

THE SURNATUREL OF P. HENRI DE LUBAC, S.J.

ANY work of Père de Lubac cannot fail to attract the attention of the theological world. It has become increasingly evident during the last two decades that he is one of the really great and profound thinkers of our age. He combines to an unusual degree the uncommon gifts of almost incredibly vast and thorough research and of penetrating synthesis; a combination which is perhaps the most authentic sign and criterion of true genius. He is, of course, a theologian, but far more essentially, he is a priest and apostle. Laboring constantly under the handicap of wretched health, his zeal and anguished concern for the welfare of souls, torn and bruised by the brutal forces of a secularized world, have been the sustaining inspiration of his literary production which, in view of the almost impossible situations of the war and post-war period in France, required not only indefatigable exertion, but also rare, not to say heroic, virtue. Even as the United States achieved the impossible by keeping our production of war materials geared to the ever increasing needs of our armies, so P. de Lubac, as a docile and perfectly adapted instrument of Christ, increased his labors in direct proportion to the ominously swelling tide of Godlessness: e.g. 1937, *L'Origine de la religion*; 1942, *Israel et la foi chrétienne*, *La lumière du Christ*, *Vocation de la France*; 1944, *Origene, homélies sur la Genèse*, *Le drame de l'humanisme athée*, *Corpus Mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'Église au moyen âge*; 1945, *Proudhon et le Christianisme*, *De la connaissance de Dieu*; 1946, *Le fondement théologique des missions, Surnaturel*. This literary output would seem to have been enough, but in addition, P. de Lubac has carried on his exacting tasks as Professor at the *Institut Catholique de Lyon*, he has contributed lengthy scholarly articles to *Recherches de science religieuse*, *Mélanges de science religieuse*, *Dieu Vivant*, *Études*, etc., and has launched successfully the widely acclaimed series—*Sources chrétiennes*, on patristic and early ecclesiastical writers.

Of all his works thus far, *Surnaturel* is of transcendent im-

portance. It will live as one of the outstanding theological books of the century because of its historical erudition and the penetration of its insights. It has stirred what bids fair to be the most stimulating and profitable controversy of recent years, because it challenges the conclusions of theological thought during the last four hundred years concerning the very heart of Catholic doctrine and life, the supernatural order. Since this paper is to serve merely as a directive for discussion with the hope that expression of opinion will be completely frank and open, I shall limit myself to as adequate summary as possible of P. de Lubac's theory, and shall then outline, with selected references from recent literature, topics for discussion. In accepting leadership of the discussion of *Surnaturel*, I was motivated by the certainty that, due to fortuitous circumstances, I would have more time to devote to study this year than those who were pressed by their multiple tasks of teaching and writing; however, there are many in the American Catholic Theological Association, who possess a far more extensive background and deeper knowledge of not a few topics which I have chosen for discussion, and it is my sincere wish that they should take the lead in these matters and share the fulness of their knowledge.

I.

P. DE LUBAC'S THEORY OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Surnaturel is not entirely a new work of P. de Lubac. The first three parts consist of historical studies previously published as articles: I—Augustinianism and Baianism (pp. 9-183) previously published in *Recherches de science religieuse* in 1931 under the title "Deux Augustiniens fourvoyés"; II—Spirit and Liberty in Theological Traditions (pp. 9-187-321) published as "Esprit et liberté" in *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*, 1939; III—The Origin of the Word "Supernatural" (pp. 325-428) which first appeared as "Remarques sur l'histoire du mot 'Surnaturel'" in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 1934. However these studies take on an entirely new aspect because of their orientation toward, and integration with part IV: Historical Notes (pp. 431-480) and with the entire book's Conclusion (pp. 483-494), entitled Divine Exigence and Natural Desire.

Setting for himself explicitly the modest limit of a mere attempt at outlining the history of the supernatural order (which he acknowledges as solely a preparation for a definitive work and as requiring completion and even correction by many others (p. 6),) it is evident, nevertheless, from the outset that P. de Lubac's historical studies are controlled and directed implicitly by a personal thesis which he considers final, and of a consistency which must eventually win the adherence of all theologians. Because of this fact, we shall first propose the distinctiveness of the new theory and secondly the grounds on which it is based.

In simplest terms, P. de Lubac's theory may be expressed as follows: the supernatural end of the beatific vision is the uniquely possible destiny of any finite spirit, whether human or angelic. This positive statement is identical with the same position expressed negatively: any destiny, inferior to the beatific vision, is impossible; therefore the hypothesis of "pure nature" and of a natural destiny is chimerical and must be rejected. These two aspects of P. de Lubac's thesis are in reality nothing more than a synthetic formulation of his views on the nature of a finite spirit, which is the image of the Blessed Trinity and strives toward attaining full likeness (p. 475). Unlike other created natures, which are enclosed in their own order, are the centers of various properties and faculties enabling them to attain their destiny, and are therefore "absolutes," finite spirit must be classed with divine being (pp. 113-118). Men and angels, then, are in no wise absolute beings confronting God autonomously with rights and exigencies demanding fulfillment. Rather, *their very nature is constituted* by a desire of God in the beatific vision. This natural desire, identical with spirit, is according to P. de Lubac, inefficacious and absolute. (p. 484).

By the term inefficacious, the author understands that a finite spirit is utterly powerless to produce the means of attaining its unique destiny, namely divine grace. This situation is at once anomalous and indicative of the supreme dignity of spiritual being. It is anomalous because all other finite natures are capable of fulfilling their destiny by their natural powers and the cooperation of natural forces. It is indicative of man's dignity, because, despite his powerlessness, he is destined to a share in divine happiness. In attributing

to the very essence of spiritual beings a natural desire which is inefficacious, P. de Lubac is by no means unique among modern theologians; otherwise, men and angels, by the very fact that they are finite spirits, would be intrinsically and completely proportioned to the beatific vision; grace would not only not be gratuitous, but it would no longer be necessary.

The distinctive feature of P. de Lubac's theory is his conviction that the natural desire for the beatific vision is absolute. By this term he understands that, despite the inefficacy of the natural desire, it is nevertheless infrustrable; apart from sin, it cannot but be fulfilled. (p. 484).

Finite spirits are so closely attuned to the divine and the desire of God is so deeply imbedded in their very essence, that God cannot but respond to this desire, which is nothing else but His own invitation to the beatific vision. This quality of the natural desire P. de Lubac admits to be paradoxical; but it is a case where paradox is a necessary sign of truth: finite spirit of its very nature not only desires God Himself in the beatific vision, but it desires God as He cannot help being, namely, giving Himself freely according to the initiative of His pure love. (p. 484). However pressing and urgent this natural desire may be, however strictly rigorous the fundamental need of a spiritual being which it translates, it is not something human and finite which weighs, as it were, on God. For, although this quintessential desire or need is in man, it is nevertheless not from man; it owes its existence totally to the will of God. Furthermore, although it must be called natural since it is essentially in nature and expresses the very being of spirit, it is nevertheless, in a sense, "quelque chose de Dieu." (p. 487).

Spiritual being may, according to P. de Lubac, be defined as a natural desire, simultaneously inefficacious and absolute, for the beatific vision. Because the desire is so completely absolute, the beatific vision is the sole possible destiny of men or angels, and a purely natural destiny is inconceivable. Nevertheless, despite his uncompromising conviction that the natural desire is unalterably and ineluctably infrustrable, P. de Lubac parallels this assertion

with the equally uncompromising conviction, that the *free* will of God is its unique source (pp. 484, 486, 488).

The question naturally arises from the foregoing summary of the essential elements of P. de Lubac's theory: does not this theory implicitly involve a revolutionary concept of the gratuity of the supernatural order? How can a natural desire, which is so completely infrustrable, remain gratuitous, a gift of pure liberality? P. de Lubac grants the legitimacy of these questions and admits that his theory is a quite different expression of the gratuity of the supernatural. Since the notion of gratuity is so essential to Catholic thought, we shall conclude this summary with P. de Lubac's views.

If we persist in naturalizing the concept of spirit, in conceiving it as a monad cut off from its transcendental relation to its Creator and emancipated in its being and in its action, then, according to P. de Lubac, there is a real difficulty in safeguarding the gratuity of grace and the infrustrable quality of our natural desire for God. But if we restore to the notion of spirit its inherent quality of radical dependence on God, as a participation of divine spirit, in no wise belonging to itself and remaining always the property and possession of God, it follows that the appeal for the beatific vision, identified with spirit and infrustrable, is instigated by God Himself; spirit essentially desires God, but this desire, born of God and nourished by Him is nothing else than His will that He has to give Himself, a will entirely gratuitous in its origin and in its perseverance. Thus, when God answers, by the consummated gift of Himself, the natural desire of spirit, it is His own will which He encounters and fulfills. (p. 486, cf. also pp. 489, 436). P. de Lubac is convinced that the classical definition of the supernatural: *quod superat vires et exigentias naturae*, is safeguarded in his theory. There is no exigency whatsoever in finite spirit for the beatific vision, in the sense that this exigency arises from spirit as its immanent source. Therefore, P. de Lubac feels that the "monster of an exigency for the supernatural" has been exorcised by his theory. He has rendered the concept of a natural exigency for the supernatural innocuous; for although there is in his theory a natural exigency, constitutive of spirit itself, for the beatific vision, never-

theless it is completely supernatural in its origin, and even in its subject, since it is the will of God in us; it has nothing of the nature of an insolent demand laid on God; on the contrary, it is pure obedience and submission of finite spirit to the ordination which has been received from the liberality of God. (cf. p. 436, and Conclusion, pp. 483-494).

REFERENCES: The following authors give adequate summaries of P. de Lubac's theory: C. Vollert, S.J., *Theological Studies*, VIII (1947), 288-93; C. Boyer, S. J., *Gregorianum*, XXVIII (1947), 379-86; A. Michel, *L'Ami du clergé*, LIV (1947), 797-804; L. Malevez, S.J., *Nouvelle revue théologique*, LXIX (1947), 1-23; Rhea Laurin, O.M.I., *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa; Section Spéciale*, XVIII (1948), 53-63.

II. PROOFS OF P. DE LUBAC'S THEORY

P. de Lubac does not attempt to base his theory directly on Sacred Scripture. However he does intend that his position should be constructed entirely on theological grounds, and should be judged solely on theological principles. Therefore, his proof must be from tradition. He appeals to the Fathers of the Church, both Latin and Greek as holding his theory of the supernatural, not merely as a theological opinion, but as pertaining to fundamental Christian doctrine, and therefore belonging to Tradition in the strict sense of the word. (pp. 475-477, cf. also p. 165). This appeal to the Fathers, however, does not merit the title of a proof, because it is in reality nothing more than a reiterated assertion without adequate documentation. Only here and there, (pp. 32-387) are there any indications of a demonstration.

Actually, the pivot and support of the theory consist in the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas on the natural desire for the beatific vision. P. de Lubac is certain that, in general, St. Thomas is only the mouth-piece of a constant tradition and holds the beatific vision to be the only possible destiny of a spiritual being. (pp. 117-20 cf. also pp. 110, 165ff., 173-452). However, with St. Thomas, the traditional view became complicated by the introduction of the Aristotelian notion of nature; this notion was never fully integrated by St. Thomas with patristic and traditional doctrine, and thereby the seeds were sown for the loose thinking which resulted finally in

the view that the gratuity of the supernatural cannot be safeguarded except by admitting the possibility of a purely natural destiny; despite his general adherence to traditional thought, a corrective must be applied to St. Thomas, and this corrective consists in re-establishing the notion of spirit in its dignity as the image of God tending toward full likeness, and in not reducing the natural desire of a spirit for God to an appetite of its intellectual nature. (cf. pp. 118, 433, 467-71).

Thus far, P. de Lubac's positive argumentation. His remaining proofs are to a large extent negative, and tend to show how invalidly the concept of pure nature arose, and what great harm it has brought about, not only in theological thought and theory, but also in the practical sphere of Christian life.

Once the Aristotelian notion of nature had been fully accepted, the decadent Scholasticism of the late sixteenth and subsequent centuries, due to ignorance of traditional sources and to the baneful influence of nominalism, was unprepared to confront the heresies of Baius and Jansen. The hypothesis of pure nature, already proposed by Cajetan, Javelle and Köllin, was utilized as a facile tool of expediency to reject the errors of Baius. This "dualistic system," in which the supernatural is no longer given any prominence except as a superfluity (*superfétation*), has no dogmatic foundation (p. 394, 427); it owes its wide diffusion and almost universal acceptance to a false comprehension of Baius' essential errors (pp. 161, 180, 427; cf. also p. 175).

Of the condemned propositions of Baius, there is not one whose contradictory expresses or even supposes the possibility of a purely natural destiny (p. 103); similarly, no other document of the *Magisterium*, among those generally cited in its favor, furnishes the desired proof (p. 179). Moreover this relatively new system has never acquired a prescriptive right against traditional doctrine; for, even though it has won over the majority of theologians, and has become almost the *doctrina communis*, it has never obtained unanimous consent; the Augustinian school, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has been able to attack it severely without ever drawing a censure from Rome (pp. 164-79). Finally, in our day, thanks to an intellectual movement initiated

by Cardinal Dechamps (1810-1883), the new system is in the process of a retreat much swifter than the time necessary for its construction (p. 427).

The system of pure nature, then, is only orthodox *à la rigueur* (p. 162), and is responsible for several serious defects, which have had a deleterious effect on Catholic thought and practice. It teaches the complete sufficiency of human nature left to itself; man becomes an absolute, completely enclosed and confined to a natural order; he confronts God with rights and demands; the supernatural is reduced to something extrinsic, a superficial accretion, an unwarranted, and therefore unwanted, intrusion into temporal life in all its self-sufficient spheres. The theory of pure nature is in great measure responsible for the laicisation and secularization of western civilization, for excessive rationalism in theology, and formalism in religion (cf. pp. 153-74).

Above all, P. de Lubac feels that the hypothesis of pure nature, like a sword of Solomon, cuts man in two, fosters the increase of separatist philosophies, and blocks off all avenues of approach toward convincing men of their obligation to accept the supernatural order and to conform their lives to its exigencies (cf. p. 427). In his conclusion, P. de Lubac is sedulously concerned to convince his readers that his theory in no wise offends against Catholic doctrine on the complete gratuity of the entire supernatural order, including the beatific vision, and on the exclusion of any exigency in human nature for the supernatural (cf. Councils of Orange, Mileve, Trent, and the Apostolic Constitution of Benedict XII, *DB*, 175 ff., 103 ff., 797 ff., 530 f.; Vatican Council and Pius X: *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, *DB*, 1785, 2103).

This he attempts from the viewpoint of man and of God. First, if we view the theory anthropocentrically, the infrustrable natural desire is due solèly to the *free* gift of God; it manifests itself, then, primarily as an obligation, not as a need; it is not the right of a creature confronting God as one absolute being facing another; it is rather a request that God will give Himself completely as a gift (pp. 483-91). Theocentrically, our natural desire is due to divine beneficence; God, however creates all things for His glory, and the beatific vision is the highest degree of glory possible, save for the

hypostatic union. Therefore, ultimately, the root of the absolute infrustrability of man's natural desire for the beatific vision lies in the fact that God owes it to Himself to plant in human nature this desire and to answer completely the appeal and invitation which He Himself has *freely* created and *freely* maintains in existence (pp. 491-494). In P. de Lubac's view, then, the gratuity of the supernatural is completely safeguarded by removing from man's relation to God all notions of a juridical order, of self-interest and of commutative justice (p. 494). Gratuity does not in any way imply any further gesture of divine beneficence beyond the creation of finite spirits; included in their spiritual existence is the appeal for divine grace; God simply could not create a spirit without intending to give the means to the uniquely possible end. P. de Lubac's entire theory can be legitimately summed up in his constant conviction that the gratuity of the entire supernatural order does not in any way diminish the normality and infrustrability of man's uniquely possible end—the beatific vision; rather, this gratuity, according to traditional Catholic thought, is adequately defined by the *de facto* transcendence of the beatific vision, which renders it totally inaccessible to the productive powers or faculties of any finite spirit (p. 392 f.).

REFERENCES: for a complete bibliography on the natural desire for the beatific vision until 1940, cf. Lennerz, *De Deo Uno (Romae, apud Aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1940)* pp. 188-20, note 24, p. 127f., note 28; cf. also William R. O'Connor, *The Eternal Quest* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947), passim, but especially pp. 276-285; Patrick K. Bastable, *Desire for God*, (London and Dublin; Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1947) pp. 135-78; J. de Blic, S.J., "Bulletin de Morale," *Mélanges de science religieuse*, IV (1947), 93-113; M. Chevasse, *Revue du Moyen Âge latin*, II (1946), 352-55; F. Cayré, *L'Année théologique*, VII (1946), 463 f.; R. W. Meagher, *Clergy Review*, XXIX (1948), 12-18; J. Crehan, S.J., *The Month*, CLXXXIV (1947); 278-86; Dom S. Moore, *Downside Review*, LXV (1947) 246-59; Dom Illtyd Trethowan, *Orate Fratres*, XXII (1947), 72 f.; L. B. Gillon, O.P., *Revue Thomiste*, XLVII (1947) 304-10; V. Turner, S.J., *Letters and Notices*, LV (1947), 47 f.; J. Lebreton, S.J., *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXXIV (1947), 77 ff.; H. Rondet, S.J., *Nouvelle revue théologique*, LXIX (1947) 124; J. de Blic, S.J., *Mélanges de science religieuse*, I (1944), 277 ff., III (1946) 162, 359-62; de Lubac and de Blic, *Mélanges de science religieuse*, IV

(1947), 364-79; Lucien Roy, S.J., *Sciences ecclésiastiques*, I (1948), 110-43; cf. also PP. Malevez, S.J., and Boyer, S.J., *opera citata supra*.

III. SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

(1) *P. de Lubac's theory and the liberty of God.*

Can P. de Lubac's theory of the natural desire for the beatific vision be reconciled with the liberty of God? The natural desire is absolutely infrustrable, but connotes no exigency (cf. *DB* 2103) on the part of man; furthermore, according to P. de Lubac, the infrustrability of the natural desire is due to the *free* gift of God. Does divine liberty mean for P. de Lubac liberty of choice, or merely liberty of spontaneity? If the supernatural order has at its source a true divine liberty of choice, does it, or does it not, follow immediately that a state of pure nature with a purely natural destiny is completely possible?

REFERENCES: L. Orbán, *Theologia Gutheriana et Concilium Vaticanum*, (Rome, Gregorian University, 1942) pp. 148-57; J. de Blic, "Platonisme et Christianisme dans la conception augustinienne du Dieu createur," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXX (1940), p. 178 f.; Paul Henry, S.J., "Le problème de la liberté chez Plotin," *Revue néo-scholastique*, XXXIV (1931), pp. 50-79, 180-215, 318-39; C. P. Gorman, "Freedom in the God of Plotinus," *New Scholasticism* (1940), 379-405; J. Péghaire, "L'Axiome: *bonum est diffusivum sui*," *Revue d'Université d'Ottawa* (Section spéciale) I (1932), 5-32; P. Bonnetain, art. "Grace," *Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément*, III, 1242 f.; Saint Thomas, *De Ver.*, q. 27, a. 3, ad 17; *Collectio Lacensis*, VII, "Adnotationes in primum schema constitutionis de doctrina catholica," 547 f., Th. P. Roser, "Emanation and Creation," *New Scholasticism* (1945), 85-116; Gerard Smith, S.J., "Query on the Natural End of Man," *Modern Schoolman* XXV (1947), 38.

(2) *P. de Lubac's theory and the dogma of original sin.*

It is a notable *lacuna* in *Surnaturel* that in his historical studies P. de Lubac does not note the extraordinary parallel between the development of the theory of pure nature and the development of the dogma of original sin. In his concept of nature, in the case of finite spirits, P. de Lubac appeals almost exclusively to St. Augustine, whose deficiencies in the matter of original sin, its mode of transmission, the question of why Adam's sin alone and no other is

transmitted, etc. etc., are so well known. P. de Lubac's work is intended to be at least an *ébauche*, an initial attempt at a definitive history and synthesis of Catholic doctrine on the supernatural order (p. 6). All theologians would agree, I think, that no such synthesis is possible, unless it includes an integration of the revealed dogma of original sin. The problem, then, is: can P. de Lubac's theory of "nature," which is so clearly Neo-Platonic in its affinities, be reconciled with a sound theological explanation of original sin?

REFERENCES: D. O. Lottin, O.S.B., "Le péché originel chez Albert le Grand, Bonaventure et Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, XII (1940), 275-328; J. Beumer, S.J., "Zwischen Patristik und Scholastik," *Gregorianum* XIII 1942 343; A. Horvath, "Sünde und Undsündlichkeit," *Divus Thomas* (Frib.) (1941), 129-156, 241-268, 409-431, (1942), 35-66, 157-75, 347-79, (1943), 23-47; A. Gaudel, art. "Péché originel," *DTC*, XII A.

(3) *P. de Lubac's theory and the Fathers of the Church.*

Since P. de Lubac maintains that his theory is part of Christian tradition, in the strict sense of the term, he must base it either on Scripture or on the Fathers of the Church. It is obvious even to a casual reader that he makes no attempt to establish his viewpoint from Scripture; does he, however, validly maintain that his doctrine is contained so clearly in the Fathers of the Church that it may be legitimately called traditional?

REFERENCES: L. Malevez, S.J., "L'Esprit et désir de Dieu," *Nouvelle revue théologique*, LXIX (1947), p. 24: "... dans ces conditions, il est assez étonnant que le P. de Lubac ait, quant à lui, choisi la première sans s'appliquer à la fonder. Mais dût-elle même invoquer en sa faveur les textes des écrivains ecclésiastiques, resterait encore à savoir si ces derniers ont considéré la doctrine du désir essentiel comme un article de la foi de l'Eglise; le P. de Lubac donne ici et là à penser qu'elle se range parmi les idées chrétiennes et les vérités de la tradition; mais cela non plus n'est pas établi et sans doute a peu de chance de l'être jamais."; Ant. Casino, S.J., *quid est homo sive controversia de statu purae naturae qua ratio simul et finis oeconomiae dei erga homines supernaturalis uberrime ex patrum praesertim sententia demonstratur*, (Moguntiae, ed. quarta, opera Dr. M. Jos. Scheeben, 1862) pp. xii & 349; Scheeben, *Dogmatik* (1878) pp. 281-294; Boyer op. cit., pp. 387-390.

(4) *P. de Lubac's theory and the Council of Trent.*

According to the Council of Trent, the beatific vision is the final cause, not of human nature as a finite spirit, but of human nature *justified* by sanctifying grace (*Sessio VI*, "Decretum de iustificatione," DB 799). But justification or sanctifying grace is a totally free gift of God to fallen men. However, original sin, according to common Catholic doctrine, is in no wise a personal sin involving personal guilt or responsibility on the part of the descendants of Adam. Since original sin is totally the loss in Adam of gifts completely unowed to the human race, why could God not have left men in original sin? If God could have left the human race in original sin, wherein, through no personal fault of any individual descendant of Adam, the beatific vision would have been completely unattainable, why could not God have created the human race in an order in which it would never have been destined to the beatific vision?

(5) *P. de Lubac and the doctrine of St. Thomas.*

Do the texts of St. Thomas cited by de Lubac represent the Angelic Doctor's profoundest thought on the supernatural order? Does St. Thomas' teaching on the natural desire for the beatific vision fade completely in the light of his teaching on merit, the theological virtues, the necessity of revelation and limbo?

REFERENCES: de Lubac, *Supernatural*, esp. pp. 118, 433, 467-71; de Blic, *Mélanges de science religieuse*, IV (1947), esp. pp. 95-100; W. R. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 135-86. H. Rondet, S.J., "Nature et surnaturel dans la théologie de S. Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXXIII (1946), 56-91; E. Elter, S.J., "De naturali hominis beatitudine," *Gregorianum*, IX (1928), 268-306; L. B. Gillon, O.P., "Aux origines de la 'Puissance obédientielle'." *Revue Thomiste*, SLVII (1947), 304-11.

(6) *P. de Lubac and the errors of Baius.*

To what extent is P. de Lubac justified in maintaining that modern theologians have misinterpreted the essential errors of Baius?

REFERENCES: de Lubac, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-37, 144-183; F. X. Jansen, S.J., *Baius et le Baianisme* (Louvain; 1927), esp. pp. 127-47; X.-M. Le Bachelet, art. "Baius", *DTC* (Mangenot-Vacant), T. II; L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Papste im Zeitalter der katholischen Reformation und Restauration* (Frib. i. Br., 1926) pp. 139-143; E. Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de St. Augustin* (Paris: 2nd edition) c. f. "Indéterminismes de S. Augustin", pp. 62 f., 141-147, Boyer, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

(7) *P. de Lubac and the theory of pure nature.*

Is P. de Lubac's statement of the doctrine of pure nature an accurate historical description of what its proponents really hold? What is essential, and what accidental in this doctrine? By failing to distinguish between a rigid and more moderate theory of pure nature, has P. de Lubac at least partially misrepresented the issue?

REFERENCES: Malevez, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-15; Boyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 392-4; de Broglie, S.J., "De ultimo fine humanae vitae asserta quaedam", *Gregorianum*, IX (1928), 628-30; M. Blondel, *L'Action*, Paris: 1936, I, p. 417.

IV. CONCLUSION

Whether or not one agrees with *Supernatural*, it is sincerely hoped that the topics suggested for discussion, and any others which may be introduced, will provide stimulation to American theologians to produce studies comparable to P. de Lubac's work, and imbued with his keen perception of the urgent need to make our supernatural destiny more vitally operative in the lives of all men: "Man only arrives at life, in the only possible "total" society, by saying with his whole self: *Soli Deo gloria. Gloria Dei vivens homo.* Something is needed beyond natural progress, even in the realm of moral values and in the elaboration of new ideas, to confer definite value on all his strivings; a transfiguration beyond any natural transformation which means, not further progress, but the passage to a state beyond progress. Such a passage is beyond man's scope, for it is not a question of attaining a new degree in the same order. The supernatural is not a higher, richer, more beautiful nature. It is the invasion of another *principle*, the sudden opening up of a kind of fourth dimension incommensurable with all the framework provided by the natural dimensions. It is literally concerned with a 'new birth' (whose first benefit to the Christian will be the freshness of a new childhood). Nature evolves and advances through time; the supernatural enables us to pass constantly from time to eternity. The first builds up the earthly city; the second leads us into the Kingdom of God. The links between the two are real and close, for one, as it were, weaves the body of the other. So we

need look with no suspicious eye on human research and discovery. The Christian is not dispensed from performing his whole task as a man. It is a task noble enough for him to throw himself into it with enthusiasm. But it only prepares the raw material. No formation of a 'new man' can destroy the necessity of the 'new Man' described by St. Paul, which presupposes the whole mystery of the Man-God. Let man then, strong in the divine help, take over the work of the six days and prolong it throughout the seventh day. Let him show himself bold, inventive, and masterful.

"God will not rob man of what man can make." But the eighth, on which alone all can be accomplished and renewed, is the Lord's day and man can only receive it. Let him continue, as long as this world lasts, to make the gesture of Prometheus; let him light in every century a new fire which shall be the forge of a new endeavor. But let him at the same time implore the descent of the only Fire without whose flame nothing can be saved, consummated or made eternal. *Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur et renovabis faciem terrae.*" (Henri de Lubac, S.J., "The New Man," *The Dublin Review*, no. 442, 1948, p. 34 f.)

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