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Faith and Reason in a Spiritual Philosophy *

JOSEPH L. ROCHE, S.J.

IN this scientific, atomic era, one age-old problem still captivates the minds of men. It is the question of the relation between their reason and their faith, or in general terms, between philosophy and religion. This problem has been central to the work of contemporary French "spiritual" philosophers, loosely grouped under the title of "Philosophie de l'Esprit." For any spiritual philosophy, engaged as it is in analyzing, protecting and developing the values peculiar to man's spirit, necessarily comes into direct contact with the human phenomenon of religious faith. A very sound though little publicized approach to this basic problem is found in an outstanding representative of this current French school of thought, Aimé Forest, professor at the University of Montpellier. This article attempts to sketch the broad lines of this modern "spiritual" approach to the perennial faith-reason problem, especially as proposed in the work of Prof. Forest.

It is imperative in any discussion of the problem to determine the exact *status questionis* of the debate. Throughout this article, philosophy is not taken as some pure, abstract, ideal essence, which has never actually existed nor ever will exist, but rather as it is in the real, existential order, that is, in the minds and works of philosophers. The meaning of religion or faith is likewise specified, for there is no question but

* This is the first of two articles.

that we are concerned with the relationship between philosophy and the *Christian* faith. As a result, the relationship itself between these two concrete realities is likewise considered not in an abstract, ideal manner, but rather as it has existed in actual historical situations. This is based on the firm belief that the metaphysical truths involved in the relationship between faith and reason can best be grasped by an attentive study of the concrete factual relations that have actually existed in definite philosophers and philosophical systems.

In his lengthy historical study of Christian philosophy, Forest indicates the fundamental basis for all difficulties surrounding this relationship.

Reason and religion are each defined by their common search for unity, for a totality. We are not facing notions which express only one aspect of being, but rather it is in a way the very universality of the real that both philosophic thought and the life of faith wish to attain, in an attitude and according to principles proper to each.¹

From this simple fact arises a formidable difficulty: how can philosophy be true to its own proper nature, and still recognize a relation to a superior knowledge which it does not include and which its own properly philosophic principles cannot possess? Similarly, how can Christianity, as a revealed religion, acknowledge that it is not completely self-sufficient in the sense that philosophical analyses and investigations have something of real value to offer it, while at the same time continuing to assert its own possession of the truth ultimately sought in philosophic research?

From an historical point of view, Forest sees evidence of three different attitudes toward the relation of philosophy to religious faith: a position asserting the *complete separation* of faith and reason; a second approach that *reduces* one element to the other; and finally, a third point of view which favors some sort of *union of the two*.² This third attitude, which sees

¹ Forest, "Le Problème historique de la philosophie chrétienne." in *La Philosophie chrétienne* ("Journées d'Etudes de la Société Thomiste"; Vol. II: Juvisy, Ed. du Cerf, 1933), p. 20. Cited in future references simply as "Le Problème historique."

² "Le Problème historique," p. 24.

the true relationship between faith and reason in a certain balance or harmony, would seem to be the natural ideal toward which the first two attitudes are, for the most part, factual, concrete attempts which have failed in one way or another. To speak of harmony or union between faith and reason is to assert that the two are not perfectly identified, and thus are "separated" to some extent; yet at the same time that this qualified independence is maintained, a definite cooperation and synthesis of the two is also signified, so that in this sense there is a certain "reduction" effected.

Forest develops this attitude of union or harmony by analyzing the notion of "Christian philosophy."³ He warns that in any discussion of "Christian philosophy" the qualifier "Christian" should be taken in an accidental sense.⁴ It does not, in other words, apply to the *intrinsic* condition of philosophy as thought and worked out by men. The relationship between Christianity and philosophy is viewed by Forest in terms of a *dialogue of friendship*. Friendship supposes distinction; it demands, moreover a certain sense of mutual respect and reverence for the other's value and independence. The relationship of friendship is not juridical but a spiritual relation of harmony and union characterized by its absolute freedom.

This note of independence and respect for the distinction between faith and reason implies a certain reserve toward the idea, popularized in recent years by Prof. Gilson, of "faith as

³ Today's approaches to the reason-faith problem can be grouped into three main types: those centering on "Christian philosophy," a second group studying the philosophy of religion, and a third investigating the philosophy of symbol and myth. See G. Van Riet, "Foi chrétienne et réflexion philosophique," in *Foi et réflexion philosophique*. Mélanges Franz Grégoire ("Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Théologiarum Lovaniensium," Vol. XIX; Louvain: Publ. Universitaires, 1961) p. 424.

⁴ See Forest's "Les Idées philosophiques du Chanoine Duret," in *Georges Duret* (Paris: Ed. du Témoignage Chrétien, 1947), p. 109. Elsewhere he likes to repeat J. Maritain's distinction between "*l'ordre de spécification et l'ordre d'exercice*." See Maritain, *De la Philosophie chrétienne* (Paris: Desclée, 1933), pp. 27-39.

generatrix of reason."⁵ Although properly interpreted this phrase could be defended, it is nevertheless open to the misconception that the autonomy of philosophy is being undermined, that the "water of philosophy" is being changed into the "wine of theology." Rather, the value of the natural must remain whole and entire within its intimate relationship with, and elevation by, the supernatural. Philosophy, therefore, is not something of merely transitory value, something that merely prepares the way and subsequently is completely absorbed into the higher perfection of theological knowledge. Philosophy is seen as endowed with a permanent value: the water is not changed entirely into wine, for water itself has a value and perfection proper to its own nature, a value that is not undermined by the different perfection proper to wine.

One practical corollary of this idea of philosophy's independence is that it should not be defined by its relation to faith. Philosophy should be considered and viewed from its own principles rather than from its relationship to theology. This in no way limits the use of philosophy by theology for theological purposes, but it does prohibit regarding and defining philosophy uniquely from this point of view.⁶ The danger is to deform that which is proper to philosophy, that which constitutes its nature, by defining it in terms of a supernatural finality.⁷ This is precisely the temptation of theologians who tend to regard philosophy merely as an instrument to further their own investigations, and consequently to neglect philosophy as a discipline with its own proper end, with a vocation all its own.⁸

⁵ Forest, "Deux historiens de la philosophie," in *Etienne Gilson, philosophe de la chrétienté* ("Rencontres," No. 30; Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1949), p. 42.

⁶ Forest points out that the notion of "Christian philosophy" takes on its full meaning only if viewed from a *theological* conception of philosophy. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.

⁷ Taken from Forest's key article on this matter, "La philosophie dans l'ordre due salut," *Lumière et Vie*, No. 23 (Sept., 1955) p. 119. Hereafter cited as "L'Ordre du Salut."

⁸ When the faith-reason relationship is approached from the religious standpoint, faith often becomes in fact, if not in theory, a determining constituent of philosophy. On the other hand, starting from

This care for precision regarding the theological use of philosophy dictates a similar attention to the *order* of philosophical truths. Numerous truths of a philosophical nature are found throughout the *sacra doctrina* of Saint Thomas; not, however, according to an order proper to philosophy, but rather according to the exigencies and in the light of revelation.⁹ This does not deprive these truths of their philosophic value, but Forest does insist, in contrast to Gilson, that on their own rational level they should be organized according to a properly philosophical order.

We think that it is necessary to establish with great precision what exactly this order and this approach constitutive of philosophy itself consists in. The question therefore is not only to seek what is the best method of exposing truths already discovered; it is much more a question of determining what this research should be, the spiritual value, the signification of the whole of this *via inventionis*. For the problem of order in philosophy cannot be accessory or secondary in relation to that of the truths which it assembles.¹⁰

Nevertheless, this independent value proper to philosophy does not constitute a complete separation from religious faith. Philosophy does not become purer by reason of a total separation from faith, or from complete indifference to the phenomenon of religion. Contrary to those who would protect the rationality of philosophy by such a separation from everything connoting anything religious, Forest plainly affirms that "philosophy, as all other human activities, can be lived in a Chris-

philosophy, faith is usually viewed only as an exterior, regulating principle of the philosopher's actual exercise of his vocation. What Forest thinks should be emphasized is rather the *internal* reference to faith which philosophy discovers in itself by means of a deeper penetration into its own nature through reflection.

⁹ The preoccupation in Thomism, Forest points out, is that of the believer, not of the philosopher as such. The care in scholasticism is to *order* truths already known, *in via iudicii*, rather than an original search for truth *in via inventionis*. See "Deux historiens," p. 50. Certain American Thomists have taken up this theme of "philosophic order,"; see J. Collins, "Toward a Philosophically Ordered Thomism," *The New Scholasticism*, XXXII (1958), pp. 301-26.

¹⁰ See Forest's review of Gilson's *Le Thomisme*, in *Bulletin Thomiste*, VI (1940-42), p. 24.

tian spirit.¹¹ The basic reason for this from the side of the Christian faith is simply that the truths proposed by the Church take their significance, their sense and meaning, relative to a certain human reality. Christian truths correspond to the truth which is inscribed in man's very nature, or constitutes his nature. This correspondence is only reasonable, once the basic principle is granted that philosophy and revelation are rooted in the same truth, God, the author of all truth, natural and supernatural.¹²

The correspondence between philosophy and the truths of faith however, poses the initial problem mentioned at the start of this article in even sharper terms. For how can the independence of philosophy be safeguarded when it is referred to a higher system of truths? "How can an activity be autonomous and still be subordinated to another activity which is exercised on a superior plane?"¹³ Forest has approached this problem in various fashions during his career. In first treating the question in a review article in 1928, his response centered on the clarification which the Thomistic approach sought to bring to the reason-faith relationship. For the Thomistic system's "constant preoccupation was to safeguard the hierarchic distinction between the superior and the inferior, as also the independence of the inferior in its own proper order."¹⁴ The practical implementation of this ideal was based on a scholastic principle: "*Gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*"—grace does not destroy nature but perfects it.¹⁵

¹¹ "L'Ordre du salut," p. 123.

¹² This fundamental point, originating undoubtedly from Christian teaching, can be treated in a properly philosophical manner.

¹³ See Forest, "Autour de la notion de philosophie chrétienne," *La Vie Intellectuelle*, I (October, 1928), p. 127.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128. A similar remark is made by J. Pieper in *The Silence of St. Thomas* (trans. by J. Murray, S.J., and D. O'Connor; New York: Pantheon, 1957), p. 100: "Thomas has, of course, clearly distinguished between knowledge and faith, between philosophy and theology. To have established and maintained this distinction is considered his foremost achievement."

¹⁵ See Forest, "L'Esprit de la philosophie thomiste," *Revue des Cours et Conférences*, XXXIV (1932-33), pp. 363-64.

In more recent years Forest has drawn upon other approaches in explaining the same general stand, notably on the doctrine of Maurice Blondel. The following section is an attempt to synthesize Forest's thought on this hierarchic relation of faith and reason: first, faith's influence on philosophy, then the various relations of philosophy itself to religious faith.

INFLUENCE OF FAITH ON PHILOSOPHY

In taking up the influence of faith—or more precisely, the Christian faith—on philosophy, it is well to recall two general ways philosophy itself can be viewed, that is, either as a science of principles, stressing content and explanation, or as an attitude of the soul highlighting intention and dynamic coherence. For the precise influence of faith on philosophy will vary according to the precise manner in which philosophy is conceived in the discussion.

Those who deny that there can be any intrinsic influence of faith on philosophy usually argue from the point of view of content. They pose the question: Is there any formally "Christian" epistemology, or "Christian" cosmology?¹⁶ Forest took up this question in describing the Bréhier-Gilson debate over Christian philosophy.

Christian teaching does not present itself as a philosophy, we admit; it is also correct to say that it did not modify our vision of the physical universe, but one cannot admit that the faith did not open to the spirit a domain of new truths, truths which are proposed not only for our "assent" but also for our "meditation."¹⁷

What Forest claims here is that the faith has in fact brought a certain amount of new content to the philosopher's world, that "the very object of intellectual research is considerably enriched." He further specifies this in a way that is probably more acceptable today than at the time it was written: this new content enters through man's experience. "Properly speaking, the lights received by the spirit of faith ought to appear

¹⁶ See Bréhier's denial of the possibility of a Christian philosophy, any more than that of a Christian mathematics or physics: *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, XXXVIII (1931), p. 162.

¹⁷ "Autour de la notion de philosophie chrétienne," p. 125.

as constituting an 'experience,' just the same as the experience of natural truths. The Christian philosopher is thus in presence of a universe of greater vastness than that which constituted the world for the ancient scholars."¹⁸ What the faith has to offer as new for philosophic reflection evidently pertains primarily to those truths which concern the nature of God, man's spiritual nature and his final destiny, the nature and significance of liberty, law and love.¹⁹

Bréhier has attacked this position in claiming that any originality which Christianity has brought relative to man's destiny was purely religious in character, a question of salvation, and consequently completely exterior to the rational exigency which defines philosophic research.²⁰ In reply to this fundamental objection there is, first, the necessity to clarify exactly what constitutes the properly philosophic quality of any truth. Forest holds as a fundamental principle that the *origin* of a truth does not determine its philosophic value; the fact that a particular doctrine owes its origin or milieu of communication to Christianity, does not detract in the least from its strictly philosophical value. "A doctrine remains philosophical as long as it can be justified by reason, . . . whatever be the principle by which it was transmitted."²¹ An example is the peculiarly Christian philosophical doctrine on time. The

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Forest here draws inspiration from one of his favorite authors, Malebranche. See his "Lavelle et Malebranche," *Les Etudes Philosophiques*, XIII (1958), pp. 32-46. On using "experience" as object of philosophical reflection, Forest seems to have anticipated the existential renewal Paul Ricoeur speaks of in "Le renouvellement du problème de la philosophie chrétienne par les philosophies de l'existence," in *Le Problème de la philosophie chrétienne*, ed. J. Boisset (Paris: P.U.F., 1949), pp. 43-67.

¹⁹ See "Le Problème historique," p. 50; also "Deux historiens," p. 38.

²⁰ See "Deux historiens," p. 47. Bréhier denies that Christianity influenced philosophic thought to any appreciable extent, and hence there is no such thing as "Christian philosophy." See his *Histoire de la Philosophie*, Vol. I: *L'Antiquité et le Moyen Age* (7^e ed.; Paris: P.U.F., 1961), Fasc. 2, p. 501.

²¹ See Forest, "Newman et saint Augustin en Sorbonne," *Revue Thomiste*, XVII (1934), p. 98; also his review of Gilson's *L'Esprit de la philosophie médiévale* in *Bulletin Thomiste*, III (Avr.-Juin, 1933), p. 835

fact that St. Augustine's idea of time differed so radically from that of Plotinus was undoubtedly due to the influence of his Christian faith. But the origin of this new idea did not destroy the properly philosophical value of his concept of time. Moreover, the fact that certain philosophic doctrines are incompatible with truths of the Christian faith, makes it difficult to deny the properly philosophical value of those very Christian truths.

Two general areas are open to this influence of revealed truths on philosophic research. Logically enough they are the two elements involved in any philosophy, being and the human spirit. Regarding being, the advantageous influence faith can have on the philosopher's metaphysical penetration is clear: "It is the religious conscience which creates the penetration and the force of our attachment to being by freeing us from abstraction, absolute negation, evasion."²² The reason for this is not hard to see, particularly after the inspiring historical studies of Gilson concerning the influence of Christian dogma on the metaphysics of being. The doctrine of creation provides an extraordinary aid for the philosophic investigation into the ultimate nature of being and its causes. "The idea of creative liberty is not only an idea that reason would perhaps, never actually have discovered if left to its own resources; it is the idea in which reason truly finds itself when its movement of penetration is led far enough."²³

Nor is this influence of the doctrine of creation confined exclusively to the nature of being, in referring it directly to God. What is perhaps more indicative of Forest's own insight is his stress on creation's influence on the relation of being to the spirit.

The doctrine of creation . . . gives to the spirit the consciousness of a new signification in its relation to being . . . Our task . . . is to draw out the significance of the doctrine of creation, not as a thesis on

²² Forest, "L'existence et la conscience religieuse." in *L'Esistenzialismo*, Vol. II of *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Filosofia*, Rome, 1946 (2 vols.; Milano: Castellani e C., 1948), p. 219.

²³ *Bulletin Thomiste*, III (1933), p. 839.

the nature of things, but as recognition of their signification and their value in relation to the spirit.²⁴

Concerning the spirit itself, Forest has described the philosophic signification of the religious life in terms of a "revelation of the spirit." For if Christian thought is true to its own nature, it favors a recollection of the spirit that cannot but enhance the spirit's unity and efficacy. Moreover, Christian dogma opens to the spirit its true nature, revealing it as the image of grace.²⁵ The mutual influence and distinction existing between faith and reason constitute a situation in which "the life of grace undoubtedly surpasses everything that metaphysical reflection wishes to translate, everything that is accessible to it. But this life takes up philosophic reflection without destroying it and carries to greater heights our primary aspiration toward being and value."²⁶ Consequently the analysis of concrete religious experience can present rich material for philosophical reflection and research, and provide a wide area for progress in a properly philosophical line.

There is no confusion here between the area of spiritual or mystical experience and that of metaphysical research. In recognizing the differences between these two realities, however, it is equally important to recognize what in the Christian order pertains to nature. "What is demanded of philosophical reflection is a discernment in the spiritual life . . . of that which corresponds to the natural aspiration itself. Metaphysical analysis searches to recognize the structure and the dynamism of the spirit which the supernatural vocation supposes and utilizes."²⁷ Forest's ideal is to draw from a penetrating philosophic analysis of the spiritual experience of great Christian saints and mystics a kind of "metaphysical translation"

²⁴ Forest, *Consentement et création* ("Philosophie de l'Esprit," Paris: Aubier, 1943), p. 35.

²⁵ See "Situation des philosophies actuelles devant la foi," in *Foi en Jesus Christ et monde d'aujourd'hui* (Semaine des Intellectuels catholiques, 1949; Paris: Ed. du Flore, 1949), p. 54.

²⁶ Taken from Forest's preface to P. Fontan's *Adhésion et dépassement* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1952), p. viii.

²⁷ Forest, *La Vocation de l'Esprit* ("Philosophie de l'Esprit," Paris: Aubier, 1953), p. 131.

of the natural, human values which remain present in Christian spirituality.²⁸

What may be more indicative of faith's influence on philosophy, however, concerns philosophy viewed particularly as an attitude of soul. In treating of Blondel's doctrine on this matter, Forest states that "what must be shown among other things is that the very existence of revealed truths has a deepening and vivifying effect on the ideal man conceives of the method and function of philosophy itself."²⁹ What is important is not the partial coincidence of certain revealed truths with properly philosophical doctrines, but rather the obligation incumbent on philosophy as such to be open to an order beyond its own. The impact of faith on philosophy, according to this line of reasoning, is not primarily through new doctrines, but through faith's influence on men, on the philosophers themselves. "Religion brings no new system, but it makes new men."³⁰

As a result, the relation of faith to reason appears in a new light when not the content, but the intent or purpose of philosophy is considered.

In this perspective faith is not only a complement to philosophy. Its action is not limited to suggesting to reason a task which would have escaped consciousness, to giving it an orientation toward a new world. What must be considered is a preliminary action, more profound without doubt, a regulation by faith of what is most interior to philosophy, a safeguard of its very spontaneity.³¹

This preliminary regulation of philosophy's intent by faith consists in perfecting, redressing, purifying the natural rational élan of the spirit. It is not a question of enlarging the philosopher's domain to undreamed of proportions; on the contrary, while enlightening philosophy as to its true value within its own order, faith works its purifying action in large measure

²⁸ A typical expression of this fundamental idea of Forest is found in his preface to Fontan's *Adhésion*, p. ix.

²⁹ "Le Problème historique," p. 50.

³⁰ This is Forest's summary of Gilson's theme. See *Bulletin Thohiste*, III (1933), p. 836.

³¹ From Forest's "L'Ordre du salut," pp. 122-23.

by instilling a basic modesty and discretion which endows philosophic research with greater assurance, greater efficacy, greater simplicity. The pursuit of the philosophic ideal of wisdom is thus greatly furthered.

This insistence on modesty, humility and discretion should not give the impression that Forest conceives the action of faith on reason to be restrictive. He rather sees the relation between religion and reason in terms of a mutual implication, in the sense that religion confirms reason by showing that the perfection to which it aspires is actually possible. Consequently, faith should render reason's aspiration even more exigent in the pursuit of its natural ideal, while at the same time instilling a greater suppleness, a finer respect for reality's distinctions.³²

The foregoing analyses have attempted to provide a general idea of faith's influence on philosophy. More important, however, is the other side of this mutual relation, namely what constitutes the nature and characteristics of philosophy's relation to religious faith. This is clearly the more delicate dimension of the problem; for whereas there is nothing in the nature of faith which restricts its influence on anything human, philosophy appears to exclude the religious properly so called by reason of its strictly rational nature. In comparison with many contemporary philosophic positions on this topic, Forest's position, it must frankly be admitted, appears at first sight to be rather "pious," if such a term can be legitimately used to qualify a philosophic doctrine. On closer inspection, however, his major ideas would seem to be the product of a long tradition, and constitute an explication of much of the work current in today's "philosophy of the spirit."

PHILOSOPHY'S LINK WITH FAITH

The most general description of philosophy's relation to religious faith pictures philosophy as a *preparation* for the religious life of man. For the analysis of being as an appeal

³² See Forest's "La Philosophie du Moyen Age d'apres M. Emile Bréhier," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, XLVI (1939), p. 509.

calling for a personal response of man's spirit manifests a movement which is constitutive of the very life of the spirit, and which at the same time prepares for its religious adherence.³³ A case in point is the philosophic thought of René Le Senne which evolved from a consideration of obstacle, determination, to that of submission to obligation, and finally to a philosophy of the spirit which reveals man to himself through the spiritual experience of participation in value. In effect, then, this progressive philosophic experience of Le Senne constituted "an introduction, according to the natural order, to religion in which this philosophic experience finds its fulfillment."³⁴ In analyzing profoundly man's vocation and destiny, Le Senne's philosophy leads to a recognition of transcendence in the very progress of man's spirit. Going beyond natural morality, Le Senne saw in religion the only force capable of gaining access to the ultimate values proper to the spirit's intimacy.

This general idea can be summed up in the classic thesis which sees in philosophy a "figure" of the truths proposed by revelation. It also corresponds to a favorite idea of Kierkegaard, which discerns in faith a "repetition" of philosophic truths.³⁵ For his own part, Forest specifies his general approach with an idea peculiar to himself: *philosophy in the order of salvation*.

This concept of philosophy in the order of salvation is undoubtedly due in part to the need for grouping the various religious elements met in philosophy into some kind of unifying

³³ This notion is developed by Forest in a number of his works, notably his "La Philosophie de l'Esprit," *Giornale di Metafisica*, I (1946), p. 297; *Consentement et création*, pp. 78-83, and especially in his outstanding article on the vocation of a Christian professor in a secular university: "Qu'est-ce qu'un universitaire catholique?" *Cahiers Universitaires Catholiques* (Oct.-Nov., 1954), pp. 42-56. The author finds in philosophical reflection a prefiguration of the option offered us by the Gospels. There is but one God—not one for the philosophers and a different God of Faith—and hence the rational affirmation alone of His existence is already a personal encounter with Him.

³⁴ See Forest's "La Pensée de René LeSenne," *Revue Thomiste*, LIV (1954), p. 391.

³⁵ See "L'Ordre du salut," pp. 118, 122.

theory. Yet perhaps the more cogent motive originated from the recognition of an extremely important fact: philosophy often substitutes for religion. It has, in fact, frequently claimed for itself the mission and the role of religion. Furthermore, even when no such claim is made or implied, philosophy has actually gained a hearing, inspired enthusiasm, captivated spiritual energies, precisely where religion had failed miserably to make any important impression. This is all the more true today, since modern philosophy often claims to be the "science of the spirit," whose primary intention is to "save the spirit." This poses the problem of the relation between philosophy and faith even more delicately.

The phrase "order of salvation" needs some explanation. The concept of order can be summarily defined here as a *unified totality*. There are innumerable different orders open to consideration: an order of power or force, for example, comprising different degrees of force arranged according to some common measure, or an order of knowledge constituted by various degrees of intellectual capacity, or Pascal's order *du coeur*, distinguished from the order of the spirit. Perhaps the clearest example Forest gives is the order of the French nobility before the Revolution, obviously composed of all those who have just title to a certain quality of nobility. What precisely makes this group an "order" is that the common attribute of "nobility" is not had to the same degree by all members. On the contrary, it is realized in varying degrees in the members, who thus can be arranged according to a hierarchic system which then properly constitutes "the order of nobility."

Now applying this notion of order to the question of philosophy's relation with religion, philosophy pertains to the general order of salvation because it possesses the necessary quality distinctive of that order, though not, of course, to its highest degree. To clarify his meaning Forest uses a quaint example: the primitive Flemish tableaux. In almost all these old masterpieces depicting some gospel mystery such as the Annunciation, the artist's patron, the donor of the painting, is portrayed at one side. Philosophy can be compared to the position of the donor in those Flemish tableaux. For the donor

occupies a place within the total tableau (or order); he is present in an attitude of prayerful recollection, close to the religious mystery. Yet at the same time, since he takes no intrinsic part in the mystery itself, he is independent in the sense of remaining properly himself. In his own dress, the donor (philosophy) is not "specified" by the religious scene which can be compared to theology.

In considering this picturesque illustration of the notion of philosophy in the order of salvation, three main ideas seem to be implied. The first is simply that philosophy itself is worthy to be associated with religious mysteries, that there is something in philosophy's own nature and élan that makes its deserving to be near, accessory to, religion's direct relation to the absolute. This quality would seem to be an exigence for rectitude, for purity of intention, for perfect intellectual honesty, for simplicity and humility,— qualities that are characteristic of philosophic research at its highest perfection. Philosophy can thus justly be compared to the situation of the donor in the Flemish primitive, present in an attitude of offering, of recollection or consent.

But a second meaning contained in this illustration revolves about the actual role played by the patron. Through his assistance, financial or otherwise, the artist was enabled to produce his masterpiece. That is clearly the only reason why the patron is included in the tableau. Similarly philosophy pertains to the order of salvation because through its action man is led to a plane where he is directly referred to salvation, to this encounter with the absolute; its action constitutes a real preparation in the existential order for man's response to the revealed call of Christ. This takes up an idea of Kant that man elevates himself to be worthy of being transformed. For Forest, philosophy is assigned just such a task, namely, to purify, rectify, correct and prolong man's spiritual aspirations and capacities, to render them worthy, open, attentive, to *Deus elevans*.³⁶ Finally, within the order of salvation—

³⁶ The notion of *Deus elevans* is repeated in Forest's "L'Ordre du salut," pp. 120-21, as well as in his "L'Augustinisme de Maurice Blondel," *Sciences Ecclésiastiques*, XIV (1962), pp. 180-81.

or within the Flemish tableau—there is a certain independence retained. Philosophy is not specified by theology or religion; something natural, profane in a sense, is needed to offer to God's elevating grace, and it is this natural perfection which, portrayed in a state of virtual offering, represents Forest's conception of "philosophy in the order of salvation."

But this picturesque illustration of philosophy's relation with faith must be translated into more sober, rigorous language by showing precisely how philosophy actually does pertain to the order of salvation. The purpose of the second part of this article, then, will be to bring out clearly the religious aspect of philosophy's *object*, both being and spirit, its *method*, and its ultimate *goal*, contemplative wisdom.