Religion

SAMPLER

INCLUDING

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WILEY Blackwell

Chapter 2

Julian's Theology

Why should Julian be considered as a theologian rather than simply as a spiritual writer or as a "mystic"? The famous mid-twentieth century monastic writer Thomas Merton was clear that Julian of Norwich was not only the greatest of the fourteenth-century English mystics but was also, in his judgment, one of the greatest English theologians of all times.[1] Scholars nowadays acknowledge that Julian's texts are neither solely a record of her mystical visionary experiences nor essentially devotional in tone and purpose. Rather, particularly in her Long Text, Julian offers substantial, innovative, and important theological reflections aimed at teaching a wide audience of her fellow Christians.

Apart from developing my judgment that Julian is to be considered as an important theological writer, in this chapter I also wish to underline the difference between exploring theological themes provoked by reading Julian and offering a study of Julian's own theology. The purpose of this book is to do the latter. My aim, in a positive sense, is to provide a critical study of the range of Julian's theology rather than a purely descriptive survey. What is the nature of Julian's theology, its genre, purpose, and projected audience? The questions of purpose and intended audience are central to this issue.

In her book of essays *The Kindness of God*, Cambridge theologian Janet Martin Soskice notes that, in the continuing popular enthusiasm for Julian as a great mystical writer, the importance of her text as a work of theology is frequently underplayed or even entirely overlooked. This suggests that many people are instinctively reacting against a widespread perception that theology is simply "sclerotic pronouncements."[2] Soskice also implicitly outlines the difference between Julian and classic systematic or philosophical theology. Julian's style may appear to be "rambling" but it is deliberately so. Indeed, Soskice prefers the term "recursive." The point is that Julian's writing in her Long Text is not meant to be a logical, architectonic exposition of doctrine. Rather she seeks to draw the reader into the text and its purpose in such a way as to make the reader a "fellow traveller into the mystery of the love of God."[3]

Julian of Norwich: "In God's Sight" – Her Theology in Context, First Edition. Philip Sheldrake.

The Forms of Medieval Theology

During the Western European Middle Ages, there were broadly three major styles of theology. First there was scholastic theology, or the theology "of the schools" (that is, the new universities) of which arguably the best-known exponent is Thomas Aquinas.[4] This drew a great deal upon classical philosophy and on philosophical categories more broadly and was tightly structured in a similar way to contemporary styles of systematic theology. The scholastic style of theology, as a method of learning, placed a strong emphasis on philosophical reasoning. Its conceptual analysis was rigorous and dialectical with a careful use of distinctions. The pedagogical process classically involved what was known as "disputation" through a logical sequence of questions and speculative debate leading to a final conclusion. In contemporary terms, systematic theology is also an orderly, rational, and highly structured exposition of Christian doctrines often drawing upon philosophical method as well as on scripture and history. No contemporary scholars interpret Julian in these terms.

The second Western medieval theological style was what is known as monastic theology. "Monastic" refers both to the setting within which this theological reflection took place and to its particular approach or method. Monastic theology arose from an inner contemplative life within a monastic setting and the spiritual practices or ascetic disciplines that nurtured the contemplation of God. Monastic theologians existed within the lifestyle of monasteries where their theology was rooted in an experience of the rhythm of worship and daily meditative reading of scripture and reflection upon scripture, known as *lectio divina*. Monastic theology was therefore based primarily on a meditative approach to scripture so that its method was not one of detached, objective speculation but of committed participation.[5] One or two scholars have suggested that Julian partly fits into this theological category. However, as I shall explain briefly in a moment, I seriously question this understanding of Julian.

The third approach to theology, inherited originally from the Patristic period and developed further in the Middle Ages, is known as mystical theology. As I will suggest, I believe that this is one of the most important categories for understanding the basis of Julian's theology and her theological style.

Julian's Theological Style

If we describe Julian's writing as theological, a central question concerns the genre of theology that we are dealing with and the degree to which Julian explicitly draws upon earlier theological sources. Judgments about these questions vary.

In their ground-breaking 1978 two-volume critical edition of Julian's texts, the scholars Edmund Colledge and James Walsh were convinced that, first, Julian not only extensively cited or alluded to large numbers of scriptural passages but also showed evidence of having made her own translations from the Latin Vulgate (thus indicating a good grounding in Latin). In their second volume, they offer an extensive list of scriptural citations. They also suggested that Julian knew the theology of Augustine and Gregory the Great well and was explicitly influenced by William of St Thierry's *The Golden Epistle* and more generally by Cistercian writings.[6] Other contemporary scholars are more cautious about Julian's direct scriptural or theological sources. However, to be fair, in the description of her visit to Julian for spiritual counsel, Margery Kempe does suggest that Julian referred to biblical texts and alluded to St Jerome and St Bernard on the gift of tears.[7]

In more recent studies of Julian's theology since the days of Colledge and Walsh, opinions about her theology and her possible sources vary. Here I will summarize five important contributions. First, in the Preface and Introduction to their relatively recent scholarly edition of Julian's writings, Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins describe Julian as one of the greatest "speculative" theologians of the Middle Ages. In their judgment, Julian (not least in her exemplum of a Lord and a Servant) radically rethinks the nature of sin and goodness in "speculative leaps." In their words, Julian offers "an unprecedented speculative vernacular theology." I will discuss the important category of vernacular theology later in this chapter. However, I believe that we need to be careful about how we use the word "speculative" in relation to Julian's theology. The notion of speculative theology has frequently been employed to describe a theological style founded upon metaphysical philosophy. It seems pretty clear that Julian's somewhat meandering approach does not correspond to the philosophically influenced, analytically precise, and dialectical approach of medieval scholastic theology. However, my sense is that by using the word "speculative," Watson and Jenkins are not reflecting this technical definition. Rather, they are actually implying that Julian's theological style is an imaginative and highly original rereading of the nature of God, the created order, human identity, and how God interacts with humanity.[8]

In her illuminating study of Julian's theology, Joan Nuth describes it as womanly, synthetic, sensitive to pastoral needs, and based on life rather than on abstract thought. In other words, Julian's theology is not in the style of medieval scholastic theology based on formal questions and disputations. Rather, the foundation of Julian's theology is essentially intense and careful reflection over many years on her spiritual experiences. Nuth describes this as a theology of integration in which Julian's experience of God in the midst of her sickness and suffering, sophisticated reflection,

and a trajectory of pastoral concern are brought together. Nuth also judges that Julian wrote a style of monastic theology in which scriptural reflection and resulting spiritual insight are the core. I have questions about this judgment because she does not base her theological reflections explicitly on the monastic style of meditative scriptural exegesis. Nor, as we have already noted, does Julian make any other references to monastic values or to a monastic lifestyle. Nuth suggests that Julian's theology may be tentatively described as "systematic" in the broad sense that Julian focuses on the chief Christian doctrines and has an original theological system, involving rigorous speculation. However, it is certainly not systematic in contemporary terms because it does not have a predominantly philosophical basis. Nuth believes that Julian had a thorough grasp of key aspects of Augustine's theology although this does not necessarily mean that she had direct access to Augustine's writings or had read them. I agree with both aspects of this judgment.[9]

In another important study of Julian and her writings, the late Grace Jantzen notes that no aspect of Julian's theology is divorced from her original vision of the crucified Christ (the First Revelation) that she experienced while on her sickbed. Jantzen is clear that everything else about Julian's teachings is based on this central theme of Christ's Passion. I will return to this insight later. Like Nuth, Jantzen judges that Julian does not employ the medieval scholastic theological method. Rather, hers is an "integrated theology" that brings her religious experiences, the concerns of daily life, and theological reflection together into an integrated whole. The organizing thread, developed from her vision of the Passion, is that love is God's meaning. The essential link to the cross means that Julian's understanding of love is not sentimental but robust and gritty. Julian's Long Text understands theological doctrines in the context of three criteria. The first of these is natural reasoning ("in my sight"). Then there is what is commonly taught by the Church ("Holy Church teaches"). Finally, there is the inward – and challenging – operation of God's Spirit within Julian's process of understanding. For Julian, the intellect is never separated from love. Reason is natural in the sense of being part of our nature but this is not contrasted with "the spiritual," which is also a dimension of our nature, grounded in God. Finally, Jantzen describes Julian's theology as practical theology in the sense of placing a clear emphasis on practicality.[10]

In his more recent book of theological and philosophical reflections provoked by reading Julian, Denys Turner agrees with Nuth and Jantzen that Julian's approach is very different from the medieval scholastic method of *quaestio* and *disputatio*. However, he also suggests that Julian's method is unlike monastic theology, whose starting point and method are explicitly scriptural, based on *lectio divina* which embraces meditative

"rumination" upon scripture. In contrast, Julian's theological reflections are "a process of progressive intensification and complex elaboration of particular and personal experience."[11] Turner also underlines that Julian's theology is intentionally incomplete because, theologically speaking, only the eschatological vision can "complete" our understanding of God.[12] This incompleteness is a subject to which I shall return at the end of this book. Finally, Turner interestingly describes Julian as an "anchoritic theologian." That is, her theology is inextricably linked to a place of unlikeness or exile. In that sense it is liminal theology conceived on a boundary or a "between place." Of course, this notion depends on believing that Julian's Long Text was not completed before she became an anchoress. Unfortunately Turner does not substantially discuss Julian in relation to her historical context and so this issue is not addressed. As with everything else about Julian we have no certainty about the date when she entered the anchorhold. The earliest evidence of her status as an anchoress is in a will dating to 1393–4. However, the contemporary scholarly consensus is that, whether or not she began the first draft of the Long Text before entering the anchorhold, Julian's text probably went through several revisions and developments and may not have been completed until the second decade of the fifteenth century. On this basis, Turner's description of Julian as "anchoritic theologian" seems reasonable and illuminating.[13]

Bernard McGinn, in the fifth volume of his major project on the history of Western Christian mysticism, is clear that Julian of Norwich is deeply theological.[14] He highlights her remarkable theology of the Trinity, her distinctive theodicy, a soteriology that undercuts "satisfaction" models of redemption, and a nuanced understanding of our union with God ("oneing" in Julian's language). This union originates in humanity's eternal existence in God and human destiny is the completion of this "oneing" by enjoying endless bliss. Denys Turner also gives a great deal of attention to Julian's theodicy. Personally, I have some questions about using the term "theodicy" in its classic sense in relation to Julian. I believe it can be misleading. I will explain this further in Chapter 5, Love is God's Meaning, where I will discuss Julian's creative theology of the Trinity and her Christology. McGinn is cautious about the designation "systematic" in relation to Julian's theology, although this depends on how we define "systematic." He is certainly clear that she does not write medieval scholastic theology and he also does not believe that Julian writes monastic theology because she does not present her teaching as meditative exegesis of scripture. Rather, McGinn sees Julian's theology as "relational" in the sense of holistic. He also makes reference to Jantzen's description of Julian's "integrated theology." Each aspect of her thought interlocks with and implies the others. Clearly, McGinn understands Julian's theology as

mystical. He also describes it as vernacular theology in the fullest sense – that is, not only written in the English vernacular but also addressed to an everyday audience. Indeed, it is the earliest significant theological text in Middle English rather than in Latin. However, it is also addressed to, and focused upon, the needs of a "vernacular" (that is, everyday) audience of spiritually minded literate Christians rather than at professional theologians, clergy, or monastics.

Finally, in his 2014 Julian Lecture given in Norwich, the theologian and former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, interestingly refers to Julian's "anti-theology." That is, Julian's theology is intended to lead the reader into contemplative theological awareness rather than focus on abstract theological formulae or argumentation. Williams is not suggesting that Julian is essentially a devotional writer or that she is uninterested in Christian doctrines. Rather, her deeply reflective "anti-theology" counters what Williams refers to as "unthinking theology." That approach suggests that the purpose of theology is essentially to establish straight-forward "answers." However, in contrast, the foundations of Julian's theological reflections are "revelations." These imply that "we have been impelled by the act of God into this unfolding process of reflection and growth."[15]

In terms of my own interpretation of Julian's theological style, I agree with other scholars that Julian was neither a scholastic theologian nor a monastic theologian. Rather, I believe that it is more useful to think of Julian's theology in three other important ways. First, it is mystical theology in the classic sense. Second, it is vernacular theology that is symptomatic of an emerging "age of the vernacular." This notion has a number of dimensions which I will explain further. Finally, in describing Julian's theological style we need to give prominence to Julian's own stated purpose in relation to her urgent and transformative theological message. In this context, Julian's theological method should also be considered as a form of practical-pastoral theology, no doubt responding, albeit implicitly, to the complex cultural, social, and religious realities of her immediate audience.

However, before briefly exploring these categories, it is important to underline that Julian's theology was thoroughly embedded in scripture.

Scriptural Sources

Scripture is part of the very texture of Julian's thinking. In her description of a visit to Julian for spiritual counsel, Margery Kempe notes that Julian cited the scriptures. As Julian herself says in the Long Text, chapter 32, "Our faith is founded on God's word." Julian does not simply refer to biblical characters or to scriptural anecdotes, for example David, Mary Magdalen, Peter and

Paul, and the apostle Thomas (chapter 38). Many of these could have come from listening to popular preaching or from the religious art with which Julian was familiar. There are also occasional quotations. For example in chapter 15 she says "And in the time of joy I could have said with St Paul: Nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ; and in the pain I could have said with St Peter: Lord save me, I am perishing."

At other moments, Julian embeds scriptural phraseology or allusions in her texts in an apparently seamless way. A particularly rich example is her exemplum known as the parable of a Lord and a Servant (chapter 51). Clearly her reference to the story of Adam and the Fall echoes the Book of Genesis, chapter 3. The figure of the servant is both rich and ambiguous. The image of falling into a ditch and being wounded immediately suggests the story of Adam. However, the image of the servant as beloved and chosen also seems to echo the servant songs and image of a "suffering servant" in the Book of Isaiah, especially the chapters now known as Deutero-Isaiah. For example, there is "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights" (Isaiah 42, 1–7). There is also the ambiguity and pain of being Yahweh's servant in Isaiah 49, 1–7. The servant was "a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity" yet will "be exalted and lifted up" (see Isaiah 52, 13 to Isaiah 53, 12). The "man of sorrow" in 53, 3 echoes the experience of Julian's servant but also points to the connection in the Christian mind between Isaiah's suffering servant and the person of Christ, God's servant who must suffer and be rejected (Gospel of Luke 9, 22). It is now thought by scholars that Julian's chapter 51 may have significant Pauline echoes. The willingness of the servant to leave himself aside to do the will of his lord may be an allusion to the kenotic hymn in Philippians 2 where Christ Jesus, though at one with God, the Lord ("in the form of God," verse 6), emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. This fits with the fact that in chapter 51 Julian's servant is shown to be both Adam and Christ. There also seem to be a number of allusions to the Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 5 and to 1 Corinthians, chapter 12 and to Christ as the head of the body and Christians as his members. More controversially, the inability of the servant in the ditch to see the lord who has followed him or to feel the lord's continuing love may be an echo of Jesus Christ on the cross crying "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" (Gospel of Matthew 27, 46 and Gospel of Mark 15, 34).

Mystical Theology

If we are to describe Julian's theology as mystical, what exactly does this imply? The eminent Belgian Catholic philosopher, Louis Dupré, who developed an interest in what might be called a mystical experience of

"the self," suggested that "The mystics start their spiritual journey from within, and that is the only place where the believer *must* begin, whether he wants to or not."[16] As we shall see in a later chapter, this inwardness does not compromise the essence of Christian theological anthropology, which involves self-giving rather than self-focused interiority. This inwardness is also radically open to a mysterious God who draws human beings into the unknown. What Dupré critiqued is the failure of conventional theology to be touched by the reality of God rather than limiting itself to abstract and systematic attempts to analyse God's nature. In that sense, Dupré's "from within" is not self-preoccupation but implies the courage actually to encounter God and to be radically changed by this encounter. What is conventionally termed "mystical theology" is an alternative (and subversive) approach to theological reflection based not simply on intellectual thought but also on the vulnerable practice of contemplation. This means taking seriously the witness of those theological thinkers like Julian of Norwich who in their engagement with the immediacy of God risk the experience of "rupture"; that is, in the words of Bernard McGinn, the "surprise and amazement that opens up new possibilities in spiritual experience."[17]

Julian's rich theological reflection is founded upon her deep mystical-visionary experience and, according to her own testimony, intense on-going spiritual reflection over a period of many years. This led Julian to a transformed perception of God, and of God's relationship with humanity. Without her deep encounter with God, and the sense that she had been "shown" vitally important insights through that encounter, Julian would not have been inspired to write theology at all.

From its patristic origins, not least in the central figure of the anonymous sixth-century theologian known as Pseudo-Dionysius, mystical theology has consistently sought a different approach to theological reflection from one founded purely upon analytical-philosophical ways of thinking.[18] This is partly a process, as with Julian, of engaging the process of theology with a lived experience of God and with the on-going practice of the Christian life including exposure to the scriptures, participation in the liturgy and sacraments, and through belonging to "the fellowship of the mystery"; that is, the Church. The very heart of all theology was mystical. "Doctrinal theology" arose from this basis rather than from speculative reasoning in isolation.[19]

From the patristic period until the development of the so-called "new theology" of scholasticism around the twelfth century, theology was a single unified enterprise. By unified I do not simply mean that there was an absence of the later distinctions between theological disciplines, such as doctrine, moral theology (ethics), Church history, sacramental theology, and so on. Rather, the unity of theology overall implied that

intellectual reflection or speculation, the practice of contemplation, living the Christian life, and pastoral practice were ideally a seamless whole. Critically, to be "a theologian" meant that a person (for example, Julian of Norwich) had contemplated the mystery of God and had an experience of faith and practice (especially exposure to scripture and participation in the liturgy) on which to reflect. Knowledge of divine things was inseparable from the love of God, deepened in prayer. For Augustine, for example in his *De Trinitate*, Books XII–XIV, God is known not by *scientia* (analytical knowledge) but by *sapientia* (a contemplative knowledge of love and desire). This approach to theology is richly illustrated in the writings of Julian.

It is important to underline that the notion of "mysticism" as a distinctive reality based on purely subjective experience is not overtly present in patristic and medieval contexts, including Julian. The French Jesuit interdisciplinary scholar and important historian of Christian mysticism, Michel de Certeau, can be credited with establishing that such a distinct category associated with subjective religious experience, largely detached from the wider Christian life and from Church teaching, originated only in the later sixteenth century and the seventeenth century. It was associated with the major religious, social, and cultural changes of the time.[20]

Julian of Norwich is a mystical theologian in the sense that her theology expresses an *intelligentia amoris*, a knowledge born of loving God and experiencing the love of God. Julian's theological journey depends on her pursuit of a deeply contemplative Christian life which led at some stage to her becoming a solitary or anchoress. The starting point of Julian's theology, as with so much medieval mystical writing, is her experience of God in the midst of sickness and suffering and her sense that the essential icon of God is the figure of the suffering Jesus on the Cross.

As a consequence, Julian's mystical theology maintains an ambiguous balance of a theology of "knowing" ("positive" or kataphatic theology) and a theology of "unknowing" ("negative" or apophatic theology) both in relation to the transcendent mystery of God-as-Trinity and in relation to the core of human identity which is irrevocably united with God. These themes will be developed further in later chapters.

Vernacular Theology

The historical context within which Julian of Norwich wrote her texts is often described as "the age of the vernacular." This was a century when, as I noted in the previous chapter, there was a gradual shift from writing literature only in Latin or Norman-French to using Middle English as a literary language rather than simply the spoken language of the lower social

classes. It was also a time when there was a growing interest in religious ideas and greater access to the bible and other religious literature among an increasingly literate laity, particularly the new merchant classes in the expanding world of commercial towns and cities like Norwich.

However, Julian may be described as a vernacular theologian not simply because she used Middle English prose rather than Latin but also because her vision and projected audience is democratic rather than limited to a spiritual or theological elite. In her own words, "In all this I was greatly moved in love towards my fellow Christians ['mine evenchristen'], that they might all see and know the same as I saw, for I wished it to be a comfort to them, for all this vision was shown for all men" (chapter 8).

The phrase "fellow Christians" or "my fellow Christians" appears regularly throughout Julian's text. The first mention of this key word is at the end of chapter 6 where Julian underlines that the lesson of God's tender love for us is the foundation of everything that was revealed to her. Her teaching addressed to everyone is that this knowledge should provoke "the soul" – that is, each human being – to be less self-preoccupied and to be filled with love for its fellow Christians. In chapter 8 Julian is very clear that her intention in writing is that all her fellow Christians "might see and know the same as I saw" and that "everything that I say about me I mean to apply to all my fellow Christians."

This additional dimension of the concept of "vernacular" is defined by Denys Turner as "demotic" theology – that is, non-formulaic, non-hierarchical in tone, and in a language intelligible to ordinary people.[21] This demotic style is underlined by Julian's frequent use of everyday images. Thus, in chapter 6 (as it appears in the Paris manuscript) God's providential care is shown even in the physical provision in the human body of a means of expelling food waste; in other words, defecation. Her vision of the copious bleeding of Jesus in chapter 7 is compared to the drops of water that fall from the eaves of a house during rain showers and also to the herring scales that would have been familiar to people living in a fishing port such as Norwich. The following chapter 8 echoes the imagery of chapter 5 in suggesting that all that is made is "little" when compared to God. Yet Julian also firmly underlines that the world that we know and all creation is beautiful and good. Again, perhaps echoing the familiar experience of the fishermen and other sailors of the port of Norwich, chapter 10 uses the imagery of being in the depths of the sea. Whatever its origins, this imagery was intended by Julian as a way of reassuring people that wherever they are, God is continually with them and they are wholly safe. The imagery of "bountiful waters" on the earth is also used in chapter 12 as a reminder of God's care. A final example is the use of the word "poynte" or "pointe" in chapter 11: "I saw God in

a pointe." While Colledge and Walsh translate this as "an instant of time," it seems clear from the wider context of the chapter that this is a spatial image. As Julian herself comments, "by which sight I saw that he is in al thing." God is present in everything, however small it may be. God is the "within" of all things. This develops Julian's vision of existence first stated in chapter 1. God "has made everything that is…," "He does and brings about all that is done." As noted in the previous chapter, in her practical commentary on Julian of Norwich, Ritamary Bradley also suggested that Julian may have been thinking of needle-point or lace-point. The metaphor of "a pointe" would then suggest God's presence in even the smallest stitch that goes towards making up the final pattern of the cloth.[22]

Pastoral Theology

Finally, in describing Julian's theological style we need to give prominence to Julian's own stated purpose in relation to her urgent and transformative theological message. In this context, Julian's theological method should also be considered as a form of practical-pastoral theology, responding to the needs of her readers in their cultural, social, and religious contexts. Julian's vernacular theology has a clear pastoral purpose. In broad terms, its goal is to underline for her readers, all her "fellow Christians," a new understanding of human living in the everyday world as well as a revolutionary understanding of the nature of God and how God engages with this world, particularly through Christ. Her initial vision is of the Passion: God in Christ suffering for all humanity on the cross. However, later in her text she develops the rich imagery of Christ as Mother. The interrelated Christological and Trinitarian dimensions of this theology will be developed more substantially in Chapter 4, Love is God's Meaning.

The foundation of Julian's pastoral theology is her explanation of the work of Christ our Mother. The work of Christ our Mother is developed particularly in Long Text chapters 60, 61, and 63. All this was added to Julian's writings after she was led to understand the meaning of the exemplum of a Lord and a Servant which became chapter 51 of the Long Text. Essentially, the theme of motherhood expresses the essence of Christ's action for humankind. That is, it expresses why he took on human nature in the Incarnation, and also the "economy" of redemption. In chapter 60 Christ's motherhood is described in terms of mercy and grace.

> Our Great God…..arrayed and prepared himself in this humble place [Mary's womb], all ready in our poor flesh, himself to do the service and the office of motherhood in everything.

Equally important:

> The mother's service is nearest, readiest and surest…. No one ever might or could perform this office fully, except only him.

In general, Mother Jesus' love for humans is compared to the tenderness and compassion that a human mother has towards her child.

Also in chapter 60, Julian compares the nourishment of the human soul through the Eucharist to the nurturing function of motherhood. Mother Jesus feeds us (as a human mother suckles her child) with the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist. A mother also lays her child tenderly on her breast while Mother Jesus opens up his wounded side to draw us in. Overall, Julian compares Jesus's suffering in the Passion with the pains of childbirth. In this selfless act, Mother Jesus had "born us for bliss."

Yet in chapter 61, a mother may sometimes suffer a child to fall for its own learning and benefit. Yet Mother Jesus never suffers "any kind of peril to come to her child." Equally, Mother Jesus "may never suffer us who are his children to perish." Mother Jesus wants us to act like children with a human mother: running to him in need and calling for help.

In chapter 63, the idea of Christ our Mother taking on human fleshliness and giving of himself is compared to the human mother giving of her bodily self to the fetus in the womb. Overall, the "office" of Mother Jesus is to ease us and to save us.

By way of conclusion, I think that it is important to underline that, as Grace Jantzen suggests, we may describe Julian's theology as "practical" in that there is a clear emphasis on the practicalities of human life. However, in her writings Julian does not fall into the trap of seeking to be simplistically "relevant."

The Heart of Julian's Theology

What is the heart of Julian's theology? Classic approaches to what may be called "doctrinal theology" are not really present in Julian in any organized sense. In terms of the dimensions of theology on which Julian reflects, she explores profoundly the nature of God-as-Trinity but in ways that are founded upon her Christology at the heart of which lies her visions of Christ's suffering on the cross. Other important themes are those of sin and salvation, her theology of human identity (theological anthropology), and her distinctly non-apocalyptic eschatology. While Church and sacraments are mentioned, these themes are not developed at length. Ecclesiology is only important to Julian in relation to the authority of Holy Church and its teachings in the light of Julian's

challenging visions and alternative insights. She battles away with the tension between orthodoxy (what "Holy Church" teaches) and what she believes she has been led to see by God. Notable examples are her reflections in the Long Text chapters 9 and 10. Thus in chapter 9 she affirms that "I am sure that there are many who never had revelations or visions, but only the common teaching of Holy Church, who love God better than I." And again, "in everything I believe as Holy Church preaches and teaches." Julian does not deal with Church organization, hierarchical order, or sacramental theology in any technical sense. However, there is an extensive consideration in the Fourteenth Revelation of the nature of prayer as a relationship with God, but with no mention of actual spiritual practices.

The Centrality of Christ's Passion

In my judgment, in terms of describing the heart of Julian's theology there are three vital keys. First of all, Julian's initial visionary experience of Jesus' suffering and Passion is the provocation for her theological reflections and for everything that she subsequently writes. Towards the beginning of her Long Text (chapter 3), Julian describes how she lay gravely ill and apparently dying aged thirty and a half. Her local priest was sent for and he brought a crucifix to place by her bed in order to comfort her. This led her to be filled with a recollection of the Passion. In chapter 4, she describes seeing blood running from under the crown of thorns, "hot and flowing freely and copiously, a living stream." Yet, she says, suddenly the Trinity "filled my heart full of the greatest joy." This leads her to affirm the Trinitarian nature of God as our lover, joy, and bliss. Here is the first of a series of rich reflections on God-as-Trinity that permeate her text and which I will develop further in Chapter 4 on Julian's theology of God. Her imagery of the suffering Christ continues in subsequent chapters. Thus in chapter 5, at the same time as she continues to see the bleeding from Christ's head, she is shown "a spiritual sight" of God's love. She uses the image of clothing – God is our clothing wrapping us in love. She is also shown the famous image of something small, "no bigger than a hazelnut," which she is led to understand is creation, "everything which is made." This is created, loved and preserved by God. In chapter 6 Christ's passion and wounds are intimately linked to an insight about God's goodness and providence. In subsequent chapters Julian's spiritual vision – in other words, the heart of her spiritual insights and the source of her teaching – continues to be linked to the "bodily" imagery of bleeding as she explicitly affirms in chapter 7. "And during all the time that our Lord showed me this spiritual vision which I have now

described, I saw the bodily vision of the copious bleeding of the head persist." What is critically important here is her further comment in chapter 4 that "where Jesus appears the blessed Trinity is understood, as I see it." In her vision of the suffering Christ lies the source of all that she needs to see and know about God, about created reality, and about the human condition. In chapter 18 she comes to understand in the image of the suffering Christ the "great unity between Christ and us." In other words, in Christ's pain is his identification with human suffering.

In chapter 19 Julian describes how she wanted to look away from the crucifix. She felt secure contemplating the cross but she experienced an apparently friendly suggestion "to my reason" that she should take her eyes off the crucifix by her sickbed to "look up the heaven to his Father." She rejects this option because, as she addresses Jesus on the cross, she affirms powerfully "No, I cannot, for you are my heaven." She does not desire to come to heaven "any other way than by him." In the following chapter, chapter 20, Julian effectively states that she came to understand that all she needed to know about God, "the glorious divinity," was to be found in the image of the suffering Christ.

Julian's Triadic Theology

A second vital key to Julian's theology is her regular use of various triads. Beyond Julian's explicit Trinitarian theology, it is worth noting in reference to her broader theological style that she employs three-fold imagery (that is, triads) in a range of other ways. Without question her overall use of three-fold imagery echoes her rich theology of the Trinity as the in-built meaning of everything. Indeed, it is reasonable to describe Julian's theology as in some sense triadic overall. A brief summary of examples will serve to illustrate this point.

Thus, in chapter 2, Julian describes how, before her revelations, she had desired three graces – a recollection of the Passion, bodily sickness, and, by God's gift, three wounds. These wounds were true contrition, loving compassion, and a longing for God. In chapter 5, Julian describes being shown "something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand." This proves to be "everything which is made." Julian notes that this image of all creation had three properties: that God made it, that God loves it, and that God preserves it. In chapter 7 when Julian had a "bodily vision of the copious bleeding of the [that is, Christ's] head" she notes that three things occurred to her. First, the drops were round like pellets. Second, "they were round like herring's scales as they spread" and, finally, "they were like raindrops off a house's eaves, so many that they could not be counted." In chapter 9, Julian notes that her

revelations were "shown" in three parts – bodily vision, words formed in her understanding, and spiritual vision. Towards the end of chapter 10, Julian affirms that God desires that we receive three gifts: that we should seek joyfully and happily, that we wait for God steadfastly, and, third, that we have great trust. In chapter 13 after being shown how the fiend [the devil] is overcome by the Passion, Julian says to her companions around her sickbed that in this process she sees three things: sport and scorn and seriousness. In chapter 14 God shows Julian the "three degrees of bliss" which every soul will have in heaven: honor and thanks from God, that this honor will be revealed to everyone else in heaven, and joy that will last for evermore. In chapter 39 Julian affirms that all souls will come to heaven by three means: by contrition in which they are made clean, by compassion by which they are made ready, and finally by true longing for God in which they are made worthy. Finally, in chapter 58 Julian explicitly links her theology of the Trinity to human existence. "For all our life consists of three: In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfilment. The first is nature, the second is mercy, the third is grace."

Love as God's Meaning

The third vital key to the heart of Julian's theology appears at several points in her Long Text, for example in chapter 6, but most clearly in the final chapter 86. On one level these references indicate that after many years of struggle and questioning, she was given the spiritual understanding that "our Lord's meaning is love," and only love. For Julian, theologically speaking, everything is subordinated to the nature of God as love, the nature of human beings as irrevocably loved and just as irrevocably united to God in their essential substance. In particular, as we shall see in later chapters, Julian's insights into sin, salvation (soteriology), and eschatology are predicated on this fundamental vision of a God of love. Having said this, Julian is clear that this message of love is not easy to grasp. In chapter 73, she notes that God wants us "in all things to have our contemplation and our delight in love." However, "it is about this knowledge that we are most blind, for some of us believe that God is almighty and may do everything, and that he is all wisdom and can do everything, but that he is all love and wishes to do everything, there we fail." Running through Julian's theological reflections is a deep sense of reassurance. This pervades the whole of the Thirteenth Revelation and is further reinforced in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Revelations. As chapter 1 of the Long Text summarises the matter, "Here [that is, in the Thirteenth Revelation] he says: Behold and see, for by the same power, wisdom and goodness that

I have done all this [creating all things], by the same power wisdom and goodness I shall make all things well which are not well, and you will see it."

Julian's Apophatic and Eschatological Theology

Finally, on another level, the final chapter 86 of Julian's Long Text also suggests that her teachings are necessarily open-ended. "This book is begun by God's gift and his grace, but it is not yet performed, as I see it." Julian's theological journey is necessarily incomplete because authentic theology takes us to the boundaries of the knowable: "a marvellous great mystery hidden in God," as Julian suggests in chapter 27. This is both a reference to Julian's incomplete understanding and also to the necessarily on-going process of God's relationship with humanity which will find completion only in "heavenly joy."

For all its emphasis on her God-given visions and her rich use of imagery, Julian's theology is at the same time a theology of "seeing" (that is, of knowing) in a new way but also a theology of "unknowing" at the deepest level. In short, Julian's writings are a balance of positive (kataphatic) theology and negative (apophatic) theology. Julian's writings are famously fully of imagery and she is also clear in making certain affirmations about the nature of God. However, Julian is also clear that in her revelations she has not been given any complete or definitive knowledge about God. As we have seen, Julian's overall theological process is not a form of analytical reasoning and her affirmations about God are not a matter of reaching certain conclusions through logical deduction. Rather, in her revelations Julian senses what might be called a "surplus of meaning" that she cannot conclusively understand but which she feels the need to return to again and again over many years. In Julian's own words, after she received her revelations "I desired many times to know in what was our Lord's meaning." As her final chapter 86 makes clear, more than 15 years later she received further spiritual insight. "Know it well, love was his meaning…. Remain in this and you will know more of the same. But you will never know different, without end."

As a revelation of love, Julian's text is not a consecutive and highly structured narrative. On the contrary, it is a meditative circling around the key themes of her teaching that are aimed at all her fellow Christians. For Julian, any one theme she presents immediately calls up other important issues. In addition, there is an on-going connection between the themes of time and eternity in her text. What does it mean to learn that "all manner of thing will be well"? God continually reminds her that God does not see things in sequential terms or in terms of sharp distinctions between past, present and future. Consequently, there is necessarily an

open-ended, unfulfilled, and eschatological core to Julian's theology and to what she seeks to teach her audience of fellow Christians. As Julian had herself been told by God, so she affirms that every one of her audience were to "remain in this" (that is, the realization that love is God's meaning) while "more of the same" was offered throughout life and finally given conclusively at the end of time.

Conclusion

It is true that Julian's Long Text does not merely describe her religious experiences but explains their theological meaning and implications. In the process, Julian touches on many of the most important themes and dimensions of Christian theology including the Trinity, Christology, grace, creation, anthropology, sin and redemption, and eschatology. However, she is not compiling a theological textbook. Julian reflects on various theological areas in order to communicate a multi-faceted and vital message to her fellow Christians about the true nature of God and of human beings "in God's sight."

Notes

1 See Thomas Merton, *Mystics and Zen Masters*, New York: The Noonday Press, Reprinted 1993, p 140.
2 See Janet Martin Soskice, *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender, and Religious Language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p 126.
3 Soskice, *The Kindness of God*, p 131.
4 See, Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993; Mary Clark, ed., *An Aquinas Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Aquinas*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2000.
5 For a classic exposition of monastic theology, see Jean Leclercq OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, 3rd edition, English translation, New York: Fordham University Press, 1982, especially Chapter 9 "Monastic Theology."
6 See Edmund Colledge & James Walsh, eds., *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich*, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978, Part One, Introduction Part IX "Theological Content of the Revelations," pp 59–198. Colledge & Walsh also offer a massive list of scriptural citations or echoes in Part Two, pp 779–788.
7 See Barry Windeatt, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe*, London: Penguin Books, 1985, Chapter 18.

8 See Nicholas Watson & Jacqueline Jenkins, eds., *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005, Preface, p ix and Introduction, pp 2–3.
9 Joan M. Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter: The Theology of Julian of Norwich*, New York: Crossroad, 1991, Chapter 2 "Julian's Theology."
10 Grace Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, 2nd edition, London: SPCK 2000, Chapter 6 "Love was his meaning": Julian's Theological Method.
11 See Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011, p xi.
12 Turner, p xii.
13 See Turner, Chapter One "Julian the Theologian."
14 See Bernard McGinn, *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism: 1350–1550*, New York: Crossroad, 2012, Chapter 12 "Julian of Norwich: 'Love is oure lordes mening'."
15 See Rowan Williams, *Holy Living: The Christian Tradition for Today*, New York: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2017, Part Five: Ways of Knowing, Chapter 12: Julian of Norwich's Way.
16 Louis Dupré, "Spiritual life in a secular age," in *Daedalus* volume III, 1982, pp 21–31, quote from p 25.
17 See Bernard McGinn, "The future of past spiritual experiences," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, volume 15, issue 1, Spring 2015 pp 1–17, especially p 3. In using the term "rupture," McGinn draws explicitly upon the important writings on mysticism by Michel de Certeau, particularly his late work, *The Mystic Fable, Volume One: The Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*, ET Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
18 For an accessible modern translation of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, see C. Luibheid & O. Rorem, eds., *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality, New York: Paulist Press, 1987. For further remarks on the approach of Pseudo-Dionysius to mystical theology, not least the balance between kataphatic and apophatic approaches, see Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method*, Revised edition, London: SPCK/Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1995, pp 199–206.
19 For a brief summary of this approach to and understanding of theology as it would have impacted on Julian of Norwich, see Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998/Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1999, Chapter 2 "The Divorce of Spirituality and Theology," pp 33–64.
20 For a summary overview of de Certeau's approach to mysticism, see Philip Sheldrake, *Explorations in Spirituality: History, Theology and Social Practice*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010, Chapter 6 "Mysticism and Social Practice: The Mystical and Michel de Certeau." For Michel de

Certeau's own writings on mysticism, see "'Mystique' au XVIIe siècle: Le probleme du language mystique," in his *L'Homme Devant Dieu: Mélanges offerts au Père Henri du Lubac*, Paris: Aubier, 1964, 2: 267–291; also de Certeau's essay in English translation "Mystic Speech" in his *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995; and most importantly the first volume of de Certeau's *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

21 Turner, p 3.

22 See Ritamary Bradley, *Julian's Way: A Practical Commentary on Julian of Norwich*, London: Harper Collins, 1992, pp 94–97.

Chapter 5

Creation and Human Nature

The themes of God's relationship with material creation and the status of humankind before God are central to the theological vision of Julian of Norwich and her teachings in the Long Text. I suggest that the rich imagery employed by her in chapter 5 offers an evocative and appropriate starting point for considering her understanding of both creation and her theology of human nature.

Creation

In terms of God's relationship to material creation, I will begin with one of Julian's most famous images, that of "something small, no bigger than a hazelnut." Without being pedantic, it is worth noting that Julian's language is comparative whereas some popular writings and icons of Julian are more literal, suggesting that the "something small" actually *was* a hazelnut!

> And in this he [our good Lord] showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed to me, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and thought: What can this be? And I was given this general answer: it is everything which is made.[1]
>
> *(Chapter 5)*

Julian wonders how creation could survive, given that it is so little and therefore fragile. "I thought that because of its littleness it would suddenly have fallen into nothing." However, the answer she receives is that it is simply God's love that is the cause both of creation's existence and of the survival of everything that is other than God. Julian then summarizes her understanding of the three essential "properties" of creation, "this little thing." First, God made it, then God loves it, and finally God preserves it.

Julian of Norwich: "In God's Sight" – Her Theology in Context, First Edition. Philip Sheldrake.

However, in the following sentences Julian declares that an appreciation of creation as the gift of God's love must never be allowed to come between us and God. Here we need to be careful about how we understand what Julian says. On the face of it, we are asked to "delight in despising as nothing everything created" – in Middle English, "that us liketh to nought all thing that is made." However, Julian qualifies this potential contradiction of the value and goodness of creation. "Despise" is arguably an unhelpful translation. The point Julian seeks to make is that if we mistakenly focus our "liking," that is our ultimate satisfaction, on created things rather than on God ("if we seek rest in this thing which is so little") we cannot truly love God or be "substantially united" to our uncreated God.

Overall, in reference to Julian's teaching, both Watson and Jenkins in their scholarly edition of the Middle English text, as well as Bernard McGinn in the chapter on Julian in his volume on late medieval mysticism, detect echoes in Julian's imagery of the deutero-canonical book of the Old Testament, The Wisdom of Solomon 11, 22–25.[2] Here the littleness of creation is portrayed as "a speck that tips the scales" and "a drop of morning dew." Yet "you [God] love all things that exist."

More strikingly, the image of a nut is also used in relation to creation, albeit in a different way, in a text by another of the fourteenth-century English mystics, Walter Hilton (mid-1340s–1396). This is specifically in his *The Scale* [or *Ladder*] *of Perfection*. Hilton's text consists of two Books, apparently written some years apart, and addressed to an anchoress. These probably date from the late 1380s and the early 1390s. Of course, as with everything else about Julian's sources and influences, we have no way of knowing whether she knew Hilton's text let alone whether she had read it. However, its intended audience and its likely dates make this theoretically feasible. In his Book 2, chapter 33, Hilton refers to Jesus being "within all creatures but not in the way that a kernel is hidden inside the shell of a nut…he is within all creatures as holding and keeping them in their being."

Interestingly, in her reference to Julian's image the Australian theologian Kerrie Hide refers to an "active kernel of growth" within a hazelnut. In this way she notes that Julian's image suggests an evolutionary view of creation rather than a static one. Beyond "making," the images of God's "preserving" or keeping creation and "loving" creation suggests both God's continuous involvement in renewing creation and also the dynamic nature of creation itself.[3]

What Julian portrays in chapter 5 is that the whole of creation is a manifestation of divine love. There is a radical contingency to everything that is not God. That is, in relation to God's "Being" created reality is infinitesimal. Yet God is nevertheless always active in the world of time

and space which God loves eternally. Julian makes no overt reference to the creation myth in the Book of Genesis but her parable of a Lord and a Servant in chapter 51, which we explored in depth in Chapter 3, can be seen as an image of God's restoration and renewal of creation. The servant of the parable is also identified as the second Adam, God's Son. The servant is thus imaged as "a gardener, digging and ditching and sweating." He waters plants, and makes streams to flow and fruit to grow. In summary, Julian's understanding of the created universe is Christocentric both in terms of its making and also in terms of its renewal through Christ, the second Adam, in his embodied suffering and death. The critical point is that the work of salvation carries on God's work of creation. In Julian's theology there is a unity and continuity between them that underlines the irreversible value of material creation, including human nature. The theme of salvation will be developed further in the next chapter.

A second evocative image of God in relation to creation appears in chapter 11. "I saw God in a pointe…by which sight I saw that he is in al thing." From the wider context of the passage, I have already suggested that this "pointe" is a spatial image rather than a reference to "an instant of time" as in the translation by Colledge and Walsh.[4] In other words, for Julian, God is unquestionably the center of everything that exists and does everything in the functioning of creation. Indeed, God alone is the "doer."

In chapter 11, the image of "a pointe" also suggests God's presence and action in even the smallest conceivable thing. "Everything which exists in nature is of God's creation, so that everything which is done has the property of being God's doing." Further, "the smallest of deeds which is done is as well done as the best and the greatest." Again, as in chapter 5, the image of God "in a pointe" is used at the end of the chapter to underline God's continuous involvement in preserving creation. Julian expresses this by having God say:

> See, I am God. See I am in all things. See, I do all things. See I never remove my hands from my works, nor ever shall without end. See, I guide all things to the end that I ordain them for, before time began, with the same power and wisdom and love with which I made them.

Both images, "like a hazelnut" and "in a pointe," offer a vision of a created universe wholly dependent on God, originating in God, and also destined to return to God. All things finally converge in God. Julian's vision of, and subsequent meditation upon, the bleeding head of Christ leads her to see creation as a whole as the ultimate expression

of the self-giving love of God. Her chapter 8 clearly states that one of the important things she came to understand from this powerful vision of the bleeding Christ was both that "heaven and earth and all creation are great, generous and beautiful and good" and that God "created everything for love, and by the same love is it preserved, and always will be without end."

The proper Christian attitude towards creation is summarized in Julian's chapter 75. God's presence is to be affirmed in the smallest part of what is created.

> But it is proper to God's honourable majesty so to be contemplated by his creatures, trembling and quaking in fear, because of their much greater joy [literally, "mekehede of joy," meekness of joy] endlessly marvelling at the greatness of God, the Creator, and at the smallest part [literally, "litilhede," littleness] of all that is created.

While in Julian's mind even "the smallest of deeds which is done is well done," she has a hierarchical approach to the created order that is typical of a medieval world view. Thus, she affirms that "man's creation is superior to all God's works" (chapter 1) and that God "wants us to know that the noblest thing which he ever made is mankind" (chapter 53).

Human Nature

Turning now to Julian's theology of human nature and identity, or theological anthropology, it is important to underline at the outset that Julian's understanding of the value of human nature in God's eyes makes no distinction between women and men. As already noted, her more conventional, and apologetic, portrayal of womanhood in the Short Text, chapter vi, as ignorant, weak, and frail disappears in the Long Text. Here, Julian's confident voice addresses her teachings, a woman's teachings, to all her fellow Christians, both men and women.

A rich starting point for considering Julian's anthropology is a second image employed by her at the very beginning of the Long Text, in chapter 5. Here she describes how God showed her a spiritual sight of his "familiar love." The closeness of God to humankind is described in terms of clothing. "He is our clothing, who wraps and enfolds us for love, embraces us and shelters us, surrounds us for his love, which is so tender that he may never desert us." By describing God as our clothing, Julian does not merely offer an image of closeness and loving intimacy but also

one of care and protection. It is important to note that Julian does not express any dichotomy between male and female in the chain of being. All humanity is equally loved and protected.

It is interesting to note that later in the same chapter Julian appears to use human nakedness as an image of innocence when she added that God also revealed that "it is very greatly pleasing to him that a simple soul should come naked, openly and familiarly." The notion of a "simple soul," or "sely soule" in Middle English, may validly be translated as an "innocent soul." The image of being clothed in God is repeated in the following chapter 6 immediately after the graphic image of human excretion (as it appears in the Paris manuscript) where God's care is shown in "the simplest natural functions of our body." From this, Julian concludes that "we, soul and body, are clad and enclosed in the goodness of God."

Taken together, Julian's images of God as our "clothing" and "being clad" by God in love appear to contrast with the imagery of nakedness and clothing as they appear in the Book of Genesis, chapter 3. There, the narrative of humanity's original disobedience and "fall" has Adam and Eve lose their innocence, become aware of their nakedness and seek to cover themselves up. Subsequently, in the Eden story, God clothes Adam and Eve in garments of skins before expelling them from the Garden of Eden. The contrast between Genesis and Julian's text is that, in the first, being covered up by clothing is a sign of human degradation whereas in Julian's text being clothed by and in God is an image of love and protection. In this regard, there is also a striking contrast between Julian and the other fourteenth-century English spiritual writer Walter Hilton. In Book 1, chapter 84 of his *The Scale of Perfection*, Hilton has a more negative view of human embodiment as a symbol of our sinful state.

> Our Lord made clothes of beasts' hide for Adam and his wife as a sign that for his sin he was misshapen like a beast. With these bestial clothes we are all born, wrapped up and disfigured from our natural shape.

In her Seventh Revelation (as in the Long Text chapter 15, also summarized in chapter 1), Julian suggests that she (and no doubt her intended audience) was caught between an experience of well-being, which she understood as being enlightened by God's grace, and what she refers to as woe. She suggests that this is caused by "the heaviness and weariness of our mortal life" (chapter 1). However, this sense of depression is to be understood as a temptation.

The Influence of Augustine

The probable influence, directly or indirectly, of the theology of Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) on Julian's thinking about human nature has been noted frequently. Augustine was, and continues to be, a major figure in Western theology, not least in relation to theological anthropology. Augustine adopted the symbol of the heart as a way of expressing "the self." In the mind of Augustine our inner selves are where we are also united with the whole of creation and with God. For Augustine, God created humans with the divine image (*imago Dei*) in their hearts. This *imago Dei* is the true self although sin may disconnect us from it. The concept of the *imago Dei* points to humanity being inherently united to God, a theme strongly underlined in Julian of Norwich. Humanity in this image also reflects the triune nature of God, expressed by Augustine and later mystical theologians in the three-fold structure or "powers" of human identity, the soul, in terms of memory, understanding, and will. As I shall explain in a moment, Julian appears to modify and expand Augustine's three-fold schema.

Augustine's notion of the *imago Dei* in which we are created and which is imprinted on the heart must be read alongside his overall doctrine of human creation. In Augustine's *Commentary on Genesis*, Adam's sin was precisely to please himself and to live for himself (*secundum se vivere, sibi placere*). Thus the unity or mutual communion that should be at the heart of everything is ruptured; whether this is our union with God, our solidarity with other people, or our harmony with our true selves. Self-seeking pride is the archetypal sin (*Commentary on Genesis* XI.15.19–20). In Augustine's mind, the original Garden of Eden and his "City of God" were based on "the love that promotes the common good for the sake of the heavenly society" (*Commentary on Genesis* XI.15.20). For Augustine, in the Heavenly City there is to be the fullness of sharing.[5]

In terms of the foundations of Augustine's theological anthropology, there is a tension that should not be resolved between a clear sense of a personal self and an equally clear sense of the fundamentally collective nature of human existence. It is possible to detect echoes of this viewpoint in Julian's strong sense of responsibility for, and solidarity with, her "evenchristen." "The heart" for Augustine is where a true integration of our inner and outer lives takes place. In Book 10 of his *Confessions* Augustine refers to "my heart, where I am whatever it is that I am" and in his *Tractates on the Gospel of John* (Section 18.10) Augustine exclaimed "return to your heart!" However, Augustine is clear that if anything is claimed to be in the heart but does not show itself outwardly in love and community, it is illusory.

Julian's Anthropology

The Augustinian theme of returning to the heart connects strongly with how Julian of Norwich approaches her theology of human identity. While the question of what we are as humans is important, equally challenging is precisely how we come to know ourselves deeply rather than superficially. As Julian underlines, this is not a self-driven intellectual or psychological process but involves a contemplative journey inwards. As we shall see, in Julian's way of thinking, for us to come to know our own soul (or self) demands that we first come to know God.

In Julian's theological vision, her complex binary (but not dualistic) portrayal of human identity in terms of the dimensions of "substance" and "sensuality" also echoes Augustine's anthropology to some degree. However, the fundamental source of Julian's highly original theological reflection in *A Revelation of Love* is what she believes was revealed to her by God initially through her visions and then through her subsequent contemplative reflection. Julian's doctrine of human nature and human destiny is expressed particularly in her chapters 53–63.

As I suggested in Chapter 2, I believe that Julian's overall theological approach may be partly placed within the category of mystical theology. This equally applies to her theology of human identity or theological anthropology. In patristic and medieval mystical theology the theological style, including the approach to theological anthropology, takes broadly two forms. There is a "positive" or kataphatic approach that focuses on what we may legitimately affirm about human identity. The second approach, known as "negative" or apophatic theology, emphasizes that the human soul or "self" in its deep union with the divine is, like the all-embracing reality of God, ultimately beyond our capacity to know definitively. It is important to emphasize that while these two theological approaches have distinctive features they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they complement each other and, indeed, may intersect in the writings of specific mystical thinkers such as Julian of Norwich.

Two interrelated elements run through the writings of Julian of Norwich and underpin her mystical anthropology. The first element is that "the mystical" involves a process of self-forgetfulness rather than the pursuit of self-preoccupied interiority. Second, as a consequence, Julian's mystical reflections remind us that the core of a theology of human identity necessarily involves a risky openness to a God who draws Julian, and all her "evenchristen," forward into the unknown. In that sense, human identity is not a static reality but is a dynamic and open-ended process. These interrelated elements of self-emptying and a divinely guided process of becoming are presented in a range of ways in Julian's mystical theological writing.

Here, I suggest that Julian modifies Augustine's three-fold scheme of memory, understanding, and will. Julian adopts the more dynamic, process-focused, categories of "being," "increase," and "fulfilment."

> I had a partial touching, and it is founded in nature, that is to say: Our reason is founded in God, who is nature's substance. From this substantial nature spring mercy and grace and penetrate us ["spredeth into us"] accomplishing everything for the fulfilment of our joy. These are our foundations, in which we have our being, our increase and our fulfilment. This is three properties in one goodness, and where one operates all operate in the things which now pertain to us.
>
> *(Chapter 56)*

Later, Julian expounds her triadic process of human existence further in relationship to the nature and work of the Trinity. Thus, "being" is nature, "increase" is mercy, and "fulfilment" is grace (chapter 58).

In general, in Julian's theology, how she comes to understand human identity engages directly with her mystical theological understanding of God-as-Trinity. The mutual indwelling of God in us and us in God permeates her theological vision. Indeed, according to Julian we cannot truly know our self unless we first cease to be self-preoccupied and contemplate God.

> For our soul is so deeply grounded in God and so endlessly treasured that we cannot come to knowledge of it until we first have knowledge of God, who is the Creator to whom it is united. But nevertheless I saw that we have, naturally from our fullness, to desire wisely and truly to know our own soul, through which we are taught to seek it where it is, and that is in God.
>
> *(Chapter 56)*

Indeed,

> God is closer to us than our own soul, for he is the foundation on which our soul stands, and he is the mean which keeps the substance and the sensuality together, so that they will never separate.
>
> *(Chapter 56)*

Julian bases her theological reflections on her foundational experience of sixteen visions. As we have already underlined, the visions, "showings," or "revelations" focus primarily upon the Passion of Jesus. Julian recognizes

that everything she was taught was grounded in the first revelation of Jesus' suffering and bleeding on the cross (chapters 2–9). As a result, the whole of Julian's theology of human identity finds its focus in the self-emptying of Christ's Passion. Her teachings on God-as-Trinity, on creation, and on Incarnation are ultimately measured by the standard of the cross and flow naturally into her anthropology. The Passion of the incarnate Christ is understood fundamentally as the supreme revelation of the love of God.

Love is not something God "does" or "has." Rather, love is God's very nature and this love is directed outwards towards creation and towards humanity in particular. In other words, for Julian, self-giving love is God's entire reality. Julian does not provide simple definitions or a systematic structure to help us to understand what this means. Her pedagogical approach is to begin with the Passion, expressed in visionary form, and then to proceed by means of other images and stories. In this way, Julian is able to teach a deeper wisdom beyond the language of logic. Julian's *A Revelation of Love* begins with an overwhelming image of self-giving love manifested in the face of the crucified and suffering Christ and which is to be the measure of all human existence. The cross is both an indication of humanity's need for healing and radical transformation and also of humanity's continued worth "in God's sight."

The point of the visions was to find the transcendent reality of God in this broken human figure of the crucified Jesus. Yet, at the same time, to see God mediated essentially through the suffering flesh of Jesus and through God's "working" in all contingent things also paradoxically serves to preserve the otherness of God. That is, God's transcendence is inextricably linked to God's immanence. "I perceived, truly and powerfully, that it was he [Christ] who just so, both God and man, himself suffered for me, who showed it to me without any intermediary" (chapter 4).

Thus, in Jesus Christ the creation, life, and eternal future of humanity are caught up into the life of God-as-Trinity.

> And in the same revelation, suddenly the Trinity filled my heart full of the greatest joy, and I understood that it will be so in heaven without end to all who will come there. For the Trinity is God, God is the Trinity. The Trinity is our maker, the Trinity is our protector, the Trinity is our everlasting lover, the Trinity is our endless joy and our bliss, by our Lord Jesus Christ and in our Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> *(Chapter 4)*

On the cross, the love of God for humankind is shown to be a parallel of the love relationship within the Trinity – a dynamic and mutual

indwelling in which each person of the Godhead is constantly giving to and sharing with the others. This way of being is also revealed as afflicted love, united through suffering to all humanity. From the vision of Jesus Christ on the cross Julian learned that everything is filled with God and enclosed by God. Through the cross, God offers intimacy or "familiar love." Julian does not suggest directly that God suffers. Yet there are hints that God is not untouched by our condition. In the Incarnation, God is indissolubly joined to the human condition and longs for us.

As we saw in the last chapter, within God there is a longing and desire as part of God's everlasting goodness. Also because of God's indwelling within the human soul, God's thirst underpins our own deep longing and desire. God in Christ thirsts for us and because of our union with God we also thirst for God.

For Julian the simple fact is that, in her understanding of the Passion, the Trinity as such participates in all activities relating to salvation. This is part of the eternal economy of God even if only the "virgin's Son" may be said to suffer. "All the Trinity worked in Christ's Passion, administering abundant virtues and plentiful grace to us by him; but only the virgin's Son suffered, in which all the blessed Trinity rejoice." Further, concerning our salvation, "All the Trinity worked in Christ's Passion, administering abundant virtues and plentiful grace to us by him" (chapter 23).

The participation of the Trinity in salvation is also strongly implied earlier in chapter 11 where, as we have already noted several times, Julian sees God "in a pointe." Here, God is seen to be in all things, as doing all things and as bringing them to their preordained conclusion.

> And therefore the blessed Trinity is always wholly pleased with all its works; and God revealed all this most blessedly, as though to say: See I am God. See, I am in all things. See, I do all things. See, I never remove my hands from my works, nor ever shall without end. See, I guide all things to the end that I ordain them for, before time began, with the same power and wisdom and love with which I made them; how should anything be amiss?
>
> *(Chapter 11)*

As we have seen, in the three "properties" of fatherhood, motherhood, and lordship "in one God" our essential human nature (what Julian refers to as our "substance") dwells equally in each person of the Trinity and in all the persons together. "And our substance is in our Father, God almighty, and our substance is in our Mother, God all wisdom, and our substance is in our Lord God, the Holy Spirit, all goodness, for our substance is whole in each person of the Trinity, who is one God." In chapter 58 Julian also explicitly links her theology of the Trinity to human

existence. "For all our life consists of three: In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfilment. The first is nature, the second is mercy, the third is grace." In other words, in relation to human existence, God's love has three effects, corresponding to the persons of the Trinity. First, God's love performs a work of nature by creating us in God's image and sustaining us in existence. Second, God's love performs a work of mercy by healing the damage caused by our failing and falling (that is, by sin). Finally, God's love performs a work of grace, fulfilling human existence by bringing it into union with the life of God. This begins now in time and space but is to be finally completed in heaven.

The mutual indwelling of the persons of the Trinity one in the other (*perichoresis*), as affirmed at a number of points including at the end of the famous parable of a Lord and a Servant, is related to the human condition. "Now the Son, true God and true man, sits in his city [the human soul] in rest and in peace, which his Father has prepared for him by his endless purpose, and the Father in the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the Father and in the Son" (chapter 51). We are drawn into this mutual indwelling, into an intimacy with God that is Julian's version of deification. She expresses this as a mutual enclosure. We are enclosed in God and God is enclosed in us:

> And I saw no difference between God and our substance, but, as it were, all God; and still my understanding accepted that our substance is in God, that is to say that God is God, and our substance is a creature in God. For the almighty truth of the Trinity is our Father, for he made us and keeps us in him. And the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, in whom we are enclosed. And the high goodness of the Trinity is our Lord, and in him we are enclosed and he in us. We are enclosed in the Father, and we are enclosed in the Son, and we are enclosed in the Holy Spirit. And the Father is enclosed in us, the Son is enclosed in us, and the Holy Spirit is enclosed in us, almighty, all wisdom and all goodness, one God, one Lord.
>
> *(Chapter 54)*

Also, "Our soul sits in God in true rest, and our soul stands in God in sure strength, and our soul is naturally rooted in God in endless love" (chapter 56).

Because Julian seeks to articulate not only something of what God is but also something of how God sees reality and has revealed it to her in part, she offers a radically alternative vision of all created reality, including human existence. As we shall see in more detail in the next chapter,

this results in two striking assertions. First, there is neither blame nor wrath in God (chapters 45–49). Second, and related to it, sin is "no deed" (chapter 11). In seeing God in everything (chapter 11) Julian also sees all things in God and therefore "in all this sin was not shown to me." Later, as she considers the paradox of how the experience of sin hinders her longing for God (chapter 27) she is taught that she could not see sin as she contemplated the Passion because "it has no kind of substance, no share in being, nor can it be recognized except by the pain caused by it." What is critical is that in her anthropology, Julian teaches that the essence of human nature is not "sinful." Sin is the cause both of human pain and of the Passion and yet "sin is necessary" (in Middle English, "behovely"). In Julian's thinking around the question of what sin means it is somehow a providential dimension of our contingent incompleteness and fallibility. Counter-intuitively, while sin often blinds us it also at times enables us to experience more deeply God's essential nature as love.

As we shall explore in the next chapter, God does not "see" human sin but only the ultimate bliss that will be ours. In God's vision this is the truth of human existence. Thus Julian, in her vision of God's eye-view, cannot see sin even though she knows its impact on human life and experience. This does not deny that human beings sin. However, it is to say that the centrality of sin in human experience is not reproduced on the level of God's essential relationship with humanity. Julian expresses this in terms of a paradox at the end of chapter 34: "When I saw that God does everything which is done, I did not see sin, and then I saw that all is well. But when God did show me about sin, then he said: All will be well."

The two assertions are based on God's "great endless love" (chapter 45). "God is that goodness which cannot be angry, for God is nothing but goodness" (chapter 46). However, as we have seen, the parable of a Lord and a Servant makes clear (chapter 51) that it all depends on a difference in ways of seeing. The point is that God looks on human beings and their failings with unending love and compassion and not with blame.

The fallen servant in the parable then sees neither his loving lord who remains nearby "nor does he truly see what he himself is in the sight of his loving lord." We do not see ourselves truly. Indeed, the next chapter (chapter 52) clearly states that "God sees one way and man sees another way." Essentially God can only see humanity in the light of his Son. "When Adam fell, God's Son fell [into Mary's womb]; because of the true union which was made in heaven, God's Son could not be separated from Adam, for by Adam I understand all mankind" (chapter 51). Julian finally understands the parable when she is granted an insight into how God sees humankind.

From this standpoint, the story of Adam's Fall and of Christ's "fall" into Mary's womb (the Incarnation) are inextricably linked; they are even

somehow a single event. The moment of Adam's Fall becomes the moment of salvation as well. The parable is an exposition both of how God always views humankind and also of salvation history from God's viewpoint. God looks upon us as we are in Christ and sees us both in our original blessing and final integrity: healed, sinless, and glorified. In chapter 10 this unbroken connection between our creation and our redemption is related to the unchanging nature of God's love. "And he who created man for love, by the same love wanted to restore man to the same blessedness and to even more." In the light of eternity we are ever in union with God and always have been. "And for the great endless love that God has for all mankind, he makes no distinction in love between the blessed soul of Christ and the least soul that will be saved" (chapter 54).

The whole purpose of God's grace is not simply to overcome the fall but to "bring fair nature back again to the blessed place from which it came, which is God, with more nobility and honour by the powerful operation of grace" (chapter 63). In general, Julian's teaching about human nature is inseparable from her understanding of the fall and of redemption as she "saw" this in the vision of Christ on the cross and eventually came to understand it in the parable of a Lord and a Servant.

Substance and Sensuality

Julian's most extensive exposition of human identity appears in the chapters immediately following the parable of a Lord and a Servant. Indeed, her analysis of human nature is related directly to her prolonged attempts to understand the parable. As already noted, Julian's theology of human nature is complex and binary but it is not dualistic. We therefore need to understand what Julian means by her describing two dimensions of the "soul" or of human identity. These are entitled "substance" and "sensuality" and are elucidated especially in chapters 53–59. Julian is clear that these dimensions mutually support each other.

> Let either of them take help from the other, until we have grown into full stature as creative nature brings about; and then in the foundation of creative nature with the operation of mercy, the Holy Spirit by grace breathes into us gifts leading to endless life.
>
> *(Chapter 55)*

These two dimensions of human identity are not easy to define because the words have a number of connotations. What needs to be underlined is that they certainly do not mean "spirit" or soul versus "matter" or body.

The concepts of substance and sensuality bear some, but not total, resemblance to Augustine's concept of the higher and lower parts of the soul, understanding "soul" to mean the depths of human identity.[6]

Julian does not actually consider human embodiment in any systematic or extensive way. However, again it needs to be emphasized that she is free from any statements that devalue or demean the body. Indeed, as we have already noted, in chapter 6 Julian graphically illustrates how God is involved in even the lowliest of bodily functions, defecation. The important point is that Julian uses this involvement as an image of God's overall care for and service of humanity.

> A man walks upright, and the food in his body is shut in as if in a well-made purse. When the time of his necessity comes, the purse is opened and then shut again, in most seemly fashion. And it is God who does this, as it is shown when he says that he comes down to us in our humblest needs. For he does not despise what he has made, nor does he disdain to serve us in the simplest natural functions of our body, for love of the soul which he created in his own likeness.

Most fundamentally, the notion of "substance" refers to the core or essence of our humanity that is by its nature and creation for ever united to God. It is also the self that God persistently "sees." In chapter 53 Julian uses the image of "knitting" to describe the distinctive relationship between God and humanity. Human beings are "knit" to God in their making and God is "knit" to humanity by taking flesh.

> Therefore he wants us to know that the noblest thing which he ever made is mankind, and the fullest substance and the highest power is the blessed soul of Christ. And furthermore, he wants us to know that this beloved soul was preciously knitted to him in its making, by a knot so subtle and so mighty that it is united in God. In this uniting it is made endlessly holy. Furthermore, he wants us to know that all the souls which will be saved in heaven without end are knit in this knot, and united in this union, and made holy in this holiness

In the same chapter 53, Julian also writes of the "godly will." This will, "which never assented to sin nor ever will," is an aspect of what Julian calls our "substance." This echoes Augustine's anthropology. Julian also adopts Augustine's notion of the *imago Dei*. The human person, whether female or male, is created in the image of God-the-Trinity (chapter 10) and this is humanity's true nature: a sharing in the nature and substance

of God. In chapter 10 Julian also notes that the human soul is an image of the Trinity. In her theological anthropology there is no hierarchy of male and female. Also, in Julian's exposition, the *imago Dei* within us does not imply that human existence is purely static. On the contrary, all humans have a dynamic tendency to return to God their origin. Thus substance "could never and should never be parted from him [God]." Chapter 54 develops the theme further. God dwells in our soul and our soul, while created, "dwells in God in substance, of which substance, through God, we are what we are." Julian then offers a radical understanding of substance.

> And I saw no difference between God and our substance, but, as it were, all God; and still my understanding accepted that our substance is in God, that is to say that God is God, and our substance is a creature in God.

Our soul is a created trinity, like the uncreated Trinity. "And so my understanding was led by God to see in him and to know, to understand and to recognize that our soul is a created trinity, like the uncreated blessed Trinity" (chapter 55).

There is a mutual indwelling between God and the essence or substance of human beings. "Greatly ought we to rejoice that God dwells in our soul; and more greatly ought we to rejoice that our soul dwells in God." God and the human soul are united and mutually indwell from the first moment each human soul is created.

Turning to the second dimension of Julian's exposition of human identity, "sensuality," this aspect of human nature is broadly speaking changeable (chapter 45). What is described as the lower part of the soul is united directly to the embodied dimension of human life in space and time. In a sense, sensuality expresses our incompleteness as human persons. As Julian puts it, "in our sensuality we are lacking" (chapter 57). However, this notion of "lacking" does not simply mean that we are faulty or flawed. Rather, it also suggests that we are incomplete in a more positive sense. We are unfinished beings and a "work in progress." As such we will ultimately be completed by God in heaven. In that sense, sensuality stands for the dimension of human existence that is necessarily a dynamic and evolutionary process. Importantly, Julian is clear that our sensuality is precious in God's eyes. Indeed, in and through Christ God dwells in our sensuality.

> I also saw that God is in our sensuality, for in the same instant and place in which our soul is made sensual, in that same instant and place exists the city of God, ordained for him without beginning.

> He comes into this city and will never depart from it, for God is never out of the soul in which he will dwell blessedly without end. *(Chapter 55)*

Sensuality may also be said to stand for the dimension of the human self that we perceive in our bodily, historical, context-specific lives. Neither image of "the self," whether substance or sensuality, is exclusively true. However, neither aspect is untrue. The paradox of human identity is somehow caught in the image of "the crown." We are God's crown. This is both a crown of thorns as Jesus Christ suffers for our sins (chapter 4) and also a crown of glory "which crown is the Father's joy, the Son's honour, the Holy Spirit's delight, and endless marvellous bliss to all who are in heaven" (chapter 51).

Yet we need to be careful. Substance and sensuality are not unequal or radically separated. "As regards our substance, it can rightly be called our soul, and as regards our sensuality, it can rightly be called our soul, and that is by the union [Middle English "oning"] which it has in God" (chapter 56). Our substance and sensuality are united through God's incarnation in human history. "And so in Christ our two natures are united." Also, "For the same time that God joined himself to our body in the maiden's womb, he took our soul, which is sensual, and in taking it, having enclosed us all in himself, he united it to our substance" (chapter 57). Thus sensual human life is gradually drawn up into the eternity of God.

In Julian's theological anthropology, her conception of human identity is fundamentally positive because it is grounded in her experience of God-as-love provoked by her dramatic visions of the sufferings of Christ on the cross. As Julian sees it, the cross is both a sign of our need for healing and also of our eternal and basic worth "in God's sight." In the end, Julian images our human nature as an "honourable city." Sensuality has dignity too. "That honourable city in which our Lord Jesus sits is our sensuality, in which he is enclosed; and our natural substance is enclosed in Jesus, with the blessed soul of Christ sitting in rest in the divinity" (chapter 56).

Julian and Apophatic Anthropology

In the minds of many people, the rich imagery used by Julian of Norwich in her text precludes thinking of her in terms of apophatic theology. Yet, while on the face of it, Julian has an overall "positive" or kataphatic approach to theology, I would suggest that in the end she also has an apophatic or "negative" dimension. Most immediately this applies to her theology of God. Thus, while the final chapter 86 of the Long Text

indicates yet again that "Our Lord's meaning is love," and only love, on another level, as the same chapter also underlines, Julian's book, while begun by God's gift of "seeing," is "not yet completed." Julian's own theological journey as well as her theological teaching is necessarily incomplete because her theological reflections take us to the boundaries of the knowable to touch upon what cannot be fully known. In her own words, there is always and necessarily "a marvellous great mystery hidden in God" (chapter 27). Her theology is at the same time one of "seeing" (or knowing) truly in a new way and also of apophatic unknowing at the deepest level. This "negative" or apophatic dimension of Julian's theology does not concern only her approach to the reality of God. Precisely because human beings are created in the image of God and are forever united with God in their substance, this apophatic dimension to theology also applies to our inability to grasp the full depths of our human identity.

Julian's apophatic approach to human identity is hinted at in several places and in a number of different ways. For example, in the parable of a Lord and a Servant (chapter 51), the fallen and injured servant in the ditch cannot see himself truly precisely because he cannot see his lord who looks on him with pity rather than blame. Also, as we have noted earlier, in chapter 56 the true knowledge of our own soul (our fundamental identity) is dependent on having knowledge of God, because our identity is "in God." "And therefore if we want to have knowledge of our soul, and communion and discourse with it, we must seek in our Lord God in whom it is enclosed" (chapter 56).

Equally, when "oned" with God, I cease to be – or, rather, discover myself not to be – a "self" apart from God in the sense of an individualized and free-standing self. Julian echoes Augustine in seeing our deepest self, symbolized as the "heart" in Augustine and our "substance" in Julian, as the true "I am." This is where I am at one with God. In our highest powers, our "substance," we become by grace a "self" that cannot be distinguished from God except that we are created and God is not created (chapter 54).

> Our soul is made to be God's dwelling place, and the dwelling place of the soul is God, who is not made. It shows deep understanding to see and know inwardly that God, who is our maker, dwells in our soul, and deeper understanding to see and know that our soul, which is made, dwells in God's being; through this essential being – God – we are what we are.

In essence, in her quest to understand human nature, Julian is not given conclusive knowledge-as-fact but persistently senses a "surplus of

meaning" to which she needs to return again and again. "So I saw him [God] and sought him, and I had him and I lacked him; and this is and should be our ordinary undertaking in this life, as I see it" (chapter 10). Even at the end of the Long Text (chapter 86) she is clear that "this book is begun by God's gift and his grace, but it is not yet performed, as I see it." This is both a reference to our incomplete understanding of our human nature and to an incomplete process of "becoming" (particularly in reference to the dimension of "sensuality") which will find completion only in heavenly joy.

Notes

1 This version is based on the modern translation of the Long Text by Edmund Colledge & James Walsh, in *Julian of Norwich: Showings*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978, p 183. However, there is an unfortunate misprint which has not been corrected since the text's original publication in 1978. This misprint omits the answer to Julian's query. I have therefore inserted the answer as it appears in the Short Text, chapter iv, in *Showings*, p 130. This corresponds accurately to the Middle English text.

2 See Nicholas Watson & Jacqueline Jenkins, eds., *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, p 138, notes on Chapter 5; also Bernard McGinn, *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism: 1350–1550*, New York: Crossroad, 2012, Chapter 12 "Julian of Norwich: 'Love is oure lordes mening'," p 434 & note 53.

3 See Kerrie Hide, *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfillment: The Soteriology of Julian of Norwich*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001, p 66.

4 See Colledge & Walsh, *Showings*, p 197. The chapter overall suggests a spatial image. Thus, "By which vision I saw that he is present in all things." Also, "For he is at the centre of everything."

5 See R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p 78.

6 See, for example Grace Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, 2nd edition, London: SPCK, 2000, pp 137–149 and Joan M. Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter: The Theology of Julian of Norwich*, New York: Crossroad, 1991, pp 104–116.

2

Thomas Aquinas and Reformed Biblical Interpretation: The Contribution of William Whitaker

David S. Sytsma

In recent decades scholars have brought renewed attention to Thomas Aquinas as a biblical exegete, and the importance of Scripture for his *Summa Theologiae*. The study of Aquinas's use of the Bible is now something of a "hot topic" (Levering 2014, xi; Prügl 2005). Before he began composing his famous *Summa Theologiae* around 1265, Aquinas had already lectured on the Bible for over a decade, first at Cologne prior to 1252 (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations), and then from 1256 as *magister in sacra pagina*. This was a position with three duties: to comment verse by verse on the Bible (*legere*), to formulate topical objections and replies (*disputare*), and to preach (*praedicare*). As *magister*, Aquinas lectured on Job, Matthew, John, the Psalms, and the traditionally received Pauline epistles, which included Hebrews (Torrell 2005a, 27–28, 54–74; Prügl 2005, 387–91; Chenu 1964, 233–63). In both theory and practice, Aquinas was a major contributor to the late-medieval emphasis on the literal sense of Scripture (Prügl 2005, 393–94; Muller 2003, 2: 35–7, 56–7). Aquinas himself held that the Psalms and Pauline epistles contain "almost the entire *doctrina* of theology" (*In epist. Pauli*, prol.; Persson 1970, 53), and scholarship has confirmed that his great *Summa Theologiae* is, in the memorable words of Marie-Dominique Chenu, "embedded in an evangelical soil" (1964, 233). Taken together, the *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa contra Gentiles* contain about 25,000 biblical citations (Torrell 2005b, 72). According to a recent estimate, "three quarters of the questions of the *Summa theologiae* contain Pauline quotations," for a total of roughly 2,198 Pauline citations, almost half of

Aquinas Among the Protestants, First Edition. Edited by Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen.

which derive from Romans and 1 Corinthians (Levering 2014, xix–xx). Although Thomist scholarship since *Aeterni Patris* was long dominated by interest in Aquinas as predominantly a philosophical thinker (Kerr 2002, 17–34) – a perspective also assumed in twentieth-century Protestant misunderstandings of Aquinas as a rationalist (Vos 1985) – we can now say that "his systematic works [are] more scriptural and exegetical than much traditional Thomistic scholarship has recognized" (Harkins 2013, 236).

The Pauline epistles, particularly the Epistle to the Romans, were of course also foundational to the inception of Protestant theology (Lohse 1995, 68–95; Wengert 1996; Muller 2000, 27–9, 127–30). The immersion of both Aquinas and Protestants in the Pauline epistles, along with their shared emphasis on the literal sense (Muller 2003, 2: 469–72; Schreiner 1994), raises the interesting question of whether and to what extent Protestants may have read and benefited from Aquinas's hermeneutics and exegesis. Neither Luther or Calvin seem to have had a good firsthand knowledge of Aquinas's exegesis. According to Janz, Luther had "a dubious acquaintance with Thomas' Scripture commentaries" (1989, 27), and he arguably misunderstood Aquinas's Augustinian view of grace (Steinmetz 2002, 55; Janz 1989, 57–8). Luther was also dismissive of Aquinas's commentaries. After Melanchthon complained that biblical commentaries degenerated after the fourth century (Pauck 1969, 19–20), Luther agreed: "You speak the truth concerning Jerome, Origen, Thomas and others like them. For they wrote commentaries in which they handed down their own thoughts rather than Pauline or Christian ones" (1522, aii; Wengert 1996, 124). In his 1536 *Institutio*, Calvin's knowledge of scholastic theology in general was initially limited to Gratian's *Decretals* and Lombard's *Sentences* (Ganoczy 1987, 176–7). In his later works he only cites Aquinas four times, and provides no indication of having read his commentaries. In the opinion of Anthony Lane, Calvin's few citations could be due either to reliance on intermediate sources or to a restrained practice of citation (1999, 45; cf. Vos 1985, 38–9). The thesis of an indirect knowledge is supported by the fact that Calvin arguably misinterpreted Aquinas's doctrine of predestination (Raith 2011, 156–7). Some scholars also posit an indirect influence of Aquinas on Calvin via the late-medieval exegesis of Nicholas of Lyra (Raith 2014, 10; Schreiner 1994, 9, 91; Steinmetz 2010, 148–51; Muller 2000, 56).

While there is little evidence for a direct positive relation between Luther or Calvin and Aquinas's biblical interpretation, the same is not true for other Reformers. Despite Melanchthon's dismissive attitude toward the

scholastics, in his exegesis of the Gospel of John "parallels to Thomas Aquinas's *Expositio in Johannem* are abundant and striking" (Wengert 1987, 95). Matthias Flacius Illyricus cited a number of Aquinas's Pauline commentaries positively in his *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* (1567, 1:100, 489–91, 493–94, 910, 1139, 1154, 2:174, 281, 383–4, 562), an influential work for both Lutheran and Reformed hermeneutics (Muller 2003, 2:105–7). Thomas Cranmer also owned and annotated Aquinas's Pauline commentaries (Selwyn 1993, 69), and collected notes on various topics, including Scripture and justification, from both Aquinas's biblical commentaries and the *Summa Theologiae* (Cranmer 1844–6, 2:35, 52n1, 203–4, 208–11). Cranmer was especially interested in Aquinas's views on grace and free will, referring with approval to Aquinas's commentary on Romans 9 in the midst of extensive notes on Aquinas's doctrine of grace in *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae.109–12 (Cranmer ca. 1538–44, fols. 112v–118v; Null 2000, 198n167, 202n185, 264n47).

A number of Reformers were heavily exposed to Thomist theology – Martin Bucer, Heinrich Bullinger, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Girolamo Zanchi, and to some extent Huldrych Zwingli and Johannes Oecolampadius – before their conversions to Protestantism. Such Protestants were of course more informed about Aquinas's writings than were Luther and Calvin. Bucer was more familiar with Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* than his commentaries (Greschat 2004, 24–25; Steinmetz 2010, 147). Nonetheless, in contrast to Calvin's critique of Aquinas on predestination, Bucer praised Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* 1a.23 for "rightly refut[ing] the error" of certain church fathers that "our good works are in any way the cause of our predestination" (1562, 412[F]; more citations at 302, 323, 392–3, 460). Like Bucer, both Bullinger and Vermigli drew mostly on Aquinas's systematic works. Yet Bullinger was also reading Aquinas's commentaries on 1 Corinthians (Bullinger 1539, 93v), Hebrews (Bullinger 1532, 88r), and the inauthentic commentary on Revelation (Bullinger 1557, βv, 31, 39, 133, 170, 255, 290, 295, 303). Vermigli cites Aquinas's lectures on Galatians once (Donnelly 1976a, 24–8), and his commentaries reveal traces of the *Summa Theologiae* (cf. Balserak 2009, 295). Zanchi exceeded his mentor Vermigli in respect for Aquinas – volumes 1–4 of his *Opera* cite Aquinas 128 times, Scotus four times, and Ockham not at all (Budiman 2011, 41–2) – and comes closest to meriting the label "Calvinist Thomism" (Donnelly 1976b, 444–52). Although Zanchi's biblical commentaries have received little attention, his interpretation of Ephesians 5:22–33 demonstrates points of continuity with both Aquinas and Calvin (Farthing 1993).

Scholarship has thus uncovered a more positive relation to Aquinas among sixteenth-century Reformers than existed with Luther or Calvin. Yet remarkably, among the most Thomistically informed Reformed theologians, use of Aquinas's exegetical works was overshadowed by attention to his systematic works, particularly the *Summa Theologiae*. Zanchi does not seem to have cited the commentaries at all, Vermigli only cited Aquinas's lectures on Galatians once, while Bucer's citations in his Romans commentary are largely to the *Summa Theologiae*. When we look to the post-Reformation era, a more balanced reception of Aquinas's works is apparent among Reformed theologians, with a noticeable rise in positive citations of Aquinas's commentaries,[1] along with increasing usage of the *Summa Theologiae* as an exegetical resource (Willet 1608a, 1608b; Davenant [1634]1831). How does one explain this growth of interest in Aquinas's exegesis? To a certain extent interest in Aquinas's commentaries might be explained as part of a growing interest in medieval exegesis more generally. But this is not the whole story.

In the present chapter I would like to suggest that one important factor in the greater post-Reformation attention given to Aquinas as a biblical interpreter is the influence of the *Disputatio de Sacra Scriptura* (1588) of William Whitaker (1548–95). Although born as a polemical response to Robert Bellarmine's *De verbo Dei scripto et non scripto* (1586), Whitaker's *Disputatio* went on to become a significant reference for the Reformed doctrine of Scripture in general (Muller 2003, 2:107–8). As Frits Broeyer (2001) has shown, Whitaker was also immersed in Aquinas's systematic and exegetical works. Building on the work of Muller and Broeyer, this study will examine Whitaker's contribution to the reception of Aquinas's biblical interpretation in greater detail. Whitaker's significance in this regard is twofold. First, he cited many commentaries of Aquinas on the nature of Scripture to make the case that Aquinas, although problematically dependent on the Vulgate in his exegesis, was not far removed from Protestant beliefs regarding the authority of Scripture. Second, he appropriated elements of Aquinas's hermeneutics within a larger framework informed by Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, thereby setting a precedent for similar reception in Reformed scholasticism. Just as Protestant theologians generally restricted and adapted – but did not altogether reject – medieval allegorical exegesis to suit Protestant doctrine and the primacy of the literal sense (Farmer 1997, 50–77; Scheper 1974; Blacketer 1999; Steinmetz 2002, 142–68), so also Whitaker's reception of Aquinas reflected an eclectic and critical reception of medieval scholasticism (cf. Muller 2003, 1:194–7). Whitaker left no

doubt that Aquinas belonged in many ways to Rome, but his sympathetic reading of Aquinas's hermeneutics and exegesis led the way toward a period of greater sympathy to Aquinas as a biblical interpreter.

Whitaker's *Disputatio de Sacra Scriptura* in the Reformed Tradition

William Whitaker was educated in an already confessionally polarized environment. As a student at Trinity College, Cambridge since 1564, Whitaker witnessed the rise of controversial literature in England, as his uncle and mentor, Alexander Nowell, produced tracts during 1565–7 against the Catholic controversialist Thomas Dorman. Nowell and Dorman sparred over the church fathers, and this certainly would have left an impression on the young Whitaker, who dedicated his first book to his uncle (Whitaker 1569). By the time he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1580 he had made much progress, not only in his knowledge of the church fathers but also the scholastics. This knowledge is evident throughout his earliest polemics against Catholic controversialists Edmund Campion (1581, 1583a), Nicholas Sanders (1583b), John Durie (1583a), and William Rainolds (1585). Already in his response to Campion, Whitaker cites Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* repeatedly (1581, 146–7, 160, 209, 213–14).

When Whitaker came to write his *Disputatio*, he was thus already an experienced controversialist, not only sparring over church fathers as Nowell before him, but now also medieval scholastics, and particularly Aquinas. As he noted to the reader, "nor do we produce merely the ancient fathers of the church as witnesses on our side, but also the schoolmen and classic authors of the papists" (Whitaker 1588, "Ad Lectorem Christianum," 1849, 707). Post-reformation polemics with Catholics were thus an important factor pushing Whitaker to delve more deeply into the study of Aquinas. While Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* is sometimes seen as a forerunner of later English appreciation of Aquinas's works (e.g., Ryan 1948), it ought to be noted that Whitaker was already drawing on Aquinas's works more than a decade before Hooker's *Laws* went to press in 1593. Interest in Aquinas should thus not be understood as limited to a narrowly defined "Anglican" tradition. In fact, beginning in the 1580s, Oxford and Cambridge witnessed a heightened interest both in medieval scholastic theology (Schmitt 1983, 64–7) and Zanchi's Thomistically inclined

De natura Dei (1619, vol. 2; Dent 1983, 80, 96–102; O'Banion 2005). Whitaker was at the forefront of this trend.

Whitaker's *Disputatio* had a major impact on the Reformed doctrine of Scripture comparable to the impact of Franciscus Junius's 1594 work *De theologia vera* on the definition of theology (Muller 2003, 1:113–17). Whitaker first delivered its contents orally before students at Cambridge, which certainly reinforced local interest in the printed work (1588, "Ad Lectorem Christianum," 1849, 707). Andrew Willet, for example, followed Whitaker's method and arguments closely in the preface of his own frequently reprinted *Synopsis Papismi* (1592, 1–41). After its initial Cambridge printing (1588), the *Disputatio* was soon reprinted in multiple editions at Herborn (1590, 1600, 1603), and then as part of the two-volume *Opera* at Geneva (1610). The *Disputatio* was quickly incorporated into Amandus Polanus's *De verbo Dei didascalia* (1593, 30–1), which plagiarized it without attribution.[2] Polanus's *De verbo Dei* was reprinted in an enlarged edition in *Sylloge thesium theologicarum* (1597), and its arguments integrated into the frequently reprinted *Syntagma theologiae christianae* (1609), thereby silently spreading Whitaker's ideas. Although many other theologians no doubt also drew silently upon Whitaker's *Disputatio*, we find overt dependence on him from an impressive number of authors. Matthias Martini (1603, 517) pointed his readers to Whitaker's *Disputatio*, followed by Polanus's *De verbo Dei*, as "the most erudite writings" on the topic of Scripture. Bartholomäus Keckermann (1602, 178, 181, 186, 190, 192, 196), André Rivet (1627, 214, 224–6, 229), and Johannes Maccovius (1650, 13, 19, 47, 48), among others, all drew extensively on the *Disputatio* (Morton 1609, 313–23; Walaeus 1643, 1:137b, 141b; Leigh 1654, 17–22, 28, 54–6, 64, 69, 75–9, 87, 95–7, 103, 111, 117; Nethenus 1657, 14, 65; Wilson 1678, 169, appendix 10). As Muller observes, Whitaker's *Disputatio* was still being cited as an authority in Petrus van Mastricht's 1682–7 *Theoretico-practica theologia* (1715, 1.2.9, 1.2.49; Muller 2003, 2:108).

The popularity of the *Disputatio* was due first of all to its high degree of erudition. In addition to a wealth of biblical arguments, Whitaker effectively piled up patristic and medieval authorities that contradicted post-Tridentine Catholic controversialists (Muller 2003, 2:107–8). To following generations of Protestants, Whitaker's erudition was legendary. The great scholars Joseph Scaliger and Isaac Casaubon praised his breadth of knowledge (Broeyer 2001, 161).

The *Disputatio*'s wide readership was also due to the fact that it was the first major response to Bellarmine's 1586 work *De verbo Dei scripto et non*

scripto. Already in 1586 Whitaker had acquired manuscripts of Bellarmine's lectures, probably through the efforts of English spies in Rome, which facilitated his speedy reply (Broeyer 2001, 158; cf. Whitaker 1588, Br, 174, 235, 406, 457, 1849, 12, 242, 322, 540, 609). Bellarmine's *De verbo Dei* and the subsequent *Disputationes* generated an avalanche of some two hundred polemical responses, both Protestant and Catholic (Sommervogel 1890–1932, 1:1165–80). As the first Protestant response to Bellarmine, Whitaker's *Disputatio* not only provided a model for subsequent Reformed polemics, but also helped to define the major topics for the later Reformed doctrine of Scripture. Whitaker identified a number of points of debate – the number of canonical books, their authentic editions and versions, their authority, perspicuity, interpretation, and perfection – and these subtopics found their way into the Reformed *locus* on Scripture (Muller 2003, 2:94–5, 108).

As post-Reformation theologians paged through Whitaker's *Disputatio*, they would have been confronted with citations not only to the usual biblical and patristic authorities, but also to a range of medieval and early-modern scholastics, weighted heavily in favor of Aquinas and sixteenth-century Thomists (Broeyer 2001, 159–60). Whereas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* and biblical commentaries figure prominently in the *Disputatio*, Scotus is cited favorably only once (Whitaker 1588, 530, 1849, 707). In this respect the *Disputatio* exceeds Zanchi's 1593 work *De scriptura sacra* (1619, 8:349), where Aquinas is hardly mentioned.

Whitaker appears to have acquired his knowledge of Aquinas's commentaries between 1581 and 1583. In his reply to Campion (1581), Whitaker only cites the *Summa Theologiae*. Two years later, however, his reply to Durie includes citations not only to the *Summa Theologiae* but also to Aquinas's commentaries on Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Titus, and the inauthentic commentaries James, Jude, and Revelation (assumed by Whitaker to be genuine).[3] Around this same time Whitaker gave lectures on 1 Timothy in which he cites Aquinas's lectures on the same epistle (Broeyer 2001, 173). When he replied to Rainolds in 1585, Whitaker was also familiar with Aquinas's commentary on Job (Whitaker 1585, "An Answer to Master Rainolds Preface," 9 [*ST* 1a.1.8, *ad* 2], "An Answer to Master Rainolds Refutation," 88 [*ST* 1a.25.3], 151 [*In Iob* 31], 187 [*In Rom.* 12]). By the time he came to write the *Disputatio*, Whitaker had read most of the remainder of Aquinas's Pauline commentaries – 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy – along with the *Catena aurea* on the Gospels, and the inauthentic commentary on 1 John. He also drew on the *Summa Theologiae* as a source of biblical interpretation.

The Philological Weakness of Aquinas's Exegesis

Before we turn to Whitaker's positive use of Aquinas, we should observe his critical remarks on Aquinas's exegesis. As a humanistically trained Protestant, Whitaker sharply subordinated the authority of all translations to the original Hebrew and Greek texts, whereas Aquinas, although open to correction of translations based on the original languages, lacked philological resources and based his interpretation largely on the Latin Vulgate available to him (Prügl 2005, 397–9; Pope 1925, 112–21). Whitaker drew attention to this philological weakness. In particular instances, argued Whitaker, Aquinas was misled by the Vulgate, which obscured the true sense gathered from the original languages.

According to Whitaker, "those divines, whom they call scholastic, have drawn some most absurd conclusions from the Latin Vulgate edition." Whitaker provides various examples from Aquinas. The first example comes from the interpretation of Song of Songs 2:4, translated *Ordinavit in me caritatem* ("He set in order charity in me"). Aquinas repeatedly uses this translation, notes Whitaker, to prove "that there is a certain order and certain degrees in charity." Although Whitaker agrees with Aquinas's theological conclusion on order and degrees in charity, he disagrees with the interpretation of the passage, which he translates *Vexillum eius erga me caritas* ("His banner towards me is charity") (Whitaker 1588, 99–100, 1849, 140–1; cf. *ST* 1a.96.3; 2a2ae.26.1; 2a2ae.44.8; *In Rom.* 13, lect. 2; *QDVCom* 2.9; *In Sent.* 3, d. 29.1.6).

The second example comes from Romans 13:1b, which Aquinas, following the Vulgate, renders as a separate sentence: *Quae a Deo sunt, ordinata sunt* ("Those things that are from God, are well-ordered").[4] Whitaker points out that Aquinas from this sentence "collects in many places that all things are well and rightly constituted by God, and specially in *Prima Secundae*, q. 102, a. 1, he proves from these words, that ceremonial precepts have a reason." However, the Vulgate omits the word "powers" (*ἐξουσία*) and places the comma after *a Deo* rather than before it. Aquinas, following the Vulgate, thus changes the sense from the specific institution of authority ("those powers that exist, have been ordained by God") to a general statement regarding God's institution of good order in all things (Whitaker 1588, 100, 1849, 141; cf. *ST* 1a.22.2; 1a.96.3; 1a2ae.100.6; 1a2ae.102.1; 1a2ae.111.1; 2a2ae.172.2; 3a.30.4; 3a.31.3; 3a.36.2; 3a.42.1; 3a.55.2; *In I Cor.* 15, lect. 3; *QDM* 16.9; *QDP* 6.1; *In Sent.* 4, d. 2.1.4 qc. 3; d. 24.1.1 qc. 1; *SCG* 3.76; 3.81).

Elsewhere in his *Disputatio*, Whitaker observes a similar exegetical error made by Aquinas from dependence on the Vulgate. Aquinas relies on the Vulgate's translation of Ephesians 6:13, *Ut possitis resistere in die malo, et in omnibus perfecti stare*. The translation *in omnibus perfecti* in this place, argues Whitaker, is a poor rendering of *ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι*. The Greek does not mean "all things being complete," but rather, as Chrysostom explained, "to stand firm ourselves and unconquered." Consequently, Aquinas's argument from this passage for two kinds of *perfection*, of the way (*viae*) and of the homeland (*patriae*), "although they are true in themselves, are things wholly impertinent to the passage before us" (Whitaker 1588, 142–3, 1849, 197–8; cf. *In Eph.* 6, lect. 4; *ST* 2a2ae.184.1, *ad* 2).

It is remarkable that the examples Whitaker cites in the *Disputatio* of Aquinas's exegetical errors are mainly methodological criticisms regarding the way Aquinas reached his conclusions, and indicate little substantive disagreement with Aquinas's conclusions themselves. In one place, however, he identifies an exegetical mistake of practical consequence. This stems from the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:16b, which the Vulgate rendered *qui supplet locum idiotae* ("the one who supplies the place of the unlearned"). From this translation, Whitaker notes that Aquinas and sixteenth-century Roman Catholics could argue that as long as a cleric understands public prayers, they need not be performed in the vernacular. But Whitaker points out that *ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον* does not mean a "person" who "supplies" but rather a "place" that one "fills," which gives the sense of "he who occupies the room, and sits among the laity." Accordingly, the one who occupies the room and answers "Amen" (1 Cor. 14:16) is not a cleric but a layman, as Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Oecumenius interpret correctly (Whitaker 1588, 186, 1849, 259–60; cf. *In I Cor.* 14, lect. 3).

When Whitaker noted problems with Aquinas's exegetical dependence on the Vulgate, he was expressing an opinion shared by his Reformed contemporaries. John Rainolds, for example, also censured this aspect of Aquinas's interpretation. Rainolds urged that although Aquinas had "rare gifts of wit, learning, and industry," he also introduced errors at various points by following bad translations, corrupt interpretations of church fathers, and overvaluing the opinion of Aristotle (Rainolds 1584, 111). Both Whitaker and Rainolds thus pointed to flaws in Aquinas's exegetical practice with attendant textual and interpretive corruptions. Whitaker's examples would instruct his Protestant readers to read Aquinas's works and commentaries with caution, and in comparison with the original languages

and with more philologically equipped church fathers and humanistically trained sixteenth-century exegetes.

Aquinas and the Authority of Scripture

While Whitaker pointed to various errors in Aquinas's practice of exegesis, he also appealed positively to Aquinas's opinion on the canonical authority and perfection of Scripture. By this perfection, Whitaker did not exclude the interpretation of Scripture by means of the "rule of faith" in the ante-Nicene sense of the "compendium and sum and ascertained sense of Scripture" (1588, 359, 1849, 484–5; citing Tertullian's *regula fidei*), or deny that the apostles handed down unwritten traditions regarding "external polity and order," but rather asserted that "all the principal heads of doctrine are in Scripture" and that "all necessary dogmas may be drawn from Scripture" (1588, 406, 412, 1849, 541, 548–9; cf. Muller 2003, 2:195–206, 340–70). This topic had already been handled at length by Martin Chemnitz's 1566–73 *Examen concilii Tridentini* (Olson 1990), which made some use of Aquinas's *Catena aurea* (Chemnitz 1861, 21b, 26a). Chemnitz's *Examen* was an important source for Whitaker, who, while rehearsing familiar arguments, went much further in utilizing the writings of Aquinas on the topic of Scripture.

Aquinas understood Scripture to be the highest authority in matters of faith, but not to the exclusion of ecclesiastical interpretation or practices handed down in the church. The Scripture's supreme authority is reflected in Aquinas's contrast between necessary arguments taken from Scripture and the probable arguments of doctors (*ST* 1a.1.8, *ad* 2). The role of tradition is reflected in his assertion that the church's creedal teaching, as drawn up by the pope, constitutes an "infallible and divine rule" for interpretation (*ST* 2a2ae.5.3; cf. 2a2ae.1.9–10; Decker 1960), and in his belief that the apostles handed down unwritten things (*In I Cor.* 11, lect. 7; *In II Thess.* 2, lect. 3; Principe 1994). As Persson observes, Aquinas's usage of oral traditions "belong primarily to the sphere of the activity and outward ordering of the church and are therefore to be regarded as *traditiones servandae* [traditions to be observed]," whereas "specifically scriptural tradition has a primary reference to the substance of the faith" and "is always related to ideas like *faith* and *truth*" (1970, 45–7). Accordingly, Aquinas's occasional appeals to unwritten practices, notably the sacrament of confirmation and the veneration of images, are embedded in the context

of biblical argumentation (*ST* 3a.25.3, *ad* 4; 3a.64.2, *ad* 1; 3a.72.4, *ad* 1; 3a.78.3, *ad* 9; 3a.83.4, *ad* 2). Aquinas speaks of Scripture as the "foundation of faith" (*fidei fundamentum*; *ST* 3a.55.5) and the basis of faith's certainty (*fidei certitudo … innititur*; 2a2ae.110.3, *ad* 1). He interprets Galatians 1:6–10 as teaching that "nothing ought to be proclaimed (*evangelizandum est*) except what is contained implicitly or explicitly in the Gospels, and in the epistles, and in Holy Scripture" (*In Gal.* 1, lect. 2; cf. *ST* 1a.36.2, *ad* 1; *QDV* 14.10, *ad* 11), and explains John 21:24, with a cross-reference to Galatians 1:9, as teaching that "canonical Scripture alone is the rule of faith" (*sola canonica Scriptura est regula fidei*; *In Io.* 21, lect. 6; cf. *ST* 2a2ae.1.9; 3a.1.3; *Quodl.* 12.17; Persson 1970, 51–3, 64, 79–90). On the basis of such texts Yves Congar spoke of Scripture's "material sufficiency" (1967, 114), while Bruno Decker observed that for Aquinas "the Bible seems to be the only source of revelation" and "Scripture is the source and norm of church doctrine, faith, and theology" (1960, 123, 126; cf. the endorsement of this essay by Joseph Ratzinger in Wicks 2008, 276). Aquinas's position regarding Scripture's material sufficiency remained prevalent among medieval theologians until the early fourteenth century, sometime after which a two-source theory of tradition arose which allowed for doctrinal truths contained neither explicitly nor implicitly in Scripture (Oberman 1963, 361–412, 1966, 53–65; Congar 1967, 97–98; cf. Tierney 1972, 15–31, who corrects Oberman regarding canonists).

In contrast to Aquinas, Whitaker followed Protestants in denying Rome's magisterial interpretive authority (1588, 305–16; 1849, 410–16). Yet Whitaker did draw on Aquinas to counter Jesuit controversialists who posited "some revealed truths not found in Scripture," the so-called *partim-partim* view (Donnelly 1994, 105). He regarded the Jesuits' position as contrary to the weight of patristic and early scholastic testimony (Whitaker 1588, 506–30, 1849, 669–704; a sentiment shared by Ratzinger in Wicks 2008, 273–7). Whitaker was familiar with *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.8 and cited it favorably in his earlier works (1581, 213–14, 1583a, 356, 834–5, 1585, "An Answer to Master Rainolds Preface," 9). In his *Disputatio*, however, he chose to draw largely on Aquinas's commentaries in support of the authority and perfection of the Scriptures. He gravitated strongly to Aquinas's commentary on 1 Timothy, but also drew on Aquinas's commentaries on Ephesians, Philippians, and 2 Timothy.

In lecture one on 1 Timothy 6, Aquinas discussed the nature of canonical authority when he came to verse 3, *si quis aliter docet* ("If any one teaches otherwise"). Aquinas interprets this verse as establishing three ways of

determining erroneous doctrine: first, if it is against ecclesiastical doctrine; second, if it does not conform to Christ's words; and third, if the doctrine is not according to godliness, that is, the worship of God. On the first point, Aquinas writes as follows:

> If you wish to know whether a doctrine be erroneous, he shows this by three things. First, if it be against ecclesiastical doctrine. And therefore he says, "If any man teach otherwise," namely, than I or the other Apostles. Gal. 1:9: "If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema." For the doctrine of the Apostles and prophets is called canonical, since it is like a rule for our intellect. And therefore no one ought to teach otherwise. Deut. 4:2: "You shall not add to the word that I speak to you, neither shall you take away from it." Apoc. 22:18: "If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book." (Thomas Aquinas 2007, 77; *In I Tim.* 6, lect. 1)

Whitaker was especially interested in this text. He cites it in three places in order to support the authority of Scripture. Although Aquinas speaks here of apostolic *doctrina*, Whitaker understood this as synonymous with *scriptura*, as indicated by his conflation of *scriptura* with *doctrina* when citing the passage on two occasions – a conflation not without precedent in Aquinas himself (*ST* 1a.1.2, *ad* 2; Persson 1970, 53, 86–7).

Whitaker drew attention to Aquinas's comments on 1 Timothy 6:3 both for Aquinas's interpretation of the canonical status of Scripture and for Aquinas's use of biblical proofs. At the beginning of his *Disputatio*, when setting up the state of the question on Scripture as a canon for faith and morals, Whitaker writes, "Aquinas too lays down, that 'the doctrine of the apostles and prophets is called canonical, because it is, as it were, the rule of our intellect'" (Whitaker 1588, 3, 1849, 28). Toward the end of the *Disputatio*, one of the four reasons given for the perfection of Scripture is that it is canonical, which implies that "whatever disagrees with Scripture must be rejected; whatever agrees with it, received." In this context, Whitaker writes:

> Nay, Thomas himself, in his commentary on 1 Tim. 6, lect. 1, says that "Scripture is as it were the rule of our faith." He does not say "as it were" (*quasi*) to diminish the dignity of Scripture, but to show that he is drawing a comparison. *Quasi* is here a mark not of diminution, but of comparison. And that he means that Scripture is a perfect rule is evident from his subjoining that nothing should be added to or diminished from it: to which purpose he alleges Deut. 4:2 and Rev. 22:18–19. (Whitaker 1588, 499, 1849, 660)

The passages from Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18 that Whitaker draws attention to in this place also happen to coincide with Whitaker's own biblical argumentation. In fact, of the six primary passages that Whitaker uses to argue against Bellarmine's sense of unwritten traditions, the first three (Deut. 4:2, Rev. 22:18, Gal. 1:9) are the same passages cited by Aquinas (Whitaker 1588, 462–73, 1849, 615–28). Since Bellarmine considered these three verses as the first main objection of his Protestant adversaries (1856–62, 1:132b), Whitaker no doubt enjoyed finding Aquinas employing the same proof texts as the Protestants. In his specific explanations of Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18, Whitaker also draws on Aquinas. Whereas Bellarmine interpreted Deuteronomy 4:2 to mean an oral word not exclusive of traditions (1856–62, 1:132b–133a), Whitaker notes that Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* 3a.60.8 understood Deuteronomy 4:2 to mean "nothing should be added to the words of Holy Scripture, or diminished from them" (as to the sense), to which he joins the commentary of the famous sixteenth-century Dominican, Thomas de Vio Cajetan: "It may be gathered from this that the law of God is perfect" (Whitaker 1588, 464, 1849, 618; citing *ST* 3a.60.8; and Cajetan 1531, 227v). Whitaker then concludes his discussion of Revelation 22:18 by citing Aquinas's commentary on 1 Timothy 6 (lect. 1) with the observation that in order to confirm Scripture as the rule of our understanding, "[Aquinas] subjoins the two places of Scripture we have been handling [Deut. 4:2 and Rev. 22:18]" (Whitaker 1588, 468, 1849, 622).

After Aquinas's commentary on 1 Timothy 6:3, the second most frequently cited place is his commentary on Ephesians 2:20, which Whitaker refers to twice. As Whitaker notes out of Aquinas, both apostles and prophets are called the foundation of the church to show that "the doctrine of both is necessary for salvation" (Whitaker 1588, 491, 1849, 649; citing *In Eph.* 2, lect. 6, Whitaker 1588, 256, 1849, 349). Whitaker also appeals to Aquinas's comments on Romans 15:4, Philippians 3:1, and citations from Aquinas's *Catena aurea* on Matthew, in order to argue for the necessity of Scripture (Whitaker 1588, 392, 495–6, 528, 1849, 524, 655, 701–2; citing *In Rom* 15, lect. 1; *In Philip.* 3, lect. 1; *Catena aurea*, in Matt. proem; *Catena aurea*, in Matt. 15, lect. 5). The concluding page of the *Disputatio* cites Aquinas's comment on 2 Timothy 3:16 that Scripture makes "the man of God perfect" (Whitaker 1588, 530, 1849, 704, citing *In II Tim.* 3, lect. 3). Such citations do not exhaust Whitaker's use of Aquinas on Scripture (e.g., he uses his exegesis to support arguments for the use of vernacular; see Whitaker 1588, 172, 188, 1849, 240, 261; citing *In Col.* 3, lect. 3; *In I Cor.* 14, lect. 1), but suffice to demonstrate a remarkable knowledge of Aquinas's commentaries.

Aquinas and Hermeneutics

Aquinas's clearest discussion of principles of interpretation is found in *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.9–10. Despite only briefly discussing hermeneutical principles in two articles, Aquinas was immersed in the thought of Augustine's hermeneutical textbook, *De doctrina christiana* (*In Rom.* 1, lect. 3; *In Rom.* 13, lect. 2; *In Rom.* 15, lect. 3; *In I Cor.* 1, lect. 3; *In BDT* 2.3–4; *ST* 1a.5.1; 2a2ae.23–7; *QDVCom* 2.4, *ad* 2; *Quodl.* 2.2.1; 3.4.2; 4.12.1, *ad* 9; 6.9.3). Accordingly, *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.9–10 is heavily, albeit implicitly, indebted to *De doctrina christiana* (Wawrykow 1995). The same can be said of Whitaker, who drew heavily on *De doctrina christiania* for his chapter on the proper "means" for interpretation (Whitaker 1588, 349–53, 1849, 468–72; on the importance of Whitaker's rules, see Muller 2003, 2:482). Whitaker's specific interest in Aquinas for hermeneutics is twofold. First, he argues that significant continuity exists between Aquinas's hermeneutics and the Reformed understanding of the clarity of Scripture and reception of traditional fourfold exegesis (*quadriga*). Second, he uses Aquinas's exegesis to illustrate sound means for the interpretation of Scripture.

Whitaker remarks on *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.9–10 in sections from the *Disputatio* on the perspicuity and interpretation of Scripture. The perspicuity of Scripture, although discussed by Whitaker and other Protestants as a distinct controversy, involved the hermeneutical question of how to make sense of difficult or obscure passages. Reformers often argued, as Augustine had in his *De doctrina christiana* (2.6, 3.26) that obscure passages should be interpreted by clear passages within the canonical Scriptures (Muller 2003, 2:333–5, 458–9, 490–3; Chemnitz 1861, 66b). Whitaker noticed, as indeed modern scholarship has confirmed (Wawrykow 1995, 102–6), that Aquinas made the same point as *De doctrina christiana* 2.6 in *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.9:

> In the same way [as Augustine and Chrysostom], Thomas Aquinas, in the first part of the *Summa*, q. 1, art. 9 *ad* 2, whose words are these: "Whence those things that are in one place are spoken under metaphors, are expressed more clearly elsewhere." Therefore although the Scriptures are rendered more obscure in some places by metaphors, yet those metaphors are elsewhere explained so as to leave no obscurity in the discourse or sentence. (Whitaker 1588, 280, 1849, 379).

Moreover, both Aquinas and Whitaker explained, following in the steps of Augustine, that obscure passages exist in order to exercise faithful minds.

Aquinas and Whitaker also agreed in a further reason for obscurities: they keep pure things from profane minds (Whitaker 1588, 270, 1849, 365; *ST* 1a.1.9, *ad* 2; both refer to the profane as "dogs"). The reason many do not understand the Gospel, Whitaker also noted, citing Aquinas's commentary on 2 Corinthians 4:3, "is not in the gospel, but in the malice and incredulity of men" (Whitaker 1588, 287, 1849, 388; citing *In II Cor.* 4, lect. 2).

Aquinas's discussion of the senses of Scripture was also of considerable interest to Whitaker. For Aquinas, in order to function as a basis for argument (*ST* 1a.1.8), Scripture needs to speak unequivocally (*ST* 1a.1.10, *ad* 1). The literal sense establishes an unequivocal basis of argument for doctrine, and the traditional spiritual senses (allegory, tropology, anagogy) are based on the literal. The literal sense refers to things signified by *words* (whether proper or figurative), while the spiritual senses refer to spiritual realities further signified by *things* and follow the basic history of salvation – figures foreshadowed in the Old Testament (allegory), the acts of Christ signifying Christian morals (tropology), and the church as a shadow of future glory (anagogy). Furthermore, since God is the ultimate author of Scripture, and the literal sense is that intended by the author, the literal sense includes those intended spiritual realities that build on the literal sense (*ST* 1a.1.10; cf. Prügl 2005, 392–4; Dahan 1992, 109–17).

Whitaker found this hermeneutical position of Aquinas to be quite close to that of the Reformed tradition, and assented to it with only minor reservations. After describing the medieval fourfold exegesis with various examples including *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.10, Whitaker replied, "These things we do not wholly reject" (Whitaker 1588, 299–300, 1849, 403–4; citing *ST* 1a.1.10). Whitaker holds, as Aquinas did, that figures of speech are included in the literal sense along with proper words (Whitaker 1588, 300, 1849, 405; cf. *ST* 1a.1.10, *ad* 3; 1a2a.102.2, *ad* 1; *In Gal.* 4, lect. 7; Dahan 1992, 109–12). He agrees that the things signified by the words can also have a further spiritual signification as allegory, tropology, and anagogy. But given their basis in the literal sense, he argues that these spiritual interpretations should not be called "senses," which implies something separate from the literal sense. Instead, he describes the two levels of meaning arising from the sign and thing signified as two "parts" of the "whole and complete" (*totus & integer*) sense, which is "founded in the comparison and conjunction of the signs and things." The realities of the traditional spiritual senses remain, but they are tightly joined to the initial signification of words, and subordinated and renamed as "applications and accommodations," or "corollaries or consequences," of the literal sense (Whitaker 1588, 301–3, 1849, 405–8; cf.

Muller 2003, 2:469–82; Scheper 1974, 554–5). By incorporating what were considered separate senses into a broader compound definition of literal sense, Whitaker seeks to remove ambiguity and avoid arbitrary exegesis while retaining the benefits of spiritual signification (cf. Muller 2003, 2:472–82). He asserts that Aquinas agreed with this incorporation of the spiritual senses into the literal sense:

> Those things may, indeed, be called corollaries or consequences, flowing from the right understanding of the words, but new and different senses they are by no means. Thomas Aquinas himself appears to have seen this; for, in the first part of his *Summa* q. 1 a. 10, he writes thus: "Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and the author of Holy Scripture is God, who comprehends all things together in his mind; there is nothing improper in saying that, even according to the literal sense, there are several meanings of Scripture in one text." Since then that is the sense of Scripture, and the literal sense, which the Holy Spirit intends, however it may be gathered; certainly, if the Holy Spirit intended the tropologic, anagogic, or allegoric sense of any place, these senses are not different from the literal, as Thomas hath expressly taught us. (Whitaker 1588, 303–4, 1849, 408–9)

Whitaker reinforces his agreement with Aquinas by making the further point that "it is only from the literal sense that strong, valid, and efficacious arguments can be derived." If firm arguments cannot be taken from anything other than the literal sense, Whitaker reasons, then whatever validity spiritual meanings have is derivative of the literal sense. He then cites the dictum "metaphorical and symbolical theology is not argumentative" (*metaphorica et symbolica theologia non est argumentativa*), noting Aquinas's affirmation of the same (Whitaker 1588, 304, 1849, 409; citing *ST* 1a.1.10, *ad* 1; cf. Rainolds 1584, 239; citing *ST* 1a.1.10). Whitaker's explicit agreement with Aquinas on the literal sense as the point of departure for gathering spiritual meaning is so striking that his disavowal of spiritual "senses" almost looks like "a purely semantic distinction" motivated by a type of contemporary allegorical exegesis that had become unmoored from the literal sense (Scheper 1974, 552–3). It is interesting to observe that despite his polemical context, Whitaker's reading of Aquinas on the literal sense matches the understanding of recent scholarship, that for Aquinas "the contents of the spiritual senses do not extend beyond the literal sense" (Prügl 2005, 394).

In addition to his interest in Aquinas's hermeneutical views in *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.9–10, Whitaker drew upon Aquinas's works to illustrate good exegetical practice. One practice concerns the proper use of the

church fathers. To counter Roman Catholic claims that Scripture ought to be interpreted by the unanimous agreement of the fathers, Whitaker argues that the fathers frequently disagree. They were divided, for example, over whether to understand Romans 7:14 as regenerate or unregenerate Paul. Aquinas, Whitaker notes, recognized differences but sided with Augustine's mature opinion (Whitaker 1588, 340, 1849, 455; *In Rom.* 7, lect. 3; also *ST* 1a2ae.109.8–9; a similar example occurs in *In Gal.* 2, lect. 3; cf. Persson 1970, 51–2n55, 65–6). A second practice involves comparing similar places in Scripture and interpreting more obscure passages in light of plainer passages. Whitaker discusses the celebrated problem of reconciling Paul and James on justification. He argues that the proper solution is to differentiate between different senses of the word "justification." For James, justification means "to be declared and shown to be just," whereas Paul uses the term as "to be absolved from all sins, and accounted righteous with God." According to Whitaker, Aquinas observed these differences in the sense of terms. Whitaker cites the inauthentic commentary on James to make his point (Whitaker 1588, 352, 1849, 471–2; cf. [Pseudo-]Thomas Aquinas 1871–80, 31:349a), so his interpretation of Aquinas's genuine opinion was clouded. Aquinas does actually compare similar passages and distinguish multiple senses of justification (agreeing with Whitaker's methodological point), but he understands Paul's teaching to include both remission and transformation (*In Rom.* 2, lect. 3; *ST* 1a2ae.113.1; cf. Raith 2014, 35–9, 47–8; Harkins 2013, 258). A third practice concerns deducing consequences which are implicitly contained in Scripture. Whitaker commends Aquinas for proving in "many places" from Scripture that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (Whitaker 1588, 402, 1849, 536; citing *QDP* 10; and *ST* 1a.36.2).

Whitaker arguably disposed later Reformed theologians to look favorably upon Aquinas's hermeneutics. Although direct influence is often difficult to establish, we can be almost certain that Whitaker's *Disputatio* led Polanus and Keckermann to refer positively to Aquinas's hermeneutics. In the midst of heavily plagiarizing Whitaker, Polanus wrote, "Thomas Aquinas rightly pronounces in the first part of the *Summa*, q. 1 a. 10 that 'the literal sense is that, which the author intends': also that he can intend either proper or figurative words" (1593, 30 [no. 276]; cf. note 2 below). Keckermann, while drawing heavily on Whitaker's *Disputatio*, cited Aquinas for the dictum "symbolical theology is not argumentative" (1602, 196). After Whitaker's *Disputatio*, and its positive reception with Polanus and Keckermann, citations to *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.9–10 became

widespread (Lubbert 1591, 398, 409, 412, 420; Kimedoncius, 1595, 534, 536, 538; Polanus 1609, 1.44 [cols. 623–4]; Junius 1613, 2:1273; Crocius, 1636, 181, 212, 214; Becmann, 1644, 364; Chamier 1653, 56; Strang, 1663, 20, 25–30; Placeus, 1664, 92; Turretin, 1679–85, 2.19.3; Wilson 1678, 168–9; Momma 1683, 44). William Ames even referred to Domingo Báñez as one who "rightly explains" *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.10 (Ames 1629, 49).

Whitaker's direct impact on the use of Aquinas in post-Reformation exegetical practice, as distinct from hermeneutical principles, is more difficult to establish. Even so, the example of Andrew Willet, one of the most respected Reformed exegetes of the seventeenth century (Voetius 1644, 520–1: "In Danielem … instar omnium, Willetus … Ad Romanos … instar omnium Willetus"), is instructive. In his *Synopsis Papismi*, Willet not only closely followed Whitaker's *Disputatio* in general, but also his specific reconciliation of Paul and James on justification, including the same citation to Aquinas (Willet 1592, 32; 1603, 233–4; Whitaker 1588, 352). Willet's commentaries subsequently made extensive use of Aquinas, and not only on biblical books for which commentaries by Aquinas are extant, for example citing Aquinas's works about 100 times in his exposition of the Decalogue (Willet 1608b, 320–457). In Willet's commentary on Romans, Aquinas is cited at least 80 times (more than Bullinger, Bucer, or Melanchthon),[5] and appears as a respected, albeit fallible, interpreter. Although Willet freely disagrees with Aquinas, he also remarks appreciatively, "Thomas well observeth upon this place," "we mislike not the opinion of Thomas," or "Thomas saith better" (1611, 177, 227, 359). Willet even appeals to Aquinas's exegesis of Romans 4:25 to conclude, in response to the intra-Reformed dispute over the imputation of Christ's active obedience, that the actions of Christ's life (not merely his death) concur in justification (Willet 1611, 232–3; citing *In Rom.* 4, lect. 3; on the controversy, see Campos 2009). In Willet's exegesis, Aquinas has moved beyond a useful weapon for Catholic–Protestant polemics to a serious exegete worthy of consideration for intraconfessional Protestant debate.

Conclusion

The contrast between the reception of Aquinas in the twentieth century, during which both Catholics and Protestants largely ignored his biblical interpretation, and his reception in early-modern Protestant biblical interpretation, is striking. When we move beyond a narrow consideration of

Luther and Calvin to other Reformers and their successors, a far more positive relation to Aquinas's biblical interpretation is evident. Within the Reformed tradition, William Whitaker's *Disputatio de Sacra Scriptura* in particular both facilitated the integration of key points of Aquinas's hermeneutics into later Reformed hermeneutics and, through his frequent citation of Aquinas's biblical commentaries in support of the authority of Scripture, encouraged by example a more thorough acquaintance with Aquinas as an exegete.

Despite their break with Rome and narrative of medieval decline, Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries practiced their theology and biblical interpretation within a churchly context, shared with medieval theologians a high regard for the hermeneutics of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, and valued doctrinal and exegetical tradition as a source of precedent subordinate to the norm of Scripture (Muller 2003, 2:483–4, 502–3, 4:403–9; Olson 1990). By arguing that Aquinas, although philologically weak in comparison with later humanist advances, was also an ally to Reformed concepts of the authority of Scripture and hermeneutics, Whitaker joined Bucer, Vermigli, Zanchi, and others in advancing the authority of Aquinas among the Protestants as one of the *saniores scholastici* (Whitaker 1610, 1:693b; 1:651b: *scholastici prudentiores*) who could be used profitably as a probable doctor of the church under the *norma normans* of Scripture (cf. *ST* 1a.1.8, *ad* 2; *QDV* 14.10, *ad* 11).

Notes

1 See Perkins (1598, 9, 29, 31–2, 75, 88, 108); Tossanus (1603, 41); Roberts (1610, 47, 82, 85, 86, 87); Willet (1611, passim); Taylor (1612, 424, 636, 710, 713, 733, 737, 737, 751); Bunny (1616, 7, 47–9, 56, 72); Mayer (1631, passim); Odingsells (1637, 40, 53, 64, 68, 70, 72, 73, 80, 84, 85, 89); Davenant (1831, 1:100, 225, 541, 2:214, 348); Jones (1635, 5, 13, 29, 36, 185, 214, 264, 564, 576, 580, 587, 664, 665, 666, 667, 670, 682, 690, 700, 705); Laurentius (1642, passim); Gomarus (1644, 2:40b, 98b, 162b–4b, 198a, 220a, 225b, 269b, 294b, 3:282b); Hall (1658, passim); Burgess (1656, 6, 85, 132, 414, 1661, 127, 148, 338, 379, 498, 500, 549, 648, 659); Strang (1663, 165, 339, 348, 359, 378, 428, 431–3, 499); and Barlow (1699, 12).

2 Examples of plagiarism include: "Quia ex sensu duntaxat literali, firma valida & efficacia argumenta sumi possunt." (1593, 30 [no. 274]), which is slightly rephrased in Polanus's *Syntagma* (1609, 1.45 [col. 640]); and "Hinc tritum illud & vulgare dictum, *Metaphoricam & Symbolicam Theologiam non esse argumentativam*" (1593, 31 [no. 280]). Cf. Whitaker (1588, 304).

3 See Whitaker (1583a), 48 [Pseudo-Thomas], 72 [Pseudo-Thomas], 90 [Pseudo-Thomas], 164 [*ST* 1a.1.10, *ad* 1], 188 [*In I Cor.* 10, lect. 4], 288 [*Exp. Symb. Apost.*], 356 [*ST* 1a.1.8, *ad* 2], 400 [*In Sent.* 3, d. 2], 428 [*In I Cor.* 11], 538, 574 [*ST* 1a2ae.82.1], 580 [*ST* 1a2ae.110.1; *In Tit.* 2, lect. 3], 586 [*In Rom.* 8, lect. 6], 607 [*QDV* 6.2; *ST* 1a.23.1], 616 [*In Gal.* 3, lect. 4], 630 [*In Eph.* 1, lect. 5], 690 [*In I Cor.* 7, lect. 1], 707 [*In Gal.* 3, lect. 4], 709 [*In Gal.* 3], 711 [*In Gal.* 3, lect. 4], 716 [*In Gal.* 3], 771 [*In Gal.* 3, lect. 4], 784 [*ST* 1a2ae.114.1, *ad* 1], 791 [*ST* 1a.52.2], 834–35 [*ST* 1a.1.8], 853 [*ST* 1a.32.1], 868 [*ST* 3a.25.3–4], 882 [*ST* 1a.116.1]). Some of these citations are discussed in Broeyer (2001, 171–6).

4 The mid-sixteenth century Vulgate reads: "Omnis anima potestatibus sublimioribus subdita sit. Non est enim potestas nisi a deo. Quae autem sunt a deo, ordinata sunt" (*Biblia Sacra* 1549, 105).

5 Bullinger is cited about 10, Melanchthon about 25, Bucer about 45, Cajetan over 50 times, Calvin about 250, Lyra about 350, Beza about 370, Vermigli about 400, and David Pareus about 600.

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13

The Influence of Aquinas on Protestant Ethics

Daniel Westberg

The scope of Protestant ethics spans five centuries and a wide variety of countries, denominations, and educational traditions. There are attitudes and approaches to the morality of human actions within Protestantism that are inherently antithetical to any influence from Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic scholasticism he represents. These attitudes would include a suspicion of the influence of the pagan philosophy of Aristotle, a conviction that only the Bible ought to be a guide for ethics, and in some cases a preference in theory and practice for immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Reformed tradition and Anglicans (and some Lutherans) have been the least hostile to the influence of Aquinas, and the figures we consider here, until we come to the twentieth century, come from these traditions. We mention here but do not treat certain Anglo-Catholics whose aim was simply to appropriate the ethical section of the *Summa Theologiae* directly (e.g., Elmendorf, 1892) because our interest is in those who have a commitment to the Protestant heritage and seek to incorporate in it elements they find helpful from the Thomistic tradition. Underlying this chapter is a conviction that a virtue-centered moral theology based on reason, desire for the good, and union with God – which also avoids subjectivism, relativism, individualism, and indifference to God's law – is possible and desirable. The work of Thomas Aquinas is of great interest for developing such a moral theology.

We begin with the legacy of Aristotelian-Thomist ethics in the Reformation era, and then consider important Protestant representatives up until the period of the Enlightenment. This survey is illustrative rather

Aquinas Among the Protestants, First Edition. Edited by Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen.

than comprehensive, since a complete account would require a careful reading of the entire Protestant scholastic tradition from the standpoint of Thomistic ethics; but the hope is that some readers will be inspired to undertake further research.

From the Reformation to the Enlightenment

We would expect early Protestant theologians in general to be suspicious of Aristotle's ethics and their use by Thomas Aquinas. The main champions of Aristotelianism were the Jesuits in Italy and Spain, and the flourishing of Spanish Thomist scholarship at the University of Salamanca, the Dominican leadership in the Inquisition, and the recovery of vigor in the Counter-Reformation would all have been further grounds for suspicion of the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition. If the Franciscans and other Augustinian theologians had shown some stiff resistance to the enthusiasm for Aristotle in the thirteenth century, how much more would the Protestant Reformers have questioned the value of a theology based on Peripatetic philosophy and championed by theologians associated with the Spanish Inquisition and Counter-Reformation?

A dependable and coherent philosophical system is difficult to replace, however, and at first Aristotelian ethics remained strong in the Protestant universities of northern Europe, from Oxford to Uppsala (Kraye 1998, 1280). Peripatetic philosophy had been firmly entrenched in Dutch higher education, and in the field of ethics remained so even after the Cartesian controversies of the later seventeenth century. In Germany Melanchthon lectured on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Andreas Hyperius (1511–64) as well as other scholars continued the tradition of lecturing and writing commentaries on Aristotle (Stone 2000).

Reconciling Aristotle with Christianity had been a perennial challenge for theologians since the thirteenth century, and was especially so for Protestants. Some wrote works which corrected Aristotle according to Christian norms; others tried to retain as much of Aristotle as possible, and others played down the differences by finding close parallels between Aristotle and the Bible. The question whether Aristotelian ethics should continue to be taught in Christian schools was a standard topic in Protestant university disputations, normally answered in the affirmative, although there were some who argued that Aristotle's notions of the supreme good and virtue were so contrary to Christian faith that they did not belong in Christian education at all (Kraye, 1998, 1281).

Lutherans

The well-known hostility of Martin Luther to Aristotle and medieval scholasticism in general was bound to set a certain tone for Lutherans, even if, as noted above, Aristotelian ethics often appeared on the syllabi of evangelical universities in Germany. Luther's acquaintance with Aquinas was mostly indirect; for example, through the prejudiced view of Andreas Karlstadt or the somewhat more favorable teaching of Gabriel Biel (Janz 1989, 101–2). We know that copies of the *Summa Theologiae* would have been available to Luther in Erfurt and Wittenberg, but it seems that he confined his reading to the *prima pars* (Janz 1989, 110). Luther, like many later theologians, assumed that the ethical teaching of Aquinas was irrelevant, and missed out on useful insights on social and political issues (not to mention the theology of law) he might have found in the moral section of the *Summa*.

There was a renewal of interest in Aristotelian and medieval scholasticism in Lutheran circles in the early seventeenth century. This can be seen in the anthropological doctrine of Johann Gerhard (1582–1637), which often reveals a fundamental agreement between his teaching and that of Thomas Aquinas. Though Gerhard undoubtedly was acquainted with the teaching of Aquinas, it is difficult to tell whether the knowledge comes from compendia, or citations in later theologians, or from direct study of the passages in the works of Thomas himself (this also applies to many of the figures treated below).

The Reformed Tradition

The direct influence of Aquinas on the theology of Calvin is negligible, but it is still worthwhile to compare, as Helm (2004) does, their understandings of anthropology, practical reason, natural law, the effect of sin on the human soul, and free will, for example. Significant differences in teaching are evident, and the similarities are due mostly to a shared Augustinianism.

Theologians of the Reformed tradition in France and the Netherlands, at least in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were somewhat open to the construction of ethics in Aristotelian Thomism. One of the most influential French manuals, used in both Protestant and Roman Catholic countries, was the *Ethica* of the Cistercian Eustachius a Sancto Paulo, first published in 1609 for teaching at the Sorbonne. It followed a standard range of recognizably Thomistic topics, organized under three main headings: (1) happiness, (2) the principles of human actions, and (3) human actions themselves,

including the passions, virtues, and vices. In topics not treated by Aristotle, material is taken from Thomas Aquinas, the Bible, or various patristic or medieval writers (Kraye 1998, 1283).

Protestant textbooks differed from Catholic ones in two respects: they abandoned or radically simplified the scholastic mode of exposition, favoring more straightforward presentation of material, and their organization was based not on Thomist patterns but on schemes to suit pedagogical purposes. Most commonly, they divided ethics into just two parts: *Eudaimonologia* dealing with happiness, the goal of ethics, and *Aretologia*, dealing with virtue, the means to reach that goal (Kraye 1998, 1284). The passion for order, characteristic of these systematic manuals, found another outlet in dichotomization: dividing and subdividing every concept or topic in sight. Here we may note the influence of Peter Ramus (1515–72), known for his binary subdivisions and exercising a tremendous influence in Puritan circles as the Protestant alternative to Aristotelian logic and heavily influencing subsequent Reformed systematic theology and ethics.

Lambert Daneau (1530–95), pastor and later teacher at Leiden, followed Aristotle and Aquinas on the relation of soul and body and the description of human action, but modified the role of the intellect, and did not accept the distinction between acquired and infused virtues, on the grounds that corrupt human nature is incapable of acquiring virtue without grace. Thus a tension existed in Daneau between the scholastic terms and categories and the reformed theology of original sin (Baschera 2013, 533–4).

Kraye (1998) summarizes other Reformed teachers of ethics: Clemens Timpler (1511–87) exemplifies binary Ramist logic by dividing moral virtue into piety (living according to the rules of Christianity), and probity (which entailed behaving virtuously), either towards oneself (moderate self-love/temperance) or towards others, benefiting them either as individuals (mercifulness/civility) or as members of society (liberality/justice). Timpler's division of moral virtue was taken over by Franco Burgersdijck (1590–1635) of Leiden. He treated the Aristotelian virtues and admitted, as any Christian Aristotelian would, that piety towards God could not be learned from Aristotle. Burgersdijck composed his handbook on ethics to cover the same territory as Aristotle's ethics, but in more manageable form. Each of the 24 chapters had numbered paragraphs with pithy sentences backed up by references to Aristotle. Citations from the Bible as well as from other classical and Christian authors filled in the gaps but, interestingly, Burgersdijck also made considerable use of Thomas Aquinas, including a modified treatment of the passions. The influence of Aquinas

can be seen also in Adrian Heereboord, a student of Burgersdijck's, who retained a recognizably Thomist account, even at a time when one might expect some influence from Cartesian teaching (Kraye 1998, 1286).

The Puritans

The Puritans were also Reformed, of course, but we consider them separately from the continental tradition because the early Puritans were part of the Church of England and influenced later (non-Puritan) Anglicans. William Perkins (1558–1602) was an important early Puritan theologian in England, who, among other treatises, wrote a text on ethics significantly titled *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (Merrill 1966). Perkins intentionally steered ethics away from scholastic philosophy to Scripture, and also signaled a shift in emphasis towards conscience and law. There is little discernible influence of Aquinas.

More important was his student William Ames (1576–1633), who trained at Cambridge with Perkins but taught in the Netherlands and influenced much of the later Reformed ethical tradition in England, on the continent, and in Puritan circles in colonial America. He also emphasized Scripture as the source of reference for theology, evident in his popular *Medulla theologiae*. More important for moral theology is his 1639 work *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof*, still very much centered in Scripture, but also including scholastic discussions of the nature of conscience, intellect and will, the practical syllogism, and *synderesis* as the source of foundational moral norms. Although generally he did not cite Aquinas specifically, Ames undoubtedly turned to the *Summa Theologiae* as a source for these matters; but it is important not to exaggerate the dependence of Ames on Aquinas, since he felt the need to filter out the Aristotelian elements he found in the *Summa* (Fiering 1981, 24–5).

The question of the relation of the will and intellect is a critical one in the history of Western thought, and the influence of the voluntarist tradition of Scotus and Ockham following Aquinas must be taken into account. Ames recognized something of the complementary aspects of the will and intellect, as they related to goodness or truth, respectively. Perceiving this complementary function, which Burgersdijck and Heereboord also noted (Fiering 1981, 108–112), could well have been the result of a fairly careful reading of the *Summa*, but Ames also resisted the intellectualist position (often associated with Aquinas) since it implied tendencies toward Pelagianism (Fiering 1981, 120–3).

Ames defined conscience as belonging to the understanding and not the will, and disagreed with his mentor Perkins who said it was a faculty, and with Scotus and Bonaventure who made it a habit. Ames, evidently following Aquinas (but without citing him), makes it a practical judgment, "by which, that which a man knoweth is particularly applied to that which is either good or evill to him, to the end that it may be a rule within him to direct his will" (Ames 1975, 2). He may well have been following St Thomas, but then Ames goes on to give an example of "the force and nature of Conscience" and constructs this syllogism (Ames 1975, 3):

> He that lives in sinne, shall dye:
> I live in sinne;
> Therefore, I shall dye.

This is certainly a conclusion about the nature of life, logically valid and spiritually true, but not at all the kind of practical syllogism which Aristotle and Aquinas described, that is, a reasoning process leading to an action. Thus Ames, like nearly all theologians, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, failed to grasp the Aristotelian-Thomist model of practical reasoning. Even though the treatment has elements drawn from Aquinas, the whole treatise is under the influence of a different conception of moral reasoning, shaped by obedience to conscience.

The arguments used by Ames (1975, 186) against suicide, which include sinning against nature, against charity, and against the community, suggest that he consulted the *Summa*; but these and other topics such as war, usury, marriage, and so on are treated under the framework of the Decalogue (in book V of "Duties of Man Towards his Neighbour") rather than under virtues.

Ames does include brief summaries of virtues such as prudence, patience, fortitude, and temperance, but because he did not accept the validity of acquired moral virtues, these make their appearance in book III which deals with "Man's Duty in General" and begins with obedience. He picks up remnants of the Thomist tradition, but rearranges them in a foreign context. Vischer (1965) has summarized: Ames envisioned the moral life as one of obedience to the order of God summarized in the Decalogue. Virtue is no longer the perfection of all aspects of the soul but centered on the will's inclination to obeying the norm.

John Owen (1616–83) was the most learned of the Puritan divines of the seventeenth century, and had a wide acquaintance with the theological

tradition, including Thomas Aquinas and other scholastics. Cleveland (2013) has identified the main Thomistic elements in the writings of Owen: the Thomistic concept of God as pure act, the concept of infused habits which forms the basis for the operation of grace, and aspects of Christology. Of most relevance to moral theology is the discussion of infused habit.

John Owen did not seem interested in the formation of moral virtue that comes from good decisions and repeated action, but in the distinctive notion of infused virtue which does not come from human capacity but from grace. Cleveland (2013, 78) points out that John Owen follows the Thomistic understanding of an infused habit of grace that produces fruitful action in the Christian believer, and makes use of Aquinas's teaching that infused habits precede the individual actions which proceed from them; but his purpose in using this concept is to argue for the sovereignty of God in salvation and to counter Pelagianism. This is revealing in that Owen's exposition of the Aristotelian and Thomist category of *habitus* has to do with a specific polemical purpose of countering Socinianism rather than as part of a moral theology describing Christian character. In fact, within his framework of law, obedience, and holiness, the Reformed Owen stresses the inability of human nature to obey God, and is capable only of sinning against him.

In his chapters on the link between Owen and Aquinas on infused virtue, Cleveland is not in complete command of Aquinas's teaching. He states that a moral virtue is a "virtue of the faculty of the will" which betrays his reading of Aquinas through a later voluntarist lens (Cleveland 2013, 93). He shows little awareness of the distinctions between the moral virtues: that prudence is a moral virtue, *related* to the will, of course, but primarily a virtue of the intellect; while temperance and fortitude are perfections of sense appetite, formed by actions directed by will and intellect. Cleveland recognizes differences between Aquinas and Owen, but does not realize the extent of a fundamental difference in approach to the Christian moral life. Cleveland notes that, for Thomas, the infused virtues of faith, hope, and love direct all other virtues and habits to action that is consistent with the ultimate end of blessedness, while for Owen virtue directs all of the faculties of the soul to produce obedience and holy action; but then he asserts that Owen's view should be seen as in accord with Thomistic teaching. When we compare Aquinas's description of the work of the Holy Spirit in producing virtues of faith, hope, and love, which affects and perfects human intellect, will, and emotion and then transforms the moral virtues (humanly acquired) as well, this seems very different from the habit of holiness as the capacity to obey

God which Owen described. Instead of a primary virtue (charity) drawing us into fellowship and union with God, we have a virtue that enables us to be obedient to God.

Richard Hooker and Anglican Divines

In many ways Richard Hooker does not deserve his reputation as a transmitter of Thomism to the Anglican tradition. Although he provides an accurate summary of the Thomistic view of practical reasoning and the nature of law, he leaves out much of the *prima pars* and virtually ignores the virtues and related matter of the *secunda pars*. Hooker's role as a bridge from Thomism to the Caroline divines and later tradition seems much more important to those whose ethical system magnifies the importance of conscience, law, and obedience. Both Aquinas and Hooker have reputations as theologians of natural law, but this is unfortunate: in the case of Aquinas his valuable insights on law ironically contributed to distortions of his ethical system and the later legalism of Roman Catholic moral theology (Pinckaers 1995); and in the case of Hooker it led later Anglican theologians to accept the correctness of an ethic centered on law and conscience.

The "Caroline divines" were an important group of theologians during the reigns of Charles I and II and the Puritan interregnum, the most important of whom were Robert Sanderson and Jeremy Taylor. The two standard accounts of the moral theology of the period (McAdoo 1949 and Wood 1952) are rather slight volumes and published well before Vatican II and the subsequent reappraisal of the tradition of Roman Catholic moral theology, which is the necessary point of comparison for understanding the Anglicans. It was simply assumed by later Anglican moral theologians that Jeremy Taylor and the other Caroline theologians were faithful to the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, and this impression is conveyed also by Thomas Wood (1952, 79–84), who in his treatment of Jeremy Taylor and the period stresses the closeness with which Taylor follows Aquinas on natural law and conscience. This assumption of a basic continuity from Aquinas to Hooker to Jeremy Taylor and the other Carolines needs correction, however.

Robert Sanderson (1587–1663), bishop of Lincoln, had the reputation of being the clearest and most profound of the Anglican moral theologians. His original *De Obligatione Conscientiae* was a collection of 10 lectures in Latin, translated into English much later (Wordsworth 1877). In the first

lecture he disagrees with Aquinas's view that conscience is an act and instead argues that it is a habit (following Scotus and others), since to him it was a kind of "science." Following treatment of the inadequacy of good intention, and that the examples and teaching of famous men are not a reliable guide, Sanderson proceeds to spend more than half the space of his lectures on the force of obligation in human laws, treated in accordance with different modes of causality. Kelly (1967, 77) quotes from the fourth lecture of Sanderson on the force of conscience: "The Conscience hath this power over men's wills and actions by virtue of that unchangeable Law of God, which He establisheth by an ordinance of nature … that the will of every man … should conform itself to the judgment of the practical understanding or conscience, as to its proper and immediate rule, and yield itself to be guided thereby."

With his emphasis on conscience and obedience Sanderson has more in common with the tradition of Ames and Owen than with Aquinas, and leads to a moral theology emphasizing legal conformity, rather than the Thomistic view of the moral life founded on the virtues, with its greater emphasis on prudence as a dynamic guide, instead of a structure of commands interpreted by conscience (Kelly 1967, 179).

The Caroline divines, though their writing is often literary and academic, emphasized the connection of theology to life in their "practical divinity." This was especially true of Sanderson, who had a keen interest in the topic of justice. His treatment of the interpretation of laws and their application, which he viewed from the standpoint of both citizen and magistrate, owes much to Aquinas (McAdoo 1965, 38–40). This influence can be seen in his reflections on the need to consider the intention of the law when applying it to unusual or difficult circumstances. Sanderson had a deep concern for social issues, but did not let this suppress theological principles and concerns. Sanderson had the balanced outlook which was able to combine theology and social concern to their mutual strengthening.

Jeremy Taylor (1613–67), Bishop of Down and Connor, is the best known of these Caroline divines, largely for his popular devotional works *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*. His magnum opus in moral theology is the daunting *Ductor Dubitantium* (Taylor 1851–2), prolix and adorned with learned citations. A perusal of the work shows that Taylor is far fonder of citing Augustine, Cicero, and even Tertullian than Aquinas. His treatment of the philosophy of law is indebted not so much to the *Summa Theologiae* as to Gratian and other codices of civil and canon law. Taylor frequently cites Cicero, Seneca, and other pagan philosophers, and no doubt there are some

topics and illustrations embedded in the *Ductor* that come from Aquinas without attribution. But the fact that Taylor cites the *Nicomachean Ethics* and other Aristotelian works far more than the works of Aquinas shows it was not the Aristotelianism in the *Summa* that was thought to require tempering.

Agreement in approach, method, substance, and specific teachings is much more telling than a mere catalog of references, of course. The topics that Wood (1952) and McAdoo (1949) can cite as Thomistic in background are actually very few: the components of a human act, natural law, and conscience. Taylor often either disagrees outright or substantially modifies Thomas. For example, on natural law Taylor reduces the teaching of Aquinas to appetites, actions, and instincts common to humans and animals, a view quite different from Hooker's emphasis on right reason. Also, Taylor's category of conscience is far different from that of Aquinas, whose treatment occurs in the *prima pars*, on human nature as part of creation, and not in the central ethical section where he develops at length the process of human action, the moral evaluation of acts, and their connection to virtues and character. Taylor seems completely uninterested in the virtues; or to be more accurate, Taylor's interest in virtue does appear in his spiritual writings and in his treatment of Jesus in *The Great Exemplar*, but it remained unintegrated with the moral theology represented by *Ductor Dubitantium*, which was based on a system of obedience to conscience.

We must conclude, against the view that the Caroline divines were followers of Aquinas, that there is very little of Thomistic ethics left in the moral theology of the Caroline divines. True, they follow Aquinas in linking conscience with the intellect rather than the will, and in identifying the foundational moral principles with that aspect of the mind known as *synderesis*; but the fact that they did not notice that the treatment of conscience in the *Summa Theologiae* is peripheral (and is only an equivalent term for the practical judgment) and made so little use of the substance of Thomas's ethical teaching must lower our estimation of the degree to which they followed Aquinas. This conclusion gains force when we consider that Hooker's better treatment was available to them, but apparently either lightly regarded or less than carefully read.

One important qualification to this criticism is that Roman Catholic moral theology had long since adopted the structure of law, conscience, and obedience, with even less excuse, given that most Roman moral theologians, who would naturally have had more contact with the *Summa Theologiae*, exhibit little more faithfulness to what Thomas actually wrote

than the Puritans and Anglicans. Pinckaers (1995) has provided a helpful description of the distorted view of law, freedom, and conscience, which affected the entire Western Church in the area of moral theology from the late medieval period. He points to a major shift (produced by larger philosophical and cultural influences) to a fundamental orientation of the moral life to law and obedience. When prudence and the other virtues recede, or become aspects of an obedient will, then conscience becomes the source for moral reasoning, with the decision to act made by the will, a decision which then takes on the character of obedience or disobedience.

Roughly contemporary with the Caroline divines was the important continental figure Hugo Grotius (1583–1646), expert in the classics, history, law, and theology, and a key figure in the development of modern international law. In his important writings on natural law, justice, punishment, and war Grotius engaged with Aquinas, but in his encyclopedic fashion also drew on Aristotle, Cicero and the Stoics, Augustine, as well as Luis de Molina, Domingo de Soto, and Francisco Suárez. Tooke (1965) compares Grotius with Aquinas on natural law, war, and related issues.

At about this time (mid-seventeenth century) Aristotle finally lost his place in the university curriculum; scholastic theology and philosophy, along with Gothic cathedrals, were scorned as barbaric, and Thomas Aquinas was virtually forgotten in non-Roman Catholic circles. The new theories of Hume, Kant, and utilitarians ignored, or considered irrelevant, the ethical teaching of Aquinas. Even those whose approaches did overlap with Aquinas apparently did not think it worthwhile to consult the Angelic doctor, even when they would have been surprised by helpful insights. We may point to two examples: Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), though trained in a Puritanism not so far removed from William Ames, and who had an erudite and imaginative mind, did not go to the *Summa Theologiae* even on such topics as charity, self-love, the role of passions and affections, and the nature of virtue, about which both theologians wrote extensively.

The other example is Francis Wayland (1796–1865), president of Brown University and author of *The Elements of Moral Science*, an extremely popular textbook following its publication in 1835. He has fairly long treatments of the moral law, human action, conscience, virtue, happiness, justice, and love for God. He has some sources outside of Scripture (Joseph Butler, for example) but he seems completely unaware that Thomas Aquinas might have had some useful reflections on these topics. Not just interest in Aquinas, but even basic awareness of his contribution seems to have been lost in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Protestantism.

The Twentieth Century Revival of Thomism

Kenneth Kirk (1886–1954), professor of moral theology at Oxford, described the challenge of all ethics as the reconciliation of two opposing principles, law and liberty, or authority and individualism (Kirk 1920, ix). He hailed the contribution of Thomas Aquinas in addressing the challenge, and asserted that while Protestants erred on the side of liberty and individualism, the later Roman Catholic theology had lapsed into an almost complete authoritarianism. Kirk then goes on to undermine his analysis, however, by affirming that the group of Caroline divines achieved the kind of balance which came closest to the Thomist ethical ideal.

The structure of *Some Principles in Moral Theology* reflects Kirk's partial recovery of Thomas's ethics: he deals with theological virtues from the *Summa Theologiae*, has chapters on faith, Christian character and education, and the healing of the soul which reincorporate spiritual theology. He makes imaginative use of the links he sees between Thomas Aquinas and contemporary psychology.

A subsequent book on conscience, however, seems a regression, as Kirk (1927) replays discussions of conscience and casuistry in conjunction with error, doubt, and perplexity. In spite of his attraction to the *Summa*, he is still following in the footsteps of Taylor and Sanderson, influenced by the belief that they were accurate transmitters of Thomistic moral theology.

A few others followed Kirk's example in constructing a moral theology for Anglicans loosely based on the *Summa Theologiae*, and their works were used as textbooks in seminaries worldwide which had Anglo-Catholic convictions or tendencies. Among these were R. C. Mortimer, a successor of Kirk at Oxford, and Herbert Waddams, who wrote in 1964 before Vatican II (Mortimer [1947]1961; Waddams 1972). Lindsay Dewar, who wrote in the aftermath of the Council, was critical of Thomistic theology as being legalistic, based, as he saw it, on a faulty conception by Aquinas of the relationship between law and nature (Dewar 1968, 9). These authors also saw the *Summa* as a resource for analysis of certain moral issues such as marriage, war, and capital punishment.

In continental Europe, Protestant theologians before the 1960s were still wary of much engagement with Aquinas. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–45), despite his considerable interest in the Roman Catholic tradition, wrote his *Ethics* as a powerful and imaginative engagement with the Lutheran tradition but without reference to Thomas. Helmut Thielicke (1908–86) wrote an influential, multivolume treatise on ethics, published 1958–64, which

gives some evidence of engagement with Aquinas (and not limited to the *Summa Theologiae*). Thielicke was critical of Aquinas's teaching on love, specifically the *ordo amoris*, the distinctive ranking of objects of love which Thielicke found contrary to what he thought love of neighbor ought to be.

Thielicke devoted a major section of the first volume to the theme of natural law in relation to Protestant theology, with sections on the problem of natural law in general, and in Scholasticism and Roman Catholic theology. Thielicke (1966–9) cited Aquinas regarding primary and secondary principles of natural law and the corresponding difficulty of drawing firm conclusions. Although critical of Aquinas, Thielicke read him accurately enough to note that Thomas recognized the possibility of erroneous conclusions being drawn from natural law, and mentioned this ambiguity in relation to warfare. Also of interest to Thielicke was the question of how circumstances affect natural law principles, such as exceptions to the obligation to return another person's property.

In the subsequent volumes dealing with ethical topics, he makes limited use of Thomas's teaching. On sex, marriage, and divorce, he refers to Aquinas only on the topic of the sacrament of marriage and the question of the validity of marriage to a heretic. Similarly, the lengthy volume on politics, which deals with authority, the nature of the state, resistance and revolution, and war and pacifism, includes reference to Aquinas only on the questions of oath-taking and democracy versus monarchy, and lacks engagement with the contributions Aquinas might have made to his reflections on such topics as war, the right of revolution, and telling the truth.

Karl Barth offers a varied picture. His own view of the command of God shared much of the structure of obedience and command, and he was critical of the tradition of cases of conscience (mentioning Ames) and naturally associated this approach with the work of Aquinas (Barth 1961). On the other hand, he was open to make use of some specific teaching of Aquinas: on the Sabbath, he cites the *Summa Theologiae* favorably on the importance of the interruption of our normal pattern of life for divine things. He discusses the attempt to assassinate Hitler by referring to the discussion of Thomas on the legitimacy of restoring freedom by killing a tyrant; and in his theology of work he approves of Aquinas's opinion that the basic and primary meaning of work is to secure survival and sustain existence.

Paul Ramsey is a key twentieth-century figure in Protestant awareness of Thomistic ethics. As a Methodist, without the traditional Lutheran or Reformed skepticism of the Thomist tradition, he was perhaps more open to constructive use of Aquinas for ethics. At least a decade before Vatican II

Ramsey was engaging with the Roman Catholic moral tradition: he summarized fairly the virtue theory of Aquinas (Ramsey 1950), not without some cautious reservations about the distinction between natural and supernatural virtues. In his important work on the development of Christian thought on war, which introduced many Protestant ethicists to the principle of double effect, Ramsey (1961) also increased interest in the *Summa Theologiae* as a reference for ethical issues.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–5) admitted that moral theology needed to be more Christ-centered and biblically based, and implied a recognition of the faults of the moral handbooks characteristic of neo-Thomist scholasticism. The growing awareness that the traditional legalistic moral systems were actually not very faithful to the real teaching of St Thomas was an impetus to Roman Catholics to reevaluate their approach to ethics, and an invitation to many Protestants to engage (often for the first time) with the richness and depth of the *Summa Theologiae*.

James Gustafson, just a few years after Vatican II (but also probably influenced by Paul Ramsey) set out a brief but sympathetic account of the virtues and the life of grace, pointing out that Protestants needed to change their stereotyped view of legalism in the Roman Catholic tradition (Gustafson 1968, 102). Gustafson also helped Protestants in their understanding of natural law. In a study of the relation of Protestant to Roman Catholic ethics he pointed out, correctly, that the later scholastic moral theology of the Roman Catholic manual tradition (which prevailed until Vatican II) exaggerated or even distorted aspects of Thomistic teaching. He wisely advocated returning to the texts of Aquinas themselves, where we would find that in Aquinas's view natural law had a dynamic quality, with less certitude about the unchanging nature of moral conclusions than found in the standard textbook interpretations (Gustafson 1978, 81).

Stanley Hauerwas was one of the Yale graduate students influenced by Gustafson and he wrote his dissertation on a Christian view of character, drawing extensively on Thomas Aquinas, comparing him with Aristotle and assessing the place of character in theological ethics in dialogue with Bultmann and Barth (Hauerwas 1975). Hauerwas has written many articles on various topics in virtue theory, and in turn has worked with students at Duke such as Charles Pinches, with whom he collaborated in taking a deeper look at the relationship between theological ethics and classical virtue theory on prudence, obedience, friendship, courage, and patience (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997).

Gilbert Meilaender, while committed to his Lutheran heritage, transcended the kind of traditional Lutheran suspicion of virtue and character evident in the pre-Vatican II era. Meilaender (1984) helped readers to reflect more deeply on the connection between natural virtue and theological virtues. While the influence of Aquinas is sometime indirect, mediated through Josef Pieper (1966) and Alasdair MacIntyre (1981), that in itself points to the growing influence of a Thomistic view of the Christian moral life.

Oliver O'Donovan may be compared to Paul Ramsey in that both were basically Augustinian in orientation but with careful and imaginative reading were able to draw profitably from Aquinas and a variety of sources. In an earlier phase O'Donovan dealt with the major themes of creation, freedom, and authority, and was especially penetrating (with help from Aquinas) on the problems in both Roman Catholic and Protestant moral thought on the nature of conscience in relation to intellect and will (O'Donovan 1986). He has continued the dialogue with Thomas on the nature of practical reason and the theological virtues (O'Donovan 2014).

In the decades since World War II, with the weakening of traditional morality and the popularity of moral relativism, there has been a resurgence of interest in the theory of natural law, or an objective basis for morality in the structure of reality. Since Aquinas is well-known as a key figure in the theory of natural law, Anglicans and other Protestants have been interacting with Thomistic teaching (found in *ST* 1a2ae.90–6), often mediated through Roman Catholic expositions and new interpretations, such as that of John Finnis and Germain Grisez, the so-called "new natural law school." The Episcopalian philosopher Henry Veatch (1971) argued from Aristotle and Aquinas for the importance of the connection between moral principles, human nature, and objective reality and later criticized Finnis and Grisez for neglecting the metaphysical foundations of Thomistic natural law (Veatch, 1981). Rufus Black (2000) has also engaged with the new interpretations of Thomistic natural law, as well as interacting with Hauerwas and his criticism of natural law. Reformed theologians such as Grabill (2006) and VanDrunen (2010) have tried to show the general importance of the natural law tradition, including links or parallels between Aquinas and Calvin and the Reformed tradition.

The *Summa Theologiae* has been recognized as an ethical resource by ethicists who have no particular interest in the Aristotelian background or indeed its moral psychology, views on virtue, theory of law, and so on, but who teach and write on specific moral issues and realize that Aquinas may

have at least a position of interest to include in the discussion. Lewis Smedes, an evangelical of Reformed tradition who taught ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, refers fairly often to Aquinas in discussions of adultery, private property, and truth telling (Smedes 1983). Stephen C. Mott (1993), professor of social ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, highlighted certain themes from Thomistic political thought, especially to correct the emphasis on individual rights in American political life by pointing to Aquinas's different views of property and the common good.

As a result of the willingness to interact with Aquinas on a wider range of issues, influenced by MacIntyre and the openness to Aristotle and pre-Kantian moral thought, there are the beginnings of a deeper appreciation of Thomistic moral psychology. Don Browning (2006) deals with implications of views on moral development and evolutionary psychology, and points out areas of similarity in some contemporary theory to Aristotelian and Thomistic moral psychology. Kent Dunnington (2011) has creatively used the category of *habitus* in Aquinas to enable a better understanding of the phenomenon of addiction and its relation to the virtue of temperance. Robert C. Roberts (2013) provides hints of the extensive analysis of emotion in the *Summa Theologiae* which still awaits engagement by Protestant theologians interested in a systematic moral psychology.

If we consider the influence of Aquinas's ethical system, rather than the short section on natural law or discussions of specific virtues or particular ethical topics, there has not been much to point to, other than the Anglican tradition of Kirk and Mortimer who wrote with a certain blinkered vision before the reappraisal of the relationship of Roman Catholic moral theology to the ethics of Aquinas. Notable, however, is the recent work of DeYoung, McCluskey, and Van Dyke (2009), scholars trained in Thomistic moral theology but having commitments to the Reformed tradition. They present a useful description of actions, habits, freedom, virtues, and the relation of law and gospel, including chapters on the metaphysics of human nature, soul and body, and the *imago Dei*. I believe this is the first work outside of Roman Catholic and Anglican circles to synthesize and objectively describe the ethical teaching of Aquinas in the *prima pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*.

With similar intent, Westberg (1994) made a careful study of Aristotelian and Thomistic practical reasoning and its connection to human action and the virtues. This was followed by a more basic textbook (Westberg 2015) with the express aim of articulating an overall Thomistic structure of ethics, making use of the more accurate understanding of Aquinas achieved in the

last generation, combined with the concerns of the tradition of evangelical ethics – a tradition strong on Scripture and weak in philosophical background. The reader will find chapters summarizing the Aristotelian-Thomist account of practical reasoning and virtues, but also chapters on sin, conversion, and the relation of ethics to the law of God. One might characterize the book as Thomistic in foundation, evangelical in conviction, and Anglican in ethos.

It should be possible to have a Christian ethics fundamentally based on reason, desire for good, and union with God – in other words a moral theology that emphasizes character and virtue rather than obedience to law – and yet avoid subjectivism, relativism, and individualism, retaining a faithful commitment to God's law. There seems to be a growing conviction that Thomas Aquinas is one of our best guides in that endeavor.

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