

be admitted, and much more so, the influence on the intellectual milieu of our time.<sup>1</sup>

I would like to suggest a reason for this situation and, in doing so, to suggest a remedy. To me, the basic need in our teaching and writing on ethics is a new focus more in accord with the need of our time—and, I am convinced, of all times, because it gives the fullest insight into moral reality.

What, then, is the present focus in Scholastic ethics? If I am not mistaken, the general focus can be expressed by the following questions. In what does my end consist? That is, what will fulfill me? What is the most I can demand as a right from others? And what is the least I am required to render to others, whether it be owed to the individual or to the common good? Put in a universal manner, in what does man's fulfillment as a being capable of thought consist? What is the minimum of obligation which each has to the others and they to him, so that each may be enabled to seek his own fulfillment? This approach is referred to as the "rights-and-duties" approach. And it is, of course, valid and useful as far as it goes. We cannot do without these considerations in ethical theory.

Some make what is an important advance over this approach. Without eliminating what is valid in this latter, they focus more on the ideal of moral development, on virtue, on the heights of moral achievement, rather than on minimal obligation. However, while allowing for a more complete and more effective ethics than the former, even this focus, in practice if not in theory, fails to make clear what, as Christian philosophers,<sup>2</sup> we ought to see is obviously the heart and soul of moral greatness, and as men sensitive to our times, we ought to see is a conscious and intense need of our world, a need which is also a call.

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<sup>1</sup> These remarks are not made with the intention of adding another voice to that chorus of those who criticize Catholic universities for their lack of scholarship. In the matter under discussion our failure is certainly less than that of the secular schools. And this is one deficiency that can be remedied without a great addition to present financial resources—which cannot be said of scholarly production on any notable scale.

<sup>2</sup> This term, "Christian philosopher," because of its close relationship with the term, "Christian philosophy," could be a cause of misunderstanding and debate and might better be avoided if there were a convenient substitute. I do not wish to take any position here on the legitimacy of the term "Christian philosophy." But certainly there can be no question about whether or not there are Christians who philosophize, and I see no reason for avoiding the term "Christian philosopher" any more than for avoiding the term "Christian lawyer," "doctor," "bricklayer" or "carpenter."