

"The First Fact; The First Principle; And The First Condition"

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I

Introduction

The science of epistemology is the general field in which this thesis is being written. As a result it is most fitting to introduce this work with a general introduction to the science of epistemology.

Metaphysics, which is the apex of the science of philosophy, deals with being considered in itself, simply as being. Such a consideration of being in itself involves, it is clear to be seen, the greatest degree of abstraction and the widest universalization of which the mind is capable, since to attempt to abstract further, from being itself, would lead us to a contemplation of nothing. Since, therefore, it is the ultimate in human reasoning, it must unlike other sciences defend its own possibilities and principles, because there is no other upon which it can depend to do this work. "Such a defense is known as epistemology, or the science of knowledge; for it is an essential requirement for the consideration of the science of being that it should be established that the human mind is able to know being."¹

We can, therefore, conclude that the science of epistemology "must be considered to be a part -- the first and introductory part -- of metaphysics; for it does not consider being either as it is subject to motion or to quantity, but purely in the abstract, and -- here is the distinction from the rest of methaphysics -- as it is related to the human mind."¹

Epistemology, then, is that part of metaphysics which examines the value of knowledge, and the capacity of the mind to know being. As will be shown in the process of this work, "the first fact, the first principle, and the first condition" are understood to be present before one can have a sci-

tific act of cognition; these three, therefore, are of preeminent importance in a study of epistemology.

Since, as will be seen in the conclusion of this work, epistemology and psychology are so closely related, it was imperative that the author explain and define terms in the light of psychology, for this is the only positive approach to the principles and propositions presented in the course of writing this thesis.

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II

The First Fact

The consideration of the truth of the proposition that I, as an individual thinking subject exist, is the first of the three primary truths of epistemology which are to be explained in this work. This proposition, as stated above, is commonly called by modern epistemologist "The First Fact." This proposition is, if its terms are understood correctly, obviously the first fact, because by the very fact that we make our first simple apprehension, which is first in the order of cognition, it is evident, after a certain process of introspection, that there is a subject of cognition. This subject of cognition is ordinarily referred to as 'self' or 'Ego.'

Some have thought that a discussion of the first fact has no foundation, for we should not be investigating it unless we existed.² However, to say this is to acknowledge that one has already considered the reasons for its truth, and has satisfied himself that the objective evidence for such a proposition is in conformity with his own observations.

These reasons for this proposition are the object of the present writer. Since they are not obvious to all, it is legitimate for us to try to understand them.

The first approach to the reasons supporting the existence of a subject of cognition is that of consciousness or self-consciousness. From our own observations it can clearly be seen that self-consciousness is a characteristic of all men. In our considerations here stated self-consciousness means: "the consciousness of one's self or Ego as the subject and bearer of all conditions and states affecting his being, particularly of conscious-

ness itself." 3

The means or medium by which we acquire this state of self-consciousness is introspection. Introspection is a look at one's 'self' through one's acts of cognition. Introspection reveals the indisputable fact that all conscious phenomena are referred, in the last analysis, to the 'self' or 'Ego'. To deny this is to deny the validity of the very foundations of knowledge. 3

The process by which we reach introspection is explained at some length by St. Thomas Aquinas in his Summa Theologica:

"... A thing is intelligible according as it is in act. Now the ultimate perfection of the intellect consists in its own operation of the work accomplished, as building is the perfection of the thing built; but it remains in the agent as its perfection and act, as is said Metaph. ix. (Did. viii. 8). Therefore the first thing understood of the intellect is its own act of understanding.... And there is yet another, namely, the human intellect, which neither is its own act of understanding, nor is its own essence the first object of its act of understanding, for the object is the nature of a material thing. And therefore that which is first known by the human intellect is an object of this kind, and that which is known secondarily is the act by which that object is known; and through the act the intellect itself is known, the perfection of which is this act of understanding. For this reason the Philosopher asserts that objects are known before acts, and acts before powers (De Anima ii.4)." 4

Thus in this quotation St. Thomas points out that the human intellect does not know its 'self' or 'Ego' immediately but through a process as was clearly stated in the quotation itself. The first objects of the human mind are external objects, then, in the second place, man knows the acts by which he knows the object, and by way of this act he comes to the knowledge of the intellect itself whose perfection consists in knowledge. 5

This process by which we reach the consciousness of the subject, as is presented by the above quotation from St. Thomas 6, seems to be the

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direct contradictory of what St. Augustine writes concerning the consciousness of the subject or bearer of knowledge. For St. Augustine writes: "Just as the mind gathers knowledge of corporeal things by means of the senses, so does it acquire knowledge of incorporeal things by itself. Therefore it also knows itself, since itself is incorporeal."⁷

From this we may conclude that St. Augustine thought that the 'self' or 'Ego' of a human being, though incorporeal is an immediate object of understanding. If this were true, however, we would not, as St. Thomas contends, be forced through the process of introspection in order to know the subject of cognition, the 'self.' It can immediately be seen therefore that there is present an apparent contradiction between these two illustrious philosophical doctors.

Let us now turn to the answer which St. Thomas proposes to this question. He writes in reference to St. Augustine's statement⁷; "If the soul, by itself, understands what itself is: and since every man has a soul; every man will know what his soul is; which is evidently false."⁸ The truth of this refutation can immediately be seen because it can be pointed out that men have even gone so far as to say that there is no soul in man. It is obvious that such men do not understand the soul. Thus, it would seem that St. Augustine was wrong about this matter.

However, St. Augustine further writes concerning self-consciousness: "When the soul seeks self-knowledge, it does not seek to see itself as though it were absent, but to discern itself as present: not to know itself, as though it knew not; but in order to distinguish itself from what it knows to be distinct."⁹ If understood correctly, as St. Thomas understood it,

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this statement manifests that St. Augustine taught the same theory in this regard that St. Thomas himself taught.

The meaning of the above quotation from St. Augustine⁹ can be discerned by St. Thomas' statement in reference to it:

"It (the possible intellect) understands itself by means of intelligible species, by which it is brought to actual intelligibility. For, considered in itself, it is only potentially an intelligible being: now nothing is known according as it is in potentiality, but only according as it is in act. Wherefore separate substances, the substance whereof is as something actual in the genus of things intelligible, understand by their very substance what they are: whereas our possible intellect understands what it is, through the intelligible species by which it is made actually understanding....

"Accordingly Augustine means to say that our mind knows itself by itself, inasmuch as it knows that it is: because by the very fact that it perceives itself to act, it perceives that it exists; and since it acts by itself, it knows by itself that it exists."¹⁰

Aristotle's opinion can also be explained by the above quotation from St. Thomas¹⁰; for Aristotle writes: "The possible intellect understands itself even as it understands other things."¹¹ It would seem at first sight that Aristotle meant that the possible intellect understood itself as it understands other objects in reality, i.e. without process of introspection. But as St. Thomas points out¹² Aristotle understood that the process of introspection was necessary to make the self intelligible. Because a thing is only intelligible according as it is in act, therefore it is impossible for the possible intellect to know itself directly but only through act; and it is only possible to reach this act through a process of introspection.

It would seem from the facts presented above that since we must go through a process in order to reach the conclusion that there is a subject or bearer of knowledge, this knowledge would not be held with any great

degree of certitude. St. Thomas, however, says that this knowledge, the immediate data of consciousness, about the soul is the most certain of human knowledge inasmuch as each one experiences in himself that he has a soul and places certain spiritual acts.¹³

Since we have thus discovered the opinions of St. Thomas, let us now proceed to the opinions and views of some modern Thomists of the question of the first fact.

We have already seen the position of Bittle on this subject¹⁴, but I believe it would be very beneficial to us to follow up with some of his arguments for his position in this matter. First of all, we can give a clear and concise definition of self-consciousness given by him: "Self-consciousness means that the mind (self, Ego) recognizes all mental states and activities as its own."¹⁵ And again further on he states: "Consciousness reveals to us the existence of our self or Ego as the single, permanent, self-identical subject and bearer of all our states and experiences."¹⁶ It can immediately and obviously be seen that these statements and what has been said before in this section are entirely in conformity.

It is perhaps of some profit to us here to give two of Bittle's proofs for the existence of a subject of cognition. The first of these proofs, is a proof taken from the common speech of human beings. Professor Bittle writes: "We seldom say: 'sight, hearing, pleasure, thought, volition, etc., are present.' We invariably say: 'I see, I hear, I experience pleasure, I think, I will, etc.' The subject and bearer is always mentioned together with the conscious state."¹⁷ This proof is built upon the impossibility of all of mankind being wrong in their manner of expressing themselves

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in a language. As such it is a fairly powerful argument inasmuch as it gives us moral certitude that a subject of cognition exists, because moral certitude states that it could not be otherwise according to man's way of acting.¹⁸

The second of the two proofs, is a proof which is based on an individual's past experiences. Professor Bittle writes: "How could I remember them (past experiences) as 'mine,' as having happened in 'me,' if my Ego were not a permanent abiding reality in whom they accrued? My Ego is clearly perceived to be the abiding subjects of these transitory states."¹⁹ If there were no permanently abiding subjects all memory or comprehension of our actions would die along with the action itself, but this is immediately seen to be false, for everyone has the ability of remembering actions as his own.

Another modern philosopher which we might consider is Hans Meyer. His opinion I believe can be summed up in one brief quotation: "Even though skepticism may threaten the existence or the nature of the external world, for most thinkers the consciousness of self and the certainty of one's own thinking is the impregnable rock against which the waves of skepticism break in vain."²⁰

Mr. Meyer gives an example of the process of introspection that I believe would be very profitable to state before we close our discussion on the first fact. In his work, Mr. Meyer writes: "As prime matter can be known only through the forms that are received in it so the human soul and the human mind can be known only through the knowledge of external objects and through the cognitive forms that act on the soul."²¹ Since a thing is

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intelligible according as it is in act,²² and since prime matter is pure potentiality, it (prime matter) can only be known by the forms which actualize its potency. So, likewise, the intellect can only know itself through the actualization of its potencies or powers.

To synthesize the whole of the proofs for the existence of 'self' or 'Ego' as the subject or bearer of all conscious phenomena, I would like to quote here what the Angelic Doctor writes.

"The power of any potency of the soul is determined to its object; hence its action primarily and principally tends to that object. But it cannot do this with regard to those means by which it tends to the object except by a kind of reversion.... Hence at first the activity of the intellect turns to that which is comprehended from the phantasms, then it returns to a knowledge of its acts, then to the intelligible species, the habit and powers of the soul, and finally to the essence of the intellect and the soul itself."²³

The final thing to be said in regard to the first fact in this section is to answer the question whether this proposition is self-evident. In order to answer this question one must have a correct notion of what a self-evident proposition is. In this matter we turn again to the Angelic Doctor.

He defines a self-evident proposition in the following manner:

"A thing can be self-evident in either of two ways; on the one hand, self-evident in itself, though not to us; on the other, self-evident in itself, and to us. A proposition is self-evident because the predicate is included in the essence of the subject, as 'Man is an animal,' for animal is contained in the essence of man.. If, therefore, the essence of the predicate and subject be known to all, the proposition will be self-evident to all; as is clear with regard to the first principles of demonstration, the terms of which are common things that no one is ignorant of, such as being and non-being, whole and part, and such like. If, however, there are some to whom the essence of the predicate and subject is unknown, the proposition will be self-evident in itself, but not to those who do not know the meaning of the predicate and subject of the proposition."²⁴

It is impossible to contend that the first fact is not self-evident...

according to the second classification, i.e., self-evident in itself, and to us. It would seem that the first fact is a proposition self-evident in itself, because this proposition fits the definition of a self-evident proposition as is stated by St. Thomas. The predicate is included in the essence of the subject because once we say that there is an action by which we know the subject of cognition, we include that that subject exists because the efficient cause of an action must be prior in time to the action of cognition. But this is the only way in which we know the subject of cognition, i.e., through its acts, as has been proven above. It is self-evident to all since it is impossible to doubt it, as was shown above. Therefore, the predicate of this proposition is included in the essence of the subject, and is self-evident in itself, and to us.

Having thus explored the first of the three primary truths of epistemology, we now turn our attention to the second, the first principle.

III

The First Principle

The first thing which is to be discussed is, naturally, the statement of the principle of contradiction. This principle can be stated in many different ways; for example, Aristotle stated it thus: "The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect."²⁵ This is a much different statement than the one we are ordinarily accustomed to hearing. For this section of this work, I will use St. Thomas' statement of this principle, which I consider the most comprehensive enunciation of this principle. It is merely: Being is not

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non-being; in other words it is not possible for a thing to both be and not be at the same time, and in the same respect.²⁶

Now, it is our object to prove that this proposition is the first principle upon which all others ultimately rest for the proof of themselves. All other propositions ultimately are proven by "reduction to absurdity" or to the denial of the principle of contradiction.

We must, therefore, endeavor to comprehend just what it entails to be a principle. For this definition we may again turn to the great storehouse of wisdom, the Angelic Doctor. St. Thomas writes: "the word principle signifies only that whence another proceeds: since anything whence something proceeds in any way we call a principle; and conversely. As the Father then is the one whence another proceeds, it follows that the Father is a principle."²⁷

Aristotle says a principle is: "that first from which anything either is, or comes to be, or is known."²⁸ Distinction: an ontological principle would be one from which something "either is or comes to be," and a logical principle would be one by which something "is known."

From this we may readily gather that the word 'principle' is a very broad term. Another definition which may clarify the above slightly is: "A principle is that from which anything proceeds in any way."²⁹ To give a positive idea to the reader of all that the term 'principle' stands for, I believe it is propitious to give the divisions of principle.³⁰ First of all, principle is divided: 1. according to the intellect or a rational principle (e.g., as a conclusion follows from premises, thus the premises are the principles of the conclusion); 2., according to the thing

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or a real principle. And a real principle is divided into: a) a merely negative principle, such as privation; b) a positive principle. A positive principle is, likewise, double according as to whether it gives existence or not. An example of a positive principle not giving existence would be a point as the principle of a line, for the line can exist without that particular point but that point is still that from which the line proceeds. If the positive principle does give existence to its principiated this may be with or without dependence in reality. If there is no dependence, the only possible case is procession in the Blessed Trinity; for the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Ghost proceeds from both the Father and the Son, however all are equal and there is no dependence one upon the other. If there is a dependence, any common cause would be an example, for the definition of a cause is: a positive principle from which something proceeds really with dependence in existence. This is a complete division of a principle.

Now that we have discovered what a principle is, we must endeavor to define a 'first' principle. The term, principle absolutely first, can be taken in two ways. The first meaning is a principle "which actually in itself contains all other verities, in the first place of the metaphysical or the abstract order of essences, in the second of the experimental or the concrete order of contingent existences so that these truths can be seen in that principle or deduced from it through demonstration."³¹ This principle would be the most perfect and could not be anything else than the divine essence. It is not the intention of the present author to develop any further the divine attributes, which is a field in itself; we

will, therefore, proceed to the second connotation of an absolute first principle.

This second connotation is an absolute first principle as that which is "the most imperfect, and the most potential or the most universal judgment which does not actually contain all other verities in itself, but which is presupposed for all and from which all can be demonstrated indirectly."³¹ This second connotation is the one to which this section of this thesis is devoted.

After investigating what it means to be an absolutely first principle, it remains now to discover what the requisites are to qualify for being an absolutely first principle. There are three requirements necessary in order to have such a principle, as can be seen from St. Thomas Aquinas.

The first requirement is that this principle be self-evident but not only in itself and to the wise men, but it must be evident to all. For no one could doubt or err in regard to such a principle. Secondly, this principle cannot be conditional, that is it must be held with absolute certainty. For, as the definition of such a principle above points out, this principle must be held with certitude as a basis of all further knowledge. And thirdly, this principle must be non-demonstrable. For, since all knowledge is based on such a principle, it must be seen immediately after simple apprehension; for otherwise, it would be a conclusion drawn from a prior premise, and there would, therefore, be a proposition prior to it and it would no longer be absolutely first.³²

The fulfillment of the first requirement, that the absolutely first principle must be self-evident to all by the principle of contradiction, is shown in the following way by St. Thomas. He comments,³³ that no one

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can possibly think that both terms of a contradiction are true. By the very apprehension of contradictory terms, the mutual exclusion is seen. He says further that even though a person may say that he believes both terms of a contradiction to be true, in his mind he will hold the opposite view. We may further see the application of this to the principle of contradiction in the following quotation:

"The things themselves that are contrary have no contrariety in the mind, because one is the reason for knowing the other: nevertheless there is in the intellect contrariety of affirmation and negation, which are contraries.... For though to be and not to be are not in contrary, but in contradictory opposition to one another, so long as we consider their signification in things themselves, for on the one hand we have being and on the other we have simple non-being; yet if we refer them to the act of the mind, there is something positive in both cases. Hence to be and not to be are contradictory...." 34

All demonstration reduce their propositions to a basis common to all men. The principle which immediately follows the concept of being is the most evident principle possible to all men; the principle of contradiction is such a principle since it combines the first two concepts of man, "being" and "non-being."

Another proof that can be presented to prove that the principle of contradiction is self-evident to all men is by taking the negative approach to it; that is by seeing the result if we doubt this principle. 35 If we doubt the principle of contradiction we should say: perhaps it is not true that being and non-being are contradictorily opposed. In this case perhaps one is the other; i.e., perhaps being is not-being. Now either we attribute some meaning to this suggestion or none; if none, it is not a suggestion or a thought, but nothing at all. If we do attribute some meaning to it, we must also allow that the meaning is: 'perhaps being is not non-

being;' while at the same time it is: 'perhaps being is non-being,' since our thought may be its contradictory. These two, however, cancel out; and we are left, as before, without any thought or suggestion at all. Our minds have become, in the strictest sense, a *tabula rasa*. The suggestion, in other words, that the principle of contradiction is false cannot be entertained; it is meaningless. We might in our attempt to doubt this principle, go so far as to deny it; and so affirm that being is non-being, in which case the non-being in this (or any other) proposition we can substitute the word being, and the proposition becomes: 'being is being'; which is the principle of identity; or, alternatively, 'non-being is not being'; which is the principle of contradiction. The principle might be called a 'boomerang principle,' for even though we cast it away from us, it returns to us again. Hence it remains, since no one can deny it, nor can any one even doubt it, that this principle is self-evident to all mankind.

The second requirement, that the first principle be non-conditional, can also easily be seen to apply to the principle of contradiction. For it is impossible that the principle of contradiction be acquired from a prior, since it is the first in the order of judgment. The first operation of the mind is simple apprehension and its first operation is to know 'being'. Hence the first judgment in the second operation of the mind, composition and division, will follow directly upon the apprehension of being; this first judgment is the principle of contradiction.³⁶ The third requisite, that the first principle be non-demonstrable, follows immediately upon the latter proof. For if the principle of contradiction is first in the order of judgment it is obvious that there will be no prior

premise from which it could be concluded. But demonstration proceeds from prior premises. Therefore, the principle is non-demonstrable.

Since, therefore, as has been shown, the principle of contradiction fills all the requirements for an absolutely first principle, the only thing that remains is to be certain of the veracity of this principle.

St. Thomas in his Metaphysics presents several proofs, or really refutation against those who deny the principle of contradiction. The following is a presentation of two of these proofs.

The first proof that will be considered is the refutation against those who say that both contradictories are true. The refutation is taken from the signification of a name.³⁷ If one admits that a name has a signification, by that very fact he is admitting to the principle of contradiction, for a name signifies what a thing is as opposed to what that thing is not, which is the principle of contradiction. For example, let us take the name man; for this name, man, to have any meaning it must signify some one thing, or some one class of things, but it must exclude some other things. But if one says that two contradictories are both true, for example, man and non-man, he is saying that both these names can be applied to one and the same subject and both would signify the same quiddity. From his reasoning, also, can be drawn a further absurd conclusion, namely that the same notion or 'ratio' will be applied to all things. If this were true, speech or any form of words or names would be senseless. But each name of necessity must have one proper notion or 'ratio' for which it stands and two names can only be applied to the same 'ratio' in an equivocal signification.

St. Thomas further states in refutation of those who contend that contra-

dictories are true at the same time:

He (Aristotle) proves the third, namely, that man and non-man do not signify the same, by the following reasoning. Man signifies that which is to be man and the quiddity of man: now non-man signifies to be non-man, and the quiddity of non-man. If therefore man and non-man do not signify something diverse, then that existence for man will not be diverse from non-existence for man or not to be man. And so one of those will be predicated of the other. Also, they will be one according to notion. For when we say certain things signify one thing, we understand that they signify one notion, as garment and clothing. If to be man and to be non-man are one in this way, that is, according to notion, that will be one and the same which will signify that which is man and that which is non-man. But it is given or demonstrated that a diverse name is used for each. For it is shown that this name man signifies the quiddity of man and does not signify not to be man: hence it is evident that to be man and not to be man are not one according to notion. And so the proposed is shown, that man and non-man signify diverse things. ³⁸

Another common fault is pointed out by St. Thomas in his refutation of those who hold that an affirmation and negation said of the same thing are both true. In this argument the Angelic Doctor shows how this would eliminate all substance and substantial predication. ³⁹ As was stated in the above argument the definition of a name is: a name signifies one thing; that is, it signifies the quiddity of the substance of that one thing. However if it were possible to predicate both man and non-man of one thing, we would be predicating two substantial predicates and thus the unity of that thing would be lost. Moreover, if both contradictories are true, there is only accidental predication. However, accidental predication can be had in two ways. The first way is when one accident is predicated of another accident because they both inhere in the same subject, for example, white is said of musical because they are both predicated accidentally of man. Secondly, an accident is predicated of its subject, as the man is white. But in either mode of accidental predication one accident cannot

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be predicated of another on to infinity, but the accidents must inhere in a subject. This subject of accidents is the substance, but substance is destroyed by those who hold that the same thing is affirmed and denied of the same thing at the same time. Therefore, ultimately all predication is destroyed by them.

Thus with these arguments for the veracity of the principle of contradiction we have finished our analysis of the first principle.

IV

The First Condition

The First condition is really an old question with a comparatively new name. We might state the first condition as: that the mind is capable of attaining truth. This is obviously one of the oldest philosophical questions which has been handed down to us from antiquity. Before the time of Christ the old Greek philosophers considered it and after the time of Christ it has been considered down to the present date. The name 'first condition' is the epistemological term given to this age old question.

The first condition has sometimes been misunderstood; and has been taken to mean that the mind is capable of knowing thing as they are in themselves. This statement, however, has an ambiguous meaning; and seems to say that knowledge is always mediate. It suggests that we know our own ideas first, and then things by their means. The correspondence between our ideas and things is assured by the principle 'our representations are true, i.e., in agreement with things;' this principle is admitted by them without proof. Those who take the meaning of the first condition in this

sense, therefore, speak of 'the veracity of our faculties' as though we do not know the things themselves but only what our faculties tells us of things. But, in fact, such an exposition, which they present as self-evident, needs strict proof and can really be doubted. "Hence the first condition is not to be taken to imply the capacity of the mind for attaining knowledge of external things, but simply the capacity for knowledge of the object: that which lies before, or is presented to the mind."⁴⁰

The question implied in the above statements is whether the first condition is self-evident. To consider the self-evidence of this proposition let us present again briefly St. Thomas' definition of a self-evident proposition, given above. St. Thomas defines a self-evident proposition as one in which the predicate is included in the essence of the subject. And a proposition of this sort is either self-evident to all or only to the wise according as the two terms are understood by all or only by a few, respectively.⁴¹ Now the first condition, that the mind has a capacity for the knowledge of the object, is a proposition in which the predicate is included in the essence of the subject. This can be shown in the following way. The term 'mind' is a name given to the soul insofar as the soul has the power of knowing things; it is the very connotation of the word mind that the soul has the capacity or the power to know objects. But the first power of the soul is the intellect for St. Thomas says: "It is necessary to say the intellect is a power of the soul, and not the very essence of the soul"⁴² But the power, intellect, is often given the name mind. Therefore, the capacity for knowing objects is included in the notion of the word mind. Thus the proposition is self-evident.

As a proof of the self-evidency of the first condition the following quotation is presented:

"It is not difficult to see that the proposition taken in this sense ⁴³ is really indubitable, since it is an assertion that we have faculties whose business it is to know their objects, and which, consequently, cannot essentially fail in knowledge of their object. Now, if we try to doubt this, it is clear that the value of such doubt will depend on the essential rectitude of the very faculties which we are doubting; since if they be essentially untrustworthy, so will also be our doubt about their trustworthiness. If we are doubtfull of the existence of the cognitive faculties which can give us knowledge of truth, we must, eo ipso, be doubtful of the reasoning which has led us to doubt their existence. We shall, therefore, be unable to retain our doubt, as even probably true, since we shall be unable to think at all." ⁴⁴

If one is to explain how the objects of our intellect are present and the process by which we know, I don't believe that a person could do better than to merely quot St. Thomas verbatim, for it is impossible to state it clearer or more concisely than he himself states it.

"Let us consider the fact that an external thing understood by us does not exist in our intellect according to its own nature; rather, it is necessary that its species be in our intellect, and through this species the intellect comes to be in act. Once in act through this species as through its own form, the intellect knows the thing itself. This is not to be understood in the sense that the act itself of understanding is an action proceeding to the thing understood, as heating proceeds to the heated thing. Understanding remains in the one understanding, but it is related to the thing understood because the abovementioned species, which is a principle of intellectual operation as a form, is the likeness of the thing understood.

"We must further consider that the intellect, having been informed by the species of the thing, by an act of understanding forms within itself a certain intention of the thing understood, that is to say, its notion, which the definition signifies. This is a necessary point, because the intellect understands a present and an absent thing indifferently. In this the imagination agrees with the intellect. But the intellect has this characteristic in addition, namely, that it understands a thing as separated from material conditions, without which a thing does not exist in reality. But this could not take place un-

less the intellect formed the abovementioned intention for itself.

"Now, since this understood intention is, as it were, a terminus of intelligible operation, it is distinct from the intelligible species that actualizes the intellect, and that we must consider the principle of intellectual operation, though both are a likeness of the thing understood. For, by the fact that the intelligible species, which is the form of the intellect and the principle of understanding, is the likeness of the external thing, it follows that the intellect forms an intention like that thing, since such as a thing is, such are its works. And because the understood intention is like some thing, it follows that the intellect, by forming such an intention, knows that thing." 45

The knowing powers in us are per se infallible, that is, they are ordered to truth. If this is true, every error must be per accidens; to be fallible per accidens is to be mistaken because of some cause which is extrinsic to nature: as a color-blind person makes a mistake in color distinction, it is because of the abnormal or unnatural functioning of his sense organs. This must be true because the very definition of knowing powers means that these powers are ordered to know things as they are, for knowledge is the adquation of the intellect with the thing. But if the knowing powers were per se order to falsity, we could not rely on our knowledge and universal skepticism would result; no knowing power would be trustworthy. 46

The conclusion follows readily that the mind has the capacity for knowledge of the object, which is the first condition.

V

The basic conclusion which can be drawn from the consideration of these three epistemological propositions is that they are mutually dependent one upon the other. This is immediately seen if we consider each in regard

to and in the light of the others. The first fact, the existence of a subject of cognition is dependent upon the other two in order to be known, but not in the order of existence. For the first fact, as was shown above, is only known through the process of introspection, but before we can have any process by which we can know something we must have the capacity to be able to know it, the first condition.

Secondly, let us take the first principle in regard to its dependence upon the other two. Now the first principle is the first judgment of the second operation of the mind, composition and division. But it is obvious that there would be no first judgment if there were no power to make that judgment, the first condition, and there would be no judgment if there were no subject in which that power can be found, the first fact. Thirdly, the first condition relies upon the other two. If there were no subject, the first fact, in which the first condition could inhere, there would be no first condition. In regard to the first principle, in our capacity to receive knowledge we have three processes, simple apprehension, composition and division, and discursive knowledge. Therefore, since discursive knowledge is part of the first condition, and since the first principle is the basic proposition form which all conclusion are ultimately drawn, there is a dependence of the first condition upon the first principle.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this thesis, which I believe is evident to the reader, is the very close relationship between the science of epistemology and that of psychology. In every part of this thesis psychology was needed to explain these epistemological propositions. For example, in order to show that there was a subject of cognition it

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was necessary to bring in such psychological considerations as self-consciousness and introspection. For a clarification of the first principle the psychological first, second, and third operations of the mind were necessary. And in the first condition it is plain to be seen that it is a study of the cognitive powers of man, which is also a psychological study. In fact, one might say that a person cannot think of epistemology without including some part of psychology, for psychology is the study of the human soul and its powers but epistemology is concerned with the highest power of the soul, the cognitive power.

- Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam -

Footnotes

1. Phillips, Modern Thomistic Philosophy, vol. 2, p. 1.
2. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 47.
3. Bittle, The Whole Man, p. 417.
4. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 87, Art. 3.
5. Meyer, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 347.
6. See footnote 4.
7. St. Augustine, De Trinitate, 9, III.
8. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Bk. III, Ch. 46, p. 106.
9. St. Augustine, op. cit., Bk. 10, Ch. IX.
10. St. Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., Bk. III, Ch. 46, p. 107.
11. Aristotle, De Anima, Bk. 3, Ch. IV.
12. See footnote 10.
13. St. Thomas Aquinas, De Veritate, X, 8 ad 8; also cf. Meyer, op. cit., p. 349.
14. See footnote 3.
15. Bittle, op. cit., p. 417.
16. Ibid., p. 420.
17. Ibid., p. 418.
18. Gredt, Elementa Philosophiae, vol. 2, ch. 2, par. 669.
19. Bittle, op. cit., p. 418.
20. Meyer, op. cit., p. 346.
21. Ibid., p. 347.
22. St. Thomas Aquinas, Op. cit., Summa Theologica, I, Q. 87, Art. 3.
23. St. Thomas Aquinas, De Veritate, X, 9.

24. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 2, Art. 1.
25. Aristotle, Metaphysics, IV, 1005b 25.
26. St. Thomas Aquinas, In Duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio, IV, 606.
27. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, Q. 33, Art. 1.
28. Aristotle, Metaphysics, V, 1013a 17.
29. Gredt. Op. Cit., Vol. 2, Ch. III, # 746.
30. The following division with most of its examples and explanation is taken chiefly from Gredt, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, Ch. III, # 746.
31. Gredt, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, 645; Cf. also St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, Q. 4, Art. 1c.
32. St. Thomas Aquinas, In Posteriora Analytica, I, L. 5, 6.
33. St. Thomas Aquinas, In Duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio, IV, 601.
34. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I II, Q. 64, Art. 3 ad 3.
35. The following proof is taken almost entirely from: Phillips, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 36.
36. Gredt, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, 646.
37. St. Thomas Aquinas, In Dodēcim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio, IV, 611 - 623.
38. Ibid, IV, 619.
39. Ibid, IV, 624 - 635.
- 40 Phillips, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 37.
41. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, Q. 2, Art.
42. Ibid., I, Q. 79, Art. 1.
43. See footnote 40.
44. Phillips, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 37 - 38.
45. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, Ch. 53, Par. 1, 2, & 3.

46. Gredt, Op. Cit. Vol. 2, 681 - 682.

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