

### Liberty

It is interesting to note that Dr. Montessori, in her practical dealings with children, has, by a sure instinct worked out a method which is in remarkable conformity with scholastic views regarding the nature of human liberty.

The following is a summary of the main points taken from Leo XIII's Papal Encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum*:

- (1) Only those who have the gift of reason can have true freedom.
- (2) Liberty is the faculty of choosing means fitted for the end proposed.
- (3) Every act of true choice is preceded by an act of judgment.
- (4) Because of the imperfection of man's nature a law is necessary to point out the way in conformity with reason.
- (5) One who acts through a power outside himself is a slave.

Anyone who studies what has been written on Montessori's idea of "liberty" with these points in view will realize how perfectly Montessori's practice with regard to freedom in the schoolroom is in conformity with these principles.

Other parallels could be mentioned between rational psychology and Montessori's ideas derived from her experiences with liberated children, for instance the relation which exists or should exist between imagination and reason, and also certain further details with regard to the part played by the "agent intellect" in the formation of abstract ideas from concrete objects. But enough has been written to show that both Montessori's theory and practice fit in with what is permanent in rational psychology, as well as with the latest discoveries in the new.

—E. Mortimer Standing

## DAVID HUME: FLIGHT FROM ABSTRACTION

*David Hume is considered one of the greatest modern philosophers. He is to modern philosophy what St. Thomas is to the Scholastics—the mind that resolved all difficulties. Our secular universities teach Hume's philosophy extensively. Many of these centers of higher education require*

*students of philosophy to read Hume's Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding before launching into a formal philosophy course, to provide some sort of foundation for their future philosophical structure. Hume is an empiricist—the chief proponent of the doctrine that only sense knowledge is valid. Using as his point of departure the principle: nothing is known unless it is sensed, Hume developed a theory of knowledge and a theory of causality which brought him face to face with sheer scepticism.*

## I

David Hume was born in Scotland in 1711 and received an education comparable to the means allowed a person of his middle-class status. A journey to France as a youth brought him into direct contact with the school of rationalism which had held the continent captive for over a century. It was in France that he published his first work, *The Treatise on Human Nature*, at the age 27. He was, in succession, tutor to the Marquis of Annandale, and secretary of the military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. In 1752, he was appointed Librarian of Edinburgh, having already written a good part of his *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary; An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding; and An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. It was while at Edinburgh that he wrote and published *A History of England*, for which, ironically, he gained world renown. In 1763 he returned to Paris as secretary of the British Embassy there, but retired to Edinburgh three years later for the purpose of burying himself in a philosophical retreat. It was here that he died in 1776.

Understanding Hume's position in the history of thought necessitates a glance at preceding philosophical systems. In the thirteenth century scholastic philosophy reached the zenith of its achievement; yet as its greatest mind, St. Thomas Aquinas, lay dying, Scholasticism was on the wane. By the end of the sixteenth century, with the rise in influence of the physical sciences and the use of the vernacular as the tool of philosophical thought, the school had degenerated into almost unrecognizable confusion.

In disgust, men turned elsewhere to certify their knowledge. Just as scholastic philosophy was wedded to theology, the school of modern thought based itself on an order to science. And modern science takes its first bearing in this context from Galileo. It was from Galileo's doctrine of a duality of substance that Descartes founded the school of rationalism, which holds that true knowledge can be obtained only through certain absolute principles. Descartes moved from the world of the fluctuating and

the sensible and attempted to apply the methods of mathematics to all thought processes. Together with his two most important adherents, Spinoza and Leibniz, he forms the bulk-head against which the storms of empiricism would soon be unleashed and which would reach full violence and climax in David Hume.

Against this supremacy of reason, the English school rose up at once in defense of the discarded senses. They saw the world as one of natural bodies in motion and not of mathematical relationships. They saw too that we can only know through contact with this world and they set themselves to prove it.

The roots of English empiricism have their origin in Francis Bacon who agrees with Descartes in opposing the scholastic method. However, unlike Descartes, Bacon took the path diametrically opposed to that of the rationalists, preferring the experimental method which begins with observation of particular things and events.

Bacon's empirical stress on the necessity of sensible experiments had immediate effects. Thomas Hobbes, his close friend, was the first to launch an attack against the Cartesian dualism. Hobbes' neo-atomism, coupled with his theory of no existing universals, was to have a profound effect on Berkeley and ultimately on Hume.

It is John Locke who is generally regarded as the founder of *modern* empirical philosophy. But for all practical purposes, he should be considered as a "middle-of-the-road" empiricist. His primary purpose was to remove from men's minds the rationalistic premisses which retarded scientific progress, not to draw conclusions. His *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, upon which Hume launched an attack, inaugurated a new era of philosophical thought. And yet, Locke wanted very much to retain the notion that the empirical order is somehow grounded in true reason because he saw that both rational and empirical theories were necessary for an adequate theory of knowledge. Basically, Locke's doctrine holds that there are no innate principles of natural knowledge and that only science, using material sensation, can produce new knowledge in us. The Cartesian doctrine of innate ideas can in no way be established sufficiently to explain our knowledge of reality. All human knowledge springs from experience.

George Berkeley is the bridge between Hobbes and Locke and Hume, but Hume barely gives him a glance. Berkeley was vehemently opposed to the rationalist doctrine that mathematical concepts necessarily define an ultimate structure in nature. Although almost wholly influenced by the writings of Locke, Berkeley does not hesitate to criticize Locke for his ac-

ceptance of reason. It is reason and not the senses that deceives us, according to Berkeley.

Perhaps Berkeley's most important doctrine is his denial of universals. For him, universals cannot exist, since what the mind perceives is only the particular, individual thing. Knowledge for Berkeley is the process of observing right order among ideas rather than a penetration into something external. Berkeley, then, is a thorough-going subjectivist.

Two centuries have passed from Galileo and Bacon up to George Berkeley and two schools have sprung up, each striving to prove that its method of knowledge was the true method; each diametrically opposed to the other. The chief adherent of each sought to overcome the arguments of his contemporary adversary as is evident with Hobbes and Descartes and Locke and Spinoza. To Hume, then, is left the task of completing the empiricist experiment and of presenting an uncompromising antithesis to rationalism.

## II

In his philosophical works, Hume's first attempt is to reformulate the position of John Locke, by pushing Locke's empirical principles to their logical conclusions. Hume attempts to show that abstruse thought and profound researches are completely outside the scope of man's mind. He warns that one who tries to engage in such thought will be severely punished by a pensive melancholy which these thoughts introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve him, and, lastly, by the cold reception which his pretended discoveries shall receive. In a word, his message is: be a philosopher; but amidst all your philosophy, remember that you are only a man.

Hume tries to make clear the nature of the operations of the mind. He separates operations from one another, classes them under their proper headings, and corrects all the seeming disorder in which they lie involved. He hopes to free learning from abstract questions by inquiring seriously into the nature of human understanding. He shows, from an "exact" analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote subjects as metaphysics.

### A. Origin and Nature of Ideas

It will readily be admitted that there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of the mind when we *feel* the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of moderate warmth, and when we afterwards *recall* this sensation by memory or *anticipate* it by imagination. The actual sensation

here and now of the pain of excessive heat is always more forceful than merely recalling it. The faculties of memory and imagination may copy the perceptions of the senses, but these faculties can never entirely reach the force of the original sensation. The most we can say is that the memory and the imagination can represent their object so vividly that we could almost say we feel or see the object.

Should we examine all the other perceptions of the mind, we would find that the same is true. When a man is in an uncontrollable rage, he is actuated in a very different way from one who only thinks of that emotion.

It is evident from experience, therefore, that when we recall our past sensations and feelings, our thought is accurate and represents its objects truly; but the colors which the mind uses in so representing are faint and dull in comparison with those with which our original perceptions were painted.

Hume concludes from this that all the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds which are called *impressions* and *thoughts* or *ideas*. The difference between these impressions and ideas consists in the degree of force with which they strike the mind and make their way into our consciousness. Those perceptions which enter the mind with most force and vivacity, we call impressions. When we feel the pain of excessive heat, this sensation enters the mind with great force and is correctly called an impression. Likewise, when we hear a beautiful symphony, our minds are impressed by the force of this sensation. Impressions, therefore, refer to all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, when we see, when we feel, or love, or hate or will. Ideas are the faint images of these sensations in thinking and reasoning. Thus, when we afterwards recall the pain of excessive heat, we do not feel that sensation as clearly as when the sensation actually took place. Thoughts, therefore, are reflections on impressions, or copies of our impressions. Every thought, regardless how lively it may be, is always less vivid than the dullest sensation, and one need not be a metaphysician to distinguish between the two.

Having touched upon the origin of our thoughts, Hume now considers these thoughts as they are in themselves. He relates:

Nothing, at first view, may seem more unbounded than the thought of man, which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. . . . What never was seen, or heard of may yet be conceived; nor is anything beyond the power of thought. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Although these words seem to contradict Hume's fundamental principle concerning knowledge, namely, that nothing is known unless it is sensed, upon a closer scrutiny, we find that no contradiction is involved. However compounded our thoughts may be, we always find, upon analysis, that they resolve themselves into single thoughts which are copies of preceding sensations. Thus, we can conceive a pink elephant even though a pink elephant as such has never existed in nature. When we do this, we are only joining two consistent ideas, pink and elephant, with which we were formerly acquainted. For pink does exist in nature although not found in elephants. Likewise, elephants also exist in nature, but never pink ones.

What we have said about pink elephants is also true of our more complex thoughts. So, in the words of Hume:

The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. We may prosecute this inquiry to what length we please: where we shall always find, that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, God exists because our minds exist. For Hume, therefore, thought is confined within very narrow limits due to the fact that we are constantly dependent on the senses. What might be called the creative power of the mind is really nothing more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting or diminishing those materials given us by the senses. In other words, "all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones."<sup>3</sup>

Hume gives a rule which will show the validity of our knowledge: if an idea, or an intellectual perception, is derived as an exact similitude from some preceding sensitive impression, then we can accept that idea as genuine and authentic. Otherwise it must be rejected as untrue and illusory. He tells us that "when we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea, we need but inquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?* And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion."<sup>4</sup> Hence it would follow that an idea of some universal formality is completely without fundament in reality—it is a figment of our minds. Some philosophers speak of substance, first matter, and so forth. Hume says:

I would fain ask those philosophers, who found so much of their reasonings on



the distinction of substance and accident, and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the idea of *substance* be derived from the impressions of sensation or reflexion? If it be conveyed to us by our senses, I ask, which of them, and after what manner?<sup>5</sup>

In other words, Hume's question is: Can we feel substance or accident? Can we see or hear them? Or can we taste them or smell them? To all these questions we have to answer negatively. Such things, therefore, do not exist. From all this, then, Hume considered his first principle concerning knowledge as established; namely, everything in knowledge is to be rejected except what enters through the senses, for nothing is known except what is sensed.

### B. Association of Ideas

We may now consider the association of ideas. When the mind has received impressions, these impressions can reappear, as Hume puts it, either in the faculty of memory, or in the faculty of imagination. Memory preserves not only simple ideas but also their order and position. When we say, for example, that a person has a good memory of a football game, we mean that he recalls not only the various events taken singly, but also the order in which they occurred. The imagination, on the other hand, is not tied down in this way. For it can combine simple ideas arbitrarily or break down complex ideas into simple ideas and then rearrange them. (It might be interesting to note here that Hume attributes wisdom to the faculty of imagination, since this faculty is not restricted and can do with ideas anything it so pleases.) But though the imagination can freely combine ideas, it usually works according to general principles of association. These principles are three in number, namely, resemblance, contiguity in time or place, and cause and effect. So, for example, a picture of a friend naturally leads us to think about that person. This principle of association is resemblance. Likewise, the mention of one room in a building naturally introduces an inquiry concerning the other rooms. This is contiguity. Finally, if we think of a wound, we are naturally led to think of the pain which follows it. This is the principle of cause and effect, into which we shall inquire shortly.

Another problem of Hume's theory of knowledge is the discussion of the real significance of the so-called self. Hume tells us:

There are some philosophers [Descartes] who imagine we are every moment intimately

conscious of what we call our *self*; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity. . . . Unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience . . . nor have we any idea of *self*. . . . For from what impression could this idea be derived?<sup>6</sup>

Since the only valid knowledge is that which we receive through the senses, Hume insists we must deny the existence of self; for from what sense do we get this impression? The so-called self is nothing more than a mere collection of different perceptions which are in a perpetual flux and movement. Hume speaks here:

But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. . . . The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations.<sup>7</sup>

We find ourselves, then, knocking on the door of scepticism. Hume appreciated this and at times he was almost bewildered by the position in which he found himself; frequently, he was at a loss as to what to conclude or how to proceed.

### C. Theory of Causality

We find within us the inclination to attribute necessary connections between things that happen. We say that one thing causes another. But where do we get this idea? From what impression is it derived? When we look about us toward external objects and consider the operation of causes, we can never, in any single instance, discover any power of necessary connection, any quality which binds the cause to the effect and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We find only that one actually does, in fact, follow the other. When we lift a rose and smell it, the sweet odor which we experience we attribute to the flower, but this is merely due to custom. The sequence of the pleasant sensation from the closeness of the rose is all that we can really affirm. We note the antecedent, the rose, and the sequence, the sweet odor. Any link of causality between the two is not in the objects themselves, but in us, who because of custom or habit, read into the objects what is not really there. It is quite possible that the odor



we attribute to the rose might proceed from some other object. But our belief that the odor comes from the flower is due to the fact that we have had a vivid impression of the conjunction of the two things.

Frequent experience enables us, we think, to conclude that phenomena thus associated not only will, but must remain associated; and that there is more than mere sequence in the links of the chain, that is, that there is a necessary tie. The sole function, however, of any one phenomenon we may select is to suggest that it will be followed by another. Its use as an antecedent is that of being a sign that a consequent will come after it; and all that we can attain to—all that we reach in the course of our experience of the world—is the accumulation of a vast number of these signs which persuade us from the antecedent in due time to expect the consequent.

Hume admitted the possibility of objectively necessary connection but he warns that there is no authentication, that is, no sure knowledge of it. In any object striking the senses, we cannot discover the cause which gave rise to it, or the effect that will follow from it. All the senses can assure us is the conjunction of the one with the other; custom provides or rather persuades us to "project" a necessity of connection; the so-called "causal tie."

Hume did not deny that we do, as a matter of fact, attribute some kind of causality to the antecedent which produces the consequent. What he denied was that we have any philosophical justification for doing so:

So that, upon the whole, there appears not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connexion which is conceivable by us. All events seems entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we can never observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. . . . We can never, by our utmost scrutiny, discover anything but one object following another, without being able to comprehend any force or power by which the cause operates, or any connection between it and its supposed effect.<sup>8</sup>

The whole problem lay in finding a reason for the fact that, given any single phenomenon (a), another phenomenon (b) must of necessity follow it. Hume could discover no reason for the existing sequence of events except custom, and therefore, no reason for attributing effective causality to any single phenomenon except the accident of custom.

It is interesting to note that while Hume warns us against abstruse thought and profound researches as being conducive to nothing but melancholy and uncertainty, he himself was filled with melancholy and con-

founded with that forlorn solitude in which he was placed by his own philosophy:

Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what conditions shall I return? . . . What beings surround me? . . . I am confounded with all these questions, and fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, enveloped with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.<sup>9</sup>

### III

*Nothing is known except what is sensed.* To substantiate this most fundamental principle, Hume gives no explanation, no basis, no defence. He merely states it at the beginning and zealously follows it to its logical conclusions. When properly understood, this principle is true. Hume, however, gives it a meaning not acceptable to the Thomist. He distinguishes the knowing powers into sensitive and intellectual, but unlike Aristotle and St. Thomas, he attributes to the intellect the functions of the imagination and its creative part. We may note a verbal similarity between Hume's empiriological principle and the scholastic adage based on Aristotle that nothing is in the intellect except what is first in the senses. But the doctrinal difference overshadows the verbal likeness. Aristotle includes the existence of an intellect quite distinct from sense faculties. Consequently, he considers man as possessing a knowledge which Hume considers to be impossible. As Hume insists over and over, the only authentic cognitive activity in man is sensation, a memory of past sensations, and an ability to re-arrange the impressions of the past. This much, Aristotle and St. Thomas will agree is in all animals which have local motion—is this the best that can be said of man?

The question is, then, "Does man have an intellect?" According to Hume, the empiricist, we have sense knowledge and our senses are accurate or infallible. But when we examine the experience normally called intellectual knowing, Hume doffs the empiricist's robe, refusing to accept the "given" experience, explaining it away as illusion. Do we have any other knowledge than sensitive? Experience would incline the thorough-going empiricist to say "yes." Even Hume attests to this, by the fact that he feels obliged to explain it away. The real problem for the empirical-minded philosopher is not: do we know intellectually? but rather: how is intellectual knowledge explained? Aristotle takes up this very question, and considers the teachings of all his predecessors. Aristotle comes to a theory

of knowledge based on abstraction, the basis of which is that we do not know a thing in its entirety at once, but what we do know is actually part of the thing.

When he explains his own theory, Aristotle makes the point that our knowledge is abstractive, and proceeds to show the reasonableness of this view by an analogy to the senses. Just as the eye when it sees red in the apple does not in any way perceive the odor or the taste of the apple, and yet what it does perceive is truly a part of the apple; so, when all of the senses perceive their proper sense objects, although they perceive parts of the apple, they do not perceive what is not proper to them, as for example, causality. This perception is made by the intellect.

Aristotle, in company with most other philosophers, takes up the problem of those who think they know causes and properly intelligible things, and offers a reasonable explanation for the perception of things other than those which are properly sensible. Thus he is every bit as much an empiricist as Hume, and as a matter of fact more of one. For when Hume comes to the problem of those who think they know causes and substances and properly intelligible things, he does not explain what these perceptions are; rather, he completely abandons his empirical bent. Quite un-empirically, he tells us that in spite of the fact that we think we know a necessary connection, all we in fact know is a temporal sequence. Causality is a fiction; then, without the least embarrassment, he assigns the cause of this constant fiction: from frequent experience of the same thing, we get the notion that one must follow the other. Thus Hume stands in an extraordinary position: defiantly waving the banner of empiricism, totally committed to the experientially "given," he draws back from experience in the matter of causality, insisting that causality is a clever trick the mind plays. Then he exposes the fraud of causality by pin-pointing the hidden cause behind the delusion! Experience leads him away from experience; he resorts to causality to explain it away.

Aristotle, if he is to adhere to his empiricism, must then explain how he can have his sensitive knowledge, also have his intellectual knowledge, and still preserve the fundamental principle on which Hume trips. By such strict adherence to the necessity of sense knowledge, Aristotle seems to have opened a door only to be met by the waiting spectre of contradiction on the other side. For is it not part of his system that nothing is in the intellect except what is first in the senses? But Hume has pointed out the impossibility of sensing causality, substance and other such things. Where is the solution to this problem?

Aristotelianism is the system so famous for its universals. How do these force their way through the senses? Where is the Trojan horse which brings them through the walls of the senses? It is St. Thomas who analyzes Aristotle's teaching, and he very carefully explains that all our universals must, in a certain way, come to us through the senses, precisely because of the principle that nothing is in the intellect except what is first in the senses.

He explains this seeming contradiction in some detail in the *Posterior Analytics*. First he observes that there must be in us some knowing power which exists prior to the knowledge of the principles but which cannot have more certainty than the principles have. Next, he points out what this principle is. He calls to mind a fact from experience, that all animals have sensation as something natural to them, and not as something acquired. Moreover, some animals have, in addition to immediate perceptions, a memory of their past perceptions. But, even of these, there is a difference, because, of those with memory, some also have reasoning as well; while some do not. Now, when it comes to acquiring the knowledge of first principles, he reflects that from sensation, in those animals capable of retaining impressions, memory follows; and from the memory of the same thing repeated many times, we gain experience, since experience is nothing but the reception of something from many repeated sensations retained in the memory. Up to this point Hume will agree with St. Thomas. Reason does not properly consist in the experience of particulars, but, from the many particulars in which it has had experience, it takes some common thing, which is re-established in the soul. It considers that, without considering any of the singulars; and this common thing is the universal. Thus from experience, and from the universal acquired from experience, there is in the soul that which is the beginning of art and science. The universal is said to be in the soul insofar as it is considered as one aspect separated from the particulars. It is one related to many, not according to existence, but according to the consideration of the intellect, which considers some particular nature, e.g., man, while not considering the individuals, e.g., Ed or Harry. In singular things, it is one according to its species, but not according to its number. If the universal is taken as it relates to generating or making, it is obviously a principle of art; but if it is taken according to something which is always the same, it pertains to science. Thus, the habit of principles does not pre-exist in us as something determined and complete; nor is it generated from anything more known which exists prior to the habit; the habit of principles is generated in us according as it

pre-exists in the senses. Then, he repeats his point by example. In a military battle, one side is routing the other; but one soldier of the losing side courageously determines to take a stand and fight back; soon, one of his comrades joins him; and then another; and another; and another; and then the tide of battle begins to turn, at least to the extent that it is no longer a rout, but there is positive resistance. So, from one sensation and the memory of it; and from another; and from another; finally the addition and repetition builds up to the point where the intellect perceives a common note, the universal, or one of the principles of art or science.

Since we receive the knowledge of universals from singulars, St. Thomas concludes that the first universal principles must be known by induction, i.e., by way of induction the sense makes the universal in the soul, insofar as all singulars are considered.

To return to Hume: when he comes to the consideration of substance, he asks whether the idea of substance is derived from the impressions of sensation or reflection. If we answer "by the senses," he asks by which one. Since we must admit that no sense knows substance, he concludes that it must be derived from an impression of reflection:

But the impressions of reflection resolve themselves into our passions and emotions; none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have therefore no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it.<sup>10</sup>

Here again, Aristotle is on hand to answer this difficulty, for he attacked the same problem twenty centuries before. Is there a substance? Where is it? Is it in things, or is it someplace separate? Here, as in his explanation of the process of knowing, he does not prove his teaching that substance is in things by means of a demonstration. Rather he proceeds dialectically to point out the reasonableness of his position, and the absurdities which follow from the acceptance of other views. When the very first principles of knowing or being are questioned or challenged, i.e., the principles on which all defence and proof rest, there is nothing prior to them by which they in turn can be proven; all we can do is simply point to what is obvious, and then indicate the insufficiencies of other explanations, thus defining the difficulties and offering a solution which will reasonably explain the problem.

In summary, much of what Hume advocates in the positive line, especially what he offers in opposition to the rationalists is true and quite in

conformity with Aristotelian-Thomistic teaching. However, there are certain fundamental points which must be corrected and the first of these is his most basic principle that the only knowledge is sense knowledge. If this be taken as the only means we have of contacting things in their singularity, this is true; if, on the other hand, it is taken absolutely, without qualification, in such a way that there is no other knowledge, we must deny the principle for the reasons given above. Another point is his notion of substance: we would agree with him when he says we can only come to a knowledge of substance through the senses, for there is nothing in the intellect except what is first in the senses; but this is merely part of the picture; the intellect by abstraction goes further, as we have seen. In denying this, Hume errs by default. Finally, his notion of causality is entirely wrong. The only cause he considered was the efficient cause, and here his notion involves no necessity, but only the temporal sequence.

When we consider the milieu in which he wrote, we can certainly say that Hume brought men back to their senses, but there is such an emphasis on the senses, that all other knowledge is destroyed. Not only that, but when intellectual knowledge is destroyed, the whole basis for knowledge about science, ethics, a reasonable religion, God and a whole score of others is lost as well. Obviously, the consequences of his first principle are of tremendous import; much more so than appears at first glance. Just as so many of the sailors in Virgil's epic, so Hume in his attempt to avoid the Scylla of the rationalists veered far enough off course so as to find himself caught in the Charybdis of extreme empiricism bringing himself and his philosophy to shipwreck.

When Hume finishes his philosophical solo, he ends on a very blue note: "To be a philosophical sceptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian."<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, with a proper understanding of the role of the senses in the process of knowing, and a proper application of the principles involved, we come, with Aristotle and St. Thomas, to the end of their highest rational science, and with them we conclude:

that the whole universe is as one dominion and one kingdom. And thus it is necessary that it be directed by one governor. And this is the conclusion, that there is one ruler of the whole universe, namely, the first mover, and the first intelligible being, and the first good, which was earlier called God, who is blessed forever and ever. Amen.<sup>12</sup>

—Christopher Lozier, O.P.



<sup>1</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Gateway Editions, Inc., 1956), Sect. II, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Everyman's Library No. 548, ed. Ernest Rhys (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1939), Vol. I, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> William Knight, *Hume* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1886), p. 131.

<sup>10</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), Bk. I, Pt. I, Sect. VI.

<sup>11</sup> David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Henry D. Aiken (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1957), Pt. XII, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentaria in Methaphysicam Aristotelis* (Taurini: Marietti, 1926), Bk. XII, lect. 12, No. 2663.

## THE LOVE OF GOD

Humility, the general attitude of complete submissiveness before God, arises from self-knowledge. St. Bernard had in fact defined humility in these terms a century before St. Thomas. [Humility is that virtue by which a man estimates himself as insignificant as a result of a truly accurate knowledge of himself.] . . . If the knowledge of God and of ourselves given us by revelation, instead of remaining theoretical and sterile, truly determined our actions and outlook on life we could not fail to be humble. It has been pointed out that humility is a specifically Christian virtue, of which the pagans seem to have had little idea. For them "humble" . . . was synonymous with "low," "vile," "abject," "servile," and "ignoble." The revealed dogmas of creation *ex nihilo* and of the necessity of divine grace for every salutary act provide, so to say, the ontological foundations for humility. That we were produced from nothing by God; that He preserves us at every moment, by His positive act of conservation, from falling back into the original nothingness from which we came; that further we cannot make the slightest movements toward our salvation without His efficacious help are facts so all-embracing in their significance as not to fall within the category of any virtue. These are the truths which dominate the *Summa*