other ways, they [possess not the fecundity] to produce another person [by the mode in which they were produced]; therefore, there are only three persons" [I, 57a].

⁹⁰ *I Sent.*, d.11, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 216b]. Another way to say this might be that the Son just is the fecundity of the Father's nature subsisting relative to the Father, and the Spirit just is the liberality of the Father and Son's will subsisting relative to the Father and the Son. And to be sure, although only two possess this fecundity of will, the will itself is in all three; cf. *I Sent.*, d.11, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 216b]; d.32, a.1, q.1 [I, 558a], *voluntatis fecunditatem ad producendam personam ex se, quae quidem fecunditas solum est in duobus, quamvis voluntas sit in tribus*.

⁹¹ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.2, fund. 1 [I, 197a]; d.12, a.sole, q.4 [I, 225-226]; d.13, a.sole, q.3 [I, 236b], "Because the act of spiration presupposes a prior act of generation" Cf. *Itin.*, VI.2, wherein the diffusive goodness of God in the diffusion of the Spirit by way of will and love presupposes the diffusion of the Son by way nature and word.

concluded from the Spirit's intrinsic mode of perfection, and all that it presupposes, that "it is impossible that there be more than three [persons]."

The question arises, however, with respect to the way in which the Spirit's procession according to a liberality of will should be distinguished relative to the Son's procession or generation according to a fecundity of nature. The question concerns the distinction between *the act of generating* and *the act of spirating* respectively, that is, the divine processions understood in their active sense. If the same were asked regarding the distinction between these two modes of emanating understood in their passive sense, it would yield nothing more than the conclusion that the Son is not the Spirit and the Spirit is not the Son, for "the Son just is his own generation, and the Spirit just is his own procession."⁹² But it is for this very reason, because the persons themselves are distinguished one from the other, and because each are to be distinguished solely on the basis of their relative emanations of origin, that Bonaventure insists that if the persons differ so also must the manner in which each proceed *from* their principle. He writes, "It would be absurd to say that the Spirit does not have a proper and singular manner of emanating, just as the Son does."⁹³

Bonaventure argues that there must be a *real* and not merely *rational* difference between active generation and active spiration. The Son and the Spirit differ both according to origin and mode of relation (*originis et habitudinis*), "for their mode of subsisting is diverse and their mode of origin differs (*quia diversus est modus se habendi et differens modus originis*)."⁹⁴ Indeed their modes of subsisting perfection are really diverse *because* their modes of origin and relation really differ.⁹⁵ Bonaventure rejects the idea that the difference can be reduced to the observation that the former proceeds from the fecundity of one whereas the latter proceeds from the fecundity or liberality of two, for this still leaves unanswered the reason for the difference. What difference, then, is there between these two modes of fecundity that can account for the two modes of emanation? Bonaventure replies that, precisely *because* the act of generation is a procession according to a fecundity of nature, whereby there is a perfect assimilation, the one generated necessarily proceeds from one principle of origination alone. And precisely *because* the act of spiration is a procession according to a fecundity or liberality of will, whereby there is a perfect

⁹² *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.2, fund. 4 [I, 232b]; *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.3 [I, 235b].

⁹³ *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 234a]; cf. Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.13, q.1, a.3, ad 3.

⁹⁴ *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.3 [I, 235b].

⁹⁵ *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.3 [I, 236a], *quia omnis distinctio in divinis venit a modis originis et relationis*.

communication or union or a tending unto another, the one spirated necessarily proceeds as from two principles (or a twofold principle) of origination communicating and uniting and tending toward the other.⁹⁶

For Bonaventure, there is a real distinction between a procession according to nature and a procession according to will, and that distinction is the irreducible reason for their distinct relations of origin and their differing modes of perfection. But in affirming a real distinction between the processions, Bonaventure is careful not to predicate a real distinction between the nature and will of God. Nature and will are really identical in God. Nevertheless, they may be distinguished insofar as they are distinct principles from which distinct relations subsist in God. One emanation proceeds from its principle according to nature, and another according to will, and although nature and will do not differ really, the relations do — for the divine processions just are the divine essence distinguished rationally, according to distinct relations which are themselves distinguished really.⁹⁷ And therefore, Bonaventure is equally careful to maintain that *nature* and *will* must be understood in such a way that they always act *conjointly*, though only one or the other may be said to act *principally*. “Therefore, either the nature is producing principally, with the will being concomitant, or the other way around; for both are not able to be principal [at the same time with respect to the same thing].” In other words, the Father acts willfully in generating the Son *by way of nature* and the Father and Son act naturally in spirating the Spirit *by way of will*. He continues,

If the will is the principle, with the nature being concomitant, then it is the procession of the Holy Spirit that is in view, who proceeds according to a mode of love, and yet as one who is the same in nature. But if nature is the first principle, with the will being concomitant, then it is the generation of the Son that is in view, who is produced as one who is entirely similar according to a mode of nature, but nonetheless as one who is loved.⁹⁸

And thus, just as the one generated is called Son, Image, and Word by reason of his manner of proceeding principally by way of nature, so also the one spirated is called Holy Spirit, Love, and Gift by reason of his manner of proceeding principally by way of will. And again, because the perfection of the latter presupposes the perfection of the former, the procession of the Spirit most

⁹⁶ *I Sent.* d.13, a.sole, q.3 [I, 236a], *Et sicut differentiae differentiarum* Bonaventure adds in this place a further argument for a real distinction between the processions, namely, because that distinction is the foundation for their distinct missions toward us within the economy.

⁹⁷ *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.3, ad 2 [I, 236b].

⁹⁸ *I Sent.*, d.6, a.sole, q.2; cf. Aquinas, *ST I*, q.41, a.2.

fully manifests the perfection and completion of the divine emanations. As such, the procession of the Spirit becomes for Bonaventure a contemplative focal point by means of which the contemplative is able to gaze upon the beatific perfection of the Trinity:

Therefore, if, with the eye of your mind you are able to reflect on the purity of that goodness [i.e., twofold fecundity] which is the pure act of the principle that in charity loves with a love that is free, and a love that is due, and a love that is a combination of both, which would be the fullest diffusion by way of nature and will and which is found in the diffusion of the Word in which all things are spoken and the diffusion of the Gift in which all goods are given, you will be able to see that the supreme communicability of the good demands necessarily that there be a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁹⁹

Here, Bonaventure incorporates into his own view an argument that had previously been introduced by Richard of St. Victor, which we shall consider below. The point, however, is that, by reason of the perfection of emanations, it was necessary that a third person proceed by way of will, “for it is necessary that those distinct and entirely similar,” namely the Father and the Son proceeding from the Father according to a fecundity of nature, “be conjoined through satisfying love (*deliciosum amorem*).”¹⁰⁰

1.3.1.3 The Perfection of the Divine Love (*perfectio dilectionis*)

With this we may return to Bonaventure’s assertion that the perfection and completion of love is likewise manifest in, and even necessitates, the procession of the Spirit. It is frequently observed that Bonaventure utilizes an argument that was first introduced by Richard of St. Victor in his work *On the Trinity*, wherein he argues that there must be three persons, no more and no

⁹⁹ *Itin.*, VI.2 [V, 311a] (Hayes, trans., 125). Both, Bonaventure and Aquinas, would have rejected the thesis proposed by Thomas Weinandy in his *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship* (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1995), which is also picked up in Etienne Vetö’s *The Breath of God* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019), that the Father generates the Son by the Spirit, just as the Father spirates the Spirit through the Son. When Bonaventure speaks of love being concomitant in the generation of the Son, love is being understood *essentially* as a love of complacency in a good possessed and not *notionally* or *personally*. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.1 [I, 200-201]; d.32, a.1, q.1 [I, 556-558]; Aquinas, *ST I*, q.37, a.1. Concerning the economy, Zachary Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 95-96n.20, likewise concludes that, “despite the fact that the incarnation is appropriated to the Spirit in this way, Christ is not to be called the Son of the Spirit. This would be problematic for two reasons. To understand this moment of the history of grace in such a way would lead to confusion in understanding the trinitarian relations; for He who is Son of the Father from eternity would be known as the Son of the Spirit in time. Also, to call Jesus the Son of the Spirit would reflect an erroneous understanding of the virginal conception since it would imply that Christ was born from Mary and the Spirit as from a woman and a man. This is totally false since the material elements of Christ’s humanity are derived from Mary alone.”

¹⁰⁰ *I Sent.*, d.13, a.sole, q.3 [I, 236b].

less, by reason of the nature of love and that which is required for there to be a most perfect beatitude in God. Bonaventure writes, “It is necessary that where there is beatitude (*beatitudo*), there must be the highest love (*dilectio*), and consequently love (*dilectio*) on the supreme level.”¹⁰¹ Elsewhere he writes, “If there were less than three, there would not be perfect charity in God,” or again, “a most high beatitude requires *dilectio* and *condilectio*, ... and this requires no less than three persons.”¹⁰² Perfect beatitude and, therefore, perfect love necessitates three: a lover, a beloved, and a co-beloved.¹⁰³

Richard’s particular elaboration of the argument aside, Bonaventure explains it in his own way. He says, “Now love (*dilectio*) may be reflexive, connective, [and] charitable. Connective love (*dilectio*), by which I love (*diligo*) another, is more perfect than reflexive [love], by which I love (*diligo*) myself; but the charitable is more perfect than the other [two], because it has a beloved (*dilectum*) and a cobeloved (*condilectum*); therefore this is in the divine.”¹⁰⁴ He elaborates elsewhere:

More perfect is mutual love (*dilectio mutua*) than reflexive (*reflexa*), and more perfect still is mutual love that is communicated (*communicata*) than that which is not communicated; because such, namely, that which is not communicated, seems to smell like a love that is still yearning (*amorem libidinosum*). And therefore, if there is in God a most high love (*dilectio*) and a most high enjoyment (*delectatio*) and beatitude, there is not a person who is not loved reciprocally, but one to whom (*cui*) mutual love may be communicated. And the communication of mutual love is according to liberality (*per liberalitatem*).¹⁰⁵

Love may be considered according to three degrees of perfection. *Reflexive love* implies only one, inasmuch it refers to the love which a person has for themselves. *Mutual love* is more perfect and implies two, inasmuch as it refers to the love which a person has for another. *Charitable love*, however, as the highest form of love, requires a third, inasmuch as the mutual love of two is communicated in relation to a third. As such, *charitable love* is not so much a different kind of love but rather the perfection of *mutual love*, insofar as the *dilectio* of two is consummated in the *condilectio* of a third.

¹⁰¹ *Hex.*, XI.12 [V, 382a] (Hammond, trans., 220).

¹⁰² *I Sent.*, d.2, a. sole, q.4, fund. 1 and in corp. [I, 56a, 57a].

¹⁰³ Richard of St. Victor, *Trinity*, III.11-20. See Ruben Angelici, trans., *Richard of Saint Victor, On the Trinity: English Translation and Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

¹⁰⁴ *Hex.*, XI.12 [V, 382a].

¹⁰⁵ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.1, fund. 1 [I, 194b-195a].

C.S. Lewis, in his *Reflections on the Psalms*, has insightfully articulated the very idea that Bonaventure has in mind. He is worth quoting at length.

The most obvious fact about praise—whether of God or anything—strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise.... I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: ‘Isn’t she lovely? Wasn’t it glorious? Don’t you think that magnificent?’ The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. ...

... I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with This is so even when our expressions are inadequate, as of course they usually are. But how if one could really and fully praise even such things to perfection—utterly ‘get out’ in poetry or music or paint the upsurge of appreciation which almost bursts you? Then indeed the object would be fully appreciated and our delight would have attained perfect development. The worthier the object, the more intense this delight would be. If it were possible for a created soul fully (I mean, up to the full measure conceivable in a finite being) to ‘appreciate’, that is to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme beatitude.¹⁰⁶

Mutual love is incomplete and imperfect so long as it is not expressed and communicated; its communication “is its appointed consummation.” “Beatitude requires *dilectio* and *condilectio*,”¹⁰⁷ whereby the mutual *dilectio* of two is perfected and consummated in the *condilectio* of a third. As such, the Father’s love for the Son and the Son’s love for the Father, namely their common liberality or mutual fecundity of will, is perfected and consummated in their active spiration of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸ The Father and the Son consummate their mutual love for one another in the active

¹⁰⁶ C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (1958; repr., San Francisco: HarperOne Publishing, 2017), 109, 110-111.

¹⁰⁷ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, q.4 [I, 57a].

¹⁰⁸ *I Sent.*, d.2, a.sole, fund. 1 [I, 56b]. A most high beatitude requires a most high concord, which is their common fecundity of the will, as it is manifest in their mutual charity. “Perfect love is both liberal and common.” It must be liberal, because “it tends toward the other” (supremely communicability), and it must be common (to the Father and Son), “because it wants the one to be loved by another and to love the other just as themselves and by themselves [i.e., as they themselves love themselves by themselves]; there is therefore *dilection* and *condilection* in God, and this is not possible if there be less than three persons.”

spiration of the Spirit, who is the subsisting communication and perfection of that love itself.¹⁰⁹ The point here is not that the mutual love of the Father and the Son is perfected in their common love for the Spirit.¹¹⁰ Rather, the idea is that the Spirit is himself the mutual love of the Father and the Son subsisting personally, perfectly, and consummately.

The reality, however, is that Bonaventure employs this particular argument sparingly, and only in contexts wherein he is arguing for the *trinitarian* perfection and completion of the divine order of persons, which is most fully manifest in relation to the procession of the Spirit. Bonaventure much more commonly develops his understanding of the third person by means of the personal names and relative properties that are ascribed to him in the Scripture: as Holy Spirit, Love, and Gift. As was observed with regard to the Son *as Son, Image, and Word*, Bonaventure likewise maintains that each of the three names given to the Spirit add something or infer something more than the last. “Concerning the plurality of notions, it may be said that spirit, love, and gift all refer to the same property, differing according to reason.” In other words, they all signify the same emanation and same relation of origin, but they do so differently.

For spirit is said principally in relation to the producing power (*vim*), which is a spirative power; love is said more so in relation to his manner of emanating, because [love proceeds] as a bond (*nexus*); but gift is said more so with a consequent relation [to the creature] in view. And just as the emanation of the Word is signified in a threefold way, namely, according to the name son, image, and word, [so also the emanation of the Spirit]. For because [the emanation of the Word is] from a generative force, [he is given the name] Son; because [he emanates] through a mode of expressing, [he is given the name] image; because he is [conceived in a way that is] expressive of others, he is therefore [given the name] word. Similarly, because [the emanation of the Spirit is] from a spirative power, [he is given the name] spirit; because [he emanates] through a mode of uniting (*per modum nexus*), [he is given the name] love; because he is constituted (*natus*) [in such a way] to unite us, [he is given the name] gift. And so, it is clear that one [emanation] is named differently and according to different consequent reasons and are therefore not absolute synonyms.¹¹¹

1.3.2 The Spirit *as Holy Spirit*

¹⁰⁹ *I Sent.*, d.32, a.1, q.1 [I, 556-559]; d.10, a.1, q.1 ad 4 [I, 196b]; d.10, a.1, q.2, ad 3 [I, 198b], “[T]here is a resting (*status*) in the first love. For with the first love produced, since he loves by his very self and is loved, it is not necessary that there be produced another love or another person through a manner of love.”

¹¹⁰ You find this sort of misunderstanding perpetuated and exploited in works such as Lydia Schumacher’s *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge* (NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 119.

¹¹¹ *I Sent.*, d.18, a.sole, q.5, ad 4 [I, 331b].

Insofar as our language is derived from things below, *spirit* can be understood absolutely, in opposition to corporeality, or relatively, in relation to the principle of life (breath) in a rational substance. “The reason of [the latter meaning] is that the act of spiration in a body is an *internal* act, a *continual* act, and a *vivifying* act.”¹¹² In the former sense, it is said absolutely of the whole Trinity (John 4:24); in the latter sense it is said relatively of the third person alone, signifying the relation between a spirit or breath and a spirator (*spiratoris*) or breather.¹¹³ He further elaborates:

[*Spirit*, understood] relative to which *spiration* is said, is fitting for that person alone who proceeds as love (*amor*), for the reasons already said [i.e., because an egress of love, insofar as it is love, proceeds *internally*, and is a *vivifying* act insofar as love is life, and again is a *continuous* act, insofar as love ought to be continually reciprocated ..., [and] therefore love alone is said to be spirated spiritually]. For “to spirate” in spiritual things is by means of love alone; and because love may be spirated either uprightly and ordinately, and be thus pure, or inordinately and uncleanly, and be thus libidinous, that person who is love itself is not only called a Spirit but a Holy Spirit.¹¹⁴

Accordingly, the name *Spirit* principally signifies the producing power itself, that is, the eternal act of spiration whereby the third person is constituted by way of a most fecund will. *Holy*, in Bonaventure’s estimation, further intimates that such a spiration is by way of a most pure love. And this leads us to the second name ascribed to the third person, namely, the Spirit *as Love*.

1.3.3 The Spirit *as Love*

Bonaventure maintains that *love* principally signifies not only the spirative power itself, or the fecundity of will from which the Spirit proceeds, but especially the Spirit’s manner of proceeding. *Love* therefore adds a further connotation to *Spirit* and is therefore even more descriptive of his person. For perfect *love* is that which unites, effecting a consequent bond of perfection (Col. 3:14) and, therefore, more clearly signifies a relation to more than one, that is, a relation to those who are united by it.¹¹⁵

¹¹² *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.3 [I, 204a-b].

¹¹³ *I Sent.*, d.18, dub.1 [I, 333-334a].

¹¹⁴ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.3 [I, 204b].

¹¹⁵ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.1, ad 3 [I, 201b].

In taking up the question whether love or charity is proper to the Holy Spirit, Bonaventure distinguishes three ways in which love may be ascribed to God: essentially, notionally, and personally.¹¹⁶ Absolutely and essentially understood, love may be ascribed to the whole Trinity, insofar as love signifies a relation between a subject and object. God is love (John 4:24) and, therefore, loves himself by himself, and his creatures with reference to himself, with a love of complacency. Love may also be ascribed to the Father and the Son notionally, insofar as the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father and concordantly and actively communicate their mutual love in spirating the Holy Spirit. As such the Father and the Son may be said to love each other by the Holy Spirit. And although the Spirit may not be said to spirate love, he too may be said to love himself and the others by means of himself, as love-spirated. Thus, insofar as love proceeds from the act of Father and the Son in loving each other, love itself may be peculiarly ascribed to the Holy Spirit who is the consummation and communication of that love subsisting personally in relation to those who are united by it. “Therefore,” Bonaventure concludes, “being a nexus is proper to the Holy Spirit, because he himself is their mutual love subsisting personally.”¹¹⁷

Properly speaking a bond or nexus is that which unites things which are otherwise distinct. Here, the Holy Spirit is a nexus precisely insofar as he proceeds from the Father and the Son mutually communicating in One Love and so proceeds concomitantly from both as from one principle. Bonaventure maintains that, as the nexus of both, he proceeds in entirely the same manner from both, because although they differ, he proceeds from them both not insofar as they differ, according to which they are Father and Son, but insofar as both are united by a common fecundity of will, according to which they are *the improcessible God (Deus improcessibilis)*.¹¹⁸ Thus, although the spiration of the Spirit does not constitute but rather presupposes their relation as Father and Son, the Spirit is himself constituted in relation to the Father and Son as the Spirit in whom they are united in perfect Love.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.1 [I, 201a].

¹¹⁷ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.2 [I, 202b], *ideo Spiritus sanctus proprie nexus est, quia est amor mutuus, est amor unicus et substantificus*.

¹¹⁸ *I Sent.*, d.11, a. sole, q.1, fund. 6 [I, 210-211]; ad 3 [I, 213a]; q.2 [I, 214-216]. The divine will is in all of the persons commonly, but it is in the Father and Son peculiarly, i.e., notionally, according to a fecundity to spirate. The Spirit’s person just is the consummation and perfection of the will’s fecundity, subsisting personally. Cf. *Hex.*, I.12 [V, 331].

¹¹⁹ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.2, ad 4 [I, 203b], Bonaventure notes that even though we speak in the active voice, *the Spirit unites*, or in the passive voice, *the Father and Son are united*, this in no way implies that the Spirit adds something to or contributes to that which makes them Father and Son respectively. Similarly, the Father, in loving the

1.3.4 The Spirit *as Gift*

Bonaventure was not the first to note that love is also a gift (*donum*) freely given; indeed, it is the best of gifts, for the gift of love is itself the gift in which all other gifts are given. And thus, because the Spirit is perfect Love itself, he is not merely a gift given by means of love but is the Gift of Love itself by whom and/or with whom all other gifts (i.e., things which proceed freely from the will of God) are given.¹²⁰ The Spirit is not said to be a Gift because he is given, though this is consistent with the order of our experience and of our knowing (i.e., we come to him *as Gift* by reason of him being given to us). Rather he is given (and said in Scripture to be given) because he himself is *Gift*, personally, and thereby possesses a givable (*donabilis*) aptitude.¹²¹ And thus, although a gift is so-called principally in relation to a giver, just as *spirit* and *love* proceed from the liberality and generosity of a lover, *Gift* additionally signifies a consequent relation to creatures that is not signified by the other two names.¹²²

Bonaventure explains this in relation to the Son *as Word* whereby a consequent relation to creatures is also signified. Bonaventure notes that the actual production and existence of creatures within time presupposes their eternal existence within the mind and will of God, “for all creatures are produced by God according to [his] knowledge and will.” For just as every possible way that his nature or likeness may be expressed through and in creatures is eternally expressed in the generation of the Son *as Word*, so also every possible way that his goodness may be freely communicated through and in creatures is eternally communicated or granted in the spiration of the Spirit *as Gift*. He writes, “All creatures are produced by God according to [his] knowledge and will. But before the [actual] production of creatures, [what is to be produced] had to be established in the divine emanation of the Word from eternity, in whom the Father disposed all that was to be made. Therefore, for an equal reason it was necessary that another person emanate in whom he would will and grant all things.”¹²³ As such, all creatures exist eternally in the Son *as Word*, not

Son, does not add to the Son but rather unites with the Son in actively spirating the Spirit. And the Son, in loving the Father, does not add to the Father but rather unites with the Father in the same. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.2, fund. 1 [I, 197a]; d.12, a.sole, q.4 [I, 225-226], wherein Bonaventure notes that perfect love presupposes perfect cognition.

¹²⁰ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.2, ad 5-6 [I, 198b].

¹²¹ *I Sent.*, d.18, a.sole, q.3, ad 4 [I, 327b]; d.18, a.sole, q.4, ad 1 [I, 328b-329a].

¹²² *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.1 [I, 194-196]; d.18, a.sole, q.3 [I, 326-327].

¹²³ *I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.1, fund. 4 [I, 195a].

actually, but through a dispositive exemplarity according to whom he patterns whatsoever is to be made. Likewise, all creatures, including the entire economy of grace exist eternally in the Spirit *as Gift* in the way that an effect exists in its cause or principle, not actually, but through an aptitudinal exemplarity by whom and/or with whom he wills and grants whatsoever he wills.¹²⁴

The whole and undivided Trinity is the ultimate principle of the production of creatures according to knowledge and will. But the Son *as Word* peculiarly and properly has within his own person the relation of expression, for which reason truth and wisdom are most especially appropriated to him, for in relation to him the truth of all things is most perfectly expressed, not in themselves but in their Exemplar, through whom and according to whom their being is patterned. Similarly, the Spirit *as Gift* peculiarly and properly has within his own person the relation of donation, for which reason goodness is most especially appropriated to him, for in relation to him the goodness of all things is most perfectly possessed, not in themselves but in their End, by whom and for whom their being is granted.

It has already been said that, because the Father is the originating principle of all things, the ultimate end of contemplation is the return of all things to the Father in and through our knowledge and love of God, which is made metaphysically possible through the Son and by the Spirit respectively. Creaturely knowledge of God is made metaphysically possible through the Son. Because the Father speaks all things through the Word, the Father may be known and, therefore, contemplated in creatures by reason of the relation of all things to their Exemplar. Similarly, creaturely love for God is made metaphysically possible through the Spirit. For, if there was not One *in God* in whom the love and goodness of God was perfectly and consummately communicated, it would be impossible for such a good to be freely and liberally communicated to others, much less order all other goods unto himself. As the most perfect Gift of the Father and the Son, the Father through the Son are together able to will freely and grant liberally all other things by means of the Spirit, in relation to whom every created thing is itself a gift whose goodness is a participation in, and ultimately ordered to, the whole Trinity as to their chief good and highest End.

It has been said that, for Bonaventure, the same object may be contemplated in two ways. By means of what we have called philosophical contemplation, God may be contemplated through the created order as that *being* which explains and grounds the entire order of created beings. In

¹²⁴ *I Sent.*, d.18, a.sole, q.2 [I, 325b].

this way, the contemplative rises from a knowledge of creatures to a knowledge of God as their first principle and cause. But by means of what we are calling theological contemplation, God *as Trinity* is contemplated in the created order, in each thing, as the end for the sake of which all things are intrinsically ordered “in their own purity.” Thus, the contemplative theologian begins with and presupposes a faith infused knowledge of the Trinity as their highest good and chief end and is thereby enabled to discern the trinitarian principle and cause of all things in his created effects. In other words, theological contemplation follows a path of reduction that reduces the end and desire of all things to the Highest Good, which, for Bonaventure, is inchoately grounded in the primacy of the Father, principally in the fecundity of the Father and the Son, and consummately in the perfection of the Spirit (i.e., *ordo personarum*), and is manifest and may therefore be contemplated *in* the created order (i.e., his “presence and influence” in creatures).

2. The Intrinsic Order of Creatures

These two forms of contemplative *reductio* are two ways of viewing the same reality and are themselves ordered one to another insofar as the resolution of the former is perfected in the reduction of the latter. By means of natural reason, the first form of reduction leads the soul from created beings to the contemplation of the first and ultimate principle, that is, insofar as the essential order and perfect unity of the divine being and attributes is manifest *through* creatures. The second form of reduction, however, requires the infused grace of faith, by the light of which reason is elevated and its epistemic horizon is enlarged, enabling the soul to understand more fully, namely, that the first and ultimate principle of all is in fact a trinity of persons.¹²⁵ In other words, not only does grace restore the nature that had been corrupted by sin, but it also perfects and elevates it. According to this second way of reduction and more perfect form of contemplation, graced-reason is enabled to perceive in God a divine order and most perfect hierarchy according to which, and for the sake of which, all things have been ordered. This fuller disclosure of the first principle reveals a perfect *reductio* in God, in which a plurality of persons, intrinsically ordered one to another, subsist in the perfect unity of the divine essence.

¹²⁵ Cf. LaNave, “Theological Method,” 98-99; Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 25-29.

It has been said that a person must be converted twice over, first from the natural to the supernatural, then from the supernatural back to the natural.¹²⁶ Whereas the first reduction leads the soul from a knowledge of creatures to an essential knowledge of God as the first and ultimate principle of all, Bonaventure does not similarly propose that the second reduction leads the soul from a knowledge of creatures to a knowledge of the Trinity. Rather, his proposal is that faith deepens our understanding of that first principle, by virtue of the missions of the Son and the Spirit within the economy of grace indwelling and hierarchizing the redeemed soul by means of faith and charity, thereby revealing to us that within God's essential unity subsists a trinity of persons. And this in turn recovers our spiritual senses and enables the soul to return to the book of creation with a certain theological sensitivity, to read it in a new light, i.e., a properly theological light. And therefore, by means of graced-reason, the second form of reduction, which brings the soul closest to its beatific end in this life, leads to a more perfect form of knowledge in which the trinitarian order of persons is itself contemplated according to the varying degrees to which the Trinity is reflected *in* each creature. According to Bonaventure, the intrinsic relations that constituted the divine order of persons are to varying degrees reflected in the various intrinsic relations that constitute the intrinsic order of every creature. Hellmann writes, "Through faith Bonaventure sees the divine order written internally within God and he thereby comes to see that order written externally in every creature. ... The internal and intrinsic order within the divine essence is also the foundation of the internal and intrinsic order within each created essence."¹²⁷

2.1 *The Created Vestiges of the Trinity*

Bonaventure himself states, "From all we have said, we may gather that the created world is a kind of book, reflecting, representing, and, describing its maker, *the Trinity*, at three different levels of expression: as a vestige, as an image, and as a likeness."¹²⁸ We have already considered the vestigial character of all created reality and have even anticipated what now comes into clearer focus when we considered the doctrine of trinitarian appropriations. As such, Bonaventure follows

¹²⁶ Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation: The Stone Lectures for 1908-1909*, Princeton Theological Seminary (1909; repr., London: Forgotten Books, 2012), 242.

¹²⁷ Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 106.

¹²⁸ *Brev.*, II.12.1 [V, 230] (Monti, trans., 96). Emphasis added.

Augustine when he writes that even “that which is but a vestige does [give witness to the Trinity], as it were, from afar. Every creature has measure, species, and order; or unity, truth, and goodness; or measure, number, and weight, which by appropriation correspond to the trinity of persons, and thus give witness to the fact that God is a trinity.”¹²⁹ The clearest trinitarian appropriation, unity, truth, goodness, has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Aertsen’s words are worth recalling: “These determinations are supremely ascribed to the supreme principle because they are perfect and general; they are appropriated to the three Persons because they have order.”¹³⁰ And although the order of these relations is an object that can be grasped by natural reason and, therefore, through philosophical contemplation (hence its inclusion in chapter 2), it is only by faith and, therefore, only through theological contemplation that the actual trinity of persons can be fully and properly apprehended and contemplated as such. Something similar may be said with respect to the ordered relations within the other triads that Bonaventure evokes elsewhere; each one is a vestige of the trinity of persons insofar as each may be reduced to a certain order of relations that in some distant way reflects the order of divine persons.¹³¹

2.2 *The Created Image of the Trinity*

Whereas vestiges are related to God as the principle who created them and, therefore, refers to all creatures, an image, though also a vestige, refers far more narrowly to those creatures that are related to God as the end who moves them.¹³² Bonaventure has in view all intellectual creatures, angels and men alike, but especially the latter. And although he affirms that God may be contemplated both *through* and *in* his image-bearer, he is careful to maintain that the Trinity itself, or the order of persons as such, cannot be discovered or learned (*reperi*) from the contemplation of God *through* that image, but may only be discerned *in* it and only upon the supposition of faith. In corroboration of our thesis concerning the two levels of contemplation, one philosophical and the other theological, Bonaventure notes that God may be contemplated in relation to his image-bearer in two ways, either philosophically, according to that which *it is*

¹²⁹ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 54b] (Hayes, trans., 128).

¹³⁰ Aertsen and Speer, “Die Philosophie,” 58; e.g., *Hex.*, II.26 [V, 340b].

¹³¹ Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 130; Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 112-113.

¹³² *Brev.*, II.12.2 [V, 230a] (Monti, trans., 96-97); *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 24a].

(*secundum id quod est*), and thus *through* the image *insofar as it is a vestige* of the highest order relative to the overall order of being; or, as it is considered theologically, according to that whereby it is *an image* (*secundum quod imago*), and thus *in* the image *insofar as it is a likeness* relative to the trinitarian order of persons. The vestigial character of the former was considered in the previous chapter and will be treated more fully according to its epistemological implications in chapter 5. The trinitarian character of the latter is, in the first place, seen in how the intrinsic relations of the faculties of “memory, intellect, and will; or mind, knowledge, and love,” render the soul capable of being immediately ordered to God as its ultimate end. He explains that

mind [is] like a parent, knowledge [is] like an offspring, and love [is] like a bond proceeding from both and joining them together. For the mind cannot fail to love the word which it generates. Therefore, these not only indicate origin and emanation which leads to distinction among them; but they indicate also quality, consubstantiality, and inseparability, from which an express testimony is given to the fact that God is a trinity. For since He is spirit and intellect, He can lack neither a word that is begotten nor a love that proceeds. Among these there is distinction by reason of origin, and emanation of one from another; and together with this, there is equality, consubstantiality, and inseparability. This is what Augustine intended to add toward the end of the ninth book *On the Trinity*, showing how testimony to the eternal trinity is given by the created image.¹³³

Just as the Son *as the Image* is the expressed likeness of the whole Trinity, we *as an image* are a created expression of the whole divine order of persons. The intrinsic relations *in* the intellectual creature relative to our acts of knowing and loving not only mirror the divine order of persons, in God’s own knowing and loving himself, they are also the metaphysical basis upon which we *as an image* are ordered to the triune God as the ultimate end which moves us, for he has made us capable of apprehending truth and of pursuing the good — which leaves us restless within until we come to know God who is Truth itself and love him as our highest Good. We will return to this idea as well in chapter 5, but it may be pointed out here, in the second place, that the actual realization of this end, in actually knowing and loving God the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit, for which end we are *an image*, as well as our actual contemplation of the God *in* that image, necessitates the soul’s gracious reformation and renewal *as a created likeness of the Trinity*.

¹³³ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 55a] (Hayes, trans., 129). Cf. Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 114.

2.3 *The Created Likeness of the Trinity*

Therefore, whereas an image is intrinsically ordered in such a way that makes it capable of possessing God as its end, Bonaventure also refers to the image as a *likeness* insofar as it is actually conformed to God in knowledge and love. Although *image* and *likeness* can be and sometimes are used interchangeably, the precise connotation of each can differ according to the context. In general terms, although every image is a likeness, not every so-called likeness is necessarily an image. To some degree or another, every creature bears a distant likeness to God as a vestige or footprint of his nature, but only an intellectual and free creature bears a close enough likeness and nearness to God to rise to the level of an image. And so, every image is a likeness, understood in its broad sense, but not every so-called likeness of God rises to the level of being his image; only men and angels have this honor and dignity. More technically, however, Bonaventure employs *likeness* in a narrower sense, as he does here, when it is used of men and angels who do in fact participate in God's image and, therefore, possess a greater inherent *nearness to God in likeness* than do other creatures.

In this sense, an image-bearer can be considered more or less *like* God according to the degree to which the image in man is perfected or corrupted, and therefore according to the extent and degree man *as image* is actually and morally ordered to God as his trinitarian end through faith, hope, and charity. Understood in this way, *likeness* denotes the moral perfection of the *image*. Or as Bonaventure says, "a likeness is related to God as "the gift who dwells within them," that is, by means of faith and the gift of created charity by which every other gift is given.¹³⁴ The distinction noted here not only harmonizes with the doctrine of sanctification, wherein a redeemed soul is renewed more and more in the likeness of God's image (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), it also harmonizes with a biblical theological understanding of the image. In their state of integrity, Adam and Eve were formed in the image and likeness of God yet not fully formed so as not to be able to fall from that state or be further perfected and confirmed in it. And yet, out of their own freedom, they corrupted and deformed that image through sin; though still an image of God, being stripped of their original righteousness, they ceased to possess a likeness to God. Only by the infused grace of the gospel can an *image-bearer* be graciously reformed *in God's likeness*, by means of the Son

¹³⁴ *Brev.*, II.12.1-3 [V, 230] (Monti, trans., 96-97); cf. *Christus unus*, n.16-17 [V, 571b-572a] (Hayes, trans., 35-36); *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 24a] (Hayes, trans., 135-137).

indwelling the redeemed intellect through faith and the Spirit the redeemed will through charity. Bonaventure contends that “the eye of contemplation does not function perfectly except through glory, which human beings have lost through sin, although they may recover this through grace and faith and the understanding of the Scriptures. By these means, the human soul is cleansed, enlightened, and perfected for the contemplation of heavenly things.”¹³⁵ Only then can we truly know and love ourselves *as God’s image* in the contemplative knowledge and love of God as our end. As such, the likeness of God in man *as an image* that was formed in the Garden and deformed in the Fall must be reformed by the grace of the gospel, through the missions of the Son and the Spirit, through which he is also reconciling the world to himself, until that image be deformed and morally perfected in glory.

Theological contemplation, even the contemplation of God *as Trinity* in ourselves *as image and likeness*, rests morally upon the divine missions, the invisible indwelling of the Son and Spirit respectively, through an infused gift of grace. Bonaventure writes, “Therefore the image that is our soul must be clothed over with the three theological virtues by which the soul is purified, illumined, and brought to perfection. In this way the image is reformed and brought to conformity with the heavenly Jerusalem and becomes a member of the church militant which is the offspring of the heavenly Jerusalem.”¹³⁶ When the likeness of God is restored to the soul, “it is ordered hierarchically so that it can ascend upward.”¹³⁷ In other words, for it to ascend upward to God in theological contemplation, the Son and the Spirit must first descend into our soul by means of grace. But not only does theological contemplation depend upon reforming grace, God’s work of grace becomes for Bonaventure an object of contemplation itself, for the intrinsic relations which constitute the order of persons are manifest in the divine missions through which the image is reformed. “From all this, God is seen as *all in all* when we contemplate God in our minds where God dwells through the gifts of the most generous charity.”¹³⁸ And as such, man’s theological knowledge of himself as an *image* reformed in God’s *likeness* serves as an important medium for Bonaventure’s contemplative endeavor, which is itself inseparable from the contemplative’s pursuit of his own end.

¹³⁵ *Brev.*, II.12.5 [V, 230b] (Monti, trans., 98).

¹³⁶ *Itin.*, IV.3 [V, 306b] (Hayes, trans., 99).

¹³⁷ *Itin.*, IV.4 [V, 307a] (Hayes, trans., 101).

¹³⁸ *Itin.*, IV.4 [V, 307a] (Hayes, trans., 103).

In the final analysis, Bonaventure affirms two modes of reduction or two grades of contemplation, wherein the same object is contemplated in two ways: God, as that *being* which explains and grounds the entire order of created beings and as the *end* for the sake of which all things are ordered “in their own purity.” The one is according to his essential attributes, whereas the other is according to his personal properties. The one is laid open to natural reason, the other to graced-reason alone. The philosophical way pertains to what may be known of God naturally, the theological way to what may be known supernaturally. In both of these ways, the divine order is contuited (*contuitio*), that is, simultaneously known either *through* or *in* the created order respectively, and each according to increasing degrees (*gradus*) of perfection. Jay Hammond writes, “In effect, *contuitio* is an intuitive grasp of the divine order permeating all reality.”¹³⁹ Thus, Hellmann is not wrong to conclude that “contemplation,” philosophical and theological, within their own order and conjointly, “is seen as the perfection of contuition.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” 209.

¹⁴⁰ Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 15.

PART III
EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

IV

Wisdom:

Philosophical and Theological

It has been our contention thus far that order grounds intelligibility. Andreas Speer captures it nicely when he says, “The intelligibility of things corresponds to their ontological structure,” which is Bonaventure’s meaning when he says, “For the principle of being (*essendi*) and knowing (*cognoscendi*) is the same.”¹ Specifically, each thing is intelligible by reason of its particular set of relations within the metaphysical order, both the extrinsic relation it has to other things (chapter 2) as well as the intrinsic relations inherent to its own constitution (chapter 3). One cannot properly understand the structure of Bonaventure’s thought apart from his conviction that “the whole material world machine is integrated and constituted in a distinct, perfect, and ordered fashion.”² God has created and patterned all things according to his infinite and uncreated wisdom, and “wisdom,” Bonaventure maintains, “connotes order.”³ As a master artist creating and fashioning all things according to his eternal art, “it is fitting for God to produce things in a way that his [artistic] *wisdom* should be manifest. And the wisdom of an artist is manifest in the perfection of order.”⁴ Wisdom connotes order, and thus the uncreated wisdom of the creator has been woven into the very fabric of the created order. And our contention in this chapter is that our pursuit of created wisdom aims to apprehend this order and thereby participate in God’s uncreated wisdom as it is manifest both *through* creatures and *in* creatures.

¹ Andreas Speer, “Bonaventure and the Question of a Medieval Philosophy,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997): 31; *Hex.*, I.13 [V, 331b] (Hammond, trans., 81).

² *Brev.*, II.3.1 [V, 220b] (Monti, trans., 67), *ex quibus* ...

³ *IV Sent.*, d.46, a.1, q.3, ad 3 [IV, 961b], *Sapientia connotat ordinem*.

⁴ *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.1, q.2, fund. 2 [II, 41b], *Item, decuit Deum ...*; *I Sent.*, d.44, a.1, q.2, ad 3 [I, 785a-b], *qui agit secundum artem* ..., “he who makes something according to art and wisdom makes it inasmuch as he wills and inasmuch as it is fitting, while safeguarding order, for ‘it is for the wise to order;’” *II Sent.*, d.7, p.1, a.1, q.1, ad 1 [II, 177a], *potentia ordinata, quae operatur secundum ordinem sapientiae*, “ordained power, which operates according to the order of wisdom;” *II Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.8, fund. 3 [II, 255b], *Item, ‘sapientis est ordinare* ..., “Likewise, ‘it is for the wise to order,’ and the greater the wisdom the greater the order. And therefore, it is the noblest effect of the one who is most wise to produce the most orderly things;” *IV Sent.*, d.44, p.2, a.3, q.2, fund. 3 [IV, 931b], *secundum quod sapientia ordinat in natura*, “according to that which wisdom orders in nature;” *IV Sent.*, d.46, a.1, q.3, fund. 2 [IV, 960a], *Item, ordo et gradus est in effectibus divinis propter sapientiam, cuius est ordinare*, “Likewise, there is an order and degree in the divine effects according to wisdom.”

Common among Bonaventure's contemporaries was the idea that the rational (i.e., human) soul alone is able to receive within itself the whole *universum*, including that which lies beyond the empirical senses. Inasmuch as every kind of knowledge requires the union of the knowing subject and the knowable object,⁵ Bonaventure concludes that "the soul in a certain manner becomes all things through a process of assimilation to all things, in that it is made to know all things and is especially capable of knowing God (*capax Dei*) through assimilation, since it is the image and likeness of God."⁶ By this, he singles out that which is distinctively and uniquely human; unlike the brute beasts that are only aware of the world of particulars that confront them through the senses, as when a dog remembers the smell of its owner, the rational soul alone is able to receive within itself, really though abstractly, the *whole* universe, both particulars and universals, *this* tree and the universal form (i.e., essence) of *tree-ness* itself according to the various relations it sustains within the unified totality of things. As Josef Pieper remarks, "The development of [that which is] genuinely and distinctively human — in other words, the real education of man — happens only insofar as such confrontation with the whole of being is expressly set in motion. A truly educated person is one who knows his relationship to the world as a whole, however imperfect such knowledge may be."⁷ Implied here is a mode of intellectual engagement with the world that proceeds upon the realistic conviction that the cosmos to which we are related may be rationally internalized and logically apprehended in the coherence of its relations. According to this way of being in the world, the rational person is laid open and receptive to the whole reality of the universe, being driven by a persistent and genuinely human desire to understand the deeper meaning, coherence, and interconnectedness of all things—that is, the whole *universum* according to each thing's origin, exemplar, and end.

1. The Pursuit of Wisdom

⁵ *IV Sent.*, d.49, p.2, sec.1, a.3, q.2, fund. 2 [IV, 1020a], *Item, omnis cognitio est per unionem cognoscibilis cum cognoscente* ...

⁶ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.1, ad 1 [I, 69a]; *II Sent.*, d.24, p.1, a.2, q.2, ad op. 2 [II, 563b]; d.24, p.1, a.2, q.4 [II, 569b]; d.39, a.1, q.2, resp. [II, 902b]; *IV Sent.*, d.49, p.2, sec.1, a.3, q.1 [IV, 1019]. Cf. Aquinas, *de Veritate*, q.1, a.2; *ST I*, q.80, a.1; Aristotle, *On the Soul*, III.4.

⁷ Josef Pieper, *What Does "Academic" Mean?*, trans. Dan Farrelly (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2015), 60.

Man's pursuit of wisdom is arguably a central theme running throughout all of Bonaventure's works, for it is a correlative of our chief and contemplative end in knowing and loving God and all things in relation to him. Christopher M. Cullen asserts that "the notion of wisdom (*sapientia*) is so central in the thought of Bonaventure that its pursuit can safely be considered the whole purpose of his life and work,"⁸ and, what is more, "an examination of this concept reveals his understanding of both theology and philosophy, the relationship between these two disciplines, and finally the foundational unity of all knowledge."⁹ In this section, we will consider the distinction and relation between philosophical and theological wisdom, beginning with the debated question whether Bonaventure believes that the former is actually obtainable by means of its own principles. In other words, even if there is such a thing as philosophical wisdom, is it in the final analysis possible to obtain apart from the grace of faith? The proposed answer to this question, which will be argued in the affirmative, will lead to a fuller understanding of how Bonaventure understands the relationship between philosophy and theology and the place of each within our overall pursuit of wisdom. Chiefly, this line of inquiry will lead, in this chapter and the next, to various epistemological conclusions that, in Bonaventure's estimation, must be presupposed in order to ground such a pursuit, most especially the contemplative's gradual and increasing participation in the eternal light of uncreated wisdom itself. As we shall see, such a participation is for Bonaventure not only a precondition of contemplation but also its desired end. We must begin, however, with the nature of wisdom itself.

1.1 *The Nature of Wisdom*

Bonaventure speaks of wisdom in two distinct but related ways, what Cullen refers to as objective and subjective wisdom. Because knowledge consists of the union between a knowable object and a knowing subject, *wisdom* is used both objectively and subjectively. Objectively, it refers to the objective manifestation of God's wisdom in the orders of nature and grace, that is, in natural and supernatural revelation. Understood in this way, Bonaventure speaks in the *Hexaemeron* of the uniform, multiform, omniform, and nulliform wisdom of God, which refer to

⁸ Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 23.

⁹ Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 24.

the various creaturely modes whereby God's wisdom is given objective existence in created reality. These objective modes of wisdom will be considered shortly, but our inquiry here more immediately concerns wisdom in the subjective sense. Subjectively, *wisdom* is used to refer to our acquisition of a particular intellectual habit of the mind, a particular *habitus* that disposes the soul to apprehend things a certain way, which Gregory F. LaNave describes as the "natural fulfillment of a capacity in the soul to know the ultimate truth of things."¹⁰ In other words, the knowing subject may be said to possess wisdom to the extent that their soul's subjective capacity to apprehend and know the objective order of wisdom, and each mode by which it is manifest, is habitually fulfilled and satisfied.

Bonaventure's understanding of the nature and kinds of habitual knowledge was equally indebted to both Aristotle and Augustine, whom he often cites as corroborating authorities.¹¹ In the context of inquiring into the proper act and object of each of the spiritual gifts, but especially of the intellectual gifts of wisdom, science, and understanding, he notes that both *wisdom* and *science* have four possible connotations. Science, he says, has two speculative and two corresponding practical meanings. In the first place, *science* can refer to the sort of knowledge that is acquired from creatures by means of rational principles, which he reduces to the science(s) of human philosophy (*scientia humanae philosophiae*). Corresponding to this speculative philosophical knowledge is the practical science of natural prudence (*scientia prudentiae-virtutis*), which is established upon natural law principles (*principia iuris naturalis*). In the second place, *science* can refer to the sort of knowledge that is inclined by the affections, that is, by the fiducial affection of the will assenting to the articles or principles of faith, which he here refers to as the science of sacred Scripture (*scientia sacrae Scripturae*) or theology. Corresponding to this speculative theological knowledge is the so-called gift of science or practical and moral theology, which is established upon the divine law (*iuris divini*) and flows from the principles of faith (*principia fidei*).¹² We may speak, therefore, of both philosophical as well as theological science that may be both speculative and practical. Both rest upon principles and conclusions that are proper and intrinsic to their distinct objects and ends. As such, the subjective cognitive *habitus* of both is brought about in the soul by means of their particular formal cognitive principle, namely,

¹⁰ LaNave, "Philosophical Wisdom," 819; cf. Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 24.

¹¹ Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 405-406.

¹² *III Sent.*, d.35, a.sole, q.2 [III, 775-777].

the two lights of reason and faith. The soul possesses an intellectual capacity and desire, as it were, to be informed actually and habitually by both forms of science relative to the orders of nature and grace respectively.¹³

In the same context, Bonaventure similarly ascribes four possible meanings to *wisdom*, two speculative and two practical, although in this case the latter two do not perfectly correspond to the former two. Understood most commonly (*communiter*), wisdom connotes a relatively comprehensive knowledge of things in general or even a general mastery of a particular genus of knowledge. For instance, a master mathematician may be considered wise in his general area of knowledge.¹⁴ Understood less commonly (*minus communiter*), and more technically, the intellectual habit of wisdom consists of a higher and more penetrating form of knowledge than that of the habit of science previously described. Cullen reduces Bonaventure's meaning here to metaphysics, which is true insofar as it goes but is far too restrictive and potentially fails to grasp the significance of Bonaventure's point.¹⁵ Just as we may speak of philosophical science as well as theological science, we may also speak of philosophical wisdom (which Cullen rightly identifies as metaphysics) *as well as* theological wisdom, wherein *wisdom* in both cases connotes the fullness and perfection of knowledge within each particular genus of knowledge.¹⁶ Whereas Bonaventure's first two definitions of *science* pertain to a partial reduction of things within a genus of knowledge, *either philosophical or theological*, relative to their immediate and proximate causes, *wisdom* more

¹³ Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 406-407.

¹⁴ LaNave, "Philosophical Wisdom," 815.

¹⁵ Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 24. Cf. Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 410, who makes the same mistake. Reducing Bonaventure's second definition of wisdom to *philosophical* wisdom, to the exclusion of *theological* wisdom, does not help explain why he cites 1 Corinthians 12:8 in support and explication of the definition he is offering: "for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of science through the same Spirit."

¹⁶ Zachary Hayes, in "Christology and Metaphysics in the thought of Bonaventure," *The Journal of Religion* 58 (1978): S82-S96, recognizes the distinction we are making but uses language that reduces it to a distinction within the category of metaphysics rather than wisdom (i.e., philosophical and theological metaphysics). To reduce philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom to two forms of metaphysics is less than helpful, inasmuch as it seems to reduce them to two degrees within one genus of knowledge rather than as the fullness and perfection of knowledge within their own genus. And although theological wisdom opens up a new epistemic horizon that enables the redeemed intellect to view the metaphysical order in a new light, this *new* horizon of knowledge does not fundamentally belong to the science of metaphysics but to the science of theology. He writes, "The reason for distinguishing philosophical metaphysics and theological metaphysics now becomes clear. God speaks but one Word in which the world and its history are co-spoken" (p.S92). But that which unifies philosophy and theology is not that God speaks in "one metaphysics," as if in one book only, but that he speaks one uncreated wisdom in the books of nature and grace respectively, in the unity of which both philosophy and theology participate according to their own epistemic orders.

fully reduces our knowledge of the same things, each within their particular genus and order of knowledge, but now in relation to their highest and ultimate causes.¹⁷

And because theological wisdom is a higher and more perfect knowledge than philosophical wisdom, indeed because it is the highest form of knowledge, Bonaventure's last two definitions are more narrowly and properly restricted to the genus of theology and to the soul's experiential capacity for God, unto whom all things are ultimately reducible not only in the order of being and knowing but also in the order of living and enjoying. Wisdom, therefore, may be properly (*proprie*) understood in a third way, as the knowledge of God according to piety (*cognitionem Dei secundum pietatem*), which is cultivated in worship (*in cultu latriae*) rendered to God through faith, hope, and charity. But most properly (*magis proprie*), *wisdom* signifies the soul's capacity for an ecstatic knowledge of and mystical union with God (*cognitionem Dei experimentalem*), which Bonaventure identifies as the Spirit's special gift of wisdom without which the soul's experiential capacity for God and all things in relation to him cannot be *fully* satisfied.¹⁸

Further consideration of Bonaventure's "most proper" form of wisdom, as the eschatological end of contemplation in the beatific ecstasy, must await a fuller analysis of his second "less common" definition, which is most immediately relevant for our present purposes. Understood as such, *wisdom* is distinguished from *science* as the perfection of knowledge within a particular genus or order of knowledge, such as philosophical and theological wisdom respectively. This distinction, however, raises an importantly debated question, whether according to Bonaventure philosophical wisdom is actually obtainable on the basis of purely natural principles.¹⁹ This is an important question to answer, not only to elucidate his understanding of the relation between philosophy and theology, but also to establish the epistemological basis for our proposed distinction in Bonaventure's thought between philosophical and theological contemplation.

¹⁷ Cf. *Scientia Christi*, q.4, ad 2 [V, 24b]; fund. 27 [V, 20a]; cf. *Christus unus*, n.18 [V, 572a], wherein Bonaventure similarly contrasts wisdom and science: "In doing this, [Plato] would seem to provide a firm basis for the way of *wisdom* which proceeds according to the eternal reasons; but he destroyed the way of *science* which proceeds according to created reasons. On the other hand, Aristotle provided a firm foundation for the way of science while neglecting the way of wisdom" (Hayes, trans., 37).

¹⁸ *III Sent.*, d.35, a.sole, q.1 [III, 772-775].

¹⁹ LaNave, "Philosophical Wisdom," 812-833.

1.2 *The Possibility of Philosophical Wisdom*

Whether Bonaventure regarded philosophical wisdom as something obtainable by means of its own philosophical principles is one of the most debated questions among medieval historians. The objective here is not to settle the debate, although a summary of it is necessary in order to demonstrate the uniqueness of the present proposal. In particular, our larger proposal, as it concerns what we have called philosophical contemplation, depends upon the possibility of obtaining a philosophical wisdom that is both distinct from theological wisdom and epistemically independent of the grace of faith. Therefore, before arguing for a particular solution to this debated question, the state of the question itself must be summarily considered.

1.2.1 The State of the Question

The danger of any summary, and especially of such a complex scholarly debate, is oversimplification. But even if this is an oversimplification, it is an oversimplification of a truth, namely, that the crux of the debate among intellectual historians has revolved around different historical narratives concerning the reception of Aristotelian philosophy at the University of Paris in the thirteenth century. Étienne Gilson, who is representative of one side of this debate, popularized the idea that the major issue in the thirteenth century “was not a question of this or that philosophic doctrine, but [was] the very notion of philosophy [itself],” especially the difference over whether a separate philosophy independent of theology is truly possible.²⁰ It is in response to this particular question that Gilson maintained an anti-Aristotelian bent in Bonaventure’s writings, opposing Aristotelianism as a separate philosophy: “Now it is impossible to make any close study of [the] *Summa Philosophica* of Bonaventure’s thought without realizing that for him Aristotelianism is a doctrine condemned.”²¹ Gilson maintained that this characterization of Bonaventure befits him even from the very start of his academic career. Even though his *Commentary on the Sentences* could potentially give “the impression of a hesitant

²⁰ Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 28. It should be recognized Gilson’s portrayal of Bonaventure was not a mere work of historical interpretation, accurate or not, but also served as a means of criticizing the separated Thomistic philosophy of Gilson’s own day.

²¹ Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 7.

Thomism which began right but never came to completion,” this is only because “the problem of the possibility of philosophy separate from theology, did not [yet] arise: [but] all the philosophy he was ever to teach [had already been] from its first moment integrated in his theological synthesis.”²² In his later writings, when such a “problem” did begin to arise among the various derivations of Parisian Aristotelianism, Bonaventure’s already existent anti-Aristotelianism became more prominent as the matter became more relevant. “Denying the principle of a pure philosophy — a philosophy independent of revelation,” Bonaventure purportedly opposed any and all derivations of Aristotelianism by means of his own particular derivation of Augustinianism, that is, by means of a *Christian* philosophy that is dependent upon and subalternated to Christian theology.²³ In Gilson’s own words, the issue was “reducible in its entirety to this one fundamental question: has philosophy any rights as a separate doctrine, as Albert puts it: or, in the phrase of St. Thomas, as a doctrine formally distinct from theology? Of this controversy the decisive figure was St. Bonaventure.”²⁴ As Joseph Ratzinger points out, Gilson’s portrayal of Bonaventure gained wide acceptance and assumed almost an authoritative status.²⁵ Accordingly, Gilson introduced what was to become an often unquestioned interpretation of Bonaventure that precludes the possibility, and even vehemently opposes the idea, of a philosophical wisdom formally distinct from theology or at the very least one obtainable on philosophical grounds alone.

But Gilson’s portrayal has not gone completely unchallenged. Fernand van Steenberghen, among others for whom he is a fair representative, argued that by the middle of the thirteenth century Aristotelian philosophy, its technical vocabulary, principles, methods, and conclusions, had been well received and established within the curriculum of the University of Paris.²⁶ According to Van Steenberghen, the prevailing philosophy of the day was fundamentally Aristotelian, and Bonaventure was no exception. However, there was no such thing at the time as a pure Aristotelianism, at least not among the Faculty of Theology. Aristotelian philosophy was always modified to a greater or lesser extent by other philosophical and theological, often

²² Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 9-10.

²³ Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 28.

²⁴ Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 29. The fact is incontrovertible that Bonaventure opposed the Averroist errors of the Faculty of the Arts, but it remains debatable whether Bonaventure reduced their error to the very idea of a separate philosophy.

²⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in Saint Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2020), 114.

²⁶ Fernand van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, trans. Leonard Johnston (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1955); Van Steenberghen, *Philosophical Movement*, 56-74.

Neoplatonic and Augustinian, preferences and influences, producing a variety of eclectic philosophies built upon a fundamentally Aristotelian foundation.²⁷ “To sum up,” Van Steenberghen writes, “the philosophy of St Bonaventure is an *eclectic and Neoplatonic Aristotelianism, subordinated to an Augustinian theology*.”²⁸ He argued that Bonaventure neither condemned Aristotelianism nor the notion of philosophy as a separate discipline, even though he did recognize the moral weakness of human reason apart from faith, and he did later condemn those within the Faculty of the Arts (e.g., Siger of Brabant), who could have and should have been extrinsically regulated by faith but rather championed the radical Aristotelianism of Averroes and methodologically pursued philosophy as though they were pagans.²⁹ That being said, although Van Steenberghen portrays Bonaventure as a theologian who never arrived at a complete philosophical synthesis that could be abstracted from his theological works, he nevertheless rejected what Gilson called Bonaventure’s Augustinian spirit — the idea that faith is necessary in order to secure the right use of reason, so as to preclude the possibility of philosophical wisdom apart from the intrinsic controls of theology. Instead, Van Steenberghen argued that Bonaventure considered faith to be necessary only in its own domain and only to supply extrinsic controls for reason within the domain of philosophy, so as to making philosophizing *as philosophizing* easier and less doubtful. Accordingly, Van Steenberghen’s portrayal of Bonaventure introduced doubt into the Gilsonian consensus and left open the possibility of a philosophical wisdom formally distinct from theology that is obtainable on purely philosophical grounds.

More recently, John Francis Quinn concluded, after a very thorough and careful exegetical analysis, that Bonaventure was neither anti-Aristotelian nor an eclectic Aristotelian. Like Van Steenberghen, Quinn argues convincingly and thoroughly that a separate philosophy and, therefore, philosophical wisdom, is both possible and obtainable on philosophical grounds. But unlike Van Steenberghen, Quinn concludes that Bonaventure achieved and developed a coherent and complete philosophical synthesis that can neither be described as “an eclectic system based on Aristotelian principles, though with Augustinian tendencies,” nor can it be said to “depend on a

²⁷ Van Steenberghen, “The philosophy of Bonaventure and that of Thomas do not stand opposed to one another as an Augustinian system against an Aristotelian system, but rather as two forms of Neo-Platonizing Aristotelianism which have not been equally developed. It remained more eclectic in the case of the Franciscan master, while in the case of St. Thomas, it has acquired the form of a strong, seamless synthesis,” quoted by Ratzinger, *Theology of History*, 117.

²⁸ Van Steenberghen, *Philosophical Movement*, 61.

²⁹ *Hex.*, I.9 [V, 330]; cf. Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 46-59.

traditional metaphysics of Augustinianism, to which St. Bonaventure subordinates Aristotelian elements, as Gilson has maintained.” Rather, his philosophical synthesis can only be properly described as Bonaventurean. He explains,

As an original and indeed a unique organization of philosophical thought, St. Bonaventure’s synthesis has its coherency and consistency from his personal use of the principle of participation, as we have shown at every level of his thought. The participational character of his synthesis is reflected, as has also been shown, in the way that he organizes and composes it under the influences of the different sources used by him in constituting his own philosophy. No one of those sources is fundamental by itself to the synthesis of St. Bonaventure, who uses them according as they conform, or can be conformed, to his own philosophical principles.³⁰

For our present purposes, this “participational character” can be seen in how philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom may be conceived within the Bonaventurean synthesis as two degrees of perfection in which the created soul is made to participate in one and the same uncreated wisdom, each according to their own order.

Quinn has ably demonstrated from the works of Bonaventure both a separate as well as a subordinate use of philosophy in his overall pursuit of wisdom. As separate, philosophical wisdom demarcates a participation in uncreated wisdom as it is manifest within the natural order of being and, therefore, able to be apprehended by natural principles. Inasmuch as the grace of faith perfects the natural use of reason within its own order, Quinn notes that “faith enables the Christian philosopher to think better, or at least more inerrantly, than the non-Christian philosopher about some things, particularly divine things.” In this case, however, faith merely supplies the extrinsic controls whereby reason is strengthened in its own activity, so that it might be said that “the Christian philosopher has a better ability than the non-Christian philosopher to develop a true philosophy, but not [thereby reducible to] a Christian philosophy.” Theological wisdom, however, demarcates a fuller participation in uncreated wisdom as it is supernaturally revealed in Scripture and apprehended by supernatural principles within the order of grace. As subordinate, therefore, philosophy or philosophical reasoning merely assists faith, whereby reason is elevated above itself to apprehend the divine wisdom as it is more fully manifest, no less in the intrinsic order of created things, but according “to a higher order of truth.”³¹

³⁰ Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 843.

³¹ Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 864-865.

1.2.2 Philosophical Wisdom as the Perfection of Philosophical Science

Wisdom may be distinguished from *science* as the perfection of knowledge within a particular genus or order of knowledge. Whereas a science reduces the knowledge of its object to its proximate causes, wisdom more comprehensively reduces knowledge of the same to its ultimate causes. And so, in order to understand what is being proposed by the affirmation that Bonaventure maintains the possibility of obtaining a *habitus* of philosophical wisdom on philosophical grounds, it is helpful to grasp this distinction more fully.

Our knowledge of the natural world consists in our knowledge of things relative to their many causes, and therefore the philosophical sciences were divided into three general categories: natural, rational, and moral. Natural philosophy considered the truth of things or beings, while rational philosophy considered the truth of words or our thinking and judging, and moral philosophy considered the truth of morals or living.³² But because “the many” are reducible to “the one,” the multiplicity of beings within the so-called order of being or essences, along with their multiplicity of causes, can all be reduced to one ultimate principle. And the task of philosophy as a whole, notwithstanding the various proximate objects and causes of the particular sciences of philosophy, is “to draw all human knowledge into a unity.” Zachary Hayes adds, “It is this task of unification which falls to metaphysics in a special way, for it has the task of unifying the various philosophical disciplines by reducing all of finite reality to one first principle which is origin, exemplar, and final end of all things.”³³ The science of metaphysics is concerned with the knowledge of being itself and, in its final analysis, traces all beings “back to the one first Principle from which they proceeded, that is, to God, in as far as God is the *Beginning*, the *End*, and the *Exemplar*.”³⁴ Metaphysics unifies all of the philosophical sciences in reducing them all to God. It simultaneously perfects the science of physics, in tracing all things back to their *ultimate* originating principle, as well as the science of morals or ethics, in reducing all things to their *ultimate* end. But it also uniquely reduces all things to their *ultimate* exemplary principle. And in this irreducible threefold reduction of all things to God as the One, the True, and the Good,

³² *Hex.*, IV.2-3 [V, 349].

³³ Hayes, “Christology and Metaphysics,” S86.

³⁴ *Reductione Artium*, 4 [V, 321a] (Hayes, trans., 43).

metaphysics unifies and brings to an end *the whole of philosophy* (natural, rational, and moral) in the knowledge of God as the ultimate “cause of existing, the reason of understanding, and the order of living.”³⁵ In this unified reduction “is the whole of our metaphysics: emanation, exemplarity, and consummation.”³⁶ In unifying and reducing the knowledge all things to God, as to one threefold principle of the whole order of being, the science of metaphysics cultivates a habit of philosophical wisdom within the soul — which is the relative perfection of, and fulfillment of the soul’s capacity for, philosophical knowledge.³⁷ Quinn helpfully explains: “The three orders of causality are one in God. Consequently, for the perfection of philosophical knowledge, the three principal sciences must be brought together to form one source of knowledge about God as the supreme cause of creatures. This unification of the philosophical sciences gives rise to the habitus of [philosophical] wisdom, which is the ultimate perfection of natural knowledge in man.”³⁸

“And in this way,” Bonaventure adds, “you will be a true metaphysician.”³⁹ In other words, philosophical wisdom signifies the perfection of knowledge within its own order, even if not a perfect participation in uncreated wisdom itself. Although philosophical wisdom is not the whole fulfillment of the soul’s total capacity for wisdom, for which it still requires the further formation of theological wisdom, it nevertheless signifies the fulfillment of the soul’s capacity for a *natural* or *philosophical knowledge of God*, contemplated *through* creatures by means of natural or philosophical principles.

By comparison, as we shall see, theological wisdom signifies the further perfection of the soul’s capacity for a *supernatural* or *theological knowledge of God*, contemplated *in* creatures by means of supernatural or theological principles. Both, philosophical and theological wisdom, signify a perfect unification of knowledge, each separate and sufficient relative to their own order of knowledge, *through* and *in* creatures respectively. And although the former be imperfect relative to the latter, it is nonetheless perfect within its own order. Philosophical wisdom marks a degree of perfection, whereby the soul participates in uncreated wisdom and is thereby disposed to ascend higher, as a Christian, until it reaches the summit of theological wisdom.

³⁵ *Hex.*, IV.3 [V, 349b], *causa essendi, ratio intelligendi et ordo vivendi*.

³⁶ *Hex.*, I.17 [V, 332b] (Hammond, trans., 83).

³⁷ *Scientia Christi*, q.6 [V, 35a].

³⁸ Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 409.

³⁹ *Hex.*, I.17 [V, 332b] (Hammond, trans., 83); cf. *Hex.*, I.11 [V.331b].

1.2.3 The Fourfold Wisdom of the *Hexaemeron*

Bonaventure's fourfold definition and description of wisdom in his *Sentences Commentary* as a subjective *habitus* of the soul is complemented by his fourfold description of wisdom in his *Hexaemeron*. In his second sermon, he describes created wisdom as a fourfold object that is able to be apprehended by the soul that is properly habituated to receive it. In his own words:

This form [of wisdom] is marvelous, because it is sometimes uniform (*uniformis*), then it is multiform (*multiformis*), then again omniform (*omniformis*), and then without-form (*nulliformis*). Therefore, [eternal wisdom] clothes itself in a four-form light (*lumine*). Now it appears uniform in the rules of the divine laws, multiform in the mysteries of the divine Scriptures, omniform in the vestiges of the divine works, and without-form in the elevations of divine excess (*excessuum*).⁴⁰

Gregory LaNave helpfully points out a well-documented aspect of Bonaventure's understanding of creation, which was also touched upon in chapter 1: the Augustinian doctrine of seminal reasons. He explains, "[F]orms exist in matter potentially and are brought to actuality when they are educed from matter under the influence of light. Every form disposes the matter of the thing to the eduction of a yet higher form."⁴¹ The salient point here is that these four different forms of wisdom are ordered one to another, whereby the soul is led from lower forms of wisdom to higher forms. The eternal light of uncreated wisdom shines in or through each created form of wisdom, so as to lead the soul to the summit of Christian wisdom; the lower forms of wisdom inform and actualize the soul's subjective capacity for wisdom, disposing it to desire and receive each higher form through a correspondingly greater influence of light. Therefore, the order in which Bonaventure presents these four forms of wisdom will prove significant. Moreover, as Cullen has demonstrated, it is also possible to correlate Bonaventure's four-form wisdom in his *Hexaemeron* (as a knowable object) with the previously mentioned fourfold definition of wisdom in his *Commentary* (as a habit disposing the subject). It will become apparent, however, that the following analysis differs from that of Cullen in a subtle but significant way.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Hex.*, II.8 [V, 337b] (Hammond, trans., 97).

⁴¹ LaNave, "Philosophical Wisdom," 826.

⁴² Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 25-26.

The first and lowest form of wisdom is uniform wisdom (*sapientia uniformis*).⁴³ According to Bonaventure, this refers to the eternal law as it is manifest in the first and self-evident principles of knowledge that are implanted within every rational intellect. “These rules, shining in rational minds (*mentibus rationalibus*),” he writes, “are all of those ways by which the mind knows (*mens cognoscit*) and judges that which could not be otherwise These rules are infallible, indubitable, and unjudgeable because judgment is by them, and not about them. ... For these [rules] are rooted in Eternal Light (*luce*) and lead to it.”⁴⁴ Uniform wisdom consists of the first principles of all knowledge enlightening every rational intellect, upon the objective foundation of which all speculative and practical judgments are made possible. And a soul may be said to be wise by this wisdom, according to Bonaventure’s first and common (*communiter*) definition of wisdom in the subject, when one’s actual knowledge of these first principles is further reduced to the divine laws upon which all our knowing and all our living is ultimately grounded (see chapter 5).

The second form of wisdom that Bonaventure mentions is multiform wisdom (*sapientia multiformis*).⁴⁵ This form of wisdom refers to the objective revelation of God’s eternal wisdom in the book of Scripture. It is so-called because it is manifest according to multiple senses, literal as well as spiritual. “Therefore, this wisdom is called multiform, because there are many ways of expressing it; and so, it was necessary that wisdom be revealed in many figures, ... so that it may also be veiled from the proud, and uncovered to the humble.”⁴⁶ Just as words are themselves signs that point to things, the literal sense of the book of Scripture points the one who is wise by this wisdom to a fuller meaning shining forth according to a threefold spiritual understanding manifest by the light of faith alone. Bonaventure is typical in how he identifies this fuller meaning: “A threefold understanding (*intelligentia*) shines forth (*refulget*) in Scripture, which teaches: what is to be believed, what is to be expected, and what is to be done. What is to be believed refers to faith; what is to be expected refers to hope; and what is to be done refers to charity, which consists in action, not only in affection (*affectione*).”⁴⁷ And thus, a soul may be said to be wise by this wisdom, according to Bonaventure’s third and proper (*proprie*) definition of wisdom, when one possesses a *theological* knowledge of God according to piety (*cognitionem Dei secundum*

⁴³ *Hex.*, II.9-10 [V, 337b-338a].

⁴⁴ *Hex.*, II.9 and 10 [V, 338a] (Hammond, trans., 97-98).

⁴⁵ *Hex.*, II.11-19 [V, 338a-339b]. Cf. The Vulgate’s rendering of Eph. 3:10, *multiformis sapientia Dei*.

⁴⁶ *Hex.*, II.12 [V, 338b] (Hammond, trans., 99).

⁴⁷ *Hex.*, II.13 [V, 338b] (Hammond, trans., 99).

pietatem) by means of faith, hope, and charity. “This wisdom, therefore, is hidden and veiled from the proud, who are not able to understand (*intelligere*) the Scripture. ... This wisdom is given according to the measure of faith, *and to each one, as God divided the measure of faith*; because the more understanding (*intellectum*) a person grasps, the wiser that person becomes, and faith is possessed through humility.”⁴⁸

The third form of wisdom is what Bonaventure calls omniform wisdom (*sapientia omniformis*).⁴⁹ This form of wisdom refers to the objective revelation of God’s eternal wisdom relative to the book of creation. It is so-called because “this wisdom is diffused in everything, because whatever thing, according to that which it is in whatever property, possesses the rule of wisdom and displays divine wisdom; and anyone who knew all these properties would clearly see this wisdom. And to this consideration, philosophers devoted themselves, as well as Solomon himself.”⁵⁰ It is certainly tempting to distinguish neatly multiform and omniform wisdom, the books of Scripture and creation respectively, along the lines of theology and philosophy. And it is in this way that Cullen reduces Bonaventure’s concept of omniform wisdom to the object of philosophy, in the same way he had reduced Bonaventure’s second and less common (*minus communiter*) definition to the subjective habit of *philosophical* wisdom. But while the impulse to correlate these two concepts is justified — that is, omniform wisdom, as the *objective* revelation of divine wisdom in the book of creation, and Bonaventure’s second definition of wisdom, as the *subjective habitus* formed by this object — Cullen is again overly reductionistic in how he conceives of both. Just as the second definition, understood as the fullness and perfection of knowledge within a particular genus, cannot be reduced to the genus of *philosophical* wisdom alone but equally implies the possibility of *theological* wisdom, so also Bonaventure’s concept of omniform wisdom implies a twofold object that may be apprehended both philosophically and theologically, each according to their own order or genus of knowledge. This is supported by the observation that Bonaventure’s concept of omniform wisdom not only includes the manifestation of the divine “to Be” *through* the things he has made but also to varying degrees the trinity of persons *in* those same things.⁵¹ The point is this: although omniform wisdom refers to the total

⁴⁸ *Hex.*, II.17 and 19 [V, 339a-b] (Hammond, trans., 101-102).

⁴⁹ *Hex.*, II.20-27 [V, 339b-340b].

⁵⁰ *Hex.*, II.21 [V, 340a] (Hammond, trans., 102). He states elsewhere, “For every creature is by nature a kind of copy and likeness of that eternal Wisdom,” *Itin.*, II.12 [V, 302] (Hayes, trans., 79).

⁵¹ *Hex.*, II.21-27 [V, 340].

manifestation of God's wisdom within the book of creation, it cannot be reduced to philosophical wisdom, nor to an object *wholly* accessible to reason alone, for God is manifest in creation in more than one way: *through* and *in* creatures respectively. As we have already observed, and as will be considered more fully in the next section, one and the same book of creation can be read in two different but related ways: philosophically and theologically.

Just as an effect in some way participates in its cause, the created order participates in uncreated wisdom, insofar as it mirrors and reflects the perfection and unity of the divine order from which it emanates. And just as the divine order is itself twofold — pertaining to essence (chapter 2) and persons (chapter 3) respectively — so also is its created omniform reflection. And thus, because the cosmological order provides the intelligible medium for Bonaventure's contemplative endeavor, the omniform wisdom of God may be contemplated relative to two distinct orders of knowledge. Because the knowledge of something consists in the apprehension of that thing within its order of relations, God may be known in relation to creatures in two ways: either *per speculum* or *in speculo*. In both ways and from one and the same book, a soul is made wise by omniform wisdom, according to Bonaventure's second definition, when it is enabled to apprehend the divine order as it is manifest both *through* and *in* the created order. The first way leads to a knowledge of God's essential attributes (chapter 2), whereas the second way contemplates the deeper trinitarian dimensions of every created thing (chapter 3). The one is laid open to natural reason, the other only to a reason that is elevated by faith. The one follows a philosophical way, perfecting the soul's capacity for philosophical wisdom; the other follows a theological way, perfecting the soul's capacity for theological wisdom. Taken together, they perfect the soul's capacity for omniform wisdom, disposing it to receive the grace of a still higher wisdom.

The fourth and final form of wisdom is what Bonaventure calls nulliform wisdom (*sapientia nulliformis*), or an apophatic wisdom that is without-form.⁵² This kind of wisdom refers to the summit and “end (*status*) of Christian wisdom.” It is so-called because “this wisdom is *hidden in a mystery*.” It is without-form in that it does not refer to an object through which God is manifest, informing the intellect, but to the soul's mystical union with God himself, who is separate from everything that is not God and far above all of the created forms through which he is manifest,

⁵² *Hex.*, II.28-34 [V, 340a-342b].

as if to say: that which I wish to understand (*intelligere*) is above every substance and knowledge (*cognitionem*). And there is a most secret operation transcending all understanding (*intellectum*); because nobody there knows (*scit*) it, unless it is experienced (*experitur*). For in the soul (*anima*) there are many apprehending powers: the sensitive, the imaginative, the estimative, the intellective (*intellectiva*); and all must be relinquished, and at the summit is the union of love (*unitio amoris*), and this transcends all. Hence it is clear that total beatitude (*beatitudo*) is not in the intellective [power] (*intellectiva*).⁵³

Supposing that wisdom (*sapientia*) derives its name from *sapor* (*to taste*), Bonaventure maintained that it may be most properly (*magis proprie*) understood, per his last definition, in terms of an experiential knowledge of God wherein the soul tastes and delights in the divine sweetness. And because delight (*delectatio*) presupposes an act of knowledge and love, that is, delighting in the possession of a known good, the soul that is made wise by this wisdom thereby enjoys an experiential knowledge of God (*cognitionem Dei experimentalem*) that presupposes and yet surpasses understanding.

Bonaventure consistently maintained that in this state of ecstasy the intellective power of the soul is at rest, such that in the final analysis our beatitude does not reside in the intellective power but in the affective. But he does not intend to suggest by this that the intellect is sentimentally disengaged but rather that its intellectual capacity for wisdom reaches its limit; cataphatic theology, having affirmed all that it can, perfects itself in apophatic silence. The soul's mental excesses that are commenced in the intellect (*cognitione inchoatur*) and yet exceeding its own capacity are consummated in the affection (*affectione consummatur*).⁵⁴ "Only the affective [power] (*affectiva*) is awake and imposes a silence upon all the other powers; and then a person is alienated from the senses and is placed in ecstasy (*ecstasi*), and hears *secret words that no person may say* because they are only in the affect (*affectu*)."⁵⁵ For the affections reach beyond the capacity of the intellect in the way that apophatic theology reaches beyond the limits of cataphatic theology, not as an irrational movement of the soul but as a suprarational extension and perfection of the intellect through the affections.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Hex.*, II.29 [V, 340b] (Hammond, trans., 105).

⁵⁴ *Hex.*, II.34 [V, 342b]; *III Sent.*, d.35, a.sole, q.1 [I, 774b]; *Itin.*, VII.4 [V, 312b]. In order to satisfy the soul's capacity for blessedness, its object must exceed its own capacity; *Scientia Christi*, q.6 [V, 35a].

⁵⁵ *Hex.*, II.30 [V, 341b] (Hammond, trans., 106).

⁵⁶ *Hex.*, II.29 [V, 341]; *III Sent.*, d.23, a.1, q.2 [V, 475-476]. Boyd Taylor Coolman, *Knowledge, Love, and Ecstasy in the Theology of Thomas Gallus* (Oxford: OUP, 2017), convincingly traces Bonaventure's concept of ecstasy to Thomas Gallus's commentaries upon the Dionysian corpus.

Although Bonaventure believed that such an apophatic rapture and ecstasy is possible this side of glory, as is evident from Paul's own experience (1 Cor. 12:2), he also believed that very few ever enjoy this privilege in this life. It is "a special privilege surpassing the state of the wayfarer (*viatorum*), that is, not as something brought about by virtue of that state but as something that could only be done for them."⁵⁷ It more properly belongs to the state of the blessed in heaven, by virtue of the grace of glory. "Therefore, since nature is helpless in this matter, and even personal effort is of little significance,"⁵⁸ Bonaventure consistently stressed that "this [wisdom] cannot be obtained except through prayer."⁵⁹

1.2.4 A Twofold Reading Strategy: Philosophical and Theological

How then does Bonaventure conceive the relation between philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom? The answer to this question presupposes another: how does he conceive the relation between multiform and omniform wisdom? As indicated above, so-called multiform and omniform wisdom refer to two distinct ways in which God has objectively manifested his uncreated wisdom in creaturely form. Furthermore, these two forms of created wisdom are reducible to two distinct books: the books of Scripture and of creation respectively.⁶⁰ The argument thus far has been that, in the pursuit of wisdom, God and the omniform wisdom of God may be contemplated in the book of creation in two ways, philosophically and theologically. The argument here is not that philosophical wisdom is an end in itself, a notion that Bonaventure vehemently opposes, for the omniform wisdom of God manifest in the book of creation cannot be fully apprehended on philosophical grounds alone. However, the larger argument presented here does include within it the disputed claim that, for Bonaventure, *philosophical* wisdom is obtainable by means of philosophical contemplation apart from any intrinsic dependence upon theology or the theological virtues or the transformative effects of multiform wisdom.

But a possible objection arises from the order whereby Bonaventure introduces multiform wisdom, or the book of Scripture, prior to the omniform wisdom of God manifest in the book of creation. Not a few have concluded from this that, for Bonaventure, the book of creation cannot

⁵⁷ *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 544b], *qui specialitate privilegii ... sed solum aguntur*.

⁵⁸ *Itin.*, VII.5 [V, 312b] (Hayes, trans., 137).

⁵⁹ *Hex.*, II.32 [V, 342a] (Hammond, trans., 107); cf. *Itin.*, VII.6 [V, 313b].

⁶⁰ *Hex.*, XII.14 and 17 [V, 386b and 387a]; cf. Psalm 19.

be read until the soul be properly disposed by the book of Scripture and the grace of faith. Jay M. Hammond has put it this way: “[Bonaventure] first presents *multiform* wisdom (Scripture), the book written within, and then considers *omniform* wisdom, the book written without. ... [Thus] both books only become readable by faith, ... which itself is revealed in Scripture.”⁶¹ Gregory LaNave arrives at a similar conclusion: “Omniform wisdom clearly depends on the transformation of the person by grace.”⁶² In other words, only by learning how to read Scripture are we taught how to read creation properly. And if this is Bonaventure’s intent, then the distinction proposed here between philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom, or between philosophical contemplation and theological contemplation, would not be properly Bonaventurian.

There is no doubt a significance to the order in which Bonaventure initially presents this fourfold concept of wisdom in his *Hexaemeron*, as each of the lower forms of wisdom in some way dispose the soul to receive the higher forms. The question is in what way and to what extent the multiform wisdom of God in Scripture must transform and dispose the soul by grace before it can receive and perceive the omniform wisdom of God in creation. In answering this question, it is important to recall that God, as he is manifest *through* and *in* the book of creation, may be apprehended in two distinct ways: philosophically and theologically. In the second conference or sermon, Bonaventure prioritizes multiform wisdom over omniform wisdom, not because the book of creation cannot be read philosophically apart from theology or the theological graces, but because without them it cannot be read *fully* and thereby dispose the contemplative soul for its further reception of the omniform wisdom of God. In this, the interpretation of LaNave is not too far from our own, except that he mistakenly reduces the whole of omniform wisdom to philosophical wisdom simply because it pertains to a knowledge of God manifest in relation to created things. Consequently, he infers from this that *philosophical wisdom* cannot therefore be *fully* obtained apart from the gracious or theological transformation of the soul.⁶³ Our contention, however, is that the book of creation cannot be reduced to philosophical wisdom only. Certainly, inasmuch as the omniform wisdom of God is manifest *through* creatures, the knowledge obtained pertains to the fullness of philosophical wisdom arrived at by means of philosophical contemplation. However, the omniform wisdom of God is also, and more fully, manifest *in*

⁶¹ Jay M. Hammond, “Introduction,” in *Collations of the Hexaemeron: Conferences on the Six Days of Creation* (NY: Franciscan Institute, 2018), 51n.265.

⁶² LaNave, “Philosophical Wisdom,” 828.

⁶³ LaNave, “Philosophical Wisdom,” 828-829.

creatures, though not in a *philosophical* way to be apprehended by philosophical means. In other words, although this fuller manifestation regards a knowledge of God *in creatures*, it is not obtained in a philosophical or analytical way that arrives at a knowledge of the uncreated cause *through* a knowledge of his created effects. Rather, it pertains to a knowledge or wisdom that is obtainable only in a theological or synthetic way, arriving at a deeper and more penetrating knowledge of the created effects as they are known *in* their uncreated cause. Bonaventure's intention in placing multiform wisdom before omniform wisdom is not to suggest that the theological virtues are intrinsically necessary in order to obtain philosophical wisdom, nor that the book of creation can only be read by means of faith, but only, and yet significantly, that the theological virtues are necessary in order to read and contemplate that book most fully, that is, theologically as well as philosophically.

The strength of this conclusion can be seen in how Bonaventure later inverts the order, expounding upon the omniform wisdom of God in conference 12 before beginning an extended treatment of multiform wisdom in conference 13. This reordering of things is both intentional and significant. Regarding the book of creation, Bonaventure affirms that “both reason (*ratio*) and faith lead to these exemplary splendors (*splendores exemplares*).” In other words, the omniform wisdom of God may be read by means of two lights, or two internal or subjective cognitive principles, reason and faith, by means of philosophical contemplation and theological contemplation respectively. Moreover, Bonaventure notes that omniform wisdom is apprehended by means of three objective helps, or three external cognitive principles by means of which we may progressively rise “towards the [Eternal] Exemplary Reasons (*exemplares rationes*), namely: [the help] of the sensible creature, the spiritual creature, [and] sacramental Scripture, which contains mysteries.”⁶⁴ In conference 12, Bonaventure proceeds to elaborate upon the first two, sensible creatures and spiritual creatures, which represent those objects that are laid open to the light of reason whereby God may be philosophically contemplated relative to the so-called order of being, *through* the things he has made. And although these may be sufficient to arrive at philosophical wisdom, they themselves are not sufficient to lead us unto a complete and full apprehension of all that is manifest in the omniform wisdom of God. Philosophical wisdom, though complete within its own order, is not an end in itself. There is still a higher order of wisdom manifest in the book of creation, theological wisdom, that requires a supernatural help to obtain it:

⁶⁴ *Hex.*, XII.14 [V, 386b] (Hammond, trans., 232).

“sacramental Scripture, which contains mysteries.” Bonaventure criticizes those philosophers that prematurely rest in philosophical wisdom and fail to ascend the mountain in order to receive further revelation from God — a supernatural book that would raise them to a higher order and enable them to read the book of creation more fully, in a new and brighter light, the supra-rational light of faith.⁶⁵

The multiform wisdom of the book of Scripture is then elaborated upon in conferences 13-18 as a further help in the soul’s fuller pursuit of omniform wisdom. Whereas the uniform wisdom of God prepares and disposes the soul to read and understand the literal sense of both the book of creation and the book of Scripture, the multiform wisdom of Scripture is necessary in order to prepare and dispose the soul to read and apprehend the mysteries hidden in the spiritual sense that is to be spiritually discerned in both books.⁶⁶ In other words, through Scripture the redeemed soul is not only transformed by faith, hope and love but is also taught how to read and apprehend the triune God in his word. “Hence just as there are three Persons in one essence, so [there are] three understandings (*intelligentiae*) within the one surface of the letter.”⁶⁷ And just as the theological virtues produce in the soul a certain sensitivity to the spiritual sense of Scripture, the soul is thereby also prepared and disposed by grace to read the book of creation, or to see God *in* creatures, in a new and deeper way, not only literally or philosophically according to the order of being, but spiritually and theologically according to the so-called order of persons.

Thus the first sense [is] the literal; then, because things signify, there are three senses. For God manifests (*manifestat*) himself in any creature in three ways: according to substance, power, and operation. And every creature represents God, who is Trinity, as well as the way one is to come to [God]. And because one is to come to God through faith, hope, and charity, therefore every creature suggests (*insinuate*) ... a threefold spiritual understanding (*intelligentia*).⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Hex.*, XII.17 [V, 387].

⁶⁶ *Hex.*, XIII.10-12 [V, 389-390]; cf. IV [V, 348-353]; 1 Cor. 2:14; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.1-2 [V, 45-58]. The book of creation witnesses to the Trinity in two ways, through vestiges and images: “This twofold witness of the book of creation was efficacious in the state of innocent nature, when that book had not been obscured; nor had the eye of man been darkened. But when the sins of man had weakened his sight, then that mirror was made dark and obscure, and the ear of our inner understanding was hardened against hearing that testimony.” Fallen man, deprived of faith, hope, and love, was deprived of his ability to read the book of creation, not entirely but fully, not philosophically but theologically. “For this reason, divine providence saw fit to provide the testimony of another book; namely, that of the book of Scripture, which was written in accord with the divine revelation which has never been deficient nor absent from the beginning of the world to the end,” a.2 [V, 55a] (Hayes, trans., 129).

⁶⁷ *Hex.*, XIII.11 [V, 389b] (Hammond, trans., 240).

⁶⁸ *Hex.*, XIII.11 [V, 389b] (Hammond, trans., 240).

By means of the Spirit working through the word, the intellect is increasingly habituated and disposed, being elevated by faith (col. 17), and the affections are progressively disposed and inclined, being ordered by love (col. 18), to contemplate and apprehend God, who is Trinity, *through* and *in* the things he has made. In the same way that nature is perfected by grace — through its moral and spiritual transformation and recovery of the spiritual senses, in proportion to its exercise of faith, hope, and love, the soul in possession of philosophical wisdom is perfected by means of theological wisdom (col. 19); helped by the multiform wisdom of Scripture and transformed by grace, the soul is further disposed and elevated, not only to contemplate the omniform wisdom of God manifest philosophically *through* creatures, but also and more fully to contemplate the omniform wisdom of God manifest theologically *in* creatures.

2. The Limitations of Philosophical Wisdom

The limitations of philosophical wisdom have been intimated throughout, but it will prove helpful to distinguish between two kinds of limitations before we consider more fully how philosophical wisdom is perfected and the soul is elevated by means of theological wisdom. Bonaventure speaks about the limitations of philosophical wisdom in at least two ways: with respect to the moral limitations of its subject and with respect to the formal limitations of its object.

2.1 *The Moral Limitations of Its Subject*

Bonaventure remarks that “the philosophers have provided nine sciences (*scientia*), and they promised to provide a tenth, namely contemplation. But many philosophers, while they determined to separate themselves from the darkness of error, immersed themselves in even greater errors: *claiming to be wise, they became fools instead.*”⁶⁹ Bonaventure is highlighting here, not an inherent limitation with respect to philosophy or philosophical wisdom *in itself* (*in se*), but rather a moral limitation *in the subject* (*in subiecto*) on account of sin.

⁶⁹ *Hex.*, IV.1 [V, 349a] (Hammond, trans., 129).

Philosophical wisdom *in itself* is a perfect and ideal form of natural theology that is theoretically obtainable by purely natural principles, i.e., all that may be known of God within the domain of reason. In practice, however, philosophical wisdom *in the subject*, as that form of natural theology that a person actually acquires, will always be imperfect and to some degree mixed with error. For this reason, Bonaventure advises his pupils to scan and plunder the works of pagan philosophy but not linger there permanently.⁷⁰ But once again, this is not to suggest that philosophical wisdom is effectively impossible apart from the renewing work of grace, for as Bonaventure quickly adds: “The light (*lux*) of the soul (*animae*) is truth; this light (*lux*) knows no setting. For it so forcefully shines forth (*irradiat*) upon the soul (*animam*), it cannot even be thought (*cogitari*) not to be (*esse*) ... lest a person contradict oneself.”⁷¹ That is, although the light of reason be darkened by sin, it is not thereby snuffed out. For the same reason, however, Bonaventure maintains that our natural knowledge will always be mixed with one degree of error or another, insofar as the light of reason has been darkened and the soul’s rational faculties have now been both weakened and corrupted by sin.

As a result, Bonaventure remarks that reason has frequently run wild (*luxuriata*) and fallen into error.⁷² Throughout his career, it is well-known that he consistently warned against what he considered the three most significant errors which not only contradict sacred Scripture but also destroy the Christian faith: the eternity of the world, which posits that an eternal creation necessarily follows from an eternal cause and, therefore, undermines the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*; fatalism, which posits that all things happen by way of necessity and, therefore, undermines the doctrines of divine providence and of human freedom; and the unity of the human intellect, which posits that there is one intellect in all people and, therefore, undermines the concept of merit and the doctrine of eternal punishments and rewards.⁷³ In Bonaventure’s estimation, all of these are in one way or another reducible to the rejection of the doctrine of divine exemplarity or of the divine Ideas by certain philosophers, but especially Aristotle.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ *Hex.*, IXX.15 [V, 422b].

⁷¹ *Hex.*, IV.1 [V, 349a] (Hammond, trans., 130); cf. Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 29.

⁷² *Hex.*, V.21 [V, 357a]; IV.8-13 [V, 350a-351b].

⁷³ *Donis Spiritus*, VIII.16 [V, 497] (Hayes, trans., 176-177); *Collationes de decem praeceptis*, II.25 [V, 514], trans. Paul Spaeth, *Collations on the Ten Commandments* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1995), 40-41; *Hex.*, VI.4 [V, 361]; VII.1 [V, 365a].

⁷⁴ *Hex.*, VII.1 [V, 365a].

This is not evidence in support of Bonaventure's purported anti-Aristotelianism. Whereas Bonaventure is much more impatient with the Faculty of the Arts who should have known better but nevertheless reasoned like pagans, he goes so far as to excuse Aristotle for not enjoying the renewing and regulating effects of the light of faith and, thus, for reasoning imperfectly and inadequately about the eternity of the world; Bonaventure graciously acquiesces that, from the limited perspective of physics, it is true that *something* cannot come from *nothing*, and therefore begin *to be*, by means of *natural* causes.⁷⁵ But neither is this evidence in support of the claim that philosophical wisdom is impossible apart from the *internal* controls of faith. Two observations mitigate against this conclusion. First, Bonaventure proceeds to speak of other more illumined (*illuminati*) philosophers who did nonetheless affirm some version or another of the divine Ideas, "thus illumined (*illuminati*) [by the light of reason], even without faith."⁷⁶ Secondly, if Bonaventure's point was that philosophical wisdom, even if imperfect, is impossible apart from the intrinsic controls of faith, then it would be very curious why he consistently employed philosophical rather than theological counterarguments for why the world cannot be eternal, i.e., arguments based upon reason rather than upon faith. As Quinn points out, it is Aquinas rather than Bonaventure that, in this particular instance, turned to the light of faith in order to affirm the temporal beginning of creation;⁷⁷ in this case, Bonaventure attributed more ability to human reason than Aquinas, while also recognizing its moral weakness and practical imperfection as a consequence of sin.

That being said, the rational faculties of the soul need to be renewed and restored by grace no less than the soul itself; grace renews and restores nature. As it concerns *philosophical* wisdom, reason is not in need of faith to elevate it above itself, for the object of natural theology still only pertains to what may be known of God from nature, by natural means, within the domain of reason alone. But the grace of faith also renews and restores, even rectifies, the right use of reason itself, potentially and progressively enabling the Christian philosopher to think better, at least more inerrantly, and for better ends.⁷⁸ Faith supplies the extrinsic controls whereby reason itself is rectified and strengthened in its own native activity, so that it might be said that the Christian has

⁷⁵ *Hex.*, VII.2-3 [V, 365a-366a]; *Donis Spiritus*, IV.12 [V, 476a], "Therefore, this knowledge has darkened and debased the philosophers because they did not have the light of faith" (Hayes, trans., 92).

⁷⁶ *Hex.*, VII.4 [V, 366a] (Hammond, trans., 173).

⁷⁷ Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 890.

⁷⁸ Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 864-865; cf. *Hex.*, II.21 [V, 340]; XII.15 [V, 386].

greater potential to reason well and arrive at a more perfect philosophical wisdom. Simply put, “if the seasoning (*condimentum*) of faith is added, then [reasoning] is easier.”⁷⁹ “In proof of this,” Bonaventure points out that, “although some philosophers have known much about God that is true, yet, because of lack of faith, they have often erred in their speculations or even given them up altogether.”⁸⁰

2.2 *The Formal Limitations of Its Object*

In addition to the moral limitation inherent *in the subject*, there is also a formal limitation inherent to the object of philosophical wisdom *in itself*. This is made especially clear in Bonaventure’s collations or sermons on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and especially conference four where he expounds upon the gift of knowledge (*scientia*).⁸¹ He distinguishes four degrees and forms of knowledge: of philosophy, of theology, of grace, and of glory.⁸² By distinguishing the science of theology from the science of grace, he does not intend to suggest that the former is not also a grace-infused knowledge. With reference to the science of grace (*gratuitae*), Bonaventure has in mind the particular gift (*donum*) of the Holy Spirit.⁸³ Of particular interest, however, is the traditional manner in which he distinguishes the science of philosophy and the science of theology. Ultimately, both are a gift from God, but they differ in their material and formal principles. “Philosophical knowledge is nothing other than the certain knowledge of truth in as far as it can be investigated [rationally]. Theological knowledge is the pious knowledge of truth as believable.”⁸⁴ The object of both is *truth* and even, as it relates to wisdom, *the truth of God* or what may be known about God, but the object of each pertains to the truth of God considered under a different formal aspect. Whereas the object of theological knowledge concerns what may be

⁷⁹ *Hex.*, IV.5 [V, 349b], (Hammond, trans., 131); *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1, ad 1 [V, 62a] (Hayes, trans., 144), “It can be maintained that reason is capable of proving that God is one.” He responds to the objection that apart from faith many have drawn the conclusion that there are many gods by affirming the extrinsic help of faith without attributing an utter impotence to unregenerate reason as it concerns such matters: “Philosophy can rescue us from such an error, but the Christian faith does so even more effectively; and both these agree that the divine being is supremely one,” in corp. [V, 61b] (Hayes, trans., 144).

⁸⁰ *III Sent.*, d.24, a.2, q.3 [III, 523a], translation from Bougerol, *Introduction*, 67.

⁸¹ *Donis Spiritus*, IV [V, 473-479]; cf. *III Sent.*, d.35, q.2 [III, 775-776].

⁸² *Donis Spiritus*, IV.3 [V, 474a].

⁸³ *Donis Spiritus*, IV.4 [V, 474a].

⁸⁴ *Donis Spiritus*, IV.5 [V, 474b] (Hayes, trans., 86).

known about God relative to what has been supernaturally revealed and infused by the light of faith (*lumen infusum*) and, therefore, believed on the basis of divine authority, the object of philosophical knowledge is inherently limited to what may be known about God by means of the light of nature and the natural light of judgment (*naturalis iudicatorii*) and, therefore, on the basis of human reason. Both forms of knowledge consider God, but they do so within different orders of knowledge and under different formal aspects. Whereas the one leads to the knowledge of God *as creator*, the other leads to the fuller knowledge of God *as savior*.⁸⁵

The point is that philosophical wisdom is, even as the height and perfection of philosophical science, inherently limited to what may be known about God from within the domain of reason. Because it *in itself* is only sufficient to acquire a *philosophical* knowledge, it can only ever achieve a limited and incomplete knowledge of its object — inadequate to reveal the wisdom of God unto salvation and inadequate to satisfy fully the soul's capacity for God. Elsewhere, Bonaventure notes that, "although the metaphysician may rise from a consideration of the principles of created and particular substances to the universal and uncreated and to that 'to Be' (*esse*)," that is, by the philosophical contemplation of God relative to the order of being, "yet [one does] not [have that 'to Be'] in the relation (*ratione*) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."⁸⁶ In other words, metaphysics may rise to a knowledge of the first principle *as creator*, but as true as that knowledge may be it cannot rise to the fuller knowledge of that first principle *as trinity*. And this is Bonaventure's consistent concern. "The first radiance, that of philosophical knowledge, is great in the opinion of worldly people. But it can easily be darkened unless one is on guard against the head and the tail of the dragon," that is, when a person treats philosophical wisdom as the beginning and end of wisdom itself.⁸⁷ "This happens," he explains, "when he believes he has grasped the Creator through this knowledge without any further light." Quoting from the Gospel of Matthew, he asks, "What does it profit a person to gain the whole world," to arrive at a philosophical knowledge of God as creator, "but to suffer the loss of his soul," never arriving at a saving knowledge of God as his triune savior?

Positively speaking, "philosophical science is the road [*via*] to the other sciences," that is, to the sciences of theology, grace, and glory. "But the person who wishes to remain [*stare*] there

⁸⁵ *Donis Spiritus*, IV.2 [V, 474a].

⁸⁶ *Hex.*, I.13 [V, 331b] (Hammond, trans., 80).

⁸⁷ *Donis Spiritus*, IV.12 [V, 475b-476a] (Hayes, trans., 91-92).

will fall into darkness.”⁸⁸ The danger, as Bonaventure sees it, is not in the idea of philosophical wisdom itself but in the temptation to regard it as an end in and of itself. For although philosophical wisdom may come to a point of rest within its own order of knowledge, the soul itself must not presume to rest but must recognize the formal limitation inherent to the object of philosophical wisdom *in itself*. For “theology is ... the only perfect wisdom, for it begins with the supreme cause as the principle of all things that are caused — the very point at which philosophical knowledge ends. ... In this knowledge one finds perfect taste, life, and the salvation of souls; that is why all Christians should be aflame with longing to acquire it.”⁸⁹

3. The Perfection of Theological Wisdom

It has been argued that in order for anything to be intelligible, and therefore contemplated, there must be an intelligible *order* among and within the reality of things themselves. And because God created all things from nothing, he necessarily acts from himself, in accordance with himself, and for himself. In this way, the unity and diversity of the entire created order is necessarily patterned after the divine order. And inasmuch as wisdom connotes order, the uncreated wisdom of the creator has been woven into the very fabric of the created order. As such, the contemplative endeavor presupposes our pursuit of wisdom, for it the soul’s apprehension of and participation in the uncreated wisdom of the divine order itself, insofar as it may be contemplated both *through* creatures and *in* creatures, that is, both philosophically as well as theologically. In other words, our treatment of philosophical and theological wisdom in this chapter can be mapped onto our previous considerations of what we have called philosophical and theological contemplation respectively, for as Charles Carpenter says, “Knowing God by means of contemplation is the proper work of wisdom.”⁹⁰ And both forms of wisdom are obtained within their own order, according to increasing degrees (*gradus*) of perfection and their own forms of contemplation. But it must now be emphasized how and why Bonaventure regarded the latter of the two “the only perfect wisdom” and, therefore, a more perfect and perfecting form of contemplation. In what

⁸⁸ *Donis Spiritus*, IV.12 [V, 476a] (Hayes, trans., 93).

⁸⁹ *Brev.*, I.1.3 [V, 210] (Monti, trans., 28).

⁹⁰ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness in St. Bonaventure* (NY: Paulist Press, 1999), 31; cf. *Itin.*, I.8 [V, 298a].

follows, it will be argued that the perfection of theological wisdom can be seen as the perfection of the human pursuit as well as the human capacity for wisdom.

3.1 *The Perfection of Man's Pursuit*

Throughout it has been observed in one way or another how God has manifested himself and his omniform wisdom in the book of creation in two distinct ways, philosophically and theologically, according to two distinct orders of knowledge and two distinct ways of knowing. And it is Bonaventure's contention that our pursuit of wisdom culminates and is perfected in the latter of the two, both materially, according to a more perfect grasp of its object, and formally, according to a more perfect mode of proceeding.

3.1.1 Materially: The Perfection of Its Object

Bonaventure does not reject the obtainability of philosophical wisdom nor its pursuit by means of philosophical principles, even though it will always be imperfect and mixed with much error apart from the extrinsic assistance of faith. As such, it is much more likely to be obtained by those whose natural use of reason has been renewed and rectified by the grace of faith. But no matter how perfectly it is obtained, Bonaventure was especially critical of those who succumbed to the temptation to rest their pursuits prematurely in philosophical wisdom itself. As we have seen, Bonaventure regarded this as a grave mistake principally because of the formal limitations of its own object, which only ever touches very incompletely upon divine realities, for by it God is only ever contemplated *through* his creatures (*per effectum*) and not in himself (*in se*). Bonaventure approves and affirms the pursuit of philosophical wisdom through philosophical contemplation but only when it is pursued as a means (*via*) of lifting and preparing the soul for a higher and properly theological apprehension of the same; and those who are truly wise by philosophical wisdom will apprehend its own limitations to apprehend its object fully and perfectly by merely natural means (i.e., through creatures and by the light of reason). Even if philosophical wisdom were perfectly obtained, the soul still has both a need and a capacity to be raised to a higher order of wisdom by supernatural means. For "the truth of the First Principle is infinitely

greater than ... any light of our understanding. ... It must believe, therefore, not only what is in accord with reason, but even what surpasses reason.”⁹¹

In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure asserts that

theology is the only perfect wisdom, for it begins with the supreme cause as the principle of all things that are caused – the very point at which philosophical knowledge ends. But theology goes beyond this, considering that cause as the remedy for sins; and it leads back to it, considering that cause as the reward ... and the goal of human desires. In this knowledge one finds perfect taste, life, and the salvation of souls; that is why all Christians should be aflame with longing to acquire it.⁹²

Just as grace presupposes nature, theology and theological wisdom begin where philosophical wisdom ends. Whereas philosophical wisdom concludes with a knowledge of the uncreated cause insofar as it may be known through created effects, theological wisdom begins with a knowledge of the same. But theology goes beyond this; just as grace also perfects and elevates nature, and faith perfects and elevates reason, so also does theology not only start where philosophy ends but begins with an even more elevated and perfected knowledge of that same uncreated cause, presupposing but also reaching beyond the outer limits of what may be known through created effects.⁹³

In the third book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure entertains the question whether God may simultaneously be known philosophically as well as theologically and whether the latter adds anything to the former.⁹⁴ He responds in the affirmative inasmuch as these signify two different orders of knowledge and, therefore, ascending degrees of wisdom. He writes:

Although it is possible to prove by means of necessary reasons that God exists, and that God is one, yet to see [with the eyes of the intellect] the very being of the Godhead, or the very oneness of God, or the manner in which this oneness does not exclude plurality of Persons, is quite impossible unless [the mind] is cleansed by the righteousness of faith. Hence, the illumination and certitude of [philosophical] knowledge is not so great as to render superfluous the illumination of faith: on the contrary, such an illumination is a necessary addition.⁹⁵

⁹¹ *Brev.*, V.7.4 [V, 260b] (Monti, trans., 198). Cf. Carpenter, *Theology*, 22-23.

⁹² *Brev.*, I.1.3 [V, 210] (Monti, trans., 28).

⁹³ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2, ad 5-6 [V, 57b], “Grace is the perfection of nature not only in as far as it equips nature but also in as far as it both reforms and elevates it. But in reforming and elevating it, grace does not destroy nature itself nor any part thereof, but only the defects surrounding the nature” (Hayes, trans., 134).

⁹⁴ *III Sent.*, d.24, a.2, q.3 [III, 521a].

⁹⁵ *III Sent.*, d.24, a.2, q.3 [III, 523a] translation from Bougerol, *Introduction*, 66.

Bonaventure speaks here of two different ways and degrees of knowing God. Whereas philosophical wisdom apprehends God through his effects, theological wisdom apprehends God himself, inasmuch as he has more fully and immediately revealed himself in his word. Philosophical wisdom, being limited by what may be known of God through his creatures, culminates in a knowledge *that* God exists and is One. But that which philosophical wisdom merely introduces, theology sees more perfectly by means of an added light, that is, the infused grace of faith. Faith perfects and elevates reason, just as theological wisdom elevates philosophical wisdom, so as more fully to apprehend God in himself and how he who is One is a plurality of persons.⁹⁶ “Hence,” he concludes, “no man praises the divine unity perfectly unless at the same time he recognizes the trinity.”⁹⁷ In other words, even as it reaches its own natural limits, philosophical wisdom has only begun to contemplate divine things — that is, according to the order of being but not yet fully and perfectly, or theologically, according to the order of persons. “For that which is inchoate in the natural light [of reason] finds its consummation in the infused light [of faith].”⁹⁸

Jacques Maritain expresses this progression from the relative imperfection of philosophical wisdom to the greater perfection of theological wisdom very eloquently:

[T]he lower [philosophical] wisdom of itself aspires to the higher [theological] wisdom. Not because it is in itself powerless in regard to its proper object, which would be absurd: but because the more it attains its object, the more this object awakens in it the desire of a higher knowledge, and the more in this sense it forms a void which the lower wisdom is by its essence incapable of filling. It does not aspire towards the higher wisdom because it knows incompetently its own proper object and according to the measure of its incompetence: but because it knows it well. Thus the more it drinks, the more it thirsts.⁹⁹

Maritain’s description is reminiscent of where our study began. Just as primordial matter was initially created formless and imperfect in being so that it might cry out to God to perfect it, and just as nature is elevated and perfected by grace, philosophical wisdom disposes the soul and even elicits a desire for a higher and more perfect form of wisdom. As LaNave puts it, “To know God

⁹⁶ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.1, ad 1 [V, 62a]; q.2, a.2 [V, 65a].

⁹⁷ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.2 [V, 66a] (Hayes, trans., 153).

⁹⁸ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 56b].

⁹⁹ Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, trans. Bernard Wall (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1940), 24.

as creator enlivens in the soul a desire to know him better.”¹⁰⁰ Higher disciplines give to the soul that which the lower disciplines encourage it to desire. The more that one obtains philosophical wisdom and knows God as the creator and cause of all beings, the more it disposes the soul to know, and to desire to know, what only the grace of theological wisdom can supply.¹⁰¹ As such, theological wisdom exercised by means of theological contemplation brings about the perfection and consummation of created wisdom. God is the liminal object between philosophy and theology and such that the knowledge obtained by the one is completed or consummated and perfected by means of the other. What is begun through philosophical contemplation is perfected through theological contemplation. The latter, however, requires the infused grace of faith, by the light of which reason is elevated and its epistemic horizon is enlarged, enabling the soul to more fully and perfectly grasp its object, not only as it concerns his unity of essence but also insofar as his unity of essence is most highly manifest in his plurality of persons.

3.1.2 Formally: The Perfection of Its Mode

The perfection of theological wisdom, as the consummation of created wisdom, may be understood formally as well, for Bonaventure likewise contends that theological contemplation proceeds in a more perfect way. Relative to these two grades of wisdom, philosophical and theological, and the two modes of contemplation whereby they are obtained, Bonaventure speaks of two corresponding modes of proceeding that move or reason in opposite and distinct ways. The one proceeds from the effects to their cause, the other proceeds from the cause to its effects. He explains: “He who knows a thing through a demonstration *quia*, that is, through the effects, if he then begins to know it through the cause, that is, through a demonstration *propter quid*, does not by so doing lose the former knowledge, although the latter is of a higher order.”¹⁰²

He speaks here of two different ways of proceeding. He refers to the first as a demonstration *quia*, which, as he explains, is a way of moving from the knowledge of certain effects to a knowledge of their cause. It is so-called because, from the knowledge of certain effects, it is possible to demonstrate *that (quia)* a certain sort of cause exists, i.e., insofar as it is necessary in

¹⁰⁰ LaNave, “Philosophical Wisdom,” 818.

¹⁰¹ Although the one is ordered to and disposes a person for the other, neither philosophy nor theology derive their principles from the other. And yet, because theology is wisdom par excellence, it judges the principles and conclusions of all other sciences.

¹⁰² *III Sent.*, d.24, a.2, q.3, fund. 2 [III, 521] translation from Bougerol, *Introduction*, 61.

order to explain the existence of those effects adequately. This form of demonstration represents a philosophical movement whereby God is contemplated *through* his created effects. As he says, “To understand this matter one must realize that knowing God *in* a creature is different from knowing God *through* a creature. ... Knowing God through a creature ... is being lifted up from knowing the creature to knowing God, as by a ladder connecting the two.”¹⁰³ In this way, philosophical contemplation leads to a knowledge *that (quia)* God exists and that he is the sort of God that is necessary to explain his created effects adequately. Nevertheless, this form of demonstration or manner of proceeding does not go so far as to apprehend or demonstrate who or what God is. Bonaventure notes that there is another form of demonstration, a demonstration *propter quid*, which pertains to a higher order of knowing than the first manner of proceeding. It is of a higher order because it seeks to demonstrate *why*, or that *on account of which (propter quid)*, a thing is what it is, which requires that such a thing be known through its cause, not only in terms of its principle but also in terms of its end. In other words, *that (quia)* God exists, and does so in certain necessary ways, may be known and contemplated *through* his created effects, but it cannot thereby be demonstrated why God exists thusly *on account of (propter quid)* those same effects. Whereas a demonstration *quia* reasons *that* the uncreated cause must exist as it does in order for such created effects to exist as they do, a demonstration *propter quid* goes beyond this in search of the reasons why. Firstly, why or on account of what does God exist as he does, and secondarily, why do created things exist as they do? Ultimately, created effects must be what they are *because* the uncreated cause is what he is. As it touches upon the knowledge of divine things, this second form of demonstration represents a theological movement whereby God is contemplated not *through* but *in* his created effects. “Knowing God *in* a creature,” Bonaventure explains, “is knowing his presence and influence in the creature,” as the ultimate cause *on account of which (propter quid)*, and therefore *for the sake of which*, all things are most fully what they are.¹⁰⁴

The perfection of theological wisdom and of theological contemplation can be seen, therefore, in its more perfect manner of proceeding. Philosophical wisdom begins from a knowledge of things below and, from it, proceeds to derive a knowledge of God above insofar as he may be known through the things below. Theological wisdom moves in a more perfect

¹⁰³ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.3 [I, 74b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 80); cf. *III Sent.*, d.31, a.2, q.1, ad 5 [III, 682a].

¹⁰⁴ Same as above.

direction, for it presupposes the former things but itself begins with a knowledge of God above, not *through* another but by virtue of his own self-disclosure in the book of Scripture, and then proceeds from there to derive an even more penetrating knowledge of things below, as a corollary to this more perfect knowledge of God. For instance, Bonaventure notes that it is possible to know the soul in two ways. On the one hand, “it is possible to know the soul according to *that which it is*, and this way of knowing,” he says, “pertains to reason.” In other words, from a knowledge of *what the soul is*, the existence of God may be known and contemplated philosophically as a cause is known through the existence of its effect. On the other hand, Bonaventure adds that the soul “may also be known according to its nature *as an image*, and this way of knowing,” he says, “pertains to faith alone.”¹⁰⁵ Why? Because to contemplate the soul *as an image* is to know it in relation to that *on account of which* it is what it is and *for the sake of him* whose image it is. In other words, it is to contemplate the trinity of persons reflected *in it*, not only as its principle but also its end — by the knowledge of which the soul is lifted up and enabled to see itself more fully and perfectly, even theologically.

In short, philosophical contemplation begins with a philosophical, even literal, reading of the book of creation insofar as God (divine “to Be”) may be contemplated *through creatures* by the light of reason. Theological contemplation, however, begins with the supernatural revelation of God in the book of Scripture and then returns to the book of creation insofar as it may also be read theologically, according to its spiritual sense, whereby God (Trinity) may also be contemplated *in creatures* by the added light of faith. While the philosophical movement of the first may be considered perfect within its own order, the theological movement of the second goes beyond it and more perfectly brings about the consummation of created wisdom itself, for in contemplating God *in* rather than *through* creatures, the soul more fully and perfectly contemplates God himself according to the divine self-disclosure in his word, not only as the alpha but also as the omega, and thus in all other things insofar as they are more fully and perfectly known in relation to him *on account of whom* (*propter quid*) and for the sake of whom they are what they are.

Because theology is, indeed, discourse about God and about the First Principle, as the highest science and doctrine it should resolve everything in God as its first and supreme principle. That is why, in giving the reasons for everything contained in this little work or tract [of theology], I have attempted to derive each reason from the First Principle, in order

¹⁰⁵ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.4, ad 4 [I, 76b].

to demonstrate that the truth of Sacred Scripture is from God, concerning God, according to God, and because (*propter*) of God.¹⁰⁶

3.2 *The Perfection of Man's Capacity*

The culmination of our pursuit of wisdom is contemplation, wherein the soul apprehends and participates in the uncreated wisdom of the divine order as it is manifest *through* and *in* the created order, that is, both philosophically as well as theologically. And inasmuch as theological wisdom both presupposes and perfects philosophical wisdom, a comprehensive pursuit of wisdom will necessarily include both. Nevertheless, Bonaventure regarded theology as “the only perfect wisdom,” not only because it is most perfect in itself, as the summit of our pursuit, but also, and for the same reason, because our subjective created capacity for wisdom is most perfected and satisfied by means of it. In the space that remains, it will be argued that the end of theological wisdom and the end of man, or the perfection of both, are coordinate.

3.2.1 Theology as Wisdom

Theological wisdom more than any other deserves the name *wisdom* because by it alone is the whole man brought to perfection. Bonaventure speaks of the uniqueness of theological knowledge in his first *Commentary on the Sentences* when asking the routine Aristotelian question whether theology is a speculative science or a practical science.¹⁰⁷ Every science exists in order to perfect the intellect in some way. But the speculative and practical sciences do so in different ways according to different ends. Bonaventure explains that a purely speculative science concerns the sort of knowledge that perfects the so-called speculative intellect alone, i.e., truth known for its own sake. The philosophical sciences are of this sort. Bonaventure gives the example of the mathematician who understands “that the diameter [of a square] is incommensurate with [its] sides.” He knows this, not for the sake of something else or for anything that must be done but for its own sake. However, a purely practical science concerns the sort of knowledge that is not only speculative but perfects the so-called practical intellect, i.e., truth known for the sake of something

¹⁰⁶ *Brev.*, prol., 6.6 [V, 208b] (Monti, trans., 22-23).

¹⁰⁷ *I Sent.*, prol., q.3 [I, 12-13].

else. The moral sciences, and even the arts, are of this nature. But theological knowledge is of a different sort, neither purely speculative nor purely practical. It is the sort of knowledge that aims to perfect the speculative and the practical intellect — the speculative intellect, because the knowledge of God is not for the sake of something else or some higher end, and the practical intellect, because the knowledge of God ought to inform godly living. But theological knowledge goes beyond this, for it is the sort of knowledge that necessarily perfects the intellect in such a way that it extends (*extendi*) to and consummates (*consummatur*) in the affections.¹⁰⁸ “And this is called wisdom,” he says, “because it refers simultaneously to knowledge and affection.”¹⁰⁹

The point here is that the nature of theological knowledge is unique, in that it is its nature to inform and transform the whole man. Bonaventure points out that “the knowledge that Christ died for us,” and a truth like “the diameter [of a square] is incommensurate with [its] sides,” differ from one another in kind; whether or not one delights in this Euclidian axiom, their affection for it adds nothing to the knowledge of it. Philosophical knowledge, in order for it to be what it is, is neither perfected nor consummated in the affections.¹¹⁰ But theological knowledge is of another sort, for “the knowledge that Christ died for us, and other such truths, [necessarily] move us to love, unless we are talking about a hardened sinner.”¹¹¹ Theological knowledge is of such a kind that if it does not move and is not consummated in the affections, so as to order also one’s actions, then it is not truly known.¹¹² Unlike mathematical theorems, love is not merely accidental to such knowledge but completes it and consummates it in the soul that possesses it, such that God is known by means of it in an experiential way.

Again, Bonaventure’s point is not merely that theological knowledge *should* move the affections but that it *will* move or reorder the affections to the extent that such knowledge is truly possessed, for it is its very nature and end to do so. Indeed, theological knowledge pertains to those things which are to be believed (*credibile*), and Bonaventure points out that it is the nature of faith to reside in the intellect in such a way that that which is believed necessarily moves the

¹⁰⁸ *I Sent.*, prol., q.3 [I, 13a-b]; *Hex.*, II.34 [V, 342b]; *III Sent.*, d.35, a.sole, q.1 [I, 774b]; *Itin.*, VII.4 [V, 312b].

¹⁰⁹ *I Sent.*, prol., q.3 [I, 13b], ... *quae simul dicit cognitionem et affectum*.

¹¹⁰ *Hex.*, XVII.7 [V, 410b], Bonaventure playfully mocks Aristotle: “Only in [theological] knowledge is there delight, not in any other. The Philosopher says that there is great delight in knowing that the diameter is asymmetrical to the circumference. Let this delight be his; but now let it nourish him!” (Hammond, trans, 300).

¹¹¹ *I Sent.*, prol., q.3 [I, 13b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 12).

¹¹² *Donis Spiritus*, IV.18 [V, 477].

affections.¹¹³ Thus, although a philosophical apprehension of God as the principle and cause (alpha) of all things may be possible without being inclined by the affections, a theological apprehension of God as one's own greatest good and highest end (omega) is not a matter of the intellect alone. Such knowledge, the knowledge of faith, presupposes an act of the intellect that is inclined by the free will. "For a person does not believe unless he wants (*vellet*) [to believe]. ... And for this reason, it is impossible that the virtue of faith be in the intellect, unless the intellect also be in some measure joined to the affection."¹¹⁴ By faith, the soul is experientially and voluntarily united to God himself, as its omega and end, through both knowledge and love. And therefore, he concludes that

faith [and thus also the knowledge of faith] is not found in the intellect as though it were purely speculative but is necessarily in the intellect according to a certain mode of *extension* whereby it is *inclined* by the affections. Again, since the desire to believe is itself essential to faith, thus it is that this habit is not exclusively found in the intellect, as it *speculates* the highest Truth without yet being inclined by the affection, but rather [as it is] *itself affected* (*ipsum affectum*).¹¹⁵

It is, therefore, the peculiar nature and end of the science of theology and the knowledge of faith to perfect the whole man, intellect and will, in knowing God himself as one's own end and in such a way that such a one cannot not desire to unite oneself to him in love. And thus, the peculiar perfection of theological wisdom may be seen in this, that the ultimate end of theology and the ultimate end of man are one and the same.

Knowledge of God must be completed and perfected by love. An act of the intellect must be perfected in a corresponding act of affection, so as to act upon what we know and actually possess that which we love and, therefore, desire. If we say we know God but do not know him to be good and, therefore, to be desired, not only will the affection not be moved to love him and seek him, but it may also be said that the intellect does not truly apprehend him. Whereas the affection depends upon the intellect for its object, otherwise it cannot see what is good and desirable, the intellect also depends upon the affection for its perfection, otherwise it will see the

¹¹³ *I Sent.*, prol., q.3 [I, 13b], *Nam cognitio haec iuvat fidem* ...; q.1 [V, 6-8]; Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 23. Aquinas says something similar, even if not identical: "Hence it is proper to the believer to think with assent: so that the act of believing is distinguished from all the other acts of the intellect, which are about the true or the false;" *ST* II-II q.2, a.1, in corp; cf. ad 3.

¹¹⁴ *III Sent.*, d.23, a.1, q.2 [III, 475b], *est in ipso intellectu* ...; [III, 476a], *et ideo impossibile est* ...; *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b].

¹¹⁵ *III Sent.*, d.23, a.1, q.2 [III, 476b], *Et quoniam intellectus non habilitatur ... sed etiam ipsum affectum*.

good but lack the means whereby to pursue it and actually possess it. Only when the two sweetly concur in truth and in goodness, in knowledge and in love, is our rational life wholly complete and perfected. “So it is,” Bonaventure explains, “that the act of the gift of [theological] wisdom (*sapientia*) is partly cognitive and partly affective, so that what is commenced in cognition (*cognitione inchoatur*) is consummated in the affection (*affectione consummatur*). Thus, it follows that taste itself, or savoring (*sapor*), is an experiential knowledge of [God as] the good and the sweet.”¹¹⁶ In this way, theological wisdom aims to unite the soul to God, actually and experientially, through knowledge and love, as unto its highest good and chief end. And similarly, with the soul being reordered to God by grace and having its spiritual senses recovered, theological contemplation aims to return the soul’s gaze upon the book of creation with a certain theological sensitivity, apprehension and delight, of his trinitarian presence in all things.

3.2.2 Theology in the Subject

Theological wisdom, as wisdom, is therefore partly speculative and partly practical. Nevertheless, Bonaventure concedes that insofar as the end of theology is concerned, it is principally practical. “Consequently, this habit,” that is, theology in the subject, “is for the sake of contemplation and also for our becoming good, but principally for the sake of our becoming good.”¹¹⁷ His emphasis upon the practical is meant to reinforce what was just observed, that theological knowledge affects and perfects the whole person, for the knowledge of faith is not the sort that perfects the intellect alone but extends also to the will, reordering the soul in relation to God. By the grace of faith, the Son indwells the redeemed intellect, and by the grace of charity, the Spirit indwells the renewed will, thereby uniting the soul *as subject* to God himself *as object*. In other words, theology, by reason of its object, means, and ends, by its very nature requires and presupposes the spiritual transformation of the knowing subject, being disposed by divine grace to see divine things.¹¹⁸

3.2.2.1 The Pursuit of Holiness

¹¹⁶ *III Sent.*, d.35, a.sole, q.1 [III, 774b], *hinc est, ... est experimentalis boni et dulcis cognitio*.

¹¹⁷ *I Sent.*, prol., q.3 [I, 13b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 12); *Hex.*, VII.13 [V, 367b].

¹¹⁸ *Itin.*, prol., 4 [V, 296].

Bonaventure's emphasis upon the practical furthermore suggests that the soul's ongoing pursuit of theological wisdom likewise requires a concomitant pursuit of holiness. Theology for Bonaventure is both contemplative and practical, for its chief end is our beatific communion with God, but such beatitude necessarily entails holiness. "Now the end of the whole of sacred scripture is that we become not just good, but blessed, for beatitude is the highest end. Therefore, the end of this science is that we become good," unto the chief end, that is, that we be disposed by grace to apprehend God as our highest good.¹¹⁹ For "we attain perfection by arriving at the highest good, which is ... accomplished through the gift of wisdom,"¹²⁰ and "sanctity is the [soul's] immediate disposition toward wisdom."¹²¹ In the same place, he writes, "Now when the soul (*anima*) has been made godlike (*deiformis*), Wisdom immediately enters into it."¹²² In other words, the soul's holy conformity to and communion with God is not only the end of theological wisdom, and of the soul itself, but is also the *practical* means whereby greater communion with God must be *contemplatively* sought.

In the nineteenth conference or sermon of Bonaventure's *Hexaameron*, he states in no uncertain terms that "the passing over (*transitus*) from knowledge (*scientia*) to wisdom is not secure," or guaranteed, and "therefore it is necessary to propose a medium (*medium*), namely, sanctity."¹²³ In order to make a study of wisdom, he tells his fellow friars that they must simultaneously make a study of personal holiness, which should include four things: order, attention or devotion (*assiduitatem*), gratification (*complacentiam*), and balance (*commensurationem*).¹²⁴ First, those who pursue wisdom must order their studies; "[the] one who wants to learn (*vult discere*) should seek knowledge (*scientiam*) at its source (*fonte*), namely in sacred Scripture," as the principle means by which God makes himself and his presence known, and only secondarily and subordinately in the writings of the saints, the masters, and the philosophers respectively, each being ordered to and subjected to the authority of sacred Scripture.¹²⁵ Bonaventure's concern is about more than external pedagogy. His concern here is that the soul itself must be properly ordered and disposed in relation to the various cognitive

¹¹⁹ *I Sent.*, prol., q.3, fund. 3 [I, 12b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 11); cf. Carpenter, 17, 27-28.

¹²⁰ *Brev.*, V.5.8 [V, 258a] (Monti, trans., 190).

¹²¹ *Hex.*, II.6 [V, 337a] (Hammond, trans., 96).

¹²² *Hex.*, II.6 [V, 337a] (Hammond, trans., 96).

¹²³ *Hex.*, IXX.3 [V, 420b] (Hammond, trans., 329).

¹²⁴ *Hex.*, XIX.6 [V, 421a]. His entire explication of "order" extends to n.15 [V, 421a-422b]. The other three are explicated in nn.16-19 [V, 422b-423b].

¹²⁵ *Hex.*, IXX.7 [V, 421a] (Hammond, trans., 331).

sources of theology with the appropriate humility and reverence. Second, wisdom must be pursued with devotion, by hiding God's word in their heart, committing what is read to memory, and *lectio*–driven *meditatio*. Third, it must also be pursued with gratification, so that the soul be nourished and strengthened by it, with an increasing appetite and affection for it. Fourth, wisdom must be pursued with balance, in proportion with one's ability, their gifts and graces, knowing oneself and their own creaturely limitations. Most of all, “whoever wants (*vult*) to succeed in this study must have sanctity and be able to strive towards a God-fearing (*timoratum*), undefiled, religious, [and] edifying life.”¹²⁶

Bonaventure's point could be reduced to this: “Sanctity is the [soul's] immediate disposition toward wisdom.”¹²⁷ In order to appreciate what he is saying, an analogy may be drawn from nature. A person with dull and cloudy eyes will only partially apprehend the world of visible things, and blind eyes not at all, whereas clear and focused eyes will be more perceptive and better disposed to apprehend visible things more fully. And so, “first we must speak of ourselves and see the qualities we should possess. For if a ray of light (*radius*) is applied to an infirm eye, then it is more blinded than illumined (*illuminetur*).”¹²⁸ In other words, something similar may be said with respect to the soul's apprehension of spiritual things.

Therefore, it is first necessary to consider oneself, not like the bodily eye, which does not see itself except by a reflection in a mirror (*speculo*), but like the eye of the mind (*mentis*), which first sees itself and afterward another thing. But to do this it is necessary that [the mind] should turn (*convertat*) itself toward potencies and toward acts. For the soul (*anima*) has three potencies: the animal, the intellectual (*intellectualem*), and the divine, according to the three eyes of the flesh, of reason (*rationes*), [and] of contemplation. The first thrives, the second clouds, and the third is blinded.¹²⁹

Our apprehension of a supernatural object requires a supernatural principle within. Apart from the supernatural grace of faith, the eyes of contemplation remain blind toward divine things, at least concerning those things above the eyes of reason. “[Certain] powers are implanted in us by nature. They are deformed through sin and [must be] reformed through grace. [Moreover,] they must be [further] cleansed through [the exercise of] justice, developed by knowledge, and perfected by

¹²⁶ *Hex.*, IXX.20 [V, 423b] (Hammond, trans., 337).

¹²⁷ *Hex.*, II.6 [V, 337a] (Hammond, trans., 96).

¹²⁸ *Hex.*, I.2 [V, 328b] (Hammond, trans., 75).

¹²⁹ *Hex.*, V.24 [V, 357b-358a] (Hammond, trans., 152); *Brev.*, II.12.5 [V, 230b]. Cf. Hugh of Saint Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, I.10.2, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 167.

wisdom.”¹³⁰ The soul needs to be re-hierarchized by grace to those things which are above. And to the point at hand, the more that a soul reformed by grace continues to grow in holiness, having its faith and charity increasingly strengthened through the studious and intentional exercise of them, the more disposed it will be to see and apprehend holy things. In other words, theological wisdom must be pursued from within the economy of God’s sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*), as its influence increasingly and progressively branches out (*ramificatur*) by the holy exercise of the virtues, gifts, and beatitudes, but especially of the so-called gifts.¹³¹ Gregory LaNave helpfully explains:

Its first effect (i.e., in the virtues) is to turn man away from sin and back toward God. Its second effect (i.e., in the gifts of the Holy Spirit) is to free a man in his journey toward God by removing the impediments that block him. Its third and culminating effect (i.e., in the beatitudes) is to join a man to God insofar as he is capable. Holiness has to do especially with the second stage. It is a discipline, an exercise, a training by which one who is rectified disposes himself to the greatest possible union with God. It is the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, prepared for by the infused virtues and leading to the beatitudes. This “intermediary” role of holiness is essential when one comes to its place in theology.¹³²

3.2.2.2 *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

Bonaventure maintained that after the soul is rectified (*rectificantur*) by the virtues, it is then advanced (*expediuntur*) in holiness by the gifts, unto the end that it be perfected (*perficiuntur*) in beatitude. He more fully explains:

From this, ... the reason for which they are named is clear. Rectifying habits are rightly called virtues; this is because “virtue” refers to the reason for its name, that it arouses (*erigit*) and invigorates (*vigorat*) [the soul] to work (*ad agendum*). Advancing (*expedientes*) habits are rightly called gifts; this is because they refer to some further abundance of goodness [in the soul, advancing it] to work (*ad agendum*), by which abundance the divine liberality is more greatly attested. And because of this they are reckoned by the name of gift. Perfecting habits are rightly called beatitudes; this is because

¹³⁰ *Itin.*, I.6 [V, 297b] (Hayes, trans., 51).

¹³¹ *Brev.*, V.4-6 [V, 256a-260a].

¹³² Gregory F. LaNave, *Through Holiness to Wisdom: The Nature of Theology according to St. Bonaventure* (Rome: Istituto Storico Dei Cappuccini, 2005), 194.

such excellent habits bring (*faciunt*) a man nearer to God and bring about conformity to the highest glory and beatitude itself, in which he finds the highest perfection.¹³³

In this threefold schema of sanctifying grace, Bonaventure notes that the gifts, and therefore the pursuit of holiness itself, have a mediating role (*dona ad actus medios*), as the soul advances toward its beatitude.¹³⁴ Although the theological virtues both rectify and advance the soul toward God, moral weaknesses still remain by which it is impeded unless the virtues be helped by the habits of the gifts.¹³⁵ All of the gifts, as also all of the virtues, are needed for the perfection of the whole life, contemplative and active, of the whole person, but three are of particular importance. He writes: “Thus, there is a triple act corresponding to a hierarchical act, namely, to illuminate, to purge, and to perfect, and according to these are three gifts. One disposes [the soul] with respect to purgation, and this is [the gift of] fear; another concerns the act of illuminating, and this is [the gift of] intellect; a third concerns the act of perfecting, and this is [the gift of] wisdom.”¹³⁶

That being said, the more a soul increases in godliness, through the exercise of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, the more receptive and perceptive it will become to the things of God. The greater its conformity to God, the nearer it will be in likeness to God and the closer it will be in communion with him. The more that a person takes their mind off the things which are below (*purgatio*), the more they will be able to set their mind upon (*illuminatio*) and seek (*perfectio*) those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1-2).¹³⁷ God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. To which James adds, “He gives more grace. ... Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (Jas. 1:6, 8). And thus, “with its spiritual senses restored, the soul now sees, hears, smells, tastes, and embraces its beloved,” the uncreated, incarnate, and inspired Word.¹³⁸ In this way, the perfection of theological wisdom comes most clearly into view, in that its very pursuit perfects the whole person in union and conformity to God through knowledge and love.

¹³³ *III Sent.*, d.34, p.1, a.1, q.1 [III, 738a], *Ex his patet non solummodo differentia ... in qua est reperire summam perfectionem.*

¹³⁴ *III Sent.*, d.34, p.1, a.1, q.1 [III, 737a].

¹³⁵ *III Sent.*, d.34, p.1, a.1, q.1, ad 5 [III, 739], *Magis autem dicuntur dona ...*

¹³⁶ *III Sent.*, d.34, p.1, a.2, q.1 [III, 746a], *Si quantum ad vitam contemplativam ... tribus faciunt septem.*

¹³⁷ *Itin.*, IV.4 [V, 307a]; cf. *The Triple Way by St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio*, trans. Peter Damian M. Fehlner (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012).

¹³⁸ *Itin.*, IV.3 [V, 306b] (Hayes, trans., 101).

V

Light:

The Certitude of Knowledge

According to Bonaventure, that which principally moves the soul from science to wisdom and from philosophical wisdom to theological wisdom “is the illumination which begins in the implanted light (*lumine indito*) and finds its consummation in the infused light (*lumine infuso*).”¹ His well-known conviction that some form of divine illumination guides the soul in its pursuit of wisdom was not itself controversial in the thirteenth century. The question is why and, more controversially, in what way. In what follows, we will take for granted a more general account of Bonaventure’s illuminist epistemology in order to consider how Bonaventure understands the particular influence of *divine* illumination within such an account. It will be argued that an extrinsic influence of divine light is implicated throughout this cognitive process and is necessary in order to intrinsically move and direct the created light in its own natural as well as grace-infused operations, and that this is the case whether we are aware of its influence or not. Furthermore, it will be argued that Bonaventure treats this influence differently in relation to philosophical contemplation than he does in relation to theological contemplation, so that the latter elevates and perfects the former, just as grace elevates and perfects nature (chapter 1) and theological wisdom elevates and perfects philosophical wisdom (chapter 4). The hope is that by framing the discussion in this way what follows will not only contribute to a better understanding of Bonaventure’s doctrine of illumination but also confirm our understanding of philosophical and theological contemplation and the way in which Bonaventure relates the two within man’s unified pursuit of wisdom. And although the whole Trinity is the ultimate principle of knowledge, because the Word properly has within his own person the relation of expression, we will conclude the chapter by considering the centrality of Christ in Bonaventure’s contemplative endeavor, namely, as the source of illumination.

¹ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 56b] (Hayes, trans., 132), “implanted” translates *indito*.

1. The Necessity of Divine Illumination

Why is some form of divine illumination necessary? According to Bonaventure, the created light of the agent intellect is insufficient *in itself* and thus necessitates the additional influence of divine illumination in order to ground its own operational integrity.² Bonaventure's principal concern here was not itself controversial in the premodern context of his own day, which was to account for all of the ontological and epistemological preconditions that are necessary in order to make knowledge possible. Differences did arise, however, with respect to how the divine influence should be understood. Even so, Ignatius Brady is surely correct that Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination arose at least in large part from a common concern among the scholastics, to provide "a metaphysical analysis of human certitude."³ Theodore Crowley notes that the problem of human certitude "is one that preoccupied both Plato and Aristotle. It is a problem that no philosopher can avoid for on its solution hangs the fate of philosophy itself and, on the fate of philosophy, the fate of morals and politics, of personal and social rational existence."⁴ Indeed, on the solution to this question hangs the fate of all *knowledge* properly so-called, both natural and supernatural, philosophical and theological, albeit in different respects. At bottom, Bonaventure's concern is the fate of the soul's capacity to know God, both philosophically and theologically. In this section, the common concern over the necessity of human certitude will be introduced, together with an overview of the preconditions that were considered necessary in order to achieve it. This will lead to a more particular examination of Bonaventure's proposed solution in the next section.

To begin with, it is helpful to acknowledge that there are only four possible cognitive states in which a person may find themselves: ignorance, doubt, opinion, or certainty.⁵ Ignorance does not concern us here, for it is the privation of the sort of knowledge with which we are here concerned. Doubt is relevant insofar as it occurs when the mind is *uncertain* about the necessity

² *II Sent.*, d.17, a.1, q.1, ad 6 [II, 412b-413], *Cum autem sit ... quae a luce aeterna et producitur et conservatur.*

³ Ignatius Brady, "St. Bonaventure's Doctrine of Illumination: Reactions Medieval and Modern," in *Bonaventure and Aquinas: Enduring Philosophers*, ed. Robert W. Shahan and Francis J. Kovach (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 57; Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 78.

⁴ Theodore Crowley, "Illumination and Certitude," in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*, vol. 3, *Philosophica* (Rome: Grottaferrata, 1973), 432.

⁵ Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 81, to which we could perhaps add the condition of *being deceived* whereby, out of an ignorance of the truth, we have a false sense of the necessity and certainty of our own opinions.

of the reasons for any particular judgment, and opinion likewise pertains to a judgment that is at best based upon plausible reasons. Certainty or certitude, however, signifies *knowledge* properly so-called, because it alone is the sort of knowledge that is neither doubtful and uncertain nor based upon conjecture but rests upon an indisputable and irreducible foundation. In other words, certitude is the sort of knowledge that is not derived from doubtful or uncertain premises but is itself reducible to foundational principles that are immutably and infallibly certain in their own right; otherwise, intellectual investigation would be subject to an infinite regress, searching in vain for a foundation capable of ensuring the integrity of the intellect's own natural operations.

Moreover, Bonaventure distinguishes between four different kinds of certitude, “namely, the certitude of demonstration, of authority, of interior illumination, and of external persuasion.”⁶ The first pertains to a natural knowledge of things and the foundation or principles upon which philosophical certainty is achievable. The latter three all pertain to a grace-infused knowledge of things supernaturally revealed and the foundation and principles upon which theological certainty is obtained. Elsewhere, Bonaventure reduces these to two categories, the “foundation of all certain knowledge” (*fundamentum omnis cognitionis certitudinalis*) and the “foundation of all the knowledge of faith” (*fundamentum omnis cognitionis fidelis*), which he in turn reduces to two foundational presuppositions, the truth that God exists and the truth that the God who exists is Trinity.⁷ Both will be examined, distinguished and related, when the specifics of Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination are given more particular consideration in the next section. At present, however, it suffices to say that both forms of knowledge may be called knowledge properly so-called to the extent they rest upon and are reducible to a certain and indubitable foundation, understood within the respective cognitive domains of nature and grace. And although these two forms of knowledge derive their certainty from different foundations or principles, the necessary conditions upon which certainty is made possible are generally the same for both.

Admittedly, the medieval discussion of human certitude most often arises in the context of our natural knowledge, but both sorts of knowledge presuppose two necessary conditions. Bonaventure cites Aristotle as an authority when he asserts that “everything that is known,

⁶ *Sancti Ioannis*, prooemium, n.10, q.2, q.2, in resp. [VI, 243a] (cf. Karris, trans., 47). John Francis Quinn, “Certitude of Reason and Faith in St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas,” in *St. Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974 Commemorative Studies*, ed. Armand A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1974), 2:105-106. Note that natural certitude would have been obtained intuitively rather demonstratively in the state of innocence, *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.1 [II, 537-538]; q.3 [II, 542-548].

⁷ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, prol. [V, 45a] (Hayes, trans., 107), see q.1, a.1 and a.2 respectively.

according to the Philosopher, [must be] necessary in itself without mutability, and [must be] certain to the knower himself.”⁸ This rule is translated into an assertion commonly found throughout Bonaventure’s corpus: “There can be no certain knowledge except where there is immutability on the part of the object known and infallibility on the part of the knower.”⁹ We must not only be certain about the object of our knowledge but also about our knowledge of the object. Again, Bonaventure attributes these two axioms to Aristotle, whom he quotes saying, “In fact *we know* when we judge that we know the cause on account of which a thing exists, and we know it because it is the cause of this, and because it is impossible for it to be otherwise.”¹⁰ In other words, *our* certainty of knowledge requires that we apprehend the necessary causal conditions that ground and certify both the truth of the object known and our knowledge of it. Certainty, therefore, necessitates two conditions, namely, an *objective* principle of knowledge that is itself reducible to an immutable foundation and a corresponding *subjective* principle of knowledge that is similarly reducible to an infallible light.

The first necessary precondition of knowledge, whether philosophical or theological, is the immutability of the object known. As we’ve observed, all of our knowledge is foremost derived from the truth and light of things below. But Bonaventure notes that the truth of things below can be considered immutable only upon the supposition (*ex suppositione*) that those things first exist immutably in the creative mind of him from whom, according to whom, and for whom they derive their being and, thus, so also the immutable (*incommutabilis simpliciter*) truth of their being. All created things, he points out, are in and of themselves mutable inasmuch as they “come from non-being and can return to non-being,” for they themselves are caused by another.¹¹ And thus, if the truth of things were to cease to exist in their creative cause, Bonaventure concludes that “nothing else would continue to be true.”¹² Therefore only the eternal reasons, or existence of the truth of things in the eternal Art or Exemplary cause, can provide an immutable objective basis for the truth of those things themselves. And so, he can say in another place, “Even though all things were to perish, the certitude of truth would remain,” for God cannot cease to know himself and every

⁸ *Dominica XXII Post Pentecosten: Sermo I*, n.4 [IX, 442a] (Johnson, trans., Sunday Sermons, 515); cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I.2.

⁹ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23b] (Hayes, trans., 135); cf. Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 383.

¹⁰ *Dominica XXII Post Pentecosten: Sermo I*, n.4 [IX, 442a] (Johnson, trans., Sunday Sermons, 515), emphasis added; *Christus unus*, n.6 [V, 569a] (Hayes, trans., 26); cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I.2. Also *Hex.*, XII.5 [V, 385].

¹¹ *Scientia Christi*, q.4, ad 23-26 [V, 26b] (Hayes, trans., 143).

¹² *I Sent.*, d.8, p.1, a.1, q.1, ad 4 and 7 [I, 151b], *Omnia enim vera ... per participationem*.

way in which he is imitable in limited and finite creatures.¹³ Once more, the epistemological conclusion which Bonaventure draws from this is not especially controversial, namely, that the certainty of our knowledge of the truth of things presupposes an ontology of participation. The light and truth of creatures, therefore, provides an objective basis for epistemic certitude only upon the supposition of their metaphysical participation as created effects of the immutable light and truth of God.

There is, however, another necessary precondition of knowledge, namely, infallibility on the part of the knowing subject. Our subjective knowledge of the objective truth of things is not only contingent upon and caused by things which are themselves mutable, save their immutable foundation in God, but also upon the created light of our intellect, which is similarly fallible. As such, *subjective* certitude requires infallibility on the part of the knowing subject, because a mind that can be deceived and a light that can be darkened and obscured is an unstable basis for epistemic certainty. As a precondition for the possibility of epistemic certainty, Bonaventure contends that our own intellectual acts must be aided in some way by the divine light, that is, by an infallible intellect whose light in some way preserves the operational integrity of our own.¹⁴ From this, Bonaventure contends that, as a precondition for the possibility of human certainty and in order to preserve its own operational integrity, the light of the created intellect must in some way participate in the infallible light of the divine intellect. And again, this basic contention was not itself particularly controversial. What is more particular to Bonaventure, as we shall observe, is the further contention that a theory of participation, though true, is not alone a sufficient answer to the *subjective* problem of certitude but requires, in addition, the co-operation of an extrinsic influence of divine illumination within the intrinsic operations of the soul.¹⁵ In his own words: “The light of the created intellect of itself is not sufficient for the *certain* comprehension of anything without the light of the eternal Word.”¹⁶

In this much both Bonaventure and Aquinas agreed: there is a need to establish a basis for epistemic certainty, and some form of divine illumination is necessary to secure it. John Francis Quinn asserts that these two great scholastic theologians of the thirteenth century, who are often

¹³ *Donis Spiritus*, VIII.15 [V, 497b] (Hayes, trans., 176).

¹⁴ *Christus unus*, n.9 [V, 569b] (Hayes, trans., 28).

¹⁵ In other words, *extrinsic* not to the act of knowing but to the fallible light of the created intellect itself.

¹⁶ *Christus unus*, n.10 [V, 569b-570a] (Hayes, trans., 29), *emphasis* added. Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of in the Thirteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Brill, 2001), 1:217, “cognitively implicated.”

set in opposition to one another in modern scholarship, would “concur in regarding God as the primary source of the infallibility of the mind and immutability of its truth, the two conditions required for the certitude of human knowledge.”¹⁷ Their disagreement was not over the necessity of epistemic certitude itself nor about the general conditions upon which it is obtained. Neither did they disagree that *some form* of divine illumination is part of the answer to the question at hand, notwithstanding their real differences. Without minimizing those differences, it shall be contended in what follows that the two theologians are nearer to one another than is often assumed. Genuine disagreement comes from the particular ways in which they articulate the nature and extent of God’s involvement in the cognitive process, namely, whether a theory of participation is alone a sufficient answer. A summary of the history of interpretation as it concerns Bonaventure’s solution is beyond the scope of this chapter and has already been done by others. Instead, what follows is our own attempt at a positive and constructive account of Bonaventure’s particular doctrine of divine illumination, as it concerns both philosophical and theological certitude.¹⁸

2. The Pursuit of Wisdom, the Perfection of Man, and Divine Illumination

Our thesis is that Bonaventure understands contemplation in two principal ways: philosophically and theologically. We may summarize it as follows: God may be contemplated philosophically *through creatures*, inasmuch as our knowledge of creatures, as created effects, is in its final analysis reducible to their uncreated cause. Even so, the knowledge and wisdom that is achievable through philosophical contemplation should not be overstated. Through creatures, God may be known and contemplated, but only insofar as he is that sort of being whose essence and existence is necessary in order to explain the essence and existence of all other beings, just as a certain sort of cause is necessary in order to explain certain kinds of effects. Recalling the inherent limitations set upon the cognitive domain of philosophical contemplation will help to guide us in what follows, minimizing the temptation to overstate the role played by divine illumination within that process. In the second place, however, Bonaventure maintains that God may be more fully and perfectly

¹⁷ Quinn, “Certitude,” 2:112; cf. Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, I.129.

¹⁸ E.g., T. Alexander Giltner, “The Lightness of Being: Illumination in the Philosophy and Theology of Saint Bonaventure,” (PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 2018), 1-145.

contemplated *in creatures* in a theological way. Just as grace presupposes nature, theological illumination presupposes philosophical or natural illumination; and just as grace also elevates and perfects nature, so also theological illumination elevates and perfects philosophical illumination, inasmuch as the God apprehended in a philosophical way is more fully and supernaturally revealed at the outset of the theological way, namely, as the trinitarian end unto which every creature is intrinsically ordered. Unto this end, a supernatural burden is additionally placed upon divine illumination to supply the specific foundation in God that is necessary for theological certitude this side of glory.

It must be recalled, therefore, that Bonaventure distinguishes two kinds of certitude achievable this side of glory, philosophical and theological, and therefore two corresponding degrees of divine illumination. The soul's path in its pursuit of wisdom is illumined by degrees and is increasingly led by and drawn to the illuminating source of wisdom itself. Accordingly, the following section will seek to accomplish several things. First, it will demonstrate the particular way in which Bonaventure formulates his doctrine of divine illumination relative to philosophical and theological contemplation respectively. Second, it aims to demonstrate the way in which Bonaventure understands the relation between the two, namely, the way in which philosophical or natural illumination is perfected by theological illumination. This should further confirm our particular understanding of how Bonaventure relates philosophy and theology within the soul's unified pursuit of wisdom. Third, occasional comparison between the views of Bonaventure and Aquinas will be offered in order to show that they are perhaps more alike than often thought, notwithstanding their significant differences. And fourth, although it is not the primary burden of this study, the major differences between Bonaventure's and Aquinas's view of illumination, particularly in the domain of our natural knowledge, should become clearer. It may be asserted at the outset that Bonaventure, by comparison, goes further in his analysis of the necessary preconditions for certitude than does Aquinas. He is decidedly more sensitive to the way in which the transcendental preconditions of cognition have their immutable and infallible foundation in God and is, therefore, more willing to implicate the aid of the divine light at the outset of the cognitive process. Furthermore, because he is more inclined to see a divine presence and influence throughout the entire cognitive process, philosophically and theologically understood — although the accusation that this undermines the integrity of philosophy or metaphysics as a discipline distinct from theology is rejected — it will be suggested that Bonaventure perceives a more organic

relationship between philosophy and theology, or philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom, than Aquinas. For Bonaventure, they are two kinds and degrees of wisdom, and of contemplation, relative to man's natural inclination toward and unified pursuit of God.

2.1 *Philosophical Certitude and Divine Illumination*

In Bonaventure's view, an extrinsic influence of the divine light is necessary in order to assist the created light of the intellect in providing a foundation for philosophical certitude and thereby ensuring its operational integrity.¹⁹ According to this view, an inchoate knowledge of the divine *being* is implicitly present and cognitively presupposed in every act of intellection. Bonaventure does not intend by this an *actual* knowledge of the divine *being*, much less a knowledge of God by means of his own essence; the former is achieved only as the end of philosophical wisdom, and the latter is altogether reserved for glory. Rather, Bonaventure contends that, *insofar* as the existence of a divine *being* is the necessary causal explanation for the existence and truth of all other beings, and as such is the immutable and infallible foundation of all certain knowledge, *to that same extent* an inchoate knowledge of such a *being* is necessarily presupposed by us and, thus, co-intuited in everything we truly apprehend, judge, and infer. This holds true even if we never become philosophically wise and personally aware of him whom we cognitively presuppose with every rational thought. Though of course such an awareness is the goal, even if not always the outcome.

2.1.1 The Image of God and Natural Illumination

Bonaventure locates his discussion of divine illumination within the unique context of the relation we have to God as those created in his image. In several places, he says something to this effect:

In those creaturely operations which proceed from the creature itself in as far as it is a vestige — and this is universally the case with natural actions — God cooperates as [creative] principle and cause. In those actions which proceed from the creature as an image

¹⁹ *Christus unus*, n.9 [V, 569b] (Hayes, trans., 28).

— and such are the intellectual actions by which the soul sees immutable truth itself — God cooperates as object and as motivating reason. In those actions which proceed from a creature in as far as it is a similitude [i.e., likeness] — and such are meritorious actions — God cooperates as a gift infused through grace.²⁰

Here again, Bonaventure distinguishes the different ways in which God may be said to be present and active within creation, cooperating with his creatures so as to govern and uphold each thing and its actions according to the integrity of their nature. Inasmuch as all creatures are vestiges, Bonaventure observes that God is present to and cooperates with all things as their creative principle and first cause. And he does so in such a way that the nature and contingency of second causes is not taken away but rather established. But inasmuch as certain vestiges are also image-bearers, Bonaventure asserts that God is also present to and cooperates with us as rational creatures and in our rational activities in a more intimate though no less natural way. As it regards the intellectual nature of man as the created image of God, God is additionally present to the soul as a regulating and motivating principle (*regulans et ratio motiva*), co-operating with the soul within the domain of its intellectual activity.

Bonaventure is not speaking here of a supernatural presence or activity, which is reserved for his third distinction; neither is he speaking of a quasi-supernatural influence, but rather of a natural presence that is peculiar to and befitting of the nature of man as an image-bearer. Herein he quotes Augustine, who writes, “The soul is an image of God in that it is capable of God and of participation (in the divine life),” to which Bonaventure adds, “through knowledge and love.”²¹ Bonaventure therefore maintains that divine illumination is necessary in order to move and motivate his image-bearers, even if unconsciously and implicitly, unto the fulfillment of the end for which they are image-bearers. But because the sort of presence and influence which is immediately in view offers only a partial, that is natural or philosophical, fulfillment of man’s supernatural end, it bespeaks yet another even more intimate kind of presence and influence. Thus, according to his third distinction, because man as an image of God can also be elevated and perfected in God’s likeness through grace, Bonaventure notes that God’s presence and activity

²⁰ *Christus unus*, n.17 [V, 571b] (Hayes, trans., 36); cf. n.16 [V, 571b] (Hayes, trans., 35), as a motivating object (*obiectum motivum*); *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23b] (Hayes, trans., 134, cf. 135-137), as a motivating principle (*regulans et ratio motiva*); and [V, 24a] (Hayes, trans., 136), through the manner of a moving cause (*per modum rationis moventis*) or “motion-inducing means of knowing” (cf. Marrone, *The Light*, 1:144); *Brev.*, II.12.1-3 [V, 230] (Monti, trans., 96-97).

²¹ *Christus unus*, n.16 [V, 571b] (Hayes, trans., 36).

may be construed in yet another way. He is most intimately present and active with the soul by means of a supernatural and theological light, unto the end that the soul might be united and conformed to God, as much as is possible this side of glory, through a more perfect knowledge and love. We shall return to this final distinction, man as God's likeness, in order to provide the supernatural context in which Bonaventure's concept of theological certitude must be considered. First, however, we must consider Bonaventure's second distinction, namely, God's presence and activity in us according to our nature as an image-bearer. In summary, in order to establish a basis for natural or philosophical certitude and to uphold the natural integrity of the soul and its intellectual activity as an image-bearer, Bonaventure maintains that God must be in some manner present and co-operating with it as its regulating and motivating object.

In order to understand what this does and does not mean, Bonaventure's doctrine must be examined in relation to his particular concept of the image of God vis-à-vis our rational capacity for knowledge and love, most especially the knowledge and love of God. Bonaventure is characteristically Augustinian in that he locates the created image in the soul and, in particular, in the relation between the intrinsic acts of the memory, intellect, and will. He cautiously maintains that the intellect and the will are diverse powers of the soul that differ from one another within the genus of power, for experience shows that *to know* is different than *to love*; nevertheless, they do not differ in the genus of substance, for they are *proper* accidents of the same soul.²² In this, Bonaventure recognizes, together with Augustine, that the created image falls short of a perfect image, as do all analogies. Whereas God Himself *is* three persons, and the three persons *are* God, each of the three powers of the soul cannot in the same way be unequivocally said to be the whole soul itself. "It may be observed that when Augustine refers to memory, understanding, and will as one essence, he is not speaking according to an absolute mode of identity, but according to a certain intrinsic adherence (*adhaerentiam*)."²³

What about the memory? Although he frames his discussion of the image of God in terms of memory, intellect (or understanding), and will, and although he seems quite comfortable to speak of them as though they were three distinct powers, in his discussion on the nature of the soul itself he is quite clear that there are only two powers properly so-called, the cognitive and the

²² A "proper accident" is a property that arises from the very essence of a thing but does not alone define it, whereas an ordinary accident is a property that is itself essentially different from and extrinsic to the essence of the thing in which it inheres; cf. *II Sent.*, d.24, p.1, a.2, q.1 [II, 560a-b], *potentiae animae* ...; Aquinas, *ST I*, q.79, a.1.

²³ *II Sent.*, d.24, p.1, a.2, q.1, ad 1 [II, 561a]; cf. Augustine, *de Trinitate*, XII.17.11.

affective.²⁴ Unlike the powers of intellect and will, Bonaventure notes that the “memory and understanding negotiate about the same thing, so that what the one acquires the other preserves, or what the one presents (*offert*) the other judges (*diuidicat*).” In other words, while the light of the intellect abstracts and acquires the intelligible species of things through experience, the memory stores what is acquired; and while the memory re-presents to the intellect the species of the things it has stored, the understanding judges the truth of things which the memory re-presents. “And because both are necessary for the perfection of the *cognitive* act,” he concludes that “the memory and understanding are more preferably called diverse [cognitive] strengths (*vires*) rather than diverse powers (*potentiae*).”²⁵ But even so, the intellectual memory has a distinctly primitive role in the process of knowledge acquisition and is, as we shall come to see, the principal seat of divine illumination.

“The function of the memory,” he explains, “is to retain and to represent not only things that are present, corporeal, and temporal, but also things that are successive, simple, and eternal.”²⁶ The last of these is of particular significance, wherein, in addition to what is acquired and retained, certain eternal and immutable truths are said to be present in and connatural with the memory itself. Recall that philosophical or natural certitude necessitates that all demonstrative knowledge be retraceable and reducible to certain principles that themselves require no further demonstration or proof. In other words, in order for there to be infallibility on the part of the knowing subject, the cognitive process must rest on and flow from an infallible foundation, namely, first principles that are themselves self-evident and certain, in that they cannot be thought to be otherwise without rejecting the nature of reason itself, and on the basis of which other things can be known with a “certitude of demonstration.”²⁷ Bonaventure notes that all of the sciences proceed on the basis of principles, the certitude of which must be taken for granted insofar as they rest upon the principles and conclusions of a higher science. But lest there be an infinite regress, the subalternation of

²⁴ *II Sent.*, d.24, p.1, a.2, q.1 [II, 560b]; *Brev.*, II.9.6-7 [V, 227b]; *III Sent.*, d.23, a.1, q.2, ad 5 [III, 475a]; cf. *I Sent.*, d.3, p.2, a.2, q.1 [I, 80-82]. For Aquinas’s trinitarian anthropology, see D. Juvenal Merriel, “Trinitarian Anthropology,” in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 123-142.

²⁵ *II Sent.*, d.24, p.1, a.2, q.1 [II, 560b], *Memoria enim et intelligentia negotiantur circa idem* When understanding (*intelligentia*) is distinguished from memory, it denotes the intellect (*intellectus*) in the act of knowing rather than in the act of retaining. Cf. Aquinas, *ST I*, q.79, a.7.

²⁶ *Itin.*, III.2 [V, 303b] (Hayes, trans., 81-83).

²⁷ *Sancti Ioannis*, prooemium, n.10, q.2, in resp. [VI, 243a] (Karris, trans., 47); *Dominica XXII Post Pentecosten: Sermo I*, n.4 [IX, 442a] (Johnson, trans., *Sunday Sermons*, 515), emphasis added; *Christus unus*, n.6 [V, 569a] (Hayes, trans., 26); *Hex.*, II.10 [V, 338a]; cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I.2.

principles must eventually rest upon first principles of a certain infallible self-evident nature. He writes: “All these sciences are governed by certain and infallible laws that are like lights and beams coming down from that eternal law into our mind.”²⁸ In other words, certain first principles or laws and axioms, both *of understanding* and *of morality*, are as if implanted within the memory, relative to the so-called speculative and practical intellect, and are implicitly or inchoately presupposed as the ground of all our speculative and practical reasoning. “For as long as one uses reason, it is impossible to forget them. So that when one hears them one approves and gives one’s assent to them. But it is not as though one were hearing them for the first time. Rather, it is as though one recognizes them as innate and familiar.”²⁹

Bonaventure is uncontroversial in how he identifies these principles, both speculative as well as practical. Again, all of our speculative reasoning and our knowledge of the truth rests upon certain self-evident principles (*dignitates*).³⁰ Bonaventure gives the example of the so-called principle of bivalence, which itself is reducible to the law of noncontradiction, “Concerning any particular matter, one must say either true or false.” It is similar in the case of our practical reasoning and our knowledge of the goodness of things, which likewise rests upon certain self-evident principles. All of our practical deliberations are based upon certain laws or principles of morality such as the distinction between good and evil, the duty to hate evil and love the good, to desire most what is most good, to love one’s neighbor as oneself, and so forth.³¹ Perhaps foundational for both, our speculative as well as practical reasoning, is the principle that something cannot *be* and *not be* at the same time and in the same respect, which itself presupposes an intuitive grasp of the distinction between *being* and *non-being*. Only upon the supposition of this distinction can any other meaningful distinction be made, even the distinction between truth and falsity or good and evil. “For as long as one uses reason, it is impossible to forget them.” It is impossible, that is, not to presuppose them axiomatically in all of our thinking. In other words, the created intellect naturally operates from an intuitive transcendental notion of *being* that is distinct from *non-being* and is common to all creatures, upon the supposition of which each thing has the capacity *to be known*, *to be true*, and *to be good*, as was observed in chapter 2 of this study. Upon

²⁸ *Itin.*, III.7 [V, 305b] (Hayes, trans., 93).

²⁹ *Itin.*, III.1, 2 [V, 303b] (Hayes, trans., 81, 83).

³⁰ *Itin.*, III.2 [V, 303b] (Hayes, trans., 83), Philotheus Boehner, in his commentary on the text, notes that this exact phraseology likely originated with Albert the Great, wherein he refers to certain axioms or propositions as “dignities” insofar as they are possessed by the mind as a natural habit and are “involved in all knowledge and truth.”

³¹ *Itin.*, III.2 [V, 303b] (Hayes, trans., 83); *II Sent.*, d.39, a.1, q.2 [II, 901-904].

this supposition, the soul is laid open to the transcendental conditions of things and is capable of apprehending, judging, and even inferring the truth and goodness of them; these principles are not themselves judged but only presupposed, as if recalled and remembered, supplying a basis for certitude to every act of intellection. For we do not grasp anything with the understanding unless it first be present to us *in principle* in our memory; in this way, it may be said that understanding proceeds from memory as if its offspring.³²

Bonaventure offers a point of clarification here. Although these principles are in some manner innately present, they are not *in the understanding* as if actually known, but *in the memory* as if habitually and implicitly presupposed within the natural operations of the intellect. Bonaventure consistently rejects the innatism of Plato and maintains along Aristotelian lines that we are born blank slates (*tabula rasa*), inasmuch as all *actual* knowledge, even of the first principles themselves, has its beginning with sense perception.³³ In other words, he is not suggesting that we *actually understand* or have an *actual knowledge* of these principles. Rather, he is suggesting that they are habitually implanted in the created intellect insofar as they are cognitively implicated in all rational thought, *as if* they were already known. On one occasion he refers to them as preparatory knowledge (*cognitionis praeambulae*), in that they are necessary for and implicated in our actual knowledge of everything else.³⁴ We have been given an innate light *by which* we come to know certain things as self-evident once the knowledge of the relevant terms is acquired through sense-experience. Bonaventure explains this best with respect to our practical reasoning when he inquires into whether the conscience is an innate or an acquired habit. His answer is both but in different respects. “The conscience,” he explains, “is called an innate habit in relation to the light of the soul by which the first principles of morality are introduced, and it is called an acquired habit in relation to the discernible species pertaining to its specific operation.”³⁵ Experience, he adds, teaches us this very thing, for no one has an actual understanding of what a father or mother is but must first acquire a knowledge of the species of these things through experience. Nevertheless, in the very apprehension of the species of father and mother, it is

³² *Itin.*, III.5 [V, 305a] (Hayes, trans., 91); cf. *Hex.*, V.30 [V, 359a] (Hammond, trans., 156).

³³ This is what Spruit calls “strictly normative innatism,” in *Species Intelligibilis*, 130-131, 157.

³⁴ *II Sent.*, d.39, a.1, q.1, ad 3 [II, 900b].

³⁵ *II Sent.*, d.39, a.1, q.2, in concl. [II, 902b]. Whereas Aquinas referred to the innate knowledge of conscience as *synderesis* and its acquired knowledge according to which it judges particular actions the *conscience*, Bonaventure maintained that the *conscience* is innate in one respect and acquired in another. *Synderesis*, for Bonaventure, refers to the corresponding natural desire or inclination of the will for the good in general, satisfied only by the highest good in particular.

immediately accepted as true and good that parents are to be honored, for the practical principle that a superior is to be honored by an inferior is implicitly and axiomatically presupposed as though it were remembered rather than learned, co-intuited as something self-evident rather than needing further demonstration and proof. In the same way, a most basic and common notion of *being*, as distinct from *non-being*, is presupposed, as if implicitly recalled and remembered, within every act of intellection.³⁶

The question arises whether such principles meet, to Bonaventure's satisfaction, the necessary preconditions for epistemic certitude. It may be affirmed from the foregoing discussion that a theory of participation constitutes an important part of Bonaventure's solution to the ontological problem of immutability, inasmuch as the *objective* light and truth of creatures, which is the objective formal principle of our knowledge, is itself a participated likeness of the immutable light and truth of God.³⁷ Objectively speaking, "it must be said that, just as the cooperation of the Creator is not excluded from the works of the creature, so the uncreated principle of knowledge is not excluded by the created principle of knowledge but is included in it," and is thus mediately contuited, even if implicitly, through and by means of our apprehension of its created effects.³⁸ Similarly, it may also be affirmed that a theory of participation constitutes an important part of Bonaventure's solution to the epistemological and subjective problem of infallibility. He contends that, by means of the foregoing principles implanted in both the speculative and practical intellect, the "memory has present within itself a changeless light by which it remembers changeless truths," which it too possesses by means of participation.³⁹ The light and truth of the created intellect is itself a participated likeness of the infallible light and truth of the uncreated intellect. In other words, the first principles both of understanding and of morality are themselves subjectively implanted in the created intellect by virtue of its creaturely participation in the infallible light of the divine intellect, and as such Bonaventure would agree that they are therefore able to supply a *relatively* infallible basis upon which to secure epistemic certitude.

³⁶ *Itin.*, III.3 [V, 304a] (Hayes, trans., 85).

³⁷ Crowley, "Illumination and Certitude," 433.

³⁸ *Scientia Christi*, q.4, ad 3 [V, 24b] (Hayes, trans., 137); cf. *Hex.*, V.1 [V, 354a], "Insofar as this light (*lux*) is the cause of being (*causa essendi*), it is the great light (*lux magna*); insofar as it is the reason for understanding (*ratio intelligendi*), it is the clear light (*lux clara*); [and] insofar as it is an order of living (*ordo vivendi*), it is the good light (*lux bona*)" (Hammond, trans., 141).

³⁹ *Itin.*, III.2 [V, 303b-304a] (Hayes, trans., 83).

However, as Bonaventure sees it, a full analysis must go further, inasmuch as the so-called first principles are themselves “rooted in the eternal light and lead to it.”⁴⁰ Upon a more complete analysis, Bonaventure contends that the intrinsic presence of these principles within the created intellect is not itself sufficient to ensure the infallibility of the knowing subject, that is, not apart from the further presupposition of an *absolutely* infallible and eternal foundation that stands outside and above the fallibility of the created intellect — the First Principle of the first principles. This is what Bonaventure means when he says that “for certain knowledge, the eternal reason is necessarily involved as the regulative and motivating principle, but certainly not as the sole principal nor in its full clarity. But along with the created reason, it is contuited by us in part as is fitting in this life.”⁴¹ In addition to the so-called first principles implanted within the created intellect, the influence of an extrinsic divine light is needed in order to move and direct the created light in its own natural and intrinsic operations according to a tacit awareness of an immutable standard of uncreated truth and goodness that cannot be thought not to-be but is necessarily and implicitly presupposed and contuited (“along with the created reason”) as the infallible measure relative to which all things are apprehended, judged, inferred, deliberated, and desired. Andreas Speer explains, “This eternal standard is the *ars aeterna*, the eternal creative art, in which things are considered,” or upon the implicit presupposition of which things are considered, “according to their conceptual and specific mode of existence, that is, insofar as each constitutes a trace, an image or a similitude (*secundum vestigium, imaginem et similitudinem*).”⁴² Thus, Bonaventure concludes that,

if full knowledge requires recourse to a truth, that is fully immutable and stable, and to a light that is completely infallible, it is necessary for this sort of knowledge to have recourse to the heavenly art as to light and truth: a light, I say, which gives infallibility to the knower, and a truth which gives a immutability to the object of knowledge. Therefore, since things have an existence in the mind, in themselves, and in the eternal art, the truth which they possess in the mind or in themselves, is not sufficient to give the soul certain knowledge, since both of these are mutable, unless — in someway — the soul attains to these things as they exist in the eternal art.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Hex.*, II.10 [V, 338a] (Hammond, trans., 98).

⁴¹ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23b] (Hayes, trans., 134), *Et ideo est tertius modus intelligendi ...*

⁴² Andreas Speer, “Illumination and Certitude: The Foundation of Knowledge in Bonaventure,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85.1 (2011): 132.

⁴³ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23b-24a] (Hayes, trans., 135), *Si ergo ad plenam cognitionem ... sunt in arte aeterna*.

Speer again helpfully explains: “In this context, the [divine] ideas are not the *obiectum quod* of human knowledge, not what we can perceive, but only the *obiectum quo* — that through whose influence we attain certainty. The ideas, which serve as the ‘standard of knowledge’ (*ratio cognoscendi*) insofar as they can be grasped at all by the human intellect, can only be grasped by it reflexively.”⁴⁴ In other words, the eternal reasons, or the divine *being* with which they are identical and to which they are logically reducible, is not itself immediately known but is instead cognitively implicated in all that is known; the divine *being* relative to which all other beings are knowable is intuited in all that we know without itself being directly seen (*non propter hoc ipsa videtur*). The eternal reasons, or more accurately the divine *being* in relation to which they are supposed, are co-intuited not as the object known but as the object upon the supposition of which, and relative to the moving and regulating influence of which, other things may be known with certitude.⁴⁵ Speer continues: “Therefore, the [divine] ideas in Bonaventure are principles of knowing, not the objects known; they cannot be grasped by us without an inductive element of experience and sense-perception, and then only reflexively. So, the way in which he makes the question of certain knowledge the point of departure in their epistemological analyses, brings Aristotle [knowledge through sense-experience] and Augustine [knowledge through the divine ideas] together.”⁴⁶ John Francis Quinn draws the same conclusion:

Combining Aristotelean and Augustinian doctrines, then, Bonaventure synthesizes them in a twofold solution to the problem of natural certitude. On the one side, he maintains that the created light and principles of truth, though they are both necessary for human knowledge, are insufficient to cause certitude without the extrinsic help of the uncreated light and eternal reasons of God. On the other side, he affirms that the intellect is moved both by the eternal truth of its objects and by the created truth of its own principles, so that it sees the eternal reasons of God as they are reflected in its created principles.⁴⁷

Bonaventure’s meaning is perhaps made most clear in the third chapter of the *Itinerarium*, wherein God is contemplated through the soul itself, inasmuch as he may be known through the vestigial characteristics of the soul as an image of God. By means of *reductio*, Bonaventure

⁴⁴ Speer, “Illumination and Certitude,” 132. Cf. Crowley, “Illumination and Certitude,” 440.

⁴⁵ *Hex.*, II.10 [V, 338a] (Hammond, trans., 98), *Hae enim radicanter in luce aeterna et ducunt in eam, sed non propter hoc ipsa videtur*. Cf. Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 85.

⁴⁶ Speer, “Illumination and Certitude,” 138-139.

⁴⁷ Quinn, “Certitude,” 2:109.

retraces the illuminations intrinsic to the rational operations of the soul back to their epistemological source in God as the irreducible foundation upon which its search for certitude is finally resolved. He demonstrates this with respect to both our speculative and practical reasoning, which presuppose the influence of what Bonaventure refers to elsewhere as God's clear light (*lux clara*), in order to lend absolute certitude to the first principles of understanding (*ratio intelligendi*), and God's good light (*lux bona*), in order to lend certitude to the first principles of morality (*ordo vivendi*).⁴⁸ In the first place, then, he demonstrates by way of reduction that an intuitive knowledge of *perfect being* is necessarily and cognitively presupposed in all of our speculative reasoning, including our concepts, judgments, and inferences. Whereas Marrone suggests that "God enter[s] into simple cognition merely as creator and providential conserver of existence" and thereby limits the influence of divine illumination to the epistemic moment of judgment, Bonaventure seems quite clear that divine illumination is already cognitively implicated at the level of our formation of concepts.⁴⁹ At the moment of simple apprehension, a similitude of a thing is formed in the mind like a mental word or concept, by means of which the form of that thing is apprehended. Or as Bonaventure puts it: "The intellect understands the meaning of terms when it comprehends what each thing is by means of a definition. But a definition is formulated by using broader terms; and these, in turn, are defined by still broader terms. Thus it goes until we arrive at the highest and most general terms (*generalissima*). If these are not known, it is impossible to understand the less general terms by means of a definition."⁵⁰ An understanding of specific concepts presupposes and cognitively implicates an understanding of the more general concepts in which they participate, upon which they depend, and to which they may therefore be epistemologically reduced. As we have already observed, Bonaventure notes that the most universal concept is that of *being* (*ens*), along with the transcendental conditions of *being*, such as the one, true, and good.

Up to this point, there is nothing unique in what Bonaventure is proposing. But he insists that a full epistemological reduction must go further, for *being* (*ens*) can be conceived disjunctively in various ways. Among other distinctions, *being* may be conceived as perfect or imperfect, in act or in potency, and especially as *being* through itself (*ens per se*) or *being* through another (*ens per*

⁴⁸ *Hex.*, V.1 [V, 354a] (Hammond, trans., 141).

⁴⁹ Marrone, *The Light*, 1:150.

⁵⁰ *Itin.*, III.3 [V, 304a] (Hayes, trans., 85).

aliud). And because “privations and defects cannot be known except through affirmations,” the concept of *imperfect being* presupposes a conceptual grasp of *perfect being*, and similarly with the other disjunctives, from which Bonaventure concludes that “our intellect does not come to a full analysis of any particular created being unless it is aided by an understanding of the most pure, most actual, most complete, and absolute being, which is being simply and eternally, in which the principles of all creatures are found in their purity. For how can the intellect know that this being is defective or incomplete if it has no knowledge of that being which has no defect?”⁵¹ In other words, even the most general concept of *being* (*ens*) itself, which is presupposed in every other concept or definition, implicitly presupposes a particular concept of *being* that is perfect, pure act, absolute *ens per se*, and therefore a *being* that causally explains the existence of all other created *beings* and apart from which no other *being* is conceivable. Therefore, that *being* which is conceptually presupposed or first known (*primum cognitum*) to the mind, insofar as it is contuited in our actual apprehension of particular beings, must be an implicit and inchoate concept of *perfect being*. It should be noted, as Christopher M. Cullen is correct to point out, that “Bonaventure is not claiming that God somehow causes knowledge at the level of ideogenesis.”⁵² Bonaventure’s point is not that the eternal reasons or divine *being* are the formal principles by which the ideal concepts of things are immediately formed in our mind; his point is simply that the existence of such a *being* that explains both itself and the relative existence of every other *being* must be conceptually presupposed, contuited, and cognitively implicated in the formation of every concept whereby we apprehend each thing according to the light and truth *of its own being*.

Bonaventure follows a similar *reductio* with respect to the other transcendental conditions of *being*, the true and the good. He proceeds to argue that the propositions or judgments by which we obtain *a knowledge of the truth of things* presuppose an implicit cognitive awareness of that *being* which exists *according to itself* and is, therefore, the eternal foundation of all that is *true* and relative to which the truth of all things is judged. Likewise, with respect to our demonstrative inferences by which we obtain other truths, especially contingent yet immutable truths existing nowhere but in “the exemplarity of the eternal Art, according to which things have an aptitude for each other and a relation to each other which is grounded in their representation in the eternal Art.” And so, he concludes: “From this it is clear that our intellect is united with the eternal truth itself.

⁵¹ *Itin.*, III.3 [V, 304a] (Hayes, trans., 85). Cf. Averroes, *III de Anima*, text. 25.

⁵² Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 83.

And if that truth is not teaching our intellect, it would be impossible to grasp anything with certitude.”⁵³

He then extends the same reasoning to our practical intellect, as it concerns *a knowledge of the good*, and thus to the will insofar as it takes counsel from the intellect; observable here is the same order that constitutes the trinitarian appropriations observed in previous chapters. Bonaventure proceeds to demonstrate that all of our practical deliberations, judgments, and desires presuppose an intuitive knowledge of a *perfect being* that exists *for its own sake* and is thereby the eternal foundation of all that is good. Accordingly, Bonaventure notes that the will naturally desires most that which it loves the most, which is most generally our own happiness. “But happiness is attained only by reaching the best and ultimate goal,” from which he concludes, “therefore, human desire is directed at nothing but the supreme Good, or that which leads to it or reflects that Good in a certain way.”⁵⁴ He has in mind here what he refers to elsewhere as *synderesis*, which is a term that was employed variously among the scholastics. According to Bonaventure, whereas *conscience* denotes the first principles of morality implanted within the memory of the practical intellect, *synderesis* denotes the corresponding desire or inclination implanted in the will for one’s own happiness, or for the good-in-general, which he contends is satisfied only by the highest good in particular — which similarly presupposes some intuitive grasp of that *perfect being* which is goodness itself. He writes elsewhere, “Just as the intellect has a light from the very creation of the soul, which is its natural judgment, directing the intellect in knowing; even so, the affections have a certain natural weight, directing it in desiring. ... And just as ‘conscience’ does not name that judgment, except insofar as it directs to moral works [i.e., practical judgments], so ‘synderesis’ does not name that weight of the will, or the will with that weight, except insofar as it inclines it to the more eminent good.”⁵⁵ Efreem Bettoni even speaks of *synderesis* as a kind of natural moral illumination of the will:

Divine illumination directly affects the will by impressing in it a natural — and hence indestructible — inclination toward the good. It is a power or weight which directs the will not to the good in so far as it is suitable, pleasing and useful, but to the good for its own sake. This inclination ... has the same function and the same efficacy with regard to the will as the innate idea has with regard to the intellect. It constitutes the will as rational, ...

⁵³ *Itin.*, III.3 [V, 304b] (Hayes, trans., 87).

⁵⁴ *Itin.*, III.4 [V, 305a] (Hayes, trans., 89).

⁵⁵ *II Sent.*, d.39, a.2, q.1 [II, 910a], *quod quemadmodum ab ipsa ... inclinare ad bonum honestum*.

[by the light of which we are made] aware of the fact that the goods which we gradually acquire are not the supreme good, the true good, which we must seek more diligently.⁵⁶

All of this is to say that there is presupposed in all that we desire and love a certain intuitive cognitive awareness of the subordinate relation of all good things to an ultimate source of our happiness, such that all creatures become means loved and used for the sake of something else, toward which we are intuitively drawn.⁵⁷ “The [innate draw] of the supreme Good is so great that nothing else can be loved by a creature except through a desire for the supreme Good,” as if already familiar and known and, thus, sought after and recognized when it is found.⁵⁸ Similarly, then, when we deliberate about any practical matter, and we inquire into whether certain means are better than others, a certain intuitive grasp of an eternal and immutable standard of goodness is implicitly presupposed. “No one can know, therefore, whether one thing is better than another without knowing that this thing has a greater resemblance to the best. ... Therefore, it is necessary that the notion of the highest good [i.e., the existence of a *being* that is the cause of all that is good] be impressed on anyone who is engaged in deliberation.”⁵⁹ Moreover, in order to judge with certitude the truth of the matters over which we deliberate, we must judge according to some immutable and infallible standard. Since such a law cannot be judged by us but is the means by which other things are judged, ourselves included, Bonaventure contends that its source must be superior to our mind. “But nothing is superior to the human mind except the One who has created it.”⁶⁰ As such, the existence of such a *being* that *exists for its own sake* and is thus the cause for the sake of which all other *beings* exist must necessarily be presupposed and cognitively implicated in all of our practical deliberations and judgments.

Because Bonaventure’s *reductio* in the third chapter of the *Itinerarium* is strictly speaking epistemological, the ontological or metaphysical status of that *being* which is *primum cognitum* awaits its further analysis in chapter 5, wherein a seemingly curious but significant implication emerges (and a point at which Bonaventure and Aquinas most especially diverge), namely, the conclusion that the *divine being* (*esse divinum*) is that which is first in our thoughts (*primum cognitum*) as the irreducible *a priori* condition that is contuited and necessarily cognitively

⁵⁶ Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 107.

⁵⁷ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.1, fund. 3 and 7 [V, 45b, 46a] (Hayes, trans., 108-109).

⁵⁸ *Itin.*, III.4 [V, 305a] (Hayes, trans., 89-91).

⁵⁹ *Itin.*, III.4 [V, 305a] (Hayes, trans., 89).

⁶⁰ *Itin.*, III.4 [V, 305a] (Hayes, trans., 89).

presupposed in all actual acts of intellection. Bonaventure plainly expresses this conclusion on a number of occasions throughout multiple works but not least of which, as was just suggested, in the fifth chapter of the *Itinerarium*: “It remains, therefore, that this being is the divine Being. How remarkable, then, is the blindness of the intellect which does not take note of that which it sees first, and without which it can know nothing.”⁶¹ Andreas Speer comments that, “in the end, nothing can be known without referring to the divine being as the *primum cognitum*, i.e., without grasping the necessary causal relation expressed by truth and goodness.”⁶² Bonaventure intends to evoke Avicenna’s well-known claim that *created being*, together with its transcendental conditions, is the first concept impressed on the soul. For Bonaventure, however, a full analysis reveals that even a general or universal notion of *created being*, which is reducible to *being per aliud* relative to its ultimate cause, presupposes an *a priori* concept of *perfect being* or absolute *being en se*, which can only be the *divine being*.⁶³ The point should not be missed that, by locating his doctrine of illumination in relation to our nature as an image of God (i.e., capable of knowing and loving God), Bonaventure’s principal concern is not merely to establish the necessary preconditions for epistemic certitude but, even more so, to unveil the necessary preconditions whereby the soul is inclined and moved unto the full realization of this end. Bonaventure applies the principle that “the end imposes a necessity on those things that pertain to the end.”⁶⁴ Thus, unto the end that we arrive at an actual knowledge and love of God, Bonaventure maintains that God must be that which is first known (*primum cognitum*), not as the formal object of our knowledge but as the motivating objective, secretly moving us according to a natural inclination (*fertur naturali inclinatione*) for an actual knowledge of that *being* whom we have cognitively presupposed from the beginning in all of our actual apprehension and knowledge of every other *being*.⁶⁵

2.1.2 The *Primum Cognitum* and the Doctrine of Analogy

According to Bonaventure, the *primum cognitum* is God, specifically the divine *being* relative to which we apprehend the intelligibility of all other *beings*. “For the divine ‘to Be’ (*esse*)

⁶¹ *Itin.*, V.3-4 [V, 308b-309a] (Hayes, trans., 115); *Hex.*, V.30 [V, 359a]; X.6-7 [V, 378a]; X.18 [V, 379b]; *Scientia Christi*, q.4, fund. 25 [V, 19b-20a].

⁶² Speer, “Illumination and Certitude,” 137.

⁶³ Cf. Marrone, *The Light*, 1:215-216.

⁶⁴ *Sancti Ioannis*, prooemium, n.10, q.2, ad 1-2 [VI, 243] (Karris, trans., 47).

⁶⁵ *Hex.*, II.10 [V, 338a] (Hammond, trans., 98); IV.3 [V, 349b] (Hammond, trans., 131).

is the first that comes into the mind (*mente*).”⁶⁶ And because this assertion is highly susceptible to misinterpretation, it is necessary to begin by addressing one of these potential misunderstandings. Bonaventure clears himself of the charge of ontologism or the view that the human intellect immediately apprehends the divine ideas themselves in the way a subject apprehends an object that informs the mind.⁶⁷ In response to this charge, or something like it, he consistently rejected any possibility of a direct or immediate knowledge of God in this life, whether of the divine essence and attributes or of the eternal reasons as such. In the second book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, he asks the question “whether Adam, in the state of innocence, was able to know God just as He is known in the state of glory.” His answer is plain: “Adam, in his state of innocence, did not know God immediately or in his substance (*substantia*), as He is known in glory, but through a mirror (*speculum*).” And an important (though not the only) difference between our prelapsarian and postlapsarian knowledge is whether God is known through a clear mirror (*per speculum clarum*) apart from any cloud of sin or through an obscure mirror (*per speculum obscuratum*) and in an enigma (*et in aenigmate*); what is significant here is that neither of these modes of knowledge are direct or immediate.⁶⁸ And so, Bonaventure clears any possible confusion by explicitly rejecting any notion that we can ever attain any immediate knowledge of the eternal reasons this side of glory; for this, he says, would destroy the

distinction between knowledge in the Word and knowledge of a thing in its own right. Furthermore, if He were the bare and open ground of knowledge, there would be no difference between our knowledge in this life and our knowledge in heaven. But this is clearly false, since in heaven our knowledge will be face-to-face while on earth we see ‘darkly and through a mirror’ (1 Cor. 13:12), because in this life our knowledge depends on the sense phantasms. Finally, if He were the total ground, we would have no need of species and reception to know things. But this we see to be manifestly false.⁶⁹

The formal object of our intellect and the immediate principle of knowledge is the truth of things below, that is, knowledge of things in their own right and according to their created reasons. All of our knowledge is immediately derived from those things which are below, according to which

⁶⁶ *Hex.*, X.6 [V, 378a] (Hammond, trans., 207); cf. V.30 [V, 359a] (Hammond, trans., 156). The first known defense of this doctrine and a definite influence upon Bonaventure was by Gilbert of Tournai, a Franciscan predecessor of Bonaventure. Cf. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and Transcendental Thought*, 159.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Scientia Christi*, q.4, ad 23-26 [V, 26b-27a] (Hayes, trans., 142-144).

⁶⁸ *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 543b, 545a].

⁶⁹ *Christus unus*, n.18 [V, 572a] (Hayes, trans., 36-37).

we derive a relative or qualified certitude (*ita quod ab inferiori recipit certitudinem secundum quid*). But Bonaventure's contention is that, *through* our apprehension of the truth of things in their own right, the mind implicitly co-intuits a certain necessary and dependent relation to the uncreated truth of things above, according to which we derive an absolute certainty (*a superiori vero recipit certitudinem simpliciter*).⁷⁰ Put differently, Quinn writes, "The light and principles of created truth are so included in the light and principles of the uncreated truth that the human mind knows creatures not only in its created light of truth, but also in the uncreated light of God, and so it knows created things in His eternal truth."⁷¹

Furthermore, whatsoever knowledge of God is possible in this life, whether innately intuited or rationally acquired, habitual or actual, is only ever by way of analogy, that is, mediated *through the mirror* of created effects. Bonaventure very clearly rejects any suggestion that he is speaking univocally of divine and created *being*; "between God and creatures things are not common univocally, but analogically ... as in the relation of an exemplar to what imitates it."⁷² There is an unfortunate tendency among certain scholars to accuse Bonaventure of holding to a univocal understanding of being, or at least of holding to other conclusions that are reducible to it. Among Bonaventure scholars, Jay M. Hammond offers an unsubstantiated though strong assertion that "univocity can be seen as the nascent metaphysical premise that underlies Bonaventure's speculative considerations."⁷³ Hammond seems to assume but does not demonstrate a necessary correlation between a so-called universal analogy of being (a *likeness* of all things to their divine exemplar) and a univocal understanding of being; and yet this is the very conclusion which Bonaventure rejects in his affirmation of an exemplar-based analogy between Creator and creature.⁷⁴ Others, such as Lydia Schumacher, encouraged by the all too frequent assertions of others, pushes the charge of univocism to its limits in her own idiosyncratic desire to find a pre-Scotistic source of univocity in order simultaneously to champion Aquinas as the true Augustinian and, at least implicitly, to defend the much debated narrative of the Radical Orthodoxy movement concerning the genealogy of modernity. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that

⁷⁰ *Scientia Christi*, q.4, ad 23-26 [V, 26b] (Hayes, trans., 143).

⁷¹ Quinn, "Certitude of Reason and Faith," 2:109.

⁷² *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 72b], trans. R. E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone (NY: Franciscan Institute, 2013), 76; cf. *Scientia Christi*, q.2, ad 2-5 [V, 9]; q.3, ad 6 [V, 15a]; *I Sent.*, d.1, a.3, q.1, ad 1 [I, 38b-39a]; d.35, a.sole, q.1 [I, 601].

⁷³ Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 206.

⁷⁴ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 72b].

Schumacher adopts nearly every uncharitable interpretation of Bonaventure's thought that portrays him as antithetical to Aristotle, Thomas, and even Augustine, and as the source of Scotus's doctrine of univocity as interpreted by the Radical orthodoxy movement. Bonaventure is unrecognizable in assertions such as:

Assuming that creatures do in fact exist in the same mode of being as God, Bonaventure denies that creatures differ from the Creator because there is a composition of essence and existence in them, where that is not the case in God [wherein she cites Aquinas but not Bonaventure]. For Bonaventure, creatures differ from God only in the sense that they are comprised of matter and form, while God is pure form. Put differently, creatures are finite and material instances of what He is infinitely and immaterially.⁷⁵

Based upon these assertions, without demonstrating the truth of them from the texts of Bonaventure himself but rather leaning upon secondary sources, she then concludes: "Although Bonaventure employs the typical terminology of analogy in describing the way creatures reflect their Creator, a number of scholars have noted that he appears to recast the meaning of analogy along the lines of a univocal concept of being, according to which two parties subsist in the same mode of being, such that thoughts and words can be applied to them in exactly the same sense."⁷⁶

Contra both Hammond and Schumacher, in the first book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure raises the question whether God is in any specific genus or category of being. His answer is unequivocally negative. To the objection that it seems as if both God and creatures are reducible to the category of substance or to the genus of *being per se*, as some scholars have concluded with respect to the third and fifth chapters of the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure responds that *being per se* cannot be predicated of both univocally but only by means of analogy; for although a common *ratio* is employed, neither a common nature nor a relationship of equality is signified but only a relationship of likeness according to a relation of *prius et posterius*.⁷⁷ He

⁷⁵ Schumacher, *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 124.

⁷⁶ Schumacher, *Divine Illumination*, 124.

⁷⁷ Among those who have more faithfully and systematically expounded and historically situated Bonaventure relative to the scholastic development of a doctrine of analogy, see especially the work of Philip L. Reynolds, "Bonaventure's Theory of Resemblance," *Traditio* 58 (2003): 219-255; cf. "Analogy of Names in Bonaventure," *Mediaeval Studies* 65 (2003): 117-162.

Reynolds locates Bonaventure within the developments of the doctrine in the thirteenth century. He demonstrates several things in particular: (1) analogy exists wherein there is not a common nature between the two analogates; (2) assumes a common concept (*ratio*) based upon a relation of likeness (*similis habitudo; consimilis*

explains: “For God is *being per se*, because he needs nothing; the creature is a *being per se*, insofar as it is not in another (*in alio*) as [an accident subsisting] in a subject, though it [ultimately] still

habitus); (3) the common concept must be grounded in reality or else it is merely metaphorical predication at best; (4) the analogy of proportionality, as it concerns theological predication (regarding things of a different kind, wherein there is only a relationship of *likeness* and not of *equality* (cf. *I Sent.*, d.25, a.2, q.2 [I, 444-445]), cannot however be reduced to an identical relationship in reality but entails a comparison according to prior and posterior, wherein the common concept is proper to one and improperly of the other; (5) thus, *the community of analogy* signified by the common concept, although grounded in reality and yet not an identical relationship in reality, is *itself* only conceptual rather than real (cf. *III Sent.*, d.34, p.2, dub.1 [III, 768a], *Ubi autem est analogia ...*; *I Sent.*, d.25, a.2, q.1 ad opp. 4 [I, 442b], *Si tantum nominis et rationis, ...*; *I Sent.*, d.48, a.1, q.1 [I, 852b], *contingit conformari aliquid ...*; *I Sent.*, d.25, a.2, q.1, ad 4 [I, 444b], *communitas realis duplex est, ...*; *I Sent.*, d.1, dub.5 [I, 43], *est etiam tertia medio modo ...*; *I Sent.*, d.25, a.2, q.1 [I:443a]).

Commenting upon Bonaventure’s discussion in *I Sent.*, d.25, a.2, q.1 ad opp. 4 [I, 442b], Reynolds writes: “Analogy, according to Bonaventure, presupposes a common concept rather than a common nature, but the concept must be based on a relational resemblance. Discussing the ambiguity of ‘person’ in the full commentary, Bonaventure distinguishes, in an argument *ad oppositum*, three kinds of community: community of name alone (equivocity); community of name and concept (*ratio*) alone; and community of name, concept, and reality (univocity). But he notes that the second kind of community would be vacuous unless the concept corresponded to something in reality. Replying to the argument, therefore, Bonaventure modifies the division, eliminating the second class and subdividing real (rather than vacuous) community into (i) community according to unity of nature (*secundum naturae unitatem*), and (ii) community according to like relationship (*secundum similem habitudinem*). The first is univocity, and the second is analogy” (“Analogy of Names,” 137-138). Regarding Bonaventure’s discussion of the analogical use of the name “person” predicated of God and creatures, Reynolds helpfully summarizes the analogical relation of priority and posteriority: “The name ‘person’ first befits the divine Persons as regards the reality that it denotes, but it first befits human persons as regards our imposition of the name, since we ‘transfer’ the name from created persons to God. ... Bonaventure argues that this name is said first of God as regards what is named (*secundum rem nominis*) but first of creatures as regards the name itself (*secundum nomen*)” (143-144; cf. *I Sent.*, d.25, a.2, q.2 [I, 444-445]). Again, Reynolds writes: “Although the resemblance is real, and although the *ratio communis* captures it, there is no univocally common relationship in reality. The analogical name is imposed ‘first’ to signify a certain relationship, considered abstractly and formally, but the concept of the relationship befits one of the analogates exactly and the other by a kind of *translatio*. When an analogy is between God and a creature, therefore, the name will befit the creature first as regards one’s understanding of the *ratio communis* (since one forms the concept by considering created things), although it will befit God first as regards the signified reality (perhaps because the divine relation is the exemplar of the created one)” (158).

Like Schumacher, Reynolds offers his own brief criticism of Bonaventure’s view relative to the overall historical development of the doctrine; unlike Schumacher, however, his criticism is neither peculiar to Bonaventure nor does he reduce Bonaventure’s view to a latent form of univocism. His criticism has more to do with potential pitfalls of an analogical method of proportionality, which was in no way peculiar to Bonaventure. According to the outline above, an analogy of this sort, where A is to B as C is to D, entails a conceptual grasp of a common *ratio*, but not a common nature, predicated according to a relation of priority and posteriority. Reynolds notes that one of the pitfalls of assuming a common *ratio*, which this sort of analogy does, is that the radical dissimilarity between divine and created being is not adequately expressed by the analogy itself. What makes the common concept (*ratio*) more proper to one of the analogates than the other? Moreover, he surmises that the notion of a common *ratio* may have paved the way for Scotus’s doctrine of univocity (cf. “Analogy of Names,” 160-161). However, contrary to Schumacher’s preferred narrative, even if Scotus did find a historical precedent in the *ratio communis* of his Franciscan predecessors, which is possible, Bonaventure would not have agreed that a *ratio communis* leads to or necessitates a univocal concept of being, nor that a univocal concept is a necessary precondition for all rational thought. As outlined above, a common *ratio* does not necessarily entail a common nature or necessitate even a minimally conceived univocal notion of being. If it did, Bonaventure would have given cognitive priority to such a univocal notion rather than to the *divine being* in particular; nor would the idea of contuitio any longer be necessary. What is more, Reynolds’ brief remarks, like Schumacher’s lengthier commentary, fail to point out the way in which Scotus’s doctrine was shaped primarily in response, not to Bonaventure, but to the later more idiosyncratic developments of Henry of Ghent.

needs another for its own preservation.”⁷⁸ Thus, although our concept of *ens per se* is derived from things below, it is properly predicated of God and only improperly of creatures. Our knowledge of the divine “to Be” this side of glory, whether inchoate as that which is *primum cognitum* or acquired as the end of philosophical investigation, is never an immediate apprehension of God according to the divine essence or according to a univocal understanding of being, but is always mediated analogically and limited to what may be known philosophically or from the order of nature, namely, as the causal precondition whose existence must necessarily be affirmed in order to explain the nature and existence of all other *beings*. Provided the significance of the name “God” be understood in this way, he cannot be thought not “to Be” so long as the *being* of anything else is affirmed.⁷⁹

Bonaventure’s thesis is simply this: not only does a full analysis of our ordinary knowledge of things lead to an actual knowledge of the divine “to Be” as the uncreated cause of all *beings*, but it also reveals in hindsight that an implicit knowledge of the same divine “to Be,” by means of the influence of a divine light, had already been contuited *through* our apprehension of created beings and was already implicitly functioning as the ultimate principle of understanding from the very first moment of intellection. “Hence it [has been] said that: ‘The first of all created things is “to Be” (*esse*);’ but I [also] say: ‘The first of intellectual things (*rerum intellectualium*) is the First “to Be” (*esse*).’”⁸⁰ Bonaventure contends that it is in this way that we are moved and disposed to an actual knowledge of God as the culmination of philosophical contemplation. As such, knowledge of the divine *being* is the first and last to enter the mind, but in different respects, implicitly and actually, though only and ever *through* a knowledge of creatures. Indeed, for Bonaventure, we are actually able to know him in the end because he is already implicitly contuited from the beginning, moving and directing us to our ultimate end.

We are reminded here that Bonaventure’s claim that the divine *being* is *primum cognitum* is informed by his understanding of the way God cooperates with the rational soul as an image, not as the formal or proper object of the intellect but as the motivating principle by which it is

⁷⁸ *I Sent.*, d.8, p.2, a.sole, q.4, ad 2 [I, 173b-174a], *Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod Deus habet superius univocum* ...; cf. *Hex.*, X.17 [V, 379] (Hammond, trans., 211-212); Daniel Matías Contreras Ríos, “*Primum Cognitum*: Bonaventure and Aquinas on the Foundations of Knowledge,” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2020), 48.

⁷⁹ *Itin.*, V.6 [V, 309b] (Hayes, trans., 117). *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.1 [V, 49b-50a] (Hayes, trans., 116-117), Bonaventure does not hereby deny that someone may doubt the existence of God but only that they do so out of either ignorance or malice.

⁸⁰ *Hex.*, X.18 [V, 379b] (Hammond, trans., 212).

secretly and naturally guided to its end — which end is in part philosophical and in part theological. Bonaventure's doctrine of the *primum cognitum* functions in his system of thought in a way that is similar to Karl Rahner's notion of transcendental experience — “an experience,” Rahner says,

that is present in everyone (reflected or unreflected, suppressed or accepted, rightly or wrongly interpreted or in whatever other form), and ... is on the one hand more fundamental and more unavoidable than that of a rational manipulation which enables us to deduce by way of causality from the egg to the chicken, from lightning to thunder, that is from the world to a causer On the other hand this experience is not so cogent and irresistible (as is that of sensible physical data or of a vital perception) that the transition from experience to explicit, reflective and interpretative knowledge and articulation must inevitably follow.⁸¹

Rahner speaks here, as he indicates elsewhere, of “an unthematic and anonymous, as it were, knowledge of God” that has “the character of a transcendental experience” operating in the background of all our interactions with the world.⁸² Insofar as the divine *being* is first known, he is not thereby immediately and intuitively grasped by the understanding, but rather, as Rik Van Nieuwenhove explains, the rational soul thereby possesses “a (latent) relatedness to God that both grounds and accompanies all our dealings with the world. There is nothing extraordinary about it — it is ‘the plainest, most obvious and most necessary condition of possibility for all spiritual understanding and comprehension.’”⁸³ In the same way, Bonaventure's claim is that God is intimately present with the soul whether it knows it or not, enabling it from within to apprehend the truth and goodness of things, while secretly motivating us with a transcendental sense of our own capacity for the Truth and Goodness that grounds all such apprehensions, that is, for that *being* who, as it turns out, is more immanent to our soul than we are to ourselves.⁸⁴

Long before Rahner or Bonaventure, Augustine expressed a similar idea in his famous statement: “For Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.”⁸⁵

⁸¹ Karl Rahner, “The Experience of God,” *Universitas* 18.1 (1976): 130.

⁸² Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (1978; repr., NY: Crossroads, 2016), 21.

⁸³ Rik Van Nieuwenhove, “Karl Rahner, Theologian of the Experience of God?” *Louvain Studies* 29 (2004): 100; cf. Rahner, *Foundations*, 21-22.

⁸⁴ Rahner, *Foundations*, 35. Cf. *Itin.*, III.2 [V, 304a-b]; George Boas's translation: “And thus, through the operations of the memory, it appears that the soul itself is the image of God and His likeness, so present to itself and having Him present that it receives Him in actuality and is susceptible of receiving Him in potency, and that it can also participate in Him;” see <https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/journey-of-the-mind-into-god/>. Cf. Augustine, *de Trinitate*, XIV.8.11.

⁸⁵ Augustine, *Confessions*, I.1, trans. F. J. Sheed (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 3.

Augustine was speaking from his own personal experience, as he recounted in his *Confessions* the testimony of his conversion. As far as Augustine understood at the time, the pursuit of his soul leading up to his conversion was more consciously a search for ultimate meaning than a search for God as such. He recounts how he sought meaning in a life of sensual pleasure, in sin, in the accolades of society and the pride of life, in everything from Manicheanism to Platonism. In all of these things, some more than others, there was great dissatisfaction and emptiness, because there was a deeper longing within his soul that could not be satisfied by these things; there was a latent restlessness and yearning that originated deep from within, moving him and motivating him in his innermost being. It was only after Augustine found his rest in God, through the knowledge of Christ, that he realized that it was the Lord whom he had been seeking all along. More importantly, Augustine came to realize that it was the Lord who had been moving him to seek him. In finding God, he found what he had been implicitly and unconsciously seeking all along. But where had this desire come from? Augustine then proceeds to reflect upon the mysterious way in which he had been *moved*, unbeknown to himself, to search for ultimate meaning in relation to God. He asks: How can we search for something if we don't already, in some sense, know what we are searching for? If we don't already know what it is, how can we be said to be searching for it? And how can we recognize what we are searching for once we have found it, if we don't already in some way know what it is? He concludes that his search had not only been *for* God but, more fundamentally, *from* some intimate presence and influence of God within even the natural operations of his soul. God was not only the end of his search (like something far off) but was all along active in initiating, moving, drawing, and guiding his search (like something already near). Denys Turner explains,

Hence, too, the awareness of God as the true object of desire is always present, if only, often, in the form of the dissatisfaction which flows from the pursuit of anything else. ... Augustine remembers God in the form of a restless dissatisfaction with all else that he seeks, a dissatisfaction which sharpens and intensifies as he draws ever nearer the goal of his seeking. That dissatisfaction is a "remembering" because it is at once a longing for what he lacks and a recognition of the failure to reach it, which implies at least negative knowledge of the true nature of the goal.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Turner, *The Darkness*, 65-66.

But at bottom, what Augustine discovered was that the Lord had been near to him all along, even if only by means of a negative knowledge, and not as an object known but as an influence and principle motivating and moving him, cognitively implicated from the outset of his search for ultimate meaning, though he himself was unaware. Of course, it is the person of wisdom who not only becomes aware but also finds contemplative repose as one who has, to one degree or another, found that which he had been searching for; but what he discovers is that the one whom he had been searching had all along been moving him “from within as a hidden object.”⁸⁷ “Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new; late have I loved Thee! For behold, Thou wert within me, and I outside; and I sought Thee outside, and in my unloveliness fell upon those lovely things that Thou hast made. Thou wert with me and I was not with Thee. I was kept from Thee by those things, yet ... Thou didst call and cry to me and break open my deafness.”⁸⁸

The fulfillment of the soul’s capacity for God, as Augustine has just expressed it, awaits our *actual* apprehension of God, *both* philosophically *and* theologically. Through philosophical contemplation, the intellect reduces its knowledge of all things to God as the ultimate first principle (the divine “to Be”), whereas theological contemplation proceeds upon the more intimate and fuller knowledge of God as our ultimate trinitarian end. As such, it is the contemplative who, in the pursuit of wisdom, *actually* comes to possess God as the Alpha and the Omega and to understand that the God who has always been first in relation to all things, our thoughts included, is also the end for which we have been searching all along. Bonaventure is clear that “our intellect does not come to a full analysis (*plene resolvens*) of any particular created being unless it is aided by an understanding of the most pure, most actual, most complete, and absolute being, which is being simply and eternally, in which the principles of all creatures are found in their purity.”⁸⁹ And again, Bonaventure’s thesis is that the divine “to Be” has cognitive ultimacy because it has cognitive primacy. In other words, we are actually able to know him in the end because he is already implicitly contuit from the beginning, moving and directing us to our ultimate end.

2.1.3 Philosophical Wisdom and the End of Philosophical Contemplation

⁸⁷ Gilson, *Bonaventure*, 363.

⁸⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, X.27 (Sheed, trans., 38).

⁸⁹ *Itin.*, III.3 [V, 304a] (Hayes, trans., 85).

Bonaventure maintains that the divine *being* is *primum cognitum*, and as such the eternal reasons are cognitively implicated in and contuited through our every apprehension, judgment, inference, desire and deliberation concerning the relative truth and goodness of creatures. We implicitly co-intuit the uncreated cause as the ultimate source and measure of those things. Put differently, we implicitly co-intuit the eternal reasons in our very apprehension of their created effects. But it is not until we *actually* and *philosophically* reduce our knowledge of them to their ultimate and metaphysical foundation in God as their uncreated cause and first principle in the order of *being* that we actually pass from science to wisdom — *philosophical wisdom*, that is — and attain the *natural end* to which we have been moved and for which we exist as image-bearers of God.⁹⁰

In response to an objection that, if the eternal reasons (i.e., the divine “to Be”) are always cognitively implicated and contuited in our apprehension of creatures, then anyone who knew anything at all would be *ipso facto* wise, Bonaventure helpfully explains,

that this does not follow because attaining to these reasons [i.e. implicitly as *primum cognitum*] does not make anyone wise unless that person is aware of attaining to them and finds repose in them. This is, indeed, the mark of the wise person. For the intellects of people of science attain these reasons as principles that move the mind, while the intellects of the wise attain these reasons as principles by which they are led back to a point of repose. And since there are few who attain to the reasons in this way, there are few wise people (*sapientes*) even though there are many people who possess knowledge (*scientes*). Indeed, there are few people who know that they attain to these reasons [i.e., implicitly and unconsciously]. And even more so, there are few who wish to believe this; for the intellect that has not yet been elevated to the contemplation of eternal things finds it difficult to understand that God is so present and near to it, despite the fact that Paul says in the seventeenth chapter of Acts: “God is not far from each of us.”⁹¹

The above passage from his *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* is significant for a proper understanding of how Bonaventure himself understands the *influence* of the divine light within the cognitive process, as well as for our understanding of philosophical contemplation within the soul’s overall pursuit of wisdom. It was noted in a previous chapter that *science*, as a mode of knowing distinct from *wisdom*, pertains to a partial reduction of things relative to their immediate and proximate causes, whereas *wisdom* more fully reduces our knowledge of the same

⁹⁰ *Hex.*, V.13 [V, 356] (Hammond, trans., 147).

⁹¹ *Scientia Christi*, q.4, ad 19 [V, 26a] (Hayes, trans., 141).

things in relation to their highest and ultimate causes. Elsewhere Bonaventure identifies Aristotle as the exemplary man of science and Plato as the exemplary man of wisdom:

[Plato] would seem to provide a firm basis for the way of *wisdom* which proceeds according to the eternal reasons; but he destroyed the way of *science* which proceeds according to created reasons. On the other hand, Aristotle provided a firm foundation for the way of science while neglecting the way of wisdom. It seems, therefore, that among the philosophers, the word of wisdom is to be granted to Plato and the word of science to Aristotle. For the former looked above all at the higher realities, while the latter looked principally to the lower things.⁹²

In other words, as Contreras Ríos helpfully remarks, “When applied to the issue here at stake, this means that, even if the cognitive primacy of God is operative in every single act of cognition, the mind does not become aware of it unless it actively reduces its knowledge into its ultimate principles. The knowledge that God is *primum cognitum* is, in other words, something we explicitly acknowledge only as the outcome of what Bonaventure calls a full or complete resolution [*plena resolutio*].”⁹³ Science imperfectly reduces our knowledge of all things to their created causes, and as such the person of science attains only a relative certitude according to their created reasons; philosophical wisdom, however, more perfectly reduces our knowledge of those same things to their uncreated cause, and as such the person of wisdom attains an absolute certitude according to their eternal reasons.⁹⁴ But as Bonaventure has pointed out, whether the person of science realizes it or not, every judgement he makes concerning those things presupposes and cognitively implicates the presence and influence of an ultimate measure and immutable rule by which those judgments are made, namely, the eternal reasons, upon the supposition of which the relative certainty of all things absolutely depends. In this way the divine light lends certitude to the created intellect, influencing it not as a proper object of knowledge but as something presupposed, even if unawares, grounding the certitude of the natural operations of the intellect. However, the person of wisdom consciously seeks out that which is cognitively implicated in all of our knowledge, namely, the ultimate cause (the divine “to Be”) or eternal reasons that are in

⁹² *Christus unus*, n.18 [V, 572a] (Hayes, trans., 37).

⁹³ Contreras Ríos, “*Primum Cognitum*,” 33.

⁹⁴ *Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica*, q.4, a.3, resp [V, 194], *Sicut enim non est ordo prioritatis et posterioritatis nisi per reductionem ad primum, sic non est ordo completus secundum sub et supra nisi per reductionem ad summum. Unde ibi solum est ordo perfectissimus ubi est reductio perfecta ad summum, quod est summum simpliciter, cuiusmodi est Deus.*

some way already intuitively presupposed in our scientific apprehension of same things according to their created causes.

For Bonaventure, philosophical contemplation is both the means and the end (albeit penultimate) of the soul's pursuit of wisdom, wherein we enjoy a degree of rest by virtue of a more absolute certainty of the truth of things in relation to God, that is, relative to their eternal reasons in the divine Art (i.e., the divine *being*), albeit in manner befitting the limitations of our wayfaring state. Bonaventure comments that few attain the eternal reasons in the way of philosophical contemplation; most remain unaware that "God is not far from each of us."⁹⁵ As we have seen, the sentiment behind this last remark is beautifully Augustinian through and through, and it helps us understand what he means when he says that the eternal reasons implicitly operate as a motivating reason (*ratio motiva*),⁹⁶ or as a motivating object (*obiectum motivum*)⁹⁷ and a "motion-inducing means of knowing (*per modum rationis moventis*)"⁹⁸ within the created intellect. Elsewhere, Bonaventure asks what moves us toward this end, and even beyond it to our supernatural and theological end. He replies, "The answer should be that that which moves us principally is the illumination which begins in the implanted light (*lumine indito*) and finds its consummation in the infused light (*lumine infuso*)."⁹⁹ Consistent with our own analysis thus far, Bonaventure's answer here is twofold: we are principally moved by one and the same divine light that leads and guides the soul in its unified pursuit of wisdom, but does so according to two degrees and modes of illumination.¹⁰⁰ Natural illumination culminates in philosophical wisdom, wherein God is known in the way an uncreated cause can be known through its created effects. But even though a natural knowledge of God is the proper end of natural illumination and coterminous with philosophical contemplation, it is not the final end of man's pursuit of wisdom. Philosophical wisdom culminates in a knowledge *that* God exists and is limited to a philosophical knowledge of what sort of *being* God must 'Be' in order to explain all other *beings*. Because we truly know a thing when we know it in relation to its cause, God (or the divine "to Be") enters into philosophical contemplation as the end of all philosophical inquiry — again, not as the proper object itself but as that which is

⁹⁵ *Scientia Christi*, q.4, ad 19 [V, 26a] (Hayes, trans., 141); *Hex.*, XII.11 [V, 386a].

⁹⁶ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23b] (Hayes, trans., 134).

⁹⁷ *Christus unus*, n.16 [V, 571b] (Hayes, trans., 35).

⁹⁸ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 24a]; cf. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, 1:144.

⁹⁹ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 56b] (Hayes, trans., 132).

¹⁰⁰ The same singular source of light guiding our unified pursuit of wisdom is described in *Hex.*, XX.9-10 [V, 427a] (Hammond, trans., 346).

presupposed by its proper object (*being qua being*) — and again, not under a general or univocal notion of *being* but as the ultimate and irreducible cause and explanation of every *being*.¹⁰¹ But while philosophical wisdom, and thus philosophical contemplation, come to rest in a natural knowledge of God *as that which provides the soul with its immutable and infallible ground of all natural certitude*, the soul's overall pursuit of wisdom is not thereby complete, for the same light that moves the soul to a knowledge *that* God (or such a *being* as God) exists does by that same knowledge stir up a desire and yearning within us to know *who* that God is and to possess him as one's own end.¹⁰² Unto this higher end, Bonaventure beautifully highlights his organic understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology, when he notes that what begins within the order of nature and reaches its natural end in philosophical wisdom by means of a natural illumination nevertheless awaits and is even *moved* by the same to cry out for its further perfection in theological wisdom by means of a supernatural illumination within the order of grace. Philosophical contemplation is perfected in theological contemplation, even as we are perfected by means of both.

2.1.4 Bonaventure and Aquinas: A Brief Comparative Analysis

A brief comparative analysis of Bonaventure and Aquinas concerning the role of divine illumination is offered here with some degree of angst, recognizing that such an analysis lies beyond the scope of this project and is indeed a worthy project in its own right.¹⁰³ There is an inherent shortcoming in any brief analysis of this kind in that it lends itself to oversimplification. Even so, before moving on, it seems useful to consider the principal ways in which Aquinas differs from Bonaventure, even if for no other reason than (i) to further clarify Bonaventure's position and (ii) to suggest that these two great scholastics may not be as dissimilar as is often assumed.

Notwithstanding their different emphases and even real differences, Bonaventure and Aquinas are not as far apart as it is often assumed. They agreed substantially with respect to the

¹⁰¹ Bonaventure maintains that the proper or natural object of the created intellect is created truth or the knowledge of the truth of things but also that our apprehension of created truth presupposes the influence of uncreated Truth as the object moving and naturally inclining the soul to ground its apprehension of truth in eternal Truth; cf. *Hex.*, IV.3.

¹⁰² *Hex.*, IV.6 [V, 349b], *Vult autem anima totum mundum describi in se*. Cf. I.13 [V, 331b].

¹⁰³ Quinn, "Certitude," 2:105-140; Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 885-886; Ríos, "*Primum Cognitum*;" Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 86-87.

sort of knowledge we may have of God at the end of philosophical inquiry, namely, an analogical and mediated knowledge of the divine *being* that is limited to what is causally necessary in order to explain his created effects. Moreover, Aquinas shared Bonaventure's concern to establish the epistemic certitude of our natural knowledge, as well as the general conditions upon which it must be established. Regarding the necessary immutability on the part of the object known, Aquinas even agreed that God is *implicitly* known in our every apprehension of his created effects, inasmuch as all things are similitudes of his immutable Truth and Goodness: "It must be said that everyone who knows also knows God implicitly in whatsoever is known. For just as nothing possesses desirability unless by reason of a similitude to the first goodness, so nothing is knowable unless it be a similitude of the first truth," in light of which Quinn adds: "and so he comes close to Bonaventure's view that the light and principles of the uncreated truth are included in the light and principles of created truth."¹⁰⁴ In the *Summa*, Aquinas asks whether the human soul knows all things in the eternal reasons; he answers in a manner similar to Bonaventure and notes that things may be said to be known in the eternal reasons in two ways, either in them as in an object known, which belongs to the saints in glory alone, or in the eternal reasons as the principles of the objects known, similar to how it can be said that we know in the sun those things we see by the sun, though we do not look directly at the sun. Understood in this way, he concludes: "And thus we must needs say that the human soul knows all things in the eternal types, since by participation of these types we know all things. For the intellectual light itself which is in us, is nothing else than a participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal types."¹⁰⁵

Their differences become more pronounced, however, as it regards the ground upon which the necessary infallibility of the knowing subject is to be established. Even here, however, they agreed that an influence of God's light upon or within the created intellect is necessary, although Aquinas was content to view this influence in terms of God's general providence whereby he upholds and governs all things; whereas Bonaventure, as we have observed, asserts a more intimate providential cooperation with his rational creatures insofar as they are images of God. According to Quinn's analysis, "Although Aquinas differs from Bonaventure on the effect produced by God

¹⁰⁴ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q.22, a.2, ad 1, *Ad primum igitur dicendum, quod etiam omnia cognoscentia cognoscunt implicate Deum in quolibet cognito. Sicut enim nihil habet rationem appetibilis nisi per similitudinem primae bonitatis, ita nihil est cognoscibile nisi per similitudinem primae veritatis.* Quinn, "Certitude," 2:111.

¹⁰⁵ Aquinas, *ST I*, q.84, a.5. Aquinas agreed with Bonaventure that created things participate in the divine light (*ST I*, q.12, a.11, ad 3).

in the human mind, even so, they concur in regarding God as the primary source of the infallibility of the mind and the immutability of its truth, the two conditions required for the certitude of human knowledge.”¹⁰⁶ The *principal* difference between them comes down to this: What is it that must be *primum cognitum* in order to ensure epistemic certainty? For Aquinas, because the so-called first principles of understanding (and the notion of *being* or *ens*) are divinely implanted in the natural light of the created intellect as similitudes of the eternal Truth, the light of the agent intellect is said to participate in the divine light. In this much he and Bonaventure would agree, but Aquinas infers from this that the first principles themselves are sufficient to provide the needed certitude, that is, by virtue of their being divinely implanted in the natural light of reason; “We see and judge of all things in the light of the first truth, forasmuch as the light itself of our mind, whether natural or gratuitous, is nothing else than the impression of the first truth upon it.”¹⁰⁷ Quinn’s comments are helpful here:

Although many men differ with regard to the truth of some things, all men concur in the truth of the first principles, both speculative and practical, for they form in every human mind a kind of image, so to speak, of the divine truth. When any mind knows something with certitude, therefore, it sees the object in those principles according to which it judges all things. Thus, by analyzing the object into the first principles, the human mind is said to see the thing in the divine truth, or in its eternal reasons, according to which the mind is said to judge all things. ... In the view of Aquinas, differing evidently from Bonaventure, the certitude of natural knowledge does not necessitate a seeing of the eternal reasons beyond their reflexions in the human mind through its first principles. Because those principles are impressed on the mind by the exemplar causality of the first truth, which they resemble as its similitudes, the intellect knows the truth of its objects in their eternal reasons, or the immutable truth of God, simply by judging them according to its first and self-evident principles.¹⁰⁸

Bonaventure is compelled to go a step further than Aquinas. Aquinas can even agree that it is God that provides the infallible ground *by which all things are known* (*Deus est quidem quo omnia cognoscuntur*), but unlike Bonaventure he rejects the inference that he must thereby be that which is *primum cognitum*. He writes, “For God is indeed that by which all things are known, not

¹⁰⁶ Quinn, “Certitude,” 2:112; cf. Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, I.129; *Questiones quodlibetales*, 10.4.1 (10.7); *De Veritate*, q.10, a.8, *Si vero consideretur cognitio* ...; q.11, a.1, *Processus autem rationis pervenientis* ...; ad 13, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas, *ST I*, q.88, a.3, ad 1, *Ad primum ergo dicendum quod in luce primae veritatis omnia intelligimus et iudicamus, inquantum ipsum lumen intellectus nostri, sive naturale sive gratuitum, nihil aliud est quam quaedam impressio veritatis primae, ut supra dictum est.*

¹⁰⁸ Quinn, “Certitude,” 2:110.

in such a way that they are not known unless he is known, as it is with self-evident principles, but because all of our knowledge is caused in us through his influence.”¹⁰⁹ The difference is not that Aquinas affirms the natural integrity of the created intellect and Bonaventure does not; the difference is in how they conceived of the divine influence and the nature of its concursus with the intellectual operations of rational creatures. Again, Quinn helpfully summarizes the difference:

In the position of Aquinas, this illumination falls under the providence of God, who bestows on the human mind an intellectual light sufficient of itself for knowing the truth of corporeal things, provided always that He moves the intellect into act and cooperates with its action. ... As understood by Bonaventure, then, [although] the natural illumination of reason does not necessitate from God an additional light in the intellect, [it nevertheless] requires in addition to His conservation the influence of His light to move into act the created light of the intellect which He conforms to His uncreated light. It is in this way that Bonaventure attributes to God an illumination conferring on the intellect the infallible certitude and the immutable truth with which it knows indubitably the necessity of the things that it sees in the light of their eternal reasons.¹¹⁰

In addition to one other place in his *Summa*, Aquinas devotes some attention to the question of what is *primum cognitum* in his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*. He begins by rejecting the conclusion that God is that which is first known. His initial arguments in opposition to this view offer nothing in direct relation to Bonaventure's own view. For instance, if God's essence were that which is first known, then all men would be perfectly happy; but Bonaventure neither holds to the view that God is known by means of his own essence nor to the view that as *primum cognitum* he must thereby be the actual or formal object of knowledge. But then Aquinas proceeds to offer an argument that, in Aertsen's words, “criticizes a more refined version of this position” that could possibly have Bonaventure in mind.¹¹¹ Aquinas writes, “Others have claimed that what we first know in this life is not the divine essence but the influx of its light, and in this way what we first know is God.”¹¹² In his main response, Aquinas gives a single argument in opposition to

¹⁰⁹ Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I.11, *Ad quintam etiam de facili patet solutio. Nam Deus est quidem quo omnia cognoscuntur, non ita quod alia non cognoscantur nisi eo cognito, sicut in principiis per se notis accidit: sed quia per eius influentiam omnis causatur in nobis cognitio.*

¹¹⁰ Quinn, “Certitude,” 2:117-118.

¹¹¹ Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 52 (Brill, 1996), 164.

¹¹² Aquinas, *Expositio super librum Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3; *Faith, Reason, and Theology: Questions I-IV of his Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, trans. Armand Maurer, Mediaeval Sources in Translation, vol. 32 (1987; repr., Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2019), 26-27. Cf. *ST I*, q.88, a.3.

this view. He rejects it upon the supposition that the light that is divinely implanted in the created intellect is “the natural light that forms our intellectual faculty,” i.e., it is connatural with the intellect itself and is sufficient to supply the necessary infallibility of the knowing subject insofar as it is a created participation and likeness of the divine light. As we have seen, Bonaventure would agree that the agent intellect is a created participation and likeness of the divine light, but he would also contend that insofar as it is *created* it cannot itself supply the ultimate ground for epistemic certainty.

But upon the supposition that the created intellect is itself the influence of divine light, Aquinas proceeds to argue that this influence of light cannot itself be that which is first known, for in order to know this light, whether it be with respect to what it is (*quid est*) or merely that it is (*an est*), presupposes that we are aware of possessing an intellect, which is only known through its act of understanding. “Now no one understands that he understands unless he understands something intelligible. Clearly, then, the knowledge of something intelligible comes before the knowledge by which we know that we have an intellect. It follows that the influx of the natural intelligible light cannot be that which we first know, and much less any other influx of light”¹¹³ But again, Bonaventure would agree with Aquinas’s major premise insofar as it goes. The light which constitutes the created intellect is an imprint of and participation in the divine light, inasmuch as the first principles of understanding are divinely imprinted within it. But Bonaventure’s point is that an additional influx of light is still needed in order to move and direct the created light in its own natural and intrinsic operations, precisely because a *created* light cannot be the ultimate ground for the infallibility of the knowing subject. And he would also agree that the mere influence of the divine light, however conceived, cannot *itself* be that which is first known. Bonaventure no less than Aquinas rejected this idea.¹¹⁴ Bonaventure is not contending that the divine light is *itself* what is first known, but rather that through its influence the divine *being* is first known, not immediately as such but as that which is tacitly presupposed and co-intuited through everything else that is known.

Aquinas comes closest to Bonaventure’s view in a few of the potential arguments introduced to the contrary. The first argument to the contrary that he puts forward goes like this: “For we know first that in which everything else is known and through which we judge about

¹¹³ Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3 (Maurer, trans., 27).

¹¹⁴ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23], *Alio modo, ut intelligatur quod ad cognitionem ...*

everything we know, ... [such as when] the intellect knows principles before conclusions. But everything is known in the first truth, and we judge everything by means of it, as Augustine says. Therefore what we know first is the first truth, namely God.”¹¹⁵ In his response, Aquinas argues that Augustine is not to be interpreted as implying that the uncreated truth is in any way the proximate principle by which we either understand or judge, “but that we know and judge through its likeness implanted in us.”¹¹⁶ And although this is where they begin to diverge, it may be pointed out that Bonaventure would similarly agree, insofar as it goes: “For everyone agrees with this, that the cognitive powers possess an implanted light (*lumen inditum*), that is, a natural judgment (*naturale iudicarium*)” or “the light through which we make judgments about things” (*lumen quo mediante de illo iudicamus*).¹¹⁷ Aquinas adds that this light is not the object which is known but the light by which other things are known, all of which is true. But this does not seem to exclude the possibility of Bonaventure’s further assertion that, just as the first principles which are divinely implanted in the natural light of the intellect are cognitively implicated in all that it understands and judges, an additional influence of light is also implicated, whereby the uncreated truth of the divine “to Be” is implicitly presupposed in the background, again not as the object known as such but as the necessary addition of light by the influence of which other things are made known.

In the third argument to the contrary, Aquinas accurately describes Bonaventure’s method of epistemological reduction, wherein our concepts of things are traced back to that which is most simple and most conceptually prior. “God, therefore, who is absolutely first and most simple, first offers himself to human knowledge.” In his response, although Aquinas affirms that this is true with respect to *being* (*ens*) and the transcendental conditions of *being* which we abstract from sense data, he asserts that “it is not necessary that we first know those which are absolutely primary, which, unlike these, are not included in the notion of its proper object.”¹¹⁸ However, Bonaventure would probably respond that the divine “to Be” is included, or more accurately *contuited*, not according to a univocal notion of *being* but according to the analogical likeness of created *beings* to their uncreated cause. In the fourth argument to the contrary, Aquinas introduces

¹¹⁵ Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3, ad opp. 1 (Maurer, trans., 24).

¹¹⁶ Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3, ad 1 (Maurer, trans., 28).

¹¹⁷ *II Sent.*, d.39, a.1, q.2 [II, 903a]; *Donis Spiritus*, IV.2 [V, 474a], Bonaventure ascribes a secondary judicial role to the agent intellect, equating the agent intellect with “the light of natural judgment or reason” (Hayes, trans., 84); VIII.20 (Hayes, trans., 179-180).

¹¹⁸ Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3, ad opp. 3 and ad 3 (Maurer, trans., 25, 28-29).

a similar reduction, also methodologically familiar to Bonaventure, wherein all our desires and deliberations are reducible to the divine *goodness*. “The end comes first in our intentions but last in being carried into effect. Now God is the final end of the human will, all other ends being directed to it. Hence he is first in being intended. But this is impossible unless he is known.” In response, Aquinas concedes that although God is “first in the intention of our natural desire, it is not necessary that he be first in the knowledge of the human mind which is directed to the end.”¹¹⁹ His reasoning is that it is sufficient that the divine goodness be first in the knowledge of God who is directing the soul’s natural desire for its own happiness. As we have observed, Bonaventure does not disagree but makes the further claim that he directs his *rational* creatures to their end in a more intimate, though no less natural, way by virtue of their being created in his image.

In the last opposing argument, Aquinas touches upon an Anselmian idea that can be frequently found in Bonaventure’s works. “The first objects of our knowledge are things which we naturally know and which cannot be thought not to be. But the knowledge of God’s existence is naturally implanted in everyone Moreover, God cannot be thought not to exist, as Anselm states. Hence what we know first of all is God.” In his reply, Aquinas does not entirely reject either the major or the minor premise. Concerning the minor premise, he understands Anselm’s meaning to be that God’s essence *is* his existence, and therefore absolutely speaking God’s existence can be said to be self-evident. But this, he retorts, is not self-evident *to us*. And again, it seems that Bonaventure would wholeheartedly agree; in a similar way that the first principles of understanding are implicitly presupposed *by us* even before they are actually self-evident *to us*, so also our knowledge of the divine ‘to Be.’ Concerning the major premise, Aquinas is similarly willing to affirm it so long as it is properly qualified; “We are said to have an innate knowledge of him insofar as we can easily perceive that he exists by means of principles implanted in us by nature.”¹²⁰ For Aquinas, it is not so much that we possess an innate *knowledge of God* but that we possess an innate *function* of an innate *faculty* that is naturally ordered according to certain innate *cognitive principles* to apprehend the true and the good with relative ease — by means of which “we can easily perceive that he exists.” Bonaventure would not disagree except to say that it does not go far enough, for the knowledge of God is innate or implanted in the even more intimate sense

¹¹⁹ Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3, ad opp. 4 and ad 4 (Maurer, trans., 25, 29).

¹²⁰ Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3, ad opp.6 and ad 6 (Maurer, trans., 25, 29); cf. Bonaventure, *Hex.*, V.6 [V, 309b].

that his existence is already implicitly and unconsciously presupposed *by us* even before it is actually self-evident *to us*.

Whichever of these two positions one takes, the differences between them, though real, should not be overstated. The difference revolves around this: for Aquinas, “although God is absolutely first in the line of intelligible beings, he is not first in the line of beings intelligible to us;” whereas for Bonaventure, “the principle of being (*essendi*) and knowing (*cognoscendi*) is the same,” and thus, God is *primum cognitum* within the order of knowing, not as it regards *actual knowledge*, wherein he is last, but as it regards the implicit foundation which all of our knowing takes for granted.¹²¹ It is perhaps this difference that produces other related differences which, though also real, should likewise not be overstated. The positions of both cohere with their own understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology.¹²² Comparatively, Bonaventure portrays a more organic relationship, wherein the soul is throughout led by one and the same Light, whereby it is moved from the very start by an implicit desire for Truth that is only partially fulfilled by means of philosophical wisdom and, therefore, yearns and cries out for its further perfection by means of theological wisdom, such that the end of philosophy marks only the first of two degrees of perfection within man’s unified pursuit of wisdom.¹²³ The organic flow of

¹²¹ Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.1, a.3, ad 2 (Maurer, trans., 28); cf. Bonaventure, *Hex.*, I.13 [V, 331b] (Hammond, trans., 81).

¹²² For Aquinas, see Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 165; Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 49.

¹²³ Something akin to both Aquinas’s and Bonaventure’s view can be found within the post-Reformation protestant tradition. Regarding Aquinas’s influence, see for instance, Francis Turretin (1623-1687), *Elenctic Theology*, I.1.2. Regarding Bonaventure’s influence, see for instance, John Calvin (1509-1564), *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.iii.1, 3; I.iv.2, 4; and especially the Dutch Reformed tradition, such as Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles* (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898), 264-265; Kuyper, “The Natural Knowledge of God,” trans. Harry van Dyke, *The Bavinck Review* 6 (2015): 73-112. Moreover, Bonaventure’s influence upon Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), especially his development of the idea of self-consciousness, man as the image of God, and his refutation of the epistemological idealism of his own day, has similarly been observed. Although depending too heavily upon the interpretation of Lydia Schumacher, Nathaniel Gray Sutanto has effectively drawn this connection: “As my analysis above has shown, like Bonaventure, Bavinck locates reason within the context of a prior, primordial, knowledge by virtue of revelation such that there is ‘an intuitive grasp of the Divine being.’ Revelation precedes and provides the context for the knowledge that is gained by reason — it is *felt* and is thus *known* prior to concepts;” cf. Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, *God and Knowledge: Herman Bavinck’s Theological Epistemology* (Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 2021), 170. Bavinck himself writes: “And humans, having been created in the divine image, were gifted with the capacity to receive the impressions of this revelation and thereby to acquire some sense and knowledge of the Eternal Being. ... In the case of the innate knowledge of God, that revelation [i.e., the revelation of God that introduces the knowledge of God into our consciousness] acts upon the human consciousness, creating impressions and intuitions.” He goes on to say that this “innate” knowledge is that whereby we are *moved* to pursue *actual* knowledge: “In the case of the acquired knowledge of God, human beings reflect upon that revelation of God. Their minds go to work The fact is, humans are not content with impressions and intuitions in any area of knowledge. ... That is also why faith aspires to become theology, and the innate knowledge of God seeks to complete itself in the acquired knowledge of God,” *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. John Vriend (Baker Academic, 2004), 2:73-74.

Bonaventure's thought is beautifully expressed in the following: "that that which moves us principally is the illumination which begins in the implanted light (*lumine indito*) and finds its consummation in the infused light (*lumine infuso*)."¹²⁴ And it is to that "infused light" that we now turn.

2.2 *Theological Certitude and Divine Illumination*

Although the medieval discussion about the certainty of faith, or the supernaturally infused knowledge of faith, is less frequently considered by scholars than those centered upon our natural certitude, it is arguably the more important, for it is all the more concerned with our salvation, our perfection and happiness, namely, our chief end, not only as a vestige-image but also as an image-likeness of God. It must be recalled how Bonaventure had enumerated three kinds of theological certitude, "of authority, of interior illumination, and of external persuasion."¹²⁵ And whereas Bonaventure identifies the divine "to Be" or the truth *that God exists* as the "foundation of all certain knowledge" (*fundamentum omnis cognitionis certitudinalis*), that is, of all natural and philosophical knowledge, he similarly reduces the "foundation of all the knowledge of faith" (*fundamentum omnis cognitionis fidelis*) to the truth that the God who exists, who is our salvation and end, *is Trinity*. This is a truth which we know with certitude, he says, on the basis of *authority* and of *an interior illumination*, whereupon the two grounds for certainty are established: the immutability of the object known (the objective revelation of God in Scripture) and the infallibility of the knowing subject (the subjective illumination of faith).¹²⁶ To this is added a third, the certitude of "external persuasion," by which Bonaventure has in mind the strengthening of our faith in the exercise of theological reasoning, as "when believers formulate reasons of fittingness and efficacy, so that they might understand what they believe."¹²⁷ This is especially relevant for our present study inasmuch as it both informs and culminates in theological contemplation. But inasmuch as its own certitude presupposes a certain foundation in the former two, that is, in the

¹²⁴ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 56b] (Hayes, trans., 132).

¹²⁵ *Sancti Ioannis*, prooemium, n.10, q.2, q.2, in resp. [VI, 243a] (Karris, trans., 47).

¹²⁶ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, prol. [V, 45a] (Hayes, trans., 107), see q.1, a.1 and a.2 respectively.

¹²⁷ *Sancti Ioannis*, prooemium, n.10, q.2, q.2, in resp. [VI, 243a] (Karris, trans., 47).

authority of Scripture and the illumination of faith as the objective and subjective cognitive principles of theology, we shall consider the relation of all three in what follows.

2.2.1 The Objective and Subjective Principles of Theology

Theological knowledge pertains to what may be known of God principally by means of supernatural principles that are extrinsic to the natural order but belong instead to the order of grace — both, with respect to the objective revelation of the book of Scripture (the *external* cognitive principle) as well as the light of faith by which the revelation of God in Scripture is subjectively apprehended (the *internal* cognitive principle). Because theological knowledge extends beyond the limits of philosophical knowledge and concerns things both beyond the immediate domain of our senses and above the grasp of reason alone, it necessarily depends upon supernatural revelation for its object. The necessity of a supernatural revelation is all the more apparent when one considers that, unlike our natural and philosophical knowledge, God himself is the *proper* object of both faith and theology, albeit still mediated analogically through the book of Scripture.¹²⁸

Precisely for this reason, the question arises whether theology is a science. Can epistemic certainty, and therefore theological *knowledge* properly so-called, be derived from such principles, seeing that the knowledge derived from them is only as certain as the principles themselves? No less here than before, certainty rests upon two conditions. Concerning the object known, namely the self-revelation of God through his Word, Bonaventure grounds the immutability of the truth of Scripture in its immediate and supernatural divine origin (*ortus*) — the Father speaking through his Son, the incarnate Word, by means of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,” which “was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will” (Heb. 1:1-2; 2:4). The most blessed Trinity is the immediate source and author of the book of Scripture, in and through which he has objectively mediated to us the revelation of

¹²⁸ *Brev.*, I.1.4 [V, 210b] (Monti, trans., 29); *III Sent.*, d.24, a.1, q.2 [III, 512-514].

both himself and the way of salvation.¹²⁹ And thus, the immediate divine *authorship* of Scripture, as the objective cognitive principle of faith and theology, ensures the immutability of the truth of the object known according to a *certitude of authority*. It is from God, according to the mind of God, in order to lead us back to God and is, therefore, an authoritative, certain and immutable, objective source for theological knowledge — “for its all-perfect author, the Holy Spirit, could not say anything false.” And thus,

lest Scripture seem doubtful and consequently lose some of its power to move us, God has given it, in the place of a certitude based upon reasoning, a certitude based on authority, which is so great that it surpasses the keenest of human minds. The authority of someone who can deceive and be deceived is not absolutely certain; but there is no one who cannot be deceived and is incapable of deceiving but God and the Holy Spirit. That is why Sacred Scripture, so that it might be perfectly authoritative, as it should be, was handed down not through human inquiry but by divine revelation.¹³⁰

Accordingly, Bonaventure follows Augustine when he concludes, “What we believe we owe to authority, what we understand, to reason.”¹³¹

Concerning the second criterion, the infallibility of the knowing subject, Bonaventure speaks of the subjective certitude of the interior illumination of faith, which he also grounds in its divine origin. The same Spirit who immediately inspired the Scripture internally illumines the mind of the believing subject to hear and understand and receive what he has divinely revealed in Scripture, “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God” (1 Thess. 2:13). Bonaventure writes, “it is by means of faith that the knowledge of Sacred Scripture is given to us according to the measure of the Blessed Trinity’s inflowing (*influentiam*).”¹³² Whereas the subjective certitude of reason ultimately rests upon the influence of a divine illumination grounded in and flowing from an infallible intellect, so also the subjective certitude of faith. In the third book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, when treating of the infallibility and certitude of faith, Bonaventure acknowledges several possible objections. Faith frequently assents to contingent truths, such as the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ, which are themselves not absolutely and

¹²⁹ *Brev.*, prol., 2 [V, 201a-b], *ortum Scripturae attendi secundum influentiam beatissimae Trinitatis* ...; cf. prol., 1.4 [V, 203b]; prol., 4.4-5 [V, 206a-b]. The human authors are the instrumental source of Scripture, but they wrote and were carried along by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

¹³⁰ *Brev.*, prol., 5.3-4 [V, 207a] (Monti, trans., 18).

¹³¹ *Brev.*, I.1.4 [V, 210b] (Monti, trans., 29).

¹³² *Brev.*, prol., 2 [V, 201b].

immutably necessary and, therefore, could have been otherwise.¹³³ As such, because faith believes many things which are not themselves absolutely necessary, it could be argued that the light of faith may itself be subject to error and is not, therefore, infallible. However, Bonaventure responds by grounding the absolute certainty of faith upon the infallibility of the divine foreknowledge in which it participates and upon the interior illumination of which its own knowledge rests.

It must be said that since the habit of faith enlightens the mind itself to assent to the truth believed according to the illumination of divine foreknowledge, and since the divine foreknowledge cannot be subject to falsehood, because it cannot be falsified, it is necessary to hold that the habit of faith itself neither is nor can be subject to falsehood. — For just as divine foreknowledge, because it does not depend on things, knows most certainly not only those things that are necessarily to come, but also contingent things, so that it cannot be deceived about them, as was shown in the first book, so also faith, which rests on the knowledge of divine foreknowledge, by which it is also illuminated and directed, has certain credulity and illumination about future contingent things, so that, although these, as far as they are concerned in and of themselves, may not happen, faith nevertheless cannot be deceived nor can it err.¹³⁴

2.2.2 The Image of God and Supernatural Illumination

It is important to remember that Bonaventure consistently locates his discussions of divine illumination, whether philosophical or theological, natural or supernatural, within the context of the different ways in which God is present and active within his creation, but especially with respect to his understanding of man as an image and likeness of God whose highest end is to know and love God analogous to the way in which God knows and loves himself. As we have observed, Bonaventure contends that God is present and active, by means of natural illumination co-operating with the natural cognitive processes of the created intellect, as the regulating and motivating principle (*regulans et ratio motiva*), leading us to a knowledge of God insofar as he may be known through creatures by means of the light of reason.¹³⁵ But our nature as an image is not thereby perfected, for natural illumination at best only leads us to a knowledge about God, or that he exist, but does not disclose who he is or how we might be united with him, so as to possess him as the end for which every creature, ourselves included, is intrinsically ordered. In order to

¹³³ It is common to speak about such things as consequent necessities rather than absolute necessities.

¹³⁴ *III Sent.*, d.24, a.1, q.1 [III, 509a-b], *Dicendum, quod cum habitus fidei ... et quod eveniat oppositum*. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.40, a.2, q.1 ad 1-3 [I, 707-08]; d.40, a.2, q.2, in resp. and ad 5 [I, 712-13]; Quinn, "Certitude," 2:118-126.

¹³⁵ *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23b] (Hayes, trans., 134).

bring us to the end for which we have been created as an image and likeness of God, Bonaventure maintains that a superadded work of grace is required, that is, a supernatural presence and influence within us as “a gift infused through grace.”¹³⁶

In our postlapsarian state, grace is needed not only to elevate and perfect nature but also to rectify and restore it; what was deformed by sin must be reformed by grace and conformed into the likeness of God. Bonaventure maintains that the so-called theological virtues of faith, hope, and love are rectifying habits (*habitus rectificantes*) by means of which the powers of the soul — memory, intellect, and will — are graciously set right (*potentiae rectificantur*), that is, hierarchized and reordered to God (*ordinant animam ad Deum*), and so vivified (*vigorat*) and elevated (*erigit*) and made sensitive again to spiritual things.¹³⁷

And so, in its upward face, the soul, being the image of the Trinity, must be set aright through the three theological virtues. In this way, just as the image of creation consists in a trinity of powers with a unity of essence, so the image of re-creation consists in a trinity of habits with a unity of grace. Through these the soul is carried straight up to the supreme Trinity in a way corresponding to the appropriated attributes of the three persons.¹³⁸

And because the Lord reforms the powers of the soul in the converse order in which they were deformed, Bonaventure contends that “reformation begins with the will and continues until it reaches the memory (*a voluntate incipit reformatio et tendit usque in memoriam*).”¹³⁹ Thus, we will very briefly consider each of the rectifying habits, according to what Bonaventure calls the order of reformation: love or charity (will), faith (intellect), and hope (memory).

As we observed in chapter 1, charity is in a certain respect the form of the other virtues, for by charity the Lord rectifies and reorders the volitional faculty of the soul, and with it all of its voluntary operations, inclining and disposing it to God as our ultimate end and highest good, and

¹³⁶ *Christus unus*, n.17 [V, 571b] (Hayes, trans., 36); cf. n.16 [V, 571b] (Hayes, trans., 35), as a motivating object (*obiectum motivum*); *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 23b] (Hayes, trans., 134, cf. 135-137), as a motivating principle (*ratio motiva*); and [V, 24a] (Hayes, trans., 136), through the manner of a moving cause (*per modum rationis moventis*) or “motion-inducing means of knowing” (cf. Marrone, *The Light*, 1:144); *Brev.*, II.12.1-3 [V, 230] (Monti, trans., 96-97).

¹³⁷ *III Sent.*, d.34, p.1, a.1, q.1, in corp. and ad 5 [737a-738b]; cf. d.33, a.sole, q.1 [III, 711a-712b]; *Brev.*, V.3.3 [V, 255a]; Gilson, *Philosophy*, 402, interprets the idea of hierarchization as a reorganization of the soul.

¹³⁸ *Brev.*, V.4.4 [V, 256b] (Monti, trans., 185); cf. *III Sent.*, d.27, a.1, q.1 [III, 592a], *Consistit enim imago recreationis in tribus virtutibus theologis* ...

¹³⁹ *I Sent.*, d.3, p.2, a.1, q.1, ad 4 [I, 81b]. In *II Sent.*, d.16, a.2, q.3 [II, 404-406], Bonaventure interestingly distinguishes the created and recreated image, insofar as the former *principally* relates to the cognitive part of the soul and the latter to the affective.

to all other things in relation to him — even as God loves himself and all things in relation to himself. The Lord similarly restores and renews our intellectual faculty through the grace of faith, both healing it from the crippling effects of sin and elevating and disposing it for a new cognitive horizon. Bonaventure maintains that, because the objective principle of theology concerns the supra-natural revelation of God and rests upon a certitude of authority, the intellect cannot be compelled to believe in the same way that it is naturally compelled to assent to whatsoever it knows to be true with a certitude of demonstration. It is helpful here to remember what was observed in chapter 4, that the proper genus of theology is *wisdom*, insofar as its object, if it is to be truly known, must be known experientially and affectively. Accordingly, Bonaventure contends that a person cannot and will not believe unless they also be disposed to believe by charity — inclining the soul to assent to the truth of God revealed in Scripture with a certain internal illumination and persuasion of the mind and a concomitant affection and adherence of the will.¹⁴⁰ To the question of what principally moves a person to believe, Bonaventure replies that it is “because this illumination proceeds from the eternal light itself which takes our intellect into obedient captivity; in capturing the mind, it subjects it to God in worship and veneration and renders it ready to believe whatever pertains to the divine honor and veneration, even though such things be beyond our reason.”¹⁴¹ As such, the grace of charity restores and renews the will, and the grace of faith restores and renews the intellect, whereby the whole soul is united and assimilated to God in knowledge and love — again, even as God knows and loves himself and all things in relation to himself.

These things being so, the rectifying role which Bonaventure ascribes to the grace of hope is relatively less clear, appears less frequently in the discussion, and is subject to greater misunderstanding. Near the beginning of the first book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, when speaking about the reformation of the image of God by means of grace, concerning its union with God and the renewal of its trinitarian likeness, he attributes to hope the task of reforming the memory. But in his lengthier discussion of the virtues in the third book, he states that hope is a rectifying habit of the irascible appetite, which pertains to the affective rather than the cognitive

¹⁴⁰ *III Sent.*, d.23, a.1, q.2 [III, 477b], *Et ideo etiam necesse est ponere, quod fides ...*; cf. d.27, a.2, q.1 [III, 604a], *Si vero loquamur de prioritate completionis ...*; ad 3 [III, 604a-b], *Verum enim est, quod motus fidei primo ...*

¹⁴¹ *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 56b] (Hayes, trans., 132); cf. *III Sent.*, d.23, a.1, q.4, in resp. [III, 481-482]; Quinn, “Certitude,” 2:126n.46, estimates that “the adhesion of a true Christian to his faith is so great, in Bonaventure’s judgment, that he would prefer to lose the whole of philosophy, if he had it, rather than ignore even one article of the creed.”

power of the soul.¹⁴² By the former claim, he is not suggesting that the memory is a distinct power of the soul properly speaking, for as we observed elsewhere Bonaventure asserts that the memory is part of the cognitive power. By the second claim, neither does Bonaventure intend to reduce the memory to the irascible appetite. And although it is difficult to synthesize his various remarks, the key seems to be in how he generally describes the nature of hope itself. According to Bonaventure, hope is the gracious virtue whereby the irascible affections of the soul are made to hold firm to God in expectation of all that he has promised, acting as an anchor and support to the other virtues. Just as faith enables the soul to assent to the first Truth and charity enables it to adhere to the highest Good, hope fortifies the soul in its pursuit of both according to a fortified memory of God's word (i.e., its commands and its promises, together with their threats and assurances of future rewards) and a firm persuasion of his infinity bounty. "And so it is with the act of the memory," Bonaventure says, "when it is joined to an affection, it is connected to an act of virtue."¹⁴³ He explains this more fully elsewhere: "The virtue of hope, by reforming the irascible power, which is an affective power, consequently reforms the memory itself, which actually communicates with it, namely in the act of holding. And therefore, it is not necessary that hope be seated in the memory as in its proper subject."¹⁴⁴

By means of all three, the soul, recreated in God's trinitarian likeness, adheres to God as its highest good and ultimate end through knowing and loving God and all things in relation to God — even as God knows and loves himself and all things in relation to himself. One of the consequences of the soul's reformation by grace, which has no small significance for our understanding of contemplation, is the renewal of what Bonaventure calls our spiritual senses. To sense something is to know it as present; as such, the *spiritual* senses signify the soul's renewed spiritual sensitivity to God's presence.¹⁴⁵ Bonaventure explains:

When in faith the soul believes in Christ as the uncreated Word, who is the Word and splendor of the Father, it recovers its spiritual sense of hearing and of sight; its hearing, so that it might receive the words of Christ, and its sight that it might consider the splendors of that light. When in hope the soul yearns to receive the inspired Word, because of this desire and affection it recovers its spiritual sense of smell. When in love the soul embraces the incarnate Word, receiving delight from him and passing over to him in ecstatic love, it

¹⁴² *I Sent.*, d.3, p.2, a.1, q.1, ad 4 [I, 81b]; *III Sent.*, d.26, a.1, q.1 [III, 556a]; a.2, q.5 [III, 578-581].

¹⁴³ *III Sent.*, d.26, a.1, q.1, ad 2 [III, 557a], *Unde etiam rememorationi, secundum quod iungitur affectioni, annectitur actus virtutis ...*

¹⁴⁴ *III Sent.*, d.26, a.2, q.5 [III, 580b-581a], *Et virtus spei reformando potentiam irascibilem ...*

¹⁴⁵ *III Sent.*, d.34, p.1, a.1, q.1 [III, 737-738].

recovers its sense of taste and touch. With its spiritual senses restored, the soul now sees, hears, smells, tastes, and embraces its beloved.¹⁴⁶

Significantly, the soul reformed by grace is not merely awakened to the sight, sound, smell, taste, and embrace of God in the book of Scripture; it is thereby awaked with a new spiritual and theological sensitivity to God's trinitarian presence and influence *in the book creation* as well.

2.2.3 Theological Wisdom and the End of Theological Contemplation

Theological contemplation not only takes for granted the reformation of the soul but also its renewed spiritual sensitivity to God's trinitarian presence and influence *in* creatures. And therefore, it also presupposes the certitude of Scripture's objective authority and of faith's supernatural illumination. Nevertheless, Bonaventure maintains that theology, and thus theological contemplation, obtain a kind of certitude of its own, an ancillary form of certainty by means "of external persuasion."¹⁴⁷ As we have already had occasion to observe, theology proceeds in a rational way, upon the supposition of faith's apprehension and assent to the truth of Scripture, so as to construct rational arguments that seek to prove the coherency, infer other doctrines, and elaborate upon the theological implications of the principles of the faith.¹⁴⁸ In other words, theology, unlike sacred Scripture to which Bonaventure subalternates it, carries out its task and fulfills its end by means of rational inquiry or grace-infused reason, so as to construct theological arguments and derive theological conclusions on the basis of revealed principles.¹⁴⁹

It is tempting to conclude from this that the soul obtains a higher certitude from theology and theological reasoning — both of which have their end and enjoyment in theological contemplation — than the certitude which is had by means of the authority of Scripture and the internal illumination of faith. Bonaventure rejects this conclusion. Inasmuch as faith believes the articles and principles revealed in the Scripture on the basis of divine authority, human reason cannot render those principles any more or less certain, nor does theological reasoning thereby

¹⁴⁶ *Itin.*, IV.3 (Hayes, trans., 99-101).

¹⁴⁷ *Sancti Ioannis*, prooemium, n.10, q.2, q.2, in resp. [VI, 243a] (Karris, trans., 47).

¹⁴⁸ *I Sent.*, prol., q.1, ad 5-6 [I, 11b].

¹⁴⁹ *I Sent.*, prol., q.2, ad 4 [I, 11a-b]; cf. *III Sent.*, d.25, a.1, q.1 [III, 534-538], the Apostles' Creed is a summary of the articles of the faith; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.1, a.2 [V, 54a], the chief principle to which all others may be reduced is the doctrine of the Trinity.

become the basis upon which those principles are believed. Theological certitude is only ever proportionate to its dependence upon the certitude which Scripture and faith alone provide.¹⁵⁰ As such, theological reasoning and theological arguments do not seek to establish the principles of theology but instead reason from them, in order to *understand* the fullness of truth contained in them.

However, the addition of theological reasoning does further dispose the intellect for a properly scientific knowledge of the things believed. And the consequent understanding to which the science of theology aspires further disposes the intellect for theological wisdom, whereby the soul enjoys not a greater certainty than what it had obtained by Scripture and faith alone but nevertheless a greater understanding of the trinitarian object and source of that certitude and, therefore, a greater sensitivity to God's trinitarian presence and influence *in creatures*, as the end to which every creature is intrinsically ordered.¹⁵¹ Theological wisdom disposes the soul to see all things anew, by means of theological contemplation, according to a greater spiritual and theological sensitivity to the intimate presence of the Trinity *in* all that he has made and, not least of which, *in* one's own soul.

3. The Christological Source of Divine Illumination

It is especially in the context of Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination, and most especially in relation to the soul's pursuit of wisdom, that the manifold significance of Christ is most clearly seen. For in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 3:2), and therefore Bonaventure estimates that Christ alone is in some way the medium *through whom* all wisdom must to be obtained, whether philosophical or theological. In the opening words of his well-known sermon on Matthew 23:10, "for One is your Teacher, the Christ," he writes: "This text states that

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *Boethii De trinitate*, q.2, a.3; *I Sent.*, q.1, a.3, solution 3; q.1, a.5, ad 4; *ST I*, q.1, a.8.

¹⁵¹ *III Sent.*, d.25, a.2, q.2, in concl. [III, 548a], "Faith grows over the course of time relative to the fullness of light, insofar as faith is considered according to its common state;" but especially, q.3, in concl. [III, 550a], "The certainty of faith does not grow in comparison to the Truth which is revealed, although it can be said to grow in the believer himself;" cf. in resp. [III, 550b-551a], wherein he quotes Hugh of St. Victor: "With respect to the growth of faith, different kinds of people are found. For some are believers who choose to believe out of piety alone, but do not understand with reason whether to believe or not to believe. Others, however, approve with reason what they already believe by faith. Others, however, experience with the understanding of a purified mind what they have learned by faith and approved by reason. In the first, faith alone makes the choice; in the second, reason adds approbation; in the third, purity of understanding apprehends certainty."

there is but one fontal principle of cognitive illumination, namely Christ,” which he applied throughout his sermon to philosophical and theological knowledge alike.¹⁵² To say that he is our teacher is to say that he is the source of all knowledge and that he in one way or another communicates his knowledge and his mind to us (1 Cor. 2:16). In this way, the person of Christ is the ultimate cognitive principle of all knowledge but, as may be anticipated by now, not of all knowledge in the same way. In order to understand properly the centrality of Christ in Bonaventure’s contemplative endeavor and illuminist epistemology, certain distinctions are in order.

3.1 *The Philosophical Illumination of Christ*

An important distinction that is most notably though not exclusively found in the third lecture of the *Hexaemeron* is that of the threefold Word. “The key to contemplation,” he writes, “is a triple understanding (*intellectus*), namely, an understanding (*intellectus*) of the uncreated Word, through whom all things are made; an understanding (*intellectus*) of the incarnate Word, through whom all things are restored; and an understanding (*intellectus*) of the inspired Word, through whom all things are revealed.”¹⁵³ Jay M. Hammond comments, “As Word, Christ mediates all reality and this fact is precisely what Bonaventure means by *triplex intellectus*: how one understands the *Verbum* constructs how one understands.”¹⁵⁴

The person of Christ according to his divine nature is the eternal uncreated Word (*Verbi increati*) through whom and according to whom all things were made. What Bonaventure has in mind here is the doctrine of divine exemplarity, which has been assumed throughout and already explained on a number of occasions. Zachary Hayes provides a helpful summary of the doctrine:

Theologically, the question of exemplarity can be summarized in the following way. The Son of the Father’s love is the eternal Word and Image of the Father in such a way that He is the real ground of all other relations. In as far as the entire mystery of the trinity is expressed in the Word, He is the Exemplar of creation which, because it is co-spoken by

¹⁵² *Christus unus*, n.1 [V, 567a] (Hayes, trans., 21), *In verbo isto declaratur, quod est fontale principium illuminationis cognoscitivae Christus videlicet*. Cf. *Sancti Ioannis*, 1.4.12 [Vi, 249]; *Hex.*, XII.5 [V, 385]; Quinn, “Certitude,” 2:109n.8.

¹⁵³ *Hex.*, III.2 [V, 343a] (Hammond, trans., 112).

¹⁵⁴ Hammond, “Introduction,” 55.

God in His Word, bears the stamp of the entire trinity which is expressed in the Word. ... Hence, all genuine knowledge is in some way knowledge of the Word.¹⁵⁵

In other words, the truth of each and every thing, like many created words expressing the mind of God exteriorly, is ultimately reducible to the relation of each thing to the uncreated Word in whose person the reason for all things is expressed eternally. As such and in the manner outlined above, the divine person of Christ is uniquely the fontal source of illuminations, even of our natural and philosophical knowledge. Bonaventure contends that our knowledge of things, whether we are aware or not, presupposes a certain relation to the uncreated Word as their creative principle and, therefore, as the regulating principle of all knowledge. “If then it is impossible to arrive at knowledge (*notitiam*) of a creature except by that through which it was made, it is necessary that the true Word go before you.”¹⁵⁶ Through him all things were made, and therefore it is in some way and to some degree through him or in relation to him that all things are known. Hayes comments that “he is the prior condition by reason of which anything in the world is knowable and who is known to some degree in any authentic act of knowledge.”¹⁵⁷ And so, Bonaventure can ultimately say, “one does not come to understand (*intelligere*) except through the Word.”¹⁵⁸ Christ, as the uncreated Word, is the key or condition that unlocks our knowledge of the truth of all things and especially of our philosophical contemplation of God through the things he has made.

Even so, as it has already been shown, Bonaventure contends that few people, on account of the corruption of our natural powers through sin, actually become aware of the presence and influence of the uncreated Word who is implicitly presupposed in every authentic act of knowledge. Concerning the effects of sin, he writes elsewhere, “For the soul (*anima*) has three potencies: the animal, the intellectual (*intellectualem*), and the divine, according to the three eyes of the flesh, of reason (*rationes*), [and] of contemplation. The first thrives, the second clouds, and the third is blinded.”¹⁵⁹ Few, he contends, ever obtain philosophical wisdom or an actual knowledge of the divine “to Be,” without the redeeming and restoring work of Christ, for which reason the Word also became flesh, namely, the incarnate Word (*Verbi incarnati*). Thus, the person of Christ

¹⁵⁵ Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 198.

¹⁵⁶ *Hex.*, I.10 [V, 331a] (Hayes, trans., 78).

¹⁵⁷ Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 206.

¹⁵⁸ *Hex.*, III.9 [V, 345a] (Hammond, trans., 116).

¹⁵⁹ *Hex.*, V.24 [V, 357b-358a] (Hammond, trans., 152); *Brev.*, II.12.5 [V, 230b]. Cf. Hugh of Saint Victor, *On the Sacraments*, I.10.2 (Deferrari, trans., 167).

according to both natures, as mediator between God and man, has become for us the restorative principle of all things. By the grace of union, the incarnate Word has not only *objectively* revealed the way back to God and is, therefore, the illuminative key to understanding the history of redemption and the multiform wisdom of God in Scripture, he has also secured the way for us by his own merits. It is through him, therefore, that a fallen humanity can be *subjectively* brought back to God, through knowledge and love, for it is by means of his grace that our nature corrupted by sin is restored and renewed and, moreover, perfected and elevated to its supernatural end.

3.2 *The Theological Illumination of Christ*

In order to unite the knowing subject, ourselves, with the object revealed, the incarnate Word, a corresponding subjective cognitive principle must first be formed within us. Hammond helpfully comments that, “although Scripture and Christ are the reciprocal foci of the exegete’s contemplation, illumination of the Incarnation’s revelation is impossible without the contemplative’s subjective participation in the inspired Word.”¹⁶⁰ Therefore, “the third key is the understanding (*intellectus*) of the inspired Word, through whom all things are revealed (*revelantur*); for there is no revelation (*revelatio*) except through the inspired Word (*Verbi inspirati*),” namely, Christ formed within the soul through the Spirit-infused graces.¹⁶¹ In redeeming and rectifying the implanted light of reason (*lumine indito*), the grace of faith not only helps a person better apprehend that which may be understood by its natural powers alone but also that which is supernaturally revealed in Scripture,¹⁶² through which the soul is elevated to its supernatural end.¹⁶³ As we have demonstrated elsewhere, the Spirit-infused light of faith opens up a new cognitive horizon to apprehend all things more fully through the Word, so as to apprehend the Trinity more clearly *in* all things. “Here,” Hammond once again explains, “Bonaventure’s hermeneutic circle completes itself. Contemplation begins with the ‘objective’ *exitus* of the Father’s fecund activity [through] the uncreated Word, the Son’s saving activity in the incarnate Word, and the Spirit’s consummating activity in the inspired Word, which in turn draws the

¹⁶⁰ Hammond, “Introduction,” 59.

¹⁶¹ *Hex.*, III.22 [V, 347a] (Hammond, trans., 122).

¹⁶² *Hex.*, III.25-29 [V, 347a-b] (Hammond, trans., 123-124).

¹⁶³ *Hex.*, III.30-31 [V, 347b-348] (Hammond, trans., 125-126).

contemplative into the ‘subjective’ *reditus* whereby everything returns by the revelations of the inspired Word, through the salvation of the incarnate Word, into unity with the Father according to the eternal generation of the uncreated Word.”¹⁶⁴

Therefore, Christ is the teacher and fontal source of *all* illuminations, but he is so in one way concerning our natural and philosophical knowledge and, in another way, concerning our supernatural and theological knowledge; he is our teacher in different but related respects within the orders of nature and grace respectively. In the former, he is so as the uncreated Word; in the latter, he is also so as the incarnate and inspired Word. In one way he is first in our thoughts, and in another way, he is last in our apprehension; in one way he is the hidden object cognitively motivating and regulating our pursuit of wisdom, and in another way, he is the proper object through whom we are restored and elevated to our supernatural end. But he is one and the same Word from first to last, “who is uncreated *in the bosom of the Father*, incarnate in the virgin’s womb, [and] inspired in your heart through faith.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Hammond, “Introduction,” 59.

¹⁶⁵ *Hex.*, III.32 [V, 348b] (Hammond, trans., 126).

PART IV
CONTEMPLATIVE APPLICATION

VI

Philosophical and Theological Contemplation in the Itinerarium Mentis in Deum

The purpose of this chapter is to show how Bonaventure applies his concept of contemplation in perhaps his greatest work, the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (1259), which is translated *The Journey of the Mind (or Soul) into God*. What follows is principally a structural analysis of the text. The utility of this approach will be seen, not only in its ability to further illuminate Bonaventure's concept of contemplation, but also in its ability to further substantiate the overall thesis of this study, namely, that Bonaventure distinguishes two *kinds* of contemplation, philosophical and theological — a distinction which itself presupposes a certain relation between nature and grace and which sheds new light upon other debated questions, such as his understanding of the organic relation between philosophy and theology, as well as the role of divine illumination relative to both, within the soul's unified pursuit of wisdom.

1. The Historical Context of the *Itinerarium*

The *Itinerarium* was written in the years following Bonaventure's appointment as Minister General of the Franciscan Order in February of 1257 and after inheriting all of the problems existing within the Order at that time. Immediately after his new appointment, Bonaventure devoted his pastoral time and energy in writing various foundational works in order to further unite the Order around a renewed Franciscan identity (*Lignum vitae*) rooted in a common theology (*Breviloquium*) and practice (*De triplici via*). In the Autumn of 1259, to prepare himself spiritually for a gathering of the Order in Narbonne in southern France, he journeyed to Mt. Alverna.¹ Bonaventure retells the occasion in his own words in the "prologue" of the *Itinerarium*:

¹ Smith, *Bonaventure's Journey*, 29.

It happened around the time of the thirty-third anniversary of the death of the saint [i.e., Francis (d. Oct. 3, 1226)] that I was moved by divine inspiration and withdrew to Mount Alverna since it was a place of quiet. There I wished to satisfy the desire of my spirit for peace. And while I was there reflecting on certain ways in which the mind might ascend to God, I recalled, among other things, that miracle which the blessed Francis himself had experienced in this very place, namely the vision of the winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified. As I reflected on this, I saw immediately that this vision pointed not only to the uplifting of our father himself in contemplation but also to the road by which one might arrive at this experience.²

It is often pointed out that one of the things almost certainly weighing heavy on Bonaventure's mind, which he knew he needed to address at the upcoming assembly and for which he needed to be prepared, was the disunity within the Order caused by the so-called Spirituals or Zealots (*zelanti*). The Spirituals were those friars who advocated for a strict and simplistic adherence to Francis's way of life as the purest means of gospel living, including Francis's own lack of academic pursuits. These friars were ideologically opposed to their more academically inclined brothers, the so-called Conventuals (*fratres de communitate*), who understood that the Parisian cultural landscape had changed since Francis's death. The Conventuals welcomed the integration of study into the life of the community as a necessary accommodation to the changing times in which they lived, not as a compromise but in order to strengthen and mature Francis's vision,³ for the end was never simplicity for simplicity's sake but as a means of conforming to Christ-crucified and as an opportunity to preach Christ to others in word and in deed. And, as Randall Smith so helpfully points out, there was a growing need for educated, yet humble and simple, preachers able to preach Christ to an increasingly learned society and to refute the Cathars and the Muslims.⁴ Education was a means, therefore, of raising up learned and able, fitted and

² *Itin.*, prol., 2 [V, 295a-b] (Hayes, trans., 37).

³ Bonaventure, writing to an unknown friar, says, "Let it not disturb you that in the beginning our brothers were simple and unlettered; rather, this very fact ought to strengthen your faith in the Order. For I confess before God that what made me live St. Francis's way of life so much was that it is exactly like the origin and the perfection of the Church itself, which began first with simple fishermen and afterwards developed to include the most illustrious and learned doctors. You find the same thing in the Order of St. Francis; in this way God reveals that it did not come about through human calculations but through Christ;" "A Letter in Response to an Unknown Master," in *St. Bonaventure's Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*, trans. Dominic Monti (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 13.

⁴ Smith, *Bonaventure's Journey*, 39-40; Bert Roest, "Francis and the Pursuit of Learning," in *The Cambridge Companion to Saint Francis of Assisi* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 161-174. Moreover, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had already called for reforms, which was one of the ends for which the mendicant orders first arose,

gifted preachers. But Smith further points out an exacerbating factor, that many of the Spirituals had adopted the eschatological ideas of Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135-1202), for which reason Bonaventure's predecessor, John of Parma, had been asked to resign. Joachim divided all of redemptive history into three ages associated with the Father, Son, and Spirit respectively. He foretold that the third and final age would be ushered in by truly spiritual men, which the Spirituals interpreted to be Francis and those who lived strictly by his rule. As such, formal theological education was not considered necessary in the age of the Spirit. Thus, Smith concludes:

The challenges facing Bonaventure when he wrote the *Itinerarium*, therefore, were manifold. The Franciscans were building a convent, devoted to learning and study, in order to prepare the friars for the more sophisticated teaching and preaching called for in the burgeoning medieval towns. The challenge was how to do all this while retaining the humility and simplicity of St. Francis. How could one get the benefits of a university-level education and face the intellectual challenges of the day without losing the vision of Christian wisdom that says all learning should lead to God the Father, through the Son – incarnate, crucified, and risen – in the Holy Spirit? How, in other words, was he going to respond, when he got to the general council at Narbonne, to the legitimate concerns of the Spirituals while not compromising the legitimate needs of the Conventuals? These, I would suggest, were the concerns on his mind when he made his retreat to Mt. Alverna; they were the concerns he brought as well to his writing of the *Itinerarium*.⁵

and especially for more educated and intellectually robust preaching: "Among the various things that are conducive to the salvation of the Christian people, the nourishment of God's word is recognized to be especially necessary, since just as the body is fed with material food so the soul is fed with spiritual food, according to the words, man lives not by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. It often happens that bishops by themselves are not sufficient to minister the word of God to the people, especially in large and scattered dioceses, whether this is because of their many occupations or bodily infirmities or because of incursions of the enemy or for other reasons — let us not say for lack of knowledge, which in bishops is to be altogether condemned and is not to be tolerated in the future. We therefore decree by this general constitution that bishops are to appoint suitable men to carry out with profit this duty of sacred preaching, men who are powerful in word and deed and who will visit with care the peoples entrusted to them in place of the bishops, since these by themselves are unable to do it, and will build them up by word and example. ... If anyone neglects to do this, let him be subject to severe punishment" (n.10), <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm> (emphasis added). Cf. David d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Carendon Press, 1985), 15-16, "This decree is a sign of the shortage of preachers as well of the desire to put matters right. It recognizes that for a variety of reasons — and implies that ignorance cannot always be ruled out — bishops may not be able adequately to minister in person to their people, especially in large dioceses. For this reason bishops are ordered to choose suitable men to perform the function of preaching, and to supply these helpers with necessities if need be. The importance of this decree has been recognized by historians. It would be hard to prove that the decree opened the door to an age of more frequent preaching; the hinge was certainly well oiled, for preaching was part of the ideal of the 'apostolic life' whose attraction was so widely felt in the twelfth century and after, and the Franciscan and Dominican orders, which dominate the preaching revival, were already beginning their work. Still, most scholars would agree that the decree marks, even if it did not cause, the beginning of a new age in the history of preaching, and that it calls attention to the gravity of the problem—too few popular sermons—which the friars in the event went far towards solving."

⁵ Smith, *Bonaventure's Journey*, 34-35.

Bonaventure wrote the *Itinerarium*, at least in part, in order to address the concerns of the Spirituals, by demonstrating how all of the vast learning of the schoolmen can be reduced to God. In this way, he demonstrates that a greater communion with God himself can and should be the proper goal of all their academic pursuits. In a beautiful display of the vastness of his own learning, Bonaventure shows that academic study is not contrary to the Spirit or to spiritual ends, for the Spirit can use all such knowledge of the truth to stir up within the soul spiritual affection for what is good, and so increase its knowledge and love of God as truth and goodness itself. Moreover, Bonaventure is equally careful to remind his more sympathetic readers, those friars already inclined to academic pursuits, that all of their learning *must be spiritual*. If their studies are to be ordered rightly and pursued for the proper end, they must lead to a greater communion with and conformity to God — they must be pursued as though from God, through God, and leading to God.⁶

Therefore, I first of all invite the reader to groans of prayer through Christ crucified, through whose blood we are purged from the stain of our sins. Do not think that reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without admiration, circumspection without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without charity, intelligence without humility, study without divine grace, the mirror without the inspiration of divine wisdom. ... At the same time I warn them that to have the mirror of the external world placed before them is of little significance unless the mirror of the mind is cleansed and polished.⁷

Bonaventure agreed with the Spirituals in this much, that to pursue learning as an end in itself *would* be contrary to Francis's original vision. But what is more, it would frustrate the proper and ultimate end of all such pursuits themselves: the contemplation of God through and in the things he has made.

In his own retelling of it, as cited above, the overall structure of the *Itinerarium* came to him as he reflected upon Francis's own contemplative "vision of the winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified." He discerned in Francis's vision not only the means whereby Francis himself was

⁶ Smith, *Bonaventure's Journey*, 15, "To simplify something that is obviously more complex, I suggest that Bonaventure's goal was twofold. It was, first, to convince the simple, uneducated friars — those who might be wondering why followers of St. Francis, the patron saint of the simple life, would need to study for years for advanced degrees at places like the University of Paris — that study and learning can in fact lead to God. And second, he sought to convince the educated friars — those benefiting from a highly sophisticated education in the arts and philosophy at places like the University of Paris — that study and learning *should* lead to God."

⁷ *Itin.*, prol., 4 [V, 296a-b] (Hayes, trans., 39-41).

lifted up to God in and through the Crucified but also “the road by which [we too] might arrive at this [same] experience.” As such, Bonaventure perceived in the sevenfold pattern of Francis’s vision a contemplative itinerary around which every Franciscan should be able to unite: “For those six wings can well be understood as symbols of six levels of uplifting illuminations through which the soul is prepared, as it were by certain stages or steps, to pass over to peace through the ecstatic rapture of Christian wisdom. There is no other way but through the most burning love of the Crucified.”⁸ Most basically, then, the *Itinerarium* consists of six chapters, after a brief introduction, of gradually ascending contemplations culminating in a seventh that is conceived after the likeness of Francis’s purported experience. But in addition to this general outline of the text, Smith argues at length that the internal structure of the *Itinerarium*, though not itself a sermon per se, is structured according to the new modern style of preaching that was at that time being taught in the schools. The three main responsibilities of the Masters were to read/lecture, dispute/debate, and preach, and to train others to do the same. Instead, then, of being an occasion to break free from the constraints of the scholastic method,⁹ the style of the *Itinerarium* follows the scholastic method of preaching. This too is significant, for one of Bonaventure’s immediate goals was to form better preachers by demonstrating how rigorous study can and should lead to greater communion and conformity with God through Christ, as well as to encourage better preaching. Unto this end, he seeks to exemplify the best methods of preaching in the *Itinerarium* itself — methods that sought to produce rhetorically sophisticated sermons that were also conducive for memorization and recollection.¹⁰

Therefore, the intellectual rigor of the *Itinerarium* aims to demonstrate how academic learning *can* and *does* lead to God and, therefore, ought to lead *us* closer to God as well. Similarly, its sermonic form aims to help them receive and remember its content, while also helping his brothers grow in their own ability to communicate the same truths to others in an increasingly educated culture. The ultimate and timeless aim of the *Itinerarium*, however, is no less than the

⁸ *Itin.*, prolog., 3 [V, 295b] (Hayes, trans., 37).

⁹ Philotheus Boehner, “Introduction to Bonaventure,” in *Itinerarium* (Hayes, trans.), 9, “In his great theological writings, the Seraphic Doctor is bound by the fetters of scholastic method and tradition. These allow little freedom to the Seraphic spirit which, though everywhere present in his writings, seldom makes its presence felt to one unfamiliar with it. ... [In the *Itinerarium*] we discover a new Bonaventure, the true Franciscan, who has learned from Saint Francis not only the rules and form of life, but his whole outlook, his ideal.”

¹⁰ Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey*, 54-55.

actual journey of the soul in its pursuit of God — a journey that is simultaneously intellectual and spiritual. And the means by which we are to achieve this end is contemplation.

2. The Formal Structure of the *Itinerarium*

The *Itinerarium* is not a work of evangelism intended to lead souls to salvation in Christ. It presupposes a Christian audience, most immediately his own Franciscan brothers. It is a spiritual exercise charting a course for Christian contemplation in the service of Christian ends. And so he writes, “To those who are already disposed by divine grace — to the humble and pious; to those who are devout and sorrowful for their sins, to those anointed with the *oil of gladness*; to those who are lovers of divine wisdom and are inflamed with desire for it; and to those who wish to give themselves to glorifying, admiring, and even savoring God, I propose the following reflections.”¹¹ We must be careful, however, not to conclude from this that the whole course of the *Itinerarium* can be reduced to theology as such, or to such knowledge that ipso facto presupposes the light of faith. It shall be argued instead that the literary structure of the *Itinerarium* sets forth two contemplative trajectories, one that is philosophical and another that is theological.

Though there are differences among scholars over the precise structure of the *Itinerarium*, as we shall shortly observe, all agree with Denys Turner that it “is at once extraordinarily complex and lucid.”¹² As to what is most clear, all agree that the first six chapters of the *Itinerarium* present six ascending stages of contemplation, according to increasing degrees of illumination “which begin with creatures and lead to God,” culminating in the ecstasy of the seventh chapter — just as the six days of creation culminated in the perfection and rest of the seventh. Bonaventure thematically grounds the entire work upon Psalm 85:11: “Lead me, O Lord, in your way so that I might enter into your truth. Let my heart rejoice that it may be in awe of your name.”¹³ From this verse he divides the first six chapters or stages of contemplation into three main parts, corresponding to the threefold existence of things, namely, “in matter, in understanding, and in the

¹¹ *Itin.*, prol., 4 [V, 296a-b] (Hayes, trans., 39-41).

¹² Turner, *Darkness*, 107.

¹³ *Itin.*, I.1 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 45).

eternal art,” which the soul apprehends through the eyes of flesh, of reason, and of contemplation respectively.¹⁴ Bonaventure explains:

In order to arrive at that First principle which is most spiritual and eternal, and above us, it is necessary that we move through the vestiges which are bodily and temporal and outside us. ... Next, we must enter into our minds which is the image of God, an image which is everlasting, spiritual, and within us. ... Finally, we must pass beyond to that which is eternal, most spiritual, and above us by raising our eyes to the First Principle.¹⁵

Bonaventure outlines three contemplative vantage points (outside, inside, and above) from which God may be increasingly contemplated as the soul ascends from its apprehension of the truth of things themselves (through and in his vestiges), to the soul that apprehends the truth of things (through and in his image), to the light of truth and goodness itself (through and in God himself). In connecting his outline to his *thema*, Psalm 85:11, he adds that the first “is to be led in the way of God;” the second “is to enter into the truth of God;” and the third “will bring us to rejoice in the knowledge of God and to stand in awe before God’s majesty.”¹⁶ Accordingly, the first two chapters begin at the bottommost pair of the Seraph’s wings, or the bottom rung of the ladder, to contemplate God in his vestiges, reflecting upon the external and material existence of sensible creatures themselves. In chapters 3 and 4, the soul rises above the material conditions of things in order to contemplate God in his image, reflecting upon the internal and spiritual operations of the soul that were already implicitly at work in the previous stage of contemplation — i.e., the soul contemplates itself contemplating. In chapters 5 and 6, the soul rises even above itself to contemplate the divine light and truth that had been cognitively implicated and implicitly presupposed in all of the intellectual operations and reflections of the previous levels.

Bonaventure summarizes the threefold division in this way: “In harmony with this threefold progression, our mind has three principal ways of seeing things. One way relates to the corporeal beings outside the mind In another way, the mind looks at itself and within itself In the third way, it looks above itself.”¹⁷ As Hammond observes, “The basic triad, outside us (*extra*

¹⁴ *Itin.*, I.3 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 47).

¹⁵ *Itin.*, I.2 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 47).

¹⁶ *Itin.*, I.2 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 47).

¹⁷ *Itin.*, I.4 [V, 297b] (Hayes, trans., 49). Years earlier Bonaventure made the same threefold distinction in his *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 4 [I, 72b-73], though the idea of interiority as a means of contemplative ascent betrays an Augustinian influence at least (from both his *Confessions* and his treatise *On the Trinity*). Cf. Turner, *Darkness*, 74-134; Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey*, 99.

nos), within us (*intra nos*), above us (*supra nos*), structures the *Itinerarium* in a hierarchical manner that leads from the lowest, through the intermediate, to the highest.”¹⁸ And as such, the first six chapters proceed upward, two chapters at a time, from the exterior to the interior and from the interior to the superior, or from the sensible to the intelligible and from the intelligible to the eternal — culminating in the rapture and ecstasy of the seventh and final chapter.

There seems to be little disagreement or confusion concerning this relatively straightforward threefold structure and upward movement of the *Itinerarium*. But within this overarching threefold structure, the reader will quickly discover “layers within layers” of divisions and subdivisions.¹⁹ Even if one does not agree with all of his conclusions, Randall Smith has done a great service to lay and academic readers alike in his recent publication, *Bonaventure’s Journey of the Soul into God: Context and Commentary*, by providing both source analysis and a detailed outline of the text in light of the sermonic conventions of Bonaventure’s own day.²⁰ But the most significant difference among interpreters has to do with the way in which Bonaventure further distinguishes each set of chapters within each of the three overarching divisions (chs. 1-2; 3-4; 5-6). He writes: “Each of these [three] foregoing ways may be doubled depending on whether we consider God as the *alpha* and the *omega*, or in as far as we consider God in each of the abovementioned ways as *through* a mirror or as *in* a mirror. Or we may consider each of these ways as related to another with which it is connected, or simply in itself in its purity. Thus, it is necessary that these three principal levels of ascent be increased to six.”²¹ In other words, at each of the three levels of contemplation, God is said to be contemplated in one of two ways: either as the *alpha*, considered *through a mirror*, relative to the order or *connection among things*; or, as the *omega*, considered *in a mirror*, relative to *each thing’s own purity*. Understanding this distinction has been the aim of our entire study, though we consider it now in its more immediate relation to the structure of the *Itinerarium* itself.

We have had a number of occasions to point out that Bonaventure himself offers a slightly more detailed explanation of this distinction in his earlier *Commentary on the Sentences*: “Knowing God *in* a creature is different from knowing God *through* a creature. Knowing God *in* a creature is knowing his presence and influence in the creature. ... Knowing God *through* a

¹⁸ Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” 204.

¹⁹ Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey*, 72.

²⁰ Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey*, see especially his outline in Appendix 1.

²¹ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b] (Hayes, trans., 49).

creature, by contrast, is being lifted up from knowing the creature to knowing God, as by a ladder connecting the two.”²² In at least one other place, he describes the difference in similar terms: “It must be said that there is a difference between seeing a thing *in a mirror* and *through a mirror*. For through a mirror refers to the one who sees God by ascending from the knowledge of the creature to the knowledge of the Creator; but he who sees in a mirror clearly beholds God in the creature itself.”²³ But despite Bonaventure’s additional clarifications, scholars differ over what Bonaventure intends by this distinction and how it is manifest in the chapter divisions of the *Itinerarium*.²⁴ The first part of Bonaventure’s explanation, concerning what it means to contemplate God *through* creatures, seems clear enough, but far less clarity remains with respect to what it means to contemplate God *in* creatures. How should it be distinguished from and related to the former distinction? And how does this distinction work itself out in the structure of the *Itinerarium*?

2.1 The State of the Question

A promising proposal has been offered by J. M. Hammond’s 2001 publication, “Order in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*.” Instead of settling the matter, however, the article initiated an academic debate, prompting a critique and alternative proposal from Gregory F. LaNave in a 2009 article, “Knowing God through and in All Things: A Proposal for Reading Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*.” In the same volume, Hammond offered a further “Respondeo” to LaNave’s counterproposal. And several years later, in 2014, LaNave’s article reappeared in the book, *Debates in Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses*, wherein Timothy B. Noone offers his own assessment.²⁵ What follows, therefore, is a brief summary of this debate and of the significant proposals that have emerged from it.

²² *I Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.sole, q.3 [I, 74b] (Houser and Noone, trans., 80).

²³ *III Sent.*, d.31, a.2, q.1, ad 5 [III, 682a], *dicendum, quod differt dicere, videre rem in speculo et per speculum. Per speculum enim dicitur videre Deum qui ascendit a cognitione creaturae ad cognitionem Creatoris; in speculo vero videt qui Deum in ipsa creatura clare intuetur.*

²⁴ Turner, *Darkness*, 109, “The second principle which governs the subdivision of each of these three steps into a further two, yielding a total of six, is less easy to understand.”

²⁵ Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” 191-271. Gregory F. LaNave, “Knowing God through and in All Things: A Proposal for Reading Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*,” *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 267-299;

In his initial publication in 2001, Hammond appended an article to the end of a monograph which he translated by J. A. Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*. In it, Hammond builds upon Hellmann's insights into Bonaventure's concept of order, not unlike what we have done throughout this study, and he seeks to apply those insights to the way in which Bonaventure orders the *Itinerarium*. Building on Hellmann's work, Hammond's thesis is that the two chapters within each of the three stages follow a dialectical ascent that progressively contemplate God within what Hellmann calls the vertical and horizontal orders, which is his way of capturing Bonaventure's distinction between the extrinsic order of being or essence and the intrinsic order of things themselves that is analogous to the intrinsic order of the divine persons.²⁶ Hammond expounds upon his thesis in a way that helps explain our own, though our differences will be noted in due course. To know God *through a mirror* (*per speculum*) and *through a creature* (*per creaturam*), which constitutes the first of the two chapters at each level (chs. 1-3-5), is to know God in a philosophical way, that is, knowledge that moves from an effect back to its cause (as *Alpha*), that is, from a knowledge of creatures to a knowledge of the Creator relative to the overall order of being. This path yields a knowledge of the ways in which the essential properties of God's *being* are analogically reflected *through* the mirror of created beings. Conversely, to know God *in a mirror* (*in speculo*) and *in a creature* (*in creatura*), which constitutes the second of the two chapters at each level (chs. 2-4-6), is to know God in a theological way, that is, knowledge that moves from the cause (as *Omega*) back to its effects, viewing them in a trinitarian light. This path yields a knowledge of the ways in which the intrinsic order of the divine persons is analogically reflected *in* the mirror and intrinsic order of created beings. Hammond is worth quoting at length:

Thus, chapters 1-3-5 relate to those speculations that are possible through the light of reason. This is the vertical order which can be known through the science of philosophy. Chapters 2-4-6 describe those speculations that are possible only through the light of

LaNave's article was also republished in Jeffrey Hause, ed., *Debates in Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses*, 181-203 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014). Jay M. Hammond, "Bonaventure's 'Itinerarium': A 'Respondeo'," *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 301-321. Timothy B. Noone, "St. Bonaventure: *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*," in *Debates in Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses*, ed. Jeffrey Hause (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 204-214.

²⁶ Hellmann, *Divine Order*, 25-29, 85, 105; Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 215-254. Cf. *II Sent.*, d.1, p.2, a.2, qq.1-2 [II, 43-47]. Cf. *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 471a], *Si ergo videmus in ordine causarum, inter quas est ordo essentialis, quod primitas facit, esse summam influentiam in causa, et maiorem influentiam secundum essentiam: pari ratione, ubi est ordo personarum, primitas in prima persona est ratio producendi alias; et quia innascibilis dicit primitatem, hinc est, quod dicit fontalem plenitudinem respect productionis personalis.*

revelation. This is the horizontal order of the persons of the Trinity which can only be known through faith. Bonaventure himself hints at this relationship when he comments on the association between chapters 3 and 4, namely, ‘For this stage of contemplation the consideration of divinely imparted sacred Scripture is especially helpful just as philosophy is for the proceeding stage.’ For Bonaventure, the mirror of revelation always perfects the mirror of reason.

... It needs to be pointed out here that the two mirrors operate in an inverse or reciprocal manner within the text. On the one side, *through* a mirror relates to the philosophical knowledge of God arrived at by a consideration of triple causality: efficient, exemplary, and final. By this approach, Bonaventure maintains that all finite reality can be led back to one first principle which is the ultimate origin, exemplar, and end of everything. The ‘philosophical movement’ begins with triple causality and ends with their one ultimate cause, the *primum principium*. For Bonaventure, philosophical inquiry can arrive at God, but can go no further. On the other side, the ‘theological movement’ starts with the belief that the *primum principium*, as Trinity, is the triple cause of everything that exists. Thus theological inquiry considers how the indwelling presence of the Trinity *ad extra* can be known according to its effects thereby leading everything to union with God. This reciprocity is closely related to [Bonaventure’s] first method of doubling via God as the *Alpha* and *Omega*.²⁷

Hammond adds to this the idea that the first way follows the order of knowledge, whereas the second follows the order of salvation. In the first place, because all of our knowledge is foremost derived from things below, according to an analogy of being, the first way therefore follows the order of knowledge from created being to uncreated being, as the knowledge of one thing leads to the knowledge of another and, ultimately, to an analogical knowledge of the first “to Be.” Through a *reductio* of the knowledge of creatures to God as the ultimate principle of being and knowing (*Alpha*) by means of the Word *as exemplar*, the intellect reaches a degree of perfection with respect to its own natural operations. The second way, however, presupposes the perfection and transformation of the soul’s own intrinsic order (*in sua puritate*) within the economy of grace and salvation through an indwelling presence of God whereby the soul is supra-naturally enabled to discern his trinitarian presence *in* the intrinsic order of all creatures as well. Through a *reductio* of the knowledge of creatures to God as the ultimate end of all things (*Omega*) by means of the Word *as mediator*, the perfection of the intellect is extended to the affections, perfecting the whole soul and bringing all things with it back to God as their highest good and ultimate end.²⁸

²⁷ Hammond, “Order in the Itinerarium,” 220-221.

²⁸ Hammond, “Order in the Itinerarium,” 213, 215, 217, 222-228.

Within the vertical order of being, wherein one thing is considered relative to another and to their first principle, the higher that one is on the chain of being, a greater similitude to God will be reflected through them (i.e., vestige, image, and likeness). Hammond contends that as the mind ascends the so-called vertical order of being, it moves from the distant similitude of God manifest through his *vestiges* (ch. 1), through the nearer similitude of his *image* (ch. 3), until it reach the height of his created *likeness* (ch. 5), according to which Hammond accounts for the threefold division of the *Itinerarium*. And the higher a creature is in the extrinsic order of being and, therefore, closer in proximate similitude to God (vestige, image, and likeness), the greater also will be its interior conformity to its threefold trinitarian principle within the so-called horizontal order. “Throughout the ascent both orders interpenetrate each other. ... The first [of each the three sets of chapters] approaches from the perspective of the vertical order and the second follows by elaborating on how the horizontal order is also manifested in the same object.”²⁹ Just as grace presupposes nature, so the second chapter in each of the three sets presupposes the first; the degree to which the intrinsic order of trinitarian relations is manifest in the so-called horizontal order of each creature will depend upon its placement within the vertical order of being. And therefore, as the contemplative ascends the vertical order of being *through* the mirror (*per speculum*) of the external relation of things (chs. 1-3-5), the contemplative is able to see (*specere*), at each of the three levels (vestige, image, likeness), a correspondingly greater reflection of the Trinity *in* the mirror (*in speculo*) of the intrinsic constitution of those same creatures (chs. 2-4-6). Hammond offers a helpful summary of his own view:

On the one hand, *to know the Alpha is to see God through a mirror according to the mind's power of concomitant awareness of objects*. These express the vertical order and primarily relate to how reason can arrive at philosophical knowledge of God in chapters 1-3-5. On the other hand, *to know the Omega is to see God in a mirror according to the mind's reflexive awareness of God's Trinitarian presence in the object itself*. These express the horizontal order and primarily relate to how revelation provides the wayfarer with theological knowledge in chapters 2-4-6. Throughout, philosophy and theology touch, like two lights from the same source, at the *primum principium*.³⁰

Before we consider the critique and alternative proposal offered by Gregory F. LaNave, it may be helpful at this point to offer a critique of our own. This will serve to highlight where and

²⁹ Hammond, “Order in the Itinerarium,” 225. Cf. Hellmann, *Divine Order*, 26.

³⁰ Hammond, “Order in the Itinerarium,” 226.

how our own thesis differs from what has been proposed thus far. There is a great deal of Hammond's proposal that is profoundly helpful. Where we differ most especially has to do with the way in which he makes Bonaventure's vestige-image-likeness distinction the structuring principle by which the threefold division of the *Itinerarium* is demarcated.³¹ The distinction itself is certainly valid; and Bonaventure does indeed identify the object of the first two chapters as the *vestiges* outside us and the object of the middle two chapters as the *image* within us. Bonaventure makes this much clearer at the outset of the *Itinerarium*.³² What is being contested here is Hammond's conclusion that *likeness* demarcates the object of chapters 5 and 6, as tempting as this may be. Hammond acknowledges that "Bonaventure does not identify the specific level of similitude [i.e., likeness] by name in 1.2," but Hammond nevertheless contends that "he does identify it by name in 7.1 when he summarizes the journey the mind has made."³³ Before considering what Bonaventure actually says at the end of the *Itinerarium*, it is worth noting two things that should give us pause. First, Bonaventure's lack of mention of *likeness* in chapter 1 wherein he so carefully lays out the itinerary should make us wary of imposing it upon the structure of the text. Second, and more importantly, Bonaventure *does* identify the object of chapters 5 and 6, not as the *likeness* within us, but as the *First Principle* above us — a distinction we'll return to shortly.

But what about Bonaventure's summary at the end of the journey? He writes:

Our mind has co-intuited God *outside itself* through vestiges and in vestiges, *within itself* through an image and in an image, [and] *above itself* through the likeness of the divine light shining upon us and in the light itself, inasmuch as it is possible for the exercise of our mind as wayfarers; only in the *sixth* degree may it arrive at this [i.e., in the light itself], as it sees in the first and supreme principle and mediator of *God and men*, Jesus Christ, the likenesses of which things in no way found in creatures, and which surpass all perspicacity of the human intellect.³⁴

³¹ Others, with some variation, argue for the same vestige-image-likeness division of the text. See Denys Turner, *Darkness of God*, 108-109; Randall Smith, *Bonaventure's Journey*, who draws his conclusion from Hammond, 101-109.

³² *Itin.*, I.2 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 47).

³³ Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 201n.34.

³⁴ *Itin.*, VII.1 [V, 312a-b], translation my own (cf. Hayes, trans., 133). *Postquam mens nostra contuita est Deum extra se per vestigia et in vestigiis, intra se per imaginem et in imagine, supra se per divinae lucis similitudinem super nos relucentem et in ipsa luce, secundum quod possibile est secundum statum viae et exercitium mentis nostrae; cum tandem in sexto gradu ad hoc pervenerit, ut speculetur in principio primo et summo et mediatore Dei et hominum, Iesu Christo ea quorum similia in creaturis nullatenus reperiri possunt, et quae omnem perspicacitatem humani intellectus excedunt.*

Admittedly he does now use the term similitude or likeness to describe the object of chapters 5 and 6, and this at least opens up the possibility that Bonaventure has in mind that *likeness* which is the image. But upon closer examination this interpretation seems improbable. Concerning the vestige-image-likeness distinction, it is helpful to remember that a vestige is related to God as the principle who created it, whereas an image is related to God as the end that moves it and a likeness as the gift that indwells it. And so, “all creatures are related to the Creator in the first way, all intelligences in the second, and all spirits that are just and acceptable to God in the third.”³⁵ As such, the image-likeness distinction does not signify a higher *being* above that of the image, in the way that an image is a higher *being* than a vestige within the vertical *order of being*. Rather, it refers to a distinction that can be made *within us*, i.e., within the image as such. In other words, relative to the threefold schema of *outside us*, *within us*, and *above us*, the image-likeness distinction does not signify the transition from *within us* to *above us*; rather, it signifies the different ways in which the image *within us* may be considered both vertically and horizontally, that is, through a mirror philosophically and in a mirror theologically — which, contrary to Hammond’s proposal, is precisely the distinction we find *within* the second step, between chapters 3 and 4, rather than between the second and third steps (chs 3-4 and 5-6). In chapter 3 the mind contemplates God through the image, considered *as an image*, relative to the vestigial characteristics whereby it is peculiarly capable of God and distinguishable from other creatures within the extrinsic order of being. In chapter 4, the mind contemplates God in the same image, but now *as it is also a likeness*, relative to its properly-trinitarian characteristics, with respect to the perfection of its own intrinsic order by divine grace. This may be easily observed in the titles which Bonaventure ascribes to both chapters: chapter 3, “The Speculation of God through the Image Imprinted on Our Natural Powers” (*De speculatione Dei per suam imaginem naturalibus potentiis insignitam*); chapter 4, “The Speculation of God in the Image Reformed by the Gifts of Grace” (*De speculatione Dei in sua imagine donis gratuitis reformata*). As such, Bonaventure has something else in mind when he summarizes the object of chapters 5 and 6 as “the likeness of the divine light shining upon us,” whereby the mind is elevated to an object “*above itself*” as an image-likeness, that is, to God himself, inasmuch as he may be seen through and in his own light shining upon us in our wayfaring state. Whereas earlier chapters contemplate God by means of his light

³⁵ *Brev.*, II.12.2 [V, 230a] (Monti, trans., 97). Cf. *I Sent.*, d.3, a.1, q.2 [I, 71a-73b]; *III Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.1, q.2 [III, 65a-69b]; *Scientia Christi*, q.4 [V, 22b-24b].

shinning through and in his vestiges and his image-likeness, chapters 5 and 6 culminate in the mind's contemplation of God through and in the divine light itself that had been variously implicated in the mind's journey all along.

Although the rest of Hammond's proposal remains coherent apart from his making the image *as a likeness* the object of chapters 5 and 6, his doing so nevertheless results in no small implication that puts his proposal in stark contrast with our own. In his own words, if a "similitude refers to the infused gift or God's indwelling presence which acts as the threefold cause in the moral order (faith, hope, love) drawing all things back to the Father," then it would follow that "chapters 5 and 6 ponder the transcendent in its 'highest' operation in the similitude."³⁶ And from this he readily concludes that "only after the soul is reformed by grace (ch. 4) can the mind arrive at the similitude of the divine order itself (chs. 5-6)." The effect of this particular proposal is to make grace absolutely necessary, and not just profitable, for the attainment of the philosophical wisdom of chapter 5 — a conclusion that is not uncommon in Bonaventuran scholarship but one that we have already rejected as unpersuasive. The difference between our proposal and Hammond's is that in his view "the disorder of sin halts the *Itinerarium*," making even philosophical wisdom (ch. 5), at least at its summit, an absolute impossibility apart from grace (ch. 4).³⁷ Though we agree that sin has greatly impeded the progress of unregenerate reason and limits the purity of its outcomes, we have argued that the pursuit of philosophical wisdom, and thus philosophical contemplation (chs. 1-3-5), is in Bonaventure's view *possible* apart from grace, even if not ideal. However, to state our position more fully, it may be said that Bonaventure would indeed affirm the absolute necessity of grace, not for philosophical wisdom and philosophical contemplation (chs. 1-3-5) itself, but for the soul's completion of the entire itinerary, wherein the philosophical way is elevated and perfected at each of three stages of the *Itinerarium* by means of theological wisdom and theological contemplation (chs. 2-4-6), thus preparing and disposing it for its rapture in glory (ch. 7).

LaNave similarly rejects the vestige-image-likeness distinction as a structural paradigm for the *Itinerarium*, but he also challenges the consistency of Hammond's, and by extension my own, twofold philosophical-theological schema.³⁸ He does not deny that there is some basis for the

³⁶ Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 226, 205.

³⁷ Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 202.

³⁸ LaNave, "Knowing God," (2014): 200n.3.

distinction itself, both in the *Itinerarium* and in Bonaventure's larger corpus. But he judges it to be an insufficient way of articulating what Bonaventure intends by his "*through* and *in* creatures" distinction. LaNave argues that there are inconsistencies in the so-called philosophical trajectory (chs. 1-3-5), wherein certain faith-commitments seem to guide some of Bonaventure's arguments. Thus, he concludes, "If this trajectory of the *Itinerarium* were concerned only with philosophical ways to God, such considerations would be entirely out of place, resting as they do on faith." Instead, he opts for a broader structural principle, namely, he suggests "that the knowing of God *through* in this trajectory of the *Itinerarium* is based in the consideration of what things are," and because Bonaventure sometimes depends upon the light of faith in order to answer this guiding question, it again shows that he is not limiting himself to philosophical reasoning.³⁹ The purported inconsistencies which LaNave raises will be duly considered below, but already the strength of his judgment is weakened by two considerations. The first is that Bonaventure himself does not explain his own distinction in the imprecise way that LaNave suggests. Rather, to know God *through* a creature is to know him "by ascending from the knowledge of the creature to the knowledge of the Creator," which is to know him in a philosophical way. The second consideration is that much depends upon the precise role which faith plays within the first trajectory of the *Itinerarium*, which is a question neither asked nor answered by LaNave; for it is possible for faith to provide extrinsic controls upon our use of reason within the domain of philosophy, that is, in order to make philosophizing *as philosophizing* easier and yet no less philosophical.

Nevertheless, by calling the consistency of the philosophical-theological schema into question, and by broadening the structuring principle of the first trajectory, LaNave opened up the possibility of another sort of explanation for the second trajectory, i.e., knowing God *in* his creatures (chs. 2-4-6). LaNave suggests that, rather than theological knowledge as such, or the doctrine of the Trinity in particular, "Bonaventure's doctrine of sensation" becomes the second structuring principle.⁴⁰ Chapter 2 is considered the key to a proper understanding of the second trajectory, and in particular its appeal to sensation. In II.7, Bonaventure draws an intriguing analogy between the process of sensation — wherein a sensible object generates a likeness of itself and unites it to our sensory organs in order that it be sensed by us — and the Father's generation of the Son in eternity and his hypostatic union with a rational soul and body in time in order that

³⁹ LaNave, "Knowing God," (2014): 187, 189.

⁴⁰ LaNave, "Knowing God," (2014): 189.

we might be led back to the Father through him. According to LaNave, it is true but insufficient to suggest that Bonaventure is saying that the Christian who possesses a knowledge of the Trinity, by virtue of the uncreated Word made sensible in the incarnation, is thereby able to apprehend its vestiges in the very act of sensation. He maintains that Bonaventure intends more than this:

My own reading is that our knowledge in faith of the Trinity is directly implicated in natural sensation. Our knowledge of the perfect generation in the Trinity conditions our experience of sensate apprehension, our knowledge of supreme delight in the Son conditions our experience of sensate delight, and our knowledge of the Son as the Eternal Art in whom lies the truth of all things is directly implicated in the judgments we make upon our sensations.⁴¹

Regarding the judgments we make concerning our sensations, LaNave contends that the intellect abstracts the form of a thing and then compares it to its eternal exemplar, which is therefore directly implicated in our judgments. To my knowledge, LaNave does not explain what he means by “compares” or “directly implicated in the judgments we make,” but he ascribes a less direct correlation with our sensory apprehension and delight. Here, LaNave maintains that our sensory apprehension and delight are “conditioned” by our knowledge of the Trinity. He seems to be proposing that the Christian’s trinitarian knowledge of God, and especially the incarnate Word, conditions our apprehension of things and what we perceive as pleasurable and delightful. “In summary,” LaNave writes, “knowing the truth of the Trinity modifies one’s sense for what happens in natural sensation. ... My claim is that Bonaventure is turning our attention to a capacity within the person that is sensitive to the divine presence and able to be formed by it.”⁴² Taking chapter 2 as the key, LaNave argues that chapter 4 of the *Itinerarium* proceeds to apply this “doctrine of sensation” to the image of God, in accordance to one’s own self-awareness of their transformation by grace and their new spiritual and theological sensitivity to the divine presence, not only in creatures outside the soul (ch. 2) but also in the soul itself (ch. 4). And the soul’s own sense of and delight in the triune presence and influence of God within itself (ch. 4) leads to a sense of and delight in the Trinity itself as our highest end and ultimate good (ch. 6).

While LaNave offers many helpful insights, I find Hammond’s criticism of his proposal generally convincing, namely, that he extracts a “logic of sensation” from chapter 2 and imposes

⁴¹ LaNave, “Knowing God,” (2014): 191.

⁴² LaNave, “Knowing God,” (2014): 193, 194.

it upon chapters 4 and 6. In doing so, he “wanders from the text's own structure and terminology.”⁴³ Moreover, I would argue that LaNave’s rejection of the larger philosophical-theological schema is unjustified and unnecessary. On the one hand, the purported intrusion of faith-commitments into the first trajectory will be considered in relation to the material content of the *Itinerarium* below, wherein the consistency of a properly *philosophical* movement will be defended. On the other hand, whatever role Bonaventure’s “doctrine of sensation” plays in the second trajectory, upon which LaNave’s particular proposal is based, it does so within a distinctly *theological* context. As observed in the previous chapter, the spiritual senses about which LaNave speaks presuppose not only the presence of the theological virtues but also the exercise of them upon their supernatural and theological object. In the exercise of faith, the soul’s spiritual sense of hearing and of sight are restored; in its exercise of hope, its spiritual sense of smell is restored; and in its exercise of love, it recovers its sense of taste and touch. “With its spiritual senses restored [by grace], the soul now sees, hears, smells, tastes, and embraces its beloved.”⁴⁴

Whereas LaNave’s proposal makes chapter 2 the “key” to a proper understanding of the second trajectory, I would propose that, inasmuch as the end always determines the means, and insofar as chapter 6 marks the end of the second trajectory, it stands to reason that chapter 6 holds the key. And Bonaventure plainly tells us that the “key” to chapter 6 is not so much a “logic of sensation” but the theological purchase associated with the Christian’s contemplation of “the good.” He writes, “Just as *being* itself is the foundational principle and the name through which the essential attributes [of God] come to be known” as the end of the first trajectory, “so the good is the most basic foundation for our contemplation of the [trinitarian] emanations” as the end of the second trajectory.⁴⁵ In the end, the soul is led to a contemplation of the Trinity (ch. 6), or the intrinsic order of persons, as that which is the highest perfection of goodness itself and, therefore, the highest and ultimate good to which all things are intrinsically ordered. And thus, the means by which the soul is led to its theological summit is the contemplation of the ways in which the intrinsic goodness of all things leads to and reflects the most perfect trinitarian goodness of God (chs. 2, 4) — and to whatever extent this implicates a “logic of sensation,” then so be it. The utility of Bonaventure’s focus upon “the good” throughout the second trajectory can again be seen in the

⁴³ Hammond, “Respondeo,” 317.

⁴⁴ *Itin.*, IV.3 [V, 306b] (Hayes, trans., 99-101).

⁴⁵ *Itin.*, VI.1 [V, 310b] (Hayes, trans., 123); cf. I.1.

different ways in which Bonaventure understands order. Whereas the truth and being of things bespeaks an extrinsic order among things leading to and reflecting their originating and expressive principle (chs. 1-3-5), the goodness of things bespeaks an order within each thing leading to and reflecting the goodness of the divine “order of persons” to whom they themselves are intrinsically ordered as to their final cause (chs. 2-4-6).⁴⁶

2.2 *A Summary of Our Proposal*

The structure of the *Itinerarium* is tremendously complex, yet in a way that contributes to rather than obscures its meaning.⁴⁷ Bonaventure himself likened its grand structural design to a ladder that gradually ascends from the lower to the higher, and ultimately to God. But as helpful as this is, it is also deceptively simplistic. Hammond likens its structure to a literary mandala, which captures the beauty of its complexity but is not especially helpful for the reader. For lack of a more perfect metaphor, the structure of the *Itinerarium* can perhaps be likened to the double helix of a spiral staircase, ascending by means of alternating vantage points. Hammond writes, “These two dimensions of Bonaventure’s basic insight into order are profoundly simple in their premise, but beautifully complex in their application.”⁴⁸ As we have observed, there is a double trajectory running throughout the *Itinerarium*, insofar as God may be contemplated *through creatures* and *in creatures*; and it has been argued through this study that the first proceeds in a philosophical way, whereas the second proceeds in a distinctly theological way. And at each of the three contemplative vantage points that constitute the gradual incline (outside, inside, and above), the contemplative alternates between these two ways. At each of the three stages, the culmination of first trajectory in philosophical wisdom disposes and prepares the soul for the theological way of the second trajectory (chs. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6), so that upon the completion of each stage of philosophical contemplation the soul is elevated and perfected by means of theological contemplation, as it gradually ascends by means of both.

⁴⁶ *I Sent.*, d.8, p.1, a.1, q.1, ad 4 and 7 [I, 151b].

⁴⁷ Cf. *Itin.*, prol., 5 [V, 296b].

⁴⁸ Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” 269.

The ladder-metaphor is complicated, however, by the fact that the *Itinerarium* does not ascend in a purely sequential manner. In this regard we differ from Hammond and others who maintain that the soul cannot ascend to the height of philosophical contemplation in chapter 5 without the reforming graces of chapter 4. Rather, it is argued here that, though they be beautifully intertwined and are capable of being followed sequentially *by the Christian*, both trajectories form their own ladders ascending within the orders of nature and grace respectively and, therefore, form two distinct itineraries (1-3-5 and 2-4-6). As such, the soul that contemplates the Trinity in its vestiges at even the lowest rung of the theological ladder (ch. 2) exercises a higher and more perfect form of wisdom than when contemplating God as the *being* through whom all other beings exist at the highest rung of the philosophical ladder (ch. 5). Taken as a whole, the entire second trajectory elevates and perfects the first so that nature is perfected in grace, and the soul that contemplates the being of God philosophically through creatures is further elevated and perfected by the theological contemplation of the trinity of God in those same creatures. And in a certain respect, the perfect rest of chapter 7 presupposes both trajectories, at least insofar as they both converge upon the contemplation of Jesus Christ, “when, at the same time, our mind sees in a single glance the first and the last, the highest and the lowest, the circumference and the center, the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the caused and the cause, the creator and the creature ... Nothing further remains but the day of rest when in an ecstatic insight the discerning power of the human mind *rests from all the work that it has done*.”⁴⁹

It may also be pointed out that the same philosophical/theological dialectic can be observed in the literary structure of Bonaventure’s *Quaestiones Disputatae de Mystério Trinitatis*, wherein each question has two articles, the first proceeding according to philosophical reasoning, concerning the essential attributes of God, and the second according to a higher theological reasoning, concerning the trinity of persons. This no doubt supports and strengthens our overall proposal and our particular reading of the *Itinerarium* and, thus, deserves greater attention. However, because LaNave argues from what he perceives to be inconsistencies in the purported philosophical/theological structure of *de Mystério Trinitatis* in order to strengthen his claim that there are similar inconsistencies in the *Itinerarium*, we will not elaborate upon this particular connection in defense of our thesis. It should be stated that I similarly disagree with LaNave’s assessment concerning the structural integrity of *de Mystério Trinitatis*, but resolving the apparent

⁴⁹ *Itin.*, VI.7 [V, 312a] (Hayes, trans., 131).

inconsistencies in *de Mysterio Trinitatis* would not only be beyond the scope of this chapter, but, more importantly, our defense of the philosophical/theological structure of the *Itinerarium* in no way depends upon our doing so. Nevertheless, if our proposed reading of the *Itinerarium* is correct, it may inadvertently point to a new way of reading *de Mysterio Trinitatis* as well, that is, as a text devoted to philosophical and theological contemplation.

3. The Material Content of the *Itinerarium*

It is important to begin by stating what this section does not attempt to accomplish. The following is not intended to be a running commentary on the *Itinerarium*, which is a another undertaking altogether. Nor will a summary of every aspect of Bonaventure's argument be attempted. Much of Bonaventure's argument in the *Itinerarium* has already been examined throughout this study from various vantage points. In what follows, the goal is quite modest, namely, to provide a further defense of the twofold philosophical-theological structure of the *Itinerarium*, not principally by repeating all that has been said thus far but by tracing the overall movement of the text and responding to the potential objections or difficulties that arise from it relative to our thesis as it has been set forth throughout this study.

3.1 First Trajectory: Philosophical Contemplation

It has been argued that the first contemplative trajectory or degree of contemplation proceeds in a philosophical way and runs through chapters 1, 3, and 5 according to an ascending order of perfection culminating at the summit of philosophical wisdom. Accordingly, God is contemplated along this itinerary only to the extent that he may be known *through creatures*, as a cause is known through its effects. In other words, this trajectory is limited to a natural knowledge of God's essential properties, insofar as his essence and existence is necessary in order to explain the essence and existence of other beings, relative to the degree of each thing's likeness within the overall order of *being*, whether vestiges or images. "Among created things, some are vestiges; some are corporeal, others are spiritual; some are temporal, others are everlasting; some are outside

us, others are within us.” Much of chapter 1 is taken up with Bonaventure’s multifaceted presentation of the overall structure of the *Itinerarium*. It is helpful here to quote him again:

In order to arrive at that First Principle which is most spiritual and eternal, and above us, it is necessary that we move through the vestiges which are corporeal and temporal and outside us [chs. 1-2]. ... Next, we must enter into our mind which is the image of God, an image which is everlasting, spiritual, and within us [chs. 3-4]. ... Finally, we must pass beyond to that which is eternal, most spiritual, and above us by raising our eyes to the First Principle [ch. 5]. And this will bring us to rejoice in the knowledge of God and to stand in awe before God’s majesty [ch. 6].⁵⁰

3.1.1 Chapter One

It is not until the tenth section of the first chapter that Bonaventure actually begins the contemplative ascent of the first trajectory, beginning as it were with what may be known of God *through* his vestiges, that is, relative to our sensory apprehension of the material conditions of the world of things around us. Not surprisingly, his focus is upon the vestigial character of all things, i.e. of all things that have *being* and manifest the common conditions of *being*. For instance, in correlation with the transcendental conditions of being, Bonaventure highlights how all things consist of weight, number and measure. Measure signifies that whereby the indivisibility or unity of a thing’s being is circumscribed and is thus reducible to its efficient cause; number signifies that whereby the truth of a thing’s being is distinguished and is thus reducible to its formal cause; weight signifies the goodness of a thing’s natural inclination to be drawn to a place of rest and is thus reducible to its final cause. “From these perspectives,” Bonaventure concludes, “we can rise as from the vestige to an understanding of the immense power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator.”⁵¹ Such is the kind of philosophical reasoning that characterizes chapter 1, with one potential exception.

In section twelve, Bonaventure adds that faith also influences the way in which we contemplate God through our sensory apprehension of the world around us. In light of this, LaNave writes: “If this trajectory of the *Itinerarium* were concerned only with philosophical ways to God,

⁵⁰ *Itin.*, I.2 [V, 297a] (Hayes, trans., 47). I have rendered *corporalis* as *corporeal* instead of *bodily* in order to make the contrast more explicit.

⁵¹ *Itin.*, I.11 [V, 298b] (Hayes, trans., 55).

such considerations would be entirely out of place, resting as they do on faith.”⁵² The difficulty is real, but in my judgment LaNave’s conclusion is not as necessary as it may at first seem. In order to present the difficulty with its full force, it is helpful to quote Bonaventure’s words in their entirety.

In the second way of seeing, namely, that of faith, we consider this world by attending to its origin, development, and end. For it is *by faith* that *we believe that the world was fashioned by the Word of life*. By faith we believe that the periods of the three laws followed each other in a most orderly way; namely, the law of nature, the law of Scripture, and the law of grace. By faith we believe that the world is to come to an end in the final judgment. In terms of the first we consider the power of the highest Principle; in terms of the second we consider the providence of that Principle; and in terms of the third we consider the justice of that same Principle.⁵³

As LaNave notes, the inclusion of a meditation regulated by what faith believes appears to contradict our proposal that the first trajectory follows a consistently philosophical path. But it is essential that we consider whether faith is playing an intrinsic or extrinsic role in Bonaventure’s particular argument. In other words, in what way do these particular considerations “rest on faith”? And what LaNave and others seem to miss is that the three things which Bonaventure mentions here, the creation of the world, the divine governance of providence, and the final judgment are allusions to the three major errors about which Bonaventure famously criticized the philosophers: the purported eternity of the world, which posits that an eternal creation necessarily follows from an eternal cause, which undermines the Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*; fatalism, which posits that all things happen by way of necessity and, therefore, similarly undermines the Christian doctrines of divine providence and of human freedom; and the purported unity of the human intellect, which posits that there is one intellect in all people and, therefore, similarly undermines the theological concept of merit and the doctrine of eternal punishments and rewards. And in Bonaventure’s estimation, all of these errors were in one way or another reducible to the rejection of the doctrine of divine exemplarity or “that the world was fashioned by the Word of life.”⁵⁴ The point shouldn’t be missed. Bonaventure maintained that all three of these things can be known by a right use of reason, hence his vehement criticism of the philosophers *as philosophers*; and yet,

⁵² LaNave, “Knowing God,” (2014): 187.

⁵³ *Itin.*, I.12 [V, 298b] (Hayes, trans., 55).

⁵⁴ *Hex.*, V.21 [V, 357a]; IV.8-13 [V, 350a-351b]; VI.4 [V, 361]; VII.1 [V, 365a]; *Donis Spiritus*, VIII.16 [V, 497]; *Decem Praeceptis*, II.25 [V, 514].

as is the case here, he also maintained that faith can supply the extrinsic controls whereby reason may be strengthened in its own activity and its conclusions may be rendered less doubtful. Simply put, Bonaventure reasons like a Christian, and yet his conclusions remain philosophical in nature: the creation of the world manifests the divine power, providence manifests the divine wisdom, and the telos of the judgment to come manifests the goodness of divine justice.

3.1.2 Chapter Three

Chapter 3 raises the soul to the next step on the ladder, in further abstraction from the material conditions of the world; having contemplated God through creatures insofar as they are able *to be apprehended by the senses*, the soul is now led to contemplate God through itself insofar as it is able *to apprehend the world around it*. “The two preceding steps, which have led us to God by means of the vestiges through which God shines forth in every creature, have brought us to a point where we can enter again into ourselves, that is, into the mind itself in which the divine image shines forth.”⁵⁵ And it is true that the image is an “image of the most blessed Trinity,” by means of memory, intellect, and will, but it is not its trinitarian reflection that is in view in chapter 3. Rather, what is especially in view is the elevated vestigial characteristics of that image through which God is philosophically contemplated relative to its place within the order of being. As such, Bonaventure leads the reader further down a philosophical path as he considers the nature and operation of each of the powers of the soul and retraces them to a knowledge of God, insofar as the existence of a certain sort of *being* must be presupposed in order for the memory, intellect, and will to be what they are and to do what they do. As we have already had occasion to observe in the previous chapter, the memory presupposes the existence of a being that is eternal and immutable, “whose undivided presentness extends to all times.”⁵⁶ The intellectual and volitional operations of the soul presuppose a being that is the most perfect and actual unchanging source and measure of truth and goodness itself. “Behold, therefore, how close the soul is to God, and how through their functions the memory leads to eternity, the intelligence leads to truth, and the power of choice leads to the highest Good.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Itin.*, III.1 [V, 303a] (Hayes, trans., 81).

⁵⁶ *Itin.*, III.2 [V, 303b] (Hayes, trans., 83).

⁵⁷ *Itin.*, III.4 [V, 305a] (Hayes, trans., 91).

However, a difficulty arises in the very next paragraph when Bonaventure introduces what appears to be a theological rather than philosophical meditation. “Furthermore, if one considers the order, origin, and relation of these faculties to one another, one is led to the most blessed Trinity itself.” The operations of the intellect presuppose the principles and axioms of the memory, for an intellectual word emerges out of the memory like its offspring. And the operations of the will presuppose both, the memory and the intellect, for love proceeds as a bond that unites them. “Therefore, if God is the perfect spirit, there must be not only memory, intelligence, and will in God but there must also be the Word begotten and the Love breathed forth. ... Therefore, when the soul reflects on itself and through itself as through a mirror, it rises to the consideration of the blessed Trinity of Father, Word, and Love.”⁵⁸ And from this, LaNave again concludes that, “as in chapter 1, Bonaventure does not restrict himself to a purely philosophical argument.”⁵⁹

LaNave is not entirely incorrect, but the trinitarian appropriations bring us to the very limits where philosophy and theology meet, and therefore Bonaventure’s inclusion of it here requires a more nuanced consideration. As it was pointed out in chapter 2 of this study, Bonaventure’s appropriation of the transcendental *trinity of relations* to the specific persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit presupposes a certain knowledge of the *trinity of persons* by means of divine revelation and, therefore, properly belongs within the domain of theological contemplation; but, the more general appropriation of the transcendental *trinity of relations* to an analogous *trinity of relations* within the indivisible divine *being* still falls within the purview of philosophical contemplation — hence its inclusion in this chapter of the *Itinerarium*. That being said, it is precisely here that philosophical contemplation strains in anticipation of what only theological contemplation can more fully and properly apprehend. I would again argue that faith here plays an extrinsic role in an otherwise philosophically based argument — an argument that anticipates its theological perfection in chapters 4 and 6 of the *Itinerarium*.⁶⁰ And this conclusion is confirmed in what immediately follows: “When the soul reflects on its triune principle by means of the trinity of its own powers which make it to be an image of God, it is aided by the light of the sciences which perfect it and inform it, and which represent the most blessed Trinity in a threefold way. For all of

⁵⁸ *Itin.*, III.5 [V, 305a] (Hayes, trans., 91).

⁵⁹ LaNave, “Knowing God,” (2014): 187.

⁶⁰ *Hex.*, IV.5 [V, 349b], wherein the “season of faith” makes reasoning about the trinitarian appropriations “easier.”

philosophy is either natural, rational, or moral. ...”⁶¹ He goes on to say that “our mind, enlightened and filled with such [philosophical] splendors, can be guided to reflect on this eternal light through itself if it has not been blinded. ... On the other hand, the unwise who reject faith as a way to understanding are led to confusion.”⁶² In other words, although Bonaventure’s observations are fundamentally philosophical, faith unashamedly supplies the extrinsic controls of his argument and thereby strengthens the operation of reason within its own domain.

3.1.3 Chapter Five

Chapter 5 brings the first trajectory to its philosophical summit and end, which is the actual knowledge of that being which, as the contemplation of chapter 3 uncovered, had been cognitively implicated in all of the soul’s intellectual operations. “How remarkable, then, is the blindness of the intellect which does not take note of that which it sees first, and without which it can know nothing.” Moreover, through a thoroughly philosophical reduction, chapter 5 more explicitly identifies this most perfect and actual being as the divine being itself. “It remains, therefore, that this being is the divine Being.”⁶³ And again, faith unashamedly plays an extrinsic role in confirming what reason is able to attain, when he notes that this “method fixes our attention primarily and first of all on Being itself ... and looks above all at the Hebrew Scriptures which are concerned to a great extent with the unity of the divine essence. For it was said to Moses: *I am who I am*” (Exod. 3:14).⁶⁴ The chapter proceeds in an indisputably philosophical manner, whereupon he concludes: “Looking over the way we have come, let us say that the most pure and absolute being, because it is being in an unqualified sense, is first and last; and therefore it is the origin and consummating end of all things.”⁶⁵ Because the divine *being* is first within the order of being — “not as though it were identical with the essence of all things, but as the most excellent, most universal, and most sufficient cause of all essences”⁶⁶ — he is also last, so that “to see him perfectly is to be blessed, as it was said to Moses: *I will show you all good*.”⁶⁷ But, as we have

⁶¹ *Itin.*, III.6 [V, 305b] (Hayes, trans., 91-93).

⁶² *Itin.*, III.7 [V, 305b] (Hayes, trans., 93).

⁶³ *Itin.*, V.3-4 [V, 309a] (Hayes, trans., 115).

⁶⁴ *Itin.*, V.2 [V, 308b] (Hayes, trans., 111-113).

⁶⁵ *Itin.*, V.8 [V, 310a] (Hayes, trans., 121).

⁶⁶ *Itin.*, V.7 [V, 310a] (Hayes, trans., 119).

⁶⁷ *Itin.*, V.8 [V, 310b] (Hayes, trans., 121).

argued, to see him “perfectly” exceeds the limitations of philosophical wisdom and is beyond the scope of philosophical contemplation. Instead, the sufficiency of philosophical wisdom consists in its ability to know its own insufficiency and so to awaken within the soul a desire and disposition for a more perfect form of wisdom. Unto this more perfect theological end, God must graciously *show you all good*.

Throughout the first contemplative trajectory, Bonaventure sets forth a consistently philosophical path, notwithstanding the potential difficulties that challenge this assertion along the way. Hammond concedes to LaNave’s objections but replies that the philosophical-theological schema “is not intended to be applied as a strict dichotomy.” Rather, he says, “the point is that [the *Itinerarium*’s bifurcated chapters] ... are *mostly* philosophical or theological, but not to the point of making the two mutually exclusive.”⁶⁸ And while this answer may be sufficient to defend our overall thesis, I have sought to demonstrate that the strength of LaNave’s objections is more apparent than real. Bonaventure’s first trajectory consistently adheres to a philosophical way, though Bonaventure himself unashamedly follows his own path as a Christian writing to and for other Christians.

3.2 *Second Trajectory: Theological Contemplation*

Bonaventure begins the sixth chapter of the *Itinerarium* by highlighting the end and goal of the entire second trajectory: “After our consideration of the essential attributes of God, the eye of intelligence must be raised to the contuition of the most blessed Trinity Just as being itself is the foundational principle and the name through which the essential attributes come to be known, so the good is the most basic foundation for our contemplation of the emanations.”⁶⁹ It has been argued that the second contemplative trajectory or degree of contemplation proceeds in a distinctly theological way and runs through chapters 2, 4, and 6 according to an ascending order of perfection culminating at the summit of theological wisdom. Accordingly, the contemplation of God along this trajectory presupposes a faith-infused knowledge of the Trinity, according to which the soul is made spiritually sensitive to the trinitarian presence and influence *in creatures* whereby all

⁶⁸ Hammond, “Respondeo,” 309-310.

⁶⁹ *Itin.*, VI.1 [V, 310b] (Hayes, trans., 123).

things are intrinsically ordered to God as to their end. Bonaventure makes “the good” the contemplative focal point of this trajectory because, as it was expressed above, whereas wisdom connotes an extrinsic order among things, goodness connotes an order *in* the constitution of things themselves that reflects the perfect trinitarian goodness of God to whom they themselves are intrinsically ordered as to their final cause.

3.2.1 Chapter Two

Returning to the sensible world outside of us, chapter 2 perfects the philosophical contemplation of chapter 1. “With respect to the mirror of sensible things, it is possible that God might be contemplated not only *through* them, but also *in* them in as far as God is present in them by essence, power, and presence. And this way of reflecting is higher than the previous one.”⁷⁰ Bonaventure and his contemporaries derived this particular triad from a scriptural gloss on Song of Songs 5:17, wherein it is asked how God is said to be *in* all things.⁷¹ Bonaventure explains this threefold distinction elsewhere.⁷² However, after introducing it at the beginning of the chapter, he makes no further explicit use of it in the *Itinerarium*. And because Bonaventure goes on to consider the soul’s powers of sensation in apprehending, enjoying, and judging the sensible world around it, it is sometimes argued that the focus of chapter 2 shifts from God’s presence and influence in creatures outside the soul to his presence and influence in the sensitive powers of the soul itself. Smith writes, “We are still dealing with sense perception, but now we are not focusing on *what* is perceived, but on what makes it possible for us to perceive the way we do; that is to say, what makes it possible that we *apprehend* the forms of things, so that we can both *enjoy* and *judge* them.”⁷³

However, I would argue that this is not entirely correct. Bonaventure clearly states that chapter 2 is principally concerned with “the contemplation of God *in all those creatures* that enter into our mind through the bodily senses,” that is, not principally with what it is about the soul that enables it to sense the world around it, but what it is about the world around us that enables the

⁷⁰ *Itin.*, II.1 [V, 299b-300a] (Hayes, trans., 63).

⁷¹ Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey*, 116-117, 306.

⁷² *I Sent.*, d.37, p.1, a.3, q.2 [I, 647-649]; Aquinas, *ST I*, q.8, a.3.

⁷³ Smith, *Bonaventure’s Journey*, 307-308.

soul to apprehend, enjoy, and judge it.⁷⁴ The focus of chapter 2 is upon the internal constitution and intrinsic order of sensible creatures themselves that enables them to make themselves present to the soul, whereby they also fulfill their own end of mediating the presence and influence of God to those who have had their spiritual and theological senses restored by grace (i.e., ch. 2 anticipates and even presupposes ch. 4). And his point seems to be this: all things possess a certain intrinsic fecundity and inner intelligibility — what James McEvoy refers to as the lucidity of things — whereby each thing has the power to multiply itself through generation and diffusion.⁷⁵ Each thing has its own light, what we may call the light of nature, whereby they are able to send forth a likeness of themselves into the surrounding medium, a *lumen* or sensible and intelligible species that is a similitude of the things itself; by this light, things themselves may be apprehended, perceived and known, as they actively impress a similitude of themselves upon our senses.⁷⁶ “For the species being apprehended is a similitude generated in a medium (*similitudo in medio*) and then impressed upon an organ itself and through that impression leads to its source, that is, the object which is perceived.”⁷⁷ The similitude of which Bonaventure speaks is the sensible form or species of the object itself, as an extension of that thing’s presence and influence upon the senses, formally communicating itself apart from its material existence but no less according to the material conditions in which it is found. The similitude is an instrumental principle in the cognitive process, whereby the soul is illumined and informed by the object from which it emanates, thereby enabling the soul to apprehend it, delight in it, and through further abstraction to judge the truth of it.⁷⁸ Bonaventure refers to the sensible species as a *similitudo* because, inasmuch as a similitude reflects the likeness of something else, it illuminatively leads the perceiving subject back to the principle from which it originates — and ultimately back to its trinitarian principle from whom all

⁷⁴ *Itin.*, VI.1 [V, 310b] (Hayes, trans., 123).

⁷⁵ James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 92.

⁷⁶ The term species goes back to classical Latin, with the meaning "aspect" or "appearance." Augustine employed it to denote the likeness in the senses and intellect of a perceived object, and this usage remained current throughout the Middle Ages. For instances, David C. Lindberg notes that “Kepler drew the term species from the medieval philosophical tradition, where (as we have seen) it was employed to denote the likeness or power that all things emanate in order to influence their surroundings—the ‘first effect,’ as Roger Bacon put it, ‘of any naturally acting thing.’ It was an expression of Neoplatonic emanationism—of the notion that all existing things are centers of activity, radiating similitudes and influences in all directions,” “The Genesis of Kepler’s Theory of Light: Light Metaphysics from Plotinus to Kepler,” *Osiris* 2 (1986): 35.

⁷⁷ *Itin.*, II.7 [V, 301a-b], translation my own.

⁷⁸ Leen Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge: Classical Roots and Medieval Discussion*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 163.

things proceed according to a certain likeness or similitude, by which they are also able to lead us back to a knowledge of God as the end of all things.

The theological nature of what follows is undisputed. He writes: “This clearly suggests that the eternal light generates a likeness of itself, or a splendor that is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal. ... If, therefore, it is in the nature of all knowable things to generate a likeness of themselves, they clearly proclaim that in them as in mirrors we can see the eternal generation of the Word, the Image, and the Son eternally emanating from God the Father.”⁷⁹ And what is more, analogous to the way that a sensible object unites a similitude of itself to our corporal sense organs, which becomes the cognitive principle by which that thing is made known to our senses as something present to the soul, the uncreated Word proceeding from the Father has united himself to a rational nature, so that, as the incarnate Word, he might be the cognitive principle by which the Father is similarly made known to our senses (apprehended, delighted in, and known to be true) and thereby present to the soul. Both observations undoubtedly assume a preexisting knowledge of the Trinity and a certain sensitivity to the trinitarian vestiges *in* all things and therefore clearly proceed in a distinctively theological way. And as his analysis of numbers at the end of the chapter would suggest, the intrinsic numerical order and proportion of all things, according to which we apprehend, delight, and know the truth of what we apprehend, has its eternal source and exemplar in the perfect order of divine persons intrinsic to the triune God. And it is by means of theological contemplation that the soul is made sensitive to this reality. “*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord who has lifted us out of the darkness into his marvelous light, since because of the lights that come to us from outside we might be disposed to re-enter the mirror of our mind in which divine realities shine forth.*”⁸⁰

3.2.2 Chapter Four

The closing words of chapter 2 quoted above anticipate the shift that takes place in chapters 3-4, wherein the contemplative soul ascends by means of a sort of interiority. Whereas chapters 1-2 contemplate God through and in the sensible world outside of us, chapters 3-4 take a decisively inward turn, so as to contemplate God through and in oneself as an image of God, conscious of

⁷⁹ *Itin.*, II.7 [V, 301b] (Hayes, trans., 71).

⁸⁰ *Itin.*, II.13 [V, 303a] (Hayes, trans., 79).

one's own capacity to know and love God. Moreover, the theological contemplation that develops in chapter 4 not only ascends to a higher level than that which is found in chapter 2, it also perfects the philosophical contemplation of the image of God that began in chapter 3. "Since the First Principle can be contemplated not only *through* ourselves while we are on the way, but also *in* ourselves; and since the latter is more excellent than the former, this kind of consideration stands at the fourth stage of contemplation."⁸¹ Chapter 3 reflected upon the vestigial or transcendental properties of the image of God in man, insofar as the soul's unique capacity for God through knowledge and love reflects certain essential properties of God himself. Chapter 4 considers that same image but now from another more penetrating, even theological, vantage point. Insofar as the image is also a likeness, the presence and influence of the Trinity is manifest in the soul by means of the invisible missions of the Son and Spirit indwelling the believer through grace, whereby the soul itself is intrinsically reordered to God as to its ultimate end and highest good. As such, the intrinsic order within the soul itself, insofar as it is reformed by grace, becomes a created reflection of the Trinity to whom it is intrinsically ordered as to its end.

Again, the theological movement of the chapter is uncontested. This is confirmed, along with the overall philosophical-theological schema, when Bonaventure writes: "At this level of speculation the divinely given sacred Scriptures are particularly helpful just as philosophy was at the previous level."⁸² Like Scripture itself, Bonaventure begins with the fall of Adam and, consequently, our need for grace. Sin has deformed the image, blinded the mind and perverted the will. And although the divine being is presupposed in all of our thoughts and is nearer to us than we are to ourselves, "no matter how enlightened one might be with the light of natural and acquired knowledge" (ch. 3), we cannot actually know and possess God as the end for the sake of which we are an image apart from two things: an objective supernatural principle of knowledge and a subjective supernatural work of grace in the soul. Only through the incarnate Word revealed in Scripture is the way back to God objectively revealed, and only through the light of grace, or the inspired Word, can the truth of Christ be subjectively impressed upon the mind and received in the heart. "One cannot enter into oneself to *delight in the Lord* except by means of the mediation of Christ who says: *I am the door*. ... But we do not draw near to this door unless we believe in Christ, hope in Christ, and love Christ. ... Therefore, the image that is our soul must be clothed

⁸¹ *Itin.*, IV.1 [V, 306a] (Hayes, trans., 97).

⁸² *Itin.*, IV.5 [V, 307a] (Hayes, trans., 103).

over with the three theological virtues by which the soul is purified, illumined, and brought to perfection.”⁸³ Through the reformation of the image by grace Bonaventure notes that the spiritual senses are restored, so that “the soul now sees, hears, smells, tastes, and embraces its beloved.”⁸⁴ And through the help of the book of Scripture, the soul is trained by grace to read, not only the literal sense of the book of creation, but also its “spiritual meaning” with a certain sensitivity to the trinitarian presence and influence of God *in creatures*, but especially in the soul united to him through knowledge and love. This is the logic of theological contemplation.

3.2.3 Chapter Six

Chapter 6 brings the second trajectory to its theological summit and end, which is the contemplation of the Trinity itself, not through or in the soul as such, but as the ultimate end and highest good to which the soul was united by grace and made to possess in chapter 4. And here too we see theological contemplation perfecting the philosophical contemplation that had gone before it, not only in how the chapter eventually converges in a united contemplation of God’s trinity — (“Therefore, so that your mind might ascend through admiration to wondering contemplation, you must consider all these matters together”)⁸⁵ — but also in the way it builds upon what went before. Whereas chapter 5 fixed our gaze upon the divine being as the uncreated cause of all other beings, chapter 6 is a more penetrating gaze into who that divine being is, the most blessed Trinity, as the highest good for the sake of which all things have been intrinsically ordered. In other words, inasmuch as goodness connotes an order *in* the constitution of things themselves, theological contemplation culminates with the perfection of all goodness as it is manifest in the order of relations intrinsic to the divine *being* itself. Bonaventure draws upon the Dionysian notion that it is the nature of goodness to be self-diffusive, and thus supreme goodness must be supremely self-diffusive, which he maintains must be trinitarian. “But the highest diffusion does not exist unless it is actual and intrinsic, substantial and personal, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, lacking nothing and perfect. In the supreme good there must be from

⁸³ *Itin.*, IV.2-3 [V, 306a] (Hayes, trans., 99).

⁸⁴ *Itin.*, IV.3 [V, 306b] (Hayes, trans., 101).

⁸⁵ *Itin.*, VI.3 [V, 311b] (Hayes, trans., 127-129).

eternity a production that is actual and consubstantial, and a hypostasis as noble as the producer, and this is the case in production by way of generation and spiration.”⁸⁶

As was previously observed in chapter 3 of this study, this is one of the few places that Bonaventure makes use of a similar argument developed by Richard of St. Victor concerning the supreme and perfect communication of charity. “In this way there can be both a beloved and a co-beloved, one generated and one spirated; that is, Father and Son, and Holy Spirit. If this were not the case, it would not be the supreme good since it would not be supremely self-diffusive.”⁸⁷ In any case, we ought to be cautioned not to lay too great a burden on this argument.⁸⁸ Bonaventure employs this particular argument sparingly and only in contexts wherein he is arguing for the trinitarian *perfection* and *completion* of the divine order of persons, as it is most fully manifest in relation to the procession of the Spirit. Accordingly, the procession of the Spirit becomes for Bonaventure a contemplative focal point by means of which the contemplative is able to gaze upon the beatific perfection of the Trinity as the ultimate end and highest good to which all things are intrinsically ordered, but especially the soul that is elevated and perfected by means of theological contemplation.

4. The Christological End of the *Itinerarium*

Although mention of Christ is not frequent in the *Itinerarium*, he does appear prominently and strategically at the beginning, middle, and end. As such, he is presented as the means, the principal object, and the ultimate end and perfection of Bonaventure’s contemplative endeavor.

4.1 *The Means of Contemplation*

⁸⁶ *Itin.*, VI.2 [V, 310b] (Hayes, trans., 123).

⁸⁷ *Itin.*, VI.2 [V, 310b] (Hayes, trans., 123-125).

⁸⁸ Cf. Ilia Delio, “Bonaventure’s Metaphysics of the Good,” *Theological Studies* 60 (1999): 228-246.

At the very start of the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure sets forth the experience of St. Francis on Mt. Alverna, the ecstatic rapture of Christian wisdom, as the end and goal of his contemplative itinerary, which he says is attained by means of “the most burning love of the Crucified.”⁸⁹ Bonaventure goes on to describe Christ-crucified as the door through which we must enter, for those who enter any other way are thieves and robbers. He is Jacob’s ladder, by means of whom we ascend. He is the Lamb, by whose blood we must be washed in order to enter the gates of the city and eat of the tree of life. In all of these ways, Christ-crucified is depicted as the necessary means through which the contemplative is able to ascend to God. And part of his point seems to be that in order to ascend with Christ in exaltation, we must first descend in conformity with Christ in humiliation. “Therefore, I first of all invite the reader to groans of prayer through Christ crucified, through whose blood we are purged from the stain of our sins. Do not think that reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, ... industry without piety, knowledge without charity, intelligence without humility, study without divine grace.”⁹⁰

We see the same thing at the center or middle of the *Itinerarium*, in chapter 4. Christ the mediator is the means, the middle, the restorative principle through whom the soul is reformed by grace and united to God through the theological virtues — apart from whom the goal of the *Itinerarium*, and of the soul’s journey into God, cannot be reached. But Bonaventure’s point is not that grace is absolutely necessary for all forms of contemplation, or that faith in Christ is a precondition for philosophical wisdom. Surely, it is a precondition for theological contemplation. But even so, his larger point is that grace is a precondition for the final end and goal of the entire itinerary — the ecstatic rapture of Christian wisdom (ch. 7). It is important to remember that Bonaventure is writing to Christians and for the benefit of Christians: “To those who are already disposed by divine grace ... I propose the following reflections.” And as we have already observed in a previous chapter, Bonaventure is quick to condemn, not philosophy itself, but those who would rest prematurely in philosophical wisdom. “Therefore, O child of God, awaken yourself first to the remorseful sting of conscience before you raise your eyes to those rays of wisdom that are reflected in its mirrors. Otherwise it might happen that the very act of looking on these rays might cause you to fall into an even more treacherous pit of darkness.”⁹¹

⁸⁹ *Itin.*, prol., 3 [V, 295b] (Hayes, trans., 37).

⁹⁰ *Itin.*, prol., 4 [V, 296] (Hayes, trans., 39).

⁹¹ *Itin.*, prol., 4 [V, 296] (Hayes, trans., 41).

4.2 *The Object of Contemplation*

At the culmination of chapter 6, Bonaventure likewise presents *the incarnate Word* as the highest and most proper object of contemplation, in whom both trajectories harmonize and converge. We have argued throughout this study, and with respect to the *Itinerarium* in particular, that philosophical contemplation endeavors to contemplate the *essential attributes* of God *through* creatures relative to *the order of being*, whereas theological contemplation further contemplates the *triunity* of God *in* creatures relative to *the order of persons*. Bonaventure signals to the reader that Christ is the culminating point of both, at least for the wayfarer, when he writes: “For we must come to admire the *essential* and *personal* attributes of God not only in themselves, but also in relation to the most admirable union of God and humanity in the unity of the person of Christ.”⁹² Simultaneously apprehended as both the *middle* person of the Trinity and the only *mediator* between God and man, the God-man and the mercy seat between the cherubim, the contemplative is able to contemplate in one and the same object the essential attributes of God (*essentialia Dei*) manifest *through Christ* as well as the properties of the persons (*personarum propria*) manifest *in Christ*, through whose person all things have come forth from God (*exitus*) as their creative principle and through whose person they also return to God (*reditus*) as their ultimate end.⁹³

At the same time, our mind sees in a single glance the first and the last, the highest and the lowest, the circumference and the center, the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the caused and the cause, the creator and the creature, that is, *the book written within and without*. Here with God the mind reaches the perfection of its illuminations Nothing further remains but the day of rest when in an ecstatic insight the discerning power of the human mind *rests from all the work that it has done*.⁹⁴

Hammond summarizes it well: “To know Christ is to know both the divine and created orders.”⁹⁵ In describing our final rest in the heavenly Jerusalem, Revelation 21:23 tells us that there will be no need of the sun or of the moon, for the glory of God will illuminate it. “The Lamb is its light.”

⁹² *Itin.*, VI.4 [V, 311b] (Hayes, 129).

⁹³ *Itin.*, VI.5-6 [V, 311b] (Hayes, 129-131).

⁹⁴ *Itin.*, VI.7 [V, 312a] (Hayes, 131).

⁹⁵ Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” 257.

4.3 *The Subjects of Contemplation*

As it was noted at the outset, the intellectual rigor of the *Itinerarium* aims to demonstrate how academic learning can and does lead to God, both philosophically and theologically. Nevertheless, the ultimate and timeless aim of the *Itinerarium* is lead *us* into a closer relationship with God, through a journey that is simultaneously academic and spiritual. And the means by which we are to achieve this end is contemplation. But it can be tempting to conclude from the scholastic nature of the *Itinerarium* that the only true subjects of contemplation are those who have been philosophically and theologically educated. And although the average or simple Christian will find it difficult or impossible to follow the entire itinerary set forth here, Bonaventure would want to reassure them that they are not thereby excluded. In a Sunday sermon, he says, “Now you should not despair, you simple ones, when you hear these things, because a simple person is unable to have these things, for you will be able to have them later.”⁹⁶

That being said, by establishing Christ-crucified as the chief means of Christian wisdom and the incarnate Word as the principal object of contemplation, he leaves the way open to every Christian, to anyone who by divine grace follows the example of Francis in humbling themselves before the cross and in dying to themselves in order that Christ might live in them. Bonaventure’s point is that the ordinary Christian and scholar alike meet at the cross, wherein the vertical and horizontal orders intersect, and the perfect goodness and love of God is most manifest.⁹⁷ Bonaventure himself stated emphatically at the beginning of the *Itinerarium* that there is no other way but through the most burning love of the Crucified — his love for us and our love for him, for we love because he first loved us (1 John 4:9). At the cross, we see the love of the Father in sending the Son (John 3:16), the love of the Son who gave himself for us (Gal. 2:20), and the love the Holy Spirit who, by reason of the Father and the Son, unites us to the Father through the Son (Rom. 5:6). Hammond captures the idea nicely: “Cruciform love leads the wayfarer into the very core of

⁹⁶ *De Sabbato Sancto*, Sermo 1 [IX, 269b], *Modo, non debetis desperare ...*

⁹⁷ *Hex.*, I.24 [V, 33b]; cf. Hammond, “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” 263.

the divine mystery of God's love."⁹⁸ The simple Christian may not be capable of traversing the entire itinerary, but they are not thereby excluded from reaching its theological end:

When we have contemplated all these things, it remains for the mind to pass over and transcend not only the sensible world but the soul itself. And in this passage, Christ is the way and the door. ... Anyone who turns fully to face this Mercy Seat with faith, hope, and love, devotion, admiration, joy, appreciation, praise and rejoicing, will behold Christ hanging on the Cross. ... This person may then rest with Christ in the tomb, as one dead to the outer world, yet experiencing, in as far as possible in this pilgrim state, what was said on the cross to the thief who was hanging there with Christ: *This day you will be with me in Paradise*.⁹⁹

4.4 *The Perfection of Contemplation*

The entire *Itinerarium* culminates in chapter 7, which Bonaventure aptly titles, "The Mystical Transport of the Mind in which Rest is given to the Intellect and through Ecstasy our Affection passes over Totally into God." Chapter 7 marks the transition to something new, so that the culmination of theological wisdom and theological contemplation in chapter 6 is still only a "provisional kind of knowing."¹⁰⁰ What Bonaventure introduces in chapter 7 no longer belongs to either the order of nature or of grace, or to the state of the wayfarer *as such*, but properly belongs to the perfection of contemplation in glory, according to the nulliform wisdom of God that Bonaventure describes elsewhere. As his title already suggests, he describes the soul's *transitus* in apophatic and affective terms: "If this passing over is to be perfect, all intellectual activities must be given up, and our deepest and total affection must be directed to God and transformed into God. But this is mystical and very secret, *which no one knows except one who receives it*. And no one receives it except one who desires it. And no one desires it but one who is penetrated to the very marrow with the fire of the Holy Spirit whom Christ has sent into the world."¹⁰¹ And although Bonaventure believed that such an apophatic rapture and ecstasy is possible this side of glory, as is evident from Paul's own experience (1 Cor. 12:2), he also believed that very few ever enjoy this privilege in this life. It is "a special privilege surpassing the state of the wayfarer (*viatorum*), that

⁹⁸ Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 264.

⁹⁹ *Itin.*, VII.1-2 [V, 312b] (Hayes, 133-135).

¹⁰⁰ Speer, "Question of a Medieval Philosophy," 44.

¹⁰¹ *Itin.*, VII.4 [V, 312b] (Hayes, 137); cf. *Hex.*, II.29-30 [V, 341]; *III Sent.*, d.23, a.1, q.2 [V, 475-476].

is, not as something brought about by virtue of that state but as something that could only be done for them.”¹⁰² It is a special privilege that transcends the experience of the wayfarer *as wayfarer* but nevertheless ought to be desired by every wayfarer who desires their own beatific perfection. And this is Bonaventure’s chief focus as the *Itinerarium* reaches its end:

Now if you ask how all these things are to come about, ask grace. ... Let us die, then, and enter into this darkness. Let us silence all our cares, desires, and imaginings. Let us pass over with the crucified Christ *from this world to the Father*, so that when the Father has been shown to us, we may say with Philip: *It is enough for us*. Let us hear with Paul: *My grace is sufficient for you*; and let us exult with David, saying: *My flesh and my heart waste away; you are the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever. Blessed be the Lord forever, and let all the people say: let it be, let it be, Amen.*¹⁰³

5. Conclusion

The discussion above has sought to demonstrate the consistency of the proposal that the twofold structure of the *Itinerarium* follows a philosophical and theological path respectively. But what is more, the philosophical-theological structure of the *Itinerarium* itself corroborates the larger thesis of this study, that Bonaventure distinguishes two *kinds* of contemplation. As it has been observed throughout, we find in the works of Bonaventure two primary forms of reduction that correspond to the two different ways in which the metaphysical and cosmological order of things may be perceived. In chapter 2, we considered the relations that exist among or between things insofar as each thing is ordered relative to all other things (*de ordine rerum ad invicem*) within the vertical hierarchical *order of being* or *essences*. In chapter 3, we considered the intrinsic relations that exist within things themselves, insofar as each thing is intrinsically (*in sua puritate*) ordered to its end (*de ordine rerum ad finem*) within what he calls the order of persons — by which Bonaventure intends an intrinsic order of relations within things that reflects the intrinsic order among the divine persons. And as we have observed, corresponding to these two orders of reflection Bonaventure speaks in his *Itinerarium* of two grades or degrees of contemplating the

¹⁰² *II Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 [II, 544b], *qui specialitate privilegii statum viatorum supergrediuntur, nec ibi aliquid agunt, sed solum aguntur*; cf. d.35, a.sole, q.1 [II, 774b]; *Itin.*, VII.5 [V, 312b].

¹⁰³ *Itin.*, VII.6 [V, 313b] (Hayes, 139).

invisible and eternal qualities of God (*gradus contemplandi Dei invisibilia et aeterna*),¹⁰⁴ “depending on whether God be considered as the alpha or as the omega, or ... as through a mirror or as in a mirror, or [as] related to another with which it is connected or should be considered according to its own purity.”¹⁰⁵ Here again, Bonaventure describes the two paths of reduction insofar as God, and the divine order as such, may be contemplated relative to these two vantage points. Although God is one, the divine order may be considered both *through* and *in* creatures, or *per speculum* and *in speculo*, relative to these two forms of reduction or degrees of contemplation. Thus, according to these two modes of contemplative reduction, the same object is known in two ways: God, either as that *being* which explains and grounds the entire order of created beings or as the end for the sake of which all things are intrinsically ordered. In both of these ways, the divine order is *contuited* (*contuitio*), that is, simultaneously known either *through* or *in* the created order according to increasing degrees (*gradus*) of perfection, whether philosophical or theological.

Philosophical contemplation endeavors to contemplate God according to his *essential attributes*, as the first and highest being, according to the extent in which he may be known *through* creatures. Theological contemplation endeavors to contemplate God according to his *personal properties*, as our last and highest end, according to the ways in which he may be known *in* creatures. It has been argued in this chapter that Bonaventure wonderfully illustrates and beautifully applies and relates both modes of contemplation in the structure of the *Itinerarium*. And although we have agreed with much of Hammond’s proposal, our own differs in a significant way. By making the image *as a likeness* the object of chapters 5 and 6, Hammond effectively makes grace absolutely necessary and not merely profitable for the attainment of philosophical wisdom — a conclusion that is not uncommon in Bonaventurian scholarship but one which we reject. Alternatively, we have argued that there is within the *Itinerarium* a spiral dynamism between nature and grace that highlights the uniqueness of our proposal, wherein both modes of contemplation (philosophical/theological) are regarded as sufficient within their own order (nature/grace) and with respect to their own ends (the contemplation of the divine being/persons) but are at the same time organically and dynamically ordered one to another in the same way that nature is elevated and perfected by grace. Accordingly, philosophical contemplation is elevated and perfected by means of theological contemplation, even as the soul that pursues God is

¹⁰⁴ *Itin.*, V.1 [V, 308].

¹⁰⁵ *Itin.*, I.5 [V, 297b].

gradually elevated and perfected through the exercise of both. And although sin has greatly impeded the progress of unregenerate reason and limits the purity of its outcomes, and although Bonaventure would be highly critical of any soul that rested prematurely in philosophical wisdom, our portrayal of Bonaventure differs from most inasmuch as we have argued that the pursuit of philosophical wisdom, and thus philosophical contemplation (*Itin.*, chs. 1-3-5), is in Bonaventure's view *possible* apart from grace, even if not ideal. Whereas theological contemplation presupposes divine grace, disposing the soul to see all things anew according to a restored spiritual and theological sensitivity to the intimate presence of the Trinity *in* all that he has made, we have argued throughout this entire study that, contrary to the common portrayal of Bonaventure, the philosophical way is entirely laid open to natural reason even apart from divine grace. Accordingly, the twofold understanding of contemplation put forth in this study and demonstrated from the *Itinerarium* sheds new light upon the much-debated question of how Bonaventure understands the relationship between philosophy and theology, and of the role of divine illumination relative to both, within the soul's unified pursuit of wisdom.

The created order itself contains intimations of the divine mystery that, though it be partially apprehended by means of philosophical contemplation, is not fully apprehended until the soul, aided by scriptural revelation and divine grace, is enabled to see the world in an even more theocentric way by means of theological contemplation. Whereas philosophical contemplation leads to a philosophical or natural knowledge of God's essential attributes, or the divine "to Be" whose essence and existence is necessary in order to explain the essence and existence of all other beings, theological contemplation presupposes the truth that the God who exists, who is truth and goodness itself and who is our salvation and end, *is Trinity*; and it is upon this supposition that theological contemplation proceeds to consider the deeper theological and trinitarian dimensions of every created thing in relation to their ultimate end. The organic way in which Bonaventure conceived the relationship between the two can be seen in how the soul is led by one and the same Light throughout, whereby it is moved from the very start by an implicit desire for Truth that is only partially fulfilled by means of philosophical wisdom, which therefore cries out for its further perfection by means of theological wisdom. In this way, philosophy, though sufficient for its own ends (i.e., a natural knowledge of God), is not in Bonaventure's estimation an end in itself. Rather, it possesses an inherent dynamic that is ordered to theology and a natural knowledge of the divine "to Be" that is dynamically ordered to a supernatural knowledge of the Trinity. For this reason,

theology is able to supply philosophy with certain extrinsic controls that strengthen rather than undermine the operation of reason within its own domain. This phenomenon was most especially observed in relation to our consideration of the transcendentals at the end of chapter 2, which in many respects is the liminal object between the two. It is precisely here that philosophical contemplation (the trinity of appropriations) strains in anticipation of what only theological contemplation can more fully and properly apprehend (the trinity of persons).

Finally, while it is true that the overall portrayal of Bonaventure in this study is less affective than is often portrayed, I have sought to argue that Bonaventure himself is in fact more intellectual (and in this way more aligned with Aquinas) than is generally allowed. As we observed in chapter 4, even in Bonaventure's most affective and apophatic form of wisdom, though it is said to be without-form (*sapientia nulliformis*) insofar as it apprehends that which transcends all understanding, such that the intellective power of the soul is most at rest and the affective is most exercised, the intellect is not thereby sentimentally disengaged. Bonaventure's point is not anti-intellectual but rather supra-intellectual. The soul's intellectual capacity for wisdom reaches its perfection and limit; cataphatic theology, having affirmed all that it can, perfects itself in apophatic silence. The mental excesses of the soul that are commenced in the intellect (*cognitione inchoatur*), because they exceed its own capacity, are consummated in the affection (*affectione consummatur*). In other words, the affections reach beyond the capacity of the intellect in the way that apophatic theology reaches beyond the limits of cataphatic theology, not as an irrational movement of the soul but as a suprarational extension and perfection of the intellect through the affections. Even so, there is admittedly still more that could be said with regard to the role which Bonaventure ascribes to charity in the re-formation of the soul by grace, as well as the way in which grace branches out by means of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, disposing even the most ordinary Christian for the contemplation of God. However, the focus here has been more narrowly upon philosophical and theological contemplation. And what is more, if I have succeeded in my argument, it must be increasingly acknowledged that any such expansion upon the more affective themes within Bonaventure's system ought to be treated within a more intellectualist context than is often allowed. In this way among others, although there are real differences between Bonaventure and Aquinas, which we have sought to highlight along the way, our overall study has demonstrated that their differences are not half as pronounced as the way they are often portrayed by their modern proponents. And thus, a more catholic reading of St. Bonaventure, namely, one that is less

idiosyncratic and more relevant to the catholic tradition as a whole, even the Reformed, seems warranted.

Appendix: What Constitutes the Father as *Father*?

Bonaventure and Aquinas differ in their response to the question whether the Father, relative to our mode of understanding, generates because he is a Father or is a Father because he generates.¹ Both options, it would seem, present certain difficulties. Insofar as paternity signifies a personal property, that is, inasmuch as the Father is *such a person* who is the paternal principle of others, both agree that paternity, understood as a property, signifies in the Father a certain paternal fecundity of nature.² And because a person acts through its form, Bonaventure notes that it is the opinion of some that he generates because he is a Father. This is the position of Aquinas.³ In creatures, a man acquires a new relation of paternity by reason of the act of generating, but relative properties exist in God in a contrary manner. Because the paternity-relation of the Father is not acquired as an accidental property but is that which constitutes his person, as a subsisting relation, and because a person acts through its form, his paternity-relation must logically precede the eternal act of generating. Aquinas, therefore, affirms that the relation is the reason for the act and not the other way around. As such, Aquinas maintained that the Father generates because he is Father.

Bonaventure does not regard this opinion with contempt and even agrees that it has a certain intelligibility with respect to the person of the Father. And whichever opinion is adopted, it is commonly agreed that he generates by reason of a certain fecundity of nature. And inasmuch as “Father” signifies paternity, and “paternity” presupposes (*quasi praesupponendo*) a paternal-fecundity, Bonaventure agrees that it may be said that he generates because he is Father.⁴ But by reason of what does the Father possess a fecundity of nature? Although the above solution has a certain intelligibility with respect to the Father, Bonaventure argues that it breaks down when the same logic is applied to the other persons. For example, it makes little sense to say that the Son is generated because he is a Son, or that the Son’s filial-relation, by which he is constituted *this* person, is the logical reason for his passive generation or his being generated. And this is Bonaventure’s primary reason for preferring another solution: Insofar as the principal and proper

¹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2 [I, 468-472]; *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 1-3].

² *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 2b], *Nam paternitas importat fecunditatem* ...; cf. Aquinas, *ST I*, q.33, a.4, ad 1.

³ Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.27, q.1, a.2.

⁴ *II Sent.*, prooemium [II, 2b-3a].

signification of paternity is a relation, it is simultaneous in nature with the Son's filiation.⁵ That whereby the Son has filiation, the Father also has paternity, and thus the reason for the Son's filiation must also be the reason for the Father's paternity.⁶ To this objection, Aquinas would later reply that, although passive generation always conceptually precedes filiation in the case of the Son, in that the filial-relation is clearly the terminus of the Father's active generation, the comparison with the Father does not hold. It does not hold, he says, because, unlike the Father who *actively* generates through his form, the Son is not generated through his form and, therefore, is not the principle of either active or passive generation. And therefore, Aquinas argues, the two are not comparable. Because the Father is the principle of both active and passive generation, his proper form, which is his paternal-relation, must conceptually precede the act of generation.⁷

Bonaventure's argument, however, does not seem to require that the Son be the principle of his own generation. It is enough that he is constituted *this* Son by reason of the Father's act of generating in order to establish the conclusion that the emanation or origin is the reason for the person-constituting relation, and not the other way around. Although Aquinas's position unequivocally prioritized the idea of subsisting relations, placing the Father's paternal relation conceptually prior to generation, it would seem, in Bonaventure's opinion, to posit a paternity that is conceptually prior to the filiation of the Son, and therefore prior to the paternal relation itself. Aquinas maintained that he generates because he is Father, and he is Father because of the opposition of the paternity–filiation relation. In other words, this order of things would seem to require that we posit a Father–Son relation prior to the generation of the Son from the Father.⁸ From this perspective, it could be argued that Bonaventure is equally concerned to preserve the intelligibility of the persons as subsisting *relations*. This is why Bonaventure remarks that it is the common opinion that the Son possess both of these, “that he is” and “that he is a Son,” through generation. The Father and the Son are both constituted as such in relation. And if that whereby the Son has filiation is also that whereby the Father has paternity, which for the former is through the act of generation, then it must be concluded that “just as passive generation relates to filiation, so active generation to paternity.”⁹ And therefore, he concludes, it is more consistent to say that

⁵ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 3 [I, 472b].

⁶ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, in corp. [I, 469b]; cf. Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.26, q.1, a.2, ad 4, *quia hoc quo pater habet paternitatem, filius habet filiationem, quae etiam est relatio*.

⁷ Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.27, q.1, a.2, ad 4.

⁸ Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions*, 1:74n53.

⁹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, in corp. [I, 469b], *Nam communiter dicitur, ... ita activa ad paternitatem*.

the act of generation is the reason for paternity, and not the other way around.¹⁰ In other words, Bonaventure maintained that it is better to say that the Father is a Father because he generates.

Bonaventure's preferred position, however, is not without its own difficulties. Among the possible arguments to the contrary, it is acknowledged that even a divine person must act *through* some form. If the act of generation is conceptually prior to the paternal relation according to which the Father is constituted as Father, then "through what," if not through the paternal fecundity, does the act of generation proceed? In response, he admits that according to his view a hypostasis must be *conceptually* understood prior to the act of generation. But since the person of the Father is distinctly constituted as Father by reason of generating, there must be something proper to his hypostasis, other than paternity itself, that *logically* grounds the very act of generation. And so, he concludes, "According to our manner of understanding, the reason for distinguishing [his person] *is inchoately implied (inchoatur)* in his innascibility (*innascibilitate*), and therefore he generates, not by reason of a prior distinction based upon *paternity*, but in some manner by reason of a prior distinction based upon *innascibility*."¹¹

Although that the concern cuts both ways, Gilles Emery remarks that Aquinas's main objection comes down to this: "the Bonaventurian thesis implies that the Father would somehow be constituted in his personal subsistence in advance of his paternity-relation."¹² Elsewhere, Emery adds that "what is at stake in the debate on the negative character of the innascibility of the Father is clear: It is about the doctrine of the person as subsisting relation, that is to say about the exclusive role of the relations for distinguishing and constituting the persons."¹³ The matter is not helped in that, even though there are real differences between the preferred solutions of Bonaventure and Aquinas respectively, many Bonaventurian scholars have overstated these differences and oversimplified Bonaventure's view.¹⁴ Does Bonaventure's view lead to the conclusion that the

¹⁰ This in no way implies that the divine relations are acquired through an act, for not only are the intrinsic acts eternal, the personal properties are really identical with the divine essence and, therefore, not "acquired" in any sense. Nevertheless, paternity is in the Father through an eternal act; cf. *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 2 [I, 470a].

¹¹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 1 [I, 470a], *tamen secundum rationem intelligendi ... modo innascibilitate*.

¹² Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 171.

¹³ Gilles Emery, *Trinity in Aquinas* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2006), 147-148.

¹⁴ Hellmann overstates and under qualifies Bonaventure's position: "The Father is the Father because He is the first person, and not the other way around." And again, "For Bonaventure, the particular relation (*proper ratio*) of the Father is not paternity, but rather *primitas*. He is the Father because He is the first person, and so it is in the idea of firstness that the ultimate identity of the Father is to be understood. As Father He generates, but he generates because He is the *primum*, that is, the *innascibilis*" (Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 59-60). Kvamme, in her "The

Father must in some way be constituted or pre-constituted prior to his paternal-relation? Before we can answer this question, we must adequately understand how these two theologians differed on the question of how each person is constituted and distinguished as *this* person. It is commonly stated in the secondary literature that Aquinas maintained that the persons are distinguished by reason of the divine relations alone, whereas Bonaventure held to the opinion that they are constituted and distinguished by reason of their respective divine emanations or origins. This is certainly the case for Aquinas, but Bonaventure's position requires greater nuance.¹⁵

Upon a superficial reading, Bonaventure appears inconsistent in how he answers this question. On more than one occasion, he intimates that the persons are distinguished and constituted by reason of their emanation and origin.¹⁶ But more often Bonaventure maintains that it is the relations which distinguish the persons: "relations in creatures do not bestow relative existence; thus, a thing is able *to be* with or without relations; in the divine, however, they give the persons existence."¹⁷ Again, he writes, "a distinction [of person] is by reason of a relation, for nothing can be related to itself nor can something be ordered to itself. Thus, by reason of *such* a relation, there is a personal distinction."¹⁸ Sometimes Bonaventure speaks as though generation is the constitutive reason for the Father's personal distinction, and on other occasions he says that it is by reason of his paternity. What are we to make of this apparent inconsistency? It is interesting that within his response to the question whether divine generation distinguishes between the One

Fontalis Plenitudo," 8, conveys the same emphasis without further qualification, "Through the imagery of the *fontalis plenitudo*, or 'fountain fullness,' Bonaventure shows God the Father as the principle and primal source of the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Holy Spirit. It is this origin, rather than relationship, which distinguishes the divine Persons." Christopher M. Cullens is a bit more measured, and closer to the truth: "This is not to say, however, that Bonaventure completely abandons any notion of the persons as subsistent relations, but only that it never takes on the centrality that it has for Aquinas," *Bonaventure* (Oxford University, 2006), 124.

¹⁵ Cf. Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d.26, q.1, a.2, ad 3, *Ad tertium dicendum*, ...; cf. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions*, 1:77n60: "Aquinas also deals with this issue and, as one would expect, comes to a fundamentally different conclusion than Bonaventure: the relations both distinguish the persons and make the distinction manifest simpliciter." Later, in *ST I*, q.40, a.2, Aquinas further nuances his view, acknowledging that emanations are a limited principle of distinction; Bonaventure addresses this question in *I Sent.*, d.26, a.sole, q.3 [I, 456–458]; d.27, p.1, a.sole, qq. 1–2 [I, 467–472], wherein he maintains that the relations alone do not distinguish the persons, but only when they are understood together with the emanations. A full understanding of his answer must take into account a wide circle of texts.

¹⁶ *I Sent.*, d.34, a.sole, q.1 [I, 587b], *Et quemadmodum distinctio* ..., "[personal] distinction through true origin is real distinction." *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.2 [I, 183a], *Dicendum quod generatio in divinis* ..., "It is said that generation in the divine, as it is shown, makes real distinction between the one generating and the one generated, and not only a rational or mere intellectual one. ... In as much as it is an emanation, it refers to some sort of distinction; in as much as it is such an emanation, it refers to a distinction in person."

¹⁷ *I Sent.*, d.7, dub.4 [I, 145a], *relationes in creaturis* ...

¹⁸ *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.2 [I, 183a-b], *Similiter ratione relationis est distinctio* ...

begetting and the One begotten, he simultaneously affirms that both emanation and relation are principles of distinction.¹⁹ Apparently, he saw no inconsistency in affirming both. Why not?

It is important to keep in mind that in making such distinctions, Bonaventure in no way intends to set the emanations and relations in opposition, nor does he intend a distinction *in time* or any sort of *temporal succession*. The distinctions being made are merely conceptual, that is, with respect to our mode of understanding. In God, emanation and relation are really identical. And, therefore, he is able to affirm that both emanations and relations are principles of distinction because although “generation in creatures refers to an emanation through a mode of action or change, in God emanation is a mode of relation.”²⁰ Similarly, he states elsewhere that although the Father’s paternity is not acquired by an act, as it is in creatures, the paternal-relation is in the Father *through* an eternal act of generating.²¹ Emanation/generation cannot be properly conceived in abstraction from relation/paternity, and vice versa. *Both* generation (*such* an emanation) and paternity (*such* a relation) distinguish such a person by reason of a particular relation of opposites. *Both*, therefore, may be said to constitute and distinguish the persons (*modis originis et relationis*).²² The analysis of Russell Friedman is helpful:

When Bonaventure deals with the emanations explicitly, he is careful to say that the emanations are in God by way (*per modum*) of relation. Thus, Bonaventure’s actual scheme for distinguishing the persons seems to be that the properties are relations—the only category remaining in God besides substance—but they are special kinds of relations, relations indicating the true origin of person from person. Thus when we think about these relative properties, we draw distinctions between emanation and reference that prioritize the emanations and subordinate reference. In God, however, actual distinction between the persons arises because the properties are relatively opposed. For Bonaventure, it is on account of the limitations of human understanding that we have to order our concepts of the emanations, the persons, and the relations in some specific way.²³

Although emanation and relation cannot really be distinguished in God, Bonaventure maintains that a certain distinction can be made according to our mode of understanding. As we have seen, he orders and logically prioritizes emanation over relation; in other words, the relations, for Bonaventure, are by reason of the emanations or origins. But this does not mean that the

¹⁹ *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.2 [I, 182-184].

²⁰ *I Sent.*, d.9, a.sole, q.2 [I, 183a], *Generatio in creaturis* ...

²¹ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.2, ad 2 [I, 470a], *Unde quamvis* ...; *Mysterio Trinitatis*, q.5, a.2.

²² *I Sent.*, d. 13, a.sole, q.3 [I, 236a].

²³ Friedman, *Intellection Traditions*, 1:78.

emanations are the greater reason, much less the only reason, by which the persons are distinguished. Because emanations are really in God by way of relation, and because emanations are prior to the relations according to our mode of understanding, he is able to affirm that both the emanations and relations are principles of distinction, but in a manner conceptually ordered one to another. Whereas Aquinas maintained that the persons are distinguished by reason of the divine relations *alone*, Bonaventure held to the opinion that they are constituted and distinguished by reason of the emanations *and* relations, but again in a manner conceptually ordered one to another. Whereas the persons are inchoately constituted and distinguished by reason of the emanations, they are formally and fully constituted and distinguished by reason of the consequent relations. For really and truly, the personal relations are the only other distinction that can be predicated of God besides that of substance.²⁴

This helps us to understand Bonaventure's reply to Aquinas's primary objection to his thesis – an objection he anticipated in his *Commentary on the Sentences*. To restate Aquinas's concern, conceptually prioritizing the emanations over the relations, and innascibility over the paternity, would seem to imply that the Father is somehow constituted and distinguished in his personal subsistence in advance of his paternity-relation. Friedman notes that “for Thomas, the hypostasis itself has no existence without opposition of relations: innascibility contributes nothing to the constitution of the Father, even at the level of our conceptualization.”²⁵ In Bonaventure's view, however, a hypostasis must be conceptually understood logically prior to the act of generation, and the Father's innascibility provides this conceptual ground. Innascibility, he maintains, inchoately (i.e., according to its consequent understanding) distinguishes his person conceptually prior to the full and formal distinction by reason of his paternity. In other words, Bonaventure agrees that the Father's person is distinguished fully and formally by his paternal-relation and has no actual existence without the opposition of relations. But Bonaventure argues that innascibility, with respect to our mode of understanding, provides the *conceptual ground* upon which we may conceive of the Father indistinctly, inchoately, and irreducibly.²⁶ He draws upon an analogy in order to elucidate his point.²⁷ Just as it is possible, by means of the Father-Son relation, to have an imperfect grasp of the Father apart from an understanding of the Holy Spirit, and just

²⁴ Cf. *Brev.*, I.4.2 [V, 212b].

²⁵ Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions*, 1:82.

²⁶ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.1 [I, 469b-470a].

²⁷ *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.sole, q.3 [I, 471b], *Ad hoc etiam movet ratio ...*; *Brev.*, I.3.7 [V, 212a].

as natural reason can obtain a minimal grasp of the divine nature apart from a fuller understanding of the plurality of persons, so also may we have an incipient and indistinct understanding of the Father's hypostasis conceptually prior to the paternity by which he is really and fully distinguished. Again, this is a distinction, not in God, but at the level of our understanding. Aquinas's concerns aside, Bonaventure is not claiming that innascibility itself distinguishes and constitutes the Father *as Father* or that it will provide us with a distinct knowledge of *such* a person.²⁸ Accordingly, J. A. Wayne Hellmann's remark that "the Father is the Father because He is the first person [i.e., innascible], and not the other way around" is an overly simplistic and misleading assessment of Bonaventure's teaching.²⁹ Neither is Bonaventure arguing for the existence of a "proto-Father" or "proto-being" in God, as Friedman suggests.³⁰ He is simply arguing that it is possible to have a minimal grasp of the Father that is *conceptually prior* to his paternity, and that such a conception may be true even if it is not a complete and proper knowledge of his person. While there are real differences between Bonaventure and Aquinas,³¹ Bonaventure does not speak here of an ontological reduction of the Father's being, but a reduction of our knowledge of the Father, so as to bring a logical end to our inquiry into the question: what is it that conceptually grounds the Father's act of generating the Son? In short, Bonaventure is simply maintaining that innascibility provides the *conceptual ground* upon which the Father may be conceived indistinctly, and yet irreducibly.

Bonaventure's sole intention is to reduce (*reduci*) our understanding of the Father to the irreducible principle that grounds that understanding, at which point the entire inquiry, "He is who

²⁸ *I Sent.*, d.28, a.sole, q.3 [I, 501b].

²⁹ Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 59.

³⁰ Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions*, 1:79. Cf. James P. Krueger, "God the Father in the Western Tradition: Bringing Augustine and Bonaventure into Conversation with Modern Theology" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 2014), 272n65, helpfully writes: "There are at least two reasons why 'proto-Father' seems a distortion of Bonaventure's thought here. Although Friedman does not overtly advocate Aquinas' position, and he does not seem to offer 'proto-Father' as a repudiation of Bonaventure, it assimilates Aquinas' criticism of Bonaventure. As Friedman is apt to point out elsewhere, this is a conceptual distinction. Both Bonaventure and Aquinas agree that the First Person is eternally Father. Why should we then use a term that insinuates splitting up the Father's fatherhood into before and after? ...

"Second, Friedman says that innascibility (i.e., the rationale for Proto-Father) 'gives a certain *amount of being* to the hypostasis that will be the person of the Father: *enough being* to be the fontal source from which the Son can be generated and the persons can become fully distinct' (*Intellectual Traditions*, 81, emphasis added). This is not accurate because Bonaventure would recoil from talk of an 'amount of being' and 'enough being' for any person of the Trinity. God's being is not partitioned into source and sourced. ... 'In' this distinction, then we can call the first person Father and the second person Son. Primity is God the Father as that eternal origin, the divine essence in such a way that the other persons arise from him. There is no 'proto-Father,' but only the Father who also eternally possesses primity."

³¹ Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions*, 1:51.

he is, by reason of what?” may be brought to rest. In summary, Bonaventure argues that generation is conceptually prior to paternity, and innascibility is conceptually prior to the act of generation. Generation is the conceptual reason for the Father’s paternity, whereas innascibility is (according to its consequent understanding) the reason for the act of generation. And therefore, Bonaventure prefers the opinion that he is Father because he generates, and he generates because he is the innascible God. Beyond this, no further reduction according to our understanding is either possible or necessary. In other words, there is no need to posit the question, “By reason of what is he innascible?” The innascibility of the Father is *conceptually irreducible*.

Works Cited

Translations of Bonaventure's Works

- Breviloquium*. Translated by Dominic V. Monti. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2005.
- "Christ, the One Teacher of All." In *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure*, translated by Zachary Hayes. Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974.
- Collations of the Hexaemeron: Conferences on the Six Days of Creation*. Translated by Jay M. Hammond. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2018.
- Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Translated by Zachary Hayes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008.
- Collations on the Ten Commandments*. Translated by Paul Spaeth. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1995.
- Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Translated by Robert J. Karris. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2007.
- Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*. Translated by Robert J. Karris. 3 vols. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2003.
- Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*. Translated by R. E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone. NY: Franciscan Institute, 2013.
- Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*. Translated by Thomas Reist and Robert J. Karris. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008.
- Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*. Translated by Zachary Hayes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2005.
- Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*. Translated by Zachary Hayes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2000.
- Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. Translated by Zachary Hayes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2002.
- On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*. Translated by Zachary Hayes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1996.
- Soliloquium*. Translated by F. Edward Coughlin. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2006.
- St. Bonaventure's Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*. Translated by Dominic Monti. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1994.
- The Soul's Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*. Translated by Ewert Cousins. London: SPCK, 1978.
- The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*. Translated by Timothy J. Johnson. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008.
- The Triple Way by St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio*. Translated by Peter Damian M. Fehlner. New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012.

Primary Sources

Alexander of Hales. *Summa Halensis*. In *A Reader in Early Franciscan Theology: The Summa Halensis*, translated by Lydia Schumacher and Oleg Bychkiov. NY: Fordham University Press, 2022.

Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Translated by John P. Rowan. Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1961.

_____. *Compendium of Theology*. Translated by Cyril Vollert. 1947. Reprint, Veritatis Splendor Publications, 2012.

_____. *Questiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*.

_____. *Faith, Reason, and Theology: Questions I-IV of his Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius* Translated by Armand Maurer. 1987. Reprint, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2019.

_____. *Scriptum Super Sententiis*.

_____. *Questiones disputatae de veritate*

_____. *Questiones quodlibetales*.

_____. *Quodlibet I*.

_____. *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by Laurence Shapcote. Green Bay, WI: Aquinas Institute, 2012.

_____. *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

Aristotle. *De Caelo*.

_____. *De Anima*.

Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by F. J. Sheed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1993.

_____. *De Civitate Dei*.

_____. *De Musica*. In *The Immortality of the Soul; The Magnitude of the Soul; On Music; The Advantage of Believing; On Faith in Things Unseen*, edited by Hermigild Dressler and translated by Robert Catesby Taliaferro. Washington, D.C.: CUP, 2002.

_____. *De Trinitate*.

_____. *Soliloquium*.

Averroes. *III De Anima*.

Basil. *Homilia XXIV, Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anommoeos*. Cited and translated in Ewert Cousins, *Christ of the 21st Century*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1992.

Boethius, *De Institutione Arithmetica*.

_____. *De Trinitate*.

- Dionysius. *The Divine Names*. In *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and The Mystical Theology*, translated by C. E. Rolt. Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004.
- _____. *Mystical Theology*.
- _____. *The Celestial Hierarchy*.
- Gregory of Nyssa. *Sermo de Spiritu Sancto adversus Pneumatomachos Macedonianos*. Translated by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. 2nd Series. Vol. V. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953.
- Hugh of Saint Victor. *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*. Translated by Roy J. Deferrari. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007.
- John Damascene. *Apologia*. In *St. John of Damascus on the Divine Images*, translated by David Anderson. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980.
- Proclus. *Elements of Theology*. Translated by Thomas Taylor. 1792. Reprint, Lydney, UK: Prometheus Trust, 2019.
- Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Major*, in *The Classics of Western Spirituality: The Twelve Patriarchs; The Mystical Ark; Book Three of the Trinity*. Translated by Grover A. Zinn. NY: Paulist Press, 1979.
- _____. *De Trinitate*. In *Richard of Saint Victor, On the Trinity: English Translation and Commentary*, translated by Ruben Angelici. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

Secondary Sources

- Aertsen, Jan A., and Andreas Speer. "Die Philosophie Bonaventuras und die Transzendentalienlehre." *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 64, no. 1 (1997): 32-66.
- Aertsen, Jan A. *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters. Vol. 52. Brill, 1996.
- _____. *Medieval Philosophy and Transcendental Thought: from Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2012.
- Armstrong, Allan. "Foreword." In *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and The Mystical Theology*, translated by C. E. Rolt. Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004.
- Ayres, Lewis. *Nicaea and its Legacy*. Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Translated by John Vriend. Vol. 2. Baker Academic, 2004.
- _____. *The Philosophy of Revelation: The Stone Lectures for 1908-1909, Princeton Theological Seminary*. 1909. Reprint, London: Forgotten Books, 2012.
- Bettoni, Efrem. *Saint Bonaventure*. Translated by Angelus Gambatese. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1964.

- Boehner, Philotheus. "Introduction to Bonaventure," in *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, translated by Zachary Hayes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2002.
- Bonnefoy, J.-Fr. *Le Saint-Esprit et Ses Dons selon Saint Bonaventure*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1929.
- Bougerol, J. Guy. *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*. Translated by José de Vinck. Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1964.
- Brady, Ignatius. "St. Bonaventure's Doctrine of Illumination: Reactions Medieval and Modern." In *Bonaventure and Aquinas: Enduring Philosophers*, edited by Robert W. Shahan and Francis J. Kovach. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976.
- Brown, Stephen F. "Introduction." In *The Journey of the Mind to God*, translated by Philotheus Boehner. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.
- Burr, David. *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.
- Carpenter, Charles. *Theology as the Road to Holiness in St. Bonaventure*. NJ: Paulist Press, 1999.
- Chenu, Marie Dominique. *Introduction à l'étude de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 2nd ed. Paris, 1954.
- Coolman, Boyd Taylor. *Knowledge, Love, and Ecstasy in the Theology of Thomas Gallus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- _____. "The Comprehensive Trinitarianism of the *Summa Halensis*." In *The Summa Halensis: Doctrines and Debates*, edited by Lydia Schumacher. Berlin/Munich/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020.
- Coulter, Dale M. "Contemplation as 'Speculation': A Comparison of Boethius, Hugh of St. Victor, and Richard of St. Victor." In *From Knowledge to Beatitude: St. Victor, Twelfth-Century Scholars, and Beyond*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2013.
- Crowley, Theodore. "Illumination and Certitude." In *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*. Vol. 3, *Philosophica*, 431-448. Rome: Grottaferrats, 1973.
- Cullen, Christopher M. "Bonaventure on Nature before Grace: A Historical Moment Reconsidered." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85.1 (2011): 161-176.
- _____. *Bonaventure*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- D'Avray, David. *The Preaching of the Friars: sermons diffused from Paris before 1300*. Oxford: Carendon Press, 1985.
- Danker, Frederick William, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- De Lubac, Henri. *The Mystery of the Supernatural*. Translated by Rosemary Sheed. NY: Herder and Herder, 1967.
- Delio, Ilia. "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good." *Theological Studies* 60 (1999): 228-246.
- Emery, Gilles. *Trinity in Aquinas*. Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2006.
- _____. *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

- Emery, Kent, Jr. "Reading the World Rightly and Squarely: Bonaventure's doctrine of the Cardinal Virtues." *Traditio* 39 (1983): 183-218.
- Falque, Emmanuel. *God, the Flesh, and the Other*. Translated by William Christian Hackett. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015.
- Feingold, Lawrence. *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*. Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2004.
- Friedman, Russell L. *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University: The Use of Philosophical Psychology in Trinitarian Theology among the Franciscans and Dominicans, 1250-1350*. 2 vol. Boston, MA: Brill, 2013.
- Gilson, Étienne. *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*. Translated by Dom Illtyd Trethowan & F. J. Sheed. NY: Sheed & Ward, 1938.
- Giltner, T. Alexander. "The Lightness of Being: Illumination in the Philosophy and Theology of Saint Bonaventure." PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 2018.
- Hammond, Jay M. "Order in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*." In the Appendix of J.A. Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, translated by J. M. Hammond. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2001.
- _____. "Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master." *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 179-226.
- _____. "Bonaventure's 'Itinerarium': A 'Respondeo'." *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 301-321.
- _____. "Introduction." In *Collations of the Hexaemeron: Conferences on the Six Days of Creation*, translated by Jay M. Hammond. NY: Franciscan Institute, 2018.
- Hayes, Zachary. "Christology and Metaphysics in the thought of Bonaventure," *The Journal of Religion* 58 (1978): S82-S96.
- _____. "Introduction." In *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, translated by Zachary Hayes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2000.
- _____. *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure*. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000.
- Hellmann, J. A. Wayne. *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*. Translated by J. M. Hammond. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2001.
- Houser, R. E. "Bonaventure's Three-fold Way to God." *Philosophy* 6 (1997): 91-135.
- Jones, Kevin E. "Bonaventure on Habitual Grace in Adam." *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2008): 39-66.
- Kent, Bonnie. *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century*. D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995.
- Krueger, James P. "God the Father in the Western Tradition: Bringing Augustine and Bonaventure into Conversation with Modern Theology." PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 2014.
- Kvamme, Janet C. "The Fontalis Plentitudo in Bonaventure as a Symbol for his Metaphysics." PhD diss., Fordham University, New York, 1999.

- Kuper, Abraham. *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles*. NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898.
- _____. "The Natural Knowledge of God," translated by Harry van Dyke. *The Bavinck Review* 6 (2015): 73-112.
- LaNave, Gregory F. *Through Holiness to Wisdom: The Nature of Theology according to St. Bonaventure*. Rome: Instituto Storico Dei Cappuccini, 2005.
- _____. "God, Creation, and the Possibility of Philosophical Wisdom: the Perspectives of Bonaventure and Aquinas." *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 812-833.
- _____. "Bonaventure's Theological Method." In *A Companion to Bonaventure*, edited by Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff. Boston, MA: Brill, 2014.
- _____. "Knowing God through and in All Things: A Proposal for Reading Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*." *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 267-299. Republished in *Debates in Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses*, edited by Jeffrey Hause, 181-203. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.
- Lewis, C. S. *Reflections on the Psalms*. 1958. Reprint, San Francisco: HarperOne Publishing, 2017.
- Lindberg, David C. "The Genesis of Kepler's Theory of Light: Light Metaphysics from Plotinus to Kepler." *Osiris* 2 (1986): 4-42.
- Long, Steven A. *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace*. NY: Fordham University Press, 2010.
- Maritain, Jacques. *Science and Wisdom*. Translated by Bernard Wall. NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.
- Marrone, Steven P. *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of in the Thirteenth Century*. Vol. 1. Brill, 2001.
- McEvoy, James. *Robert Grosseteste*. Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Merriell, D. Juvenal. "Trinitarian Anthropology." In *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*. Edited by Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow. 123-142. University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.
- Milbank, John. *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Renewed Split in Modern Catholic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Moorman, John. *Source for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1940.
- Mulcahy, Bernard. *Aquinas's Notion of Pure Nature and the Christian Integralism of Henri de Lubac: Not Everything is Grace*. NY: Peter Lang, 2011.
- Mulligan, R. W. "Partio Superior and Partio Inferior Rationis in the Writings of St. Bonaventure." *Franciscan Studies* 15.4 (1955): 332-349.
- _____. "Ratio Superior and Ratio Inferior: The Historical Background." *The New Scholasticism* (1955): 1-32.

- Noone, Timothy B. "St. Bonaventure: *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*." In *Debates in Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses*, edited by Jeffrey Hause, 204-214. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.
- Peperzak, Adriaan. "Plotinian Motifs in Bonaventure's *Itinerary of the Mind to God*." In *Christian Spirituality and the Culture of Modernity*, edited by Peter Casarella and George P. Schnier. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Perkins, Harrison. *Righteous by Design: Covenantal Merit and Adam's Original Integrity*. UK: Mentor Imprint by Christian Focus Publications, 2024.
- Pieper, Josef. *Faith, Hope, Love*. 1997. Reprint, San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2012.
- _____. *What Does "Academic" Mean?* Translated by Dan Farrelly. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2015.
- Quinn, John Francis. *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973.
- _____. "Certitude of Reason and Faith in St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas." In *St. Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974 Commemorative Studies*, edited by Armand A. Maurer. Vol. 2. 105-140. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1974).
- Rahner, Karl. "The Experience of God." *Universitas* 18.1 (1976): 129-134.
- _____. *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. Translated by William V. Dych. 1978. Reprint, NY: Crossroads, 2016.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. *The Theology of History in Saint Bonaventure*. Translated by Zachary Hayes. Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2020.
- Reynolds, Philip L. "Bonaventure's Theory of Resemblance." *Traditio* 58 (2003): 219-255.
- _____. "Analogy of Names in Bonaventure." *Mediaeval Studies* 65 (2003): 117-162.
- Ríos, Daniel Matías Contreras. "*Primum Cognitum*: Bonaventure and Aquinas on the Foundations of Knowledge." PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2020.
- Roest, Bert. "Francis and the Pursuit of Learning." In *The Cambridge Companion to Saint Francis of Assisi*, 161-174. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Rolt, C. E. "Introduction." In *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and The Mystical Theology*, translated by C. E. Rolt. Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004.
- Rorem, Paul. "Dionysian Uplifting (Anagogy) in Bonaventure's *Reductio*." *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012), 183-188.
- Schaefer, Alexander. "The Position and Function of Man in the Created World According to Saint Bonaventure." *Franciscan Studies* 20, no.3/4 (September-December 1960): 261-316.
- _____. "The Position and Function of Man in the Created World According to Saint Bonaventure." *Franciscan Studies* 21, no.3/4 (September-December 1961): 233-382.
- Schumacher, Lydia. *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*. NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

- Smith, Randall. *Bonaventure's Journey of the Soul into God: Context and Commentary*. Cambridge University Press, 2025.
- Speer, Andreas. "Bonaventure and the Question of a Medieval Philosophy." *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997): 25-46.
- . "Illumination and Certitude: The Foundation of Knowledge in Bonaventure." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85.1 (2011): 127-141.
- Spruit, Leen. *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge: Classical Roots and Medieval Discussion*. Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Sutanto, Nathaniel Gray. *God and Knowledge: Herman Bavinck's Theological Epistemology*. Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 2021.
- Togni, Luke. "The Hierarchical Center in the Thought of St. Bonaventure." *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2018): 137-157.
- Turner, Denys. *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Translated by George Musgrave Giger. Edited by James T. Dennison Jr. Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 1992.
- Van Nieuwenhove, Rik. "Karl Rahner, Theologian of the Experience of God?" *Louvain Studies* 29 (2004): 92-106.
- . *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*. Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Van Steenberghen, Fernand. *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*. Translated by Leonard Johnston. Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1955.
- . *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century*. NY: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1955.
- Vetö, Etienne. *The Breath of God*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019.
- Webster, John. "Eternal Generation." In *God Without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*. Vol. 1, *God and the Works of God*. London: T&T Clark, 2016.
- Wei, Ian P. *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University, c.1100–1330*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Weinandy, Thomas. *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*. Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1995.