

On the Concept of Charity in
St. Thomas Aquinas and as related to
the 'Univocity of Being' in John Duns Scotus

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re-read for
special exam B

A Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of
requirements of Philosophy Course 192, under
Prof. Daniel Walsh, Spring 1956.

Introduction

This paper will attempt to show certain aspects of charity as suggested in the views of St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.

Charity as a movement of will is the subject under examination. It is perhaps one of the symptoms of our age that 'love' should have fallen to such a state of ambiguity. Love has become a term thought possible to describe a biological function, an emotional state and a sentimental reaction. These activities are reflexive and merely consequential. They may result upon the movement of another's directed will in which love as charity was not intended; they may be consequent ^{upon} self reflection. In every case these states are singular in their self-centeredness. In fact 'love' has so intimate a connection with the ego that its mention is a frequent source of embarrassment as though it were

Something better to conceal than to share.

Modesty is not offended here, but privacy; Such love must be protected, even hoarded and as did the man, in the parable of the talents, with his one talent, we would hide this love, too, underground.

Of course, none of this is peculiar to our age but, through our phenomenal media of mass communication, this behaviour is subtly glamorized and described as indispensable to human happiness and the crown of life's experiences.

Clearly Christian thought does not agree, for love as Charity cannot fall to this description. As a movement of the will, action rather than reaction, love as charity is dialectically related to love conceived as desire. Love as Charity is attended by courage; desire is attended by fear. From this follows the common opposition, love / hate, linguistically habitual and serviceable. Nevertheless the usage is not

precise. It is rather, love / fear, desire / hate.
One cannot be Charitable where one is
fearful nor where one is indifferent. Charity
is more than benevolence which may be
impersonal. Charity is a willed "openness"
toward the "other," it is wholly innocent
and free of design. It is indiscriminate and
single whereas desire is discriminate and
various.

Charity is a word exclusively Biblical.
It was not used in LXX before about
100 B.C. Prior to that, ἀγάπη is generally
used of sexual love. Ἀγάπη as love, charity,
in the Authorized Version is that of "(the)
God or (the) Christ to us, and our love to
Him and to our fellow creatures thus
inspired." *

* Alexander Souter, A Pocket Lexicon to the
Greek New Testament, p. 21

The distinction made above (concerning)

concerning Charity as indiscriminate and single will be used as a point of departure from St. Thomas but, ^{is} not so required from Duns Scotus, the Subtle Doctor.

The Angelic Doctor, by reason of his rigidly hierarchic system is obliged to limit the expression of Charity according to the conditions of subject and object, or, the lover and the loved. The system of Duns Scotus, allowing for intuitive knowledge and univocity of being, entertains a freedom of passage between subject and object, the lover and the loved.

Perhaps the most fruitful contribution to Christian knowledge made by the Subtle Doctor was this metaphysic which permits of two points of view, concerning man's estate. Man, perceived intellectually as a finite mode of being, is involved in a basic dualism unless he knows his finitude as a mode of being related univocally to infinite being — also a mode of being.

If the infinite and the finite are known as modes of being, God's transcendence is non-dual from His point of view — a point of view we may posit intellectually though we cannot know it existentially!

It is good to know that man has an ad intra relationship to God as well as an ad extra. Charity is glorified through the former as it is exercised toward the farthest remove of the latter.

Though it is not the purpose of this study to explore the problems of a Christian metaphysic, it is pertinent to observe that the divorce between philosophy and theology is not necessarily ultimate for the West. As we come to know the East better, whose great traditions have fruitfully wedded religion and philosophy, we must more charitably and successfully communicate the content of Christianity. A Christian metaphysic allowing for a non-dual transcendence would seem a fruitful medium of communication.

I

St. Thomas was concerned to point out that Charity was in the will and argues this very forcibly against Peter Lombard:

"Peter Lombard held that Charity was not a created reality, but the Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul (Sentences 64.1) - he did not mean that the Holy Ghost was identified with our movement of love, but that Charity, unlike the other virtues, such as faith and hope was not elicited from a habit which was really ours. He was trying to enhance Charity.

"Ponder well and this opinion tends rather to discredit Charity. It would mean that active Charity rises from the Holy Ghost so moving the mind that we are merely passive and not responsible for our loving or otherwise. This militates against the character of a voluntary act. Charity would not then be a voluntary act. There is a snag here for our loving is very much our own.

" Nor is the situation eased by the additional qualification that the Holy Ghost moves the will as a principal cause moves an instrumental cause. An instrument of course is a principal but not of the kind which decides its own activity or inactivity. The implication would be that the voluntary character of charity was made away with, and merit banished.

" No, the Holy Ghost moves the will to love but in such a way that we are principle causes.

" Active powers perfectly develop their activities only when these become conatural through qualities which are part-principles. God, who moves all things to their due ends implants in them dispositions to follow the purposes he assigns to them: wisdom disposes all things gracefully (Wisd. 8.1.). Certainly charity surpasses the nature of the

human will power, but all the same supernatural friendship would compare unfavourably with the physical and psychological dynamism of natural functions and virtues unless a form were granted conducing to this activity. Nor would its exercise be easy and delightful whereas no virtue compares with Charity in eagerness to act and happiness in acting.

" For these reasons then, the activity of Charity presupposes the existence within us of a settled disposition over and above Kindliness and good nature, an active quality inclining us to 'love promptly and pleassurably.' "

* St. Thomas Aquinas, Theological Texts, p.

It is particularly to be observed that charity is definitely distinguished

from "Kindliness" and "good nature". Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines a wide range of meaning to the word Charity. "1. Christian love; specif: a. Now Rare. Divine love for man. b. Act of loving all men as brothers because they are sons of God. 2. An act or feeling of affection or benevolence. 3. Good will to the poor and suffering; alms giving; also, alms; hence, public provision for the relief of the poor. 4. leniency in judging men and their actions. 5. An eleemosynary foundation or institution."

Clearly St. Thomas has reference to the first definition and has attempted to define its cause. He concludes that "the activity of charity presupposes the existence within us of a settled disposition over and above Kindliness and good nature, an active quality inclining us to love promptly and pleasurably."

A close examination

of his conclusions regarding the exercise of Charity will point up his opinion that this exercise is subject to certain limitations - not so much of time and space as certain natural barriers between subject and object.

"Some spiritual writers have been persuaded that we should love all our neighbors equally even our enemies. They were speaking of inward affection not of outward effect, for where the giving of benefits is concerned the order of love puts the persons who are close to us before those who are distant.

Their position however is quite unreasonable, for the affection of Charity, following the predilection of grace, is no less unequally distributed than is natural love. Both spring from divine wisdom. Natural attractions vary according to the properties of the things engaged, and the attraction exercised by grace, which

comes out through the affection of Charity is modulated by our environment. Our attachment is deepest and most intense to those we respond to most easily. Let us analyse this.

"Every activity is proportionate to its object and to its subject. The object determines what ^(kind) sort of activity is put forth, the subject determines its intensity. The object ^{of} that friendship called Charity is God; the subject is the man who loves. Such differences as are found under the first heading are measured by reference to God: here the governing principle is this, the nearer the person is to God the greater the good we will him. For though Charity wills the same kind of good to all namely eternal happiness, this has different degrees which vary according to their nearness to divine happiness. After all Charity should be fair and observe God's justice according to which the nobler the soul the more intimately it shares

in his joy. Mind you, we are speaking precisely of Charity — there are other types of devotion which seek the good of the beloved object. The intensity of Charity is measured with reference to the subject the lover, and here the governing principle is this, the nearer the dearest; we seek the good of those we are in love with more intensely than the greater good we theoretically wish for those who are better."*

This seems hardly one of St. Thomas's more felicitous observations. Most certainly the nature of Charity is called into question by the development of this line of thought. On the one hand we are possessed of "an active quality inclining us to love promptly and pleasurably," and on the other our love is limited by certain natural laws. Charity is even put subject to

* Theological Texts, #410, p. 216

fairness. In a system which predicates that "the object determines what kind of activity is put forth," and "the subject its intensity" Charity is obliged to await its richest expression until the object meriting this gift should happen to appear. Should it be true that "the nearer the person is to God the greater the good we will him"?* We have been admonished by Christ in a new

* Another serious difficulty with this observation: who shall determine this nearness? Can this rightfully fall within the prerogative of human judgement? It does not seem so clear that my love for my neighbor must be conditioned by his nearness to God. Rather it should be the other way around! If it is my conscious nearness to God which determines what kind of activity is put forth, then the subject governs both action and intensity as should be the case for a child of God accorded full powers of moral choice.

commandment that we should love one another as He loved us. Now if we are to love as He did we should not wait until our neighbor appears to us as nearer to God before we will him greater good.

Neither is it clear that Charity should be *Yari*. Were charity subordinate to justice in God we should still be awaiting the advent of the *Logos* made flesh.

Perhaps St. Thomas should have avoided this approach to Charity had he employed another frame of reference than Aristotle's physics. It is impossible to relate adequately by the spirit of Divinity - from this Charity springs - to the observable laws of natural phenomena. Such an effort is abortive precisely at that point where so called physical laws fail to mirror the nature and intention of any given

divine action. There is a point where analogy is insufficient. It is particularly unsatisfactory where it fosters the dualistic habit of religious perception. Where every appeal is made to the observable relationships in matter only, one is forced to consider the infinite strictly in terms of the finite and, literally, one can never get off the ground.

St. Thomas is persuaded that the position of some spiritual writers, namely, "that we should love all our neighbors equally, even our enemies," is quite unreasonable. Most certainly he is correct from the finite point of view. However this leaves us in a rather awkward relationship to the commands of Christ and the spirit of the New Testament. Any attentive reading of the Epistles of St. John cannot help but foster uneasiness — not only as regards conscience, but also meaning.

Nowhere in the New Testament are we enjoined to love with discrimination either with respect to subject or object. It is true that in natural love "the nearer the dearer." But in Christian love the neighbour must be loved as oneself. What is nearer than oneself? This position is impossible, except in terms of a new orientation to the self - one cannot love another as himself until he has known his self. As soon as one distinguishes with the whole man - not just intellectually - between the self (ego) and the Knower of this self (ego) he takes up a point of view extra terrestrial, extra finite - now he is no longer trying to see his eyes with his eyes. He sees them with that inward eye of the Knower within him. He now talks out of experience about "being born again," putting on the new Adam. These expressions are no longer abstractions related to a dogmatic system touching the intellect but not the whole man. He is organically united to what they express. He knows it in his bones! It is important to consider Christ's address

to the disciples that they not speak except they speak "to them in parables". Since the rational faculty is concerned to distinguish between subject and object, I and It, the point of view is necessarily from ego. A parable speaks to more than the rational faculty and though rejected by the intellect may still be nurtured in the heart since its picture is offered to the inward eye. Therefore its communicative potential is so much the greater. * Inasmuch as St. Thomas has attempted a definition of the

* This is not to suggest that Systematic Theology or Philosophy be neglected. But they must be employed to that end for which they are most suited. As rational disciplines they are at best statements after the fact of experience. Experience cannot be duplicated whole by abstractions. As art they are testimonies to a vision of the inward eye - finite expressions of a multi-dimensional vista.

exercise of Charity in terms of physical,

finite phenomena, and these terms have been rigorously systematized according to objectively observable relationships he has left no room for the wider though less discursive function of the imagination. The exercise of charity is deeply involved with the tension between the old and the new Adam. Let the old Adam observe charity from his own point of view and have it confirmed in the analogy of natural phenomena - his world - and he sits undisturbed; the last person he wishes to confront is his dialectical opposite, the new Adam. The new Adam is in every sense a new creation and is not susceptible of definition by analogy with rationally or empirically observable natural phenomena unless these be understood poetically or mythologically. Even as symbols they may not be understood consciously except by him who has experienced what they represent. It is little wonder that the

Angelic Doctor looked upon his great rational edifices as "straw" after being granted his mystical vision. We can not so estimate his precious work.

Inestimably Christendom is indebted to him for his valiant victory over the strong Arabian influence upon Christian thinking. Yet his system has certain limitations where spiritual principles and exercises are expressed in terms related to purely physical functions. His willing self criticism should invite an interested search for new ways of expression, new points of view in order to enrich our store of fruitful concepts.

III

An illuminating statement by Prof. Gilson allows of a precise parallel between the problem of love and the problem of knowledge. . . . "All human pleasure is desirable but none ever suffices." He further remarks, "We must understand in the first place that the very instability of human desire has a positive significance; it means this: that we are attracted by an infinite good. . . . In this sense the problem of love as it arises in a Christian Philosophy, is a precise parallel to the problem of knowledge. By intelligence the soul is capable of the truth; by love it is capable of the Good; its torment arises (out) from the fact that it seeks it without knowing what it seeks." *

* E. Gilson, The Spirit of Medieval
Philosophy pp. 271, 273

In the system of Duns Scotus the problem of Knowledge, as it is appears within his concept of being, is directly addressed to the mind's primary object which is being - not truth. Hence he is persuaded that the mind pursues its quest for being by employing more than the purely rational faculty, cognitio speculativa. He likens the rational mind to a pool, "and Scotus complains that if it is regarded as a closed circle sufficient unto itself, it does not adequately represent the human soul. The human soul is not co-extensive with reason or understanding as a distinct faculty; it is a mistake to regard the other powers of the soul simply as functions or adjuncts to understanding. There is a power of the soul which is below understanding but which has better evidence of the soul's origin; and there is a power of the soul which is above understanding and which is more in touch with the soul's destiny.

The secret entrance to the pool is where the unconscious begins to influence the conscious mind. The secret exit is the point where the soul finds that its intellectual powers extended to their fullest have still failed to satisfy it, and that it must bring a higher faculty into play... (Hopes to reinstate St. Augustine's hierarchy of memory, understanding and will.)[†] He sees these powers as the one soul operating on different levels of consciousness.*

* C. Delvin, The Psychology of Duns Scotus pp. 3-4. ^{+ parentheses mine.}
Hereafter referred to as Delvin.

Since charity is a movement of the will it is important to determine how Duns Scotus regards the will. "The living act, he says, is a better likeness of the object than its abstract content. Being not truth is the mind's primary object!

Hence, however noble cognitio speculativa may be, he always makes cognitio practica to be correspondingly higher. The reason why it is nobler is that it is nearer to the will; and the will is in its own right the highest sphere of consciousness.

"The nobility of the will is its freedom, and its freedom consists not in the power to choose between alternatives, but in the intrinsic power to choose freely, even when there is no alternative. 'That which the will wills for its own sake and because it so wills it.' This is pretty stark and seems to defy further comment. But an example of it is: that even when the understanding presents it with self-evident truth, yes, even in the face of the beatific vision, the will can still choose freely even though it has no power to refuse. He makes a super-fine distinction between non posse nolle and velle. There is a difference between "to will" and

not to be able not to will or move intelligibly, not to be able to refuse is not the same as to consent. *

* Delvin, pp. 5-6

Given Being as the natural object of the mind, and will in its own right the highest sphere of consciousness, the question follows: does it make any difference how Being is conceived in the consciousness of the knower? Most certainly it makes a difference since greater or lesser knowledge of an object conditions the number and quality of relationships possible between the knower and the object. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it is necessary to distinguish between the notions of Being held by St. Thomas and Duns Scotus.

"For St. Thomas our only kind of intellectual knowledge is abstraction from reality. For Duns Scotus knowledge can be ~~at~~ intuitive as well as abstractive. In other words, whereas the Being of St. Thomas is but the result of abstraction from material things, the Being of Duns Scotus is the result of abstraction and intuition. Again,

whereas the being of St. Thomas is knowable only mediately, by means of the abstraction and the phantasm, the being of Duns Scotus is knowable immediately by intuition. The being of Scotus, therefore, is broader and of a higher character than the being of St. Thomas. Hence the Subtle Doctor could well say that being as the primary, natural, and adequate object of the intellect is more common in its character than that which is abstracted from the reality of material things, that it is an object which is included in every per se intelligible, whether material or immaterial, that it is not limited but unlimited, and, therefore, all-inclusive. This fact alone forever distinguishes the doctrine of the Subtle Doctor from that of St. Thomas. "*"

* C. L. Shireel, The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Philosophy of John Duns Scotus, pp. 166-167

While it is true that in the Scotist system the concept of being is proper neither to God nor creature, nevertheless it is contracted to God and creature by intrinsic modes - infinity and finity. "Such a contraction

involves no composition, for it involves no addition; consequently, it involves no imperfection." (See reference previously cited, p. 170). The concept of Being then, affords us the very necessary intellectual bridge connecting two points of view, the infinite and the finite. The glory of such a concept lies in its unsearchable richness and pregnancy of possibility; for in reality it is more than a mere concept, more than an algebraic factor whose relation to the whole equation is discrete and relative. It is in fact, in existential fact, the whole equation. My connection with my neighbor is one in Being, one in community and identity, and as I am in him so we are in God, even though we know it not.

To know this intellectually, is, of course, not yet charity but it permits of a knowledge grounded in experience, in flesh and blood and bones, and not in cold abstraction. How relate to a phantasm except phantasically? How relate to a sensible quiddity except as it is bound within its materiality?

But with Being as the object of intellect as intellect, the intellect is given the whole range of Being as its conatural object. Sensible quiddities are not, then, our first and natural objects of cognition.*

* It should be a profitable and timely inquiry: as to how "existential" is the thinking of Duns Scotus allowing his concept of Being its widest application.

To know intellectually is not to relate to an object organically, that is to say, not with the whole man. But given the knowledge that such an organic relationship may be consciously exercised it remains within the power of the will to decide whether such a relationship shall be so exercised. I may not will consciously ^{to} relate in being to my neighbour though I know our intimate connection exists unconsciously. I may decide that even though I know the bridge between us and he does not, it is therefore not worth while to cross it and risk a rebuff born of his

ignorance. But such is not the way of charity which "seeketh not her own" advantage. Nor am I permitted to wait for him to make the first move for the commandment to love one another is not qualified by the condition of reciprocal affection. The imperative remains simple and unconditional. I cannot plead the governance of such a principle as this, that the nearer the person is to God the greater the good we will him. It is enough that he exists; and if that is all I know, nevertheless, it is all I need to know. Neither is it a question of being fair (for I cannot judge that which admits of no specific differences, additions, composition) as is the case when I judge of genus and its contraction to its inferiors. Being qua being is not separable into particulars and therefore is not susceptible of discriminations. It remains essentially indifferent to those whom it includes. In being we know as we are

Known, disinterestedly, for we are subject
neither ^{to} gain nor loss.

In such a realm it would seem charity should know no obstacle. Being, itself, offers it no obstacle. However, charity is effected in a conscious movement of the will. To speak of unconscious charity is not to speak of it at all. God's charity moves preveniently where human charity does not exist. Therefore, when in consciousness of Being, I must confess that He first loved me.

In His grace He gives me consciousness of Being but this does not imply my consent to charity. Though compelled to some unconscious act fulfilling His charity, or some conscious act which may appear my charity, I am empowered to refuse my consent to this His will; for "to be unable to refuse is not same as to consent."

The problem of human charity is not fully comprehended until it is directly related to being. It cannot be exercised humanly without some consciousness of being, and, not completely, without taking upon itself the risk of being. In being lies the most terrifying risk of all, the risk of my identity as I think it, the jeopardy of my separateness as I conceive it. Truly the will is puzzled and ^{here} charity, not conscience, makes cowards of us all. Charity asks not an end to being but a dying in being. Physical death, for what it is, is not a matter of ultimate choice. It asks but resignation. Charity asks not resignation but resolution and so is a matter of ultimate choice. Charity is involved in duration as physical death is not. Charity asks a living death, a perpetual dying, in being, to the particular self, the consciously differentiated ego. St. Paul showed his awareness of this

experience when he said, "I die daily". Now his ego was not ^{no} annihilated since were this the case he could die only once. He willed his ego into correct relationship with Being and this he did daily. A life in full consciousness of Being is most truly alive whether the mode of Being be finite or infinite. A life in full consciousness of the assertion of the ego against Being is most truly a fiction for in Being no such assertion is valid. When we so conceive ourselves we are indeed such stuff as dreams are made on. Yet how infinitely precious is this dream that I am alone, that I am but a pilgrim and a stranger. I can tarry but a night and must leave before the first light of dawn lest I see myself inseparably involved in another's Being and charity command that I love him as myself.

I identity is not lost in Being. It is shared in a conscious community, or, in unconscious community it sleeps in potency until perceived. Once perceived

it is mistaken for Being and asserts its fictional isolation against all other beings and so thinks to cross swords with Being itself. In this it is most deluded for it can do nothing of itself to be, since it already is—though unaware. * Contrary to the usual assumption that heroism is required to

* Nietzsche was most agonizingly trapped in this dream. He had the most acute perception of the reality of identity but was fatally blind to its true relationship to Being. He correctly saw himself in dialectical opposition to Christianity but unwittingly served it better than he knew. He is the invaluable critic of Christendom which imagines itself saved where it is lost. He was only one step short of the Cross. Instead of crying "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" he shrieked from high on a windy crag, "Thou hast forsaken me, drop dead God, drop dead! How much more excruciatingly near the Cross he was than complacent Christians"—yet how far.

fully

~~fully~~ assert identity, such assertion requires total intransigence: the will not to share one's being with another. This movement of the will is consequent upon the terror at the thought of losing one's being as Charity lies in the will to share. Therefore the dialectical opposition, love / fear. Hatred wills to murder that which thwarts desire, (not love), the desire to enrich the ego's exclusiveness.

" The first act of the mind, with its primitive awareness of being, which plays so important a part in the soul's knowledge of God, plays a part equally important for its knowledge of the outside world. It is... the species or reflection of created nature, or of nature being created, which is the innate form of the intellectual memory. It is also the tendency or habitus of human nature towards completion. It gives the assurance that the mind despite its absorption

note

in material essences, has the whole range of 'being' for its proper and adequate object. It also supplies the intentio or tendency which adapts the mind to individual reality outside itself. The process of habitual and actual knowing, ... equated with unconscious and conscious are in inverse order. Unconscious knowing is an evolutionary process - via generationis vel originis - from the most indeterminate, universal and generic to the most particular and special, i.e. from nature as the simple subject of creation to the species specialissima which is the beginning of conscious knowing. Conscious knowing on the other hand, proceeds from the confused intuition of the species specialissima to the distinct understanding of the most universal concepts of all, namely, being - ens.

" Thus after the first confused contact with realityⁱⁿ the species specialissima every increase of

conscious knowledge consists in a going back over the ground already covered by unconscious knowing - enriched now of course with acquired species. For, although the mind's goal is individuality, it never quite reaches that goal in reality; all its knowledge is in the form of qualities, essences, intentions, rationes, aspects of reality. "*

* Delvin, p. 14.

Here is a profound irony: Consciousness, in order to increase its own knowledge, associates more intimately with that from which it would escape, namely, the unconscious which obeys the first law of being: there shall be no qualitative differentiation. Consciousness may not move in one direction except it also move in the other. Individuality makes the sign of the Cross unaware. These two, consciousness and unconsciousness, remain in perpetual wedding though still

relatively independent. Man's radical freedom consists in his being given the power to will that this be not so even though it be the will of God. My hand is forced but not my consent. That God should grant the grace to will His will is His benevolence; that He should grant the grace whereby I refuse His will is His charity. Though I turn my back to Him He wills that I shall not be cast out from being; but in His charity He gives me to think I am, and as the dreamer who knows not that he dreams I am granted my hell, my outer darkness. Charity is inexorable.

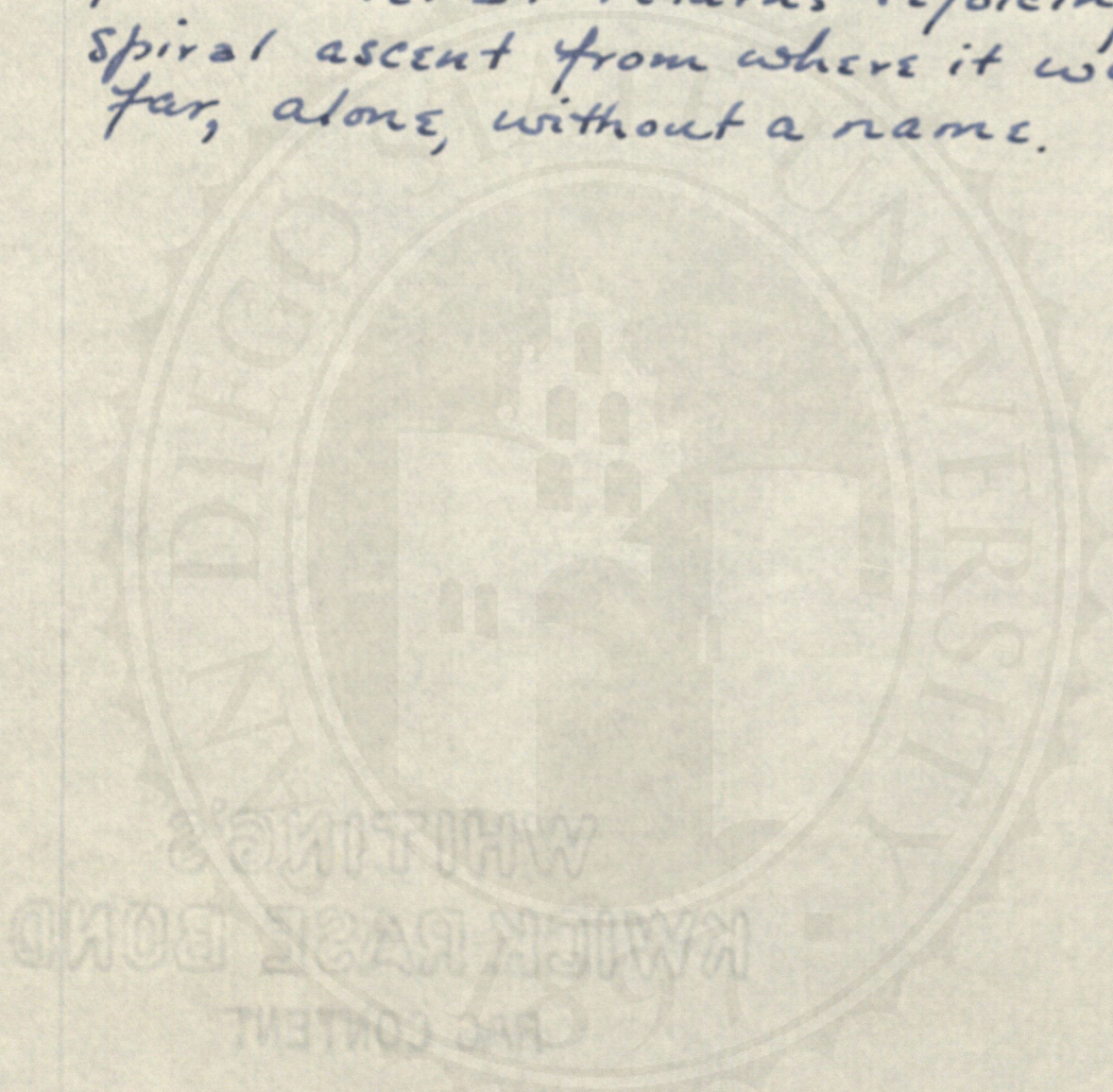
It is not an idle speculation, then, to entertain the thought of God's suffering, for where charity is refused it cannot be withdrawn. Charity is not an idea but an act in being that identifies with another - even with his sorrow. Charity does not seek to identify with another's charity, but with his being and is indifferent to the state of that being.

The intellectual complement to this conscious act of the will is the point of view of the undifferentiated; by it one may consider what is the point of view of God to His creatures. This is not to suggest that we can "see" existentially as God does, but, rather, it is given us to contemplate intellectually His point of view and conform our will to it by His grace. This perception invites us to enlarge our charity toward our neighbour since we are not restricted in our sight to just what we see of ourselves in him. Now we see in charity and not in estimations.

It is necessary that charity should suffer; but, though charity should know the fullness of grief, to it is also given all the riches and splendours of the unlimited, the all-inclusive. The rainbow of being lies in God's tears, as in our own.

Clearly, in charity consciousness reaches its superlative expression. In

an act of total charity, identity comes
full circle. It returns rejoicing in
spiral ascent from where it wandered
far, alone, without a name.

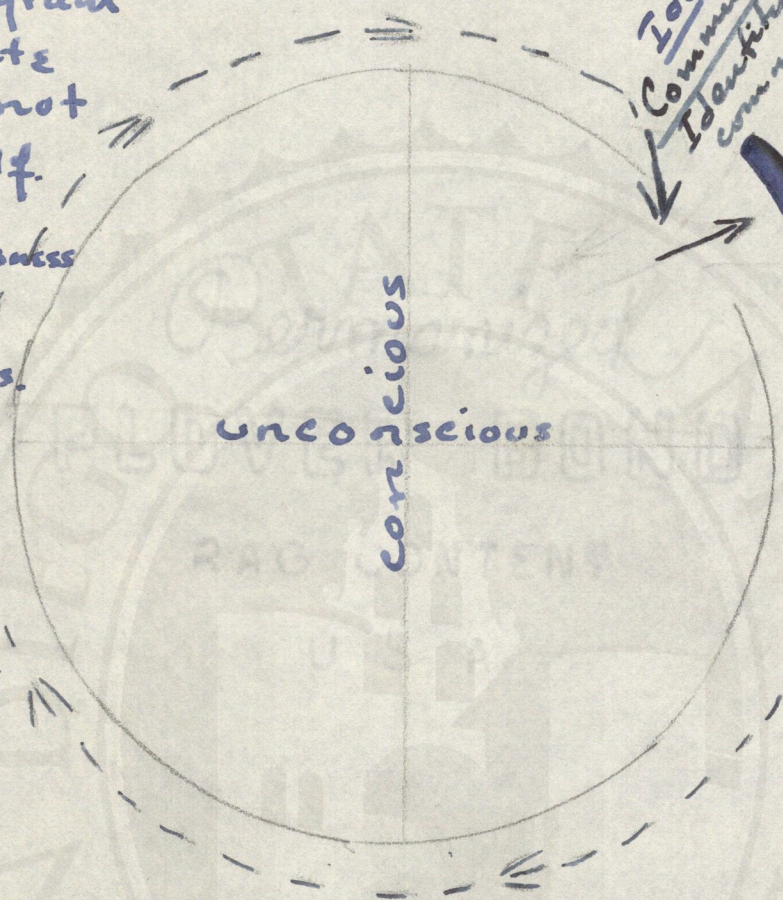


- I. The dualistic state of the "old Adam"
- II. The state of conciliation in the "new Adam"

Note: (i) This diagram represents state within Being - not ens, Being itself.

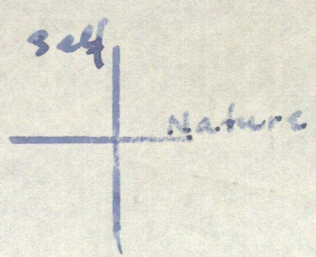
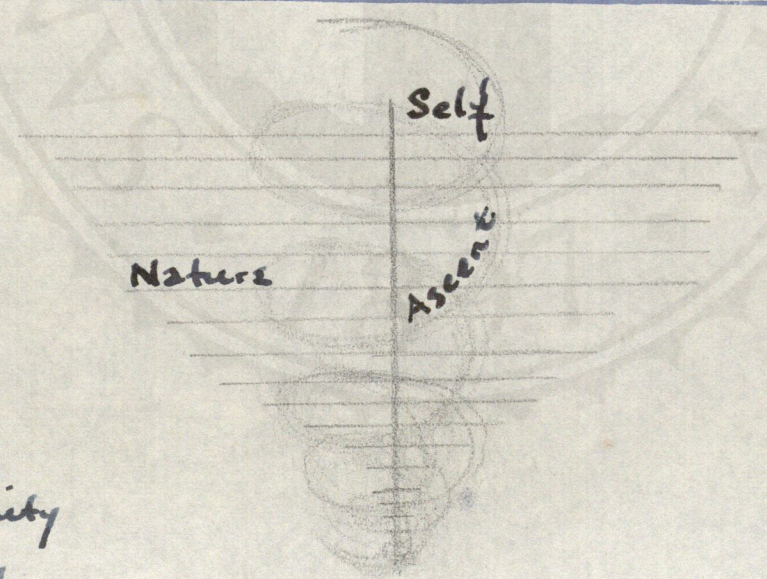
(ii) In reality consciousness and unconsciousness shown here are two types of consciousness. The unconscious is un-conscious only from the conscious point of view.

See H. Benoit, The Supreme Doctrine pp. 72 ff.



III. Identity and Community restored. Identity preserved within community and so found.

I identity: realized as separate, wholly differentiated, entirely particularized and so "lost."



Nature: Community
 Self: Identity
 Ascent: Awareness

Addendum

A Reflection on Christian Thought

It is the glory of Christian thought that it found the symbols to represent the struggle of 'becoming' at that point where 'becoming' and 'being' are seen in stark confrontation with each other. This is matchlessly shown in the Cross. The Resurrection is inseparable from the Cross — without the Resurrection, Christianity would have been still-born. But note what dogma has given great emphasis. It is the individual who is crucified, it is the individual who is resurrected to the eternal bliss. All this dogma should have done but without leaving its necessary complement undone, namely, a full representation of the principle of community — in the commonality of undifferentiated being. It abortively responded to this breach with a doctrine of the Church, community of

the saints; but this is a stop-gap. The Church remains a congregation of differentiations.

Christian thought must continue to half understand, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; love your enemies, bless them that curse you..." until it shows and affirms that in being, thy neighbour is inseparable from thyself.

Historical Christianity has always worshipped and allowed itself to be dominated by the masculine principle. Its Hebraic infancy made it peculiarly insensitive to half the mind of Christ. It found a foster home among the Teutons who hardened its individualism and further alienated it from its Greek mother. Greek thought was not averse to a contemplation of being, but even her most sublime meditations exalt the rational above the æsthetic principle.

The worship of Sophia

and the cult of the Virgin were inevitable. They ^{should and} will continue to flourish as unconscious tributes to one Christian thought continues to neglect — our mother, being.* However, the intellectual neglect cannot persist

* It is worth considering the problem Duns Scotus tackled but left no clear solution to: What is the relation of being to matter? Matter has tended to keep a God name in Christian thought — but are the reasons for this ultimately defensible? It seems difficult to avoid some identification of being with matter. If such an identification were made Christian thought would balk at such a notion. However, identifying matter with being should give no harm to Christianity.

without Christian thought failing through malnutrition.

Thomism grants pure reason to ask many questions. Duns Scotus

permits the whole man to ask questions and for him it seems irrelevant as to whether it is pure reason doing the talking. Christian thought needs a new question. Let it take up an old one it seems often to have laughed out of court.

Why should we continue to play Chinese puzzle games with elements of Thomist and Scotist thought where they will not fit? It is urgent that the concept of the univocity of being should be accorded the full attention it requires; that we should study it for itself, and gratefully receive from it those riches it can yield.

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