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John Joseph Griffin

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The Interpretation of the Two Thomistic Definitions of Certitude

If one accepts Thonnard's crediting Balmes with being the first of the precursors of the modern Thomistic restoration, [1] neo-Thomism has reached the rather respectable age of one hundred, [2] which is to say that it is old enough to have a history and to reflect upon it with profit. One of the most interesting aspects of that history is surely the development of the reflective and critical spirit in the elaboration of the theory of knowledge and in the controversies which have contributed to that elaboration. Central to this phase of the history of neo-Thomism is the concept of certitude and one is even tempted to claim that the stages of this part of its growth could be marked upon the sole basis of the different attitudes towards certitude, and more specifically of the various estimates of its importance, represented and maintained by the long line of writers, from Balmes to Van Steenberghen, who have addressed themselves to this problem.

I. MERCIER'S INTERPRETATION

The intention of this brief paper is not, however, to relieve such a claim of its appearance of extravagance. No more is it to present even a résumé of the positions taken relatively to certitude by the Thomists who have in one sense or another occupied themselves with it over the century past. Much less is it to offer a critique of all these positions. It intends rather to concentrate upon a single aspect of what would appear to be the crucial phase of the neo-Thomist theory of knowledge, the epistemology of Cardinal Mercier.

Even this narrow focus is not motivated by a mere historical curiosity, though it is not entirely devoid of interest from the point of view of pure history since it directs attention to an essential element of Mercier's teaching which seems to have been completely overlooked in the course of the discussion between the Old and the New Dogmatists. For a Thomist, the principal value attaching to any other Thomist's presentations is the help they can give him for the understanding of St. Thomas. It is mainly with an eye for such assistance that he reviews the work of his predecessors and scans the productions of his contemporaries. Thus, the single-mindedness of

1. Cf. F.-J. THONNARD, A.A., *Précis d'Histoire de la Philosophie*, Desclée, Paris, 1946, p.939.

2. Counting only from the date of the appearance of the French translation : J. BALMES, *Philosophie fondamentale*, trans. MANEC, Lardinois, Liège, 1852.

this paper derives chiefly from the fact that Mercier places an entirely original interpretation upon two basic texts of St. Thomas which define certitude. Hence the problem that concerns us is whether his reading of these texts is acceptable. Since the question of definition is here involved, the issue could easily be broadened to include the total Thomistic concept of certitude. Clearly so vast an area cannot possibly be covered in this small space. Nonetheless it is hoped that the sole solution of the problem of the acceptability of Mercier's interpretation of these texts will provide at least the starting-point for the determination of the whole of St. Thomas's teaching on certitude and, incidentally, the basis for the refutation of any such doctrine as Mercier's.

Two doctrines will forever be associated with Mercier's name in the field of epistemology : the so-called universal doubt and the distinction between spontaneous and reflex certitude. [1] For both of them he was careful to establish in some sense or other a foundation in the text of St. Thomas.

Considered only from the point of view of the Thomistic texts which Mercier adduces as his justification for these two doctrines, the powerful and highly instructive criticisms directed against Mercier's position by such men as Du Roussaux, [2] de Tonquedec, [3] and Sullivan [4] are somewhat disappointing in that they give their whole attention to the "universal doubt," and entirely neglect the distinction between spontaneous and reflex certitude. This situation seems all the more anomalous in the light of the fact that, though Mercier's endeavor to ground the distinction of the two certitudes in St. Thomas is explicit and direct, he nowhere appeals to St. Thomas in support of a real doubt [5] and in fact invokes his authority only

1. It should not be thought, however, that this statement is meant to imply that MERCIER was the first to speak of a certitude deriving from a reflex act. JOHN OF ST. THOMAS criticizes VASQUEZ' idea that theology is more certain than the other sciences, not because the faith upon which it is based is more certain than scientific knowledge, but only in virtue of a reflex act by which we judge that theological knowledge cannot be false. Cf. *Cursus Theologicus*, T.1, disp.2, a.9. n.8. Cf. also *Cursus Philosophicus*, Log., II Pars, q.23, a.3 (pp.741b-746b in REISER's edit.) ; Phil. Nat., IV Pars, q.10, a.4 (pp.322b-332a) and a.5 (pp.333b-338a).

2. Cf. L. DU ROUSSAUX, "Le Néo-Dogmatisme" in *Revue néo-scolastique de Philosophie*, Institut supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain, 1911, pp.537-563.

3. Cf. J. DE TONQUEDEC, *La Critique de la connaissance*, Beauchesne, Paris, 1929, pp.441ff.

4. Cf. J.-B. SULLIVAN, *An Examination of the First Principles in Thought and Being in the Light of Aristotle and Aquinas*, Catholic University, Washington, D.C., 1939, pp.43ff, 51ff.

5. Cardinal MERCIER, in fact, makes it very clear that the methodical doubt which he advocates is in no sense a real doubt. Cf. D. J. MERCIER, *Critériologie générale ou Traité général de la certitude*, Institut supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain, 8e édit., 1923, pp.68-73. This is a principal difference between MERCIER and JEANNIÈRE. Cf. R. JEANNIÈRE, S.J., *Criteriologia vel Critica Cognitionis Certae*, Beauchesne, Paris, 1912, p.113.

for what turns out to be nothing more serious than a positive doubt about mediate propositions. [1]

If Mercier's interpretation of the texts in which he claims to find St. Thomas making a distinction between spontaneous and reflex certitude thus still stands without direct challenge by his adversaries, it is equally bereft of direct confirmation by those who have in varying degrees aligned themselves with him. Thus, the task taken on by Noël, [2] who wrote the major reply to Du Roussaux and whose article contains all the elements of the ultimate development of Mercier's original position as we find it in F. Van Steenberghen's *Épistémologie*, [3] was to emphasize the value of reflection as the instrument for bringing to light the implications of the act of simple apprehension. This, however, is an entirely different matter from the distinction between spontaneous and reflex certitude and so Noël's dependence upon St. Thomas for the point he is making offers him no opportunity to evaluate Mercier's interpretation.

The consequence of these different emphases is that there still remains untouched a problem of textual criticism which cannot fail to arouse the interest of any Thomist. Mercier has made a suggestion for the interpretation of two texts of St. Thomas which, entirely apart from their indispensability to Mercier's own doctrine, must be examined to see whether they can bear the construction Mercier puts on them. The first part of this article, then, will be devoted to this scrutiny. The second part will develop at somewhat greater length some of the implications of points raised in the course of the refutation of Mercier's interpretation and will show, from a consideration of the subject of certitude, that certitude is an analogous term.

1. *Mercier's Statement of His Interpretation*

The two texts with which we are concerned here are the two definitions of certitude which St. Thomas gives in the third Book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*. He formulates the first definition in the following terms : " . . . It must be said that certitude is nothing else than the determination of the intellect to one thing." [4] The second reads as follows : " . . . It must be said that the firmness of the adherence of the cognitive power to its knowable object is properly called certitude." [5]

1. *Op. cit.*, p.116ff.

2. Cf. Mgr L. Noël, " Le thomisme et le point de vue critique ", in *Revue de Philosophie*, Rivière, Paris, 1919, pp.34-51.

3. Cf. F. Van Steenberghen, *Épistémologie*, édit. de l'Institut supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain, 1945.

4. *In III Sent.*, d.23, q.2, a.2, sol.3.

5. *In III Sent.*, d.26, q.2, a.4.

The question which occurs at once is that of the relationship between these two definitions. Are they really two definitions or are they just two ways of saying the same thing?

Almost alone among modern writers, [1] Mercier has at least made an attempt to answer these questions. It is worth listening to his explanation to see what he has to offer :

> Certitude envisaged in itself, as a psychological reality, independently of the causes which engender it, is the fixity of the intellect upon its sole object, " certitude is nothing else than the determination of the intellect to one thing." Envisioned in relationship to the cause which engenders it, certitude is the firm adhesion of the intellect to an object which is known to it, " the firmness of the adherence of the intellect to its cognoscible object " ; more explicitly, it is the repose of the intellect in the conscious possession of the truth. [2]

A good deal earlier in his work, Mercier has also made the following remark :

> The fixity of the mind in its adhesion to a unique term is *certitude*. When St. Thomas considers this latter from the psychological point of view he defines it : " *The determination of the intellect to one thing*. Certitude is nothing else than the determination of the intellect to one thing." [3]

In order to appreciate the full force of this interpretation, it is necessary to understand the clear distinction which Mercier makes between spontaneous and reflex certitude. The former is a psychological state which, before being submitted to a process of scientific justification through reflection, is a purely subjective, infra-scientific mental attitude, important, indeed from several points of view but useless as such as the starting-point of a critical philosophy. This spontaneous certitude is, then, defined without reference to its causes. It is only after reflection has operated upon this spontaneous certitude and so related it to its causes that it becomes a scientific certitude, [4] a certitude which is justified. [5]

Though he nowhere refers these quotations to the *Commentary on the Sentences*, it is quite obvious that it is the statements made therein by St. Thomas that Mercier has in mind. For him, then, the distinction between St. Thomas's two definitions is reducible to this, that the first considers certitude envisioned in itself as a psycho-

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1. Cf. T. PESCH, S.J., *Institutiones Logicales*, Pars I, Herder, Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1888, p.568, where it might be possible to see an understanding of the first of these two definitions as the material definition of certitude, while the second would be the formal definition. It is not clear, however, that this is what Father PESCH means.

2. *Op. cit.*, p.420.

3. *Ibid.*, p.8 ; cf. also p.16.

4. *Ibid.*, p.115.

5. *Ibid.*, p.40.

logical state or mere psychological reality and independently of the causes which engender it, while the second considers certitude in a very definite relationship to its cause.

2. *Preliminary Refutation of Mercier's Interpretation*

From a consideration of the definitions themselves, entirely apart from their context, it does not seem possible to agree with Mercier's interpretation. It cannot be maintained that St. Thomas makes explicit mention of " cause " in either definition. From another point of view, however, the cause is mentioned in both. Mercier would likely agree that, if the intellect operates at all, it must have as the object of its act something which is in the line of intelligibility, that is, an intelligible object which specifies it. The " one thing " of the first definition and the " cognoscible object " of the second are presumably meant to signify the objects of the act of intellect. To the degree, then, that the object of its act is the cause of the determination or fixity of the intellect, it must be admitted that the cause is mentioned in both definitions, and not only in the second.

This argument alone would seem to be sufficient to eliminate any possibility of basing upon these definitions of St. Thomas Mercier's distinction of spontaneous and reflex certitude, inasmuch as the former is not a legitimate certitude and has to be justified by the second.

3. *Refutation of Mercier's Interpretation Based on the Context*

The most striking difference between the two definitions of certitude given by St. Thomas is the generality and simplicity of the first and the verbal fulness of the second. In addition to this, the " properly " of the second definition seems deliberately intended to call attention to the fact that it, and not the first, is the correct definition.

Despite these indices in favor of the second as the better definition, one should not be at all hasty in coming to the conclusion that such is really the case. It would seem to be a sound rule of method that a text must be interpreted in the light of its context. When those definitions are read in their contexts, it would seem that the verbal fulness of the second, far from proving that it is the more precise and accurate and that the first is vague and inexact, serves only (but extremely effectively) to bring out clearly that each definition is designed to point up a different aspect of the same one certitude and that it is in the light of its different purpose that each of them must be understood. If they are thus properly integrated each in its own background, the difference in the terms in which they are expressed should present no difficulty.

Nor does one have to go into the context of the definitions very deeply to appreciate the difference between them. The first definition is given as the principle upon which rests the solution to the objection that "... the act of faith has a lesser certitude than does the act of science," [1] while the second is stated in answer to the difficulty that " It seems that hope does not have certitude in its act." [2]

It is obvious at once from the most superficial consideration of the questions in connection with which the definitions are formulated — and, therefore, it is all the more remarkable that Mercier completely ignores the fact — that the first difficulty is wholly and exclusively concerned with virtues which are resident in the intellect, while the second includes also a reference to the will, in which faculty hope is subjected. [3]

In view, then, of the different implications of the two questions, there is no occasion for surprise that St. Thomas does not expressly mention " cognitive faculty " and " knowable object " in the first definition as he does in the second. To do so would clearly be pointless. The emphasis " cognitive-cognoscible " can be presumed without very deep reflection as intended to set up an opposition between what it defines and something else which is not so immediately related to cognition. From this aspect, there is clearly no opposition between faith and science. But it is equally plain that a certain opposition can be found between faith and hope, in the sense that the intellect, which is perfected by faith, is a cognitive faculty while the will, which is the subject of hope, is not.

The difference between the way in which the two definitions of certitude are worded is thus easily explicable. It comes down quite simply to the fact that, however much they may be shown later to differ in other respects, both the certitude of faith and the certitude of science are alike in that they are both certitudes of the intellect, while the certitude of faith differs from the certitude of hope at least in this, that the former is a certitude of the intellect and the latter a certitude of the will. The fact that the second question is concerned with hope makes it much more than likely that it is the difference between the certitude of faith and the certitude of hope which St. Thomas wishes to underline in the second definition. Thus, to specify, in the second definition, the firmness of adhesion that is peculiar to the cognitive faculty makes perfect sense.

There still remains, however, the question concerning the use of the term " properly " in the second definition. If what has just been said is true, it would seem that this normally very significant word is here utterly meaningless, which is most unlikely.

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1. *In III Sent.*, d.23, q.2, qa.3.
2. *In III Sent.*, d.26, q.2, a.4.
3. Cf. *IIa IIae*, q.18, a.1.

Once again, it is only when the two definitions are taken entirely out of their contexts and read in isolation that one can be led to think that St. Thomas uses the " properly " to contrast one definition with the other.

Before giving the second definition, St. Thomas first mentions a theory which certain theologians have proposed as an explanation of the difference between the certitude of faith and that of hope. According to them, the certitude of faith is universal and absolute, whereas the certitude of hope is particular and conditional.

St. Thomas finds this theory defective, because the difference between universal and particular is not enough to constitute an essential difference or to necessitate different habits. The consequence of such a distinction would be that faith would not be a different habit from hope, nor would faith and hope be subjected in different powers. This conclusion, as he says, is entirely false.

He then proposes his own explanation of the difference between the certitude of faith and the certitude of hope in opposition to the theory which he has just rejected ; and it is upon the proper notion of certitude, as distinct from the notion referred to as false, that he bases his answer. Thus he says : " And therefore another explanation must be given, namely, that the firmness of the adherence of the cognitive power to its knowable object is properly called certitude." [1]

The difficulty caused by the " properly " is as easily resolved as that. It does, indeed, make a contrast, but the contrast is between St. Thomas's concept of certitude and the incorrect concept of other theologians, not between the first and second definitions.

Consequently, even an approximate idea of the relationship existing between the two definitions and their respective settings shows up Mercier's interpretation as being based upon a preconception that is unsupported not only by the definitions considered in themselves but also by their contexts. It becomes clear at once that the two are parallel definitions of the same intellectual certitude. Aside from the " properly," which has been shown to be without significance in a comparison of the two and can, therefore, be left out altogether in an attempt at correlating them, their terms are seen to correspond in the following way :

determination.....	firmness of adherence
of the intellect.....	of the cognitive power
to one thing.....	to its cognoscible object.

The fact that the terms in the second definition are somewhat more explicit than those in the first has already been explained on the ground that they are intended to emphasize the fact that certitude

1. *In III Sent.*, d.26, q.2, a.4, c.

in the proper sense is an affair of the cognitive faculty, as opposed to the wider meaning which it has when it is attributed to the will.

One should not fail to notice further that Mercier's explanation of the two definitions not only imposes upon them a burden which they cannot sustain, when St. Thomas never intended such a meaning ; but it also rejects in large measure their real significance inasmuch as it tries to make very determinate what St. Thomas quite deliberately leaves indeterminate. In St. Thomas's statement of the definitions there is not the slightest hint of a distinction between one and the other within the area of intellectual certitude. Both are perfectly applicable to every kind of intellectual certitude without exception.

When Mercier tries to twist the two definitions to fit his own preconceived notion of their meaning, he states that the first makes no mention of the cause of certitude while the second does, and that this is what constitutes the difference between them. It has already been shown above that this interpretation cannot be defended and that its falsity is apparent even without reference to the contexts of the definitions.

When the definitions are now read in their contexts, it becomes possible to appreciate the additional fact that explicit mention of the cause of certitude is exactly the thing which St. Thomas avoids in both definitions. He consistently maintains this indefiniteness even in the second definition, in which he is comparatively more express than in the first, so that he can emphasize the proper concept of certitude and make a clear-cut distinction between it and the wider meaning of the term. It is especially instructive to remark how he preserves this lack of specification, and yet remains sufficiently specific to give an adequate answer to each of the difficulties in question.

The reason for St. Thomas's precise indefiniteness here is not at all hard to understand. What he needs as the foundation of his solution to the first of the two problems with which he is faced is the most general possible definition of intellectual certitude. This is so because the whole range of intellectual certitude is involved in the question concerning faith and science and their relative certitude. Obviously, then, he must here define intellectual certitude in all its amplitude. A more restricted definition would be the definition of a specific type of certitude and would, therefore, be useless as the starting point of his resolution.

The second question which he is called upon to answer is somewhat more intricate from the point of view of intellectual certitude. The principle of his resolution here must be the proper concept of certitude as opposed to a wider concept. But the proper concept refers to intellectual certitude exclusively. At the same time, of course, it involves intellectual certitude in all its extension. Thus, he must here formulate a definition which will stress the thoroughly intellectual character of the proper concept in order to eliminate any

possible confusion with a wider signification, and he must accomplish this without wording the definition in such a way that any kind of intellectual certitude could be excluded.

One might even go so far as to say that St. Thomas's primary and immediate concern in stating the first definition is not to emphasize the intellectual character of the certitude with which he is there engaged. No one would deny that both the certitude of faith and that of science are intellectual certitudes. His purpose is rather to establish a definition of certitude wide enough to include every type of intellectual certitude, in order to forestall any objection concerning its use as the principle of his solution of the question under consideration. So, he begins with the most universal and all-embracing concept of intellectual certitude possible.

In the second definition, on the other hand, his attention is occupied first of all by the proper notion of certitude with its implication of a strictly intellectual character. Thus, it is only secondarily that he adverts to the fact that his statement of this definition must not fail to make room for every kind of intellectual certitude. But even if this latter consideration is only secondary, it is nonetheless extremely important, because any carelessness about it would result in a mis-statement of the proper concept.

Whether the order of these considerations be relevant or no, the important thing is that in both cases St. Thomas must frame the widest possible definition of intellectual certitude, consistent with the solution of each of the questions he is treating. How well he succeeds in making the second definition as general as the first is evident from the comparison, made above, between the elements of one definition with those of the other.

If, however, the "one thing" of the first definition and the "knowable object" of the second are taken to stand for the object which causes the certitude defined, then there is no possibility of including the certitude of faith in these definitions. The reason is, of course, that the certitude of faith is not caused by the object, but imperated by the will.[1] Thus, Mercier's interpretation places on these definitions the very limitation and restriction which it is St. Thomas's intention to avoid.

It is, in fact, the noncommittal character of the "one thing" and of the "knowable object" which makes the two definitions capable of being applied both to the certitude of faith and to the certitude of understanding and of science. Both certitudes are alike in that they are determinations of the intellect. They are also alike in that they are determinations to one thing, or the firmness of adhesion to a knowable object. But to go beyond that and to make of the

1. "Determinatur autem intellectus ad unum *tripliciter* ... *In fide* vero ex hoc quod voluntas intellectui imperat" (*In III Sent.*, d.23, q.2, a.2, sol.3).

" one thing " and the " knowable object " an actually known object which determines the intellect, is to destroy the universality of the definition of intellectual certitude and totally to misunderstand St. Thomas's whole point and purpose.

II. THE SUBJECT OF CERTITUDE IN THE PROPER SENSE

It should be rather obvious that the foregoing explanation of the meaning of St. Thomas's definitions of certitude, while adequate as a refutation of Mercier's understanding of them, is seriously in need of further precision. The mere advertence to one or two points involved in that explanation will make this clear. There is, for example, the frequent statement that the proper concept of certitude includes intellectual certitude alone, reference being made at the same time to a wider meaning of the term " certitude." This has the appearance of an unwarranted assumption, especially in view of the fact that the second definition might seem to imply something more than intellect in the broader term " cognitive." Furthermore, stress is placed upon a concept of certitude which will include the whole range of intellectual certitude. But the expression " the whole range of intellectual certitude " is ambiguous in that it may be understood to refer either to all three acts of the intellect or to the ability of the intellect to know both naturally knowable and supernaturally revealed truth.

These and other related problems can be resolved satisfactorily only by a consideration of the subject of certitude. This will in turn show that certitude is an analogous term, and it is primarily to the manifestation of its analogous character that the present section of this article is directed. Though it is recognized that, as St. Thomas remarks, [1] the essential judgment of certitude is to be made on the basis of its cause, a discussion of the causes of certitude would go far beyond the limits of this article.

In the course of answering the question whether there is certitude in the act of the virtue of hope — in connection with which he states the second of the two definitions of certitude — St. Thomas considers the objection that certitude does not pertain to hope, because certitude pertains to cognition, while hope does not. This is the first of the four objections stated in this article, and in replying to it St. Thomas makes an extremely important distinction. He says that certitude is primarily and principally in cognition, but that it is also in the works of nature and of virtue by way of similitude and participation : " To the first, therefore, it must be said that certitude is primarily and principally in cognition ; but it is in works of nature and of virtue by way of similitude and participation." [2]

1. *IIa IIae*, q.4, a.8.

2. *In III Sent.*, d.26, q.2, a.4. ad 1.

This is exactly the same distinction as the one he makes again when explaining the certitude of hope in the *Summa Theologiae:* ". . . Certitude is found in anything in a twofold way, that is, essentially and by participation. Indeed, it is found essentially in the knowing power ; but participatively in everything which is infallibly moved to its end by the knowing power . . ." [1]

It seems that one could hardly miss the meaning of the distinction between essential and participated certitude which St. Thomas makes so clear in these texts. Yet Father L.-M. Regis uses the text quoted last as evidence that St. Thomas transfers the notion of certitude to the will *without any restriction:* " Not only does St. Thomas distinguish in certitude *diverse* elements of which one relates much more to the appetite than to the intelligence, but he transports the notion of certitude into the voluntary domain, and that without any restriction . . ." [2]

Not only does he quote this text from the *Summa Theologiae,* but he italicizes the words " Essentialiter . . . in vi cognoscitiva ; participative . . ." Even more unexpectedly, he goes on immediately to say, in support of his theory, that there is a text in St. Thomas's *Commentary on the Sentences* which says that the subject of the certitude of faith is, not the intelligence, but the will :

> . . . We find an application . . . of this principle in the *Sentences* where he tells us that the certitude of faith has as its subject the will and not the intelligence : " Science and understanding possess certitude by that which pertains *to* cognition, namely, the evidence of that to which assent is made. But faith possesses certitude from that which is *outside the genus of cognition,* and in the genus of affection." [3]

The text from which Father Regis quotes here follows immediately the one in which the first definition of certitude is given. It occurs in direct connection with the question whether the will is the subject of faith, and is given in answer to the second objection to St. Thomas's resolution of that question. [4] The main body of the response to the principal question has already made it perfectly plain that the intellect is the subject of faith and that the function of faith is to make the intellect readily obedient to the will in matters which are above reason. This much is settled before the objections are taken up at all. The whole response from which Father Regis quotes only two sentences is made up of three. The last sentence is : ". . . And therefore science and understanding are, as in [their] subject, in that from which they derive [their] certitude, but faith is not."

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1. *IIa IIae,* q.18, a.4.

2. L.-M. Regis, o. p., *L'Opinion selon Aristote,* Inst. d'Études médiévales, Ottawa, 1935, p.193.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *In III Sent.,* d.23, q.2, a.3, qa.1 : " Videtur quod fides sit in voluntate sicut in subjecto."

Even without the additional sentence, which makes the point that science and understanding differ in their certitude from faith in that they are subjected in the same faculty as that from which their certitude derives, while faith is not subjected in the faculty from which its certitude derives — even without this concluding sentence, there should be no reason for mistaking the fact that, in the two preceding ones St. Thomas is discussing the *cause* of the certitudes of faith, of science and understanding. What he says is, not that the will is the subject of faith, but that the *cause* of the certitude of faith is outside the genus of cognition.

It remains true, then, that for St. Thomas the word " certitude " cannot apply to anything other than the certitude of the intellect without being subject to a certain restriction. When it is attributed to anything other than the intellect, it is always participated certitude that is intended.

Thus, in the development of the second definition of certitude, St. Thomas says that names which pertain to cognition are transferred to natural operations, so that nature is said to operate wisely, infallibly, and to be certain in its tendency to its end. The reason why qualities which properly belong to the intellect can be attributed to the operations of mere nature is, as he explains, that the determination of nature comes from the divine Wisdom. In this sense, the works of nature are like works of art, insofar as nature tends to its end by determined means. [1] The determination of nature is, then, an effect of the divine art, which directs natural things to their ends. This brings to mind at once the famous definition of nature given in St. Thomas's *Commentary on the Physics*. [2]

If the sense of " certitude " can thus be extended to effects which follow upon knowledge, it is no less true that St. Thomas also uses the word as the equivalent of the perfection of things : ....The word ' essence ' ... also stands for ' form, inasmuch as by form is meant the perfection or certitude of each thing ... [3] An examination of this use of the term brings to our notice the fact that the determination of the thing is the principal cause of the certitude of science and understanding.

St. Thomas goes even further to say that the word " certitude " is itself derived from the relation of cause and effect which exists in the quality and is called certain when a cause produces its effect infallibly :

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1. *In III Sent.*, d.26, q.2, a.4. c. Cf. also *Q. D. de Veritate*, q.10, a.10, ad 9.

2. " ... Natura nihil est aliud quam ratio cujusdam artis, scilicet divinae, indita rebus, qua ipsae res moventur ad finem determinatum : sicut si artifex factor navis posset lignis tribuere, quod ex se ipsis moverentur ad navis formam inducendam " (*In II Phys.*, lect.14 (edit. LEON.), n.8. See also *In I Politic.*, *prooemium* ; *Q. D. de Pot.*, q.3, a.7, ad 7.

3. *De Ente et Essentia*, c.1. Cf. CAJETAN, *In De Ente et Essentia D. Thomae Aquinatis Commentaria* (edit. LAURENT, Marietti), Taurini, 1934, p.29.

. . . Certitude is twofold : that is, of knowledge and of order. Now there is certitude of knowledge when the knowledge does not deviate in any respect from that which is found in the thing, but evaluates the thing as it is ; and because a certain estimate of a thing is possessed principally through the cause of the thing, therefore the word " certitude " is derived from the order of cause to effect, so that the order from cause to effect is called certain, when the cause infallibly produces the effect . . . [1]

There appears to be a contradiction between this text and the one referred to above in which St. Thomas says that terms which refer properly to intellectual certitude are transferred to operations which depend for their direction upon the intellect. Yet, in the present instance, he seems to be saying just the opposite, i.e. that the very word " certitude " is originally applied to the infallibility of the order of cause to effect amongst things themselves and is thence applied to the knowledge which achieves certitude on the basis of that order.

The difficulty, however, is only apparent. Reference has already been made to the fact that the certitude of things is attributed to them inasmuch as they are directed to determinate ends by determinate means in accordance with the divine Art. It goes without saying, of course, that the things in question are natural and not artificial things, though from the point of view of God they belong to the realm of what can be *made.* [2] Thus, from this primary and fundamental point of view, the certitude which things have is theirs by derivation from the divine Art and is in them intrinsically by reason of their form or essence, as indicated in the text quoted above from the *De Ente et Essentia.* It is plain, from examples stated by St. Thomas, that all the attributions of certitude in the sense of certitude of order are confined to natural things, whether inanimate, or animate though not rational, or even to those faculties of man which are other than cognitive.

The essential point is that the certitude of things, which is the cause of our intellectual certitude, is nevertheless no more than a certitude by participation. In other words, the proper notion of certitude is not found verified in them. Nor can it be, if by definition the proper notion of certitude is confined to intellectual certitude. It is precisely this identification which is expressly made in the second definition of certitude. It will be recalled that this is exactly the force of the word " properly " in the second definition. The problem resolves itself, then, into the question whether there is any inconsistency in holding that the determination or exactness of things, to which certitude is attributed only in a wide sense, can be the cause of the

1. *De Ver.*, q.6, a.3.

2. Cf. H. PICHETTE, " Considérations sur quelques principes fondamentaux de la doctrine du spéculatif et du pratique " in *Laval théologique et philosophique,* édit. de l'Université Laval, Québec, Vol.I, 1945, n.1, pp.52-70, esp., pp.58-63.

determination or certitude of the intellect, which alone is called certitude in the proper sense.

The question seems to depend for its answer on the same principle as the one used by St. Thomas to solve a like question about truth. He says that, even though the truth of our intellect is caused by the thing, there is no reason to expect that the formal notion of truth should be found first in the thing : "... Though the truth of our intellect is caused by the thing, nonetheless it is not necessary that the notion of truth be found first in the thing ... And likewise the being of the thing, not its truth, causes the truth of the intellect ..." [1]

Neither is there any reason why we should not make the same distinction for certitude as was made for truth. Just as the being of the thing, and not its truth, is the cause of the truth of our intellect, so the form or ' what it is ' of the thing is the cause of whatever certitude we have about the thing itself. Since, furthermore, our knowledge of the order between the thing and its cause or effect can, like the knowledge of its truth, be said to be dependent upon its " esse. "

It is well known that formal truth is found not in things, but in the intellect ; the reason being that the mind is adequate to the thing only when it knows it in such a way that it knows itself to be in conformity with what it knows, and what it knows to be as it is known. [2] Plainly this can be done only within the intellect itself, the action involved being wholly immanent. [3]

If this is so for truth, it is likewise true of the formality of certitude, which, according to John of St. Thomas, is the very first of the formalities of truth. [4] For him, truth, when considered as the ultimate perfection of the intellect, requires not merely a relation of adequation but includes its foundation and evidence as well. [5]

The main point of the preceding discussion is the vindication to intellectual certitude alone — in the face of whatever claims the

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1. *Ia Pars*, q.16, a.1, ad 3.

2. *De Ver.*, q.1, a.2 ; *Ia Pars*, q.16, a.1 ; *In II Metaph.*, lect.2, n.298 ; *In VI Metaph.*, lect.4, nn.1230-1240.

3. *De Ver.*, q.8, a.6 ; *Ia Pars*, q.87, a.3 ; JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Cursus Theol.*, T.II, disp.22, a.1, n.2.

4. " Dico secundo : Si attendamus ad fundamentum seu firmitatem veritatis, et condiciones ejus, potest admittere latitudinem, et principalius seu perfectius potest inveniri in uno, quam in alio. Et aliquae condiciones ex istis principalius inveniuntur in intellectu, aliae principalius in rebus ; et juxta hoc sententiae relatae conciliantur inter se, et ex omnibus illis resultat resolutio. Haec conclusio constabit, enumerando istas condiciones seu respectus, et formalitates veritatis. Et primo, considerari potest ratio firmitatis, seu immutabilitatis et certitudinis ..." (*Curs. Theol.*, T.II, disp.22, a.2, n.61).

5. " Respondetur, quod quando veritas dicitur magna perfectio intellectus, aut etiam ultima, non debet sumi pro sola relatione adaequationis, sed pro ejus fundamento, et pro certitudine atque evidentia qua attingitur veritas ... Veritas autem cum dicitur esse tam magna perfectio, non sumitur pro sola relatione adaequationis, sed pro ipsa cum suo fundamento manifestationis ut conformabilis rebus in se " (*Ibid.*, n.28).

certitude of the will and that of things might appear to have — of the right to be called certitude in the proper sense. The arguments which have been briefly suggested in defense of that right also serve to make evident the fact that certitude is an analogous word.

Its analogous character is clear from the fact that it is predicated primarily of intellectual certitude and only secondarily of the other types of certitude. The latter are called certitude solely because they participate in this primary and essential certitude, being either the cause of intellectual certitude as in the case of objects which are known by the human intellect but which are quite independent of it, or its effect, such as the things we make, which derive their certitude from the human intellect which guides their production or directs them properly to their right end.

Analogy implies an order among the significations of a word, in such a way that the word is applied first of all, in the strict and proper sense, to only one of the things of which it is predicable ; whereas of the other things it is said only secondarily and precisely by reason of their order to the subject of the first imposition.

It must not be thought, however, that the problem of the attribution of certitude to the various subjects of which it can be predicated is in any sense exhausted by what has been said about it in the present article. There is another whole series of questions which lie roughly in the same line as those already touched upon. These, too, are questions about the subject of certitude taken in the proper sense. There is this difference, however, between the problems already treated and those now coming up for discussion : while the former relates entirely to the possibility of verifying the proper concept of certitude in non-intellectual things, the latter are all concerned with subjects which are wholly within the area, if not of the intellect, at least of knowledge.

These problems suggest themselves for different reasons and in different ways. One can think, for example, of Mercier's theory of certitude as having its whole basis in a specification of the act of reflex judgment alone as the subject of certitude and then ask what is to be thought of his theory from this point of view.

It is also possible to think that the mention of cognitive faculty in the second of the two definitions of certitude should include the senses, since they surely are instruments of knowledge in the sense of knowing powers. Furthermore, St. Thomas speaks very explicitly of the certitude of sense knowledge and compares the senses on the basis of the particular certitude of which each is capable. If, then, the senses are to be understood as included in this reference to the knowing power in the second definition, how is one to reconcile the second definition with the first, which apparently forbids such extension inasmuch as it refers exclusively to the " intellect " ?

Besides, if we allow that the intellect comprises three acts : simple apprehension, judgment and reasoning, [1] there seems at first sight no reason at all why all three of these operations should not be included in the definitions, especially when both of them intend — whether directly or indirectly makes little difference — to give the broadest possible meaning to intellectual certitude.

Perhaps the simplest way of answering these questions is to point to the fact that St. Thomas says absolutely nothing about the certitude either of the senses or of simple apprehension in his discussion of the two definitions. That alone should suffice to indicate that they ought to be excluded from the proper concept of certitude.

Yet the mere omission of these certitudes does nothing to explain why they have no place in a consideration of the proper concept of certitude. One might even go so far as to say that the purpose of the second definition being none other than to clarify the distinction between certitude in the proper sense and certitude in the wide sense, St. Thomas should have given at least some hint of why these certitudes are not certitudes in the proper sense.

Such a statement would be without justification for two reasons. In the first place, the question which St. Thomas is treating when he introduces the second definition is, as has already been noted, the certitude of hope. To answer this question satisfactorily, all he needs to do is to make the distinction between certitude in the proper sense and certitude in the wide sense and to show how hope falls under the latter. To go beyond that is not in any way necessary for his purpose.

In the second place, he rather obviously presumes that neither the senses nor the act of simple apprehension should give rise to any difficulty in relation to the problems he discusses. He has, in fact, already clearly distinguished the first and second operations of the intellect and given some attention to the certitude of the senses in the first reply of the article in which the first definition of certitude occurs. But his basic assumption is that the student is acquainted with a very important and fundamental doctrine which would seem to eliminate any possibility of including the certitude of the senses and that of simple apprehension in the proper concept of certitude.

He states that doctrine in several places in connection with the problem of truth. If one remembers that certitude is a formality of truth, there would appear to be no objection to applying what he says of truth to certitude.

Even before leaving the texts of the *Commentary on the Sentences* to which reference has already been made, it is possible to find at least one answer to the aspect of the problem which is concerned with the certitude of sense knowledge. In the response to one of

1. Cf. *In I Posteriorum Analyticorum*, lect.1, n.4.

the objections concerning the certitude of hope, St. Thomas makes a distinction between the certitude of cognition and the certitude of order, which consists in the fact that the certitude of cognition never fails, while the certitude which is found in natural things can fail accidentally : ". . . And therefore the certitude of cognition never fails, but the certitude of nature fails, not, to be sure, essentially, but accidentally . . ." [1]

The thing to notice here is that, when St. Thomas says that the certitude of cognition never fails, he seems to be laying down a universal principle, to which there can be no exception. If there could be exception made to it, the distinction which he here points out, between the certitude of order and that of cognition, would appear to be utterly useless. Thus, it seems possible to say that permanence is a peculiar and particular characteristic of the certitude of cognition taken in the proper sense, so that even the certitude of a cognitive faculty would not be proper intellectual certitude if it admitted the possibility of being lost.

Leaving aside any wider implications of the principle, should we compare this statement with the passage of the first reply which deals with the way in which the certitude of the senses is affected, it becomes clear that the certitude of sense knowledge cannot meet with the character of permanence required by the proper concept of certitude. What he says there [2] is that the determination of the judgment of the senses is due to the fact that the sensible object is actually present to the senses : ". . . And in like manner the judgment of the sensitive part is determined by this that the sensible object lies under the sense . . ."

Because St. Thomas's immediate interest in this passage is simply to compare the ways in which both the intellect and the senses are made certain by the determination occasioned by the actual presence of their respective objects, the full significance of these remarks might be lost unless one remembered that, once the object of the sense ceases to be actually present to it, there can no longer be any certitude about the existence of that object :

> . . . This kind of certitude, however, that is, which cannot be otherwise, cannot be possessed relatively to things which are capable of being otherwise. For then certitude can be had about them only when they fall under the sense. But when they pass beyond observation, that is, when they cease to be seen or to be sensed, then it is unknown whether they exist or do not exist . . . [3]

This text from the *Commentary on the Sentences* appears, however, to complicate the question relatively to the act of simple appre-

1. *In III Sent.*, d.26, q.2, a.4, ad 2.

2. *In III Sent.*, d.23, q.2, a.2, sol.1.

3. *In VI Ethic.*, lect.3, n.1145 ; cf. *ibid.*, lect.5, n.1175.

hension, at the same time that it furnishes at least a partial answer with respect to sense knowledge. Granted from what has already been said that the certitude of sense knowledge cannot be included in the proper concept of certitude because its certitude is only temporary, the same cannot be said of the certitude of simple apprehension, since the quiddities which are known by this act of the intellect are universal and therefore eternal. [1] At least the certitude of simple apprehension, then, would seem to be eligible for inclusion in the proper concept of certitude in view of the fact that its certitude meets the requirement of permanence, which is laid down by St. Thomas as a distinguishing feature of the certitude of cognition.

For a satisfactory solution of the question whether the act of simple apprehension should be counted among the subjects in which the proper concept of certitude is verified, it seems necessary to turn from the consideration of the object of the act to an examination of the nature of the act in its relationship to truth. It will be seen at once that this solution is also a further argument against the possibility of finding the proper concept of certitude verified in sense knowledge.

It has already been noted above that the notion of truth is verified primarily in the intellect and not in the thing. It now becomes necessary to specify the statement further and to say that, since it is the truth *as known* which is the perfection of the intellect, the primary notion of truth is verified first in the second operation of the intellect, the operation of composition and division. The reason for this is that the intellect does not know its conformity to the thing in the first operation of simple apprehension. It knows and enunciates the truth for the first time only when it judges its conformity to the thing known. [2]

Since truth is an adequation between the intellect and the thing, and since there can be an adequation only between things which are distinct, the adequation required by truth cannot be found either in simple apprehension or in sense knowledge. The reason for this is that neither the intellect, which apprehends simply what a thing is, nor the sense, which is purely receptive of the sensible species, has in it anything more than the similitude of the things known. It is only when the act of judgment is made that the intellect has in it something which is properly its own and which does not exist in the object that it knows. In the act of simple apprehension and in that of sense knowledge, therefore, there is no possibility whatever of a comparison of two different terms in order to know their adequation. Consequently, there can be in them no *knowledge* of the truth,

1. " Eternal " in the sense that they are not subject to variation, but are immutable and necessary. Cf. *In II Metaph.*, lect.5, n.336, for immobility as cause of certitude.

2. *Ia Pars*, q.16, a.2 ; *In VI Metaph.*, lect.3, n.1236.

which is to say that the truth *as known* is not in them. [1] Obviously, then, their truth cannot be the truth which is the perfection of the intellect and which is implied in the very notion of truth itself.

This does not mean, however, that the intellect *is* not true when it apprehends quiddities, or that the sense *is* not true when it knows its object in the way that is proper to it. What it does mean is that the truth which is in them is there in the very way in which the truth is in any other *thing*, but not in that special and characteristic way in which it is in a knowing power considered in its specific nature as faculty of knowledge. This is the same as saying that, in knowing their objects as they do, they are conforming to the divine idea of what they should be and do in the way that other things conform to the divine idea of what they, too, should be by being what they are. [2] Thus the truth is in them simply as in a thing and without any special reference to the fact that they are faculties of knowledge :

> . . . Therefore, the truth can be in the sense, or in the intellect which knows a quiddity as in a kind of true thing . . . speaking properly, the truth is in the intellect which composes and divides ; but not in the sense, nor in the intellect which knows a quiddity . . . [3]

The only way, then, in which there can be truth or falsity in the first operation of the intellect or in the apprehension of the sense faculty is in virtue of the order of these acts to the judgments, whether of sense or of intellect, which follow upon these acts of apprehension :

> . . . Now, truth and falsity are found in the intellect primarily and principally in the judgment of [the intellect] which composes and divides ; and in the formation of quiddities only through a relationship to the judgment which follows upon the aforesaid formation ; hence also truth and falsity are properly said to be in the sense in this respect, that it makes a judgment about sensible objects ; but in this respect, that it apprehends the sensible object, there is not there truth and falsehood properly, but only according to the relationship to the judgment which follows upon the aforesaid formation ; insofar, that is, as from this apprehension there is a natural tendency for this judgment to follow . . . [4]

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1. " Respondeo dicendum, quod sicut verum per prius invenitur in intellectu quam in rebus, ita etiam per prius invenitur in actu intellectus componentis et dividentis quam in actu intellectus quidditates rerum formantis. Veri enim ratio consistit in adaequatione rei et intellectus ; idem autem non adaequatur sibi ipsi, sed aequalitas diversorum est ; unde ibi primo invenitur ratio veritatis in intellectu ubi primo intellectus incipit aliquid proprium habere quod res extra animam non habet, sed aliquid ei correspondens, inter quae adaequatio attendi potest. Intellectus autem formans quidditates, non habet nisi similitudinem rei existentis extra animam, sicut et sensus in quantum accipit speciem rei sensibilis ; sed quando incipit judicare de re apprehensa, tunc ipsum judicium intellectus est quoddam proprium ei, quod non invenitur extra in re . . . " (*De Ver.*, q.1, a.3). Cf. *In VI Metaph.*, lect.4, nn.1235 and 1241 : *In I Periherm.*, lect.3, n.6.

2. Cf. *Ia Pars*, q.16, a.1.

3. *Ia Pars*, q.16, a.2.

4. *De Ver.*, q.1, a.11.

If it is possible to speak of truth as being properly in the sense, it is only because the sense does not simply apprehend its object, but judges it. It is clear however that no such exception can be made for the intellect's act of simple apprehension, since there is no judgment whatsoever in that act.

It is interesting to read, in the light of these texts, the passage cited by Mgr Noël, [1] in which St. Thomas speaks of the intellect's making a kind of comparison in the act of simple apprehension, between the thing and its quiddity : "... Yet the incomplex intellect, in understanding *what a thing is,* apprehends the quiddity of the thing in a kind of comparison to the thing ; because it apprehends it as the quiddity of this thing ..." [2]

It would seem that the important point of this text is that the comparison in question is between the thing apprehended and its quiddity, not between the quiddity as known and the quiddity in itself. Such a comparison could not possibly yield any knowledge of the truth, — and it is not at all clear that Mgr Noël means to say that it does. The only case in which it could be of any use for reaching a knowledge of the truth is exactly the one which St. Thomas considers at that point, viz. the case of God. In the supposition of the argument of St. Thomas, God would know the truth because He would know His essence as His own — His intellect being identical with Himself.

Finally, with respect to the senses, it is especially important to observe the qualification which St. Thomas makes when he says that there is truth, properly speaking, in the sense faculty. First of all, he grants this only for the case in which, as already noted, the sense makes a judgment about its object. It has no application at all to the case in which the sense merely apprehends its object without judging it. The act of apprehension and the act of judgment are two formalities of the operation of the sense faculty which must be carefully distinguished, whatever may be said about the inevitable character of the judgment once the apprehension is effected. It should be noted further that when asserting that the truth is properly in the judgment of sense, St. Thomas gives as his sole reason the fact that the truth is properly in the intellect when it judges, and only when it judges.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude from this that the truth is in the judgment of the sense in the same way that it is in the judgment of the intellect. Long before reaching this discussion St. Thomas had made it clear [3] that, although the judgment of the sense is true so long as it is in conformity with the thing that it judges — which it need not always be when the object of the judgment is a

1. Mgr NOËL, *loc. cit.*, p. 47.

2. *Contra Gentiles,* I, c.59, " Amplius ... ".

3. Cf. *De Ver.*, q.1, a.9.

common sensible or a 'per accidens' sensible, [1] — nonetheless the sense does not know its conformity with the known, which is, of course, the crucial point :

> . . . But truth is in the sense as something consequent upon its act ; so long, that is, as the judgment of the sense is of the thing according to what it is ; but it is not in the sense as something known by the sense : for even though the sense judges truly about things, nonetheless it does not know the truth whereby it judges truly : for although the sense knows that it senses, still it does not know its nature, and as a consequence [it knows] neither the nature of its own act, nor its proportion to the thing, and so neither [does it know] its truth . . . [2]

In the article from which the above text has been taken, St. Thomas also makes clear that the truth is in the intellect *as known*. Thus, the intellect and the sense are alike in that the truth is in both of them as a consequence of their respective acts. For in the case of both, truth is a quality of a judgment that is in actual conformity with the reality judged. They differ, however, in that the intellect can be subject to the truth *as known*, while the sense cannot. Thus, when St. Thomas asserts that truth is properly in the judgment of the sense, so long as that judgment is in conformity with reality, he does not thereby mean to say that the perfection of truth is in the sense.

In addition to being able to make a judgment, a faculty which is to possess the perfection of truth must also be able to know its conformity with what is. This only the intellect can know, because it alone is capable of that complete return upon itself which is required in order for it to know its own nature, the nature of its act, and by way of consequence its conformity to things and therefore its own truth [3]. Thus, because it can judge and when it does actually judge correctly, there is truth in the sense. But because the sense is incapable of complete reflection, it can never know its conformity to what is sensed, and therefore can never possess the perfection of truth.

It would be interesting indeed to examine the modern commentaries made upon this text of article nine of the first Question of the *De Veritate*, and to evaluate such different interpretations of it as Father Boyer's and Father de Tonquedec's. Since, however, these studies do not directly concern the problems now under discussion, we shall refrain from entering into them. It should be noted, nevertheless, that the discord between the various interpretations of this text in no way affects what has been said so far, since the point of

1. Cf. *In II de Anima*, lect.13, n.385 ; *De Ver.*, q.1, a.11.
2. *De Ver.*, q.1, a.9.
3. *Ibid.*

disagreement is an entirely different question from what concerns us here.

It should be observed, furthermore, that Mercier's restriction of the meaning of *reflection* to a voluntary and deliberate act of judgment can find no support whatever in St. Thomas's words concerning the reflection by which the intellect knows its conformity to what is. To the contrary, St. Thomas is plainly of a quite different mind.

What has been said thus far would appear to eliminate from sense knowledge as well as from simple apprehension all certitude in the proper sense. For if neither the sense nor the first act of the intellect attains the perfection of truth, it would seem to follow that they cannot pretend to the perfection of certitude.

Still, this conclusion seems to present a serious difficulty. In the first place, among the followers of Aristotle and St. Thomas it is a well-known and generally accepted doctrine that the senses are inerrant with regard to their proper objects [1] and that the intellect is likewise infallible with respect to its apprehension of the quiddities of sensible things. [2] It is clearly impossible to deny that these certitudes are certitudes of knowledge.

In the second place, the aim of the latter of the two definitions of certitude would seem to be simply to oppose the certitude of knowledge to the certitude of the operations which are directed by knowledge, in order to show that the latter is a derived certitude, since whatever certitude such operations have comes from the certitude of the knowledge which directs them : ". . . The certitude of cognition is from itself ; while the certitude of nature is from something else which directs it to its end . . ." [3] Nor can it be said that the certitudes of sense knowledge and of simple apprehension are nothing more than certitudes of operation. They are certitudes of knowledge and, as such, seem to fall directly into the class opposed to the certitudes of operation in St. Thomas's exposition. This is the same as to say that they belong to that class of certitudes which are so called " properly. "

Finally, though the term " intellect " in the first definition clearly excludes sense knowledge, it does not seem to warrant the rejection of simple apprehension. The intellect is a knowing power and it is as truly such in its first operation as it is in the others. If this first definition intends to define the certitude which belongs to the intellect as a faculty of knowledge — and " intellect " can hardly be taken in any other sense — then it would seem that the intellectual act of simple apprehension should be included in it, and with even better

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1. Cf., for example, *In II de Anima*, lect.13, n.384.

2. Cf. *In III de Anima*, lect.11, nn.746, 761-763 ; *In IX Metaph.*, lect.11, nn. 1901-1909.

3. *In III Sent.*, d.26, q.2, a.4, ad 2.

right than the acts of judgment and reasoning, since it appears to be more certain than either of them.

These objections are plainly designed to invalidate the conclusion that certitude as defined by St. Thomas, that is to say, intellectual certitude, is a perfection of formal truth and that it can be found only where the truth as such, that is, the truth as known, is found. It would seem impossible to reject this conclusion directly. For, understanding that the truth here spoken of is formal truth, [1] that is, the truth that is defined with reference to the intellect which it perfects, [2] the perfection of the truth demands first of all that it be known [3] and, secondly, that it be certain. [4] Since, on the other hand, St. Thomas teaches beyond every doubt that the truth as known is not found either in the sense or in simple apprehension, but only in judgment, the only way of avoiding the same conclusion about certitude is to try to make a distinction between the certitude of truth and the certitude of knowledge in such a way that one could then claim that St. Thomas was defining the certitude of knowledge, not the certitude of truth. Thus, his insistence that the truth as known is found only in the judgment would be beside the point inasmuch as the certitude of knowledge is concerned.

The basis of this distinction is, however, an equivocation. It assumes that every faculty of knowledge is such indifferently, that is to say, a knowing power in exactly the same manner and uniformly so in all its different operations. The falseness of this assumption is evident from what has already been said. One does not get to the very bottom of an understanding of what the intellect is until one appreciates the fact that it is, not simply a faculty of knowledge, but a faculty which can know the truth, and that knowing the truth constitutes its perfection, and that this perfection is the truth known as such : " The perfection of the intellect is the true as known." [5]

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1. Cf. *Curs. Theol.*, T.II, disp.22, a.1, n.2 and a.2.

2. Cf. *De Ver.*, q.1, a.2.

3. " . . . Motus autem cognitivae virtutis terminatur ad animam : oportet enim ut cognitum sit in cognoscente per modum cognoscentis . . . " (*Ibid.*). Also : ". . . Veritas igitur potest esse in sensu vel in intellectu cognoscente quod quid est, ut in quadam re vera, non autem ut cognitum in cognoscente : quod importat nomen veri . . ." (*Ia Pars*, q.16, a.2).

4. ". . . Sola autem et nuda relatio veritatis non est ipsa perfectio intellectus, sed quid consecutum ad ipsam. Et hujus manifestum signum est : quia veritas et falsitas, pro sola relatione, fortuito et casualiter possunt convenire judicio, et mutari ipso etiam ignorante et non advertente : ut si quis formet hoc judicium 'Petrus loquitur,' et ipso nesciente cessat loqui, veritas mutatur in falsitatem ; et sic in reliquis veritatibus contingentibus, quia etiam sine propria advertentia potest objectum mutari, et tamen actus, qui antea erat, continuari ; et hoc ipso desinit esse verus ; ergo hoc praecise non est magna perfectio, si sumatur solum pro relatione adaequationis vel inadaequationis" (*Curs. Theol.*, T.II, disp.22, a.2, n.28).

5. *Ia Pars*, q.16, a.2.

and : "... Therefore, just as good and evil designate perfections which are in things : so true and false designate perfections of knowledge ..." [1] But the intellect knows the true or false only when it judges the thing to be or not to be so, that is to say, when in a second operation distinct from the first it composes or divides the things that it apprehends. The sense, on the other hand, while capable of a judgment of sorts, does not compose or divide.

What is more, to talk about the certitude of cognition as if it could be in any way separated from the certitude of truth betrays a complete misunderstanding of the clearly expressed doctrine that knowledge is an effect of truth :

> ... This, therefore, is what the true adds to being, namely, the conformity or adequation of the thing and the intellect ; upon which conformity, as has been said, follows knowledge of the thing. Thus, therefore, the entity of the thing precedes the notion of truth, but knowledge is an effect of truth ... [2]

These considerations seem to make it perfectly plain that any attempt to insinuate sense knowledge or the act of simple apprehension into St. Thomas's two definitions of certitude is wholly illegitimate. It may be added, further, that it is hardly good procedure to take advantage of the unqualified expression " cognitive power " in the second definition in order to establish such an objection as the one just discussed. As has already been pointed out, the purpose St. Thomas has in mind in formulating that definition is not at all to establish the precise meaning of certitude in the proper sense by indicating expressly what is to be included in that term, but simply to make the distinction between the certitude of knowledge and the derived certitude of being and operation.

It seems necessary, then, to admit that the senses and the first operation of the intellect are certain with the certitude of things, in the same way that they are true with the truth of things. What is more, because their certitude is due essentially to the fact that they are naturally determined in their operation — as will be shown in a moment — it would seem that there is no justification for attributing certitude to them in the proper sense of this term. Rather it is only by virtue of a secondary signification of the term that certitude can be attributed to them at all and in this respect they are opposed to the subjects of certitude proper.

A further objection to this conclusion might seem possible on the basis of the admission, indicated above, which St. Thomas makes concerning truth. It will be recalled that, even though he makes it clear that the truth as known cannot possibly be in the sense faculty, he nonetheless grants that truth in the proper sense is attributable

1. *In VI Metaph.*, lect.4, n.1234.

2. *De Ver.*, q.1, a.1 ; cf. *In I Sent.*, d.29, q.5, a.1.

to the true judgment of the sense faculty. The reason why he allows proper truth in the judgment of the sense is that, on the one hand, it is a judgment, and, on the other hand, its truth can be known as such by an act of intellectual judgment.

Because of the parallel between certitude and truth which has been established in the preceding discussion, perhaps it might be thought that the same concession is warranted with regards to certitude. It might seem that one could make this same distinction between certitude in the formal sense and certitude in the proper sense and then attribute certitude in the proper sense to the judgment of the sense faculty. It would not, of course, be claimed that the same thing is true of the simply representative act of sense knowledge or of the simple apprehension of the intellect, since neither of these are judgments.

If this were true, it would lead to a rather anomalous situation with regard to the second definition of certitude. It would mean that the judgment of sense is to be included in the reference to " cognitive power " in that definition, while both the representative act of sense and the act of simple apprehension were to be excluded from it. This would appear to be a rather strange alignment of cognitive faculties. The only possible pretext for attempting to maintain the truth of this position would be that it might serve to underline the importance of judgment for the definition of certitude.

This attempt must fail, however, because in this respect, there is no longer a parallel between truth and certitude. Granted that the possession of truth in the proper sense is wholly dependent upon the ability to form a judgment, the case for certitude, however, is entirely different. It is not because it makes a judgment that the sense is certain. In fact, if judgment is taken absolutely to mean a true judgment, the sense can make a judgment only because it is certain. The reason why it is certain is that its operation is naturally determined in such a way that it cannot possibly be defective when it makes a judgment about its proper object — so long, of course, as the faculty of sense itself is not impaired. Thus, the thing which guarantees the validity of the judgment of the sense faculty is its natural determination. It is clear, then, that in the sense faculty certitude precedes judgment.

In the intellect, however, it is precisely this natural determination of the judgment which is lacking. So true is this that it is absolutely impossible for the intellect to possess truth in the proper sense without having first formed a judgment, and this even in the case of first principles. Not only that, but there is in the intellect an indifference and indetermination so fundamental that the habit of first principles is required to determine the intellect with regard to truth. John of St. Thomas is quite explicit on this point when he explains the necessity for the habit of first principles :

. . . And at the same time is explained the difference between the intellect relatively to a *per se* known truth and the will relatively to its proper good, [which difference consists in the fact] that the intellect has of itself no determined inclination to this truth rather than to that, even if it is a *per se* known truth, while will essentially implies a determined inclination to its proper good understood formally. The foundation of this difference lies in the fact that the inclination of the appetite and of the will is effected by a " convenience " of the appetite, or of the one willing, with the thing willed and desired ; now the nature in which there is this appetite has of itself and without anything's being added to it a " convenience " with its proper good, insofar as it is proper, for thus it is something of its own self and, in order to possess a " convenience " with something of itself, it is not necessary to add anything at all, but this the form, or nature, and the inclination which follows upon the form has of itself. Knowledge, however, and the attainment of the truth is not effected by the " convenience " whereby the form or nature is inclined to its proper perfection and good, but by the illumination and manifestation of truth, which depends first of all upon the representation of the object, which is accomplished by the species which fecundate the intellect and unite the object to it — and these the intellect does not possess of itself, but they are added to it. And in the second place it needs the comparison and composition of the terms or objects in order to elicit the truth — indeed truth consists in the composition and in the assent to existence or to non-existence. Hence, if an intellect is not comprehensive and if its species are not proportioned to its power — as they are in the angels — it needs a comparison of the species as well as their composition in order to elicit and represent the truth — all of which comes, not from the natural impetus and determination of the faculty, but from an added acquisition, because those things which the faculty thus knows by comparing one thing with another, and not by the power of the penetration of the intellectual light, require its proper labor and its own acquisition, nor does it accomplish this by a mere natural inclination. [1]

It is very important to have clearly in mind this fact of the basic indetermination of the intellect, for otherwise one could be easily confused by such a text as the following from St. Thomas :

For our intellect can be considered in one way in itself. And thus it is determined by the presence of the intelligible object, just as matter is determined by the presence of form. And this indeed occurs in the case of those things which are immediately made intelligible by the light of the active intellect, such as the first principles with which understanding is concerned ; and in like manner the judgment of the sensitive part is determined by this, that the sensible object is present to the sense. [2]

It is, of course, true that the principal determinant of the intellect is its object. But it is by no means true that the object of the intellect is its sole determinant, as is the case with the sense faculty. It would be interesting, indeed, to explore this point further and to see how the sense faculty is by its very constitution relatively much

1. *Curs. Theol.*, T.VI, disp.16, a.1, n.16.

2. *In III Sent.*, d.23, q.2, a.2.

further advanced along the road of knowledge than is the intellect, [1] which must acquire the whole panoply of its virtues for its perfect and certain operation. To do so, however, would open up the whole question of the causes of certitude and require a development of the proposition that it is their function of endowing the intellect with certitude which gives the intellectual virtues their basic meaning. Obviously, as has been already stated, this consideration is beyond the scope of this paper.

Concerning the present discussion, the essential point that should be noted is that there is a tremendous difference between the judgment of the sense faculty and the judgment of the intellect in that the former is by its very nature determined and certain, while the latter is not. This is only another way of saying that, though the mere presence of a judgment in the sense justifies the attribution of truth in the proper sense to this faculty, the certitude which is proper to the intellect is not so immediately related to intellectual judgment that the same extension of the proper meaning can be made for certitude as was made for truth.

Thus collapses the argument that establishes a distinction between the formal and the proper senses of certitude corresponding to the difference between the formal and the proper senses of truth, a parallel which would seem to justify the attribution of certitude in its proper acceptation to the sense faculty in the same way as truth in the proper sense is predicated of this same power.

As far as the sense faculty is concerned, then, from the point of view of the degree of certitude, the judgment does not differ from the act of apprehension. Consequently, it is only in a secondary and derived sense that certitude can be attributed to any of the operations of the sense.

The result of this whole discussion is clearly that neither the senses nor the first act of the intellect is a subject of certitude in the proper sense. In its strict sense, then, the word " certitude " can be attributed only to such judgments of the intellect as are determined assents to one alternative of a contradiction. The determination of such judgments is the primary analogue of the term. It is only by an extension of this term to other subjects in one way or another related to this first analogue, that is to say, only by analogy, that certitude can be predicated of any other subject. It seems hardly necessary to add that the element which all these analogues have in common and which, therefore, justifies the attribution of certitude to them is their determination " ad unum."

JOHN JOSEPH GRIFFIN.

1. Cf. *In II de Anima*, lect.12, nn.373-374.