

Aquinas Among the Protestants

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Edited by

Manfred Svensson

David VanDrunen

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Introduction: The Reception, Critique, and Use of Aquinas in Protestant Thought

Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen

Since Martin Luther described Thomas Aquinas as “the source and foundation of all heresy, error, and obliteration of the Gospel” (Luther 1899, 184, ll. 32f), there would not seem to be much point in writing about the place of the medieval theologian in Protestant thought. At the same time, the lack of significant works on Aquinas and Protestantism is intriguing. Many regard Aquinas as a sort of official Roman Catholic thinker, and thus we might expect him to be at the forefront of intellectual exchanges between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Yet this has rarely been the case. Protestants are aware of his importance, but too often rely on second-hand accounts of his thought. Shallow Protestant understanding of Aquinas surfaces not only in discussions about Roman Catholicism but also in intra-Protestant debates. In some quarters, merely affirming that human beings have some rational access to God or to the moral law is regarded as sufficient evidence of being a “Thomist.” Needless to say, this state of affairs fosters neither interesting polemics nor critical appreciation of Aquinas in Protestant circles.

There was a time, however, when Protestant theologians and philosophers read Aquinas’s work widely. Describing these authors as “Thomists” would be misleading, but they paid careful attention to his writings and would often side with him on important questions. Few went as far as the Strasbourg Lutheran theologian Johann Georg Dorsch, who in the title of his work (1656) presented Aquinas as a “confessor of the evangelical truth according to the Augsburg Confession.” But they felt no need to apologize for quoting Thomas favorably. The present volume seeks to unpack the

different ways in which such significant interaction with Aquinas took place through the history of Protestant thought. It also explores the prospects of fruitful engagement with Aquinas in different fields of inquiry today.

One fundamental goal of the book is simply to set the record straight. The widespread impression that Aquinas is an irrelevant figure for the history of Protestant thought has dominated not only Protestant historiography but also Roman Catholic accounts of the Reformation and Protestant intellectual life. Histories of Thomism also betray this assumption by focusing exclusively on Roman Catholic affairs. Several contemporary developments place us in a good position to leave this ecumenically shared ignorance behind. And once the historical record is set straight, many different possibilities for contemporary reception, engagement, and critique become available. Even intra-Protestant relations may benefit.

The present introduction first reviews some common critiques of Thomas from contemporary Protestant writers. We then survey developments in scholarship – on both Aquinas and the history of Protestant thought – that have made renewed interaction with Aquinas possible. Finally, this introduction presents a brief history of how Protestants have received Aquinas and begun to reengage with his work in recent years.

Protestant and/or Modern Critiques

It is not easy to establish how criticism of Aquinas emerged among the Protestants. With the exception of Luther, most early Protestant critics of his thought seem to have been rather marginal authors (see, for instance, the discussion of Hooker's critics in Kirby 2005, 11–28). The lack of an unambiguous evaluation of Aquinas in the sixteenth century is quite understandable. For one thing, the fact that Aquinas is and was commonly perceived to be the preeminent Roman Catholic theologian creates an interesting dynamic that can play out in two opposite directions. On the one hand, it can create the general perception that Aquinas is Protestantism's chief adversary; on the other hand, when Aquinas and Protestant thinkers share similar views, it can point to Aquinas as a significant witness to the catholicity of Reformation insights. For another thing, Aquinas's authority even in medieval and later Roman Catholic circles was only gradually established. After significant controversies over his orthodoxy (the so-called *Correctoria* controversies), Pope John XXII canonized him in 1323 (he was the first

scholastic doctor to be canonized). The lifting of previous condemnations in the following year settled the question of his orthodoxy, but it was still only Dominicans who seriously studied his thought. His *Summa Theologiae* replaced Lombard's *Sentences* as the standard textbook of theological study only in the sixteenth century, and in 1567 Pope Pius V proclaimed him a Doctor of the Church. The vitality of Thomism as a distinct philosophical and theological tradition, however, is in some sense an even more recent phenomenon, dependent to a significant degree on the renewal of Thomistic studies prompted by the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879).¹

But as much as that encyclical and the surrounding renewal helped to advance the study of Thomas within the Roman Catholic tradition, it probably contributed to the growing opposition to his work in Protestant circles. The rise of Aquinas's authority coincided with the German *Kulturkampf* and was contemporaneous with the emergence of Kant's perceived status as "philosopher of Protestantism" (Graf 2003, 136–7). Some stereotypes of that period – which criticized the medieval theologian from the standpoint of a self-sufficient modern Protestantism – have obviously also gained traction among Protestants who would not regard Kant as their patron saint.

Some of the predominant critiques of Thomas are modern and not specifically Protestant. But there are also Protestant critiques that come from exactly the opposite front: while his enlightened despisers criticize Thomas for holding philosophy captive to theology, Protestant critics often regard him as simply too philosophical to be a faithful theologian. Two other difficulties make this inquiry all the more complex. On the one hand, Protestant critiques of Aquinas are not easy to separate from critiques of Roman Catholic theology as a whole. On the other hand, Protestants often resemble Roman Catholics in viewing Aquinas through a textbook Thomism that presents him as merely the author of the five ways to prove the existence of an unmoved First Cause and as the supreme proponent of a system of morals centered on natural law. Perhaps the first of these points invites Protestants to ask how to profit from the work of Aquinas without being Roman Catholic, while the second point invites Protestants to move together with Roman Catholics toward a more nuanced understanding of Aquinas.

One recurring critique of Thomas that emerges from this mixed background is that he divides reality into two levels. A specifically Protestant impetus animates this critique, inasmuch as some (by no means all) Protestant theologians rejected the idea that God gave the so-called *donum superadditum* to human beings as a gift added to their original constitution.² Some Protestants regarded the Roman Catholic division between natural

and supernatural gifts – both being present from the very creation of humanity – as unnecessarily dualistic. Since Thomas is one representative of this position, these Protestants have interpreted such dualism as a defining feature of his thought. Thus his account of the relationship of nature and grace, of the relationship between philosophy and theology, and of the *praeambula fidei* have all suffered the impact of this reading. Some Protestant quarters have leveled the accusation that Aquinas thus made nature autonomous in a way that prefigures modern developments. Indeed, this topic recurs remarkably often among Protestant authors who are otherwise very different from each other (see, for instance, Tillich 1972, 192–4 and Dooyeweerd 1979, 115–21).

It may be argued that this sort of critique has sometimes rested upon an accurate perception of the kind of Thomism that one could find in contemporary Roman Catholicism. As the thought of Aquinas himself has reemerged from the fruitful twentieth-century engagement with his work, however, interpreting Thomas as if his views were identical to that sort of Thomism can only be regarded as a caricature. To these changes in scholarship on Aquinas we now turn.

Changes in Contemporary Scholarship

Several gradual changes have taken place that help to account for the growing contemporary Protestant interest in Aquinas. What follows is no exhaustive explanation. Many contemporary scholars have been inspired to engage with Aquinas for reasons that cannot be grouped under these general tendencies. Paying attention to the following changes in scholarship, however, is helpful for understanding how the critiques discussed above have lost much of their force. First, a modified image of Aquinas and of late-medieval Thomism has emerged from recent historical scholarship. Second, contemporary scholars of Protestant scholasticism have overturned previously prevailing assumptions about Reformation and post-Reformation history in their relationship to the medieval intellectual tradition. Third, changes in the contemporary Christian intellectual climate are important to consider. Let us briefly look at each of these.

We have already referred to the kind of images of Aquinas that have prevailed in Protestant literature, images that many Thomistic textbooks did actually transmit. But that picture of Aquinas belongs to an age gone by. If the nineteenth century was the great era of discovery of the ancient world,

something similar happened with the Middle Ages in the twentieth century. The twentieth century witnessed a major effort to complete critical editions of great medieval works. Thanks to this discovery of the medieval world, our picture of Aquinas has become far more complex. The works of several great Thomists of the twentieth century, including those by Martin Grabmann (1909–11), Marie-Dominique Chenu (1964), and Ferdinand van Steenberghen (1955), contributed greatly to the study of Aquinas in his historical context.

The presentation of Aquinas's thought has also undergone several shifts in emphasis. Etienne Gilson (1952), for instance, has presented the act of being as the central feature of everything that is, the first principle of metaphysics, thus dissociating Thomas from what he described as the essentialist position of Suárez and Wolff (which, Gilson claimed, had dominated the later Thomistic school).³ In addition, many Thomists began to stress the centrality of virtue for Aquinas's moral thought, over against the perceived "legalism" of the manualistic tradition (Pinckaers 1995; Hall 1994; Porter 1990). Law certainly continues to be a topic on which Aquinas has much to say, but it seems right to conclude that today writers have recovered an "integrationist" approach to his thought – including law and virtue, both resting on a philosophical and theological account of human nature.⁴ Something similar can be said of the relation between philosophy and theology. In the mid-twentieth century, Gilson could still lament the tendency of historians "to imagine the middle ages as peopled by philosophers rather than theologians" (1957, 156). Not only have scholars corrected this misperception, but recent work on Aquinas has also demonstrated special interest in his biblical commentaries. Introducing a compilation on these commentaries, Nicholas Healy writes that "the commentaries have been quoted and discussed with increasing frequency by theologians that would not necessarily regard themselves as specialists in Thomas, by constructive as well as historical theologians, and by not a few who are from Christian traditions other than Roman Catholic" (2005, 2). Even a cursory glance at these developments can help us to understand why Protestants today with full integrity can display interest in the study of Aquinas.

One important development in this context is that scholars have increasingly recognized and studied the role of Augustine in Aquinas's work (Dauphinais, David, and Levering 2007). If formerly writers stressed Aquinas's opposition to a conservative Augustinian tradition, they are now more attentive to the tensions between his work and that of the radical Aristotelians in the Faculty of Arts in Paris. This is certainly significant for

the way Protestants engage his thought. Although much contemporary Protestantism has an interest in retrieval of the past, Protestants easily jump from the Reformers to the patristic period, and especially to Augustine. Since the Reformation itself is frequently described as an Augustinian movement, this change in Aquinas's image cannot but profoundly impact the way Protestants relate to his thought. The Reformation was indeed an Augustinian movement, but the Augustinian treasure was widely disseminated in the later Middle Ages and Aquinas can safely be regarded as an important representative of that tradition.

The kind of literature that presents Aquinas's thought as hardly more than a superficially baptized Aristotelianism has often ignored this. Aristotle was indeed "the Philosopher" for Aquinas, and there is no point in ignoring or lamenting that fact. But as with so many other thinkers and schools of the thirteenth century, he was involved in the complex task of being Augustinian and Aristotelian at the same time. Furthermore, we are now aware of the extent to which the early Protestants themselves held Aristotle in high esteem (in addition to the partly outdated survey by Petersen 1921, see also Freedman 1993 and Scheible 2010). If they were, in several ways, involved in bringing Aristotelian and Augustinian themes together, they cannot have considered Thomas an alien figure for being involved in such a project. Protestants may still object to aspects of Aquinas's thought, but today we can recognize him as a fellow voice in the broad Augustinian tradition.

Equally significant developments have taken place in the understanding of late medieval Thomism. This is the Thomism that confronted the Reformation, and thus it is in some sense more central than the work of Aquinas himself for understanding the first Protestant reactions to his thought. The problem can be stated precisely in relation to Thomas's Augustinianism. An Augustinian understanding of grace appears unambiguously in the mature work of Aquinas, in contrast to the somewhat semi-Pelagian tendencies of his early *Commentary on the Sentences* (Janz 1983, 34–59; Porro 2014, 553–70). This development is all the more important if we consider the enormous continuity in Aquinas's thinking. The Thomistic school did not recognize this development, however, until the work of the great fifteenth-century Parisian master John Capreolus. He was the first important Thomist to take notice of the self-corrections present in Aquinas's work, which led him to describe the *Summa* as analogous to Augustine's *Retractations*. Gregory of Rimini, whom Luther valued above all the scholastics, also was confident that he had Thomas on his side in the

anti-Pelagian protest. As Denis Janz has shown, however, Luther was never confronted with the Augustinian Thomism of Capreolus. A shift had taken place in the German Thomistic school towards positions less remote from the Pelagian error, and serious misrepresentations on the part of Andreas Karlstadt shaped Luther's views of Thomas (Janz 1983, 60–120). In brief, the Augustinian side of Aquinas's thought has not been entirely absent from the Thomistic tradition, but Luther did not come across it. These claims have not always received the attention they merit. The significant scholarship of Denis Janz is completely omitted, for example, by McGrath's (2005) influential work on the intellectual origins of the Reformation (see, however, his critical review of Janz 1989 in McGrath 1992). Much research is still needed on the diverse currents of medieval thought, and specifically on Thomism, in relation to the several Reformers. But taking this background into account encourages a more nuanced reading of the fiercest early Protestant attacks against Thomas.

While these preceding two changes in scholarship concern the pre-Reformation era, developments in post-Reformation scholarship are equally significant for renewed Protestant engagement with Aquinas. Throughout much of the twentieth century, both liberal and conservative Protestant scholars assessed post-Reformation theology and philosophy very negatively. They viewed Protestant scholasticism as a deflection from the more biblical theology of Luther and Calvin. In more recent decades, a number of prominent historical theologians, including David Steinmetz, Richard Muller, and Willem van Asselt, have challenged this view. Their work has changed perceptions not only of Protestant scholasticism but also of the Reformers themselves. These scholars have demonstrated the significant continuity between the Reformers and their scholastic successors, and have argued that the latter, while reincorporating scholastic method in theology, did not break substantively with the early Reformers. Their scholarship has also generated new appreciation for the continuity between early Protestant thought and the medieval heritage. This new appreciation of the medieval heritage has in turn brought attention to the place of Aquinas in Protestant thought.

Alongside these changes in the way we view the past, at least two changes in the current intellectual climate deserve mention. First, ecumenical dialogue has led to a renewed reciprocal reading of each other's traditions. Just as the image of Luther and Calvin has undergone significant modification among Roman Catholic scholars (Pesch 1971; Zachman 2008), so also with the image of Thomas among the Protestants. Many people justifiably

suspect that ecumenical politeness can lead to giving up well-grounded insights, but, as Theodor Dieter (2008) has exemplarily shown with respect to the Reformation's relation to medieval theology, an ecumenical disposition can also go hand-in-hand with intellectual integrity. A recent volume on the historical problems we have just sketched, *Reformation and Scholasticism*, is aptly subtitled *An Ecumenical Enterprise* (van Asselt and Dekker 2001). The present volume is not primarily a contribution to ecumenical theology, its chief concern being the role Aquinas can play in the vitality of Protestant thought. But it has benefited from some of these efforts and it may also contribute to them in its own way.

Beside ecumenism in the strict sense, we find something which is not wholly unrelated and yet distinct: the fact that Protestants and Roman Catholics face many similar intellectual challenges, and that at least some of these challenges can be faced together while relying on their common tradition. It is thus not surprising to find, for instance, that the well-known Roman Catholic Thomist Ralph McInerny wrote the preface to two works intending to reintroduce Aquinas to Protestant readers (Vos 1985 and Geisler 2003). The possibility of such collaboration rests on the fact that a robust Christian philosophical community now exists across the Christian traditions. The well-known renewal of "Christian philosophy" since the latter part of the twentieth century has in fact been a source for a more than historical interest in the thought of Aquinas. For example, many have pointed out that Alvin Plantinga draws on Calvin for his contemporary defense of warranted Christian belief, but fewer people note that Plantinga himself calls it "the Aquinas/Calvin model" (2000, 161–2, 241–90). Also Nicholas Wolterstorff has emphasized the profound difference between Enlightenment evidentialist apologetics and the medieval project of natural theology, thus calling for a more tempered view of the differences between Aquinas and Calvin (1986, 58). Contemporary Christian philosophy is of course no uniform movement. Yet the intense work being done in philosophical theology has led even many who in no sense can be considered Thomists to look with interest to Aquinas as a prime example of a philosophical theologian. And while contemporary philosophical theology is by no means limited to the world of analytic philosophy, a significant portion is, and that may provide a stylistic reason to appreciate Aquinas. If concern for careful argument, clear reasoning, and acceptance of a sometimes highly technical vocabulary are characteristic elements of analytic philosophy and theology, it can come as no surprise that its practitioners are appropriating Aquinas fruitfully (Crisp and Rea 2009).

As this section has discussed, a number of striking developments in theological, philosophical, and historical scholarship over the past half-century have undergirded the fledgling contemporary renewal of Protestant interest in Aquinas. Enriched views of Thomas, late-medieval Thomism, and Reformation and post-Reformation theology, have broken down entrenched caricatures about Aquinas, the nature of early Protestant thought, and the relationship between them. Furthermore, the growth of ecumenical theology and the “Christian philosophy” movement have provided incentives for many Protestants to reconsider the relevance of Aquinas. The times indeed seem ripe for a thorough study of Thomas’s place in historic and contemporary Protestant thought.

Aquinas in Protestant History

The Reformation

“The story of Thomas Aquinas and Protestantism has yet to be written, and it is not identical with the story of Thomas and Luther” (Steinmetz 1995, 58). David Steinmetz’s statement is still valid in both of its emphases: the story has yet to be written, and the story is not about Luther alone. A view of history that tends to exalt great figures has easily seduced people to read much of Protestantism through the lens of Luther’s anti-Aristotelianism and anti-Thomism. As a matter of fact, both his anti-Aristotelianism and his anti-Thomism merit a more nuanced interpretation than is common (Dieter 2001; Janz 1989). All the more nuance is required once we remember that Luther’s views are not necessarily representative of the whole Reformation movement. His is a significant voice to which Protestants always give ear, but it is only one voice in the large sixteenth-century network of Reformers.

It is not contemporary Protestants alone who need to be reminded of this. Since the beginning of the Reformation Roman Catholic accounts of Protestantism have suffered from an exclusive concentration on Luther. His earliest opponents were all Thomists (Bagchi 1991), and since then an almost uninterrupted tradition of abrupt opposition between Thomism and Protestantism has followed from this exclusive concentration on Luther. If contemporary Protestants tend to ignore the older Protestant familiarity with Aquinas, general histories of Thomism are equally silent about this phenomenon. Romanus Cessario’s *A Short History of Thomism* is

a good example. His work not only omits any mention of Protestant appreciation of Aquinas (which might be understandable for a *short* history), but he explicitly states that, because of the Reformation, the study of Aquinas retreated from the countries lost to Rome (2005, 36–37, 67).⁵ There was a time when people made similar statements about Aristotle, whereas today scholars are aware of the enormous extent to which Aristotle's work remained the common standard of science until late in the seventeenth century. Charles Schmitt observed that between 1550 and 1650 the tradition of commentaries on Aristotle's works was stronger in Protestant than in Roman Catholic countries (1987, 26). We will surely never come to a point where writers will make similar statements about Aquinas, but a significant correction on Aquinas in Protestantism is already under way.

Reflection upon two of Luther's colleagues in Wittenberg highlights some complexities of the case. On the one hand stands Andreas Karlstadt, a former Thomist who later became a leading figure of the Radical Reformation. As mentioned, current scholarship suggests that this ex-Thomist's misrepresentation of the Thomistic school may have influenced Luther to lump Aquinas together with the rest of the scholastics. On the other hand stands Philip Melanchthon. One might easily assume, given his Aristotelianism, that he would have a favorable disposition towards Aquinas. But that expectation presupposes a monolithic "Aristotelico-Thomism" which is a much later construct (on its problematic nature see Owens 1993). As reported by his close friend Joachim Camerarius, when Melanchthon studied in Tübingen Aristotle was associated with the *via moderna* rather than the *via antiqua* (Oberman 1989, 424). Except for the years immediately following his arrival at Wittenberg (Kuropka 2002, 24–9), Melanchthon remained an Aristotelian throughout his career as a Reformer, without ever being a Thomist. Reformation polemics, however, naturally led him to study Aquinas, and the results are a mixture of polemics and moderate appreciation. The polemical side prevails, yet Melanchthon does not lump Aquinas together with all the scholastics as a Pelagian, but mentions him as a special case: the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1967, 152) discusses him as one of the "reasonable among the recent ones." This distinction among the medieval scholastics carried over into Protestant scholasticism, which consistently viewed Aquinas as among the *saniores* or *prudenciores*. However, when Melanchthon quoted Aquinas positively he often had a polemical intent. Charles Arand notes, for instance, that Melanchthon sometimes referred to Thomas to show that "even Aquinas" had taught his position (2010, 187). But elsewhere Melanchthon simply

makes positive use of Aquinas, though not always acknowledging it, as a significant voice in the exegetical tradition. Timothy Wengert has described the parallels between Melancthon's and Aquinas's commentaries on the Gospel of John as "abundant and striking" (1987, 95).

A positive approach to Thomas seems to have taken root slightly earlier and above all more explicitly in the Reformed tradition than in Wittenberg. Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr Vermigli deserve mention as particularly important for their actual knowledge of Aquinas. Bucer's early reforming work shows traces of repudiation of his Dominican training. But these traces are moderate; there is only one sentence of Luther-like repudiation of Aquinas. Scholars have characterized his mature work, in contrast, as a creative synthesis of Luther's insights, Erasmian irenicism, and aspects of his Thomistic heritage. This heritage, moreover, is present both in specific doctrines like predestination and in the overall systematic conception of his theology (Leijssen 1979). In the case of Vermigli, historians have long recognized his link to Aquinas as an important feature of his intellectual profile. Unlike the former Dominican Bucer, Vermigli was an Augustinian canon, who became familiar with the thought of Aquinas and Gregory of Rimini during his studies in Padua. While the influence of Gregory was more significant than that of Aquinas for Vermigli's view of predestination, Thomas remained a significant source throughout his career (James 1998, 106–51). In the words of John Patrick Donnelly, Vermigli cannot fairly be called a Thomist, but "there is a strong scholastic substratum in his theology, that depends upon Saint Thomas more than upon any other medieval theologian" (1976, 443). With Vermigli we meet a link between the Reformation and later Protestant scholasticism, to which we now turn.

Protestant Scholasticism

A brief survey of the Reformation leaves the impression that Aquinas is present in significant ways but that his influence is scattered and difficult to systematize. Even the most superficial look at Protestant scholasticism leaves us with the opposite impression: here it is the wealth of information that makes it hard to give an accurate picture of Aquinas's presence in early modern Protestant theology. An older scholarship stressed the (real or apparent, significant or minor) Scotist and Occamist elements in the thought of the Reformers, a perspective still championed by Vos (2016) and others. Today, however, the majority of scholars see the Thomist understanding of things as the prevailing position among early Protestants in

important areas of philosophy and theology (Muller 2012; Rehnman 2002, 34–7; Sytsma 2012), though the eclectic manner of this appropriation should certainly be stressed (Muller 2001). Whatever the outcome of such discussions, the fact is that Thomism is at least one of the significant intellectual traditions to which early Protestant theologians and philosophers adhered. As Bernard McGinn's recent introduction to the *Summa Theologiae* puts it, "a complicated adoption and rejection of medieval scholasticism in general and of Thomas in particular" characterized Protestant scholasticism (2014, 151).

A complete survey of Aquinas's presence in Protestant scholasticism is still far from possible. Among other things, it would require a renewal in the study of Lutheran scholasticism matching the present renaissance of studies on Reformed scholasticism. The chapters in this book offer several case studies that shed light on specific ways Thomas's thought was received in the traditions of Hooker, Gerhard, and Zanchi. Since people can mean different things when they praise or criticize the Protestant scholastics as Thomists, we make some general observations at this point.

First, in what way did Protestant scholastics regard Aquinas as an authority? Aquinas is the *doctor communis* of the Roman Catholic Church, a status he never attained even among the Protestants congenial to his philosophy and theology. Indeed, Protestants usually pride themselves in not having any such *doctores communes*. But appeal to authorities (as well as interpretation of authorities and discernment among authorities) is of course a standard feature of scholastic methodology (Schönberger 1991, 103–8), and in this specific sense Aquinas functioned as an authority for the Protestant scholastics. "Thomism," however, might be an inadequate label when we try to describe the significance of Aquinas for these early modern Protestants. The term already existed, but *thomistae* were mostly Dominicans, and in any case authors who followed Thomas very strictly. Some Protestant writers had a strong predilection for Aquinas, but they responded to an intellectual culture too eclectic for them to be labeled as Thomists. This relieves us of the difficult duty of giving an adequate description of Thomism. What we are dealing with is simply an important number of cases of reception and positive appropriation of the thought of Aquinas, and mostly of Aquinas as just one very significant representative of a broader tradition. This point could be illustrated with Protestant scholastics (such as Francis Turretin) who quote abundantly from the whole tradition and from Aquinas in particular, but also with authors who tend to remain more silent about their sources. Franciscus Junius, for instance,

opens his theses on the judicial statutes of Moses with a definition of law that is almost *verbatim* the definition given by Thomas (whom he does not quote) in *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) 1a 90.4. Junius simply introduces it as the standard definition, “a certain common and analogical rationale” (Junius 2015, 38).

Within Protestant orthodoxy, however, a few authors could well deserve the title of “Thomists.” We have already mentioned Dorsch’s *Thomas Aquinas, Called Angelic Doctor, Shown to be a Confessor of the Evangelical Truth in Accordance with the Augsburg Confession*. Donnelly called Dorsch “the ne plus ultra” of Lutheran Thomism, corresponding to the “Calvinist Thomism” he diagnosed in Zanchi (1976, 442). Published in 1656, Dorsch’s voluminous work sets out to prove that Aquinas was a good Lutheran. Whoever approaches this with later prejudices and labels in mind will be surprised not to find any trace of an “Aristotelico-Thomism”: Dorsch discusses Aquinas on his own terms, as a significant author in the Christian intellectual tradition, with almost no reference to Aristotle in his 800 pages. Furthermore, written after the Thirty Year’s War, it is not a work of irenic but of polemical theology against Rome. “The most truthful argument, and the less exposed to odious contradiction, is the one formulated from the sayings of the adversaries,” he writes at the outset (1656, 1). If Thomism is the right label for someone like Dorsch, this Thomism definitively does not promote accommodation to Roman Catholicism, but is rather a part of confessional polemics. This kind of explicit predilection for Aquinas, however, is as rare as the anti-Thomism we find in Luther. The common approach is simply that of a positive appropriation that includes critical engagement. Even where Aquinas is the predominant medieval influence on Protestant authors, typically Protestant accents tend to emerge.

The preceding paragraph could give the impression of an exclusively theological reception, at the cost of Aquinas’s role as philosopher (which would obviously lead us to stress the importance of Aristotle again). There is philosophical reception of his thought, however, not only of his philosophy insofar as he incorporated it into his theological work but also of his exclusively philosophical texts. In 1618, for instance, the treatise *De ente et essentia* was republished in Jena by the Lutheran professor Michael Wolf, who used it for his own teaching (Wundt 1939, 37). Two years later his student Kaspar Ebel finished a commentary on this treatise (1677, 1407–1812). In 1629 Ebel became the successor of the better known Goclenius in Marburg. Ebel is one of those unusual scholastics who decided to remain in the Faculty of Arts for the whole of their careers (Schüling 1970). On the

whole, however, Aquinas was arguably less central as a philosopher in Protestant than in Roman Catholic circles. Or, to put it positively, for Protestant orthodoxy Thomas was, perhaps surprisingly for us, more important as a theologian.

These are stunning cases for those who have grown accustomed to the narrative of Protestant anti-Thomism. But they should be put in perspective: Protestants had much appreciation for Thomas, but in contrast to the Roman Catholic scholastics they did not see the task of commenting on Thomas's work as their life's labor. One way of putting things into the right perspective is to consider the introductions to the study of theology that many Protestant scholastics published (see Niedel 2006 for a survey of the genre). In such treatises on the study of theology Aquinas is mostly treated more generously than the other medieval scholastics. *De studio theologiae* by Thomas Barlow (John Owen's tutor) may well serve to summarize the attitude towards Aquinas that we find in this period. In order to make a useful reading of the Scriptures, he tells his students that they should furnish themselves with various questions about religion. With this goal, he cannot do better than to send them "to the Master of the Sentences, or Thomas Aquinas's Summs." He does not believe that the resolutions are always wise, but they will "furnish a wise Man with many Material Questions, and with some very Material Answers." But to ensure this happy result, he sends students to Calvin and Zanchi (Barlow 1699, 76).

Modern Protestantism

From critique and appreciation, we move to an era of ignorance. Since the end of the age of Protestant scholasticism and the rise of the so-called age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, Protestantism has been mostly negligent in its relationship to Aquinas and its critiques often prejudiced, although it must be said that this is a common feature of the era and not a distinctively Protestant one. Writers who mentioned Thomas had not necessarily read him. The following observation about Kierkegaard could apply to many modern Protestants: "the fact that Kierkegaard did not read Thomas is no accident but rather a result of what Kierkegaard thought he knew about Thomas" (Olivares 2008, 183).

But this situation began to change almost as soon as the Roman Catholic Thomist revival emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. The work of the German jurist Rudolph von Jhering provides one of the most interesting early testimonies of this slowly emerging change. In 1860 Jhering

published a two-volume work on the ends of law. But he writes in the second edition (1886) that Wilhelm Hohoff's critical review of his work convinced him that Aquinas had fully grasped the "practical and social" as well as the "historical part of law." Jehring confessed his own previous ignorance on Aquinas, but added these revealing lines:

I wonder how it is possible that, once they had been uttered, truths like these could ever be forgotten again by our Protestant science. From what wrong tracks it would have kept itself if it had taken this to heart. I would maybe not have written this book myself if I had known them, since the main positions that interested me were already vocalized by this amazing thinker with perfect clarity and concise wording.⁶ (1886, 161)

Jehring was correct in his assessment of "Protestant science." Protestant philosophy gave little attention to Aquinas at this time and the treatment of his theology was negligent, to say the least. The approach of Adolf von Harnack and Reinhold Seeberg, the two liberal historians of dogma from Berlin, illustrate this point. While both commend Aquinas as a great thinker, their praise is very restrained; they make some grandiloquent judgments, but their critiques do not rest on any substantive discussion of Aquinas. Thus Harnack writes that in Aquinas "the seeds of the destruction of absolute theology" are already present, and that in him the relation of reason to authority is "marked by a quite special amount of confusion" (1899, 157, 160). Seeberg writes a bit more appreciatively about Aquinas as "the first to make a careful analysis of the conception of faith," but he judged that "Thomas can scarcely be called a man of genius" (1904, II, 103, 99).

Although old prejudices continued to circulate during the twentieth century, several more interesting Protestant approaches to Aquinas emerged. They might be ordered according to the degree to which the authors emphasized their Protestant allegiance or related their Protestant convictions to their views of Aquinas. There is, first, the explicitly Thomist philosophy and theology of some Anglican authors such as Eric Lionel Mascall and the early Austin Farrer. Both were distinguished philosophical theologians who appropriated different versions of contemporary Thomism. But as members of the Anglo-Catholic movement they did not see their own cases as those of *Protestant* Thomists. The case of Per Erik Persson is somewhat different. His *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Thomas Aquinas* (original Swedish 1957, English translation 1970) was positively received by Roman Catholic Thomists (see, for instance, Wippel 1972 and

Moreland 2013). But if he himself can be called a Thomist, his is the work of a self-consciously Lutheran theologian.

Second, we can mention the place of Aquinas in some “postliberal” currents, encompassing under this label both the Yale school and Radical Orthodoxy. These are ecumenical movements, in the case of Radical Orthodoxy primarily involving Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Indeed, a Roman Catholic theologian (Marshall 1989) has made the most explicit case for Aquinas as a postliberal. But some significant Protestant voices exist within both movements, and the influence of works such as William Placher’s *The Domestication of Transcendence* (1996) or John Milbank’s and Catherine Pickstock’s *Truth in Aquinas* (2001) extends to much contemporary Protestant thought. Although we cannot deal with this here, we do note that some scholars have critiqued Radical Orthodox readings of Aquinas (e.g., DeHart 2012) and that others have questioned the place it assigns to the Reformation in its genealogy of decadence (e.g., Grosse 2013). Whatever one thinks of these movements, they witness to the attention Aquinas receives in circles with more contemporary intellectual roots (more continental in the case of Radical Orthodoxy, more analytic in the case of the Yale school) than those of the Anglo-Catholic authors mentioned above.

Third, the more explicitly Protestant approach of some contemporary theologians and apologists (Gerstner 1994; Geisler 2003) goes beyond the usual interaction with Aquinas’s philosophical theology to assert that Aquinas stands in substantive agreement with Protestant soteriology. Both Protestant (Reymond 1997) and Roman Catholic (Beckwith 2013) writers have challenged the accuracy of such claims, but the very existence of the discussion testifies to the renewed interest in Aquinas as a fellow Augustinian whose work forms part of Reformation Christians’ own history and tradition.

As the contributions to the present volume make clear, the three kinds of approach we have mentioned do not exhaust contemporary Protestant engagement with Aquinas, but merely reveal some of the many reasons why this engagement is taking place. As Protestants have gained increasing historical understanding of their own traditions, as Protestants and Roman Catholics of many stripes have entered into serious conversations with one another, and as Christians of various confessions have looked for helpful resources to address the challenges of postmodernism and secularism, the time has been ripe for revived Protestant exploration of Aquinas and his relation to Reformation Christianity. When we consider this contemporary Protestant engagement with Aquinas, we find roughly the same types of approach as in the classical period of Protestant theology: a few cases of

explicit Thomism alongside a general spirit of appreciation for his work that does not imply strict adherence. As a pivotal figure for both philosophy and theology, he continues to be studied in all of the major Protestant traditions.

A number of works on the place of Aquinas in specific Protestant authors and traditions have seen the light of day in this context. These include studies of John Owen (Cleveland 2013), Karl Barth (McCormack & White 2013), and Radical Orthodoxy (DeHart 2012) and their relation to Thomas. Yet to this point no one has written a general survey of Aquinas and Protestant thought. Moreover, many writers continue to repeat the old clichés, and one can still find surveys of Aquinas's Protestant reception that completely ignore the most notable Protestant students of his work (e.g., Schwöbel 2016). The present volume aims to fill this lacuna by building upon the advances in scholarship of the past half century and presenting a thorough study of this fascinating topic. The book consists of 14 essays that focus upon particular aspects of the reception, use, and criticism of Aquinas in Protestant thought. As a fuller picture of his presence in the diverse Protestant traditions emerges, we find that he has in fact been a companion in our discussions throughout the centuries.

The book as a whole offers no final word on Aquinas and Protestantism. As Thomas has experienced a mixed legacy in the various Protestant traditions, so we expect that he will continue to generate strong debate among and within these traditions in years to come. What this book can do is facilitate those future discussions by providing a richer and more nuanced account of Thomas's historic place in Protestant thought and by suggesting several lines of inquiry that other scholars may fruitfully take up. Where exactly those inquiries will lead we cannot say, but we confidently believe that serious and accurate wrestling with the texts and legacy of Thomas Aquinas can only benefit Protestant intellectual life.

Notes

- 1 For studies on the authority of Aquinas see van Geest, Goris, and Leget (2002). This volume includes two contributions, by Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen and John Bowlin, on Aquinas's Protestant reception.
- 2 There is much need for nuance on this issue. With Baschera (2012) we should emphasize that this is a fairly disputed issue among the Reformers themselves. Furthermore, when comparing two classic Protestant accounts of this dispute, those of Francis Turretin (1992–7) and Herman Bavinck (2003–8), we find a

- significant shift. Only Bavinck's exposition explicitly mentions Thomas, and he more emphatically affirms the centrality of this dispute and its consequences: it is "one of the most important and characteristic loci in Roman Catholic theology" (2, 540) and an indication of its "dual conception of humanity" (2, 541). None of these emphases appear in Turretin's discussion.
- 3 For discussion of twentieth-century Roman Catholic debates about Aquinas and metaphysics, from a perspective critical of Gilson, see also McInerny (2006).
 - 4 We label this approach "integrationist" following Konyndyk DeYoung, McCluskey, and van Dyke (2009), a work by Protestant authors.
 - 5 The same absence is evident in all of the major efforts of this sort. Leonard Kennedy's *A Catalogue of Thomists* (1987) only mentions Zanchi, probably without noticing that he was a Protestant, since the Catalogue is organized according to the religious congregation of the authors. The same applies to Berger's and Vijgen's *Thomistenlexikon* (2006). The forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of the Reception of Aquinas* should helpfully remedy this problem.
 - 6 There is an English translation, but only of the first volume. Jhering's words are also proudly quoted by an anonymous Roman Catholic journalist in *The Sacred Heart Review* in 1893, but wrongly attributed to his *Jurisprudence of Everyday Life*.

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Part I

The Protestant Reception
of Aquinas

Deformation and Reformation: Thomas Aquinas and the Rise of Protestant Scholasticism

Jordan J. Ballor

A half-millennium separates us from the reform movements of the sixteenth century. Our understanding of the sources of these diverse phenomena have developed over this time in significant and often contradictory ways. One recurring narrative of the Reformation period and beyond emphasizes the rupture and antinomy between Protestant reform movements and the medieval church and its traditions. The specifics of this narrative vary depending on a number of factors, including the confessional or ideological sympathies of the narrator, the significance placed on specific figures, ideas, or events, and the praise or blame credited to different factors. In general, however, such narratives involve the transition between a more-or-less unified world of the Middle Ages to a diverse and dynamic landscape in the aftermath of protest and reform efforts at the dawn of the early modern period. For either good or ill, the sixteenth century saw a substantial change to the world, in theological, social, and political terms.

As one recent historiographical account of this multifaceted phenomenon puts it, “the Reformation ended more than a thousand years of Christianity as a framework for shared intellectual life in the Latin West” (Gregory 2012, 45). Brad S. Gregory’s study emphasizes the discontinuity of this result with the intentions of the Reformers, but there is nevertheless a sharp rupture in the intellectual life of the West from the sixteenth century and beyond. For Gregory, the roots of this break can be traced back to earlier centuries, and it is only with the rise of figures like Martin Luther and John Calvin that these roots grow in size and strength to crack the intellectual consensus of

the Middle Ages. For Gregory, the divergence between two basic traditions can be found in the disputes between the medieval thinkers Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus: “By predicating being of God and creatures univocally, Scotus brought both within the same conceptual framework” (Gregory 2012, 37). This thirteenth-century development “would prove to be the first step toward the eventual domestication of God’s transcendence, a process in which the seventeenth-century revolutions in philosophy and science would participate – not so much by way of dramatic departures as by improvising new parts on a stage that had been unexpectedly transformed by the doctrinal disagreements among Christians in the Reformation era” (Gregory 2012, 37–8). Gregory’s narrative is representative of a much longer line of scholarship that judges the Reformation to be a kind of deformation of the great medieval synthesis, a synthesis most often understood as epitomized in the life and thought of Thomas Aquinas.

Other accounts likewise emphasize the epochal shift represented in the sixteenth century, but read the evidence in diametrically opposed terms. David H. Hopper (2011) thus writes that the “otherworldly religious ethos” of the Middle Ages engendered its own kind of divine domestication, notably manifested in church teaching and practice related to merit, and that Luther’s challenges to teachings on repentance and indulgences overturned these deformations. As Hopper puts it, “the break with obsessive otherworldliness in Luther lies in his (re)discovery of the unnatural grace of a transcendent God revealed in the cross of Christ as testified to in the Christian Scriptures and in interaction as well with events of his time, interactions that lent weight in turn to his interpretation of Scripture” (2011, 69–70). On these kinds of accounts, the Protestant Reformation breaks the chains of human-centered religion and decadent philosophizing characteristic of medieval scholastic theology.

These two contrasting and representative contemporary examples illustrate some of the challenges in attempting to understand accurately the complexities and implications of the momentous events of the sixteenth century. Each account manifests in its own way an update and particularization of older lines of scholarship and interpretation. The confessional or ideological investment that many have in making sure the narrative both places the right people on the proper sides and credits and debits these figures accordingly makes it difficult to get behind modern accretions and intellectual overlays imposed on historical source material. The interpretive significance of individual figures like Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, for instance, is at least to some extent a

modern innovation, as the introduction and other contributions to this volume indicate. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries mark a shift in the historical understanding in this regard, and it is here that Thomas Aquinas becomes perhaps the primary touchstone for understanding medieval theology and Luther and Calvin become the chief codifiers of the Protestant reformations.

This is not to say that such figures were not of enormous significance in their own times and afterward. But it is to say that the placing of such figures into a binary, for or against, of historical judgment both constricts and simplifies our historical understanding. It constricts it by reducing the number of significant figures to a handful of the great thinkers of history. And it simplifies our understanding by casting these already stylized and often decontextualized figures into a simple account of villains and heroes.

Coming to better terms with the legacy of Thomas Aquinas among Protestants in the early modern period requires understanding of the varied contexts of the development of Protestant thought, including Protestant narratives of deformation and reformation, the reformers' diverse interactions with and formation in medieval scholastic traditions, and the complex developments of Protestant scholastic theology in the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries. Contrary to simplistic depictions of early Protestantism as a radical disjunction with medieval traditions, the reception of Thomas Aquinas among Protestants is indicative of the Reformation as a multifaceted intellectual and institutional phenomenon.

Early Protestant Narratives of Deformation and Reformation

The diverse Protestant narratives of decline at the time of the Reformation provide an important context for understanding the broader reception of medieval theology, including that of Thomas Aquinas.

Perhaps the first major Protestant attempt to systematically explore the history leading up to the sixteenth-century events was the *Chronicon Carionis*, inaugurated by Johannes Carion (1499–1537), and subsequently continued by Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) before reaching its final form under the auspices of Caspar Peucer (1525–1602). Carion's original work, a universal history from ancient times up through accounts of the successive Christian emperors, was amplified and rendered into Latin by Melanchthon. Peucer would add accounts, continuing the chronicle up to

the reign of Charles V. Although the *Chronicon* largely focuses on civil power, it gives occasional and periodic attention to specifically religious or theological matters, particularly as these concern overlap in disputes between ecclesial and civil power (see Prietz 2014).

At a notable point in the *Chronicon* (book 4) there is a discussion of the intellectual contexts of the rise of papal power, pointing specifically to medieval scholasticism. Here the narrative describes Peter Lombard as the originator of scholasticism, which enhanced the authority of the pope by focusing on extrabiblical sources. The complexities of scholastic discourse were increased by Lombard's interpreters, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus, who, "having contended with each other in subtleties, so filled the church with questions, some fatuous, some impious, some insoluble, and at the same time so corrupted and defiled philosophy, that they imposed on more recent writers, William of Ockham and others, the necessity of disagreeing with them" (Melanchthon and Peucer 1572, 440, as quoted by Gaetano 2010). These scholastic subtleties led to "remarkable conflicts," which were only finally ended with the advent of the "light of restored doctrine" (Melanchthon and Peucer 1572, 440). According to the *Chronicon*, this scholastic doctrine obscured the teaching of Scripture, confusing it with the disputes of the Platonists and the Aristotelians over ethics, physics, and metaphysics. Scholastic teaching also corrupted papal laws, inextricably confusing them with moral philosophy. These canon laws also arose in this period as a counterweight to civil law and served as a means of expanding ecclesial power. All of this combined to overwhelm and obscure the gospel (Melanchthon and Peucer 1572, 440). On this account, then, Aquinas is part of a progressive corruption and confusion of the gospel with scholastic disputations, pagan philosophical speculations, and capitulation to papal tyranny.

Another major historical source for early Protestantism is the collection known as the *Magdeburg Centuries*, a series of volumes covering church history in 13 parts, each covering a century from the early church through to 1298. Thomas Aquinas appears in the final volume along with such luminaries as Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, and Duns Scotus. A summary of Aquinas's life and work appears in a section chronicling bishops and doctors of the church (Anon. 1574, cap. 10). The depiction of Aquinas here is relatively straightforward and evenhanded. It provides basic information relating to his birth and monastic training and includes lists of his major writings and other works (Anon. 1574, cols. 1193–6). Interestingly, the *Centuries* also includes a rather extensive list of

miracles attributed to Aquinas after his death (cols. 1197–8). Elsewhere in the volume Thomas is recognized for achieving such “excellence in teaching that in his time he was unsurpassed in knowledge of philosophy and theology” (cap. 6, col. 657). The depiction of Aquinas in the *Centuries* is thus essentially respectful and complimentary.

The aims of Johann Sleidanus (1506–56), unlike the more ambitious ones of the *Chronicon* or the *Centuries*, were to write a contemporary history of the Reformation, focusing on the use of primary sources to depict with accuracy the conflict arising from Martin Luther’s opposition to indulgences and then to other corruptions in the church (Sleidanus 1556). Perhaps the first to publish publically against Luther’s positions was the Dominican, Sylvester Prierias (1456/7–1527). Prierias held the position of *Magister Sacri Palatii Apostolici*, or Master of the Sacred Apostolic Palace, a posting traditionally held by a Dominican who functions as the primary papal theologian. In his response to Prierias, Luther criticizes Prierias’s reliance upon Thomas Aquinas rather than Scripture in the course of his argument. Thus, writes Sleidanus of Prierias, Luther “objects against him, That he alledged no Text of Scripture, and only quoted the Opinion of *Thomas*, who himself had handled most things, according to his own Fancy, without the Authority of Scripture” (Sleidanus 1689, 3). Because of this kind of argumentation, which relies on “Syllogisms, or the various Devices of Men” rather than with “sound Doctrin, left to us by Divine Inspiration ... thick Darkness has overspread the Church, and jangling about frivolous and needless Questions had broke into it” (1689, 3). In Prierias’s further response, he “strongly defended *Thomas Aquinas*, affirming, That his whole Doctrin was so well Received, and Approved of by the Church of *Rome*, that it was even preferred before all other Writings.” Prierias continued to critique Luther, and “rebuked him for speaking with so little Reverence of so great a Man; and told him, That he looked upon it as an Honour, to be called a *Thomist*” (1689, 3).

Perhaps because so much of this early dispute had turned upon the commitment to and disagreement with Aquinas on the respective sides, Sleidanus next introduces and summarizes Aquinas’s life and work for his readers. He briefly rehearses Aquinas’s biography, and relates further that Aquinas had been a proponent of papal authority in both the civil and spiritual realms. In addition to Johann Tetzel (1465–1519) and Prierias, two other Dominicans, Jacob von Hoogstraten (c. 1460–1527) and Thomas Cajetan (1469–1534), were also among Luther’s early opponents, further underscoring the centrality of Thomas to these early debates. These

exchanges, in turn, are pivotal for the later course of Luther's work. As Bernhard Lohse writes, for instance, "it was Prierias' *Dialogus* that first evoked the irreconcilable conflict between Luther and Rome" (1999, 109).

A final example of a significant Protestant historical narrative of decline and restoration appears in the work of Lambert Daneau (c.1535–90) on Lombard's *Sentences*. This partial critical commentary on the *Sentences* opens with a prologue that discusses the "origin, progression, and ages" of the *Scholastica Theologia*. Daneau's work has been recognized as important in the historiography of philosophy, as it introduces a tripartite schema of scholasticism: *vetus*, *media*, and *novum* (Gaetano 2010). Daneau attributes the origins of scholasticism to the time of Lanfranc in 1020, and this first period in Daneau's scheme lasts until about 1220, with Albert the Great as a transitional figure between the *vetus* and *media Scholastica*. In this older period, the time of Lombard, Gratian, and Comestor, Daneau contends (possibly depending on the *Chronicon*) that two great classes of people came into being: the canonists and the scholastics. The former are dedicated to supporting the Roman hierarchy and papal tyranny through the promulgation of decretals and canon law. The scholastics, on the other hand "devise new doctrines" for the advance of superstition and error, which further enhances the power of the Roman pontiff (Daneau 1580, cap. 1).

Since the distinctions between old, middle, and new scholasticism are not simply temporal but also qualitative, it is worthwhile to dwell on the characteristics of the old scholastics as opposed to those of the middle period in Daneau's overview. Some scholars, such as Richard A. Muller and Luca Baschera, judge Daneau's commentary to be in one way or another appreciative of the *vetus Scholastica*. As Baschera writes, "Although the general tone of Daneau's treatment of scholastic theology is critical, the distinction of different phases in its history enables him not only to regard the 'old scholasticism' in a relatively favourable way, but also to consider some authors such as Bernard of Clairvaux as 'luminaries of their age'" (2009, 141). Matthew T. Gaetano takes up the legacy of Daneau's periodization and its uses in the history of philosophy, but with a rather different emphasis. Gaetano says that the *vetus Scholastica* was for Daneau "the least evil of them all. Lanfranc of Pavia and Peter Lombard after him, despite their slavishness to human authorities instead of Sacred Scripture, still maintained devotion to Augustine, the greatest of the ancient Fathers" (2010, 2). In Daneau, then, we find an understanding of Lombard in particular and the *vetus Scholastica* in general as "the least evil," or in Baschera's characterization "relatively favourable," form of scholasticism relative to the progressive

deformations to be found in the middle and new periods, the latter of which opens with Durandus's challenge to Aquinas, in about 1330. In Lombard's time, Aristotle had not yet been invited into the inner sanctum of scholastic theology as he would be in the middle period. In this way there remained in the old scholasticism a vestigial reverence for the word of God, extinguished in the middle period.

Thomas Aquinas's theology follows that of Albert the Great, and for Daneau is characteristic of that middle, increasingly corrupted, period of scholasticism, in which the pagan philosophy of Aristotle comes to rule the articles of faith completely (1580, cap. 2). On Daneau's account, any remaining modesty or virtue from the middle period of scholasticism is absent in the new age of scholasticism, which is "by far the most shameless" (1580, cap. 2) and which provides the occasion for the rise of the reform movements inaugurated by Martin Luther. In other works, Daneau reiterates this tripartite schema and, perhaps picking up the judgments of Calvin (Muller 2000, 51; see also Sytsma 2012, 317n85), likewise distinguishes the "sounder scholastics" of the older period from the sophistry of more recent scholastics (Daneau 1586, lib. 4, cap. 8, p. 254), and even includes Aquinas as one of these better authorities, or *puriore Scholastici* (Daneau 1577, lib. 2, cap. 10, fol. 182r-v).

In this way early Protestant historiographical attitudes toward medieval scholasticism in general, and Thomas Aquinas in particular, are largely (but not simply) critical and negative. Even if Thomas is to be accounted as a luminary of his age, his is an era of increasingly abstruse speculative theological reflection and a point on a historical continuum leading toward utter corruption and decadence. These narratives of decline and deformation anticipate similar evaluations among later Protestant scholastics. As Richard A. Muller summarizes, "It was virtually a truism among the Protestant scholastics that the earlier medieval scholasticism of Anselm and Lombard was more congenial to the Reformation and less troubled by philosophical and speculative questions than the scholasticism of the later Middle Ages, particularly from the time of Duns Scotus onward" (2003a, 29).

School Theology and the Early Reformers

We must account for the early reformers' own formation in, and familiarity with, these medieval traditions within the context of this largely antagonistic posture toward the scholastic theology of the Middle Ages. The

earliest reformers were largely schooled within the context of medieval scholastic traditions and religious orders, or were otherwise familiarized with these traditions in their education.

At the time of his turn toward ecclesial reformation, Martin Luther was an Augustinian friar. Against some accounts of Luther's background, Scott H. Hendrix writes that

Martin Luther did not leave Erfurt as a troubled monk who quivered in his sandals while occasionally reading a theology book. Quite the contrary. The nine years in Erfurt and the one year in Wittenberg had turned him into a skillful young scholar who also happened to be a conscientious Augustinian friar. During the next six years in Wittenberg, before he questioned the validity of indulgences, Luther matured rapidly in both roles. (Hendrix 2015, 39–40)

As David C. Steinmetz documents, there have been great efforts to explore to what extent Luther's education introduced him to medieval thought: "There is, of course, little evidence that Luther, whose theological course of study prescribed large doses of Biel and d'Ailly, ever spent much time in the direct reading of Thomas" (Steinmetz 2002, 47; see also Pesch 1970; Janz 1983, 1989). Whether or not Luther gained an accurate understanding of Thomas's own theology, or whether Thomas's teaching was filtered through various later developments, remains a point of some debate. Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, in his survey of the scholarship, concludes that "Luther was able to gain reliable knowledge of Aquinas, especially from Gabriel Biel" (2002, 70).

But whatever familiarity with Thomas Luther gained prior to his disputes was tempered by his more substantive formation in the *via moderna*. We find in Luther's 1517 *Disputation against Scholastic Theology* that he contradicts by name such theologians as John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly, and Gabriel Biel. Emphasizing the late medieval *via moderna* contexts of Luther's thought, Steinmetz concludes, "Whatever Luther owed to his colleagues and enemies, it was in the school of William Ockham and not in the school of John Capreolus or Cardinal Cajetan that he first encountered the theology of Thomas Aquinas" (2002, 48). As we have seen from Sleidanus's account of the early debates between Luther and various Thomists, the authority of Aquinas became a point of contention at the very beginning of Luther's reform efforts. As zur Mühlen writes, "In contrast to this merely indirect encounter or argument with Thomas Aquinas up until 1517, Luther's explicit confrontation with St. Thomas begins in the quarrel over indulgences, as his opponents Tetzl, Eck, Prierias and Cajetan seek to

call on the authority of Aquinas” (2002, 75). Aquinas largely became Luther’s target because his opponents appeal to him as an authoritative source for their teaching. Luther’s opposition to Aquinas is thus to a great degree occasional: “Following this phase of criticising Thomas Aquinas from 1517–1520, Luther speaks of him less and less, and even starts to treat him in a more discriminating way” (zur Mühlen 2002, 81).

If Luther’s engagement with medieval theology, and that of Thomas in particular, was colored by disputes with Dominicans like Tetzels, Prierias, Hoogstraten, and Cajetan, as well as his formation in nominalist scholasticism, other reformers were more grounded in *via antiqua* traditions. As Gottfried W. Locher relates, at a young age Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) attended the Latin school in Basel, was accepted as a novice in the Dominican monastery in Bern, and studied in Vienna before graduating with a master of arts from Basel. Thus, writes Locher, “His studies at Vienna and Basel would provide a thorough introduction to late-medieval scholasticism” (Locher 1981, 150–1). Such study “acquainted him with the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna*, although the former almost certainly predominated” (Stephens 1986, 6). Zwingli’s successor in Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–75), was schooled in the *via antiqua* (Rüetschi 2004, 217) and likewise evidences familiarity with Thomas Aquinas, as indicated by reference to the *Summa Theologiae* in his *Decades* (Bullinger 1849–52, 1.IX:160–1; 5.VI:239; 5.IX:443; 5.IX:464). Johann Oecolampadius (1482–1531) of Basel was also substantially acquainted with Thomas’s work. Educated in Heidelberg before his parish work, Oecolampadius favored Aquinas over the works of other scholastics such as Duns Scotus (Herzog 1843, 1:105).

The major early reformer Martin Bucer (1491–1551) was a Dominican monk before his conversion to the evangelical faith. W. Peter Stephens (1970, 18n3) writes of Bucer that “it is not clear how far the influence of Thomism is more than superficial, affecting Bucer’s language rather than his fundamental understanding of the Christian faith.” As Martin Greschat documents, however, Bucer’s early formation in Dominican theology was extensive: “About half his library, to be sure, as shown by 1518 inventory of his books, did consist of theological and philosophical works representing the thought of the great Dominican teacher Thomas Aquinas. But the other half of his collection covered rhetoric, history, grammar, as well as poetry, and thus was humanistic in the broadest sense” (2004, 18). For Greschat, the makeup of Bucer’s inventory is proof that in Bucer there was a coherent synthesis of medieval scholasticism and Renaissance humanism, with a

special emphasis on the work of Aquinas (see Greschat 2004, 22–5; Fink 2007; Leijssen 1979; Noblesse-Rocher 2001; Pauck 1969, 156).

The Alsatian Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563) was a member of the small Benedictine monastery in Lixheim where he became acquainted with the theological insights of the Reformation. His advocacy of the evangelical perspective led him to be known as “the Lutheran monk,” and indeed Musculus remained convinced of both the truth of Luther’s views on salvation and the obedience due to his order (Farmer 1997, 6). Although he was among the older of the second generation of reformers, he left the monastery relatively late, and it was in 1527 that he journeyed from the Lixheim cloister to Strasbourg, where he worked and learned with Bucer and Wolfgang Capito. Although during his career Musculus was especially concerned with patristic theological sources, he did have some knowledge of medieval theology, and is noteworthy particularly for his relatively moderate and sometimes even positive reception of Lombard’s *Sentences* and Gratian’s *Decretum* (Ballor 2012, 113, 139, 215). Musculus’s interaction with Thomas Aquinas appears particularly in his engagement with the topic of natural law, both in Musculus’s commentary on Romans (1555) and in his *Loci Communes* (1560), where he also discusses Thomas in relation to the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper. Musculus essentially accepts Thomas’s definition of natural law but notes it as incomplete and corrects it to apply more properly to human beings than to all rational creatures, including the angels (Ballor 2012, 197). As for the Eucharist, Musculus contends that communication in both kinds (wine and bread) was practiced in the church up until the time of Aquinas, and that the Angelic Doctor in particular effectively argued against the practice and thereby corrupted the church’s practice (Musculus 1560, loc. 34, pp. 476–7).

Although much more work remains to be done on the familiarity, use, and grounding of such early reformers in medieval theological traditions, there has been significant scholarly attention to scholastic influences on Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) and Girolamo Zanchi (1516–90). Both Vermigli and Zanchi were Italian émigrés, who fled after being members of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine. Vermigli was schooled in scholastic theology, particularly Thomism, at the famed University of Padua while he lived in the Saint John of Verdara monastery. As Frank A. James III writes, in Padua “Vermigli acquired a thorough training in Thomistic scholasticism which was tempered with a deep appreciation for Augustine and a vibrant Christian humanism” (James 1998, 5; on Padua see also more generally Gaetano 2013). It was during his later time as prior of the Basilica of

San Frediano Lucca that Vermigli influenced the younger Zanchi. Both Vermigli and Zanchi have been the focus of significant studies dealing with the reception of Thomas in the Reformed tradition (e.g., Budiman 2011; Donnelly 1976; Goris 2001; Gründler 1961; James 2013; McNair 1967; Rehnman 2013).

Philip Melanchthon and John Calvin (1509–64) were two of the most significant early reformers who had not been ordained as Roman Catholic clergy or were not members of religious orders. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to trace the complex contours of Melanchthon's philosophical and theological thought, some writers have identified an important line of continuity between Melanchthon and medieval scholasticism, particularly Thomism, in connection with his doctrine of law and legal philosophy. Thus, writes Franz Wieacker, Melanchthon is to be understood as a “restorer of scholastic jurisprudence” and as representing “the later return of Lutheran theology to a natural-law theory rooted in Thomistic Aristotelianism” (Wieacker 1967, 165, 264, as quoted in Berman 1993, 152n25). Melanchthon's sympathies with Aristotle on various points do not entail similar sympathies with Thomas, however, and, as with Luther and Calvin, Melanchthon's relationship to Thomas, construed either positively or negatively, has been the matter of some debate. Merio Scattola, for instance, has explored the extent to which Thomas's *lex aeterna* coheres and conflicts with Melanchthon's *lex Dei* (1999, 868–73). Whether or not Melanchthon is directly dependent upon “Thomistic Aristotelianism,” it is significant to note that connections between medieval and Reformation thought can be explored in areas including law, philosophy, and jurisprudence as well as theology proper (see, e.g., Ballor 2014).

The nature of Calvin's relationship to medieval theology is a subject for scholarly dispute that is perhaps only surpassed by the question of Luther's own relationship to the preceding era. Since Calvin was not formally educated in theology, his exposure to Thomism would have come from other sources. A leading possibility is Martin Bucer, given his Dominican training and the friendship between Bucer and Calvin. In a close study of the exegesis of Romans 9 by Calvin, Bucer, and Aquinas, Steinmetz concludes that “the thesis that Calvin is the beneficiary of a Thomistic school tradition mediated to him by Martin Bucer finds no support in the admittedly limited context of the interpretation of Romans 9” (1995, 153). This is not to say that Calvin was unaware of Aquinas's theology, but rather that the basis for assuming great familiarity is not as strong as it is in the case of many of those figures mentioned above. Indeed, recent scholarship has increasingly

questioned whether Calvin is directly engaging Thomas's work, for instance, rather than versions of Thomism represented by late-medieval figures. The popular McNeill–Battles edition of Calvin's *Institutes* further complicates the picture, as it regularly adds specific references to Thomas's work that do not appear in Calvin's own work, leaving in the impression that there is more direct engagement and opposition between Calvin and Thomas than the text actually sustains. As Charles Raith II writes of such notations, "the result of Battles's footnotes has been to convey to decades of unsuspecting readers a level of conflict between Aquinas's and Calvin's theology that simply does not exist" (2014, 13).

A number of significant points can be gleaned from this brief and impressionistic survey of early reformers' formation in and familiarity with medieval theological traditions. Even from this selected group we see some diversity of institutional affiliation: Dominicans, Augustinians, Benedictines, secular clergy, and laypersons are all represented among the early generations of reformers. With some notable exceptions, particularly Luther, those with formal theological training were educated substantially in the *via antiqua*, in some cases with an explicit emphasis in the theology of Thomas Aquinas. This diversity of schooling in medieval scholastic traditions indicates the general familiarity of these early reformers with school theology. Whether this familiarity bred contempt in the form of negative substantial reception in later articulations of Protestant theology is connected with the development of Protestant scholasticism itself.

Protestantism and the Second Scholasticism

Coming to terms with Protestantism's relationship with Thomas Aquinas requires coming to terms more broadly with the Reformation and post-Reformation theological developments. This means particularly that post-Reformation Protestant theology must be understood as to a great extent taking the form of a distinctive variant of the Second Scholasticism rather than a wholesale rejection of scholasticism as such.

In his summary of the conflict between Luther and Prierias and Hoogstraten, Sleidanus writes that the topics under dispute "were in a Scholastick manner managed and debated by Writing on both Sides" (1689, 4). In this observation Sleidanus captures the ambivalent nature of Protestant reception of scholasticism. As we have seen, in historiographical and polemical contexts, medieval scholasticism is largely characterized as

speculative and vain, a degeneration from theological focus on the pure gospel. At the same time, however, and sometimes even in the process of making such claims, scholastic tools and forms are often employed. Thus Willem van 't Spijker writes of the purported wholesale rejection of scholasticism by the Protestant reformers, "it has become obvious that this farewell to scholasticism as a method was not decisive or final" (2001, 291).

What we find when examining these sources, then, is not a univocal rejection of scholasticism as such. Instead, when characterizing the historical paths from the early church to their own times, the Protestant Reformers were inclined to describe as "scholastic" the problematic doctrinal innovations implicated in idle speculation and humanistic reasoning, particularly that which served to build up human active participation in justification and the perceived tyrannies of the papacy, for example. In this regard the Reformers' complaints had more to do with scholastic content, and particular content at that, than with the form of argument or the genre of school theology as such (Muller 2000, 39). Muller writes that Protestant scholasticism "must be understood primarily as a method of theological discourse, suited to the classroom and altered in the light of changes in logic and rhetoric that belonged to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (2003b, 1: 39). If we consider what the Reformers tend to say about medieval scholastics, we find a dominant narrative of decline and deformation that typically focuses on what is being taught. If we consider what the Reformers tend to do with respect to these same sources, however, a much more nuanced and even positive picture comes into focus, which employs many of the methods, and even some of the conclusions, of medieval scholasticism, adapted to fit the newer intellectual contexts arising out of humanistic learning and reformed models of scriptural exegesis.

When viewed from the perspective of how medieval sources were actually employed, the Protestant Reformation thus becomes better understood as a kind of reformation rather than a rejection of school theology. In this regard, the reform movement inaugurated by the early generations of Reformers is institutionalized, developed, and codified in the context of reform of school curricula as well as the polemical and apologetic needs of contemporary doctrinal theology.

Muller provides a good summary of this relationship between the early generations of Protestant theologians and their later successors:

Where the Reformers painted with a broad brush, their orthodox and scholastic successors strove to fill in the details of the picture. Whereas the

Reformers were intent upon distancing themselves and their theology from problematic elements in medieval thought and, at the same time, remaining catholic in the broadest sense of that term, the Protestant orthodox were intent upon establishing systematically the normative, catholic character of institutionalized Protestantism, at times through the explicit use of those elements in patristic and medieval theology not at odds with the teachings of the Reformation. (2003b, 1: 37)

Although the term “Second Scholasticism” is most often used to identify a particularly Roman Catholic phenomenon from the beginning of the sixteenth through the first half of the eighteenth century (e.g., Heider 2014, 8), when we see the continuity as well as the development of medieval scholasticism as applied in Protestant thought it is entirely appropriate to characterize Protestant scholasticism as a variant of this broader neo-scholasticism (see Muller 2003a, 4). The larger unity of scholastic method between Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians thus undermines attempts to define scholasticism along confessional lines (see Rehnman 2002, 37).

This is not to say that there are not distinguishing characteristics that differentiate Protestant from Roman Catholic scholastic theologies. On the whole, Protestant scholasticism tended to be much more critical in the use of medieval theological sources as authoritative, and this is perhaps most noteworthy in the difference in the inclination toward commentating on such sources directly. When compared with their Roman Catholic contemporaries, Protestant scholastics tended to downplay the authority of church fathers and medieval doctors relative to Scripture. But even with this tendency as a point of departure in the earliest generations of Reformation, there were parallel developments of doctrine among the Protestant scholastics. If Roman Catholic traditions of the Second Scholasticism often took the form of commentaries on Thomas’s *Summa*, the closest analogues among Protestants would be later commentaries on confessional documents like the Heidelberg Catechism, or more singular instances like the commentary of Bernardinus De Moor (1709–80) on the work of Johannes a Marck (1656–1731). While Luther initially criticized Dominicans like Prierias and Cajetan for their reliance on extrabiblical sources and authorities like Thomas, Protestants would eventually develop their own genres focused on confessional and scholastic authorities.

In these ways the modifications of medieval scholastic theologies in the thought of Protestant scholastics mirror similar developments and deployments of medieval school theology among Roman Catholics: “The rise of

scholastic method in Protestant theology brought about a clarity in organization and argument reminiscent of the clarity of the medieval *summas* and commentaries on the *Sentences*" (Muller 2003a, 79). With respect particularly to Aquinas and within the context of his own study of John Owen (1616–83), Christopher Cleveland writes, "The discussions of Thomistic influence upon the early reformers have remained separated from the discussions of Thomistic influence upon later Reformed orthodoxy. This is unfortunate, considering that the earliest reformers provide a precedent for the presence of Thomistic ideas in Reformed theology from its earliest days" (Cleveland 2013, 12). From this perspective, figures like Zanchi and Vermigli function as gatekeepers or entry points for Thomism in Reformed scholasticism in ways analogous to the influence of Cajetan for early modern Dominican theology. As Baschera writes, "Zanchi's appreciation for Aquinas, due especially to his Augustinianism in matters of soteriology, did not remain an isolated phenomenon" and was "shared by many other Protestants" (2009, 140). If Calvin and Luther set the polemical or rhetorical edge of the Reformation, then others, such as Vermigli and Zanchi, provided the intellectual and architectonic framework for the development of mature theological systems. Thus, concludes Donnelly:

The theology of Vermigli and Zanchi, together with parallel developments within Lutheranism, shows that when Protestants came to recast their theology into a scholastic form, they rather consistently avoided nominalism as a base. Insofar as the roots of Protestant scholasticism go back to the Middle Ages, they tend to go back to the *via antiqua* and Thomism. Protestant fruit grows quite well on the Thomist tree, even better than on the bad nominalist tree. (1976, 454)

And while a great deal of work has been done on the Thomistic sympathies of Zanchi and Vermigli, as well as on the antipathies between Thomas and Luther and Calvin, more work remains to be done on the reception of Thomas among specific figures, among the earlier as well as the later generations of the Reformation. There has been a dearth of any scholarship on many major Reformed figures like Oecolampadius and Musculus, much less specific inquiry about the connections between such theologians and Aquinas. One of the great promises of this current volume is to help reintroduce and reinvigorate such focused and specialized study. Such explorations have and should continue to focus both on the broad reception of Thomas among specific figures, such as Franciscus Junius (1545–1602),

William Ames (1576–1633), Richard Hooker (1554–1600), and John Owen, as well as on the doctrinal development of specific topics, such as Scripture, the doctrine of God, anthropology, creation, providence, and law (Hampton 2008, 221–65; Sytsma 2013; see also Junius 2015; for Ames see van Vliet 2013; for Hooker see Littlejohn 2015; for Owen see Cleveland 2013 and Rehnman 2002, 34–7).

While Roman Catholics may have been loath to make positive use of Protestant thought, the reverse was certainly not always the case. Writing much later in the development of Protestant scholasticism, Richard Baxter (1615–91) captures this broader dynamic well:

The divers understanding of words among us, and the weakness and passions of Divines, and a base fear of the censures of a party, hath occasioned many on both sides to feign the differences to be much wider than indeed they are: so that when an *Alvarez*, a *Bannes*, a *Gibieuf*, have spoken the same things as the Protestants do, they are presently fain to pour out abundance of unworthy slanders against the Protestants, for fear of being accounted Protestants themselves. (1659, 365).

Baxter observes that many Protestants do the same, manufacturing differences where they do not exist or exaggerating them when it serves some polemical or apologetic purpose. Indeed, the polemical and apologetic contexts of the development of Protestant scholasticism are important to recognize as well as the more general concerns regarding institutionalization and development (Baschera 2009, 140–141; Broeyer 2001). But a more general continuity with scholastic theology is evidenced when Protestants make positive use of diverse figures, which in fact does occur. Thus, attests Baxter, “Our students would not so ordinarily read *Aquinas*, *Scotus*, *Ariminensts* [Gregory of Rimini], *Durandus*, &c. if there were not in them abundance of precious truth which they esteem” (1659, 365). Baxter’s openness in acknowledging dependence and agreement wherever it could be found is noteworthy for its forthrightness, but such positive use of medieval and contemporary Roman Catholic sources is not unique to him among the Protestants.

Conclusion

In an astute survey of recent developments in scholarship concerning the Reformation and post-Reformation eras, Willem van Asselt emphasizes the emergence of a desire “to foster an interdisciplinary approach, and in so

doing put forward the claim that the emergence of Protestant scholasticism was no 'regression' to medieval patterns of thought, but rather the result of a progressive development related to the impact of the Renaissance" (2001, 273). This perspective provides an understanding that "it is incorrect to suppose that the Renaissance, humanism and the Reformation were by definition anti-scholastic" (van Asselt 2001, 273).

This chapter has advanced this basic perspective by showing that accounting for the complex convergences and divergences among the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and post-Reformation periods must account for the self-understandings of the early Reformers relative to earlier eras, their familiarity with medieval traditions, and the actual employment of scholastic forms and methods in the early and following generations of the Reformation. When the early Reformers described the Middle Ages, and particularly the theology of the schoolmen, they tended to emphasize the decadence and deformation of doctrine. Such narratives were to a great extent based on familiarity derived from their actual formation and education in late-medieval theology, and a significant number of major reformers received substantive training in these various schools. But when we turn not only to what the early reformers say but how they actually engage their opponents and develop their own teaching, a much more complex picture comes into focus. We find a willingness as Protestant schools form and reform, and indeed even an enthusiasm, for employing scholastic methods as well as scholastic figures in the formulation and defense of Protestant doctrine. By the time the great Protestant academies of the seventeenth century have matured, we find a Protestant school-theology that has developed in dialogue with and alongside of the neo-scholastic trends among Roman Catholics.

Contrary to accounts of the Reformation which assert a radical intellectual break effected by Luther's increasingly hostile criticisms of particular doctrines and figures, this broader perspective provides evidence for seeing a greater intellectual coherence and continuity from at least the Middle Ages and the time of Thomas Aquinas to the post-Reformation period (ca. mid-eighteenth century). The magisterial Protestant Reformation, in its various forms and dispensations, is more properly understood then as a diverse group of variants within an even larger and more diverse landscape of the Second Scholasticism.

In his insightful study of Luther's interaction with contemporary Thomists, Steinmetz concludes that "there were Thomists who were converted to the Protestant cause and who remained, to a greater or lesser

degree, Thomists all their lives: theologians like Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr Vermigli, and Jerome Zanchi” (2002, 58). What this means for studies of Thomas Aquinas among the Protestants is that, in Steinmetz’s memorable formulation, “The story of Thomas Aquinas and Protestantism has yet to be written, and it is not identical with the story of Thomas and Luther” (2002, 58). If the tale of Thomas and Protestant theology is not reducible to the reception of the Angelic Doctor by individual theologians, even those of the stature of Martin Luther or John Calvin, then it is a much larger and more complex story than is often thought. It is a story that must involve recognition of the (dis)continuities both between the medieval and the early generations of the Reformation and, in turn, between the Reformation and post-Reformation periods. To a significant extent these developments involved commitment to scholastic modes of discourse, even as these modes were developed in significant ways and deployed to sometimes radically different and conflicting purposes.

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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

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. Balsarak 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 didascalica* (1593, 30–1), which plagiarized it without attribution.² Polanus's *De verbo Dei* was reprinted in an enlarged edition in *Sylloge thesium theologiarum* (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 Job 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 κατεργασόμενοι. 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, Philipians 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 christiana* 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 Danielelem ... 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 *saniore 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 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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Jerome Zanchi's Use of Thomas Aquinas

Stefan Lindholm

Jerome (or Girolamo) Zanchi (1516–90) was a leading Reformed theologian, well known for his scholastic style as well as his frequent use of Thomas Aquinas (1225–74). He was a disciple of his fellow countryman, Peter Vermigli Martyr (1499–1552) and taught theology in Strasbourg, Heidelberg, and Neustadt. In this chapter I shall look at some of the ways in which Zanchi used Aquinas in his theological writings. In doing so, I will not analyze Zanchi's relation to some generalized form of "Thomism" but instead focus on three issues that are relevant points of comparison: the doctrine of God, methodology, and natural philosophy. Zanchi's doctrine of God has been given more extensive treatments in the literature than his methodology and natural philosophy and I hope to show the important interrelation among these topics, since they are representative of Zanchi's relation to Aquinas. I offer no complete or comprehensive account of each topic, however, which would take us far beyond the parameters of this chapter. My focus will simply be guided by points of contact between Zanchi and Aquinas. I will argue, for instance, that often apparent differences between Aquinas and Zanchi are due to unstated assumptions: they wrote in different contexts and dealt with different problems, with the effect that the difference is less than some scholars have concluded.

There is also a hermeneutical problem in that some putative differences are due to assumptions in contemporary scholarship. Throughout the chapter, therefore, I shall situate my interpretation within the present state of research. A glance at scholarly interpretations of Zanchi's use of

Aquinas reveals that it is not easily pinned down. Otto Gründler argued (critically) that Zanchi had returned “to the causal thinking of the scholastics, from which Calvin, for the most part, had successfully freed himself” (Gründler 1961, 23). But contemporary scholars have more or less rejected this view. John P. Donnelly, in his comparative article, “Calvinist Thomism,” argued that there is no necessary conflict between Zanchi’s dual theological influences, that is, Calvin and Aquinas, since Zanchi was “both a better Thomist and a better Calvinist than Gründler makes him” (Donnelly 1976a, 445). Harm Goris (2001, 122), in a study of Thomism in Zanchi’s doctrine of God, remarked that Donnelly’s work is valuable but needs to be nuanced. Though Goris has added more pieces to the puzzle, there are still some pieces missing and still some work left to do before we can see the fuller picture (Budiman 2011; Merkle 2015; Lindholm 2016).

Zanchi held Aquinas in higher regard than other scholastics, sometimes calling him the purest among them (*OT*, IV, 112).¹ He had extensive knowledge of Aquinas and frequently made explicit reference to Aquinas’s works, citing a large portion of his *corpus*. He refers, for example, to *Summa Theologiae*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *De Veritate*, Aquinas’ commentaries on the *Sentences*, the *Physics*, *On Interpretation*, and *Metaphysics* (Budiman 2011, ch. 2). Donnelly has argued that Zanchi’s use of Aquinas was motivated by at least three factors. First, Aquinas provided “a potent weapon of the controversies of his time” in defense of orthodoxy against other confessional groups (Lutherans and Catholics). In those debates scriptural arguments had begun to lose their value, so theologians sought a reliable guide to tradition. Second, Aquinas was useful against the Italian radicals who argued “partly on scriptural grounds, partly for philosophical reasons” against the doctrine of trinity (Donnelly 1976a, 450; see also Merkle 2015, 85–7). Third, he suggests that “[Zanchi’s] Heidelberg years were consecrated to a vast ‘summa’ of philosophical theology which is without rival for sweep and synthetic power in sixteenth-century Calvinism. Zanchi’s model was obviously the ‘Summa Theologiae,’ and his arrangement of materials often parallels closely that of Aquinas” (1976b, 88).

None of these factors, however, makes Zanchi an epigone of Aquinas or a “Thomist.” It would be better to say that both Aquinas and Zanchi belong to a continuous academic community in which Aquinas was a reliable guide to truth, not least in the face of polemical debates (Donnelly 1976b, 88).

The Doctrine of God

Zanchi was traditionalist in the doctrine of God, revealing only shades of constructive thought and then mainly in relation to some minor aspect of the tradition or of an exegetical issue. "Tradition" was enshrined in the ecumenical councils and the best doctors of the patristic, medieval, and contemporary periods. It is therefore a legitimate procedure to focus on the relatively few (but important) minor points rather than to give an overview of his doctrine of God, since that has been done elsewhere (Goris 2001; Donnelly 1976a, 1976b; Immink 1987; Muller 1987–2003, vol. 3; Rehnman 2013; Te Velde 2013, chs. 5–8; Lindholm 2016, ch. 5). I shall mainly use his two major doctrinal works on God, *De Tribus Elohim* (OT, I) and *De Natura Dei* (OT, II) since his fullest discussions are found in these contexts and the explicit relation to Aquinas is most evident here.

When considering Zanchi's doctrine of God in relation to Aquinas I will start by making three observations, which will also be relevant to the two other topics considered below. First, Zanchi begins the first book of *De Natura Dei* by doing two things. He exegetically expounds the "names of God" based on biblical titles – such as "JHWH," "Lord," "Creator," and "King" – and discusses how language functions in the context of theology proper (OT, II, 1–50; see also Te Velde 2013, chs. 5 and 6). Zanchi's treatment of the divine names here is more explicitly exegetical in nature than Aquinas's mirroring section, which appears in a later scheme of *Summa Theologiae* (1a.13).²

Second, Zanchi does not establish his exposition of the doctrine of God by means of a demonstration of the existence of the subject matter of the science, that is, God. Aquinas, by contrast, does establish theology as a science by demonstrating the existence of God as the subject matter of the science (*ST* 1a.2).

Third, Zanchi's edited works begin with the treaties on the Trinity, *De Tribus Elohim*, and then proceeds to the doctrine of God in *De Natura Dei*. It is clear at the beginning of *De Natura Dei* that Zanchi presupposes the Trinity, and thus he discusses several Trinitarian and Christological issues in his exposition of the attributes of God. In Aquinas's exposition, the order of the Trinity and essence of God (in both the *Summas*) are the inverse, and interaction with Trinitarian issues in the attributes of God is more or less absent.

Exactly what we should make of these differences is not immediately obvious. Zanchi never set out to follow Aquinas's order of topics and methodology slavishly, so we should not make too much of it. Thus, differences

should not necessarily be interpreted as signs of implicit criticism of Aquinas (as it could easily become an argument from silence). But these initial observations are important and I will pick them up as we go along.

Let me begin with the third observation, that of the order of the doctrine of God. Zanchi's Trinitarian doctrine closely resembles Aquinas's materially, yet it differs formally.³ The Reformed scholastics' task was to combat both ancient and contemporary distortions of the Christian Trinitarian theology, and thus there was a need for a harmonization of the received theological terminology as it has been developed and integrated in the patristic and medieval periods (Muller 1987–2003, 4: 167–89). At the start of *De Natura Dei*, Zanchi notes that, in the previous work on the Trinity, he has discussed who (*quis*) God is and that, in the present work, he will discuss what (*qualis*) God is (*OT*, II, p. 1). Zanchi's ordering of the Trinity and essence of God was uncommon among the Reformed scholastics and it did not seem to have a lasting influence on Reformed scholasticism. Some modern commentators seem to make too much of this detail, however, as if it marked a potential shift in Reformed theology (Muller 1987–2003, 3: 145–6; 2008, 111). I am not convinced that we should interpret it in such terms. I suggest that the order boils down to the context in which they were written. The theological challenges were different in the High Middle Ages when Aquinas was writing and in the 1570s when Zanchi began his more productive career as a theologian (Donnelly 1975). Zanchi had the emerging antitrinitarian movement to combat. No comparable threat was present in Aquinas's historical context. It might be assumed that the Islamic non-trinitarian doctrine of God could be compared to the antitrinitarians of the sixteenth century. Despite apparent similarities it would not be a fair comparison since the latter arose from within the same theological sphere, whereas the Muslim movement, for Aquinas, was seen as an alien movement. This is fundamentally a difference between sectarians and members of another religion. Seen in their respective (apologetic) contexts, it is natural that the kind of response Aquinas chose in the smaller *Summa* begins with (that remarkable piece of) natural theology and puts revealed theology at the very end, as the culmination. But in order to correct a sectarian movement, arisen from within, no such bridges via natural theology were necessary to Zanchi's project (Burchill 1988).⁴

Having cautioned about drawing conclusions from the order of doctrine to doctrinal content and having highlighted the importance of context for interpretation of scholastic texts, we should note another question about order, which I believe is of greater importance. Richard A. Muller comments

that there is a “significant reflection here [in Zanchi’s doctrine of God] of Aquinas’ *Summa*.” Then he adds that “Zanchi also departs from Aquinas not only in the order of the remaining attributes but also their *inner logic*” (1987–2003, 3: 218; emphasis mine). Similarly, Harm Goris notes that Zanchi sometimes disagrees with “Aquinas’s formulations although this does not necessarily imply that their theological views are irreconcilable.” But then he adds something that goes beyond Muller’s assessment, namely, that “Zanchi seems to introduce a structural element in his theology that is fundamentally foreign to Aquinas.” Goris claims that Zanchi’s attempt to distinguish a natural or structural order among the attributes by ordering them as earlier and later (*prius et posterius*) is violating divine simplicity. Aquinas, on Goris’s reading, would only admit a “natural order” among the relations of origin among the divine persons. He suggests that Zanchi’s view is a consequence of a Scotist influence that makes God talk univocal (Goris 2001, 137–9). I beg to differ with Goris’s assessment.

Zanchi’s doctrine of God overlaps considerably with Aquinas’s but has some rearranged and/or extended sections (e.g., *De infinitate et immensitate dei* book, II, 5–6 and *De providentiae dei* book, V, 1) and added sections (e.g., *De gratia dei* book III, 2 and *De ira dei* book, III, 6) that are not matched in the *Summa* (see Donnelly 1976a, 447). Let us look at this more closely. As mentioned above, the first book introduces the doctrine of God by discussing the names of God and has no proper parallel in Aquinas. (Indeed, the revealed name in the Exodus 3:14 passage is mentioned twice in the beginning of the *Summa* to trigger the demonstrative proofs for the existence of God but it does not seem to have the same systematic purpose as this and other passages have in Zanchi’s exegetical treatment.) The names of God lead on to an extended discussion in the second book on the attributes of simplicity, infinity, immensity, and eternity and are arranged in a similar way to the *Summa Theologiae*. It is quite clear that in discussing the names of and the language about God, Zanchi presupposes or anticipates the attributes developed in book two, particularly divine simplicity. That God’s nature is simple is central to both Aquinas’s and Zanchi’s doctrine (Donnelly 1976b, 91; Rehnman 2013; Lindholm 2016, ch. 5). Both argue that this does not mean that things are said synonymously, equivocally, or univocally about God, but analogically. Zanchi, like Aquinas, argues that, although God is simple, words used to signify God’s essence are not synonymous but retain diverse meanings (*OT*, II, 16): “The reason is that if a thing is the self-identical, one and the same divine essence is signified by various names. However, [the essence] is not talked of in one but in in many

senses.” Instead, talk about God should be understood from the *effects* of divine action in creation. Aquinas’s use of the Dionysian three ways (*via causalitatis*, *via negationis*, and *via eminentiae*) is repeated in Zanchi’s doctrine of analogical predication. God as first cause and as simple are presuppositions that emerge in Zanchi’s introductory discussion of *De Natura Dei*. Zanchi thinks that divine attributes are derived from the order of nature and our knowledge of the effects without necessarily positing a structural element in the cause of these effects. Thus it seems misguided to assume a Scotist influence.

Since divine simplicity is so fundamental to the doctrine of God, Zanchi finds the common distinction between communicable and incommunicable attributes of God problematic because, strictly speaking, no divine attribute is communicable to any creature (*De Natura Dei*, II, ch. 1 in *OT*, II, 50–62).⁵ God’s being is undivided, lacking the kinds of composition of created existence (potency–actuality, essence–existence, form–matter, and so on). Thus the attributes of God are strictly only communicable to the persons of the godhead. For instance, the Father begets the Son and thereby communicates his own nature eternally (*OT*, II, 54). Zanchi was also careful with the incommunicable–communicable distinction because of the controversy over the real presence of Christ with some Lutheran theologians (the “ubiquitarians”), such as Johann Brenz (1499–1570) and Martin Chemnitz (1522–86). In order to defend the real presence of Christ’s human nature, they argued that the human nature was or could be everywhere (*ubiquitas*) present. Moreover, they frequently talked about a real communication of divine attributes to the human nature of Christ (see Lindholm 2016, chs. 5 and 6; Haga 2012). Zanchi, therefore, felt that the incommunicable–communicable distinction was potentially misleading and added a clarifying distinction between relational and nonrelational or absolute attributes (*OT*, II, 5). Absolute attributes signify simplicity, eternity, immutability, infinity, immensity, perfection, and beatitude.⁶ Relative attributes are those that naturally find an expression in relation to creation: first as the “faculties” or powers of God – omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, truth, and will (*De Natura Dei*, III) – and then as the “affections” of God such as goodness, grace, love, and mercy as well as anger and wrath (*De Natura Dei*, IV) and, finally, providence and predestination (*De Natura Dei*, V). (Like Aquinas, Zanchi does not presuppose that talk of “affection” in God presupposes that God has passions or emotions like human beings. God is pure act (*actus purus*) and therefore not subject to change or passion as created beings are.) This distinction has the polemical advantage of avoiding

the risk of being confused with the ubiquitarian use of “communication” since there is no real communication of any of the relative attributes to the human nature of Christ but merely effects, as in the rest of creation.

As an absolute attribute, simplicity and many other attributes discussed in the second book of *De Natura Dei* signify how God is not (*quomodo Deus non sit*), and this has a parallel in Aquinas's *Summa* (*ST*, 1a.3–11). In Aquinas, the divine operations of intellect and will are first considered in relation to the divine essence, on Zanchi's terms nonrelationally, and then in relation to created things in the context of providence (*ST*, 1a.22–4).

With respect to Zanchi's distinction I now note some differences with Aquinas, pertaining to what Muller talked of as “inner logic.” First, Aquinas includes divine goodness among the absolute attributes relating only to the divine essence (*ST*, 1a.6), whereas Zanchi discusses this attribute in the context of the affections relating to God's self-expression in creation (*De Natura Dei*, IV, 1 in *OT*, II, 326–42).⁷ Important here is the Aristotelian notion of goodness as final cause, or goodness as that which everything desires (*Bonum id esse, quod omnia appetunt*) (*OT*, II, 328). These core notions explain why Zanchi argues that goodness pertains to the will of God and functions as a bridge to his lengthy discussions of grace and providence in *De Natura Dei*. Aquinas emphasizes the Dionysian concept of self-diffusiveness to express the character of goodness in the *Summa Theologiae*, in contrast to Zanchi's emphasis on final causality and the communication to and gradation of goodness among creatures.

Second, Aquinas talks of divine life (*vita dei*) as an operation of the divine intellect and will (*ST*, 1a.18) and divine beatitude (*beatitudo dei*) in the context of divine transient operation and power (*ST*, 1a.26). Zanchi, more or less, does the opposite (see *De Natura Dei*, II, 5, 18; see also Muller 1987–2003, 3: 381–4). Aquinas remarks that “life” signifies something essential and accidental in things and from the proper operation of a thing. According to Aristotle living things are those that are equipped with the faculties of sensation and/or understanding (*ST*, 1a.18.2). God is not a material being and cannot sense but can understand and act in a way analogous to our life that is essentially rational. We may also note that Zanchi ranks life as an absolute attribute since it is closely connected to the Boethian definition of timelessness, which implies that what is timeless is God's *life*, that God lives *per se* and not through participation in creation.⁸ This generates a sense of divine life as aseity and is derived from divine simplicity.

In Aquinas, divine beatitude and life tie the doctrine of God together. Aquinas's concept of beatitude is not primarily understood as an extraneous

expression of the divine essence but as an expression of the unity, perfection, and independence of the divine intellectual and volitional life. It is worth noting its systematic function: it is the final attribute Aquinas discusses in relation to the divine essential unity before he embarks on the Trinity, thus suggesting that Trinitarian life is bliss (see *ST* 1a.26, *proemium*).⁹ Divine beatitude in Zanchi is similar in content but here he prefers other authorities and a slightly different terminology. His doctrine of divine beatitude is derived from a mixture of exegetical and philosophical considerations and is described as God's beatific or felicitous knowledge of his eternal state of abounding goodness that is free from evil and needs nothing outside himself (*De Natura Dei*, II, ch. 8, in *OT*, II, 156). He then goes on to talk about how created beatitude relates to divine beatitude as the context of the operations of God. Thus Zanchi does not give the attribute the same systematic purpose as Aquinas, as a bridge to Trinitarian life.

We have seen that the placement of some attributes in Zanchi's *De Natura Dei* serves another purpose and function from what they do in Aquinas. As I have pointed out, that does not suggest a radical divergence in content. Having dealt with the doctrine of God, we have already started discussing our next topic: methodology.

Methodology

Like Aquinas, Zanchi explicitly says that theology is a demonstrative science and that it does not argue from *per se* evident notions or first principles but from divine revelation. As is now clear from our discussion of the *locus de deo*, however, Zanchi is not writing as "narrowly" demonstratively as Aquinas, since he does not establish the existence of God in order to do theology scientifically. There are general reasons, again having to do with the difference of their respective contexts, that we could take into consideration. As Sebastian Rehnman has reminded us, the Reformed scholastics in general did not spill much ink demonstrating the existence of God in their theological treaties since, properly speaking, it belongs to philosophy rather than theology to do this. Moreover, readers of theology were "supposed to have mastered philosophy;" both natural philosophy and metaphysics were thought to culminate in the demonstration of the cause of being (Rehnman, 2013, pp. 366–7; Freedman, 1993). Thus since Zanchi mostly wrote theological texts he would have found it out of place to demonstrate the existence of God at length in such contexts.

Somewhat surprisingly, John P. Donnelly claims that Zanchi explicitly used syllogistic formulations more than Aquinas: "The deductive and defensive nature of Zanchi's theology is best illustrated by his use of the formal deductive syllogism. Formal syllogisms are rare in the theological writings of Aquinas but they are everywhere in Zanchi" (1976b, 90). It is not entirely clear what Donnelly means by "formal deductive syllogism" and it is even less clear that Zanchi employed them more than Aquinas. Zanchi's "formality" does not consist in anything like modern philosophical "formalism." He does, however, habitually state his case in a brief argument set apart at the beginning and end of a section or chapter. But syllogisms as such are not "rare" in Aquinas's texts. In fact, his *quaestiones* are argued syllogistically, only in a slightly less explicit manner, since the readers were expected to be familiar with the ordering and structuring principles of scholastic texts. The only difference does not so much concern some formalism but the didactic and (perhaps) rhetorico-polemical presentation of syllogisms, which is more explicit in Zanchi than Aquinas.

Scholars have also suggested that Zanchi's method is influenced by Paduan Aristotelianism (see Randall 1940). Zanchi's explicit and frequent use of syllogisms could then be seen as a result of a Paduan influence (see Gründler 1961, 27–36; Merkle 2015, 82–5).¹⁰ Especially in his biblical exegesis Zanchi employed the terms *resolutiva* (analysis) and *compositiviva* (synthesis), which indicates a connection to Paduan Aristotelianism. But a Paduan influence does not necessarily contradict Aquinas's methodology as much as it extends or perfects it. The Paduan philosophers had deepened the study of the original Aristotelian corpus and other ancient philosophy traditions, predating the scholastic treatments. However, rather than rejecting scholasticism, this tradition is arguably to be understood as an addition to and elaboration of the scholastic tradition. Moreover, it is not likely that Zanchi perceived it as something antithetical to Aquinas's scholastic method. For instance, Zanchi (1581) thought that Giacomo Zabarella's view of logic and science was not as muddled as that of some of his fellow Italians. His favoring of Zabarella's logic was partly motivated by his opposition to Ramist logic (Hotson 2007, 136–52). Yet the exact nature (if there is one) of Zanchi's methodology remains a topic for further research.

The following section, dealing with some topics in natural philosophy, aims to extend and exemplify some of the observations in this section on Zanchi's method.

Natural Philosophy

From his earliest publications, Zanchi presents a positive and theologized view of secular learning and philosophy. Indeed, he presents a rather impressive physico-theology. He thought that philosophy, and physics in particular, was revealed to Adam, Moses, and the fathers of the old covenant – Solomon was the greatest of the philosophers – and then eventually handed down to the Greek philosophers. Zanchi’s humanist learning is here evident from his frequent references to several authors outside the standard bulk of scholastic sources, such as Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Trismegistus, Kinchi, and other ancient authors (*OT*, III, 220 ff). Among the Greeks, he applauds not merely Plato and Aristotle but also such as John Philoponus, the Arab commentators, and Simplicianus (Introduction to Zanchi 1554; see also Budiman 2011, ch. 1). Zanchi begins his discourse on visible creation by situating natural philosophy in relation to other branches of science. God’s work in visible creation is more or less identified with natural philosophy (or physics), focusing on corporal bodies and natural principles. Natural philosophy is a useful (*utilis*) assistant in explicating the deposit or contents of revealed theology (*OT*, III, 217–24). For instance, he explicitly thinks that the Aristotelian understanding of *natura* as the intrinsic motion fundamental for visible creation is there in the Genesis account of the six-day creation through the recurring phrase “*iuxta speciem suam*” (*OT*, III, 219). In a subsection labeled “Methodus Mosis & Aristotelis,” he goes to lengths to show the harmony between the methods of Moses and Aristotle. Among the philosophers Aristotle’s method for understanding nature was judged “excellent,” “beautifully sane,” and “consonant with nature.” Indeed, Moses had in Genesis laid down the common-sense view of the accidental categories of Aristotle such as movement, time, place, and space! And when discussing the heavens Zanchi brings up the topics of “time” and “place” and other categories in a way that closely follows Aristotle’s *Categories* and the expansion of these topics in *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Zanchi then moves on to the testimony of the philosophers (*testimonia philosophorum*) and discusses the views of Aristotle’s *Physics* at length. Further themes and concepts are borrowed from *De Coelo* and *De generatione et corruptione*. Zanchi thinks that such concepts were used as the explicative strategy of Moses’ creation account in Genesis. After this interlude to natural philosophy follows a detailed commentary, word by word, on the first verses of *Genesis*.

Zanchi's treatment in *De Operibus Dei* is much more exegetically driven than Aquinas's section on the visible creation in either of the *Summas*. In Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle's works and his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, natural philosophy is given great attention but nothing like Zanchi's "theologized" account. Again, these differences might be explained by the fact that Zanchi wrote in a different theological context than Aquinas and that Aquinas still could serve as an important authority.

Zanchi and Aquinas agree on the traditional understanding that the world was created *ex nihilo* (*De Operibus Dei*, I, chs. 2–3 in *OT*, III, 7–21; see also Zanchi 2007, 146–7). The notion of an *ex nihilo* creation was not available to Aristotle (*De Operibus Dei*, I, ch. 3, question 2 [*Alia Aristotelis Argumenta refutantur*] in *OT*, III, 26–9). He had argued that the world is an enduring and seamless web of generation of corruptions but the totality of things (the world) was never generated (see Burrell 2004, ch. 1). Aquinas is cited in passing in this context and we also see a rare occasion of explicit criticism of Aquinas. Zanchi thinks that the world neither is nor could be eternal (*De Operibus Dei*, I, ch. 3, q. 2 [*An mundi sit aeterna*], Thesis. 1. [*Mundus neque aeternus est, neque aeternus esse potuit*] in *OT*, III, 22). In this he differs from Aquinas who agreed with Zanchi that the world is not eternal but argued that the eternity of the world is nondemonstrable and that it can only be accepted on the basis of divine revelation (*OT*, III, 26; Aquinas, *ST*, 1a.46.2; see also Wippel 1995). It should be said that Zanchi does not reach his stronger conclusion on a purely philosophical or dialectical basis but typically mixes it with an exegesis of biblical authoritative passages (Genesis 1, Psalm 102, and Proverbs 8). He felt free to argue from revelation against the heathen philosophers since he was convinced that God provided truth to the Hebrews before the Greeks took it over and expanded on it. Arguing from revelation in this way is to bring back to God what rightfully belongs to him.

When Zanchi turns to anthropology, however, the use of and agreement with Aquinas is more explicit (*OT*, II, 554–678). Zanchi argues in a recognizably Thomist-fashioned hylomorphism that the soul is the form of the material body and that body and soul together compose a human being. He echoes Aquinas's position that there is only one substantial form in a human person, a thesis laid down by natural philosophy. Unless that were so, the unity of a human being would dissolve into accidentally arranged substances (*OT*, II, 626–7). Other scholastics opined that there is some sort of hierarchy of substantial forms in a human being (see Cross 1998, 1–34). Zanchi also uses Aquinas when refuting two perceived extreme views of the

soul. First, along with other scholastics, he invokes Aquinas as authority against traducianism and the view that the soul is eternal, in the sense that it predates the creation of an individual human being and derives from angelic or divine essence. Zanchi associates this view with Origen's platonizing tendencies (see *OT*, III, 605–27, VIII, 172–3). Second, some Italian philosophers such as Simon Portius (1496–1554) and Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) had argued that the soul ceases to exist after its separation from the body at death. Zanchi acknowledges that such a position was a consequence of the Italian reorientation toward a text-oriented Aristotelianism (independent of the theological faculty, thus providing an alternative to the medieval commentary tradition). Aristotle had only briefly discussed the issue of the soul's survival after physical death but left the question somewhat unresolved, causing long debates among his commentators (Aristotle 1984, 430a23, 413a3–5). Medieval scholastics interpreted this openness in different ways. Zanchi explicitly follows Aquinas in arguing for the continued subsistence of the human soul since it belongs to the so-called “separate substances” (the other being angels and God).

In this section we have seen that Zanchi's natural theology has similarities with Aquinas but does not always use him as authority. If anything, it highlights Zanchi's eclectic approach to the sources. Zanchi's treatment of the eternity of the world could illustrate a possible difference between Aquinas and Zanchi. Aquinas has a narrower or stricter view than Zanchi on what might be argued on demonstrative grounds. Combined with Zanchi's positive and wide-ranging statements about the usefulness of philosophy in theology we have reason to believe that his view of dialectics – or *demonstratio quia* – in theology is wider in scope than in Aquinas. But this is a topic that needs further examination.

Concluding Remarks

So what are we to make of Zanchi's “Thomism?” We should certainly reject Gründler's evaluation and I hope to have added to what scholars such as Richard A. Muller, John P. Donnelly, and Harm Goris have argued. I think my argument shows that Zanchi was to a degree eclectic, as the Reformed scholastics tended to be. This is very much due to what I have argued throughout the chapter, that Aquinas and Zanchi wrote in different contexts. Zanchi used Aquinas first and foremost as a reliable guide to truth (and not for his “scholasticism”), and it seems clear enough that he used him for “ecumenical” purposes in relation to his theological allies as well as

opponents (antitrinitarians, Roman Catholics, and Lutherans). This much is clear from the ways that Zanchi's and Aquinas's doctrines of God overlap significantly as to individual *loci* while their purposes, evinced by the systematic placement of attributes, sometimes differed in subtle but important ways. The samples I have provided from natural theology also underscore the eclectic nature as well as possibly a slightly wider methodological sensibility than Aquinas. I have argued elsewhere that Zanchi's Christology was catholic, scholastic, and Reformed (Lindholm 2016, ch. 1). Perhaps the same characterization holds for what I have discussed in this chapter. Zanchi's primary ambition was to be a catholic by teaching what the Scripture has revealed and to learn from the church's best scholastics, among whom Aquinas was the purest.

Notes

- 1 I use *OT* throughout for Zanchi 1617–19 *Operum Theologicorum*. I shall sometimes refer to volume, chapter etc. in individual works (e.g., *De Natura Dei*, II, ch. 6) without reference to the *OT*.
- 2 References to *Summa Theologiae* (ST) are to the 1963–80 McGraw Hill edition.
- 3 There are some, but not many, references to Aquinas in *De Tribus Elohim* (*OT*, I, 381, 388–9).
- 4 We may also note that Zanchi was in the business of finding *vestigae trinitatis*, a venerable theological tradition. But this does not imply that the Trinity as such could be proven from nature. Such sentiments were in fact held by radical theologians, such as Johann Hasler. Hasler *inter alios* was the motive for Zanchi's *De Tribus Elohim*. Thus, in contrast to Aquinas, Zanchi had two battlefronts, the antitrinitarians and Johann Hasler. In neither of these was Aquinas a very influential source. For this, see Burchill (1988).
- 5 Henrich Hepppe (2000, 60–2) mistakenly considered this distinction as dominant in the Reformed scholastic tradition. Hepppe is here guilty of eisegesis since the classification of divine attributes differed through the whole period. Zanchi, for one, criticized a simple-minded use of the distinction. Thus the distinction was not universally agreed on but rather controversial, although it was never the cause of any sustained debate. For further discussion, see Muller (1987–2003, 3: 216–23).
- 6 As we will see, Zanchi does not seem to hold this distinction consistently, since relative aspects of some absolute attributes could be discussed among the absolute attributes: for instance, his discussion of ubiquity (*De Natura Dei*, II, ch. 6), which is God's infinity in relation to place and is, as a concept, intertwined with omnipotence, which is a relative attribute.
- 7 “There is some correspondence in definition [of *bonitas Dei*] between the Reformed and Thomas Aquinas, but there is very little in terms of the function

and location of the doctrine of the *bonitas Dei*: in this *locus*, certainly, the Reformed, unlike Aquinas, are less interested in the absolute Being of God and its transcendent properties than they are in the character and egress of the divine willing” (Muller 1987–2003, 3: 506).

- 8 In this use Zanchi is somewhat atypical. Both of these attributes (beatitude and life) admits an *ad intra* and an *ad extra* aspect. The Reformed scholastic theologians emphasize their *ad extra* aspects in the larger treatises. For instance, they tended to use “life” as a collective term for operations and manifestations (of the “second order”). Instead, Zanchi places life as an absolute attribute (of the “first order”). For more on this see Muller (1987–2003, 3: ch. 5).
- 9 Rudi Te Velde (2006, 90–1 n.15) explains: “The operation by which God enjoys himself, that is, his perfect goodness, is not secondary to his being but is his being. The question of divine beatitude (q. 26) may be considered as preparing for the transition to the subsequent discussion of the Trinity (starting in q. 27), that is, the Trinitarian life through which God enjoys himself in bliss.”
- 10 As far as I have seen, Zabarella is mentioned only once in Zanchi’s *corpus*. Zanchi mentions Zabarella’s view of marriage (*OT*, III, 749), but that is hardly evidence of his influence on Zanchi’s methodology. Donnelly agreed that it is not certain that “Zanchi in practice follows the Paduan school of scientific methodology in any consistent way, but this point needs further research” (1976b, 90 n.31).

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Richard Hooker and Thomas Aquinas on Defining Law

Torrance Kirby

Richard Hooker (1554–1600) was one of the most respected and influential theologians of the sixteenth-century Church of England. Hooker defines law in general as:

that which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working ... so that no certaine end could ever be attained, unlesse the actions whereby it is attained were regular, that is to say, made suteable for and correspondent unto their end, by some canon, rule or lawe.¹ (*Lawes* I.2.1; 1:58.26–9)

This definition places him squarely within a scholastic teleological tradition derived ultimately from the metaphysics of Aristotle, to whom Hooker refers, even more laudatory than Aquinas, as “the Arch-Philosopher” (*Lawes* I.10.4; 1:99.28). Hooker adapted Aquinas’s definition of law in *ST* 1a2ae.90.1,² yet went beyond any ordinary Aristotelian or Thomistic account of causality. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate Hooker’s adaptation of the *lex divinitatis* to the ecclesiological demands of the Elizabethan Settlement.

Divine Reason: The Original Source of Law

The statelnesse of houses, the goodliness of trees, when we behold them delighteth the eye; but that foundation which beareth up the one, that root which ministreth unto the other nourishment and life, is in the bosome of

the earth concealed: and if there be at any time occasion to search into it, such labour is then more necessary then pleasant both to them which undertake it, and for the lookers on. In like maner the use and benefite of good lawes, all that live under them may enjoy with delight and comfort, albeit the groundes and first originall causes from whence they have sprong be unknowne, as to the greatest part of men they are. (*Lawes* I.1.2; 1:57.6–16)

Richard Hooker's radical, foundational proposal at the outset of the first book of his treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* is easily summarized: "God is Law." From a metaphysical or theological point of view this claim taken by itself is neither original nor wholly remarkable. Indeed Hooker's claim that God is law – the hidden "first originall cause" – can reasonably be interpreted as a restatement, or better a reformulation, of classical "logos theology" such as one finds in the Hellenistic thought of Philo of Alexandria derived by him from pre-Socratic thought (Heraclitus) and the Stoics; or in such early church fathers as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Eusebius of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, or Augustine (Chadwick 1966), and which was reformulated in later Christian theology variously, for example, by Aquinas and Calvin (*ST* 1a.14, 15, 22, 33–5, 1a2ae.90–6; Calvin, *Institutes* I.5.1, pp. 51–4, II.14. 1–8, pp. 482–93). For all of these theologians, an uncreated divine principle, the Word (*logos*, or *ratio*, or *paradeigma* – reason, order, plan) constitutes the "idea of ideas," the Platonic "archetypal idea" and therefore the "first principle" of all created order, while the creation itself, both visible and invisible, proceeds from and is wholly dependent upon this original, underived and hidden divine principle as its first and primary cause.

For Hooker, however, the investigation of this hidden law or *logos* represents a great deal more in actuality than a purely metaphysical claim concerning the nature of the first principle. As the argument of his treatise unfolds, it becomes plain that Hooker is just as deeply invested in the full practical, political, even constitutional, consequences of his claim that "God is law" as he is committed to its underlying metaphysical necessity. Indeed, the burden of his argument is to show that the Elizabethan constitutional and ecclesiastical order he seeks to explain and defend – the "stately house" as it were of the established church and the "goodly tree" of the flourishing commonwealth – has its ultimate ground and justification in a first principle altogether hidden. It is of the utmost significance for Hooker that *both* his metaphysical ontology *and* his polemical apology of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement rest squarely upon this one simple proposition: *God is Law*.

Hooker's adaptation of classical *logos* theology is exceptional and indeed quite original for its extended application of the highest metaphysical principle to the most concrete institutional issues of a particular time and place. His sustained effort to explore the intimate connections of pressing political and constitutional concerns with the highest discourse of hidden divine realities – the knitting together of theology and politics – is arguably the defining characteristic of Hooker's thought. As C.S. Lewis points out, Hooker's universe is "drenched with Deity" (1954, 462). Everything created "participates" in the divine first principle: by this participation, all things have God in them and, correspondingly, all things are in God. Hooker's proposition that God is law is the substance of this idea.

As mentioned above, Hooker's definition of law in general places him in a scholastic teleological tradition derived ultimately from the metaphysics of Aristotle:

that which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working ... so that no certaine end could ever be attained, unlesse the actions whereby it is attained were regular, that is to say, made suteable for and correspondent unto their end, by some canon, rule or lawe. (*Lawes* I.2.1; 1:58.26–9)

Hooker's adaptation of this definition, however, goes beyond any ordinary Aristotelian or Thomistic account of causality. Working from the definition, Hooker asserts that everything works according to law, including God himself: "the being of God is a kinde of lawe to his working: for that perfection which God is, geveth perfection to that he doth" (*Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.6). There are certain structural similarities between this argument in Book I of the *Lawes* and Thomas Aquinas's short treatise on law in *ST* 1a2ae.90-96 (Marshall 1963; Munz 1952; d'Entrèves 1959). The principal resemblance is Hooker's adoption of Aquinas's neo-platonic metaphysical logic. Just as the neo-platonic cosmology accounts for the genesis of the world by means of a downward emanation or procession from the principle of original unity, so also Hooker derives a diverse hierarchy of laws from the eternal law as their "highest wellspring and fountaine." His emphasis upon the divine unity is marked: "our God is one, or rather verie Onenesse, and meere unitie, having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things besides" (*Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.14-19). All derivative species of law participate in the undifferentiated unity of the eternal law

which simultaneously remains ineffably one with itself, and are also discrete emanations from that original unity by way of dispositive “procession” (Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, cap. 26). Hooker adheres to the Christian neo-platonic *lex divinitatis* whereby the originative principle of law remains simple in itself while proceeding out of itself in its generation of manifold derivative forms of law. He distinguishes between a first and a second eternal law on the ground that God is a law both to himself (*in se*) in his divine simplicity and to all creatures besides (*ad extra*). His discussion of the first eternal law is thus closely analogous to a traditional “logos” theology.

The second eternal law comprises the divine order as “kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions wherewith he hath indued them” (*Laws* I.3.1, 1:63.9–10). It has a variety of “names” depending on the different orders of creatures subject to the one divine government. The two principal derivative genera of the second eternal law are the natural law and the revealed law of the Scriptures, sometimes called the divine law. The entire system of the laws is thus expressed in the classically Neoplatonic twofold motion of procession from (*exitus*) and return to (*reditus*) the original unity of the eternal law. The natural law, by a further procession, comprises in turn subordinate species of law which govern irrational natural agents as well as rational; the law governing the rational creatures is distinguished further into the “law celestial,” which orders the angels, and the “law of reason,” sometimes called the “natural law” which orders humankind. All of these subspecies represent the outward and downward *processio* of the second eternal law. On the other side, the law of God’s special revelation, the revealed law of the Scriptures, presupposes the disorder introduced into the cosmos by the Fall, and is provided in order to secure the final restoration or “return” of the creation to its original condition of unity under the eternal law. The distinction between the two *summa genera* of natural law and divine law which corresponds to the logical structure of procession and return is also reflected in the epistemological distinction of a twofold knowledge of God, namely, by the light of supernatural revelation and by the natural light of reason. There are in addition composite species of law, such as human positive law and the law of nations, which are derived by a reflection upon the general principles contained in the natural law. These derivative species of law are a consequence of human sin and, like the divine law, are given as a corrective to the disorder introduced by the Fall (*remedium peccati*). In all of this the human creature as the *imago dei* is the focal point of the cosmic operation of procession from and return to the original order established in and by the divine simplicity.

The structure of this generic division of law shows that Hooker has read Aquinas very closely indeed, especially in his generic division of the laws when compared with *ST* 1a2ae.91. Hooker's distinction between the first and second eternal laws proves, nonetheless, to be a significant departure from the scholastic model. The effect of the distinction between these two aspects of the eternal law is simultaneously to widen and to decrease the distance between the creator-lawgiver and the created cosmos. The gathering together of all the derivative species of law within the second eternal law reduces the sense of a mediated hierarchy between creator and creature and emphasizes rather the common participation of the manifold derivative species of law in their one source. At the same time the distinction between the first and second eternal laws entails a sharper distinction between the hidden original cause and creature. This treatment of the eternal law exhibits the marked Augustinian character of Hooker's thought, a general theological bent which he shares with other magisterial Reformers.

"All things," Hooker maintains, including God's own self, "do worke after a sort according to lawe" (*Lawes* I.2.2, 1:58.33–59.1). Whereas all creatures work "according to a lawe, whereof some superiour, unto whome they are subject, is author;" nonetheless "only the workes and operations of God have him both for their worker, and for the lawe whereby they are wrought. The being of God is a kinde of lawe to his working" (*Lawes* I.2.2, 1:59.12–15). As the very principle of law itself, God alone is *causa sui* and therefore *gubernator sui*, and by virtue of the inexplicable fullness of such being, is the cause and lawgiver as well to all that is derivative of his creative will. "Being the first, it can have no other then it selfe to be the author of that law which it willingly worketh by. God therefore is a law both to himselfe, and to all other things besides" (*Lawes* I.2.3, 1:60.16–18). All that is – both the first principle and all that derives from it – have their ground concealed within the simplicity of that same first principle or cause, hidden, as it were, like a foundation stone or tree root "in the bosome of the earth." Hooker's ontological claim concerning the divine ultimacy of law constitutes the decisive starting point – the "first originall cause," *archē*, *principium*, or "beginning" – of the argument of his lengthy treatise, that is, of the systematic exposition of the generic division of law itself in the first book, and of the entire subsequent unfolding of his argument in defense of the Religious Settlement of 1559.

The exposition of this legal ontology, if it may so be identified, takes the form of a generic division of the various forms of law, modeled formally, at least to some extent, upon a similar analysis by Thomas Aquinas in *ST*

1a2ae.90–6. Hooker’s approach to the definition of law is remarkable for its simultaneous appropriation of a systematically Neoplatonic structure of argument and an appeal to orthodox Protestant assumptions with respect to the relation of the orders of nature and grace (see Neelands 1997, 77; for an important discussion of related questions see Hankey 1998). Hooker offers a brief sketch of his argument in his first chapter which provides a useful starting point for understanding the Neoplatonic structure of his elaborate system of laws, all derived from the original “oneness” of law that is the very being of God. He begins with an allusion to the polemical occasion of the treatise in the ecclesiological controversies which arose in England as a consequence of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, and makes explicit the intimate connection intended between the metaphysical and the polemical arguments of the treatise:

Because the point about which wee strive is the qualitie of our *Lawes*, our first entrance hereinto cannot better be made, then with consideration of the nature of lawe in generall, and of that lawe which giveth life unto all the rest, which are commendable just and good, namely the lawe whereby the Eternall himselfe doth worke. Proceeding from hence to the lawe first of nature, then of scripture, we shall have the easier accesse unto those things which come after to be debated, concerning the particular cause and question which wee have in hand. (*Lawes* I.1.3; 1:58.11–19)

By proceeding from “the One” to the many – as he himself expresses his methodology, from “generall meditations” to the “particular decisions” – Hooker establishes an order of argument which is itself presented as a form imitative of the divine creative *processio*. By this account, the idea of law presents itself as both a “monad” and a “dyad.” First there is the law “which God hath eternallie purposed himself in all his works to observe” (*Lawes* I.3.1, 1:63.7). This eternal law is the “highest welspring and fountaine” of all other kinds of law, the “meere unitie, having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things” (*Lawes* I.2.2, 1:59.21–2). Of this original divine simplicity, of such “verie Onenesse,” says Hooker, “our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as in deed he is, neither can know him: and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confesse without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatnes above our capacitie to reach. He is above, and we upon earth, and therefore it behoveth our wordes to be warie and fewe” (*Lawes* I.2.2, 1:59.14–19). Nonetheless, since God works not only as law to himself,

but also as “first cause, whereupon originallie the being of all things dependeth,” and therefore also as law “to all other things besides,” there is a concomitant outward showing of this first law. The showing forth of the divine power in God’s “externall working” – as distinct from those “internall operations of God” as Trinity, namely, “the generation of the Sonne, and the proceeding of the Spirit” (*Lawes* I.2.2, 1:59.7–8) – is for no other purpose than “the exercise of his most glorious and most abundant vertue. Which abundance doth shew it selfe in varietie, and for that cause this varietie is oftentimes in scripture exprest by the name of *riches*. *The Lord hath made all things for his owne sake*” (*Lawes* I.2.4, 1:7–10).

The divine working which manifests itself in the riches and variety of the creation is presented by Hooker in a very singular and interesting fashion. At the beginning of the third chapter he observes as follows:

I am not ignorant that by law eternall the learned for the most part do understand the order, not which God hath eternallie purposed himselfe in all his works to observe, but rather that which with himselfe he hath set downe as expedient to be kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions herewith he hath indued them. (*Lawes* I.3.1, 1:63.6–10; cf. *ST* 1a2ae.93)

Hooker distinguishes two distinct “modes” of the eternal law which he in fact goes on to identify simply as the “first eternall lawe” and the “second law eternall” (*Lawes* I.3.1, 1:63.27, 29). The distinction between these two species of the eternal law marks a boundary of sorts between realms of apophatic and kataphatic theological discourse. The first eternal law is, as we have seen, the law as it is for the divine lawgiver, the law “whereof it selfe must needs be author unto it selfe.” This is a unity concerning which, Hooker states, our safest eloquence is silence. The divine logos or wisdom whereby God works in creating is “that law eternall which God himself hath made to himselfe, and therby worketh all things wherof he is the cause and author.” This first eternal law “has bene of God, and with God everlastingly: that law the author and observer whereof is one only God to be blessed for ever, how should either men or Angels be able perfectly to behold? The booke of this law we are neither able nor worthie to open and looke into” (see *Lawes* I.2.5, 1:61.28–62.11). By contrast, the second eternal law comprises the divine order as “kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions wherewith he hath indued them” (*Lawes* I.3.1, 1:63.9–10). Here the eternal law continues to be one, yet is adapted or accommodated nonetheless to the finitude of mortal capacity. It is with the second eternal law

that the variety of the forms of law first comes into view, yet a variety which is understood by Hooker throughout as “contained” by the original unity that is the eternal law. The first and second eternal laws are one and the same law “laid up in the bosome of God” viewed either from the standpoint of the eternal present and self-identity of the divine lawgiver, or from the standpoint of its reception by all creatures “according to the several conditions wherwith he hath indued them.” In this distinction between the two species of the eternal law, Hooker presents a subtle theological account of the mediation of the many from the One. This second eternal law has in turn a variety of “names” depending on the diverse orders and kinds of creatures subject to the single divine government.

There is indeed a considerable variety among the manifold forms of law derived from the fount of the first eternal law and understood by rational creatures under the aspect of the second eternal law (both angelic and human):

Now that law which as it is laid up in the bosome of God, they call *æternall*, receyveth according unto the different kinds of things which are subject unto it different and sundry kinds of names. That part of it which ordereth natural agents, we call usually *natures* law; that which Angels doe clearely behold, and without any swarving observe is a law *cælestiall* and heavenly: the law of *reason* that which bindeth creatures reasonable in this world, and with which by reason they may most plainly perceive themselves bound; that which bindeth them, and is not knowen but by speciall revelation from God, *Divine* law; *humane* lawe that which out of the law either of reason or of God, men probablie gathering to be expedient, they make it a law. All things therefore, which are as they ought to be, are conformed unto *this second law eternall*, and even those things which to this eternall law are not conformable, are notwithstanding in some sort ordered by *the first eternall lawe*. (*Lawes* I.3.1, 1:63.14–29)

Yet, in a manner to some extent analogous to the prior division of the eternal law into the two species of the first and the second eternal laws, here too at the level of the second eternal law the appearance of the “manifold” riches of creation is itself ordered and limited within two principal derivative species of law: “natural law” and “revealed law.” The former division embraces governance of the totality of creation – understood in Neoplatonic fashion as visible and invisible, material and formal, sensible and intelligible – by containing within itself a completely exhaustive categorization or division of the creatures and their diverse modes of subjection to the second

eternal law: (1) *nature's* law of “natural and necessary agents,” or the material, nonthinking creation; (2) the *celestial* law of the purely intellectual and unfallen creation that comprises the angelic hierarchy (a law beheld by them “without any swarving”); and (3) the law of *reason* which governs intellectual creatures “in this world” where they, unlike the angels, find themselves “bound.” The third category, which governs the rational but mortal creature, that is, the human condition, is clearly understood by Hooker to be in some sense a mixed combination of the previous two categories. As intellectual natures, mortals share the desire of the angels for an infinite good in which alone such a nature can be finally satisfied. “Then are we happie therefore when fully we enjoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied with everlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united we live as it were the life of God” (*Lawes* I.11.2, 1:112.17–20). Yet, “of such perfection capable we are not in this life. For while we are in the world, subject we are unto sundry imperfections, griefs of body, defectes of minde, yea the best thinges we do arre painefull ...” (*Lawes* I.11.2, 1:112.24–113). The predicament of the mortal condition is to be of a mixed nature, both intellectual and physical. For Hooker – and here his commitment to Reformed soteriology shines through – there can be no overcoming of this hiatus between a “natural” desire for divine perfection and a complete natural incapacity to achieve that end desired. The desire for *theosis* is a natural desire: “so that nature even in this life doth plainly claime and call for a more divine perfection” (*Lawes* I.11.4, 1:115.18–19). However,

the light of nature is never able to finde out any way of obtayning the reward of blisse, but by performing exactly the duties and workes of righteousnes. From salvation therefore and life all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisdome of God hath revealed a way mysticall and supernaturall, a way directing unto the same ende of life by a course which groundeth it selfe upon the guiltines of sinne, and through sinne desert of condemnation and death. (*Lawes* I.11.5, 6, 1:118.11–18)

Thus, there is a second primary division within the second eternal law, what Hooker calls the “*Divine* law.” Unlike the natural law, this other way of access to the divine wisdom is “revealed” – and therefore constitutes a mystical and “supernatural” way rather than a “natural” way. It is through such supernatural means that the natural desire for an infinite good overcomes the circumstance of the mortal condition of being “bound.”

Thus, for Hooker, the form of law “to be kept by all creatures according to their several conditions” is comprised within three *summa genera* – the eternal law, the natural law, and the divine law – where the latter two kinds are understood as radically comprehended within the first, and yet nonetheless distinct in their operation and in our knowledge of them. Together these *summa genera* constitute a comprehensive division of all the many and various “kinds” of law which are discussed throughout the remainder of Hooker’s argument in the first book and indeed throughout the rest of the entire treatise. To understand their derivation is to gain critical insight into the underlying logical structure of Hooker’s argument in the *Lawes*, and moreover provides a vital instrument for interpreting the manner of Hooker’s reconciliation of a Neoplatonic ontology of participation with a Reformed soteriology. Viewed from the standpoint of their divine principle of origin – that is, in the first eternal law – these three *summa genera* of law may be considered as simply one. Viewed from below, as it were, that is, from the standpoint of creaturely, mortal finitude, the original unity takes on the aspect of articulated kinds which nonetheless all “participate” and “proceed from” the undivided unity that is their common source.³ This profound account of the simultaneous unity and multiplicity of law and its species lies at the very heart of Hooker’s metaphysical vision and provides in turn the necessary instrument for his sustained effort throughout the *Lawes* to demonstrate the consistency of the terms of the Elizabethan Settlement with the foundational principles of Reformed theology.

Angelic Law and Natural Law

Hooker refers to the angels as “intellectual creatures” constituted in diverse ranks by the eternal law of God, as it were “an *Army*, one in order and degree above another” (*Lawes* I.4.2, 1:71.10, 11). Moreover the “law coelestial” which governs the angelic beings provides a paradigm for order among mortals: “Neither are the Angels themselves, so farre severed from us in their kind and manner of working, but that, betweene the law of their heavenly operations and the actions of men in this our state of mortalitie, such correspondence there is, as maketh it expedient to know in some sort the one, for the others more perfect direction” (*Lawes* I.16.4, 1:137.13–18). The obedience of the angels, with some rather notable exceptions, is more perfect and therefore, according to Hooker, they provide “a paterne and a spurre” to the weaker human nature. Even with respect to the ceremonies of the liturgy we are told

that “some regard is to be had of Angels, who best like us, when wee are most like unto them in all partes of decent demeanor” (*Lawes* I.16.4, 1:137.28–30). This concept is beautifully summarized in the Collect in the *Book of Common Prayer* appointed for the feast of Saint Michael and All Angels on 29 September: “O Everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order: Mercifully grant that, as thy holy Angels always do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth”

It must be acknowledged that there is some degree of difficulty in reconciling the authority of the natural law with the core assumptions of Reformation soteriology and scriptural hermeneutics. As we have already noted, Hooker’s advocating of natural law to defend the constitution of the Elizabethan Church met with strong opposition from some of his Puritan contemporaries. To the anonymous authors of *A Christian Letter* Hooker’s account of natural law appeared to overthrow the very foundation of the doctrine of the reformed Church of England by setting a qualification on the perfect sufficiency of scriptural authority (*Lawes* I.14.5, 1:129.10–14). In his debate with Archbishop John Whitgift earlier in the 1570s, Thomas Cartwright had argued that the dictum *sola scriptura* constituted a universal rule of human action and that whatever is not done in accord with God’s revealed written word is sinful (Cartwright 1575, 26–7; cited in *Lawes* II.1.3, 1:146.1, II.2.1 and II.4.1, 1:151.18). In the *Lawes* Hooker responds to Cartwright’s four scriptural proofs of this position with an invocation of wisdom theology:

Whatsoever either men on earth, or the Angels of heaven do know, it is as a drop of that unemptiable fountaine of wisdom, which wisdom hath diversly imparted her treasures unto the world. As her waies are of sundry kinds, so her maner of teaching is not meereley one and the same. Some things she openeth by the sacred bookes of Scripture; some things by the glorious works of nature: with some things she inspireth them from above by spirituall influence, in some things she leadeth and trayneth them onely by worldly experience and practise. We may not so in any one speciall kind admire her that we disgrace her in any other, but let all her wayes be according unto their place and degree adored. (*Lawes* II.1.4, 1:147.23–148.6; *Wisdom* 6: 12–16)

The authors of *A Christian Letter* (*ACL*) interpret Hooker’s affirmation of the natural law and his concomitant appeal to the authority of reason as an open challenge to Reformed teaching on the perfect sufficiency of Scripture (*sola scriptura*). His appeal to diversity of access to the divine wisdom is

construed as an affirmation that the “light of nature” teaches knowledge necessary to salvation and that Scripture, therefore, is merely a supplement to the natural knowledge of God (see *ACL* 3; 4:11.1–14.9. *The Holy Scripture contayneth all thinges necessarie to salvation*. See especially 4:11.22). The compatibility of natural law with such primary doctrines as justification by faith (*sola fides*) and salvation by Christ alone (*solus Christus*) is also called into question (Hooker 1977–93 [*FLE*] 4:14.4–7 and also *ACL* §6, *Of fayth and workes*, *FLE* 4:19.17–23.9). Hooker’s appeal to natural law tradition, the light of reason, and the authority of philosophy in general and Aristotle in particular (“the Arch-Philosopher” and “the mirror of humane wisdom”; *Lawes* I.4.1, 1:70.20 and I.10.4, 1:99.28) is thought to pose such a serious breach with the *Articles of Religion* that, as the *Letter* puts it, “almost all the principall pointes of our English creed [are] greatlie shaken and contradicted” (*ACL* §20. *Schoolemen, Philosophie, and Poperie*. *FLE* 4:65.16 – 68.19). In short, against Hooker’s protestations to the contrary, the authors of *A Christian Letter* regard the appeal to the authority of reason and natural law in theological discourse as simply irreconcilable with “all true christian doctrine.”

Present-day scholarly evaluations of Hooker’s thought are more inclined to agree with the assessment of these sixteenth-century critics than with Hooker’s own avowed apologetic intent. W.S. Hill, for example, maintains that Hooker’s defense of natural law leads away from Protestant orthodoxy in the direction of the Anglican *via media* and that it was precisely “the doctrinal implications of this position – specifically its apparent proximity to Rome – that the authors of *A Christian Letter* feared and opposed” (Hill 1972, 175). With respect to the specific charges made in *A Christian Letter* concerning Hooker’s appeal to the authority of natural law, H.C. Porter argues that they were entirely justified. According to Porter, Hooker’s critics perceived *correctly* that “the whole of Hooker’s work ... was a celebration of our natural faculty of reason,” and that therefore he had indeed deviated from the path of Protestant orthodoxy (Porter 1972, 103). By upholding the authority of reason and natural law Hooker had abandoned the magisterial Reformers’ insistence upon the principle *sola scriptura*, and had in fact embraced the Thomist dictum “grace comes not to destroy nature but to fulfill it, to perfect it” (*Lawes* I.14.5, 1:129.6. See Porter 1972, 103–7; Neelands 1997, 76–82). In his recent Introduction to the first book of the *Lawes*, Lee Gibbs adopts much the same view when he observes that Hooker is closer to a Thomistic “conjunctive view” of the relation between grace and nature, Scripture and reason than he is to “the more disjunctive perspective of his Calvinist antagonists” (*FLE* 6(1): 97). Gibbs points out

that Hooker's emphasis on the rationality of law depends on a teleological perspective derived from Aristotle and Aquinas while the magisterial Reformers adhere to a nominalist, voluntarist emphasis on the essence of law as command rather than reason. Gibbs maintains that the controversy turns on "the difference between two natural law traditions. Hooker stands predominantly within the medieval rationalist and realist tradition represented by Aquinas, while the magisterial Protestant Reformers and their disciplinarian progeny stand squarely in the camp of the medieval voluntarists and nominalists" (*FLE* 6(1):103). By this account a rationalist, realist account of law like Hooker's is by definition incompatible with the assumptions of Reformation theology. According to Gibbs, Hooker's more optimistic view of human nature enabled him to close the breach between reason and revelation, nature and grace which had been opened by the magisterial Reformers and maintained by the more radical disciplinarian Puritans (*FLE* 6(1):124). In this fashion, Hooker's theological position is identified as essentially neo-Thomist (see *FLE* 6(1):97; Gibbs emphasizes Hooker's dependence on Aquinas throughout his Introduction). To regard natural law as a revelation of the divine nature is, on this view, to depart from the established bounds of Protestant orthodoxy into the territory of scholastic divinity or, as the authors of *A Christian Letter* put it, "the darknesse of schoole learning" (*FLE* 4:65.1). Hooker's contemporary critics and present-day scholarship are agreed at least on this point: the theology of disciplinarian Puritanism with its rejection of natural law theory is more consistent than the theology of Hooker with the teaching of the magisterial reformers. In what remains of this discussion we shall argue that such a portrayal of the role of natural law in Hooker's theology is questionable; on the contrary, we shall seek to demonstrate that his embrace of the natural law tradition is in fact consistent with a well-established pattern in the practical theology of the magisterial Reformers.

In *A Learned Sermon on the Nature of Pride*, Hooker defines law in general as follows:

an exact rule wherby humane actions are measured. The rule to measure and judge them by is the law of God ... Under the name of law we must comprehend not only that which God hath written in tables and leaves but that which nature hath *ingraven in the hartes of men*. Els how should those heathen which never had bookes but heaven and earth to look upon be convicted of perversnes? *But the Gentils which had not the law in books had saith the apostle theeffect of the law written in their hartes. Rom. 2.* (*FLE* 5:312. Compare with the general definition of law in *Lawes* I.2.1, 1:58.26–9 and *ST* 1a2ae.90.1: "*lex sit regula quaedam et mensura*")

The passage quoted from Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the crucial scriptural text cited by Hooker in support of the authority of natural law (see *Lawes* I.8.3, 1:84.7–16; I.16.5, 1:138.27–139.8; II.8.6, 1:190.11–16; III.2.1, 1:207.14–21; III.7.2, 1:217.30–218.3 where he refers to the “edicts of nature,” III.9.3, 1:238.31–239.4 and V.1.3; 2:20.4–9 for concept of “*semen religionis*”). This is hardly surprising since Romans 2:15 is the *locus classicus* for virtually all discussion of natural law throughout the history of Christian thought. It is important here to note the derivation of the natural law (*ST* 1a2ae.94.6). Since the eternal law “reads itself” to the world, there is the paradox of keeping an invisible, unknowable law “always before our eyes” (*Lawes* I.16.2, 1:136.4–15). The eternal law, though unknowable in itself, is the highest source of all other kinds of law and is made known to us under two primary aspects: on the one hand, it is revealed by God's word written in the Scriptures and, on the other, it is manifest in creation and known by the law inscribed on human hearts by nature. These two primary modes or *summa genera*, whereby the one eternal law is made accessible to human understanding, are termed respectively by Hooker the divine law and the law of nature (see *Lawes* I.1.3, 1:58.11–19; see I.8.3, 1:84.9 and I.8. *passim* for the identification of natural law with the law or light of reason; cf III.11.8, 1:253.15–20). Although we are “neither able nor worthy to open and looke into” the book of the eternal law, the books of Scripture and nature reveal its contents in a manner adapted to our finite capacity (see *Lawes* I.2.5, 1:62.10; I.2.2, 1:59.12–20; and V.56.5, 2:237.18–25. “Now amongst the Heathens which had noe bookes whereby to know God besides the volumes of heaven and earth...” *FLE* 4:111.21–3).

Hooker is certainly not alone among Reformation theologians in holding that the knowledge of God, and thus also of the eternal law, is attainable by means of both Scripture and reason. It is furthermore a commonplace of the exegesis of the Reformers that the twofold obligation to honor God and deal justly with one's neighbor is taught by both natural and divine law. The interplay between the natural and the revealed knowledge of God gives shape to the magisterial Reformers' complex, dialectical approach to the authority of natural law; and the theory of natural law in turn constitutes a critical link between theology and ethics in their thought. Hooker's account of the twofold manifestation of the eternal law through the *summa genera* of natural law and divine law, the *duplex gubernatio dei*,⁴ gives practical expression, as it were, to Calvin's epistemological motif of the *duplex cognitio dei*. Hooker's eternal law as the divine “*processio*” manifests itself in the works of creation as natural law and as divine “*redditus*” in the economy of

redemption as divine law. While the eternal law in itself “cannot be compassed with that wit and those senses which are our owne,” it is nevertheless manifest in the “glorious workes of nature” (*Lawes* I.11.5, 1:116.21). Hooker claims that the pagan philosophers were able to attain to a knowledge of the nature of God and of his Law:

the wise and learned among the verie Heathens themselves, have all acknowledged some first cause, whereupon originallie the being of all things dependeth. Neither have they otherwise spoken of that cause, then as an Agent, which knowing *what* and *why* it worketh, observeth in working a most exact *order* or *lawe*. . . . all confesse in the working of that first cause, that *counsell* is used, *reason* followed, a *way* observed, that is to say, constant *order* and *law* is kept, wherof it selfe must needs be author unto itselfe. (*Lawes* I.2.3, 1:59.33–60.14)

Quite remarkably, Hooker seems to suggest in this passage that a *Logos* theology can be discerned in the pagan philosophers’ understanding of Law as the divine first principle and perhaps also, by implication, an adumbration of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Homer, Plato, the Stoics, and no less an authority than “Thrice-great” Hermes are enlisted in support of the proposition implicit in these expressions of *Logos* theology, namely that God *is* Law (*Lawes* I.2.3, 1:60.4–11).

For Hooker the foundation of a theological reflection on ethics is the twofold knowledge of God. Knowledge of the creator is not to be confused with knowledge of the redeemer, yet a complete account of Christian virtue demands both species of knowing. Hooker’s credentials as a Reformer stand forth when he maintains that only through the supernatural revelation of the Scriptures is it possible to hope for a participation in the divine nature. Scripture alone can reveal the supernatural way of salvation:

The light of nature is never able to finde out any way of obtayning the reward of blisse, but by performing exactly the duties and workes of righteousness. From salvation therefore and life all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisdome of God hath revealed a way mysticall and supernaturall . . . concerning that faith hope and charitie without which there can be no salvation; was there ever any mention made saving only in that lawe which God him selfe hath from heaven revealed? (*Lawes* I.11.5,6, 1:118.11–15,119.12–15)

Only by divine grace can the soul attain to a saving knowledge whereby it might participate in the divine nature and “live as it were the life of God”

(*Lawes* I.11.2, 1:112.20). Owing to humanity's willful rejection of the order of creation, the natural law by itself is insufficient to secure the unity of the cosmos under God. With a marked Augustinian emphasis Hooker notes that fallen humanity continues to possess a *natural* desire to be happy (*Lawes* I.11.4, 1:114.8–10), and thus to be reunited with the eternal source of order; yet, on account of original sin, "the will of man" is "inwardly obstinate, rebellious and averse from all obedience unto the sacred *Lawes* of his nature ... in regard of his depraved mind little better then a wild beast" (*Lawes* I.10.1, 1:96.26–9). Thus observance of the natural law is no longer effectual in preserving the divinely constituted order of creation. According to Aristotle "it is an axiome of nature that naturall desire cannot utterly be frustrate." Here Hooker cites the *Proemium* of Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (*Lawes* I.11.4, 1:114.15, quoting Aquinas 1950, 6). Reason cannot escape the predicament of desiring both a participation of the divine nature while, at the same time, being constitutionally incapable of finding its way to the consummation of its own deepest longing (see Augustine's (1991) account of the "natural weight" of the soul in *Confessions* XIII.ix.10, 11). While nature demands a "more divine perfection" (Neelands 1997, 83–5), the means whereby this perfection is attained cannot themselves be natural. Thus the redemption or mystical "return" to God of all creation can only be by supernatural means. In *Notes toward a fragment on Predestination*, Hooker distinguishes between the two species of the divine governance:

Government is that work of God whereby he *sustains created things* and disposes all things *to the end which he naturally chooses*, that is *the greatest good* which, *given the law of creation*, can be elicited. For, given the law of creation <is the rule of all> it was not fitting that creation be violated through those things which follow from creation. So God does nothing by his government which offends against that which he has framed and ratified by the very act of creation. The government of God is: general over all; special over rational creatures. There are two forms of government: that which would have been, had free creation not lost its way; that which is now when it has lost its way. (John Booty's translation of Hooker's original Latin notes in *FLE* 4: 86.28–87.12; cf Aquinas, *ST* 1a.20.2; 49.2, and 103.7)

This passage reveals the theological principle underlying the generic division of laws. On one side are laws governing the order of unfallen creation. Among these Hooker includes the law of nature in so far as it governs irrational and nonvoluntary natural agents. This again is a significant

departure from the usual, more restricted sense of natural law as an “intellectual habit” of the soul, that is to say, the *summa ratio* as it is present and known to rational creatures.⁵ The “law cœlestial” is natural law as observed by unfallen rational creatures, namely the angels.

Conclusion

In the marginal notes penned on his own copy of *A Christian Letter*⁶ and in the incomplete theological tractates which comprise the beginning of a formal response, we see clearly that the most pressing theological question Hooker faced was the need to justify continuity with the natural law tradition within the limits of Protestant orthodoxy.

Hooker’s generic division of laws rests on a carefully defined tension between natural and revealed theology. His affirmation of the authority of human reason consequent upon the revelation of the divine wisdom to the observer of “the glorious workes of Nature” is a crucial presupposition of his theologico-political system.

Notes

- 1 The citation is from the *Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* (Hooker 1977–93). All references to the *Lawes* cite book, chapter, and section followed by a reference to the Folger edition volume, page, and line numbers.
- 2 All references to *Summa Theologiae* (ST) refer to the Blackfriars edition (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode).
- 3 On the concept of the *procession* of the forms of law see, for example, *Lawes* I.3.4, 1:68.6–8: “... the naturall generation and *processe* of all things receyveth order of *proceeding* from the settled stabilitie of divine understanding.”
- 4 Hooker employs this expression in his treatment of the divine operations *ad extra* in Trinity College Dublin, MS 364, folio 80, *FLE* 4: 83–97; see esp. 86, 87.
- 5 See, for example, Aquinas’s discussion of the definition of natural law in *ST* 1a2ae.94.1; also, Cicero (1928), *De Legibus*, 1.4. Gratian (1959), *Decretum*, Part I, Distinct. 1: “Natural law is that which is contained in the Law and the Gospel whereby everyone is commanded to do to another that which he would have done to himself.” Hooker cites Gratian’s definition at *Lawes* I.12.1, 1:119.30–120.1.
- 6 See John Booty’s Introduction to “Hooker’s Marginal Notes” (*FLE* 4: xxviii–xiii). The autograph notes on *ACL* are transcribed from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 215b.

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Johann Gerhard's Reception of Thomas Aquinas's *Analogia Entis*

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Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) is generally regarded as one of the greatest Lutheran theologians of the first part of the seventeenth century. As a theologian and professor at the University of Jena, Gerhard produced devotional literature, biblical commentaries, apologetic writings, and a vast systematic theology (Fischer 2000).

Gerhard had a great respect for the earlier Christian tradition and felt it necessary to write in both continuity and dialogue with the pre-Reformation Church (Fraenkel 1961, 260–9). This included not only the church fathers but also the medieval scholastic theologians, including Thomas Aquinas.¹ We will examine Gerhard's appropriation of Aquinas in his magnum opus *Loci Communes Theologici* (1610–22). Although Gerhard frequently cites Thomas in a variety of contexts, we will narrow our focus to his discussion of the validity of Aquinas's concept of the analogy of being (*analogia entis*).

Gerhard's reception of Aquinas on this hotly debated topic illustrates how he and the wider Lutheran scholastic tradition found it necessary to appropriate and engage the early and medieval tradition of the church. The dialectical continuity that Gerhard sought to maintain with the earlier tradition was necessary for several reasons. First, in line with Philip Melancthon's theological education program, Gerhard and the other Lutheran scholastics saw a need to appropriate conceptual tools taken from earlier tradition as a means of transmitting a full system of doctrine to the ecclesiastical community which they served. Secondly, like both Melancthon and his student Martin Chemnitz, Gerhard sought to use the earlier tradition as an apologetic tool. Gerhard held that Lutheranism could

only defend itself against Counter-Reformation Catholicism by showing that it stood in continuity with the teaching of the ancient church.

Protestant Scholasticism and the Quest for Catholicity

In order to understand Gerhard's reception of Aquinas, it is important to contextualize him within a movement known as "Protestant scholasticism," which usually refers to the writings of Protestant academic theologians operating in the period between the Reformation of the sixteenth century and the advent of the Enlightenment in the early eighteenth century.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, scholars have made numerous attempts to categorize and explain Protestant scholasticism as a historical and theological phenomenon (see van Asselt 2011, 10–22). Probably the most influential has been the nineteenth-century Swiss theologian Alexander Schweizer and his "central dogma" (*Centraldogmen*) thesis. According to this thesis, the structure of Lutheran and Reformed dogmatics in the seventeenth century can be explained entirely with reference to a particular "central dogma." Progenitors of each particular tradition (Luther, Zwingli, Calvin) established such doctrines as the foundation of their particular ecclesiastical community's system of doctrine. This thesis further posited that the Protestant scholastics took over these dogmas and used them as a kind of central principle from which they deduced all subordinate dogmas. Schweizer asserted that the central dogma for Lutherans was justification by faith, whereas for the Reformed it was predestination and/or the sovereignty of God (Schweizer 1854–6).

Richard Muller has subjected Schweizer's central dogma thesis to a number of strong criticisms. As Muller observes, the major problem with Schweizer's thesis is that it entirely ignores the actual methodology of the Protestant scholastics. None of the Protestant scholastics actually speaks of "central dogmas" or characterizes either justification by faith or predestination as a *principium* of his system (Muller 1987–2003, 1:124–7). Instead, they speak of the dual *principia* of God himself as the principle of being (*principium essendi*) and sacred Scripture as the principle of knowledge (*principium cognoscendi*) (Muller 1987–2003, 1:430–45; Preus 1970–2, 1:257–8, 310–11).

Instead of deducing all doctrines out of a chief dogma, the Protestant scholastics saw their task as explicating the teaching of Scripture on the basis of various doctrines in grammatically clear passages known as the

sedes doctrinae, or the “seats of doctrine.” According to this “loci method,” after the passages on a given topic were discovered in Scripture, they were to be gathered together and allowed to interpret one another under the heading of *loci communes theologici*, or “theological commonplaces” (Muller 1987–2003, 1:96–102, 177–9). Therefore, in contrast to Schweizer’s implicit assumption, the Protestant scholastics did not seek to create a seamless and closed system of thought deduced from a single central principle, but rather to understand the teachings of Scripture on the basis of individual doctrines arranged within theological compendiums.

In light of these facts, Muller considers it far more reasonable to interpret the emergence of the Protestant scholastic tradition as, among other things, a response to the pedagogical needs of the Reformation. The Reformers freshly appropriated scriptural insights into soteriology and ecclesiology. Such truths needed to be taught in universities in a systematic form that was intellectually defensible according to the standard theological methodology of the day (Muller 1987–2003, 1:27–84).

Moreover, Muller observes that the need to teach the Reformation was also tied up in the integration of reformational insights into the doctrinal edifice of the existing catholic tradition. Muller correctly notes that although the Reformers sought to reform Western catholic teachings regarding soteriology and ecclesiology, they largely left the patristic and medieval teachings on the subjects of faith and reason, the divine essence and attributes, the nature of the Trinity, the hypostatic union, creation, and providence intact (Muller 1987–2003, 1:34). Therefore, in order to teach these subjects, the Protestant scholastics found it necessary to draw on the intellectual resources of the previous Christian tradition. Training evangelical clergy made it pedagogically necessary to work out a complete system of Christian doctrine for their students (Muller 1987–2003, 1:49–61, 446–50).

The accuracy of Muller’s thesis may be illustrated at the headwater of the Protestant Scholastic tradition in the writings of Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560). Melanchthon was Luther’s co-Reformer in Wittenberg and often credited as inventing the tradition of both Lutheran and Reformed systematic theology. Melanchthon was particularly concerned with the transmission of the Reformation through pedagogy (Muller 1987–2003, 1.53–4). Moreover, he made significant efforts to reform both the theological and nontheological curriculum of the German educational system (Manschreck 2009, 131–44), thereby earning the nickname the “Preceptor of Germany” (Pelikan 1950, ch. 2; Richard 1898).

In this spirit of educational reform, Melanchthon produced a series of textbooks on systematic theology throughout his academic career. In 1521, at the age of 24, he published the first Protestant systematic theology, *Loci Communes Theologici* (Melanchthon 1959). *Loci Communes* is strongly focused on a careful reading of Scripture using the loci method outlined above. Moreover, true to Muller's insight, the first edition of *Loci Communes*, written at the early stages of the Wittenberg Reformation, is almost exclusively soteriological in focus. Indeed, Melanchthon even foregoes any discussion of such important doctrines as the Trinity for fear that such a discussion may be too speculative (Melanchthon 1959, 21). In order to drive home the almost exclusively soteriological orientation of the work, the Preceptor choose to model his arrangement of various topics on Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Kolb 1997).

In each successive version of *Loci Communes* through the mid-1500s, Melanchthon both clarified his thought and increasingly occupied himself with a larger number of traditional theological loci. This may be due in part to Melanchthon's greater intellectual maturity. Nevertheless, as Luther's Reformation advanced, Wittenberg attracted many students preparing for ministry. Thus Melanchthon found it necessary to create theological textbooks that cover the whole corpus of Christian teaching taught in Scripture and expounded for centuries within the tradition of the catholic church (van Asselt 2011, 88–92).

Therefore, although later editions of Melanchthon's dogmatic compendium remained centered on soteriological questions, they also possessed increasingly robust discussions of topics such as the philosophical proofs of God's existence, the divine essence and attributes, the Trinity, creation, and personal ethics (Melanchthon 1992). Adding these topics to the later editions of the *Loci Communes* signaled a need to integrate reformational insights regarding soteriology with the catholic heritage of the Church (Muller 2000, 1:125–33). Creedally speaking, it could be said that second and third article soteriological issues now became more clearly integrated with first article issues.

Adding topics forced Melanchthon in some measure to draw on the resources of the previous tradition. In his later editions of the *Loci Communes*, he appropriates the developments of the early and medieval church for discussions of the aforementioned first article issues. Since the Reformers viewed these parts of the catholic tradition as accurate explications of the biblical material, there was no reason to reinvent the proverbial wheel. The later Protestant Scholastics (Gerhard included) would follow a similar procedure.

Beyond using the previous catholic tradition for pedagogical purposes, it should not go unnoticed that Melanchthon also had apologetic interests in mind. Ever since the question had been posed by Luther at the Diet of Worms, "Are you alone wise?" (Bainton 1978, 190), it had been the goal of many within reforming circles to demonstrate that the Reformation stood in continuity with the earlier tradition of the church. By studying the writings of the church fathers Protestants sought to establish that it was the medieval church, not the Reformers, that promoted novel doctrines and interpretations of the Bible (Headley 1963, 156–223).

For this reason, through his later career Melanchthon focused on an apologetic use of the church fathers and the early councils of the church. Both in the Lutheran confessional writings that bear his name, as well as in his own dogmatic works, Melanchthon cited patristic witnesses to demonstrate that the positions of the Wittenberg Reformers were not at variance with catholic truth (see Melanchthon 2000, 27–106, 107–294, 329–44).

Moreover, a highly developed notion of the church's catholicity going back to Eden went hand in hand with Melanchthon's conception of continuity between the Reformation and the theology of the ancient church. In his older, but still seminal, study of Melanchthon's use of the church fathers, Peter Fraenkel has shown that the Preceptor believed that the church had come into existence before the Fall. In the Fall, the church had collapsed and God had restored it throughout the preaching of law and gospel to Adam and Eve. By giving the curse and the promise of a Savior in Genesis 3, God reestablished the church. In this, there was a dogmatic catholicity between God's sermon of Genesis 3 and the present Christian church. Indeed, the current proclamation of the church and explication of the articles of the faith were nothing more than a refinement of what was given to Adam and Eve in the *protevangelium* (Gen. 3:15) (Fraenkel 1961, 61–2).

Similarly, Melanchthon claimed that by giving the *protevangelium*, God had brought about a kind of reformation not dissimilar to Luther's. By the proclamation of the efficacious Word, the Lord had overturned the false doctrine through which Satan had led the first humans into sin (Fraenkel 1961, 61). Melanchthon held that through history the church would remain a remnant within a sea of apostasy and that it must, like Christ, bear the cross (Fraenkel 1961, 100–18). Moreover, such a remnant would periodically reform the life of the people of God after long periods of mass apostasy (Fraenkel 1961, 69).

What Melanchthon posited here was what might be called a critical-evangelical-catholicity of the church. The catholicity of church was to be

discerned not in the judgments of the pope, but in its proclamation of the gospel through both time and space. Such an approach allowed the Preceptor to be critical of many of the church fathers (especially Origen and Jerome), while still affirming in them what was evangelical and catholic (Fraenkel 1961, 86–93). Likewise, Melanchthon also had little difficulty in ranking earlier Christian theologians according to how well their theology embodied the central truths of Christianity (Fraenkel 1961, 125–34). According to such a criterion, Augustine fares the best, whereas the medieval scholastics fared the worst (Fraenkel 1961, 93–6, 100–7).

Melanchthon's student Martin Chemnitz (1522–86) adopted and expanded his apologetic technique of using the church fathers and the decisions of early Christian councils as a means of witnessing to the catholicity of the Wittenberg Reformation (Preus 1994). Indeed, whereas Melanchthon not infrequently peppers his writing with quotations from the church fathers, Chemnitz often inundates his writings with them. This is true in his systematic treatment of both Christian doctrine in his 1554–5 *Loci Communes Theologici* (Chemnitz 1989) and Christology in his 1578 work *The Two Natures in Christ* (Chemnitz 1971). He even prefaces the former work with a brief treatise on the proper use of the church fathers and, in a typically Melanchthonian fashion, rates them from most biblical and evangelical to the least (Chemnitz 1989, 1:27–33).

Nevertheless, Chemnitz's greatest achievement in regard to his use of the church fathers can be found in his massive and highly influential apologetic work of 1563–73, *Examination of the Council of Trent*. Regarding the question of catholicity, the *Examination* follows the common Melanchthonian apologetic technique by demonstrating by way of extensive patristic citations that it was the Lutheran and not the Tridentine church that should appropriately be called "catholic" in the fullest sense of the term. Throughout the four-volume work, Chemnitz juxtaposes statements of Trent and its defenders with both Scripture and early fathers of the church. Chemnitz very skillfully shows the dissonance between the Tridentine position and that of the ancient church, as well as the agreement between the latter and the Lutheran stance (Fraenkel 1961, 267–8; Olsen 1963). Chemnitz and his fellow authors of the Lutheran confessional document the Formula of Concord (1577) used a similar apologetic technique in an appendix entitled *The Catalog of Testimonies* (Kolb and Nestingan, 2001).

Finally, following this same Melanchthonian trajectory, Gerhard himself made extensive use of the church fathers in order to bolster the credibility of his interpretations of Scripture. Gerhard's study of the church fathers was

immense, to say the least. Indeed, many have even credited him with inventing the term "patrology" (Quasten 1995, 1:1). Beyond the heavy use of patristic citations in his dogmatic and exegetical works, Gerhard is most famous for his apologetic compendium *Confessio Catholica* (Gerhard 1634–7). The *Confessio* contains a series of quotations from patristic authors as well as the councils of the early church. Like Chemnitz's *Catalogue of Testimonies*, Gerhard's *Confessio* seeks to demonstrate a clear catholic witness to the teachings of the Lutheran Reformation.

In the *Confessio* Gerhard did not limit himself to the testimonies of the early church, but also utilized material from the medieval scholastics and contemporary Roman Catholic authors. According to Bengt Hägglund, part of Gerhard's apologetic strategy in the *Confessio* was taken over from St Irenaeus's technique of using his opponents' testimonies against them. Hence, Gerhard quotes medieval and early modern catholic scholastic theologians against his contemporary catholic opponents in order to show that members of their own confession stood in line with the teachings of Lutheranism. The chief target of these attacks is the great apologist of the Counter-Reformation, Robert Bellarmine (Hägglund 2000, 164–6).

Gerhard's use of the church fathers and medieval scholastic theologians follows a trend to be found elsewhere in the Lutheran apologetic theology of the seventeenth century. Some decades after Gerhard had written the *Confessio* the Lutheran theologian Johann Dorsch wrote *Thomas Aquinas Confessor Veritatis* (1656), in which he argued that Thomas Aquinas supports the Lutheran position better than that of the Counter-Reformation (Preus 1970–2, 1:36).

When we turn to Gerhard's dogmatics (*Loci Communes Theologici*), we find the Melancthonian apologetic and pedagogical use of the earlier church tradition. For apologetic purposes, Gerhard follows Chemnitz's method of inundating his text with patristic quotations. Even more than Chemnitz, Gerhard also uses medieval scholastic quotations to support his exegesis and doctrinal teaching. Gerhard's usual method is to begin with an interpretation of the relevant *sedes doctrinae* and then follow up this exegesis with page after page of citations from the earlier tradition, thereby validating the catholicity of his interpretation and doctrine.

With respect to the pedagogical use of the earlier catholic tradition, Gerhard, like Melancthon, was forced both to answer questions and to use the conceptual tools developed by scholasticism. One of the more interesting and important questions bequeathed to Protestant scholasticism by the pre-Reformation tradition is that of the analogy of being (*analogia*

entis). Such a doctrine was taught by the medieval church at Lateran Council IV and famously expounded by Thomas Aquinas (Denzinger 1957, 171). Gerhard, following the Melanchthonian trajectory, engages the question of language and the being of God in dialogue with the options provided to him by the medieval scholastic tradition.

Gerhard's Reception of Aquinas's *Analogia Entis*

One of the major conceptual problems that the Protestant scholastics inherited from the pre-Reformation tradition was the question of the validity of theological language, as well as the connected question of the relationship between created and uncreated being. On the basis of scriptural teaching, orthodox Christians confess that God is infinite and transcendent, and yet he has revealed himself in time through clear and definite statements about himself and his nature in Holy Scripture. Some of this language is straightforwardly metaphorical. According to the biblical understanding of God, he is obviously not an earthly rock or shepherd, even though numerous scriptural passages speak of him as such.

Beyond these metaphorical statements, Scripture uses other language about God which is clearly intended to be realistic and propositional. In light of divine transcendence, this poses a problem. Classically, following a conceptual scheme taken over from the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus (Proclus 1816), Christian theologians have divided such scriptural statements about God's being into two categories: apophatic and kataphatic. The former refers to negative statements about God, saying what God is not rather than what he is. Therefore, when Scripture asserts that God is infinite, eternal, and unchanging it merely says that in thinking of God we must negate the finitude, temporality, and changeability of creatures. It does not positively say what God is, but negates what creatures are within the limited categories of time and space.

With kataphatic statements about God, things become considerably more problematic. Kataphatic or affirmative statements about God – such that he is wise, good, and loving – use language that can also be predicated of creatures. Nevertheless, because of God's aseity and infinite distance from creatures, no Christian theologian would seriously claim that these things are true of creature and God in quite the same manner. The question nevertheless remains: in what manner can these qualities be predicated of God and creatures? As observed above, this also relates to the larger

question of how God's supreme existence relates to the finite and derivative existence of creatures.

For Thomas Aquinas the primary answer to this dilemma is to be found in the doctrine of the "analogy of being" (*analogia entis*). Indeed, Aquinas's doctrine of analogy has in many respects come to be seen as the touchstone of the Thomistic tradition (see Przywara 2013; White 2010). As we will see, there have been a number of interpretations of Aquinas on the *analogia entis* through the centuries. Nevertheless, a large number of contemporary scholars (Davies 1993, 75–95; McInerny 1990; Wippel 2000, 65–93) understand Aquinas in the following manner: in creating the world God has expressed the transcendental attributes of his own essence (goodness, wisdom, etc.). Insofar as God possesses these attributes, he possesses them absolutely and simply. That is to say, God is neither derived, nor compounded, of qualities, entities, or casual forces that preexist him (*ST* 1a.3.7).² Indeed, in this sense, God does not possess qualities at all; rather, his attributes are him. For example, God does not have the quality of wisdom, but is wisdom itself. Logically then, creatures who are dependent on God's creative activity can only possess such transcendental qualities derivatively and analogically. There is an analogical similitude between God and his creatures that exists within an even greater dissimilitude (*ST* 1a.13.6).

This account of the analogical relationship between uncreated and created being serves as a platform for an account of how human language can carry the freight of God's infinite incomprehensibility. Although Scripture refers to God as "good" and "wise," this "goodness" and "wisdom" is obviously not of the same quality that one finds in creatures. Again, creaturely being is derivative and compounded, whereas the divine being is absolute and simple (*simplex*). Therefore, when applying creaturely predicates to God (goodness, wisdom, power, etc.), such language can only function analogically (*ST* 1a.13.1–6). In an ultimate sense, theologians can speak of God as "wise" only as long as they understand that Scripture applies this word to God within a framework of a similarity within an infinitely greater dissimilarity. Indeed, this is the case because God is being itself, and not simply a being among beings. Only God possesses being properly; creatures possess it only by participation (*per participationem*) (*ST* 1a.6.4; see Wippel 2000, 94–131).

In the medieval theology that stood as background to the Protestant scholastic discussion of the question, the analogical theory of being and language stood as a middle position between at least two other main alternatives. On the one hand, certain theologians (notably Henry of Ghent)

argued that the words Scripture applied to God must be understood as a form of equivocation. God is infinitely different from creatures. Consequently, when God is spoken of as “wise” or “good,” there must be an infinite distance between what it means for God to be “wise” and “good” and what it means for creatures to be spoken of in the same manner. Here the infinite dissimilarity must logically trump any supposed similarity (Ashworth 1980).

The theologies of Pseudo-Dionysius (1987) and John Scotus Eriugena (1968–81) present an earlier and much more sophisticated variation of this conception. According to this view, God is so transcendent that he can only be spoken of as “more than good,” “more than wise,” and so forth. Later, Eastern theologian Gregory Palamas further refined this view and distinguished between God’s “essence” (which is completely unknowable) and God’s “energies” (which can be quite literally observed and directly encountered in time through mystical experience) (Palamas 1983; Meyendorff 1974, 81–126).

On the other end of the spectrum is the concept of the “univocity of being” proposed by fourteenth-century Franciscan theologian John Duns Scotus. According to one popular interpretation of Scotus, when Scripture speaks of God and his attributes (“God is good,” “creatures are good”) it does so within a common continuum of attribution. Many argue that such a theory suggests that God and creatures were now subordinated to a common conceptual category of being which encompassed them both (Gregory 2012, 36–7). Therefore, for many critics, Scotus made it possible to characterize God as a “being among beings” (much like the gods of the various polytheistic religions), or to practice what the philosopher Martin Heidegger called “ontotheology” (Heidegger 1969; Marion 1991; Westphal 2001). Others (notably Richard Cross) have argued that this misconstrues Scotus’s position (Cross 2005, 65–80; see also Horan 2014). Although we do not have space to explore Cross’s alternative interpretation, the more important point is that during the late Middle Ages and early Modern period the ontotheological interpretation was the main mode by which Scotus was received (Muller 2012).

Turning to Gerhard’s treatment of these issues in his *Loci Communes Theologici*, we find a series of reflections on options given above. Gerhard begins with the possibility of the univocity of being and the consequent univocal predication of being between God and creatures. Gerhard interprets Scotus (either fairly or unfairly) as saying that Scripture’s language about God and creatures is univocal in the sense that creatures and creator

exist in more or less the same way and therefore can have the same terms applied to them (Gerhard 2006–15, 2.92–3; 1863, 1.284–5; 1762, 3.68–9). Since Scripture teaches both God's aseity and identity as creator, this is obviously an utterly unacceptable conclusion.

This demonstrates that Gerhard's rejection of the ontotheological implications of his reception of Scotus contradicts a widely held narrative about the development of metaphysics in the late Middle Ages and the early Modern period. In particular, over the previous two decades, John Milbank and his theological compatriots (self-styled "Radical Orthodox") have claimed that Scotus was widely accepted during the late Middle Ages and early Modern period (Pickstock 2003). In turn, this acceptance destroyed Western Christianity and gave rise to secularism (in particular, in the form of secular social theory) (Milbank 2006, xxv–i, 14–15). Brad Gregory has recently implicated the Reformers and by proxy all subsequent Protestant theology in his version of this same narrative (Gregory 2012, 36–7).

As Steven Ozment has noted, this narrative of a fall from the purity of Thomistic analogy to the corruption of Scotus's univocity (and from there, on to Nihilism!) was largely popularized by the work of the highly influential philosophical historian of the Middle Ages, Étienne Gilson (Ozment 1981, 9; see Gilson 1955, 1963). Richard Muller (2012, 128–9) has also pointed to the influence of the Roman Catholic Reformation scholar Joseph Lortz (1949). The logic of this narrative seems fairly clear. If one considers Thomas's synthesis to be the pinnacle of Western thought, everything subsequent to it will by comparison seem like a kind of tragic falling away from perfection (Ozment 1981, 12).

As influential as this narrative has been, it is largely unsupported by the historical data. This is especially the case when scholars apply this narrative to the Reformers and later Protestant scholastics. First, the Reformers did not generally discuss metaphysical questions at much length. Hence, imputing a clear and specific metaphysical subtext to their doctrinal teaching is problematic. Second, the major figures of the Reformation hailed from a wide variety of theological/philosophical schools, even within specific confessional groupings: Martin Luther: Augustinian and Nominalist (Lohse 1999, 196–207; White 1994); Ulrich Zwingli: Thomist and Scotist (Potter 1976, 18–19, 111, 150; Stephens 1986, 6, 23–5, 222–3); Nicholas von Amsdorf: Scotist (Kolb 1978, 28); Martin Bucer: Thomist (Greschat 2004, 22); Peter Martyr Vermigli: Thomist (McLelland 1978); and Andreas Karlstadt: Thomist (Cameron 2012, 121). Therefore, had these figures sought to address larger metaphysical questions, they likely would have

done so with standard answers of the respective philosophical schools in which they were trained.

Third, when forced to grapple more directly with the metaphysical issues raised by medieval theology, the Protestant scholastics widely (though not uniformly) accepted a version of Thomistic analogy and rejected Scotist univocity. John Patrick Donnelly (1976) famously showed an enormous Thomistic influence on Reformed scholastic metaphysics, going so far as to dub the phenomenon “Calvinist Thomism.” Likewise, Richard Muller (2012) has recently surveyed Reformed Protestant scholastic authors, most of whom accept the analogy of being, as well as the Thomistic tradition’s stock criticism of the notion of the univocity of being. We have likewise already seen Gerhard giving basically the same criticism of the univocity that Muller documents in these Reformed thinkers and early Modern Thomism. Muller ultimately demonstrates that there is no evidence whatsoever that seventeenth-century Reformed theology was based on an assumption of the univocity of being (2012, 146).

Similarly, by the early seventeenth century Lutherans scholastics also accepted a modified version of Thomistic analogy. During and after the Hoffmann Controversy (1598–1601), which centered on the compatibility of faith and philosophy (Pünjer 1887, 178–90; Haga 2012, 196–202, 213), Jakob Martini of the University of Wittenberg developed an elaborate analogical account of human conceptual language about God (Martini 1615; see Preus 1970–2, 2:39–40). In many respects, this mirrored Martini’s Thomistic account of faith and reason (reason as a first stage of knowledge about God, fulfilled and transcended by revelation) which he pressed against Daniel Hoffmann and his insistence that statements of philosophy and theology could contradict one another. In the aftermath of the controversy, Lutheran theologians largely sided with Martini against Hoffman on the question of faith and reason, and also widely accepted his view of analogy. Consequently, theologians of what Robert Preus refers to as the “Silver Age” of Lutheran scholasticism (that is, the period immediately following the Thirty Years War), such as Abraham Calov and Johannes Andreas Quenstedt, adopted an analogical concept of Scripture’s language about God (Preus 1970–2, 1:45–6).

When Gerhard himself turns to the concept of analogy, however, he breaks from the developing consensus within seventeenth-century Lutheranism. Indeed, Gerhard argues that analogy is as problematic an interpretation as that of univocity. God is infinite and eternal and therefore utterly different from his creation and, consequently, analogy is not a

genuine possibility. At this point, Gerhard actually goes so far as to quote the Eastern church father John of Damascus, an advocate of views influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius (God is “essence beyond essence”). Gerhard argues that God is utterly different from his creatures because “there is no proportion between the infinite and the finite.” In other words, to say that there is a similarity between God and his creatures within an infinite dissimilarity makes all language dependent on a perceived similarity between God and his creatures impossible. Infinite dissimilarity will ultimately trump whatever similarity one can find between human and divine wisdom, power, or goodness. God is absolutely unique and therefore all predicates are uniquely attributed to him without analogy. In using the example of how “spirit” is normally predicated of angels and God he writes: “Therefore this [the predicate of “spirit”] is predicated of God not only [as one who is] excellent but [as one who is] completely unique” (Gerhard 2006–15, 2:93; 1863, 1:285; 1762, 3:69).

At this point, many advocates of analogy might suggest that Gerhard is being unfair to Aquinas and the Thomistic tradition. First, in his treatment of the divine being in the *Summa*, Aquinas shares with Gerhard and the Eastern fathers belief that God is incomprehensible and absolutely unique (*ST* 1a.12.1–13). Nonetheless, this fact does not rule out analogy. As observed earlier, even if God is infinitely different and therefore incomprehensible in relationship to his creatures, creation still remains an expression of his will and transcendental attributes. Consequently, it is only logical to think that it bears some analogical resemblance to God. From this it could be argued that Gerhard is not genuinely grappling with Aquinas's position.

Second, although Gerhard directly quotes Thomas in this section, he seems to assume a concept of analogy greatly at odds with how contemporary scholars interpret the Angelic Doctor's version of the doctrine. As observed above, Gerhard interprets analogy in terms of what has been called “analogy of proportion” (*analogia proportionis*). Within Gerhard's historical context, this makes a great deal of sense, since this was the popular interpretation of Aquinas in the early Modern period. Specifically, Cardinal Thomas Cajetan advocated it (Cajetan 1952). According to the notion of analogy of proportion, God's attributes can be spoken of in finite human language insofar as creatures proportionally mirror the attributes in their temporal existence. What creatures have finitely, God has infinitely. Ultimately, it is often argued that analogy of proportion is covertly just a variant on the univocity of being and its implicit ontotheology.³

Beyond these considerations, it is unusual that Gerhard appears only to be aware of analogy as a form of proportion, since Martini's advocacy of a version of Thomistic analogy was already influential in Lutheran circles by the early seventeenth century. Moreover, in his work, Martini examines the possibility of an analogy of proportion and emphatically rejects it. Instead, he insisted that analogy was purely one of attribution (*analogia attributionis*), a way of conceptualizing analogy basically in accordance with Aquinas's position as outlined above (Preus 1970–2, 2:40).

Gerhard's own solution to the problem of the language of attribution is in many ways rather novel. He invokes Augustine's distinction between "knowing" and "comprehending," although he mainly cites a number of Eastern fathers in support of this conceptual distinction. God and his attributes are knowable from the words the Bible applies to him. Although we can know that these words truthfully apply to God, we cannot fully comprehend how they apply to God due to the infinite chasm between creator and creature. Nevertheless, we can know their meaning well enough from how Scripture uses them so as to be able to speak about God in an intelligent way in our doctrinal formulations (Gerhard 2006–15, 2:94–5; 1863, 1:285–6; 1762, 3:69–70; see O'Daly 1987, 213–16; Preus 1970–2, 2:47). Ultimately, people of faith trust that God has truthfully applied these terms to themselves, even if they cannot give a philosophical account of how this is the case. Taken this way, Gerhard understands the application of finite human language to God's infinite and eternal being to be essentially mysterious.

Although this is a very interesting solution, it leaves much unanswered. One issue is that Gerhard's rejection of all analogy stands in tension with his more positive reception of Aquinas on other issues which appear to presuppose the analogy of being. For example, in his discussion of natural theology, Gerhard accepts an only slightly modified version of Aquinas's five proofs of God's existence (Gerhard 2006–15, 2:60–1; 1863, 1:268–9; 1762, 3:43; see *ST* 1a.2.3). Among these is Aquinas's fourth way (Gerhard makes it the third), which states that there are degrees of perfection of various creaturely attributes manifest within the temporal order. Hence, there must be an exemplary ground and measure of these degrees of perfection. From this Aquinas concludes that God must exist, in that he alone could serve as this archetypal ground and measure of perfection. Such an argument clearly appears to presuppose the analogy of being. If indeed God is the archetypal ground of perfection which all created beings mirror, would it not follow

that there is an analogical relationship between creator and creature? For whatever reason, Gerhard seems not to draw this conclusion.

Probably the simplest answer for this apparent tension is that Gerhard eclectically appropriates the pre-Reformation tradition. Such an eclectic usage results in a number of tensions which he does not seamlessly iron out. As already seen, although he rejects a version of the analogy of being, he nonetheless accepts Aquinas's five ways and positively cites him in other contexts. At the same time, Gerhard follows the Reformed theologian Francis Junius's distinction between the "archetypal theology" (God's perfect self-knowledge) and "ectypal theology" (imperfect, derivative, human knowledge of God) (Gerhard 2006–15, 1:22; 1863, 1:3; 1762, 2:5; see Junius 2014, 107–20), a conception very likely based on the Scotistic distinction between *theologia nostra* and *theologia in se* (Muller 1987–2003, 1:227–34). Concerning the nature of the divine attributes, Gerhard accepts the Occamist claim that they possess a merely nominal distinction from one another (Gerhard 2006–15, 2:118–19; 1863, 1:297–8; 1762, 3:86–7; see Maurer 1999, 188–90; Schönberger 1990). Finally, in his short book regarding scriptural interpretation, he goes so far as to employ the aid of occult Hermetic philosophy, something that had become popular during the Renaissance (Heiser 2011; Yates 1964). He uses a series of quotations from the *Corpus Hermeticum* (Copenhaver 1992) to show that even pagan occult philosophy agrees with the Bible that spiritual understanding could only come by way of illumination and purification of the mind. Regarding this last extremely odd philosophical appropriation, it should be observed that Gerhard believed that Hermes Trismegistus was not only a real person, but a contemporary of Moses, from whom he gleaned his ideas about spiritual illumination (Gerhard 2015, 125–6).

Conclusion

Overall, Johann Gerhard's discussion of the analogy of being provides a very interesting example of the reception of Aquinas among early Modern Protestant academic theologians. Gerhard neither demonizes nor completely accepts Thomas's formulations. His reception is one of embrace and critique, dialogue and debate. Gerhard's use of Aquinas is therefore one that seeks to maintain a critical connection of his Lutheran confession of faith to the pre-Reformation tradition as represented by Aquinas.

Notes

- 1 For a comparison of Aquinas and Gerhard on central theological questions, but little discussion of the latter's reception of the former, see Scharlemann (1964).
- 2 Citations for *Summa Theologica* (ST) refer to the five volume edition published by Glencoe Publishing/Christian Classics.
- 3 In the twentieth century, Etienne Gilson (1952, 1953) offered the most prominent argument that Cajetan made analogy into a form of ontotheology. For an alternative view, see Hochschild (2010). For a critique of Suarez as an ontotheologian, see Montag (1999).

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Doubting Reformational Anti-Thomism

John Bolt

Why should Protestants engage the thought of Thomas Aquinas? This is not a question that arises when considering Augustine, for example. Protestants consider Augustine as a theologian of grace to be their own in much the same way that his ecclesiology suits Roman Catholic theology. Nor, it needs to be noted, was this a pressing concern among the Protestant orthodox theologians of the post-Reformation era. In fact, Richard Muller speaks of the “Thomistic line of thought [continuing] into the Reformation” and observes that the Protestant search for a “suitable metaphysic” led to “a reinforcing of the modified Thomism already present in Reformed thought through the work of Vermigli and Zanchi” (Muller 2003, 65). Reformed ethicists of the period also mirrored Thomas in their appropriation of Aristotle (Sinnema 1993).

Nonetheless, until recently, most Protestant theology of the past hundred plus years, including Reformed theology, has kept its distance from Thomas, even regarding him with suspicion (see Vos 1985). In this chapter I explore this resistance within one particular Reformed community, the conservative Dutch Reformed tradition represented by Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. For several reasons this exploration should be of interest not only to thinkers within that tradition but also to those outside it, particularly to Thomists. In general, the Reformed tradition matches the Roman Catholic in its philosophic interest and practice like no other does. It is important, therefore, that thinkers in both traditions know the strengths, weaknesses, and critiques of the other.¹ Furthermore, the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition I am looking at is contemporaneous with and in many

respects parallels the late-nineteenth neo-Thomist renaissance within Roman Catholicism. For that reason, though it is beyond the scope of this chapter, critiques of neo-Thomism from Roman Catholic scholars also show interesting parallels with internal Reformed questions about neo-Calvinism (see Echeverria 2013).

The renewal of Dutch Reformed/Calvinist thought in the second half of nineteenth century served as a resistance to a secularizing drift in the Dutch Reformed church, the academy, and public life. Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) was its inspirational and intellectual leader, mobilizing a break from the National Dutch Reformed Church, organizing and leading the first modern Dutch political party, and establishing a new university, all the while blanketing the Dutch public as a propagandist with a daily newspaper. Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) was the premier theologian who, together with Kuyper, formed the “one-two punch,” championing neo-Calvinism and making it an effective transformative presence in Dutch life. The following discussion is not so much about these two men and what they accomplished but about the generation(s) that followed them, a family of Reformed thinkers of which I am a member.

The spiritual and intellectual descendants of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck have generally been united in their strong distaste for Thomas Aquinas and his role in Roman Catholic thought and praxis. Taking their point of departure from Kuyper’s emphasis on a spiritual antithesis that manifests itself in every dimension of life but especially in the life of the mind (Kuyper 1954, 150–75), reformational thinkers regard Thomism as an unholy synthesis between a biblical worldview and alien Greek (Aristotelian) philosophy.² Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd, for example, divides the entire history of Western thought and civilization into four *religious* “ground motives” (Dutch: *grondmotief*) in which the notion of synthesis features prominently:

1. The “form–matter” ground motive of Greek antiquity in alliance with the Roman idea of *imperium*.
2. The scriptural ground motive of the Christian religion: creation, fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ in communion with the Holy Spirit.
3. The Roman Catholic ground motive of “nature-grace,” which seeks to combine [i.e., “synthesize”] the two mentioned above.
4. The modern humanistic ground motive of “nature-freedom,” in which an attempt is made to bring the three previous motives to a religious *synthesis* concentrated upon the value of human personality. (Dooyeweerd 1979, 15–16)

According to Dooyeweerd the great medieval synthesis of Thomas and others was an illicit joining of pagan religion with biblical faith. His judgment is severe: “they were apostate in their direction” (Dooyeweerd 1979, 111).

Others in this tradition have followed suit. After describing the early church’s use of Greek philosophy to explain and defend the faith as “an accommodation of alien viewpoints, burdened by an irresolvable inner dialectic,” Gordon Spykman acknowledges that the medieval synthesis of Thomas Aquinas is “a masterful synthesis.” Nonetheless, he contrasts it definitively with “the biblical teaching that grace renews and restores nature,” claiming that Thomas instead “held that grace complements and elevates nature,” thus turning “the directional antithesis between judgment and grace ... once again into a structural antinomy between rival sectors of reality held together in bipolar tension.” Spykman follows this with the familiar charge of “dualism,” speaking of a “split-level view of reality” which was a “pseudo-unity” that rendered “impossible an authentically biblical prolegomena [to theology]” (Spykman 1992, 20–1).

This conventional portrait, popularized in the broader evangelical world in the 1960s and 1970s by Francis Schaeffer (Schaeffer 1968, 9–12) was a staple of my own intellectual coming of age during those years. However, over time, key ingredients in the anti-Thomist recipe became problematic for me. I began to doubt several of the key dogmas of anti-Thomism as I looked more closely at Thomas himself and Reformed orthodoxy’s appropriation of many of his key ideas. In this chapter I explore these doubts in part as a testimony of intellectual biography but more to challenge other doubting Thomists to take a second look at their own assumptions. This is a matter of academic integrity; followers of Jesus Christ are under an obligation to be scrupulously fair to their opponents.

Examining my developing doubt will also shed light on the process that led to this negative judgment of Thomism by followers of Kuyper and Bavinck. Bavinck himself contributed to the problem with his general assessment of Roman Catholic thought but also provided the basis for an antidote. While the “hellenization thesis” of Adolf von Harnack (1958, I, 41–57, 318–32, II, 169–229; 1957, 190–209), promoted by scholars such as Edwin Hatch (Hatch 1898), was ironically borrowed by reformational thinkers to buttress their anti-Thomism, Bavinck emphatically repudiated it (Bavinck 2003–8, 1: 116–18, 604, 3: 266). Instead of regarding the use of Greek philosophy by the early church as a tragic error, Bavinck thinks of it as a necessity. The ideas of revelation had to be linked to human knowledge

more broadly and this required philosophy. The church fathers were not deceived; they recognized the risks and “only utilized the philosophy that was most suited to help them think through and defend the truth of God” (Bavinck 2003–8, 1: 607).

I shall begin, however, not with Bavinck but with Abraham Kuyper’s application of the doctrine of regeneration to science and scholarship. This doubt about “two kinds of people, two kinds of science” will be followed by an assessment of Dooyeweerd’s *grondmotief* analysis, a closer look at the biblical *grondmotief* of creation–fall–redemption, and, finally, a response to the misunderstanding of Thomas’s eschatological anthropology. This series of doubts does not necessarily represent the chronology of my own journey but is primarily a systematic-logical order with some historical resonance.

Just to be clear, even though Herman Dooyeweerd will be my primary interlocutor in what follows, this chapter is not intended to be a contribution to scholarship about Dooyeweerd or his philosophy, the *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*/Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (hereafter *WdW* and *PCI*).³ I do not think I am contributing anything original here; some well-known figures in the reformational movement itself have raised similar doubts (e.g., Geertsema 1987; Klapwijk 1987).

Doubt # 1: “Two Kinds of People; Two Kinds of Science”

A radical antithesis between science and scholarship that proceeds from biblical principles and scholarship that does not is the hallmark of Abraham Kuyper’s worldview. In his 1898 Princeton Stone Lectures on Calvinism, he said there were two “life-systems” engaged in a struggle for the soul of the West (Kuyper 1931, 11–12). This comprehensive portrait of two armies, both proceeding from single principles, comes from Kuyper’s extension of the doctrine of regeneration into the concrete areas of life, notably science and scholarship. For Kuyper the consequence of regeneration – “which changes man in his very being, and that indeed by a change or transformation which is effected by a supernatural cause” – radically divides “humanity in two, and repeals the unity of the human consciousness” (Kuyper 1954, 152). Consequently, we “have to acknowledge two kinds of human consciousness; that of the regenerate and the unregenerate; and these two cannot be identical” (Kuyper 1931, 133). The implication Kuyper draws from this is that “two kinds of people” will develop “two kinds of science” (Kuyper 1954, 155–82). The conflict in the scientific enterprise is not

between faith (or religion) and science, but between “two scientific systems ... each having its own faith” (Kuyper 1931, 133). Different religious perceptions of reality result in completely different scientific conceptions. And, by extension, they result in different cultural, social, and political visions, strategies, and policies.

Dooyeweerd points approvingly to this religious antithesis which he regards as an integral part of Kuyper’s “biblical reformational starting point” (Dooyeweerd 2013, 155). According to Dooyeweerd, “a totally different view of reality has to flow from Kuyper’s religious basic conception of Calvinism where the heart is conceived as the religious root and concentration point of the entire person” (Dooyeweerd 2013, 167). Dooyeweerd finds this stream of thought to be at odds with another trajectory in Kuyper, a more traditional, scholastic, dualistic body–soul anthropology, but claims that Kuyper’s emphasis on the heart as the religious root of a person was unique to him. “It was only Kuyper who accomplished here the tremendous grasp which, with one stroke, radically turned around in a Scriptural sense the anthropological perspective. Neither in the mentioned writing of [Kuyper’s neo-Calvinist colleagues] Woltjer nor in Bavinck’s *Beginnselen der Psychologie (Principles of Psychology)* is this conception found” (Dooyeweerd 2013, 165).

Before we examine Bavinck’s rejection of the “two kinds of people” paradigm I need to challenge Dooyeweerd’s claim that there is nothing comparable to Kuyper’s conception in Bavinck’s writing. Dooyeweerd refers to only one publication, Bavinck’s *Principles of Psychology*, which makes his claim doubly problematic. Bavinck’s interest in this work is to produce a scientific (*wetenschappelijke*) account of the soul’s powers and activities and not a biblical-theological statement of the divine–human covenantal relationship. Even if one disagrees with the faculty psychology that Bavinck sets forth in his *Principles*, on Dooyeweerd’s own criteria it seems an odd criticism. Dooyeweerd considers the heart to be “the *religious* root and concentration point of the entire person” and claims that it is not a product of theoretical thought but is pretheoretical and transcends it (Dooyeweerd 1980, 19; emphasis added). To accuse a theoretical work of failing to speak in pretheoretical terms appears to conflate the two.

But one could ask: should Bavinck not have directed his readers to the heart in its *religious* significance as the starting point for analyzing the soul and its faculties? Since Bavinck is quite clear that any scientific description of the soul’s faculties can only be derived indirectly from observing human action (Bavinck 1923, 11–22), it is not clear to me how this insistence on the

religious importance of the heart affects the content of the scholarly analysis. The validity of any scientific description of the soul and its faculties does not depend on its correlation with the supratemporal religious human heart but with the adequacy of a given model to account for human conduct and states of mind. One cannot dismiss Bavinck's account by quarreling with its religious starting point as Dooyeweerd does any more than one could quarrel with an atheist's weather forecast just because the forecaster is an atheist.

However, I am less interested in the finer points of Dooyeweerdian scholasticism than in simply pointing out that he was wrong when he claimed that Kuyper's understanding of the heart was unique to him. Consider, for example the following passage from the *Reformed Dogmatics* which clearly speaks of the "heart" in exactly the manner so prized by Dooyeweerd. Bavinck has just said that regeneration does not only affect *part* of a person's life but its totality: "The whole person is the subject of regeneration. Not only are their deeds and conduct, their life's purpose and direction, their ideas and activities changed, but also humans themselves are transformed and renewed in the core of their being." Then follows this passage about the heart:

To describe this process Scripture refers to the heart "from which flow the springs of life" (Prov. 4:23), in one's consciousness as well as in the emotions and will. If, as Jesus says (Matt. 15:19), it is from the heart that all evil and incomprehension flows, then that is the center where the change called regeneration must occur. Involved in it are all the constituents, capacities, and powers of human beings, each in accordance with its own nature, not only the lower and not only the higher functions, not only the intellect and will, not only the soul or the spirit, but also the whole person, soul and spirit, intellect, will and emotions, consciousness and feeling share in the blessing of regeneration. Not even the body is excluded from it. (Bavinck 2003–8, 4: 93)

It is important to take note of the genre of the work in which this statement is found: it is a work of dogmatic theology and not a scientific work on psychology. Once again, if Bavinck had started his work on psychology with such a theological statement, he would have violated an important dictum in reformational philosophy, namely, that psychology or any other science must stand on its own, from within its own modality and not be dictated to by theology. Furthermore, a final point: contrary to Dooyeweerd's anxieties about the body–soul distinction coming from an Aristotelian "substance" doctrine, Bavinck explicitly repudiates such ideas: "Now if

regeneration is neither an actual creation (an infusion of substance) nor a merely external moral amendment of life, it can only consist in a spiritual renewal of those inner dispositions of humans that from ancient times were called ‘habits’ or ‘qualities’” (Bavinck 2003–8, 4: 94).

I now come to my growing doubts about the Kuyperian emphasis on “two kinds of people, two kinds of science.” As we saw earlier, this notion was for Kuyper a necessary consequence of regeneration or *palingenesis*, “which breaks humanity in two, and repeals the unity of the human consciousness” (Kuyper 1954, 152). While Bavinck shared Kuyper’s sense of antithesis between a Christian worldview and other worldviews such as pantheism, deism, individualism, socialism, Darwinism, and historicism (Bavinck 1913, 27, 39, 41, 43, 74, 79, 84, 91), he did not follow Kuyper on this speculative point. In an unpublished series of lectures given to students at Kampen in the years 1896–7 and available only in the form of a *dictaat* or student notes, Bavinck expresses deep criticism of this application of the doctrine of regeneration (Bremmer 1966, 37–45). To conflate the scientific distinction between truth and falsehood with the personal one between regenerate and unregenerate people is to commit a logical fallacy, technically known as *metabasis eis allo genos* (crossing over into a different genus). In this instance, according to Bavinck, to identify the scientific work of the regenerate with truth and that of the unregenerate with lies is categorically false. Not only is there much good in the scientific work of unregenerate people, but Christian faith in itself gives no one a corner on scientific truth. According to Bavinck, Kuyper is operating with a speculative and highly abstract conception of science and fails adequately to distinguish between faith in a saving sense and faith in a scientific sense. Science should be empirical, not speculative. As Bavinck put it, “[Kuyper] does not attempt to derive his idea of science from the data as they appear in human life and are gathered together under the umbrella of science, but he attempts to establish it apart from empirical data, from the ‘idea’ of science” (Bremmer 1966, 39). It seems to me that Bavinck’s critique is also applicable to Dooyeweerd.

In summary, the simple but very real spiritual antithesis between the regenerate and the unregenerate, between the Christian and the unbeliever, the church and the world, cannot be transported and applied directly in society, culture, and science unless one were to withdraw completely from broader society and retreat into a monastery. Similar reservations have been voiced within the reformational movement itself. Klapwijk, for example, worries that an exclusive emphasis on the antithesis could lead to a desire “to form ... an alternative, Christian subculture or counterculture”

in “the pagan cultural system” (Klapwijk 1987, 104). My doubts about Kuyper’s dictum go farther. Although I am convinced that one’s religious commitment influences every dimension of a believer’s existence, I doubt that one can trace every thought, every action, and every cultural product directly to an ultimate religious starting point.⁴ And that brings me to my next doubt.

Doubt # 2: “*Grondmotief* Analysis”

The fourfold *grondmotief* analysis of Western civilization listed at the beginning of this chapter is simply Dooyeweerd’s application of the Kuyperian principle discussed in the previous section. If all thought can be traced back to a single “religious root and concentration point” in the human heart, a starting point that is also the root and concentration point of the whole cosmos, then it follows that entire blocks of civilization, culture, and thought can be described in terms of a fundamental religious *grondmotief*. At the same time, of course, it also logically follows that once the premise becomes uncertain then all derivative judgments that flow from it also become questionable. Nonetheless, the specifics of Dooyeweerd’s assessment of Western thought deserve special consideration.

Even Dooyeweerd’s critics often acknowledge that his *Roots of Western Culture* is a significant achievement and all careful readers can profit from it (Douma 1981, 7). The reminder that religious commitments play an important role in our intellectual and social life remains an important part of Christian engagement with the world. Religiously oriented worldviews do affect scholarship, as Nicholas Wolterstorff has more recently argued (Wolterstorff 1988). For my own part, I find the fourth *grondmotief*—nature-freedom—a helpful tool in assessing the pendulum swings of Western cultural and intellectual history since the Enlightenment. I am less persuaded that the Greco-Roman form-matter *grondmotief* is really religious in any classic sense, consider the critique of the medieval Thomistic synthesis to be a misreading of Thomas, and do not believe that the famous creation-fall-redemption scheme in practice actually serves as the Christian *grondmotief*.

It will be helpful briefly to summarize what Dooyeweerd means with the notion of a *grondmotief*. D.T. Runia suggests five basic features (with a particular emphasis on Greek society and culture): it (1) has “a dynamic character, enabling it to act as the central spiritual driving force for the

whole society in which it is operational”; (2) “underlie[s] the whole of culture”; (3) is religious (and not theoretical) in nature; (4) has a polar or “dialectical character”; and (5) has “a strong anthropological emphasis” (Runia 1989, 162–3). My first doubt has to do with the totalist claim made for a *grondmotief*. Can one truly reduce the complex and manifold dynamics of a vast organism like Greek society and culture to a single, all-determining religious principle? In the case of Dooyeweerd’s choice of the Aristotelian “form–matter” dialectic, it becomes an obvious question to wonder about Plato, the Homeric myths, or even Hesiod as legitimate potential alternatives (see Bos 1979, 1986; Runia 1989). Dooyeweerd’s choice of Aristotle is necessary because he wants to devalue the achievement of Thomas Aquinas by calling his use of Aristotle an unholy synthesis with a pagan religious *grondmotief*.

There are additional problems with Dooyeweerd’s first *grondmotief*. According to classicist Abraham Bos, the polarity between nature (matter) and culture (form) has an intellectual pedigree that includes “Hegel, Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, the writings of classicist F.M. Cornford, and representatives of the history-of-religions school” (Bos 1986, 119; Runia 1989, 161). The form–matter theme is based on a perceived conflict “between a Dionysian nature-religion and an Apolline culture-religion” (Runia 1989, 161). According to Runia, however, this reconstruction of Greek religion is “now generally regarded as historically unsound.” It presupposed that there was a great gulf between pre-Hellenic and Hellenic religion, a presupposition that has proven to be untenable by the historical evidence that there was a “continuity of Greek religion with Mycenaean, Minoan and even earlier periods” (Runia 1989: 161). Recognizing that Dooyeweerd’s original theme was untenable led others to pose alternatives while still trying in some sense to be true to Dooyeweerd’s project. Bos suggested “Titanic *zin-perspectief*” (the reassertion of a claim to divine power), based on the Greek myth of Kronos and the Titans (1986, 132–7), while Runia proposes the dialectic of “divine power and the *random*,” pointing to Plato’s important dialogue *Timaeus* as the perfect illustration of the polarity (1989, 172–5).

Once again, I am not qualified and not very interested in adjudicating these claims and counterclaims about Greek religion and culture. The important point here is that if this foundational building block of Dooyeweerd’s analysis of Western thought is called into question, the entire building crumbles to dust. With the exception of the biblical *grondmotief*, the successive ones all build on this foundation. The argument proceeds

like this: #1: Greek form–matter; #2 biblical: creation–fall–redemption–consummation; #3: nature–grace: Thomistic synthesis of #1 and # 2; #4: nature–freedom: synthesis of #1, #2, and #3. I am led to conclude that architectonic schemes such as the one Dooyeweerd proposed are themselves a version of idealism, the notion that the rich diversity and complexity of human life can be reduced to a single idea. Ideas are important and do shape individuals, communities, and even nations; they are simply not all-important. The belief that they are is itself a questionable religious conviction, a faith-based assertion.

Before taking a closer look at the biblical *grondmotief*, I do want to point out an important internal problem with Dooyeweerd’s analysis of Greek life. From where did Dooyeweerd obtain the specific insight into the Greek religious *grondmotief*? If we take seriously the evidence that Hegel, Nietzsche, and Cornford, among others, are important sources, how could their insight provide guidance to someone attempting to give a biblically based perspective on the religious orientation of an entire culture? Using Dooyeweerd’s own criteria, therefore, one would have to conclude that his own analysis is a *synthesis* of biblical truth with modern thinking, in this case thinking that has overt religious, even anti-Christian, dimensions. Once one begins travelling down that road there is no turning back on the downward spiral of seeing synthesis thinking everywhere, and even simple observations of nature such as “the sky is blue” become freighted with ultimate religious significance. Could there be a quicker way to discredit all Christian thought and scholarship?

I will reserve discussion of the second *grondmotief* – the biblical theme of creation–fall–redemption – for the next section and now briefly consider the third, the Thomistic medieval synthesis of nature and grace. Though Dooyeweerd’s analysis here also needs major correction, his missteps are more forgivable because they were broadly shared by many others, including his own neo-Calvinist teacher, Herman Bavinck.⁵ Here is how Dooyeweerd characterizes the “dualistic synthesis” of Thomas: “Unintentionally, Thomas allowed the Greek form-matter motive to overpower the creation motive of the Christian religion. Although he did acknowledge God as the “first cause” and the “ultimate goal” of nature, he divided the creation order into a natural and supernatural realm. And his view of the “natural order” stemmed from Aristotle” (Dooyeweerd 1979, 118–19).

It is important at this stage of analyzing Dooyeweerd’s argument to underscore that he considers Aristotle’s form–matter scheme as a religious Archimedean point at odds with the biblical *grondmotief* of

creation–fall–redemption. Furthermore, this form–matter dialectic embraced all of Greek religion: “Although the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle first coined the term ‘form-matter,’ the ‘form-matter’ ground motive controlled Greek thought and civilization from the beginning of the Greek city-states” (Dooyeweerd 1979, 16). Even if one accepted Dooyeweerd’s judgment on this point, it would still leave open the question whether this meant that any observation about reality made by Aristotle would thereby, for that very reason, be rendered suspect. I cannot see how this is a fair or reasonable inference. Does not every claim made by any person need to be weighed by evidence and checked by reality? In my view, that also applies to regenerate people. Born-again believers do not have a corner on observational truth.

Even aside from that critique, I believe that Arvin Vos asked the right question about the “spirit in which he [Thomas] worked”: “Was he basically an Aristotelian who also wanted to make room for the truths of revelation, or was he a Christian concerned to explain this truth in the most adequate way possible – which for him mean utilizing Aristotle?” (Vos 1985, 132).

I shall not rehearse Vos’s careful exegesis of Thomas, demonstrating that Thomas did not believe in a pure state of nature apart from grace, that he did not hold to a view of nature unimpaired by the fall into sin, that he did believe the whole person was disordered by sin and that even our natural virtues need the assistance of God’s grace, along with many correlative truths. In sum, the Protestant reading of Thomas that attributes to him a conception of nature that is “self-contained, self-sufficient, autonomous” is simply wrong. As Vos aptly puts it: Thomas “does not hold the position [his critics] have attributed to him” (Vos 1985, 148). Vos helpfully points out that the source of this misrepresentation of Thomas is to be found in the tradition of “textbook Thomism” which “departed from Aquinas in the matter of his teachings about the relationship between nature and grace” (Vos 1985, 152–8). Late nineteenth-century critics of Roman Catholic theology were criticizing this textbook tradition rather than Thomas himself and the groundswell of Protestant unanimity was simply a matter of critics repeating one another (Vos 1985, 152).

The payoff of doubting the adequacy of *grondmotief* analysis is that Christian thinkers can assess claims made by philosophers such as Aristotle, not by discerning in what ultimate religious box they belong but by whether or not they help us to understand the reality of God’s creation better. A simple example will suffice. Thomas, along with Reformed theologians from the middle of the sixteenth century to the Synod of Dort (1618–19), depended on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* as a base for their own work

(Sinnema 1993). One could get very exercised about this, considering it some form of synthesis between a Christian and a pagan *grondmotief*, or one could conclude that Aristotle's discussion of the virtue courage, for example, is a helpful way of understanding human moral psychology because we do tend to drift between cowardice and foolhardiness in this area. I have become convicted that the second approach, which liberates Christians from an impossible and crippling ideological fixation with "purity of thought," is not only correct but an essential ingredient of our freedom in Christ. That is a good segue to my third doubt.

Doubt # 3: Is "Creation-Fall-Redemption" Pre-Theoretical? Or: The Impossible Goal of a "Pure" Biblical Philosophy

The importance of learning that is directed by Holy Scripture is one of the most important building blocks of the reformational vision. But how is the Bible to be used? Klapwijk refers to "a significant difference of opinion ... on this crucial point" among the members of the Association of Reformational Philosophy dating back to Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven themselves (Klapwijk 1987, 106). Apparently, Vollenhoven was less reluctant than Dooyeweerd in making direct appeals to the concrete data (texts) of Scripture which led to questions about mixing theology and philosophy. According to Klapwijk, Dooyeweerd "grew increasingly leary of making direct appeals to Scripture in the context of philosophical argumentation," fearing the attacks of theologians and "the pitfall of scholastic tutelage." Instead, Dooyeweerd argued that "the central biblical message – he spoke of the Christian 'religious ground motive' of creation, fall, and redemption – appeals to the heart of man and should permeate as a regenerating religious force the whole of Christian experience, hence also the thought of the Christian philosopher." Klapwijk then adds this telling sentence: "And that completely aside from the problem of whether such Christian thinking can be based on biblical proof texts!" This solution of Dooyeweerd's, however, "has also produced some headaches within the Association," according to Klapwijk. In fact, he relates a personal conversation with Vollenhoven who said that "he found it unfeasible to summarize the richness of Scripture in 'such a formula'" (Klapwijk 1987, 106–8).

I find this discussion among reformational scholars fascinating in its own right and now propose an alternative framework for consideration. The debate I alluded to in the previous paragraph sets up a contrast between

the Word of God as *power* and as biblical *text* (see Downs 1974). Whether this contrast is a dialectic or represents the two extreme poles in a continuum is not important here. The main point is that Dooyeweerd and others who follow him intentionally set power word over against the text of Scripture. The whole point of this emphasis on the power of the Word of God is to underscore the change that takes place at the religious core of human persons, a change that reorients their whole life, including their thinking. But how does that happen? Does the Word as thematized by creation–fall–redemption effect this change? In its answer to the question “What do you believe concerning ‘the holy, catholic church?’” the *Heidelberg Catechism* confesses that “the Son of God ... gathers, protects and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life ... *through his Word and Spirit*” (Q & A 54; my emphasis). How is a person “born again”? The answer is simple and basic: by hearing the word of the gospel and believing it through the internal witness of the Holy Spirit.

Now what does this basic answer have to do with creation–fall–redemption? A fuller understanding of the New Testament gospel message of God’s saving work in Christ Jesus locates it within the larger scriptural narrative of creation–fall–redemption–consummation (C–F–R–C). Herman Bavinck captured this in his definition of the Christian faith: “The essence of the Christian religion consists in the reality that the creation of the Father, ruined by sin, is restored in the death of the Son of God, and re-created by the grace of the Holy Spirit into a kingdom of God” (Bavinck 2003–8, 1: 112). Alternatively, one could also think of the creation–fall–redemption structure as the basic elements of a Christian worldview as Klapwijk has argued (Klapwijk 1987, 108–9) and Al Wolters proposed in *Creation Regained* (Wolters 1985). In either case, C–F–R–C is clearly a *second-order* theme flowing from reflection on the whole narrative of Scripture and not the prethematized, pretheoretical address of the Word of God to the human heart. It is the proclaimed gospel used by the Holy Spirit that powerfully changes the human heart and not the theological abstraction of creation–fall–redemption. I should also add here that I am not satisfied with thinking of C–F–R–C as a worldview either. Herman Bavinck argued that all worldviews address three basic issues captured by the Greek division of philosophy into dialectics (thought), physics (nature/being), and ethics (doing). Over the centuries, the names may change to, “for example, logic (noetics), the natural and spiritual sciences, but every division in the end comes back to this old trilogy.” Bavinck concludes: “The problems that confront the human spirit always come back to these: What is the relation between

thinking and *being*? Between *being* and *becoming*? Between *becoming* and *acting*? Who am I? What is the world? What is my place and task within this world” (Bavinck 1913, 14)? In addition, since every created person receives the gift of consciousness – consciousness of the external world, of self, and of God – Bavinck contends that all worldviews are reducible to three basic types: naturalism/materialism, humanism, and theism. A worldview, in other words, is more comprehensive and includes fundamental questions of being, knowing, and doing that cannot be captured by the C–F–R–C formula. I came to the conclusion that C–F–R–C is not really a worldview or a pretheoretical “power word” but a second-order theological abstraction. It is in many ways a useful abstraction but it does not merit the exalted role given to it in the Reformational philosophy movement. (Incidentally, it is an abstraction that would have been perfectly acceptable to Thomas Aquinas himself.) That brings me to my final doubt.

Doubt # 4: Body, Soul, and Man’s Supernatural End

Dooyeweerd concludes his *grondmotief*-based overview of Western thought with this clarion call:

The Christian must never absorb the ground motive of an apostate culture into his life and thought. He must never strive to synthesize or bridge the gap between an apostate ground motive and the ground motive of the Christian religion. Finally, he must never deny that the antithesis, from out of the religious root, cuts directly through the issues of temporal life. (Dooyeweerd 1979, 39).

Who could disagree? It is a truism that a devoted follower of Jesus Christ must not deny his or her Lord. Furthermore, if Christ is Lord, he is Lord of our whole life, including our mind. Of course!

But what follows from this? When Dooyeweerd contends that “the Christian religion itself fights a battle of life and death against all sorts of religious ground motives,” a battle “that cuts right through Christian ranks and through the soul of every believer,” he immediately moves to a critique of the traditional duality of body and soul as his example of alien Greek philosophy invading and corrupting the church’s biblical purity (1979, 32–6). Dooyeweerd traces this anthropological dualism back to Roman Catholic philosophy and theology of the thirteenth century (i.e., Thomas

Aquinas). As Dooyeweerd sees this tradition, human beings were created with a rational-ethical nature and also “endowed with a supra-natural gift of grace, namely, participation in the divine nature.” This endowment was lost in the Fall and “is regained by the supra-natural means of grace which Christ has entrusted to his Church. In this way, the human rational nature would be elevated to that supra-natural state of perfection to which it was destined after the plan of creation” (1980, 192). Dooyeweerd praises the Reformation for breaking with the “central theme” of Roman Catholicism but goes on to lament its continuing with “the conception of human nature as a composite of a material body and an immortal rational soul,” a conception “taken from Greek philosophy, whose pagan religious basic motive was radically opposed to that of Holy Scripture” (1980, 193). He identifies the culprit as “scholasticism” (1980, 192). Herman Bavinck also criticized classic Roman Catholic anthropology in much the same way. According to Bavinck Rome starts with a philosophical/theological idea of the final “state of glory” to which believers are “elevated” by Christ and his Spirit. It is this notion of the final destiny and state of the “blessed” in which they participate in the *visio dei* by being elevated or “divinized” (or deified) that then determines the rest of Rome’s anthropology, including the question of the original state and the fall into sin (Bavinck 2003–8, 2: 539). Bavinck particularly finds fault with what he considers “a mistaken view of man’s destiny” which he characterizes as a “Neoplatonic vision of God and a mystical fusion of the soul with God” (2003–8, 2: 542).

While Bavinck is on surer ground in his criticism of the idea of merit in Thomas’s views, a closer look at Thomas’s anthropology in *ST* 1a.95.1 makes it clear that on three crucial points there is no substantive disagreement between them. First, the creation of humanity was itself a gift of grace (Bavinck 2003–8, 2: 544). Second, in the Fall, something of the image is lost (“image” in Thomas; righteousness and holiness or the “narrow” sense of image in Bavinck) and something is retained (“likeness” in Thomas; broader sense of image in Bavinck; Bavinck 2003–8, 2: 548). Third, there is a “plus” in redemption; humanity’s final destiny is more than simply a return to Adam’s original state (Bavinck 2003–8, 2: 543–4). There is no substantial disagreement between Thomas and Bavinck on these points. Bavinck’s misreading of Thomas is an uncharacteristic misstep on his part. The point we made earlier (from Arvin Vos) that late nineteenth-century critics of Roman Catholic theology were criticizing the Thomistic textbook tradition rather than Thomas himself is true here as well. Bavinck got caught up in the groundswell of Protestant unanimity where critics tended to repeat one another (Vos 1985, 152).

Finally, what about the reformational critique of body–soul dualism? On occasion an accusation of “dualism” does need to be taken seriously. The Reformation legitimately set the universal vocation and priesthood of all believers as a corrective to a twofold morality that elevated the “religious” life of the orders above that of the “lay” Christian. Setting faith over against reason and science is also an unacceptable dualism. With respect to anthropology, a dualism that sets body versus soul and exalts the soul while devaluing the body is also contrary to good biblical teaching and wisdom.

Acknowledging problematic dualisms, however, only tells half the story. Bavinck, for example, did acknowledge a legitimate distinction and even some tension between our “earthly” calling and our “heavenly” destiny. We acknowledge that God is the Creator, his creation is good, and every legitimate earthly calling an opportunity to glorify our Maker and Redeemer. At the same time, as pilgrims, especially as pilgrims in a fallen world, our longing for full communion with God, worship, meditation and contemplation, Sabbath, and eternal life with God are real and valid, not to be dismissed by activist-minded Christians as mere “other-worldliness” or world-flight. “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20). Augustine was right: *inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te* (our hearts are restless until they rest in you). There is, therefore, an inevitable tension in the Christian life between affirming creation and longing for eternal life with God.

Honoring this duality is a delicate balancing act that has proven difficult for Christians to achieve and, prior to the Second Coming, according to Bavinck, we will not achieve “a completely harmonious answer. Every person and every movement are guilty of a greater or lesser one-sidedness here. Life swings to and fro, again and again, between worldliness and world-flight. Head and heart painfully wrestle for supremacy. It has been said that in every human heart there dwells a bit of Jew and Greek” (1880, 56). Bavinck follows this with a crucial distinction: “And yet it makes a great difference whether one conceives of this dualism as absolute or relative” (1880, 56).

What could Bavinck possibly mean by the oxymoronic-sounding term “relative dualism”? His point is that some dualism is inevitable in this dispensation for eschatological reasons; we live “between the times.” Stated differently, the inevitable dualism is historically conditioned by the reality of sin; it is not a structural or, if you will, ontological dualism. This eschatological and relative dualism is overcome by the triumph of grace and the gift of revelation; a broken creation and corrupt humanity is healed by divine grace. Nonetheless, until the consummation, *some* dualism remains inevitable; it is a clear warning against all forms of perfectionism, whether

sacramental or enthusiastic. This sort of dualism will only end when our Lord returns:

A new song will be sung in heaven (Rev. 5:9, 10), but the original order of creation will remain, at least to the extent that all distinctions of nature and grace will once and for all be done away with. Dualism will cease. Grace does not remain outside or above or beside nature but rather permeates and wholly renews it. And thus nature, reborn by grace, will be brought to its highest revelation. That situation will again return in which we serve God freely and happily, without compulsion or fear, simply out of love, and in harmony with our true nature. (Bavinck 1880, 59)

Aside from many good straightforward biblical-exegetical reasons for affirming a body–soul duality, for me the importance of affirming an “end” or *telos* for human beings beyond our present earthly existence sealed the deal. I became convinced that it was a serious mistake to downgrade dedicated Christian worship in the midst of a congregation by constantly speaking of “life as worship.” I acknowledge some of the problems with calling this our “supernatural” end but am using it in this chapter to underscore the “more than” dimension of our redemption in Christ, a “plus” that we can already experience in our worship and Sabbaths now. This is not all that there is.

And this conclusion is in keeping with the wisdom of Thomas Aquinas. I rest my case.

Notes

- 1 It is worth noting that the first major examination of neo-Calvinist Herman Dooyeweerd’s philosophy was done by a Roman Catholic (see Marlet 1954).
- 2 “Reformational” is the preferred self-designation of those who intentionally work from the framework of the Calvinist philosophical tradition initiated by Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven; see, for example, Wolters (1985). The Association for Calvinistic Philosophy, founded by Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd in 1935, is now called the Association for Reformational Philosophy.
- 3 Yong-Joon Choi (2006) provides a helpful overview and assessment of key elements in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy.
- 4 Incidentally, it seems to me that this is precisely the point at contention between proponents and opponents of the “two-kingdoms doctrine.”
- 5 Pointing to and debunking this consensus is the great value of Arvin Vos’s work (Vos 1985).

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The Understanding and Critique of Thomas Aquinas in Contemporary German Protestant Theology

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In the foreword of the first volume of his *Church Dogmatics*, Karl Barth said that in the eyes of his Protestant colleagues – and he does not contradict them – he was taking the path of scholasticism. It seemed that he was able to cite Anselm and Thomas without any signs of detestation (Barth 1935, ix; see also McCormack and White 2013). At least in German-speaking Europe, these words mark a shift in the newer Protestant theology. Barth brought Protestant theology back into the situation in which it had been before the so-called “Enlightenment,” during the era of Protestant scholasticism: he brought it into a dynamic of discussion – sometimes affirming, sometimes rejecting – with pre-Reformation scholasticism, especially with the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. Barth’s theological turn had vast consequences for German Protestant theology, in this respect as well as in others. In German Protestant theology Aquinas became a person to be discussed with consent and dissent. I focus on the era after Barth – and the state of German Protestant theology can be characterized until now as that of a post-Barthian era. There has been a return to Friedrich Schleiermacher, a so-called “Schleiermacher Renaissance,”¹ but this movement does not have the capacity to bring something new. It is rather a recurrence of something against which Barth had sufficiently argued. It does not provide a critique of Aquinas’s work, but rather ignores him as a thinker of a “precritical” (i.e., pre-Kantian) age.

I focus upon four theologians who wrote their main works between the 1960s and 1990s and are significant for the preoccupation with Thomas that Karl Barth initiated: Ulrich Kühn (1932–2012), Jörg Baur (born 1930), Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–2014), and Eberhard Jüngel (born 1934).

Jörg Baur and Ulrich Kühn

Kühn and Baur were the two Protestant theologians invited by Roman Catholic philosopher Ludger Oeig-Hanhoff to participate in a commemorative volume dedicated to Thomas in 1974. In his article “Questions of a Protestant Theologian to Thomas Aquinas,” Baur mentions one of the probable reasons for the new Protestant interest in Thomas, namely, the wave of secularization or dechristianization which affects Protestants as much as Catholics:

Do we speak with each other because as Christians who have become unconfident in their confessional identity we seek refuge with one another, in order to gain orientation from the treasures of classical theological texts? Has the comprehensive *contra* of modern critique of theology and church not replaced the controversy which before inflamed us against each other? Do we not stand in a shared vexation in light of the difficulty of speaking of the Christian faith today in a genuine way? (Baur 1974, 161)

Baur’s sarcastic words make clear that there are not only two participants in a Protestant dialogue with Thomas – a Protestantism that still claims to have a confessional identity and Thomas (or the Catholic theologians who interpret and appeal to Thomas) – but also a third participant: the secularist modern critique of theology and church. Preoccupation with Thomas in the German Protestant theology of the last 50 years is to a significant degree a preoccupation in his view of a problem which in the last 200 years has become the equivalent to the confessional problem of the sixteenth century: the problem of the secularist challenge to Christianity.

In her dissertation on Aquinas (2007), Miriam Rose distinguishes two lines of German Protestant preoccupation with Thomas: historical research on Thomas, of which her own dissertation is a fine example, and a kind of work in which Thomas is a partner in a discussion in which the German theologians’ own dogmatic position is developed.² In this second line, secularism cannot be overlooked as a third partner in the dialogue. Baur

does not omit to mention the presumed Protestant vulnerability to modernism as something that can make Thomas attractive in the context of modernity. He speaks of an inability of Protestant theology to contribute more to the orientation of the present age than a mere religious appeal – in a noble way called *kerygma*. The risk is that one will always be joining the newest fashion, and he presumes that the reason for this is Luther's radicalism in making such a big gap between a theological proposition and ontology, so that as soon as his own individual religious impetus vanished, his theology had to become irrelevant. Thomas's metaphysical explication of theology would be the solution to this Protestant aporia. God in Christ did not enter a world alien to him; God *extra Christum* is not only hidden: we and all beings have always been in a movement toward the divine origin (Baur 1974, 170–1, hinting at Seckler 1964). But Baur brings these arguments as an *advocatus diaboli*. He remains a Lutheran. He responds with an attack against Thomist ontology and also against Thomas himself. The attack is on the position formulated in the following sentence: “*Illud enim est perfectum cuius nihil est extra ipsum*” (Baur 1974, 172, quoting I *Sentences* 8.1.1. sol.) – applied to God and secondarily also to humanity. Baur refuses to consent to such a position. Human life is exhausted and guilty in the toil of the realization of its self-perfectness, but God leads it to freedom through commitment to Jesus Christ (Baur 1974, 173).

Yet Baur finds in Thomas something else which is able to overcome this model of identity. This is Thomas's way of conceiving the relationships in the divine Trinity. In the persons of the Trinity God is “*ad alterum se habens*” (Baur 1974, 174, quoting *Summa Theologiae* [ST] 1a.28.2 *ad* 1).

Thus, although in later times he has been a sharp Lutheran critic of ecumenical attempts at reconciliation,³ Baur agrees with Thomas at least in some essential points. His list of overcome Protestant misinterpretations of Thomas, which have been cleared by the newer Catholic interpretation of his work, can also be read without a sarcastic undertone: the gospel was *not* delivered to Aristotle; the image and likeness of God in human beings *cannot* be reduced to our rationality; through the teaching of the law, human pride and self-confidence suffer shipwreck; Thomas's positions on qualities and *habitus* do *not* make grace and the theological virtues a disposable human property; the relational character of the understanding of grace *can* be disclosed; the Reformation understanding of law and gospel *is*, albeit formulated in a different way, also what Thomas thinks (Baur 1974, 165).⁴

In his contribution to the 1974 commemorative volume Ulrich Kühn takes the same constructive Lutheran attitude that we have found in Baur. Kühn focuses on three points:

1. Thomas calls the gospel a “new law.” Kühn states that Thomas knows very well that the gospel is not something similar to what law usually is. But he uses the word “law” and this, Kühn insists, should *not* be imitated. However, this appellation also illuminates one aspect which might otherwise be overlooked: that not only the gospel, but every other law is something by which God moves humanity to the good (Kühn 1974, 22–5). What Kühn says in this essay is in fact based on the thorough studies in his book *Via caritatis* (1964) on Thomas’s theology of the law.
2. This gospel as the new law is something Thomas conceives not as written or said, but as something interior. The Lutheran objection, that in this way there is no adequate understanding of what the word of God is, is well taken. But on the other hand, Thomas shows something which may otherwise be neglected: people *come to themselves* by the gospel; they receive their identity by the gospel. A misunderstanding of the reformational “extra nos” – that grace always remains something alien to humanity – can in this way be corrected by Thomas (Kühn 1974, 25–8).
3. According to Thomas, grace is mediated by the sacraments, and the sacraments integrate into the church. The Protestant objection is that this misconceives mediation by the word and the personal character of salvation, and it overestimates the church’s rank. On the other hand, Aquinas reminds Protestant theology of issues which are easily neglected: the sacraments and the social dimension of salvation (Kühn 1974, 28–31).

In Kühn’s consideration, then, a mutual correction and complementing takes place.

Wolfhart Pannenberg

In Wolfhart Pannenberg’s chief work, the three-volume *Systematische Theologie*, Thomas Aquinas is one of the most frequently quoted theologians. Aquinas, however, is neither Pannenberg’s only nor main reference.

In his highly scholarly work, he deals with a host of persons and problems in the history of Christian theology and of philosophy. To see how Pannenberg deals with Aquinas it is not enough to look at all the places where Pannenberg explicitly refers to him. It is much more profitable to compare Pannenberg's systematic conception with that of Aquinas. Then one can consider some places where Pannenberg explicitly argues with Aquinas and see where he makes decisions which take him in a different direction from Aquinas.

Pannenberg's central motivation as a theologian is an apologetic one. In the first place he writes against the secularization of the Western world and, in the second place, he is also aware of the rival situation in which Christianity and the other religions stand. There are several types of apologetics, however, and one has to see which type Pannenberg represents. In the foreword to the second volume of the *Systematische Theologie* Pannenberg says that Christianity may not renounce the claim to truth for the revelation upon which it is based. But to plead this claim in a credible way requires receiving the plurality of claims for truth and the controversiality of truth into one's own consciousness (1991–8, 2: xii). Christian theology has to take some steps to prove the truth of its claim. It may not presuppose the truth of Christian revelation, or else it would turn this truth into a merely subjective conviction – and this would be little less than an objective untruth (1991–8, 2: xiii). One possible test for such truth is the possession of a coherent interpretation of the world, including humankind and its history, on the presupposition of a certain concept of God (1991–8, 1:167–8). Pannenberg concedes that this interpretation of the reality of the world will remain controversial (1991–8, 2: xiv–v), insisting on the position for which he had already pleaded in his *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*: that God can be the subject-matter of theology only as a hypothesis (1973, 302–3, 344–8). The truth of the existence of God and of the Christian revelation will only become undoubtedly certain by the consummation of time and history, by the real coming of God's kingdom (1991–8, 3: 531). Pannenberg holds that this truth remains controversial until this eschatological event, not only for non-believers but also for believers themselves. Also for them truth remains something external. It can only exist in the external reality of the experience of this world, and until then the interpretation of this experience is controversial; the truth of the Christian revelation is not certain. To claim that for believers it is already certain would be subjectivism, as with Barth (Pannenberg 1973, 278).

Pannenberg's point of view is not defined by a confessional controversy between claims to the true – or the purest – way of being Christian, but by the attempt to defend what is Christian against the anti-Christian tendency of secularization and against the claims of other religions. He says that his dogmatics does not renounce its confessional provenance, but it is actually not crucial (1991–8, 1: xiii). Among Pannenberg's declared aims is the unification of the Christian churches, whose fragmentation has obscured the credibility of the gospel before the world (1991–8, 3: xiv–v). When we compare Pannenberg with Thomas Aquinas and see how he argues with him, we must be aware that this encounter does not take place around confessionally controversial issues, as was the case with Baur and Kühn. We must rather compare Pannenberg and Aquinas in their understanding of apologetics and their overall conception of theology.

Aquinas does briefly speak about the argumentative basis of Christian theology in its controversy with pagans (neither Jews nor heretics) in *ST* 1a.1.8. He goes into more detail in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG I, 5–6). In this context it is clear that Aquinas thinks that faith is certain. It is even a kind of knowledge. A truth which cannot be rationally known is proposed to humankind to believe in, that is, God offers it to us to believe. God does this in order to lead us to truer knowledge of God. God proposes a truth to be believed which cannot be known by reason – *God* proposes this truth – so that we may come to a truer knowledge of God. Only when we believe do we know God in truth – when we believe that God is beyond everything we are able to think about God – since the substance of God is beyond all natural human knowledge (SCG I, 5).

Thomas continues by arguing that it is not a sign of levity to assent to what belongs to faith, even when it supersedes reason. Miracles have helped us to believe the Christian revelation. But the greatest miracle is that mortal human beings believe something which is beyond reason, which restrains the desires of the flesh and teaches us to have contempt for what is in the world. When people believe this, this must be the work of divine inspiration (SCG I, 6). Miracles are only an additional means for convincing us of the truth of the faith; the divine inspiration is sufficient. It is therefore not necessary to reiterate the initial miracles which proved the Christian faith (SCG I, 6, commenting on Heb. 2: 3–4). These deliberations show that, for Aquinas, the certainty of faith comes by divine inspiration, not necessarily by the assent of someone who is outside of the community of believers. Finding an argument which shows that faith does not contradict natural reason (*ST* 1a.1.8) is then only a part of the interaction of a believer with an

unbeliever. More important is the hope that the nonbelieving person will be led by divine inspiration to faith and receive the certainty of faith (SCG I, 9; for a deeper insight into the causes that move people to faith see Rose 2007, 196–8, in the context of 168–78 and 194–200).

We can now look at the way in which these different understandings of the certainty of faith and of apologetics are evident in some of the places where Pannenberg speaks about Aquinas. Pannenberg sees a contradiction between Aquinas's claim that the principles of theology are conveyed by revelation (ST 1a.1.2) and the form of argument which Aquinas actually uses: he proves the existence of God by natural reason and then he reconstructs the Christian doctrine starting from this concept of God as the first cause of the created world (1991–8, 1: 22–3). Pannenberg means that in his procedure of a rational reconstruction of the truth of the faith Thomas is closer to Anselm than it could be presumed according to ST 1a.1.2 (an evaluation of this statement also depends on how Anselm is interpreted). "His theological *Summa*, then, is a very instructive example of the fact that the systematic presentation of Christian teaching is in tension with the acceptance of its truth as a presupposition that is already established independently of the course of the presentation" (1991–8, 1: 23). Pannenberg thinks that Aquinas is involved in a "verification" of that which is claimed to be revealed by God.

This is Pannenberg's way of doing theology, however, not Aquinas's. Aquinas does not regard the truths revealed by God as something that needs confirmation in a conflict of arguments between believers and unbelievers. Aquinas's procedure is more convincingly explained by Wilhelm Metz's intriguing interpretation of the composition of the *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas arranges the parts of the *Summa* in such a way that they receive their highest possible intelligibility under the conditions of this world before the eschatological perfection (Metz 1998, 17). This process of arranging and reasoning is a part of the way from revelation to the *scientia Dei et beatorum* (ST 1a.1.2), which is identical with the *philosophia in statu perfectionis* (see Metz 1998, 10, 16–17). There are four kinds of revealed truths: (1) truths which can also be proved by natural reason (SCG I, 4); (2) truths which can be received only by revelation, but which can *then* be made *completely* intelligible (e.g., predestination or grace), (3) truths which can be received only by revelation and can only partially be made intelligible (e.g., the Trinity); and (4) truths which can be received only by revelation and cannot be made intelligible – as long as humankind is *in via*, before the eschatological consummation, since they are completely contingent

(the most important of these truths is the *historia Christi*; see Metz 1998, 9–15). The doctrine of God in *ST* 1a.2-43 is arranged in such a way that the truths (1) to (3) succeed each other (Metz 1998, 16–19).

This procedure can also be called a “verification,” but not in a dispute with the arguments of unbelievers but in a process of gradual approximation to the total intelligibility of the *scientia Dei et beatorum*; and it is always presupposed that there is such a science and that it is conveyed by revelation. Thomas even says that the *rationes verisimilae* or *argumenta convenientia*, which are used for displaying the truth of our faith, are not adequate for dialogue with an unbeliever, but are for the exercise and consolation of the believer. If such arguments were to be presented to unbelievers, their insufficiency would confirm them in their error, since they would think that the believers believe because of these arguments (*SCG* I, 9).

The difference between Aquinas and Pannenberg is not only visible in their concept of theology and apologetics and the status of certainty of a theological proposition – on the one hand certain, because proposed by divine revelation; on the other uncertain, because it is nothing but a committed hypothesis in the discourse of philosophies and religions. It also touches the contents of theological propositions. At the place quoted above, Pannenberg gives his assent to Duns Scotus’s critique of Thomas (1991–8, 1:22–3, n.39). In *ST* 2a2ae.1.7 Thomas says that all articles of faith are contained in God’s being. Scotus argues in the *Ordinatio* (1950) that then all propositions of faith could be known by natural reason (prol. p. 3, q.1–3). This does not actually follow from Aquinas’s position, according to which natural reason can know God exists, without therefore knowing the fullness of God’s being (among many texts see *SCG* I, 5). Scotus, to the contrary, as Pannenberg mentions, pleads for a univocity of being which includes both God and creature, and on this basis his argument makes sense. Pannenberg clearly joins Scotus in his critique of Thomas’s doctrine, that God can be known by humankind only *in via* using concepts in an analogous way. Scotus argued against Aquinas that the statement of an analogy between two beings presupposes the knowledge of both beings by concepts, which are used univocally.⁵ In *ST* 1a.13.5, to the contrary, Aquinas taught that (*in via*) we can speak of God only in analogous terms, therefore “being” means something different in God and in the creature, but there is an analogy between divine and created being.

Pannenberg’s agreement with Scotus can be read in the light of another contemporary debate. Since the 1990s, the Radical Orthodoxy movement has raised a discussion which blamed Scotus for his preference for univocity

against analogy, since this makes God into a being that is infinitely far away from his creatures: the difference that exists between God and creature is not that God is the plenitude of being and the being of creatures is only a derivative of this plenitude, but that God is an infinite being, while creatures are finite (Oliver 2009, 23–4; Pickstock 2005). This puts things on the wrong track, according to the Radical Orthodox theologians, leading to modern secularization, in which God may be neglected as a being that is too far away. Here I do not want to discuss the historical legitimacy of Radical Orthodoxy's genealogy of deviation. But I want to point out that Pannenberg's alliance with Scotus against Aquinas has effects on his conception of theology – both on his conception of theology as apologetics, and on central contents of his theology. One may wonder whether this was the right decision.

Doubts also arise about Pannenberg's decision to assent to Scotus's critique of Aquinas's conception of theology as a science. Aquinas says that the theology practiced by humankind *in via* is a science (*scientia*), because it is subalternated to the perfect *scientia Dei et beatorum* (ST 1a.1.2). It is a kind of *scientia subalterna* in a way similar to music (the doctrine of harmony) as a science subalternated to arithmetic. It is based on principles which can be recognized only in light of the superior, the subalternating science. According to Pannenberg, Scotus argues against this. First, the subjects who practice the subalternated science must be able to recognize these principles themselves – it is necessary that they can also practice the subalternating science and not only the subalternated science. But humanity *in via* cannot recognize these principles of theological science. Second, the *matter* of the subalternating science and the subalternated science have to be different, as is the case with arithmetic and music. But this is not the case between these two types of theology, the *scientia Dei et beatorum* and the *theologia viatorum* (Pannenberg 1973, 228–30, referring to Scotus, *Ord. Prol. Pars 5, q.1–2*). Thomas, on the contrary, proposes this difference to the Aristotelian conception of alternated sciences (music based on arithmetic, etc.): the *theologus viator* is not yet in the possession of the perfect *scientia Dei et beatorum* but will be (Metz 1998, 35–7). The subjects of the *theologia viatorum* and the *scientia Dei et beatorum* are in the process of becoming identical. The distance between the present condition and eternity is in a process of being overcome and therefore the matter of both sciences can be the same.

This again casts light on the ways Pannenberg and Thomas conceive theology as apologetics. Pannenberg descends to the level of his opponents,

secularized people who reject the Christian faith. He wants to offer arguments which have to be accepted by his opponents, if not as something undoubtedly true, at least as something worthy of being seriously discussed (1991–8, 2: xiii). Apologetics practiced in this way means using arguments that are on the level of the opponent. Actually this also transforms the position which is defended by the apologist. Pannenberg wants to defend Christianity in the way it was taught and lived before the big challenge of secularization. But the result is mixed with concessions to the opponents.

This becomes apparent when he allies with Scotus against Aquinas. According to Aquinas, the plenitude of God's being cannot be known by natural reason. Everything said about God can only be said in an analogous way, since his being is much higher. But the theology practiced by believers is derived by the mediation of revelation from the perfect science God himself has, and believer are on the way, *in via*, to having the same perfect science. They do not have it yet, but their eternal destination already now shapes what they are practicing. Also as a theologian, even when arguing with an unbeliever, the believer is never on the same level of knowledge as the unbeliever. If one is not aware of this, the dignity of the knowledge of God which is already now entrusted to humankind by revelation is diminished, and one can doubt if the believer is able to render a real service to the unbeliever.

Thomas seems to plead for a type of apologetics of which Anselm (according to Barth's interpretation) and Karl Barth may be associated as well. Barth is ready to use the name of apologetics for the account that Christian theologians give of their reasons for considering the God in whom they believe to be the true God and all the others who pretend to be God to be false gods. However, he calls it a subsequent, casual, or implicit apologetics, which may be compared with the subsequent reasoning about a judgment which has already been spoken, which is valid, and whose validity cannot be discussed any longer (Barth 1940, 6).

Eberhard Jüngel

Eberhard Jüngel also practices theology vis-à-vis modern dechristianization, as can be seen in the subtitle of his chief work: *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt. Zur Begründung der Theologie des Gekreuzigten im Streit zwischen Theismus und Atheismus* (*God as the Mystery of the World: on the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism*). But in contrast to Pannenberg he sees the problem of Christian

theology in its traditional acceptance of a metaphysical concept of God. During the process of the modern era this theistic, metaphysical concept of God turns into atheism (1983, 126). The right answer to atheism is a theology based on the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ the crucified (Jüngel speaks about this in §7; §11–13; §18–25).

Jüngel first attempts to show how the modern critique refutes the conceivableness of God. This impossibility of *thinking* about God is in the final analysis implicated in the traditional metaphysical concept (§10–13, pointing to Fichte, Feuerbach and Nietzsche). Then he continues with a critique of the impossibility of *speaking* of God according to this concept (§14–18). Here, in §15, Jüngel engages in a longer discussion with Aquinas. The starting point is Aquinas's quotation of John of Damascus's *De fide orthodoxa* (1972, quoted by Thomas in *ST* 1a.1.7): "what God is, is impossible to say." Aquinas affirms this in a modifying formulation: "we cannot *know* what God is" (*ST* 1a.1.7 *ad*1). Instead of a definition of the essence of God, the human theologian uses the effects of God's operations, both in the order of nature and in the order of grace. Aquinas ties in with these deliberations in *ST* 1a.13.2, when he returns to this thought of the Damascene and comments: no name can express the essence of God, yes, but this means that no name can express the essence of God *in a perfect way* (*ST* 1a.13.2 *ad* 1). Jüngel now inserts the definition of analogy promulgated by the Fourth Lateran Council – which Aquinas does not quote at this place – namely, that between creator and creature there is not such a great similarity that there is not to be found an even greater dissimilarity (Denzinger 2014, §806). Jüngel regrets that according to Aquinas this imperfection in the way of speaking of God remains still bigger than the ability to say something of God (1983, 242–43).

Jüngel discusses Aquinas's doctrine of analogy (1983, §17.5, 272–6) and then comes to this conclusion: God is presupposed by the world as its unknown condition (referring especially to *ST* 1a.13.2). Jüngel comments critically:

The unknownness of God has become an unbearably sinister riddle. For it is intolerable to live in the awareness of a condition which comes into view only in order to disappear again into unknownness. It is difficult enough for a person, within his earthly conditionedness, to have an unknown father, as a procreator but not as a father. Theologically, such an understanding of God as mystery results methodologically in the establishment of the event for whose sake the New Testament, yes, the Bible came to be: the event of God's turning to mankind in such a way that *trust* in God was made possible. (1983, 277–8)

Jüngel now searches for a third way beside a dogmatic anthropomorphism which identifies God's nature with that of humankind and a skeptical symbolic anthropomorphism which uses terms for God which are bound to created being and knows – or seems to know – that they say something about God only in a very imperfect way. This third way affirms that God and humankind are distinct but denies that they are totally different and separate. The foundation of this third way is belief in the God who is identical with the man Jesus; that is, belief in the incarnation (1983, §17.6; this third way is then unfolded in §18–25).

Jüngel makes a very exact exposition of the texts of Aquinas, especially of *ST* 1a.13, and his intention is surely the right one. However, one may question if he has justly recognized Aquinas's intention. To start with Jüngel's comparison with the child who only knows *that* it has a father but does not know its father – this need not be something strange for the child. At least it knows that what is good in him is good in an unlimited way in its father, and it knows that everything good in the world it knows comes from this father. Maybe it is intolerable not to know the father. But this intolerability leads to a desire: it incites the child to know its father – and this desire will be fulfilled. I suppose that Aquinas's intention is just this. He reflects on human possibility of knowing God and saying something about God on the presupposition that there is a perfect knowledge of God (1 Cor. 13: 12; 1 John 3: 2): the *scientia Dei et beatorum*. By revelation and by faith in the revelation we can be put on the way towards this perfect knowledge. Let us consider the sentence from SCG I, 5 cited above, stating that human beings receive a *truer* knowledge of God by faith when they believe that God is beyond everything which they are able to think about God. This "truer" marks a progress on the way to perfect truth. The definition of analogy by Lateran IV is not to be understood in terms of human beings becoming more distant from God the more they come closer to him. There is progress in humanity's way to God, a progress which aims at deification (1 John 3:2), evoked by revelation, and this is also a progress in relation to knowledge. We have also seen that the structure of the *Summa Theologiae* may be understood in terms of this progress.

One can blame Thomas for not making it clearer in *ST* 1a.13 that the way by which humanity's knowledge of God becomes true is in a decisive way changed by God's revelation in Jesus Christ. In *ST* 1a.1.7 *ad* 1, Thomas speaks of the knowledge of God by his effects in the orders of nature and grace; he does not stress the crucial part played by grace – and more concretely by the incarnation – at this place. This peculiar reserve might be due

to the architectonics of the *Summa Theologiae*. According to Wilhelm Metz,⁶ the Christology of the third part is the *memoria* of Thomas's thought. As the unity of theology is founded in God's revelation as its formal principle (*ST* 1a.1.1–3), the *Summa* reaches in part III its *memoria* (in Augustine's sense – *intelligentia* is part I, *dilectio* is part II), the foundation of the revelation. In the prologue of Part III Thomas says that Christ has shown us *in himself* the way to truth (John 14:6). When one combines this sentence with *ST* 1a.1.7 *ad* 1 and with *ST* 1a.13, one will reach the conclusion that it is by God's incarnation in Christ the crucified that humanity receives the light of revelation and is moved forward on a way in which the knowledge of God becomes increasingly true.

Thus, by his critique, Jüngel has touched a point in Thomas where the Christological foundation is not obvious at first glance but has to be found by reflecting on the structure of his *Summa*. It is surely right to say that there is a need for clarification in Thomas, but this is no reason to reject him. There is surely no need to state, as Jüngel does, that the tradition of Christian thought has succumbed for a long time to the influence of metaphysical thought and that it is the merit of the modern era with its critique of metaphysics that it has brought Christian theology back on the way to its foundation in God's revelation in Jesus Christ. The line of the Christian tradition represented by Thomas represents an integration of classical metaphysics into revealed truth. It presupposes the revelation which is identical with Jesus Christ as a way to perfect truth.⁷ There is also another line of the Christian tradition which focuses on the human body of Jesus Christ as the place of the revelation, which makes this presupposition much more evident. One can see Martin Luther in this line (Grosse 2008). Also Christian mysticism can and must be conceived on the presupposition of the incarnation (Grosse 2005).⁸

Jüngel's motivation is quite a Protestant one. Hans Urs von Balthasar has stated that Barth focuses on the themes of creation, incarnation, and redemption (1951, 52), and Barth himself has declared that his aim was to draw the consequences from the Reformation doctrine of justification in the realm of the doctrine of the knowledge of God (1934, 37–8). Jüngel follows the path of his teacher Barth: he points out the consequences of the Reformation's focus on Jesus Christ the crucified one (1 Cor. 2: 2) for our ability to speak about God. The questions he puts to Thomas are very understandable, but they should not necessarily lead to contradiction. We have a similar situation in the doctrine of justification. Some very important correlations can and must be addressed more clearly and directly than

Thomas has done, but Thomas does not contradict them. On the other hand, Thomas brings in something which Reformation thought has either handled as a mere presupposition, or something through which it must be complemented: the integration, clarification, and reordering of metaphysical reflection about God, about the possibility of thinking, knowing, and speaking about him. What a theology in the footsteps of Jüngel can gain from this is clear: it can be freed from its dependence upon a postmetaphysical or even antimetaphysical modernist philosophy and be united to the premodern Christian tradition to which Thomas also belongs.

Notes

- 1 An initial impulse can be found in the volume edited by Trutz Rendtorff (1975). It became a dominant view in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century. The most central figures are Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, Eilert Herms, Wilfried Härle, and Ulrich Barth.
- 2 As examples of the first type she mentions the works of Johannes Mundhenk (1980), Ulrich Kühn (1964), Thomas Bonhoeffer (1961), and Rochus Leonhardt (1998). The work of George Sabra (1987), which Rose also mentions, is however that of a Catholic theologian. To Rose's list one must surely add Michael Basse (1993). As examples of the second type she counts Karl Barth, Eberhard Jüngel, Gerhard Ebeling, and Wolfhart Pannenberg.
- 3 Baur (1989) argued against volume 1 of the ecumenical work of Karl Lehmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg (1986), by the committee that prepared the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran World Federation of 1999. Baur received an answer from Ulrich Kühn and Otto Hermann Pesch (1991).
- 4 This list overlaps and is complemented by Miriam Rose's account of misinterpretations of Thomas: Thomas pursues an ahistorical metaphysics; the reception of Aristotelian philosophy has obscured the gospel; Thomas does not take human sin seriously enough; he does not know that the whole of humanity, including our reason, is affected by sin; the relation of grace to Christ is not explicated clearly enough; Thomas teaches justification by works; grace, thought by Thomas as a *habitus*, is conceived as a human property; grace is regarded as a thing (Rose 2007, 13).
- 5 Pannenberg (1991–8, 1:344–45 n.14 quoting Scotus, *Ord.* I, 3,1, a.3 and *Ord.* I, 3, 1. One can also refer to Scotus's *Lectura* (Scotus 2002): *Lect.* I, d. 8, p.1, q.3, n.64–5, and to *Lect.* I, d.3, p.1, q.1–2, n.28. Pannenberg discussed these positions in his Heidelberg habilitation thesis of 1955, *Analogie und Offenbarung*, which remains unpublished. An offshoot of this work is his article "Analogie" (1957). See Gonsalvus Scheltens (1965) for a defense of Thomas's view.

- 6 Metz (1998, 199; 61; 62, with n. 160; 63; 64, n. 164). Metz discusses his interpretation of the structure of the *Summa* with one which interprets the *Summa* as an anticipated Christology (Otto Hermann Pesch) or according to the scheme of *exitus-reditus* (Marie-Dominique Chenu): 192–204.
- 7 Jüngel (1983, 250, 252), however, thinks that it presupposes a negative conception of mysterium: something which cannot be known or spoken about. He distinguishes several possible consequences of this negative conception of the mysterium. One possibility is that God is not in every regard unconceivable. This is, according to Jüngel, the way in which theism, deism, and the metaphysical tradition in Christian theology have dealt with the question of God.
- 8 Jüngel, however, sees mysticism as one possibility among the possible consequences of a negative conception of mystery: to say nothing about God and to affirm him by saying nothing (1983, 252; 1977, 343). Christian mysticism stresses what is beyond the revelation: that realm, which cannot be thought nor spoken about, until the perfect comes (1 Cor. 13:12).

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Part II

Constructive Engagement

Philosophy Explored

Sebastian Rehnman

Socrates is the philosophical prototype of our culture. In defending his living, he contended that “the greatest human good” is to examine oneself and others well (ἐξετάζω). It is, as he showed in practice, to pose deep questions in dialogue (διαλέγω). For “the unexamined life is not worth [βιωτός] living for the human being” (Plato *A*, 38a, cf. Plato *T*, 155d).¹ A human life that is worth the effort is one that is distinctively human, namely, in accordance with the unique ability to reflect on our lives together. So we should pursue a mindful rather than a mindless life. Here Aristotle famously suggested the importance of amazement and puzzlement: “For through wonder humans both now begin and at first began to philosophize [φιλοσοφείω]. Originally they wondered about obvious difficulties and then advanced little by little to raise greater issues” (Aristotle *M*, 982b,13–15).²

My own weak attempts to lead a reflective life seem to have begun in senior high school when I majored in philosophy and religion. This was also a time that I began to wonder whether there is an authentic and universal expression of the church. At university, I studied philosophy, classical languages, religion, and history of ideas. One conclusion to which my parallel philosophical, theological, and historical research led me was that the Reformation accurately sought in its context to remodel the church to its original revelation in accordance with the best interpreters of the tradition. One of the issues that particularly interested me was the Reformation’s philosophical assumptions, and through my research I came to agree with many scholars that the scholastic method preserved rather than distorted the achievements of reformed catholicity (Rehnman 2002a). I noticed in particular that within an eclectic philosophical framework Thomas Aquinas

seemed especially significant. For instance, Peter Vermigli recommends Aquinas as of first rank (1583, 1049), Girolamo Zanchi calls Aquinas “the purest of the scholastics” (e.g., 1617–19, IV: 112), and Gisbertus Voetius constantly interacts with Aquinas (1668, 4, 8, 15, 21, 23, 40). Simultaneously I wrote two books in analytic philosophy and increasingly experienced its limitations (Rehnman 2002b, 2004). I felt I had arrived at a philosophical cul-de-sac. So 15 years ago or so I began to ponder the seemingly outrageous question whether perhaps the philosophy of the Renaissance scholastics could be as viable as their theology. In pursuing the answer to that question I came across two volumes devoted to “analytical Thomism” (Haldane 1997, 1999), which set me on course for the “archetypes” of Anscombe and Geach (1961), Kenny (1969, 1993), and recent explorations (e.g., MacIntyre 2006; Oderberg 1998; Paterson and Pugh 2006; O’Callaghan 2007; Novák 2012; Feser 2013; Hüntelmann and Hattler 2014; Kerr 2015; for readers unacquainted with this trajectory Kerr 2004 may be a good starting point). This rapprochement between contemporary and classical philosophy seemed and still seems to me to be mutually clarifying and deepening. Arguably, analytic rigor and clarity together with traditional hylomorphism and nonreductionism is a fruitful framework for examining contemporary conundrums.

In this chapter I suggest the importance of entering the dialogue that the great medieval thinker Thomas Aquinas entered with the philosophical tradition. He sought with remarkable powers to lead an examined life: “the study of philosophy is not for the sake of knowing what people have thought, but relates to how things are true” (Aquinas *In De Caelo*, 1.22.8;³ similarly, e.g., Vermigli 2011, 206, and Turretin 1992–7, 1.13.4). In a chapter of this size I must pass over many issues and, in those dealt with, I must pass over many more. I look into two philosophical issues to indicate how Aquinas may help us to lead a reflective life. I begin with the question of existence and proceed to a question concerning the basis of ethics. I have chosen these issues because (as I have argued elsewhere) of the importance of a causal argument for the existence of God and a virtues account for passions and actions to the reformed church (Rehnman 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b). I do not intend to present an original exegesis of Aquinas nor a comprehensive philosophical argument, but hope merely to show in outline that it may be useful to engage with Aquinas. I do this as if writing to someone outside the church.

Existence

One of the deep questions worth wondering about is “Why me?” or “Why you?” We pose such questions in order to answer how it came about that you and I exist as we do. In pursuing ourselves, we may in our time and place seek to answer those questions according to the consensus in natural science with the analogous term “evolution.”

We may first seek to answer “Why me?” or “Why you?” in terms of psychosocial evolution. We notice how we as individuals emerge out of our social relations, and note that environmental factors cause differences in our mental characteristics within our local populations. We come out as individuals in a common and public language through which we belong to a community, family, tradition, history, and culture. So, we may answer “Why me?” and “Why you?” by reflecting on the choices that formed our personality in this culture. We may go on to query why we belong to a culture, and cultural anthropology provides a ready answer. Humans gradually developed symbolical and technical skills to control their environment, and simpler cultures generally gave rise to more complex ones. But this raises the question why this array of human cultures exists.

Why you and I are parts of this array of human cultures may be explained in terms of biological evolution. Perhaps we answer “Why me?” and “Why you?” in terms of our complex neural system, upright posture and laryngeal size that furthered vocal signs and gestures, and enabled the human species to turn their environment into a culture. We can continue to answer “Why me?” and “Why you?” in terms of the reproductive powers and DNA of our parents, their parents and so forth. We may pursue this further in terms of how genetic mutation and natural selection give rise to species of living organisms.

Still further we can explore the question “Why you and me?” in terms of chemical evolution. We may pursue an answer by way of how chemical reactions gave rise to molecules of increasingly greater complexity and how molecules are formed. Perhaps we reflect on how clouds of electrons interact with each other and with the nuclei when atoms come in close contact with one another. If this interaction decreases the total energy of the system, then the atoms bond together to form a molecule. We may be startled that such processes seem to occur only on our planet and may thus still wonder why we exist.

Last we may answer “Why you and me?” in terms of physical evolution. Perhaps we consider that our planet (together with the Sun and other planets of our solar system) was formed as the result of a process of gravitational condensation of dust and gas. We may go on to recall that the expansion of the universe resulted in a significant decrease of density and temperature. Over hundreds of thousands of years this decrease allowed first for nuclear reactions of protons to produce nuclei of deuterium and helium, and then for electrons to remain attached to nuclei to constitute atoms. In probing our existence we will eventually end up with the four fundamental forces of gravitation, electromagnetism, and weak and strong radioactivity. We trace ourselves then all the way down to the big bang, a row of primordial explosions or whatever existed.

So in trying to lead a reflective life we pursue answers to questions of our origin. Questions about our psychosocial formation lead to questions about biological origin, questions about our biological descent lead to questions about chemical development, and questions about our chemical emergence lead to questions about physical evolution. Such questions are all well worth asking. In the process we are persistently inquiring about ourselves in broader and broader contexts or at deeper and deeper levels. At the psychosocial, biological, chemical and physical levels the question is still why you and I exist. Implicit in these questions are also contrasts or alternatives: why me rather than you, why my parents instead of your parents, why this culture rather than that culture, this species instead of that species, and so forth. So in each question we ask why this exists rather than that.

All these questions, however, are answered by things that already exist. The search for explanations in natural science, social science, and the humanities are for explanations within the world. These are not – unless confusedly – attempts to answer the deepest question of all: “Why do you or I or anything at all exist instead of nothing whatsoever?” This is the ultimate “why” question and it is a question beyond physics, namely, a question for metaphysics. This question is not answered by “the big bang,” because it concerns “Why the big bang?” or “Why whatever existent that accounts for the big bang?” In this query we relate our existence to the existence of everything, and contrast why you and I exist with nothing. We have then placed ourselves at the level of every existing thing or the “world.”

In a number of places Thomas Aquinas pursues this profound question of existence. His most succinct formulation may be this:

Whenever different things have something in common, there must be some cause of this commonality. For as different they do not themselves account

for what they have in common. Thus it is that whenever something is found in different things, it is received from one cause. For instance, when different hot bodies are heated from one fire. But existence is common to all things, however much they differ. There must therefore be one source of existence from which whatever exists in whatever manner – whether invisible and spiritual or visible and material – have existence. (ST 1a.65.1)

So, according to Aquinas, the universe consists of things that do not have to exist, since otherwise they would always have existed. Thus the universe does not exist necessarily. Whatever exists must derive its existence from something that is able to bring it into existence but that is not itself brought into existence: “sheer existence subsisting of its very nature” (ST 1a.44.1). The existence of the universe requires a cause whose essence is to exist.

Some would object, however, that existence is not worth asking about, since the word “exist” cannot be appropriately predicated of any subject. For either a proposition or sentence is empirical and describes something, or it is grammatical and rules the use of a word. “For an empirical proposition to be true is for things to be as it says they are. But for a grammatical proposition to be true ... just is for the proposition to express a constitutive rule for the use of the constituent terms” (Hacker 2007, 21). For instance, “You have blond hair” may or may not describe a fact about you, whereas “You are a human being” expresses a rule for the use of “human being.” Yet “You exist” can neither be a factual description of you nor a linguistic rule for “you.” A nonexistent you would not be different from you but would simply not be you, and the meaning of “you” has nothing to do with you. Thus it is inappropriate to wonder about existence as such.

Yet we need the predicate “to exist” (and the noun “existence”) in order to express something about certain things that is neither a fact about them nor merely a rule for their names. This is evident from the difference between sentences and statements, and the difference between kinds of statements that sentences can be used to make. Every grammatically well-formed expression is a sentence that either makes sense or does not make sense. But not every sensible sentence is a statement, since some are mere utterances or enunciations. Sensible sentences only become statements when the speaker or writer judges that their subject expressions name something that exists. Here one of Aquinas’s distinctions is helpful: first we may understand the meaning of the sentence and then we may state the existence of the thing (*Ex Post. Analyt.*, 1.1.4). In statements the subject has a distinctive function: “A term that functions as subject is taken materially, that is, it stands for a thing” (ST 3a.16.7 *ad* 4). But the existence of the subject is not

part of what is stated by every statement. When I state (truly or falsely) “You have blond hair” I am not stating that you exist; that you exist is presupposed by, but is not part of, what is stated by that statement. It is only because I am presupposing that you exist that I have said anything empirically true or false about your hair color.

But why does the sentence “You have blond hair” make sense although it may be false? This factual statement makes sense because it supposes that “to have blond hair” and “not to have blond hair” can both be predicated of “you,” which here of course is used instead of “human being.” In talking about your hair color I am of course assuming that the statement “You are a human being” is true. Thus it is the meaning of “human being” that makes it sensible to predicate “blond hair” of “you” even though it may be false. But to state that you are a human being is to state purely and simply *what* you are, and to state what you are is to state purely and simply that you exist. The *definitio* of a thing signifies, according to Aquinas, what the thing is (*De ente*, 2, 1950, 7.12.1). The subject term “human being” belongs to a special class of subject expressions (names of *entia per se*) of which “to exist” is properly predicated. The term “the human being” differs from most other subject expressions in that the definition “the human being is a rational animal” can be used not only to express a rule of language but also to state purely and simply that the human being exists (cf. Vermigli 2011, 15). When we attempt to understand things we need such definitions in order to identify them and say what it takes for them to exist at all.

“To exist,” however, is not the most general characteristic or property of any existing thing. When we say that the human being exists we say what it is; when we say that blondness exists we say what it is; when we say that dolphins exist we say what they are; when we say that atoms exist we say what they are, and so forth. We use the word “exist” in different contexts with systematically different meanings. Each kind of thing exists in its kind of way, so the meaning of “exist” will differ according to the kind of thing we are talking about. “It is clear that ‘existent’ [*ens*] is said in as many ways as there are predications.” Therefore “the word ‘to exist’ is predicated thus [analogously] of all existents” (Aquinas *Sent. Met.*, 5.9.9 (893), 4.1.6 (534)). There is not anything common to all that exist insofar as they exist. The importance of analogical predication seems to have been recovered by Wittgenstein: “For if you look at them, you won’t see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that We see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing” (2009, §66).

Let us return to the ultimate “why” question. In asking why everything or anything exists instead of nothing, we are not only continuing to use “exist” in a different context with a systematically different meaning, but we are also stretching the use of “everything,” “anything,” and “nothing” beyond our ordinary use. Ordinarily we use these words relatively. For instance, we say “there’s nothing,” meaning that there is no milk in the fridge; “I can’t find anything,” meaning that I cannot find the clothes I would like to pack; and “She has everything,” meaning that Märta has homework, iPhone, and bus card in her school bag. Ordinarily we use these words relatively for something somewhere, but in the ultimate “why” question we stretch their meaning to an absolute use. We are using the words “anything,” “everything,” and “nothing” beyond our ordinary use and hardly know what we are talking about.

Still less can we know what the meaning of the answer to the ultimate “why” question is. It is easier to know what the answer cannot mean and what alternatives should be denied. For instance, the answer to the ultimate “why” question cannot signify some part of everything or a thing among all other things, but it is that because of and for which everything exists. Whatever accounts for there being anything at all cannot be thought of as being part of everything. For it could not depend on anything as everything else does. It cannot exist with the composite, variable, temporal, and finite features of every existing thing. Since it is beyond and above everything that is dependent in existence, it must be utterly unlike everything else. Indeed, it is that which is beyond existence. Nor can it make everything out of anything, since anything would be part of everything. Nor does it make any difference in or to the world, since that can be accounted for in terms of worldly explanations. Rather, it is that which accounts for the existence of everything here and now instead of nothing. The meaning of the answer to the ultimate “why” question is inexpressible, but this is as it should be. If an answer to the ultimate question were expressible, then we would express that *that* is not the answer to the question.

Yet the fact that the answer to this question is complete mystery does not mean that the question is complete mystery. There are many good questions worth asking although we may not ever come to a good answer. Here as elsewhere it is fallacious to appeal to ignorance. An inference from the inability to know what the answer means to the inability to know what the question means would be erroneous. Although we cannot understand the meaning of the answer, it is worth wondering why at any time there is something rather than nothing. As Wittgenstein wrote: “Not *how* the world

is, is the mystical, but *that* it is.” *How* the world is can be explained in terms of what the causes are for given effects: “In the world everything is as it is and happens as it happens.” But *that* there is this huge causal nexus is not similarly explicable: “The feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical.” We know what it would take to explain how the world is or how things are in the world, but this would not answer all our questions. “We feel that even if all *possible* scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been answered.” For this reason “the meaning [*Sinn*] of the World must lie outside the world” (Wittgenstein 1922, 6.44, 6.41, 6.45, 6.41, 6.52).

It is not far from ordinary usage to call the answer to the ultimate “why” question “God.” For according to the traditional conception of divinity we do not know what we are talking about in using “God” and Aquinas is especially adept at arguing that “we cannot know what God is but only what he is not” (*ST* 1a.3.prol.). This would also seem to be what Wittgenstein suggests in writing that “God does not reveal himself in the world” (1922, 6.432). Nothing in the world – except if miracles have occurred – can be explained by reference to “God.” The word “God” cannot explain *how* the world is but *that* it is. God is, in Aquinas’s words above, the “one source of existence” that makes the world a whole. Elsewhere he reasons how we may argue the existence of the mystery that is God by proceeding from everyday usage:

When a cause is demonstrated from an effect, it is necessary that the effect is used in place of a definition of the cause in the proof that the cause exists. This happens especially in the case of God. For in proving that something exists, it is necessary to proceed from [*accipere pro medio*] the established usage of a name [*significet nomen*] but not from what the thing is. (For the question “What is it?” follows the question “Is it?”) In demonstrating that God exists from effects, we can proceed from the established usage of the name “God.” As will be shown later, the names of God are derived from effects. (*ST* 1a.2.2 *ad* 2)

People may of course not be clear about what they are talking about, and there have been and still are many frauds usurping that name. Yet the first commandment of the Abrahamic religions is calling us all to be atheists, so most contemporary card-carrying “atheists” should take encouragement. We must, however, start somewhere, and the everyday usage of “God” may give us enough to proceed from our wonder about existence to demonstrate that that word refers to the source of everything, although we cannot know what it means.

To ask the deep question why there is you, me, or something rather than nothing is to lead a reflective or distinctively human life. To assert that everything exists and that is just that would not be to lead the examined life when “God” has been put forth as the answer. With that answer we are well into the discipline of metaphysics (or perhaps even theology), which is partly the laborious attempt to invent words for the use of that because of and for which everything exists (cf. Keckermann 1614, 2015). One would do well to enter the dialogue of exploring whether or not “God” is a good answer to the question why there is something rather than nothing. Such an exploration would go beyond the confines of this chapter (but see, for instance, *ST* 1a.1–43; Burrell 1979 and Miller 1996).

The Basis of Ethics

Let us leave the wonder of existence for the present. For Socrates also engages us in dialogue on other deep questions in order to lead a worthy life. One of the topics he talked about “every day” was “virtue,” “excellence,” or “goodness” (ἀρετή) (Plato *A*, 38a). In our time and place, however, we may not even be able to understand the issue, since we are so accustomed to the modern notion of morality as a system of rules imposed by the individual or society. But Socrates intends that reflective persons lead a life with good character traits, chiefly practical knowledge or wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice (Plato *P*, 330b, *R*, 427e). Over the last five decades or so there has been an increased critique of what Bernard Williams calls “the peculiar institution” of the morality system, namely, the distinctively modern emphasis on obligation, with its disputed presupposition that whoever ought to do whatever towards whomever in similar circumstances, shared by duty-based and consequence-based ethics alike (Williams 2006, cf., e.g., Anscombe 1981; Foot 2002; and MacIntyre 2007). This has revived interest in the virtues, but the contemporary account is arguably diluted and distorted (e.g., Simpson 1992; Coope 2006). One of the more robust attempts is Philippa Foot’s argument that “evaluations of human will and action [and emotion?] share a conceptual structure with evaluations of characteristics and operations of other living things, and can only be understood in these terms” (2001, 5). This may be seen as a rediscovery of Socrates’ conception of the close relation between life-powers and virtues in humans. Aquinas similarly contends that there cannot be a basis for ethics unless virtues are understood as dispositions that empower

human abilities: “We cannot reach perfect moral knowledge [*scientia*] in moral [philosophy] unless we know the human life-powers. It is thereupon Aristotle assigns (in the *Nicomachean Ethics*) the various virtues to different life-powers” (Aquinas *DA*, 1.1.7; similarly Vermigli 2011, 229).⁴

Let us probe into the relation between the operation and evaluation of passion and action. In reflecting on what good passions and actions would be, the most basic question seems to be what humans *are*. For without humans there would not be any virtuous humans and there would be no point in examining virtues. In answering the question what humans are, we specify what it takes for humanity to exist and whenever we say what something is we use substantive predicates. What thing the subject term “human being” purports to name determines what predicate terms can be juxtaposed.

It should be clear to everyone that humans most basically are alive, namely, that the function of the parts can be understood only by examining the function of the whole. At least since Aristotle it has been acknowledged that the human being, like “every natural body which has life in it, is a substance in the sense of a composite” (Aristotle *DA*, 412a11; cf. Aquinas *DA*, 2.2.2–3).⁵ The substantive predicate “is alive” or “has life” says what something is and limits which descriptive statements may be made of the subject.⁶ Life is, according to Aquinas, “the activity” or even “the actuality [*actus*] of a body” (*ST* 1a.75.1). Humans and all other living bodies have power (broadly) to move themselves physically and thus have to be compounds, complexes, or wholes made of parts. This part–whole relationship is distinctive in living things in such a way that when one part moves another part the whole moves. For, although a rock may be said to be made up of parts, it cannot move itself physically, one part moving another. When the central nervous system of the dolphin moves its tail fin, however, the whole dolphin moves the whole dolphin. Yet, if the tail fin were removed, then it would no longer be a part of the dolphin but an amputation. Thus we account for the parts of a living thing both in generation and adolescence by reference to the whole, and the whole accounts for the living thing being what it is. For we account for the generation and development of the tail fin of a dolphin by reference to the dolphin as a whole and this whole accounts for the living thing existing as a dolphin. In living things, the whole is primary in that it is generated and matures on its own as some kind of thing, whereas the parts are secondary in that they can only be generated and develop in and of the whole. For the function of these parts exist and must be described both on their own and in the whole. Now, this “whole” is

coextensive with “life,” since in a living thing the parts are essentially related to the whole. That is why the thing is alive; what is significant in the part of the living thing is significant for the whole. So, in living things, the whole enlivens the parts.

Notice the contrasting relation between parts and wholes in machines and in Cartesian anthropology (Descartes 1996, 84). Machines are sometimes spoken of as though they were wholes with parts. Yet, in this case, the bits are generated and developed prior to the machines as some kinds of things and are later gathered for an extrinsic aim into something else. Here the bits are primary in that they are produced and processed on their own as some kinds of things and the collection is secondary in that it can only be generated and developed in and of the bits. The silicon wafers, transistors and circuits of my computer are not parts of it such as the tail fin is part of the dolphin. The bits of the computer are primary and the computer is secondary. The bits are the wholes, while the computer only seems to be a whole but really is a collection of bits. For this reason, only machines can be understood by examining the function of their parts apart from the whole. In contrast, one cannot collect bones, sinews, muscles, veins, blood, and skin and join them into a human being. Machines are only arrangements of things that had significance before they became parts of their whole and thus are only by analogy said to be wholes with functional parts. This is also the reason why we do not think that machines are alive.

Let us call a whole that enlivens parts a “nature,” because it acts, reacts, or ceases to act and react from an intrinsic principle. Such a whole can also be called a “form,” since it forms or informs all action, reaction, and cessation from action and reaction, proceeding from powers, abilities, or potentialities. It is “the form by which something is” (Aquinas 1950, 7.17.21).⁷ The forces in nature can be classified as electromagnetic, gravitational, and nuclear force. Plant natures form these by the powers of homeostasis, metabolism, augmentation, and reproduction; animal natures by the powers of sensation and emotion; and human nature by the powers of intellect and will. “Kinds of life-powers are distinguished according to their objects” (Aquinas *ST* 1a.78.1; cf. Vermigli 2011, 17). The distinctive powers of higher things subsume those of lower things, so that natures are specified or differentiated according to the higher enlivening power: plants are nutritive wholes, animals perceptual wholes, and humans rational wholes. The nutritive function enlivens the plant, the perceptual function enlivens the animal, and the rational function enlivens the human being. These powers enliven both the whole body into what it is – a bamboo, a dolphin

or a human being – and its parts. (Contrast this with the rectangular form, shape, or design of the computer, which is not an intrinsic principle but simply geometrical and determined by what the bits do and what not.) In addition, the whole – the nature or form – of each living thing stabilizes it as of a kind. Not only do dolphins generate dolphins and humans generate humans, but also whatever a dolphin or a human does it is about being a dolphin or a human. In this way, material kinds of substances are stable (within a certain range) in their action, reaction, and cessation from action and reaction. The whole – the nature or form – is that for the sake of which each kind of living thing acts, reacts, and ceases to act and react. The tail fin exists and propels for the sake of the dolphin, and the dolphin exists and operates for the sake of its own well-being and that of its species. In other words, the powers are directed to the whole so that they complete and conserve their nature. Thus living things can be characterized in terms of what they are about in whatever they do, the sake for which they exist, what they naturally or intrinsically tend to, or in terms of their end. Yet in this context, we must not confuse the terminative, perfective and intentional uses of the term “end.” The end of a natural process is most basically its termination. The combination of hydrogen and oxygen terminates in water, the union of sperm and ovum culminates in a given kind of organism, and human skeleton enlargement ends in late adolescence. Moreover, when natural processes terminate in living things, they do not lack anything to be the kind of thing they are, but are complete, perfect, or good for their own sake (and for the sake of their species in the cases of reproduction and sacrifice). Lastly, only in rational creatures can ends be intentions, purposes, or aims. Thus every living thing has a nature that it can bring to its end operating according to its form.

This specification and stabilization is important for human goodness. For in order to live as a specific and stable kind of thing, something must work or function not occasionally but dispositionally in its own way. Every activity that is natural to something, or is formed by its whole, is a function or functional, and that which functions properly operates in a way that suits its end, according to its nature or in agreement with its form. The heart must pump blood not occasionally but dispositionally for the sake of being a heart and for the sake of the whole animal being what it is. To pump blood is the proper function of the heart, but its sound is merely coincidental with its function. The function of the tail fin is propelling and the propelling is for the sake of the dolphin as a whole, whereas the function of the human hand is manipulation (as opposed to locomotion) and the manipulation is

for the sake of the human as a whole. So in living things the parts must function for their ends and for the end of the whole. When the function is proper a good state ensues and when it is improper a bad state ensues. There is the good tail fin of this dolphin and the good liver of that human, and this good dolphin and that good human. When the parts work well they are good and when the whole lives well it is good, but when the parts and/or the whole malfunction something is bad. To some extent the specifying power and the living thing as a whole can function properly and be good although some part or parts function improperly and are bad, but the more dysfunction in the parts the less can the whole live well. When the specific powers of living things work well they are good instances of their kind, but when they do not function at all it is bad.

Humans are unique in that they can state (truly or falsely) to themselves and to others what it would take for them to function properly or improperly. Other living things cannot but tend (normally) to their own good and that of their species, but humans can tend or not to their good. For humans move not only because of the genetically acquired neural significance of the world, but also because of the historically invented conventional significance of the world. Humans know things not merely under a definite number of sensations and perceptions but under an indefinite number of descriptions and definitions, and this power to invent conventional signs makes humans into a different kind of living thing. For the power to describe for oneself and/or others what end one desires transforms all activities common with all other living things and gives humans freedom. Terms such as “may,” “may not,” “should,” “should not,” “if,” “all,” “some,” and “therefore” not only distinguish humans from nonhuman animals but also express their specific ability to move. This power to use conventional signs gives humans the freedom to decide whether or not to behave in accordance with their (true or false) statements of proper functioning.

This specific human power involves pursuit of the human good. Humans that function properly say to themselves and/or others what is good and what is bad, and whatever is judged good is pursued and whatever is judged bad is avoided. Yet an individual cannot decide whether actualization of a human life is an end or not, but can only deliberate whether or not to pursue that end with appropriate means. For it is (really and not just apparently) good prior to any human decision and good notwithstanding someone choosing the opposite. Pursuing the human good requires stating not occasionally but dispositionally what is to be done here and now. This power of stating what is to be done here and now functions properly when deliberation and decision are

easy and accurate, but improperly when deliberation and decision are hard and inaccurate or even when there is disregard and indecision. Thus when humans function properly they state that good is desirable, and in everyday life we call this shrewdness acquired by experience and memory “good sense” or “common sense.”

This power of using conventional signs also transforms the passive power to be moved by neural signs or by what the world signifies to the central nervous system. To function properly all animals (including humans) need attraction when that which is pleasant to the senses is easy to attain (otherwise they would starve or would not mate) or that which is unpleasant to the senses is easy to avoid (otherwise they would miss greater goods or succumb to trivial dangers). To function properly all animals (including humans) likewise need aggression when that which is pleasant to the senses is hard to attain (otherwise they would starve or would not mate) or that which is unpleasant to the senses is hard to avoid (otherwise they would miss greater goods or succumb to trivial dangers).⁸ In nonhuman animals the merely genetically acquired neural significance of the world is sufficient, but in humans the further historically innovated conventional significance of the world requires good judgment about that which is sensed. To function properly humans must judge what the passive power – the drives of attraction and aggression – signify for their whole life. On the one hand, properly functioning human beings judge that unrestrained sensual pleasures would ruin them. For this reason dietary and sexual advice are prominent in human history and culture. A properly functioning human being moderates the sensory pleasures and lets the emotions of attraction function for the whole. On the other hand, a properly functioning human judges that hardships may be good. For this reason advice on withstanding dangers and difficulties are prominent in human history and culture. A properly functioning human being fears, combats, and endures hardships, and lets the emotions of aggression function for the whole. In other words, people who function properly do not set aside the correct description of an action by feelings of attraction or aggression, but pursue their own good by restraining impulses and facing difficulties.

In addition to the passive power to be moved by the sensual significance of the world, human beings have the active power to move by the linguistic significance of the world. The sensual significance of the world is individual and material whereas the conventional significance is universal and immaterial, so by language humans can transcend their

subjectivity and individuality and enter into objectivity and community (with others who also have that power). To function properly in such a community, one has to be willing to order one's life for the common good by stating what one owes to others and giving others their due. For it is obviously right to give others their due, and the will is the power to respond to descriptions of the world by being attracted to what promotes the common good and by being repelled by what hinders the common good. More than other living things, moreover, the proper function of human beings depends on community to develop. While a deer can run away twenty minutes after birth, the human offspring is not able to face life independently after twenty years of parental nourishment, but continues to depend on others for the actualization of its powers in education, friendship, commerce, and so forth. Health is the kind of good that is not merely individual but common, namely, a good that can (usually) only be pursued and achieved in community. For usually privately and always institutionally many share or participate in caring for health and it cannot be achieved without joint efforts. Human beings function properly when they are willing to give and share goods that are due to others, and a community functions properly when its members relate to one another to achieve the common good, since the human good is social and cannot be attained without cooperation.

So in humans "good" takes on a new significance in the operation and evaluation of passion and action. Humans have power to move themselves in judgment of the desirability of goodness. They can state (falsely or truly) to themselves what is good and behave in accordance or not with that statement. They function properly when they pursue the good and avoid the bad not only on occasion but by disposition: by easily and accurately deliberating and deciding about its means, by deeming unrestrained pleasure a hindrance to their good as well as combated evils a help to their good, and by judging it right to will what good is due to others. These dispositions match those that are traditionally called "virtues" (since they strengthen powers) and concern "psychological health" (Peterson and Seligman 2004, 4). Thus by prudence humans act individually in moderation and courage, and corporately in justice. We function properly when we are prudent about what is to be done here and now for the human good, individually when we are moderate about the pleasures of food and sex as well as courageous about the displeasures of sickness and disease, and corporately when we are just in the distribution of goods.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with Socrates' prototypical attempt to lead the reflective life that is becoming of humans. I outlined an argument inspired by Aquinas about the existence of everything rather than nothing and an argument for the relation between the operation and evaluation of human passion and action. These issues will always be relevant to a church seeking to be reformed according to the best interpretation of divine revelation. For at its core is the proclamation of the good news about union with Christ as the mystery of God become human. But the gospel presupposes both knowledge that God exists as well as how we ought to live, and that this knowledge need not be accepted on the authority of the gospel. This is a point of contact between believers and unbelievers. We know, however, that although we have been given the gift of existence we do not function as we should. We lack good sense, moderation, courage, and justice. We set aside the correct description of action by feelings of aggression or attraction and take what others are due. Thus we do not rightly use the gift of existence and do not render our lives to the giver of existence as we ought. The good news is that Christ, the Mystery of God, led a life of virtue in place of the vicious. These truths about the mystery of existence and the connection between the operation and evaluation of human beings ensure that the church can communicate the gospel to unbelievers. For this reason, the exploration of philosophy will always be relevant to theology and one of the best dialogue partners is Thomas Aquinas.⁹

Notes

- 1 Plato citations are to the 1905 Clarendon Press 5-volume edition: *A* refers to the *Apologia* (vol. 1), *T* to *Theaetetus* (vol. 1), *P* to *Parmenides* (vol. 2), *R* to *Republica* (vol. 4).
- 2 Aristotle citations are abbreviated as follows: *DA* refers to *De anima*, *DGA* to *De generatione animalium*, *DMA* to *De motu animalium*, *DPA* to *De partibus animalium*, *HA* to *Historia animalium*, *M* to *Metaphysics*, *P* to *Physics*.
- 3 Thomas Aquinas citations are abbreviated as follows: *DA* refers to *Sententia libri De anima*, *De Ente* to *De ente et essentia*, *Ex. Post. Analyt.* to *Expositio libri Posteriorum analyticorum*, *In De Caelo* to *In libros Aristotelis De caelo et mundo*, *Sent. Met.* to *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, *ST* to *Summa theologica*.
- 4 I have here translated *anima* with "life," since "soul" seems very difficult to use properly after Descartes. For very fine developments of Aquinas's anthropology, see McCabe (2008) and Pasnau (2002).

- 5 ὥστε πᾶν σῶμα φυσικὸν μετέχον ζωῆς οὐσία ἂν εἴη, οὐσία δ' οὕτως ὡς συνθετή
 “Such is an organized body,” (412b: τοιοῦτον δὲ ὁ ἂν ἦ ὀργανικόν) “it seems
 rather to be the soul that holds the body together” (411b: δοκεῖ γὰρ τοῦνατίον
 μᾶλλον ἢ ψυχὴ τὸ σῶμα συνέχειν) (cf. Aristotle *DGA, DMA, DPA, HA*).
- 6 When we say that a worm, a dolphin and a human has life or are alive, we do not
 of course use “has life” or “is alive” in the same but only in different and related
 ways. The words “life,” “live,” and “alive” signify differently according to the way
 the things they are said of differ.
- 7 Cf. ‘ἡ φύσις μὲν ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ κινήσεως καὶ μετὰ βολῆς’ (Aristotle *P*, 200b) and
 ‘μορφὴν καὶ εἶδος, καθ’ ἣν ἤδη λέγεται τὸδε τι.’ (Aristotle *DA*, 412a2, cf.
 Aristotle *P*, 193b)
- 8 Aggression must not be limited to injurious behavior: “Behavior directed
 towards causing physical injury to another person must clearly be labeled as
 aggressive, but beyond that hard core the boundaries of aggressive behavior or
 aggression are shady. ... Since attack on another individual usually involves risk
 of injury for the attacker, aggression is often associated with elements of self-
 protection and withdrawal” (Hinde 2004).
- 9 I thank Manfred Svensson, David VanDrunen, Paul Helm, Stefan Lindholm,
 and Mathias Sånglöf for comments on the draft. Given more space their sugges-
 tions could have improved the chapter even more. I am alone responsible for
 what remains.

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The Active and Contemplative Life: The Practice of Theology

Michael Allen

Assessing the theology of Thomas Aquinas is no simple matter. Difficulty resides not only with the reception of Thomas but also with the textual corpus he left behind. When considering a theme such as his theological method or his principles of biblical interpretation, for example, we might turn to a number of resources. First, he wrote a number of doctrinal *summae* which would offer contributions to the topic at hand: not only his initial commentary upon Lombard's Sentences but also his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *Summa Theologiae*, and *Compendia*. Second, he interpreted a large body of Holy Scripture and various portions of that expository work inform his approach to the theological task. Third, he participated as an academic in the University of Paris in a number of disputations wherein theological prolegomena were discussed and his fundamental commitments might be gleaned. In the foreword to his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas comments: "We have considered how newcomers to this teaching are greatly hindered by various writings on the subject." He sketches a number of these hindrances: the "swarm" of unnecessary questions or discussions, the misshapen outline that may be occasioned by following the format of a text or a debate, the dangers of repetition, and so forth. The same questions and concerns might also be raised in relation to gleaning from Thomas: how does one interact with his corpus in a way that does not swarm with its size, misdirect with its varied formats (marked by different genres and conceptual structures), or breed muddle by reason of repetition?

Typically, debate about theological prolegomena in Thomas fixes upon the first question of the *prima pars* in his magisterial *Summa Theologiae*

(e.g., Chenu 1942; VanAckeren 1952; Persson 1970; Van Steenberghe 1991; for a refreshingly different approach, see Bauerschmidt 2013, 46–51). In that question Thomas addresses a number of definitional matters regarding the discipline which the entire text of the *Summa Theologiae* exemplifies. Many matters can be gleaned from such an approach, and it has borne much fruit in diverse studies. Yet I wish to propose a different approach to retrieving Thomas's contributions regarding the method of Christian theology, a path that begins not with initial statements on prolegomena but that moves backward from his final observations and provides a matrix within which we might make sense of those methodological principles. In a sense, my approach will move backwards twice over: first, from his *Compendia* to the *Summa Theologiae*; second, from his eschatology back to his prolegomena within the *Summa Theologiae*. Finally, we will conclude with a backward survey and a forward sketch of what might be involved in appropriating his insights with respect to theological method for a Reformed Thomism today. In so doing we will focus on the decisive significance of the beatific vision as an eschatological hope and the contemplative life as a moral commitment. Rather than allow an intellectual or cultural context to overdetermine the methods of theology, a Reformed Thomism does well to relocate the exercise of theological reason in the economy of the gospel and to reenvision its practice as an exercise of intellectual asceticism in the contemplative life.

Thomas Aquinas on Human Intellectual Life in the Divine Economy

A first area to explore is the final theological project of Thomas, his *Compendia*, noting the way in which it introduces the theological task:

Faith is a certain foretaste of that knowledge which is to make us happy in the life to come. The Apostle says in Hebrews 11:1 that faith is “the substance of things to be hoped for,” as though implying that faith is already, in some preliminary way, inaugurating in us the things that are to be hoped for, that is, future beatitude. Our Lord has taught us that this beatific knowledge has to do with two truths, namely, the divinity of the Blessed Trinity and the humanity of Christ. That is why, addressing the Father, He says: “This is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” All the knowledge imparted by faith turns about these two points, the divinity of the Trinity and the humanity of Christ. This

should cause us no surprise: the humanity of Christ is the way by which we come to the divinity. Therefore, while we are still wayfarers, we ought to know the road leading to our goal. (Thomas Aquinas 1993, 4–5)

A number of observations can be made. First, knowledge has an end: “our goal” in which “we come to the divinity” and enjoy “eternal life,” “which is to make us happy in the life to come.” These “things which are to be hoped for, that is, future beatitude” constitute a *telos* for theological knowledge. Second, knowledge has a movement: “the way” and “the road” to such knowledge is sketched here. Knowledge has not arrived; knowledge is sought. The imagery remains that of the pilgrimage for those who “are still wayfarers.” The idiom is not stasis, nor is it consummation; the conceptuality comes from the realm of the journey. Third, this knowledge has a particular shape or form: “All the knowledge imparted by faith turns on these two points, the divinity of the Trinity and the humanity of Christ.” Note that these two doctrines are not the totality of knowledge, but the “hinge” upon which all knowledge turns. They constitute the focal point and the singular shape of Christian knowledge. We see, then, that knowledge has a *telos* which is an eschatological hope, and that this hope must be attained through a particular journey.

Thomas presses still further, however, to match his eschatological reflections with further comments about theology. He does not merely address the question “What is theology?” but also inquiries regarding “How does theology come to happen?” Fourth, he notes that God provides for theological knowledge: here Thomas alludes to the divine missions (in quoting John 17: 3, he speaks of the sending of the Son) whereby God makes himself known. He comments on the instrumentality of the humanity of Christ, specifically, in as much as the economy of the gospel centers upon this revelation, for “the humanity of Christ is the way by which we come to the divinity.” Fifth, Thomas not only identifies theological knowledge as a lingering hope for the finale of gospel history but also characterizes it as a present anticipation that can be enjoyed proleptically. “Faith is a certain foretaste of that knowledge,” that is, “faith is already, in some preliminary way, inaugurating in us the things that are to be hoped for.” So Thomas not only flavors his theological method with eschatological imagination but he also locates the practice of theology – and its present exercise, particularly – in the economy of the gospel.

In the *Compendia*, then, Thomas prompts us to think of theological methodology in the context of eschatology, ethics, and the economy of the

gospel. In so doing, he reminds us of the importance of locating intellectual practices within the prior matrix of an intellectual ontology, that is, a depiction of the reality wherein and whereby knowledge arises. To understand the practice of intellectual work focused upon the knowledge of God, one must attend to the figures involved and the relations whereby they communicate (or “make common”) such knowledge. Thomas’s observations, however, do not remain at the formal level; he presses these formal, analytic concerns in a specific material direction. Theology must be defined in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. His emphasis upon not only the singularity of the one triune God but also his commitment to the humanity of Christ as “the way by which we come to the divinity” prioritizes the missions of the Triune persons in this regard.

In a second area to explore, we will take the most fruitful course through Thomas’s wider corpus if we follow the sketch provided, albeit briefly, in this final methodological introduction, namely, by noting the ways in which ethical and eschatological categories flavor the practice of theology itself. These connections are not as overt or immediate in the *Summa Theologiae*, wherein Thomas’s comments regarding them are found emerging as he works his way through the various topics. In suggesting that we follow a path charted by the *Compendia*’s introduction, though, I do not mean to suggest that Thomas has changed his method or has altered his general approach to theological principia (see Corbin 1974, 713–27). Far from it. Thomas has made overt and immediately explicit what was only patiently and with some difficulty seen over the course of reading his wider *Summa Theologiae*.

In the space that remains, then, we consider the eschatological imagination provided by Thomas in the *prima secundae* wherein he describes beatitude (*ST* 1a2ae.1–5).¹ Then we consider the ethical distinction that marks Thomas’s theological method more than any other, namely, the distinction between the active life and the contemplative life (*ST* 2a2ae.179–82). Finally, I offer a reading of his discussion of the discipline or science of theology as it appears at the beginning of the *prima pars*, considering that famous entryway in light of these eschatological and ethical concerns (*ST* 1a.1).

Thomas Aquinas on Beatitude and Our Spiritual End (*ST* 1a2ae.1–5)

“There can be no complete and final happiness for us save in the vision of God” (*ST* 1a2ae.3.8). Thomas has affirmed that all humans have a desire for happiness, at least in the abstract, though not all desire its concrete

particularization in the enjoyment of God (1a2ae.5.8). But Christians know and hope in this joy, looking for and journeying toward this blessed sight. While the beatific vision will be enjoyed by all glorified believers in Christ, it will not be uniform in its exercise. For one, “joy can be deeper because he is more open and adapted to receive it” (1a2ae.5.2; cf. 1a2ae.5.2; 1a2ae.4.1). This adaptive openness stems from “the degree of sharing in this good” (1a2ae.5.2 *ad* 3).

What do we see in seeing God? Thomas speaks to our vision of God’s own being in his singular identity but then surveys more broadly how we see all things in his light (cf. 1a2ae.4.3 *ad* 1). First, we participate in God or share in God through this vision. Herein our Godward focus crystallizes: “Manifestly man is destined to an end beyond himself, for he himself is not the supreme good [*non enim homo est summum bonum*]” (1a2ae.2.5); while “happiness is a real condition of soul, yet is founded on a thing outside the soul” (1a2ae.2.7). Thomas offers a discussion of the various options to satisfy that soulish desire: riches, honors, fame, power, bodily vitality, pleasure, soulish gifts, or, finally, any created value whatsoever (see 1a2ae.2.1–8). Fundamental to appreciating his argument is its baseline that runs through an exegesis of Ecclesiastes throughout 1a2ae.2. Thomas sums up the vanity of created objects in this way: “For man to rest content with any created good is not possible, for he can be happy only with complete good which satisfies his desire altogether: he would not have reached his ultimate end were there something still remaining to be desired” (1a2ae.2.8). What, then, may be the satisfying object of our desire? “The “good without reserve” (*universale bonum*) fulfills the human appetite or will, while the “true without reserve” (*universale verum*) satisfies the mind’s search; both of these are “found, not in anything created, but in God alone” (1a2ae.2.8). Not just in God, but we must go further and say that “complete happiness requires the mind to come through to the essence itself” (1a2ae.3.8).

But our blessed vision of God centers on sight of God without being reduced to mere vision of the Almighty. In him we see all other things. While Thomas insists that its object is divine (“man’s ultimate end is uncreated good, namely God”), its exercise is human (“man’s ultimate end is a creaturely reality in him, for what is it but *his* coming to God and *his* joy with God”); he clarifies that “with respect to its object or cause happiness is uncreated reality, while with respect to its essence it is a creaturely reality” (1a2ae.3.1; see also 1a2ae.2.7: “happiness is a real condition of soul, yet is founded on a thing outside the soul”). Our human exercise is complex: the human will moves us toward happiness; this beatitude consists of an act of the mind, and this beatific intellection leads to pleasure in the will

(1a2ae.3.5). Further, the object of this human, creaturely vision is not simply God, though it is singularly God; by that I mean to note that Thomas believes we see all other things in as much as they relate to God. We see God and his many-splendored works in our glorious vision.

How can we characterize this beatific vision as an act? It is a created act, that is, an act performed by creatures. Thomas prioritizes this act by its contemplative or intellectual character. He does so for exegetical reasons, citing John 17: 3 at a decisive point to note that “eternal life” is “to know thee, the one true God,” which he identifies there as “an activity of the mind” (1a2ae.3.4, *sed contra*; he also explains the significance of this scriptural passage in 1a2ae.3.2). He does so for anthropological reasons. We can trace his argument in three steps. “First, given that happiness is an activity, then it ought to be a man’s best activity, that is to say when his highest power is engaged with its highest object.” Second, “man’s mind is his highest power, and its highest object is divine good, an object for its seeing, not for its doing something in practice.” Third, then, “the activity of contemplating the things of God is principal in happiness” (1a2ae.3.5). His language in this discussion is not exclusive, however, as he speaks of “man’s last and perfect beatitude . . . wholly centred on contemplation.”

Human vision of God, then, remains human. Indeed, Thomas will later distinguish between the varied knowledge of God available to figures in glory. “In this respect ends are diverse for lower and higher natures according to their various relationships to that one thing. So therefore God’s happiness in comprehending his essence is higher than the happiness of men and angels, who see but do not comprehend him” (1a2ae.3.8 *ad 2*; see also 1a2ae.1.8). A hierarchy has been sketched: God’s knowledge, glorified human knowledge, angelic knowledge. The creatures in glory “see but do not comprehend.” Later scholastics would draw out distinctions between archetypal and ectypal theology, that is, between God’s own knowledge of himself and that knowledge of him which he shares with creatures, and then between the diverse forms of ectypal theology: that of those in glory (beatific knowledge or that of the comprehenders) and that of those still on the journey (wayfaring knowledge).

What of the body and its pleasures? Thomas offers a qualified affirmation of their benefits to the person. “Bodily well-being, then, is a consequent condition, for the happiness of soul overflows into the body, which drinks of the fullness of soul” (1a2ae.4.6). Yet he presses still further: “Happiness is not centered on bodily good as its object, but can be endowed with a certain glow and beauty by it” (1a2ae.4.6 *ad 1*). The language of

center here evokes its paired term – circumference – to lay out a portrait whereby soulful contemplation of God provides the center of our happiness, around which other delights make up a wide circumference. The imagery of the center not only speaks to the primacy of the contemplative joy of the soul but also to its productivity, for Thomas does speak of bodily pleasure as a “consequent condition” and an “overflow” from the soul. Sensitive activity may not be a constituent of our happiness but it is an “antecedent” and “preliminary” to our “partial happiness” now and a “result” of the “perfect happiness hoped for in heaven” (1a2ae.3.3; see also 1a2ae.4.2).

What of external goods? They are presently necessary, indeed, they are “required for the imperfect happiness open to us in this life, not that they lie at the heart of happiness, yet they are tools to serve happiness which lies ... in the activity of virtue” (1a2ae.4.7). But they will not always be necessary: “Nowise are they needed for the perfect happiness of seeing God ... Perfect happiness, however, is for a soul without a body or a soul united to a body which is no longer animal but spiritual” (1a2ae.4.7). In addressing the intermediate state of presence to the Lord and the resurrected state of the glorified body, Thomas comments that external goods which presently sustain the body (e.g., food, drink) will no longer be needful. Similarly, while friends are presently necessary, they will later be an added benefit though not a strict need (1a2ae.4.8).

Our *telos* shapes our behavior now. “The end is not altogether extrinsic to the act, but is related to it as its origin and destination, and so enters into its very nature, for as an action it is from something and as a passion it is towards something” (1a2ae.1.3 *ad* 1; 1a2ae.1.3 *ad* 2 presses further: “the end affects the will as prior by intention”). “And in this life as we draw nearer to it by the felicity of the contemplative life rather than of the active life, and grow more like God ... so do we become less dependent ... on these external bodily goods” (1a2ae.4.7). Our pursuit of this blissful end in God, then, renders our actions valid (at least with regard to their goal, though their manner and form are also pertinent matters). Beatitude does not simply follow our lives as a consequence; the blessed vision of God constitutes our actions as a final cause and goal, a chief end which we pursue in all sorts of varying ways (affections, thoughts, words, deeds). And this constitutive function plays an increasingly formative role, as we are weaned off other affections and drawn more deeply into communion with the one true God.

Yet Thomas does not suggest that contemplation might overwhelm or remove our need for activity in this era. Indeed, even our thoughts (the very

realm of the contemplative) cannot be circumscribed by the spiritual; “we are not expected always to be thinking of our last end whenever we desire or do something in particular.” He even gives an example of this principle: “For example, in walking somewhere one does not have to be reminding oneself of one’s destination at every step” (1a2ae.1.6 *ad* 3). The journey provides the context for one’s every action, though it may not be the overt content of every thought or maneuver. He derives a principle: “The force of our first intention with respect to it persists in each desire of any other thing, even though it is not adverted to” (1a2ae.1.6 *ad* 3).

We do well, then, having considered our beatific end, now to turn to reflection on the ways in which the contemplative life draws us unto that glorious goal. We have seen in Thomas’s eschatological comment that contemplation plays a central, that is, a prioritized and productive role in our future hope of glory with God, and we have seen that it shapes our behavior now. In turning to his material on ethics and human behavior in light of the gospel, we can consider in greater detail the distinction between our contemplative life and the active life.

Thomas Aquinas on the Active and Contemplative Life (ST 2a2ae.179–82)

Theology constitutes a spiritual practice and, thus, an ethical agency borne of the divine economy. We do well, then, to think more directly about pertinent ethical categories that shape how Thomas views the theological task by providing something of a spiritual-relational framework for its definition and exercise. Perhaps most significant in this regard is his division of human life into the active and the contemplative life (see ST 2a2ae.179–82).

The division finds affirmation in a common sense manner: “Since some men especially dedicate themselves to the contemplation of truth while others are primarily occupied with external activities, it follows that human living is correctly divided into the active and the contemplative” (2a2ae.179.1). Of course, Thomas is not making a personal judgment regarding empirical observation; he has already cited the authoritative judgment of Gregory the Great, having alluded to his use of this distinction between the active and the contemplative, and he will allude throughout to symbols of these two facets of life in scripture (e.g., Leah and Rachel, Martha and Mary; see 2a2ae.179.1 *sed contra*; 2a2ae.179.2 *sed contra*). While this division would not apply to other forms of life, it marks out key facets of human life, which is distinguished by its rationality (see 2a2ae.179.1 *ad* 2).

It is worth noting, first of all, that this division is complete in as much as it describes the intellectual function of humans. It is not complete, however, as a total description of everything that encompasses human life, not only in its distinction from other animals by way of rationality but also in its commonality with the animals in its animality. For example, Thomas will cede the point that humans do pursue the “life of pleasure” as do the “beasts” (2a2ae.179.2 *ad* 1). So Thomas notes that bodily loves shape human action now, but these pursuits are distinctly human (even if they are also, nonetheless, actually human). As noted earlier, Thomas defines distinctly human life by its highest apogee, in this case, by its intellectual exercise or rational functioning.

Thomas describes the contemplative life as an intellectual activity which, nonetheless, “consists in love” and “terminates in delight . . . This in its turn intensifies love.” Whereas debates had proliferated regarding whether the contemplative life was a function of the intellect or the will, Thomas prefers: “as regards the very essence of its activity, the contemplative life belongs to the intellect; but as regards that which moves one to the exercise of that activity, it belongs to the will, which moves all the other faculties, and even the intellect, to their acts” (2a2ae.180.1; see also 1a2ae.9.1). In other words, while contemplation is an intellectual act, it is moved by love and results in delight and, by extension, deeper love. It is not love or delight *per se*, but it exists only in their wake and for their sake (see also 2a2ae.180.7). Similarly, Thomas notes that the moral virtues are not a part of the essence of the contemplative life, though they dispose one for this life; here he develops a distinction between something being essential or being dispositive (2a2ae.180.2; cf. 2a2ae.181.1).² So contemplation, for Thomas, flows from love, has been disposed for by the moral virtues, actualizes the intellect, culminates in delight, and results in deepening love. Also the intellectual actualization occurring in contemplation “has only one activity in which it finally terminates and from which it derives its unity, namely the contemplation of truth, but it has several activities by which it arrives at this final activity,” and he sketches them briefly: understanding epistemological principles, deduction from those principles (which he later suggests [2a2ae.180.3 *ad* 1] has been termed meditation and consideration), and contemplating that truth deduced (2a2ae.180.3).³ Thus far, his description of the subject and exercise of the contemplative life.

What of the object of the contemplative life? Thomas has much to commend here as well. He will chart “four things [that] pertain in a certain order to the contemplative life: first, the moral virtues; secondly, certain acts other than contemplation; thirdly, contemplation of divine effects; and

fourthly, the complement of all, namely the contemplation of divine truth” (2a2ae.180.4). It is plain from his prior discussion that the first two components pertain to preparations for contemplation: disposing oneself morally for such intellectual communion with God by way of virtue or fittingness; certain mental acts, not themselves contemplative, which serve, nonetheless, to prompt one to contemplation, that is, consideration of first principles, deduction, prayer, and so forth. The third and fourth components involve consideration of the divine effects or economy and, most fundamentally, of God in himself.

Thomas argues that “we can arrive at the contemplation of God through divine effects ... so the contemplation of them also pertains to the contemplative life, because through them man is led to a knowledge of God” (2a2ae.180.4). The works of God, however, make up part of the contemplative life in a penultimate or improper manner, namely, in as much as “David sought a knowledge of God’s works so that through them he could be led to God” (2a2ae.180.4 *ad* 1; see also 1a.1.3–4, 7). Thomas uses the language of primary and secondary objectivity to note that God is the primary object of contemplation and knowledge of all things in God is only a secondary object of contemplation.

How do we fare in terms of enjoying this contemplative life to the full in this life, namely, by partaking of the beatific vision? Thomas observes that both Gregory and Augustine limit beatific vision to life after this bodily and mortal life (2a2ae.180.5). Yet Thomas introduces a further distinction: someone can be in this life either “actually” or “potentially but with suspension of activity” as in rapture (2a2ae.180.5). In as much as individuals are living this life actually with bodily and sensory entanglements, they cannot partake of the beatific vision. But “in this second state the contemplation of the present life can attain to a vision of the divine essence,” and Thomas considers Paul’s rapture described in 2 Corinthians 12:2 to be an example. By invoking this distinction, Thomas wants to push the envelope historically regarding the way in which we might categorize someone partaking of the beatific vision in this life (and, notably, he will extend this approach to his reading of Christ’s continuous beholding of the divine essence during his incarnate life along the lines of an extended rapturous experience: 3a.9.2 and 3a.10).

Thomas describes the active life as that which is “occupied with external activities” (2a2ae.179.1). The active life involves thought or knowledge but such reflection is directed not to the goal of “the knowledge of truth as such” but the goal of “some external action, which engages intellect as practical or active” (2a2ae.179.2; see also 2a2ae.181.1). In as much as our

present state brings with it many needs, Thomas can assert that “in a qualified sense or in a special case the active life is to be preferred, in view of the needs of the present life” (2a2ae.182.1). His depiction of how the active life connects to the contemplative life manifests an asymmetry. While one may be called into active exercise, this summons always supplements and never should substitute for one’s contemplative activity. He argues that activity can be a mandate “not done by way of subtraction but by way of addition” (2a2ae.182.1 *ad* 3). Whereas he will not say the opposite, he here insists on the priority of the contemplative to the active.

Thomas relates the two divisions of life, evincing a consistent though complex concern to affirm this asymmetry. First, the active life can inhibit the contemplative life: “external occupation prevents a man from considering matters of thought, which are removed from the concrete affairs with which the works of the active life are concerned” (2a2ae.181.2 *ad* 2). In as much as external necessities distract from fundamental reality – God – they hinder human contemplation in the present. Second, the active life can actually enhance the contemplative life, as described in the vein of teaching. Teaching, in as much as it involves interior contemplation, is contemplative; teaching, in as much as it finds “audible expression,” however, makes contribution to the active life (2a2ae.181.3). Audible teaching, itself an active exercise, equips others better for the future exercise of contemplation, though it is itself not contemplation as such. Third, the active life will end, though the contemplative life will continue forevermore (2a2ae.181.4). Thomas then lists nine reasons why the contemplative life is more excellent than the active life: as befitting the most excellent things in humanity, as being more continuous, as bringing greater delight, as being more self-sufficient, as loved more for itself, as consisting in leisure and rest, as concerned with higher or greater things, as more proper or distinctly human, and as stated in Jesus’s commendation of the way of Mary over that of Martha (2a2ae.182.1). These nine reasons are prompted, overtly, by Aristotle in the first eight instances and by Jesus himself in the ninth. However, even those observations regarding the greater excellence of the contemplative life which come from Aristotle’s *Ethics* are also yoked in each case to scriptural argumentation. Fourth, the contemplative life, in and of itself, is more meritorious than the active life, considered in and of itself. Admittedly, however, Thomas notes that the way in which someone performs active works of service to his or her neighbor may well be more meritorious than the way in which someone else achieves merit by way of contemplative activity (2a2ae.182.2).

Ideally, how would the active and contemplative lives relate? Thomas argues that the active life “regulates and directs the internal passions of the soul” and in so doing “fosters the contemplative life, which is impeded by the disorder of the internal passions” (2a2ae.182.4). In as much as the active life involves moral virtue, prudence, and teaching (see 2a2ae.181.1–3), it serves to enhance the contemplative life. However, in as much and to the extent that the active life requires attention to external actions, it impedes the exercise of contemplation. Therefore, the ideal scenario would be to minimize such external actions as much as possible, cognizant of the fact that this present life demands such commitments to one degree or another. While some are more or less suited to one or the other life due to innate tendencies either owing to a “spirit of restlessness” or a “naturally pure and calm spirit,” Thomas notes that all are intended by God, over time, to “become even readier for contemplation” (2a2ae.182.4 *ad* 3).

Thomas sketches an eschatological end – the blessed vision of God – that only arrives in the state of glory, and in this state of grace in as much as glory breaks in rapturously yet that, nonetheless, calls for an ethical response whereby we more and more seek to “become even readier for contemplation” here and now, habituating ourselves, as it were, by the exercise of our will and mind and by the gifts of grace to partake of that intellectual communion with God that shall one day be ours.

Thomas Aquinas on Theology (ST 1a.1)

Eschatology and ethics are yoked together, and Thomas includes the call to contemplation into our summons for this spiritual journey. How do these eschatological, anthropological, and ethical reflections inform theological method? For Thomas, as we will see, *sacra doctrina* unites God’s knowledge, human beatific knowledge, and our current intellectual pilgrimage. As Matthew Levering observes: “*Sacra doctrina* both adds this supernatural knowledge and reorders all that can be known naturally in light of the triune God as our beginning and supernatural end” (2003, 31; see also Torrell 2000, 132).

To appreciate the place of *sacra doctrina*, we do well to note the ways in which Thomas argues that it is necessary alongside the exercise of philosophical reason. First, even where reason is quite capable of rendering judgments that are apt, it is evident only to a few, after much arduous mental exercise, and mixed with many mistakes (ST 1a.1.1). Thus, even where

reason can help us to know things – real, significant things – in a valid way, *sacra doctrina* does so in a wider, quicker, more effective way. Here there is a quantitative superiority noted: of the sort of knowledge that might be attained via philosophical reason, *sacra doctrina* gets more of it in a more efficient way. Second, Thomas advances to a qualitative distinction between *sacra doctrina* and philosophical reason by noting that philosophy has limits to its breadth and height which do not similarly bind theology.

Above all because God destines us for an end beyond the grasp of reason; according to Isaiah, Eye hath not seen, O God, without thee what thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Now we have to recognize an end before we can stretch out and exert ourselves for it. Hence the necessity for our welfare that divine truths surpassing reason should be signified to us through divine revelation. (1a.1.1)

Divine truths must be revealed divinely – through the instrument of *sacra scriptura* – so that we might know those things which exceed the objects of human reason.

What kind of science is this theological activity? Thomas argues that *sacra doctrina* “takes over both functions,” for the precise reason that it involves knowledge of God and all he has made. “All the same it is more theoretical than practical, since it is mainly concerned with the divine things which are, rather than with things men do; it deals with human acts only in so far as they prepare men for that achieved knowledge on which their eternal bliss reposes” (1a.1.4). Thomas characterizes the work of theology, then, as the preparation whereby wayfarers act toward their eternal bliss of beatific knowledge. The superiority of theology flows not merely from its certain roots in divine revelation (which exceeds any certainty in the empirical or philosophical sciences) but especially from its “worth of subject” which is “eternal happiness” in God (1a.1.5). Particular practices (*exercitium*) constitute the theological action of the human wayfarer. Theology calls for investment in these practices of focus upon God’s own being as found in God’s own self-revelation.

“God is truly the object of this science,” though his centrality as its object does not render its circumference narrow. Thomas also affirms: “Now all things are dealt with in holy teaching in terms of God, either because they are God himself or because they are relative to him as their origin and end” (1a.1.7). He observes how a variety of scholastics organized theology according to reality and symbols (Peter Lombard), the works or economy of

redemption (Hugh of Saint-Victor), or the pairing of Christ and the *totus Christus*, his body (Robert Kilwardby). Thomas does not rebuke them, though he seeks to point to deeper organizing principles, namely, that “all these indeed are dwelt on by this science, yet as held in their relationship to God” (1a.1.7).

Theology, for Thomas, involves contemplation of or speculation regarding God and all things in the way in which they relate to God (from whom, through whom, and to whom they exist – Rom. 11: 36).⁴ Theology is meant to draw us away from lesser goods or less potent ways of knowing the ultimate good (by reason alone) and to draw us to the most potent and primal source of truth, goodness, and beauty. In other words, theology is meant to further our intellectual communion with the triune God. His theological method in *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1 makes sense only within the spiritual journey bounded by our nature as created by God and intended for glory with this God in the blissful end. Nature and glory, eschatology and ethics, activity and contemplation – each of these pairs speaks into and sets the parameters for Thomas’s reflections on theology as a *scientia*, a discipline, a Christian undertaking.

Theology for Reformed Thomists: A Summary and a Sketch

Modern theology often locates theology and the method of its effective exercise in an intellectual economy. In late modernity, more often than not, these prolegomenal issues have been relocated to cultural and ideological economies. Each has its contributions to make, and we dare not respond to the reductive demands of either approach with a curt dismissal. But the theological reflections of Thomas Aquinas remind us that far more definitive than any intellectual or cultural context is the spiritual matrix within which the exercise of theological reason might transpire.

Charles Taylor (1989, 8) has used the language of a “moral ontology” to characterize the time and space within which an agent may exist and act. I suggest we do well to think in terms of an intellectual ontology, that is, a description of the reality within which intellectual work occurs. More specifically, we do well to locate the theological task within a reality that has its own order by God’s intention. Thus, the category of “ontology” can and must be governed materially by the description of a divine “economy” (*oikonomia*).

If we are not merely to avoid falling into the mires of pluralism and relativism but also lapsing into the muck of modern empiricism, naturalism, and rationalism, then we need to locate the theologian ontologically and economically. The question of what a Reformed Thomist approach to theological method might look like could involve a turning to the works of earlier Protestant Scholastics (whether those who drew eclectically from many but especially from Thomas, as did John Owen, or others who more consistently culled from the angelic doctor, such as Peter Martyr Vermigli) or to John Webster in recent years. For the sake of brevity and clarity, traits especially prized by Thomas's Reformed readers, a few comments along these lines might be useful by way of conclusion.

First, recent scholarship on Thomas has noted the role of narrative in an illuminating manner (see especially Levering 2003; see also Seckler 1964). More specifically, Matthew Lamb (2007, 264–5) has observed that Thomas's most notable contribution in the realm of eschatology is what he deems his “wisdom eschatology,” the way in which the last things center upon the beatific vision and the manner by which that terminus reorients all human knowledge in its frame. Wisdom comes in the application of truthful judgment in appropriate settings. Thomas exemplifies awareness that widely deploying Christian judgment follows from discerning not simply a narrative within which one fits but, more specifically, a nature and a *telos* which bound that narrative journey. Thomas's approach to exit (*exitus*) and return (*reditus*) may be a far cry from some of the covenantal terminology deployed in the Reformed tradition, but its fundamental judgment remains the same, namely, that humanity (our creation, fall, reconciliation, and restoration in Christ) must be thought of eschatologically. Not only that, but Thomas, like the later Reformed tradition (though it must be said, unlike Karl Barth's subversion), insists that the state of glory exceeds but befits the state of integrity in creation itself. As Thomas says in this section, grace does not destroy nature but perfects it (1a.1.8 *ad* 2) – understanding grace, therefore, requires knowing both nature as well as glory (its culmination or maturation in Christ). With respect to our topic, appreciating the role of theology in the Christian life and the church's witness involves appreciating our created nature (as knowers of God) and our intended end (as those who eternally and blissfully contemplate God with his own knowledge in which we graciously participate through Christ and by the Spirit).

Second, “one risks misunderstanding Thomas's intellectual project unless one sees it as a form of discipleship” (Bauerschmidt 2013, x). What does this

mean? The theological task must be construed as a process of what Bauerschmidt calls “intellectual asceticism” (2013, 81). Theology is inherently confrontational, and Thomas’s concern here is matched by the Reformed tradition’s emphasis upon theology as an iconoclastic endeavor (see Allen 2010, 12–18). In what way does this intellectual ascesis occur? Denys Turner has pointed to what seem to be important features in the work of Thomas: “Thomas is a saint so that theologians might have at least one model within the membership of their guild of a theologian without an ego to promote or protect, who knew how to make holy disappearing into a theological act” (2013, 4; cf. 34). Turner describes a Thomas without an ego. From the perspective of genre and literary production, this may seem the case. Thomas does not intrude into the text – he is more personally reticent than even Calvin and, let’s call things what they are, a far cry from the self-involving provocateur that was Martin Luther. Thomas seems to pull a John the Baptist: decreasing that another – the subject of theology – might increase.

Yet I think Bauerschmidt argues an even more profound point: it is not simply that Thomas hangs loose from overt personal involvement in the argument, but rather that he views theology as a part of the shaping of the self (including the rationality). Again, Bauerschmidt’s language of “intellectual ascesis” is extremely helpful here. He teases this out in two directions by which he defines the goal of, as the late Herbert McCabe put it so aptly, “sanctity of mind” (McCabe 1987, 236). The shape of that sanctity, for Thomas, “combined both intellectual openness and unswerving evangelical purpose” (Bauerschmidt 2013, 36). Doctrinal particularity is for, not against, intellectual openness, though we may intuit that these two commitments are mutually exclusive or at odds. Thomas speaks of taking “every thought captive to Christ” (2 Cor. 10: 5) and then launches into a discussion of grace and nature. Bauerschmidt helpfully shows that grace directs and perfects the function of nature.

Third, Thomas does attempt to honor the activity of will and mind in contemplation, albeit each in its own way. Whereas he and John Duns Scotus disagree over whether or not beatitude is fundamentally knowledge or love, in the mind or in the will, Reformed theologians have been and will surely be compelled to forego such a polarity. Francis Turretin (1997) professed a better way long ago:

Some with Thomas Aquinas hold that it is the intellect and maintain the blessedness consists in the vision of God. However, others with Scotus hold that it is the will, who on this account place happiness in the love of him. But both are at fault in this – they divide things that ought to be joined together

and hold that happiness is placed separately, either in vision or in love, since it consists conjointly in the vision and love of God. Thus neither sight without love, nor love without sight constitutes its form. (Turretin 1997, 609)

Turretin initially seems to suggest that beatitude includes sight and love, mind and will. But he then expands to rephrase “more fully that most blissful state” with three facets: “we think the three things are to be united here which inseparably cohere with each other in happiness: sight, love, joy.” He goes on to sketch out how sight relates to faith, joy answers to hope, and love abides; in other words, the three great theological virtues of 1 Corinthians 13 find their climax in this eternal bliss of human communion with God, making use of every moral and personal faculty that is distinctly human.

This side of not only the sixteenth-century reforms prompted by Luther and others, but also especially the neo-Calvinism of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck, with all its emphasis upon the breadth of Christ’s lordship and the multifaceted nature of grace’s restoration of nature, Reformed theologians will want to insist even more that beatitude not only involves every facet of the individual person but every nook and cranny of created existence: not only land, sky, and sea, but family, society, and cosmos. To the resurrection of the body, we also add our hope for a new heaven and new earth. Thomas does not glance as widely at the circumference of grace’s gift as later Reformed theology would demand. And yet, Thomas does remind us, with a resolve and specificity that the neo-Calvinist tradition, at least, has hardly mustered, that the center of our hope remains that communion with God that has traditionally been marked out by the beatitude of seeing God’s very essence. While our hope takes in the full reach of God’s creative resolve, our bliss fixes upon the nearness of our covenant Lord as its anchor and chief mark. While Reformed Thomists will want to supplement and adjust his cosmology and anthropology to attend to wider societal and ecological facets of our eschatological hope, we will want to avoid any denial of or deprioritization of his theocentric focus: for our Christian hope and, by extension, for how we think about that end as theologians on the journey.

Notes

- 1 All extracts from *Summa Theologiae* are taken from the Blackfriars translation, published by Cambridge University Press.
- 2 One wonders why this essential/dispositive distinction might not be put to use in 2a2ae.179.2 regarding the relationship of pleasure to the contemplative life.

- 3 Later he maps the various intellectual motions along circular, straight, and spiral images (2a2ae.180.6.3, reply and *ad* 2).
- 4 Gilles Emery (2003, 312–13) reminds us that Thomas tends to employ contemplative (*contemplativus*) in texts undergirded by Christian sources and speculative (*speculativus*) in texts spawned by commentary on Aristotle.

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On Divine Naming

Scott R. Swain

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν
νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης
(*Romans 1:20*)

Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον
τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο (*John 1:18*)

Christian teaching on the divine names concerns the manner in which the invisible God makes himself known to creatures by creatures, thereby overcoming the blindness of idolatry and directing creaturely wayfarers to their blessed hope in the vision of God.

The object of Christian teaching on the divine names is “him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27) (Allen 2015; Sonderegger 2015, 49–147). God’s essence is invisible to creatures. This is not due to the intrinsic opacity or unintelligibility of the divine essence but to its transcendent brilliance. “No one has ever seen or can see” God because God “dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16). The invisible God is essentially luminous and wholly intelligible: “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). God’s essence is invisible to creatures in this life because God’s luminous being transcends the limitations of creaturely bodies and natures, which are the objects of literal and metaphorical creaturely sight (Aquinas 1948 [ST] 1a.12.11; 2010: 86–7). Even in the life to come, when the blessed will see God’s essence, they will not comprehend God’s essence. Only God has a comprehensive knowledge of God (ST 1a.12.7; Aquinas 2010, 88).

Short of the beatific vision, in which God will manifest himself to creatures by means of the divine essence itself, the invisible God manifests

himself to creatures by means of creatures (*ST* 1a.12.9, 11–12). The manifestation of God to creatures by creatures occurs in two distinct but related modes (*ST* 1a.1.1–5; 12.13; Te Velde 2015, 37). The invisible God makes himself known to creaturely wayfarers through his visible works: “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made” (Rom. 1:20). He also makes himself known through his self-interpreting Word: “No one has ever seen God; the only begotten God, who is at the Father’s side, he has explained him” (John 1:18, my translation). These two modes of revelation, in turn, entail two modes of divine naming. The first, the so-called “threefold way” of Pseudo-Dionysius, names God from his creaturely effects (*via causalitatis*), honoring him as the transcendent pattern and source of every creaturely perfection (*via eminentiae*), while negating the limitations that characterize his creaturely likenesses (*via negativa*) (*ST* 1a.13.2; Rorem 2015). The second names God from his self-revealing Word, which alone communicates the name of the triune Lord and which, more fully than in his visible works, manifests his personal character and purpose to his creatures. Although the latter mode of divine naming presupposes the former mode, “this teaching surpasses all other teachings in dignity, authority and usefulness, because it was handed on immediately by the Only Begotten Son, who is the first Wisdom” (Aquinas 2010, 90).

Contemporary theology often treats these two modes of divine naming, which we might label the “metaphysical” and the “personal,” as conflicting approaches to the knowledge of God.¹ According to Bruce McCormack, the threefold way of Pseudo-Dionysius “cannot yield knowledge of the true God (i.e., the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ)” because it seeks “to speak of God in His otherness” by first speaking “of something else,” in this case, “cosmology.” Rather than leading us to God, this approach leaves us only with “a concept which is constructed by means of adjustments introduced into some aspect of created reality.” If we would truly know the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, McCormack argues, we must begin with “Christology – understood as the *Self*-revelation of God, the presence of God in the sphere of human knowing, God’s personal act of making Himself an ‘object’ of human knowing in such a way that He remains Subject” (McCormack 2010, 64). Archie Spencer draws an even sharper contrast between these two modes of divine naming than does McCormack. To the degree that the threefold way “aids in establishing a knowledge of God apart from God’s self-revelation as the Father of Jesus Christ, it

represents a standpoint over against Christ, who is the sole *analogia fidei* to which theology can appeal for theological speech.” Such an approach, Spencer contends, is “not to be found in the Bible” (Spencer 2015, 195).

Others worry that characterizing God as “personal” fails to honor divine transcendence. Thus Brian Davies: “People often assume that theology is grounded in an understanding of the nature and attributes of God considered as a particular individual. It is, for example, pretty axiomatic among modern philosophers of religion that God is a person, where ‘person’ means something like a consciousness or mind with beliefs and thoughts.” Appealing to Thomistic principles regarding divine incomparability, incomprehensibility, and simplicity, Davies would remind us “that God belongs to no class at all and that he defies the conceptual equipment by means of which we identify things and single them out as members of a world” (Davies 1988, 51). In other words, to distinguish God by means of his own “personal” history and character is not yet to distinguish God from other created individuals and therefore it is not yet to identify God as God. For this reason, Herbert McCabe argues, “Our use for the word ‘God’ cannot “begin with christology.” According to McCabe, “we cannot ask the question: ‘In what sense is Jesus to be called Son of God?’ without some prior use of the word ‘God.’ The NT is unintelligible except as the flowering of the Hebrew tradition and the asking of the creation question that became central to the Jewish Bible” (McCabe 1987, 42). Asking and answering “the creation question,” McCabe argues, leads to the conclusion that God “is not one of the participants in history but the mover . . . of all history” (McCabe 1987, 43).

These competing contemporary approaches to the knowledge of God result in different conclusions for the doctrine of God. For all their differences, however, both approaches agree that we must choose between metaphysical and personal modes of divine naming. Moreover, both agree that what is ultimately at stake in this choice is true knowledge and speech about God over against idolatry.

The purpose in what follows is to suggest that these two distinct modes of divine naming need not be pitted against each other and to show how they might fit together within a doctrine of God that is drawn from Holy Scripture, the cognitive wellspring (*principium cognoscendi*) of divine teaching on the divine names. Such an approach to divine naming can help us avoid the idolatrous confusion of God and creatures, even as it helps us participate in the community of knowledge and speech that has been opened up between God and creatures by the God who names himself.

The argument will proceed in two steps. First, I discuss the place of the metaphysical approach to divine naming within the Christian doctrine of God, addressing some of the worries voiced by contemporary theologians about this approach. Second, I address the personal approach to divine naming, also taking into account significant objections. Throughout the course of the argument, we will find instruction and encouragement from Thomas Aquinas and several of the Protestant Orthodox theologians who follow him in holding the metaphysical and personal modes of divine naming together within a seamless doctrinal garment.²

The Metaphysical Approach to Divine Naming

Recent contempt for the metaphysical approach to the divine names rests on two related concerns: first, that it is derived independently of special revelation, and second, that when brought into conversation with special revelation it has an inevitably distorting effect on the Christian doctrine of God. Again McCormack is representative: “Metaphysics has been resorted to in the ancient and modern worlds because it moves from generally-valid first principles (which should be shared by all) to the particularities of Christian belief. But the move from the general to the particular unavoidably determines the *content* of the Christology which is then elaborated” (McCormack 2010, 63). In order to appreciate the positive significance of the threefold way of divine naming for the Christian doctrine of God, we must address both concerns.

The metaphysical approach to the divine names is central to natural theological arguments regarding the existence and attributes of God.³ Through consideration of God’s creaturely effects, natural reason may draw a number of conclusions about God (*ST* 1a.1.6). Natural theology enables human beings “to know of God whether he exists, and to know of him what must necessarily belong to him, as the first cause of all things, exceeding all things caused by him” (*ST* 1a.12.12). That said, the distinction between metaphysical and personal approaches to the divine names does not map neatly onto the distinction between natural and revealed theology. Though revealed theology considers God as he makes himself known through “divine revelation” to faith, rather than through reason’s consideration of God’s creaturely effects, and though it considers “certain truths which exceed human reason,” revealed theology also addresses truths known to natural theology. This is necessary “because the truth about God such as

reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors” (*ST* 1a.1.1, 8; Junius 2014, 150). Revealed theology not only perfects the knowledge of God available through natural theology by extending our knowledge beyond natural theology’s inherent limitations. Revealed theology also restores the knowledge of God available through natural theology but rendered ineffectual through human finitude and sin. Here too grace restores and perfects nature (*ST* 1a.12.13).

Among the truths known to natural theology but also addressed by revealed theology are those drawn from the threefold way of naming God. According to Bernardinus de Moor, “the Natural Knowledge of God” is concerned with that “which is acquired by the contemplation of Objects a great many, and situated outside ourselves, through discursive reasoning; and that through the threefold path of *Causality*, *Negation*, and *Eminence*, commonly ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite.” But, de Moor continues, “Sacred Scripture goes before in this threefold Way of knowing, in which the way of *Causality* occurs, Psalm 94:9; Acts 17:28, 29; the way of *Negation*, Numbers 23:19; the way of *Eminence*, Matthew 7:11; Isaiah 55:8, 9; 1 Timothy 6:15” (de Moor 2014, 124).

Close examination of the New Testament confirms de Moor’s claim that “this threefold Way of knowing” is derived not only from natural theology but also from revealed theology. Consider the following examples.

The way of causality. Though theologians sometimes fail to detect the presence of causal language in New Testament discourse about God, students of early Christianity have demonstrated the presence of the language and concepts of causal metaphysics in the apostolic writings. Ancient philosophers often expressed and classified various conceptions of causality through the use of prepositions that identified “of which,” “by which,” and “for which” something might be accomplished. Philo, for example, employs this “prepositional metaphysics” in his work *On the Cherubim* 125–7, where he describes God as the efficient cause of creation (the one “by whom” it was made), the four elements as the material cause of creation (that “of which” it was made), the Logos as the instrumental cause of creation (that “by means of which” it was made), and the goodness of God as the final cause of creation (the reason why or “for which” it was made). In similar fashion, the New Testament appropriates the language of “prepositional metaphysics” in order to frame its causal conception of the God–world relation. According to Romans 11:36, “all things” are “from him and through him and to him.” Similarly, according to the proto-Trinitarian confession of

1 Corinthians 8:6, “for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (see also Col. 1:16). Beyond the Pauline writings, the language of prepositional metaphysics also appears in John and Hebrews as a way of characterizing God and his Word/Son as the first and final cause of creatures (John 1:1–3; Heb. 1:2, 2:10; Grant 1964; Sterling 1997).

The way of negation. Along with the language of prepositional metaphysics, the New Testament draws upon the language of Greek natural theology, including its negative predications and negative attributes, to indicate divine transcendence (Jaeger 1947; Burkert 1985). Paul describes God as “immortal” and “invisible” (Rom. 1:20, 23; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). Hebrews denies “beginning of days” and “end of life” to the eternal Son (Heb. 7:3) and, along with James, denies the possibility of change in God (Heb. 1:10–12; James 1:17) (Neyrey 1991). According to John, “No one has ever seen God” (John 1:18). In each instance, these negative predications and negative attributes indicate God’s transcendence of creaturely categories of time, change, and visibility. According to the New Testament writings, the God who is the first and final cause of all creatures transcends the various categories that characterize the existence of his creaturely effects.

The way of eminence. Both Old and New Testaments praise the transcendent excellence of God. “The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (Ps. 95:3). According to the psalmist, God’s transcendent greatness is incomparable, “Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high?” (Ps. 113:5) and incomprehensible, “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable” (Ps. 145:3). Similarly, according to Paul, the name of the Lord, which the Father gives to the Son, is “the name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:9), “above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph. 1:21). Whatever we may conclude regarding the validity of Anselm’s ontological argument, “that than which nothing greater can be conceived” well summarizes the biblical way of eminence for naming God.

Combinations of the three ways. Still other texts bring two or three of the aforementioned ways of naming God together in one context, providing integrative patterns of biblical reasoning that can and should inform dogmatic reasoning on the divine names. Paul’s Trinitarian petition and its accompanying doxology in Ephesians 3.14–21 address God by means of the way of causality, describing him as “the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (vv. 14–15),⁴ and also by means of the way

of eminence, describing the love of Christ as that which “surpasses knowledge” (v. 19) and the power of God as that which is “able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (v. 20). James 1:17 brings the three ways of naming God together in one place to praise God’s transcendent goodness: “Every good and perfect gift is from above [the way of eminence], coming down from the Father of lights [the way of causality],⁵ with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change [the way of negation].” Taken together, the threefold way of divine naming teaches us that God’s fatherly goodness is the source of all creaturely goods and that it radically transcends the vicissitudes of creaturely being.

To identify the presence of the threefold way of divine naming in the Bible is not yet to grasp its significance for the Christian doctrine of God. The language and concepts of prepositional metaphysics and negative theology are underdetermined theologically. The point bears out whether one considers the significance of such language within the context of the ancient world (McDonough 2010, 151) or, more specifically, within the Dionysian tradition of biblical interpretation (Rorem 2015). Furthermore, the language of eminence is as susceptible to Ludwig Feuerbach’s critique of “projection” as it is pervasive across world religions (Vanhoozer 2010, 18–22). In order to appreciate the significance of the language and concepts discussed above, therefore, we must attend more closely to their particular use(s) in biblical and theological discourse. Attending to the latter will allow us to address the worry that the threefold way of divine naming threatens to undermine the Christian, and indeed Christological, particularity of the doctrine of God.

The threefold way of divine naming, knowable through natural theology and clarified through revealed theology, teaches us *how* divine naming works (Te Velde 2006, 116). God’s identity as transcendent cause of all creatures teaches us about the kind of resemblance that exists between God and creatures and therefore about how creaturely terms may be predicated of God. Though God and creatures do not share a community of being – “*Deus non est in genere*” (Aquinas, *ST* 1a.3.5) – creatures nevertheless bear some family resemblance to God’s preeminent perfection because he is their fatherly cause (*ST* 1a.4.3; 13.2, 5). Consequently, names originally applied to creatures (in the order of knowing) may be applied to God by denying the limitations that characterize creaturely being and by affirming that the perfections signified in those creaturely names exist preeminently in God, the radiant sun from whom the diversity of creaturely perfections emanate (*ST* 1a.13.1–3, 5; Bavinck 2004, 129–30).⁶

While the threefold way of divine naming teaches us *how* divine naming works, it does not teach us *which* divine names are applicable or *to whom* they should be applied. The latter lesson can only be drawn from revealed theology, which considers the biblical revelation of God's triune name and his unfolding covenant purpose in history. Nevertheless, while the metaphysical mode of divine naming cannot fulfill the office that belongs to the personal mode of divine naming, it can assist that office and, in doing so, assist us in understanding the Bible's distinctive Trinitarian monotheism.

Returning to a text already discussed will help us appreciate the point. Commentators commonly acknowledge that 1 Corinthians 8:6 appropriates the Shema within its proto-Trinitarian confession (Bauckham 1998, 35–40; Fee 2007, 88–94). The result is to identify “the Father” and “Jesus Christ,” not with the generic “gods” and “lords” of Corinth's popular religious culture (1 Cor. 8:5), but with the particular Lord God of Israel. As noted above, 1 Corinthians 8:6 also appropriates the language of prepositional metaphysics in identifying the one God and one Lord of the Christian confession. Taken together, the personal and the metaphysical modes of divine naming (1) identify the Father and Jesus Christ with the one Lord God of Israel, (2) place the Father and Jesus Christ on the divine side of the causal relationship that exists between God and his creatures, and, consequently, (3) require that we understand the relationship between the Father and Jesus Christ in a manner that is categorically different from the way we understand the relationship between God and his creatures.

In considering the last point, the contribution from the metaphysical mode of divine naming to our understanding of the Bible's distinctive Trinitarian monotheism becomes apparent. The threefold way of naming God provides the appropriate metaphysical framework for describing the categorically distinctive relationship that obtains between the Father and the Son. The way of eminence teaches us that the eternal generation of the Son from the Father is “the truer and more perfect” form of generation, transcending all creaturely forms of generation (Aquinas, *ST* 1a.33.2–3). The way of negation teaches us that, unlike the generation of creaturely sons from creaturely fathers, the eternal generation of the Son from the Father is timeless, unchanging, and immaterial (*ST* 1a.42.2). Finally, the way of causality teaches us that the eternal generation of the Son from the Father is the paradigm and source of the temporal generation of creatures by creatures, a point to which we will return below (*ST* 1a.33.3; 1.41.3).

The preceding discussion demonstrates that, contrary to the concerns of some contemporary theologians, the threefold way of divine naming is not

an alien, extrabiblical contaminant which threatens to compromise the distinctive nature of the Christian doctrine of God. The metaphysical mode of divine naming draws upon an idiom that is native to Holy Scripture and that helps us understand and express the particular claims of Trinitarian monotheism. The use of the threefold way of divine naming in dogmatics therefore is not just a matter of rendering “judgments” that are faithful to biblical teaching. It is a matter of allowing the “concepts” and patterns of biblical reasoning to inform and shape dogmatic reasoning.⁷

The Personal Approach to Divine Naming

To appreciate how divine naming works is not necessarily to know the one of whom divine naming speaks. As noted above, it does not belong to the metaphysical mode of divine naming to communicate this knowledge. Such knowledge only comes by way of the personal mode of divine naming. If we would call upon the name of the Lord, God himself must reveal his name to us. The gospel claims that, through his incarnate Son and in the Spirit-inspired writings of the prophets and apostles, God has revealed his triune name to the church: “the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). Through the revelation of his triune name God has created a community of knowledge and speech between creator and creature within which we may call upon his name in petition and praise, and in proclamation to the nations: “My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever” (Ps. 145:21).

The proposition, “God reveals himself by himself,” summarizes the logic of the personal mode of divine naming (Barth 1975, 296). To affirm that “God reveals himself *by himself*” is to affirm that the personal mode of divine naming operates in a *personal manner*, by means of divine *self-revelation*. This, according to Thomas Aquinas, is why the personal mode of divine naming “surpasses all other teachings,” “because it was handed on *immediately* by the Only Begotten Son, who is the first Wisdom” (Aquinas 2010, 90, italics mine). To affirm that “God reveals *himself* by himself,” furthermore, is to affirm that the personal mode of divine naming operates in view of a *personal end*, the revelation of God’s *personal identity*. This too indicates the superiority of the personal mode of divine naming. Though natural theology reveals “*that* and *what* God is, or God’s Existence and Essence less distinctly,” only revealed theology manifests “*who* God is ... God as Triune.” So essential is the revelation of God’s triune identity that,

apart from this revelation, we will inevitably “form a false conception of his subsistence” (De Moor 2014, 155).

God reveals himself *by himself*. This claim suggests that the personal mode of divine naming operates in a personal manner, by means of divine self-revelation or divine self-communication. More fully, it suggests that, in creating a community of knowledge and speech by means of self-revelation, God himself becomes “a member of the community of speakers” (Wolterstorff 1995, ix). Of course, because God is not in a class with creatures, he cannot, in a strict sense, be “a member of the community of speakers.” Merold Westphal is right: “Any truly biblical theology should make God’s participation in our speech community ‘deeply idiosyncratic’ since God occupies a normative standing that is utterly unique” (1997, 529). What we need, then, is an account of the personal manner of divine naming that honors both the reality of God’s “absolute singularity” and the reality that God “names Godself and enters into communication with what is other” (Desmond 2008, 281). In what follows, we will address this need with respect to the personal manner of divine self-naming. As we will see, the classical Protestant theological distinction between archetypal and ectypal theology, along with the various subcategories of the latter, provides Christological clarity and focus regarding the “utterly unique” manner in which God reveals himself by himself to his people.

Archetypal theology. “Archetypal theology” refers to the triune God’s unique and exclusive self-knowledge: “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son” (Matt. 11:27). “No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11). Archetypal theology, according to Franciscus Junius’s description, is “the divine wisdom of divine matters.” Because it is divine, this wisdom is “borne above and beyond every genus.” It is also “devoid of parts, and succession, and of all motion. It is incommunicable, for it is a unique characteristic of deity, and accordingly cannot be shared with any created thing, or communicated to anything afterward that is something different from God.” For this reason, archetypal theology is not something we should “seek to trace out,” so far does it outstrip the feeble capacities of human knowledge and wisdom. Before archetypal theology rather we should “stand in awe” – “Whatever we can say about this wisdom is nothing in comparison to it. Whatever it is, it is infinite; it cannot be expressed. It is in itself amazing, and we ought to behold it with highest reverence” (Junius 2014, 107–12).

Ectypal theology. Archetypal theology refers to God's infinite ocean of wisdom, which "we must worship rather than seek to trace out." Though we cannot fathom the depths of this infinite ocean, we may nevertheless draw upon "the rivers that are communicated through it and flow from it." Divine wisdom is the mother of creaturely wisdom, and this creaturely wisdom is the subject of "ectypal theology." "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). "No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God," but, by God's grace, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God" (1 Cor. 2:11–12). According to Junius, ectypal theology is "the wisdom of divine matters, fashioned by God from the archetype of Himself, through the communication of grace for His own glory" (Junius 2014, 109–13).

Ectypal theology, which God patterns after his own archetypal theology and which he communicates to us by his grace and for his glory, is divisible into three genera: the theology of the incarnate Word or the "theology of union in Christ," the theology of the blessed in heaven or the "theology of vision," and the theology of pilgrims or the "theology of revelation":

The first theology is the highest and most complete of them all, from which we all draw (John 1:16). And it exists in Christ according to His humanity. The second theology is perfect, by which blessed spirits acquire in the heavens the glorious vision of God and by which we ourselves will, in the same way, see God (1 John 3:2). The third, finally, is not perfect in its own right, but rather through the revelation of faith it has been so endowed with the principles of the same truth that it can conveniently be called full and complete from our perspective. Yet it is incomplete if it should be compared with that heavenly theology for which we hope, as the apostle taught the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13:12). (Junius 2014, 119–20)

The theology of union in Christ. According to Junius: "The theology, which we call that of union, is the whole wisdom of divine matters, communicated to Christ as God-man, that is, as the Word made flesh, according to his humanity" (2014, 86). As a consequence of the incarnation, the Word who *shares* archetypal theology with the Father in the Spirit *receives* ectypal theology from the Father by the Spirit in his human nature in order to *communicate* that theology to us. Like all ectypal theology, the theology of union is an accommodated, human form of theology, capable of growth, development, and expansion (Allen 2009, 36–68). However, unlike other

forms of ectypal theology, this human theology subsists in the Word, who expresses “His own eternal radiance” in his human nature “most fully and perfectly.” For this reason, all other forms of ectypal theology draw their wisdom from this Christological fountain:

For because the knowledge of the divine is an unapproachable fountain and great abyss, it was definitely necessary that wisdom be supplied to that humanity which God assumed, like a most abounding stream but adjusted to created things. From this we all will drink, just as water-masters offer to those who thirst water flowing from an unapproachable fountain or drawn from a reservoir or lake. (Junius 2014, 121–5)

The preceding discussion clarifies how we may affirm God’s self-revelation to creatures by creatures without subsuming God under a generic category of creaturely speakers. God’s revelation in the incarnate Son (i.e., the theology of union) is distinct from God’s revelation to the saints in heaven (i.e., the theology of vision) in that the former is a mode of God’s revelation to creatures by creatures, whereas the latter is a mode of God’s revelation to creatures by the divine essence itself. Because the incarnate Son is *what* we are, because he is a human being, both the theology of union and the pilgrim theology that flows therefrom are human modes of theology: modes of God revealing himself to creatures by creatures. The theology of union nevertheless transcends all other forms of God’s revelation to creatures by creatures because, in and through the incarnate Son, God reveals himself by himself.

In the incarnation, the Son of God personally assumes human nature in order to live out “in a fully human form the mode of relationship among Father, Son, and Spirit in the Trinity” (Tanner 2001, 19). Consequently, that which distinguishes Jesus from other individuals has nothing to do with that which he shares with other human beings and other creatures and everything to do with his divine personal identity and mission: “What is unusual about Jesus – what sets him apart from other people – is his relationship to God (his relationship to the Word who assumes his humanity as his own), the shape of his way of life (as the exhibition of the triune life on a human level), and his effects on others (his saving significance)” (Tanner 2001, 20). Because the incarnate Son of God is not *who* we are, because he is not one human person among many, the theology of union is “enhyposstatic” in character, a theology “personalized” by its subsistence in the second person of the Trinity. In the incarnation, the Son of God *personally*

assumes our nature, our mode of learning, and our mode of teaching (Isa. 50:4) and in doing so makes them vehicles of divine *self*-interpretation: “No one has ever seen God; the only begotten God, who is at the Father’s side, he has explained him” (John 1:18).

Because the theology of union is “the highest and most complete” (Junius 2014, 119–20) form of ectypal theology, from which all other forms of ectypal theology flow, there is an analogy between God’s self-revelation in the incarnate Son and God’s self-revelation in the writings of the prophets and apostles. According to Thomas Aquinas, the same self-interpreting Word who speaks in the incarnation spoke in the past “through the prophets, who made him known to them to the extent that they shared in the eternal Word. Hence they said things like, ‘The Word of the Lord came to me’” (2010, 90). The same Word who *assumes* human nature in the incarnation *appropriates* the words of human ambassadors in the production of Holy Scripture.⁸ Though “utterly unique” in his triune mode of being and action, God is thus able to speak to creatures by creatures “in many ways” – in his incarnate Son, in the writings of the prophets and apostles (Heb. 1:1–4; 2:1–4) – assuming and appropriating our language and our mode of understanding as enhyposstatic vehicles of his utterly unique, personal self-revelation.

God reveals *himself* by himself. This claim suggests that the personal mode of divine naming operates not only in a personal manner but also in view of a personal end, the revelation of God’s personal identity in God’s personal proper name. According to Thomas Aquinas, “The proper name of any person signifies that whereby the person is distinguished from all other persons” (Aquinas, *ST* 1a.33.2). The personal end of divine naming is the revelation of the personal proper name of the triune Lord. The revelation of God’s personal proper name – the name of YHWH, which is also the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – is the supreme form of divine naming available to the theology of pilgrims. In and by this name, God reveals his utterly unique identity to creatures by creatures, opening up a community of mutual address and mutual benediction for the glory of his name.

Critics of the personal mode of divine naming would remind us that preference for the “particular” over the “general” in the doctrine of God is not in itself a sufficient protocol against idolatry. The ordinary manner in “which we identify things and single them out as members of a world” presupposes that each *particular* thing is a certain *sort* of thing, that each *particular* thing belongs to a *larger class* of things (Davies 1988, 51, 53).

Given the fact that God is not in a class with creatures, identifying and distinguishing God's personal identity cannot therefore be a matter of identifying and distinguishing him as one personal being with one personal history among others, despite the attraction such an approach has held for contemporary theology (Swain 2013). What we need, again, is an account of the personal end of divine naming that honors both the reality of God's "absolute singularity" and the reality that God "names Godself and enters into communication with what is other" (Desmond 2008, 281). This need is met in the Tetragrammaton, God's "incommunicable name" (Wis.14:21), and in the tripersonal identification of those who share "the name": the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). On this topic as well, Thomas Aquinas and the Protestant Orthodox theologians who follow him are instructive guides.

Thomas addresses the topic of God's "most proper name" in articles nine and eleven of the 13th question of the *prima pars* (Maurer 1990; Soulen 2011, 73–82). There he mentions three candidates for this singular honor: "He Who Is," "God," and "the Tetragrammaton of the Hebrews." According to Thomas, each of these, for different reasons, might be considered worthy candidates for God's most proper name. "He Who Is" deserves consideration because God revealed this name to Moses in Exodus 3:13–14, because this name signifies that God alone exists by nature, because it signifies the unbounded character of God's perfection, and because it signifies the nature of God's eternal existence (*ST* 1a.13.11). "God" deserves consideration for the honor of God's most proper name because it signifies God's unique divine nature, which is incommunicable to creatures (*ST* 1a.13.9). Finally, "the Tetragrammaton of the Hebrews" deserves consideration above other candidates because, unlike "He Who Is" and "God," this name does not function as a *description* of God's nature but *refers* to God in his incommunicable "this-ness." Whereas "He Who Is" most fully describes God's infinite ocean of being, and whereas "God" describes his incommunicable nature, the Tetragrammaton functions as God's proper name in the purest sense. The Tetragrammaton signifies God's "suppositum ... as he is considered *this something*" (*ST* 1a.13.9). The Tetragrammaton signifies "the substance of God itself, incommunicable and, if one may so speak, singular" (*ST* 1a.13.11).

A number of Protestant theologians follow Thomas's identification of the Tetragrammaton as the most proper name for God.⁹ According to the Leiden Synopsis, "God has set himself apart from everything particularly by his special name, that is, the *Tetragrammaton*." Because it is "the proper

name of God,” it is “incommunicable” (Te Velde 2015: 159). Both Johann Gerhard and Francis Turretin devote extensive attention to the question, “Whether the name ‘Jehovah’ is proper to God” (Gerhard 2007, 27–44; Turretin 1992, 183–7), and conclude affirmatively “that this name is so peculiar to God as to be altogether incommunicable to creatures” (Turretin 1992, 184). For these Protestant theologians, identifying the Tetragrammaton as God’s proper name is not simply a matter of faithful exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures but also a matter of orthodox Trinitarian theology. Their identification of the Tetragrammaton as God’s proper name is central to their defense of the deity of Jesus Christ against Socinianism. The fact that God’s incommunicable name, which cannot be given to any creature (Isa. 42:8), is given to the Son (Jer. 23:6) indicates that he is God.¹⁰ Kendall Soulen’s recent work (2011) confirms this conclusion: the sharing of God’s personal proper name, along with its various surrogates, by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is a central feature of New Testament naming of the Trinity.

In the Tetragrammaton, then, God names himself, setting himself apart from creatures in a manner that signifies his incommunicable divine identity. Unlike creatures, whose personal proper names distinguish them even while presupposing their membership in various systems of creaturely classification, the Tetragrammaton distinguishes God in a manner that signifies his transcendence of all systems of creaturely classification. As the *idem per idem* construction of Exodus 3:14 and 33:19 indicates, God names himself relative only to himself (Saner 2015, 226–30). The Tetragrammaton signifies the absolutely self-referential nature of God’s being: “I am who I am” (Ex. 3:14), and also the absolutely self-referential nature of God’s action: “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy” (Ex. 33:19).

Furthermore, the sharing of God’s personal proper name by the three persons of the Trinity transforms the significance of names that are otherwise common to God and creatures, that is, “father,” “son,” and “spirit.” As the language of prepositional metaphysics in 1 Corinthians 8:6 requires that we understand the relationship between the Father and Jesus Christ in a manner that is categorically different from the way we understand the relationship between God and his creatures, so the sharing of “the name” (an “oblique reference” to the Tetragrammaton; Soulen 2011, 176) by “the Father,” “the Son,” and “the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19) requires that we interpret the latter names according to the law of the Tetragrammaton’s absolutely self-referential nature. Three implications follow regarding the

distinctive nature of God's triune identity and the distinctive manner of its self-communication to creatures.

1. The sharing of God's personal proper name by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit indicates that, although God's name, YHWH, is incommunicable *with respect to creatures*, it is not incommunicable *with respect to the blessed Trinity*. The Father gives the name of the Lord to the Son (John 17:11; Phil. 2:9–11). And the Spirit of the Lord, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, also shares the name of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17). The utter *communicability* of God's name within God's triune life thus illumines the significance of the apostolic claim, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). God's being, which is wholly intelligible in the Father of lights (James 1:17), is wholly communicable in the eternal Word (John 1:1), who is the radiance of the Father's glory (Heb. 1:3), and wholly comprehensible to the Spirit, who "searches everything, even the depths of God" (1 Cor. 2:10).
2. The sharing of God's personal proper name, YHWH, among the three persons of the Trinity also clarifies the significance of the names that distinguish the three persons *from each other*. The names of "the Father," "the Son," and "the Spirit" indicate *the distinct personal ways* in which God's singular being, signified by the Tetragrammaton, is perfectly communicated among the three persons of the Trinity *relative to each other*. The first person of the Trinity is named "the Father" because he eternally communicates God's singular being to the second person of the Trinity through eternal generation. The second person of the Trinity is named "the Son" because he eternally receives God's singular being from the first person of the Trinity through eternal generation. The third person of the Trinity is named "the Spirit" because he eternally receives God's singular being from the first and second persons of the Trinity through eternal spiration. The names "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" are not creaturely metaphors that we apply to God. Considered with respect to the order of being, if not with respect to the order of knowing, these names signify the truth about God's being in its eternal, internal modes of self-communication before they signify truths about creatures. Consequently, when God speaks his triune name to us, though he speaks to us in our language, he speaks first and foremost of himself (Aquinas, *ST* 1a.33.2).

3. Finally, the sharing of God's personal proper name by the Father, the Son, and the Spirit also sheds further light on the distinctive nature of God's self-revelation. The doctrine of the Trinity, as derived from God's triune name, not only specifies the distinctive shape of God's being in its eternal, internal modes of self-communication. The doctrine of the Trinity also specifies the distinctive shape of God's temporal, external manner of self-communication to creatures. The Father, who utters an eternal Word in the eternal begetting of the Son, utters the self-same Word to Moses at the burning bush, revealing the Tetragrammaton, and sends the self-same Word to become flesh in order that he might more fully reveal the invisible God to his creaturely brothers and sisters (John 1:1, 12, 14, 18). The Father, who with the Son eternally breathes forth the Spirit, sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we are enabled to cry, "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:4–7), and whereby we are enabled to call upon Jesus as "Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3). God's internal relations in which God's triune being subsists thus determine the shape of God's external relations in which God's triune being communicates itself to creatures, making itself the object of creaturely knowledge, trust, and adoration.

Conclusion

The locus on divine naming is a source of considerable controversy in contemporary theology. The present chapter has engaged this controversy by addressing the question of whether metaphysical and personal modes of divine naming belong together in the Christian doctrine of God. Answering in the affirmative, it has attempted to account for both the distinction and the harmony that characterize these two modes of naming in light of Holy Scripture and in a manner that does not fall prey to an idolatrous confusion of God and creatures. In drawing our argument to its conclusion, it is worth reminding ourselves that the ultimate purpose of theological reflection upon the name of the Lord lies in honoring the name of the Lord. Above all, "we must acknowledge only him, and we must bless, honour, worship, and serve only him, and adore, praise, invoke, and glorify him in words and deeds (Romans 1:21; Titus 1:16). This is actually the goal and purpose of knowing God" (Te Velde 2015, 181).

Notes

- 1 Exceptions to this general tendency may be found among contemporary Roman Catholic theologians such as Levering (2004) and White (2015).
- 2 For an introduction to Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of God, see Te Velde (2006) and Emery (2007). For the complex reception of medieval thought, including that of Thomas Aquinas, in the Protestant Orthodox doctrine of God, see Muller (2003, 2012); Te Velde (2013); Rehnman (2013); and Cleveland (2013).
- 3 For three recent but differing evaluations of Thomas's "five ways," see Feser (2009); Pawl (2012); and Davies (2014).
- 4 Ephesians 3:14–15 seems to identify God as both the efficient and exemplary cause of creatures. Not only is he the *source*: "every family in heaven and on earth" is "of" or "from" him. He is also the *pattern*: every "*patria*" is named after him, the "*pater*." Compare the language of Ephesians 3:14–15 with that of Ephesians 4:6, which also employs the language of prepositional metaphysics.
- 5 According to Moo (2000), the description, "Father of lights," likely refers to God's identity as creator of the heavenly lights.
- 6 Rudi Te Velde calls this approach to divine naming "transgeneric predication" (2006, 112).
- 7 Here I draw on the distinction between "concepts" and "judgments" in Yeago (1994).
- 8 For a more detailed account of the relationship between the incarnate Word and his prophetic and apostolic ambassadors, see Swain (2011). For an account which does not draw upon the incarnational analogy, see Webster (2012).
- 9 Soulen fails to observe the extensive attention that Protestants devote to this issue (2011, 104). Cf. Richard Muller (2003, 246–73). As is common in the case of Protestant Orthodox theologians, it is difficult to tell in many cases whether they are following Thomas Aquinas directly on this point, following Moses Maimonides, whom Thomas appears to follow, or following some other source.
- 10 See, for example, the extensive treatment of the issue in Ridgley (1855, 170–9).

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Nature and Grace

Paul Helm

In one of his anti-Pelagian writings, *On Nature and Grace*, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) says:

Man's nature, indeed, was created at first faultless and without any sin; but that nature of man in which every one is born from Adam, now wants the Physician, because he is not sound. All good qualities, no doubt, which it still possesses in its make, life, senses, intellect, it has from the Most High God, its Creator and Maker. But the flaw, which darkens and weakens all those natural goods, so that it has need of illumination and healing, it has not contracted from its blameless Creator – but from that original sin which it committed by free will. (Augustine 1971, 122)

Augustine here provides the main elements of the doctrine and dialectic of “nature and grace” as it came to be taken on and discussed at length by the medieval church, and later by Reformed theologians. Augustine does not mean “nature” in the modern scientific sense, as “physical nature,” nor in the modern secular sense, as in “natural rights.” This distinctiveness regarding nature carries through the Christian tradition, being weakened and confused at the end of the seventeenth century with the combined effect of the Counter-Reformation, the rise of modern science, and the Enlightenment.

Thomas Aquinas, writing nearly a thousand years after Augustine, takes up the theme at the outset of the *Summa Theologiae* (Aquinas 1963–80 [ST]), where he discusses the legitimate place of human reasoning in teaching the faith:

All the same holy teaching also uses human reasoning, not indeed to prove the faith, for that would take away from the merit of believing, but to make

manifest some implications of its message. Since grace does not scrap nature but brings it to perfection [*Cum igitur gratia non tollat naturam sed perficiat*], so also natural reason should assist faith as the natural loving bent of the will yields to charity. St. Paul speaks of *bringing into captivity every understanding unto the service of Christ*. Hence holy teaching uses the authority of philosophers who have been able to perceive the truth by natural reasoning, for instance when St. Paul quotes the saying of Aratus, *As some of your poets have said, we are of the race of God*. (ST 1a.1.8.2)

Aquinas's sentence considered in isolation may mislead. By the perfection of nature Aquinas is not sponsoring a theological naturalism, much less is he claiming a perfectionism (see his remarks on the "wounds of nature" in ST 1a2ae. 85.3). It may be thought that grace *perfecting* nature is hyperbolic. But not if viewed eschatologically: he is maintaining that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ brings humankind to the true end of its creation, regenerate and reembodyed and enjoying the *visio dei*, as in I John 3:2.

Human reason and the operation of the senses, while parts of fallen nature, are yet of sufficient reliability and efficacy to identify and to apprehend enough of the sentences of the faith to draw out some of their implications. And the disordered *imago dei*, at the heart of nature, is restored by grace. But more than that, the faithful Christian can also make use of those outside the Church who have (unknown to themselves) spoken the truth (Acts 17:28).

Aquinas on Natural Law and Natural Theology

Augustine's discerning use of "law" in his writings is not a direct consequence of the earlier grace-and-nature motif but a development of the idea of natural law, found in St Paul. Book III of the *Confessions* has an interesting discussion regarding inward justice, law, and custom. Augustine opposes custom "to the inward justice which judges not by custom but by the most righteous law of almighty God" (1992, 44).

Augustine takes note of Paul's references to natural law in Romans in a number of places, notably in *The Free Choice of the Will* (1964, I.6). This law is known by reason and implanted in the conscience. He discusses moral laws and physical laws (see also 1945, 19.12; 1990, 22.27). Natural law, however, has to await scholasticism, which clarifies its character and its

relation to the eternal law. Thomas discusses such matters in his *Summa Theologiae* (1963–80 [ST] 1a2ae.9 and subsequently), distinguishing four types of law: eternal, natural, human, and divine.

Aquinas discussed the theme of natural law at greatest length in considering what he calls “the Old Law,” that is, the legal system of the Old Testament (ST 1a2ae.98–105). He maintains: “The Old Law clearly set forth the obligations of the natural law, and over and above these added certain precepts of its own” (1a2ae.98.5). The setting forth of the natural law in the Old Law was entirely appropriate, since, though with regard to those precepts of the natural law which are absolutely, universally accepted, “man’s reason could not be misled in principle . . . , it could be confused by the effect of habitual sin as to what ought to be done in particular cases” (1a2ae.99.2). Here, Aquinas recognizes that there is an overlap between Old Law (the Decalogue) and the content of the natural law. And Aquinas reckoned that the identification and application of natural law is spoiled by sin. Further, he draws a threefold distinction between moral, ceremonial, and judicial precepts of the Old Law. “The moral precepts, as distinct from the ceremonial and judicial, are concerned with matters which, of their very nature, belong to right conduct” (1a2ae.100.1). Finally, because the precepts of the Decalogue are, in all essentials, the natural law, they may be understood by natural reason.

Thus, for Aquinas, the Decalogue supplements natural law. It provides a set of applications from the natural law which all individuals could have worked out for themselves by the use of reason drawing upon their innate moral principles, their personal endowment of the moral law, at least insofar as these applications do not (as with the fourth commandment) involve a ceremonial element. In addition, there are precepts that “wise men” find by careful examination to be implied by both the basic moral principles and the precepts of the middle range. Such a principle might perhaps be that it is permissible to kill an enemy in prosecution of a just war.

Thomas’s positions on natural law parallel his views on natural theology. We might legitimately discuss what importance Aquinas’s natural theology has for his religious epistemology as a whole, but there is no denying the fact of it. By reason alone, starting from self-evident principles, any sufficiently intelligent rational person with sufficient time may demonstrate that God exists. This is what Aquinas thought Paul was teaching in Romans 1. Natural theology is possible but not necessary for faith, and some must accept as *opinio* with a considerable degree of certitude what for others is *scientia*.

The Early Reformers: John Calvin

I shall not argue directly that Aquinas, among medievals, is the overwhelming orientation of the Reformers and their followers. I have argued for this in the case of Calvin (Helm 2004, ch.1) and Richard Muller has shown that Aquinas is the dominant influence in the case of the later Reformed Orthodoxy, which is not to say that individuals never appeal to Duns Scotus (Muller 2012). Here I shall note some evidence for the central influence of Aquinas.

For instance, in *Institutes* I.5 and also in his *Commentary on Acts*, Calvin reflects on the cosmological implications of the orderliness and beauty of nature and of the workings of humankind, and sees Paul as doing the same when preaching at Lystra and Athens. Such reflections constitute “common proofs” which have value but require the Scriptures, the “addition of his word,” to give them their full significance (1559, 1.6.1; 1979a *loc. cit.*). Thus Calvin treated the themes Aquinas discussed, with a rather different balance but a similar outcome.

In the *Institutes* Calvin discusses nature before he discusses grace, under the rubric of the twofold knowledge of God and of ourselves, particularly in Book I.3 and I.5. The former discusses the *sensus divinitatis* (or *semen religionis*), the universal awareness that God exists. Though this awareness is perverted by the Fall, it is not obliterated. The moral sense, and particularly the conscience, testifies to standards which we fail to achieve. Although also perverted, it is still operative, as is seen by the almost universal religiosity of humankind and by the conscience which may prick and terrify even the minds of professing atheists (1559, 2.13).

In his *Commentary* on Romans 2:14, 15 Calvin says that people do not have full knowledge of the law, only some seeds of what is right implanted in their nature, some notions of justice and rectitude. Yet these seeds grew and blossomed. All nations “of themselves and without a monitor, are disposed to make laws for themselves ... laws to punish adultery, and theft and murder, they commended good faith in bargains and contracts” (1979b, 98). Thus while the seed of religion remaining in fallen human nature has a moral dimension, this seed does not remain dormant but may express itself in laws which fairly closely shadow the laws of the Decalogue.

When Calvin uses the term “natural law” it means at least “a law that is not in fact specially i.e. verbally revealed by God, though one that is revealable in this way.”

Furthermore, seeing that we should not operate in such a way by either finesse or subtlety, it is crucial for us to return to that natural law [*équité naturelle*], which is, that we ought to do unto others as we want them to do unto us. When we follow that rule, it is unnecessary to have thick tomes in order to learn not to steal, for, in brief, everyone knows how he ought to walk with his fellowman, that is, that he should not harbor malice, or attempt to enrich himself at his neighbor's expense, or gain for himself substance which is not his own. (1980, 189)

Without being aware of Jesus's teaching, everyone knows what the Golden Rule implies. Thus Calvin appears to hold that the law of nature is that law of God concerning humanity's relationship to God, and the relationship of people with each other which is known to some degree by all human beings, for even "barbarians" are not as barbaric as could be.

As for the natural law itself, important similarities exist between Aquinas and Calvin. Each bases his view on Romans 2:14–15, maintains that the Decalogue contains the natural law clearly set forth, and subscribes to the threefold distinction between moral, ceremonial, and judicial precepts of the Mosaic Law and the position of the Decalogue as expository of the natural law (Calvin 1559, IV.20.15). For Calvin, knowledge of the natural law is expressed in terms of tendencies and dispositions (see Backus 2003).

What Calvin says about the "civic" use of the law, its function as a socially enforced deterrent against evil, is consistent with what he says about the relation between natural law and the Decalogue. He does not argue that people obey the law because they see it to be reasonable and disobey it because they judge it to be unreasonable, but it deters (when it does) because of the sanctions of the law:

For they are restrained, not because their inner mind is stirred or affected, but because, being bridled, so to speak, they keep their hands from outward activity, and hold inside the depravity that otherwise they would wantonly have indulged. Consequently, they are neither better nor more righteous before God. Hindered by fright or shame, they dare neither execute what they have conceived in their minds, nor openly breathe forth the rage of their lust. Still, they do not have hearts disposed to fear and obedience toward God. (1559, II.7.10)

Thus only the motivation and the moral power that regenerating grace provides secures even the prospect of a properly motivated obedience to the moral law. Aquinas would broadly agree with this. Civic virtues are distinct from theological virtues.

Calvin holds that the classical philosophers and the Roman Church generally underestimated the noetic effects of sin. He thinks that the idea that sin is solely a matter of sensuality prevails with them, whereas for Calvin sin affects the understanding and will, not by destroying but by depraving it. In particular, the moral understanding is not completely wiped out, but is choked with ignorance and prejudice, and thus without divine grace the will cannot strive after what is right.

Peter Martyr Vermigli

Unlike Calvin, his contemporary and friend Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) had a thorough scholastic education. Yet despite differences in education and outlook, Vermigli takes a broadly similar view to Calvin's. He treats Romans 1:19 along similar lines. Paul taught the everlasting power of God and his divinity, disclosed through the beauty, appearance, and variety of things and the providence and wisdom disclosed in them (Vermigli 1996a, 18; generally, see Grabill 2006). But fallen humanity abuses the natural gifts, the knowledge of God the Creator.

Insofar as any emphasis falls upon “man the knower,” Vermigli distinguishes between the “wise men” and philosophers who corrupted what they received and “the ignorant masses,” whom they led astray. Presumably the latter were liable to be misled because they were lapsed every bit as much as their teachers: “For he continually holds open the book of creation before our eyes; he is always illuminating and calling us; but we regularly turn our minds away from his teaching, and are busy elsewhere. Therefore, God will cast us out as unworthy pupils, nor will he endure so great an injury with impunity” (Vermigli 1996a, 20).

Vermigli gave extensive lectures on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Although incomplete, they run to over 400 pages in translation (see 1996b). In the *Commentary* Vermigli gives chief attention to an intensive discussion of Aristotle's text. He provides a scriptural support or comment on what has just been discussed, using words such as, “It remains to look at how the above statements agree with holy scripture” (1996b, 47). What follows may turn out to endorse Aristotle's doctrine by Scripture, as when Vermigli provides biblical examples of different types of voluntary action and their value. Or it could remind the reader that since Aristotle knew nothing of the grace of justification or of the life to come, his definition or characterization of happiness is in some way deficient (1996b, 216).

The Reformed Orthodox

Among those Reformed Orthodox whose lives straddled the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Franciscus Junius (1545–1602) is noteworthy. In his 1594 work *The Mosaic Polity* he reaffirms that “grace perfects nature, grace does not, however abolish it” (2014, 38). So laws for Christian people build on natural laws for men and women generally.

Examining the forms of teaching in the growing number of Reformed academies sheds further light on early Reformed attitudes to the nature-and-grace motif. Donald Sinnema (1993) has examined the practice of two of these, which he reckons indicates a variety of attitudes among Reformed teachers toward pagan authors such as Aristotle and the Stoics. Yet the range of attitude is not great. For example, Sinnema discusses and contrasts Lambert Daneau (1530–95) and Bartholemew Keckermann (1572/3–1609). Daneau’s teaching at Geneva (as assistant to Theodore Beza) resulted in the first Reformed work on ethics, *Ethices Christianae Libri III*, in 1577. He emphasizes that Christian ethics is to be based on Scripture. But it was inevitable that even someone basing ethics on Scripture would draw comparisons with pagan philosophers, and be influenced by the likes of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. By contrast Keckermann, who taught in his native Danzig, offers a less directly scriptural approach to ethics than Daneau, regarding it strictly as a philosophical discipline. Hence he avows natural law more explicitly, for which Aristotle is a valuable resource, but also holds that what the pagans teach about virtue must be corrected and developed from Scripture. Thus, although intentionally somewhat different in method, both authors find themselves indebted to Aristotle in one way or another. Both writers may be said to work in the style of Vermigli.

The Seventeenth Century

The Genevan theologian Francis Turretin (1623–87) developed a general approach to the senses in relation to the revealed mysteries. In his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, published 1688–90, he inquired when the senses are relevant in the appraisal of a doctrine or revealed truth. The evidence of the senses is to be admitted when it deals with an area of doctrine in which that sort of evidence is relevant, when “a spiritual is joined with a corporeal thing” (1992–7, I.11.5). But how far ought we trust the senses in these matters? They are not infallible, for they are subject to our imaginations and pre-dispositions, tiredness, and “fevers and delirium” (1992–7, I.11.5). It is necessary therefore to test the senses, in obvious ways.

Whatever happened in the Fall, reason is not lost, otherwise humanity would have been lost, but wounded. The skewing of reason is, or leads to, the loss of “right” reason. Here it is helpful to allude to the distinction that is characteristic of Reformed theology of this period between the image of God in its “wide” and “narrow” senses. The loss of initial righteousness (which was metaphysically speaking, an adventitious property), led to a disordering of what remained, the essential properties of human nature (1992–7, 9.11.3).

Although the human understanding is very dark, yet there still remains in it some rays of natural light and certain first principles, the truth of which is unquestionable, such as, the whole is greater than its part, an effect supposes a cause, to be and not to be at the same time is incompatible, etc. If this were not the case, there could be no science, nor art, nor certainty in the nature of things. These first principles are not only true in nature, but also in grace and the mysteries of faith. (1992–7, I: 29–30)

Besides stressing human finiteness, and the consequent mysteriousness to us of the doctrines of our faith, Turretin also maintains that these gifts of God are universally corrupted by sin, and that for a true, spiritual understanding of the teaching of Holy Scripture, and the appropriate responses of faith and obedience, the regenerating and illuminating works of the Holy Spirit are necessary and indispensable. He is, when all is said and done, a Reformed theologian.

That’s the domain of nature, clearly enough. So what about grace? Besides the resources of unaided senses and intellect, which are natural epistemic powers, there is need for the resources of supernatural epistemic powers.

Thus Turretin argues for the twofold knowledge of God, God our creator and God our redeemer, in true Calvinist fashion. To know God the creator, special revelation and divine grace are every bit as much needed as they are to know God the redeemer in Christ. Nevertheless, there is some rudimentary and rather inchoate knowledge of God the creator that everyone possesses. It is this God, the creator and sustainer of nature, who is our redeemer in Christ. In such ways grace builds upon nature; it does not destroy it.

The Puritans

The 1647 *Westminster Confession of Faith* has a number of references to natural law and its epistemic consequences as well as significant statements regarding the interaction between nature and grace. Its opening words are

“Although the light of nature . . .” (*Westminster Confession* 1869, I.1). That is, this light provides to all people rudimentary evidence that God exists, reflecting Romans 1:19–20. Chapter XIX.2-3 states that the law given to Adam was a perfect law of righteousness, the moral law. According to Chapter XXI.7, it is a deliverance of the law of nature “that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God.” And Chapter X.2 states that in the initial workings of regeneration a person is “altogether passive therein, until, being renewed and quickened by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the gospel offered and conveyed in it.”

It is perhaps a surprise that John Owen, now best known for his “experimental” theology and for his Christology, had a considerable interest in natural theology. By this he meant not only or chiefly the cosmological proofs, but used the phrase in reference to what remains of the initial endowment of humanity. Natural theology is the study of God as he reveals himself to human nature, whether in an empirical fashion, through intuition, or in a more discursive way:

We do not say that men are born instructed with a knowledge of God: they have none at all. However we say that they have a power to know, not that they know and perceive naturally. For we perceive that there is no less reason why we should believe that each person retains an implanted power of knowing God including adults in possession of their faculties spontaneously in some way towards the performance his worship [sic], than that they certainly and necessarily reason. (Owen quoted in Rehnman 2002, 75)

This is a similar structure to the medievals, but with a more pessimistic attitude than they to the successful operation of these innate powers and whatever they produce. This activity renders human beings in their natural state without excuse, because they do not, or do not fully, follow up the evidence of the *sensus divinitatis*.

Two Examples Outside the Mainstream

We have been tracing the trajectory of nature and grace, a linkage that started with Augustine, through Aquinas’s developments, and was endorsed by the early Reformers and the later Reformed Orthodox and the Puritans, the formative periods of Reformed theology. It has to be borne in mind that these developments produced different understandings of nature and grace.

I give two examples below. They each fall outside the mainstream, one in Roman Catholicism and another in Protestantism.

“Pure Nature”

In the first place, we must note the development of nature and grace in Roman Catholicism in the direction of “pure nature.” “Pure nature” is the idea that the Fall left human nature intact, hence “pure.” Cardinal Thomas Cajetan (1469–1534) argued that the Fall resulted in the loss of the supernatural gifts, leaving a person in such a natural state (i.e., one that is connatural) which is simply strengthened by God to receive his grace. “Therefore the vision of God is in no way natural to our soul, but only in a certain respect, in that man is capable of it on the basis of his nature” (Cajetan 1888, 71). This became part of later Thomism. With respect to the Fall and its effects, humanity is left in a “state of nature” after the event of the Fall, carrying with it the capacity to intend and to fulfill lesser ends. So in this sense the Fall left human nature “intact” (Stone 2005, 71–2).

This view influenced Counter-Reformation debates on grace in the light of the Reformers and especially of Cornelius Jansenius (1585–1638) and later Jansenists. According to Henri de Lubac (2000) the idea of pure nature is that of a created nature that is self-sufficient and entire. Grace is unnecessary for nature to raise itself (or to be raised) to God. De Lubac also believes that the position of Counter-Reformation theologians such as Gabriel Vasquez (1549–1604), Robert Bellarmine (1542–1610), Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), and Leonard Lessius (1554–1623) led to an overreaction in a non-Augustinian direction which gave renewed support to the intactness of human nature after the Fall.

Roland Teske endorses Jansenius’s view that the idea of “pure nature” in Counter-Reformation scholasticism arose from the more abstract thought of Aristotle respecting human nature and its natural virtue rather than from sacred history, which was Augustine’s starting point. No doubt it was also the fruit of speculations regarding God’s absolute power, for it was alleged that God could have created human beings without sanctifying grace and without having as their end the vision of God (Teske, 1998).

The Augustinian Michael Baius (1513–89) challenged such a view (1566). According to him, to be in a natural state is to be in accordance with true unfallen nature, to have an appetite for God which is intrinsic to creation in the divine image, and to fulfill humanity’s true end (Stone 2005, 74). This intactness was shattered by the Fall.¹

Arminianism

Among other matters, Arminianism is noteworthy for taking a more generous estimate of the natural powers of fallen humankind, in a way similar to the Pelagianism of Augustine's time: the will is not deadened by the Fall, and divine grace assists rather than regenerates the fallen soul. With respect to reason, consider these statements by the Arminian J.A. Corvinus (d. 1650), a pupil of Arminius at Leiden and a signatory of the Remonstrance: "Although the knowledge of God which is drawn from created things is not in itself sufficient for salvation and in that sense it cannot be said to be salvific: yet that same knowledge can be said to be salvific to the extent that it is itself led to salvation and immediately precedes the knowledge conducive to salvation" (Corvinus, quoted in Platt 1982, 184). That is, the focus is not on natural knowledge rendering an individual inexcusable, but on functioning as a step that may lead to the worship of God, and if supernatural revelation is available, to a knowledge of God's revelation of his grace in Jesus Christ.

Obviously at this point there is room for a good deal of diversity of interpretation of the exact extent and character of the "image" that remains. As a consequence, there is room for diversity regarding the character of the recovery. On the view of Cajetan and others who took up his position during the Counter-Reformation, it makes much more sense, indeed perfect sense, to suppose that, whatever the effects of the Fall, they left human nature basically unaffected, and that the relation between nature and grace may be understood in terms of two distinct, contingently connected layers, the ground floor of nature and the upper floor of grace, rather than the more organic interrelatedness, and hence corruptedness, in Augustine and Aquinas, and of course in Calvin and the other Reformers, and later in Michael Baius. According to the Reformed, it is the role of grace to regenerate nature rather than merely to assist it.

The Theological World Today

If we turn our attention to some of the theological models or "hermeneutics" in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we are confronted by very different paradigms, in which nature is sidelined and grace is correspondingly more speculative. One dominant figure is Karl Barth (1886–1968), who spurned the possibility of any witness of God in nature, much less of

natural theology, claiming that such an outlook delivered a “God in general,” not the God who is in Christ. The influence of Kant, post-Kantianism, and later logical positivism is apparent here, as Bruce McCormack plainly shows (2008). Barth’s Christomonism is certainly a *tour de force*, but it appears to be grounded in a fideistic leap in which the human senses and reason can provide no foundational element.

Barth set the climate for a series of variants of his own stance, each a case stressing similar “autonomous theologies,” theologies which, in abandoning the historical understanding of nature and grace, pay the price of retreating from the general culture in which they are situated and not sustaining any overlap between that culture and the practice of theologizing.

There may be other forces at work in this modern Protestant reaction to nature and grace. But one of them cannot be that nature and grace constitute a “dualism,” except in the obvious sense that neither is reducible to the other. Nature and grace cooperate, but nature is not at the expense of grace, nor vice versa.

I shall take as a representative of modern theology the Lutheran George Lindbeck’s *The Nature of Doctrine* (1984), which espouses a form of communitarianism in which Christian doctrine chiefly instructs a Christian community how to speak and act. This approach views religion “as a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework phenomenon that shapes the entirety of life and thought” (1984, 33).

This framework functions rather like a Kantian *a priori*, although in this case the *a priori* is a set of skills that could be different from what they in fact are. “Like a culture or language, it is a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjectivities” (1984, 33). In this functional role, in the framework that shapes the entirety of religious life and thought, there is little place, or no place at all, for that community to take on language which has cognitive value either inside that community or outside its communal life. This is an outlook which needs to take note neither of nature nor of grace that completes it. As Lindbeck characterizes the framework, its “doctrines, cosmic stories or myths, and ethical directives, are integrally related to the rituals it practices, the sentiments or experiences it evokes, the actions it recommends and the institutional forms it develops” (Lindbeck 1984, 33). That is, they relate no further than the boundaries of its communal life, which they enliven, as it enlivens them.

If one attempts to relate them to the world outside, to the cultural order or to other communities, the result is either incommensurability or (in the

case of the cultural order) nothing other than a sea of secularity. If “nature” is invoked to describe the “outside” then this is nature as an abstraction rather than as order that is a divine creation with a history of its own. This state of affairs is not Lindbeck’s responsibility, but the Enlightenment’s, which he has simply taken over.

Lindbeck’s approach is frank and clear: “The function of church doctrines that becomes most prominent in this perspective is their use, not as expressive symbols or truth claims, but as communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude and action” (1984, 18).

Doctrine guides the community’s churchly activities, as rules for what to say, which feeling to cultivate in worship, and what else to do. Lindbeck might be implying that doctrine can be cognitive, giving reasons for these activities of the church, but in relations between the churches the best prospects are not for cognitive-doctrinal agreement, for that way requires capitulation of one or more parties to the other, but for concord in these rule-based activities.

Lindbeck is also frank about the character of the unquestioned cultural setting in which he makes his proposals. He traces the origins of “experiential expressivism” to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who helped to clear the ground “by demolishing the metaphysical and epistemological foundation of the earlier regnant cognitive-propositional views” (1984, 20). “The habits of thought it has fostered are ingrained in the soul of the modern West, perhaps particularly in the souls of theologians” (1984, 21).

Lindbeck notes the major influence of Ludwig Wittgenstein on his thinking. He takes up Wittgenstein’s (1953) gnomic phrases – “language game,” “theology as grammar,” and “forms of life” – as stimuli for his own work. He refers to philosopher Peter Winch and theologian Dallas High, and also to Thomas Kuhn, whose *Theory of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) claims that successive scientific theories are “incommensurable,” setting up new paradigms of understanding until insurmountable difficulties call for yet another incommensurable paradigm. This resembles how Lindbeck thinks of church communities.

These movements have a deeply unsettling (though some would say, no doubt, deeply liberating) effect on theology. One effect is to give the “practice” of doctrine a relative and subjective dimension. Lindbeck gives to doctrine a sociological application, instancing the many different Christian communities, each of which support and are supported by different “forms of life.”

Such an outlook has a strong tendency to undermine Christian theology’s own objectivity, the objectivity we have seen exemplified in the debates

about nature and grace, involving a tradition running from the Patristic period through Reformation developments. The idea of nature as God's creation and grace as his supernatural restorative action was common currency. Thus Lindbeck's outlook is representative of "postliberal" theology, of which there are many variants. The tendency of the whole lies in the translation of objective theology into variant "forms of life." Similar tendencies can be seen in Kevin Vanhoozer (2005), D. Z. Phillips (1965), and Paul Holmer (1978).

Another consideration also exposes problems with this outlook: reception of the faith involves the senses. We must hear the preacher and read the book. If the senses are systematically unreliable, each being understood in terms of one "form of life," then how can we get anywhere by studying the Bible, hearing the word, contemplating the works of God, holding conversations with others, and remembering what we have heard? Yet this was evidently the case with the disciples in the company of the incarnate Son, whom they saw, touched, and heard. Did their senses deceive them? Occasionally, but it is also the case with us.

Gnosticism is a recurrent serious distortion of the faith, though not much discussed at present. Gnosticism is the idea that true religion consists in a certain kind of knowledge or insight, discontinuous with natural languages and senses, and with what they convey, into which the would-be devotee must be initiated. In contrast to such an approach, it must be insisted anew that Christians occupy the natural world in the same way their Messiah did. This is why John was ready to emphasize that the Word of life, whom he proclaimed, was heard and seen and touched (1 John 1:1–3). The Word made flesh was a public figure.

The idea that grace builds on nature may not make many friends among the more fideistically inclined. Nevertheless, as we have seen, this is the church's historic position back at least as far as Augustine. Grace builds upon nature by, for example, not denying the powers of the human intellect and the senses. Jesus was not a fideist or a gnostic, any more than he was a skeptic. As his sufferings involved the pain and agony of his human body, so his teaching employed all the powers of his human mind, which in turn appealed to the senses and intellects and imaginations of his hearers. Employment of these powers does not deny the effects of sin on human nature any more that they make the illuminating, regenerating activity of the Holy Spirit unnecessary.

Further, reason intuitively recognizes the truth of certain propositions, such as *the whole is greater than the part, an effect supposes a cause, and it is*

impossible for something both to be and not to be at the same time. Without the recognition of these there could be neither science, art, nor certainty about anything. And these first principles are true not only in the realm of nature but also in the mysteries of the faith. Faith borrows these from reason and uses them to strengthen its own doctrines (that is, to prevent them from being misunderstood). Postliberals rely on nature in these senses, even as they ignore it in their writings.

Right reason means right *creaturely* reason, working from the standpoint of admitted creatureliness, a standpoint that recognizes the limitations of human, creaturely reason due to ignorance and finitude. Right reasoners do not change the subject when they cannot comprehend the mysteries of the faith, nor do they seek to overturn the first principles of natural religion. Rather, right reason subordinates itself to the revealed mysteries, and to the understanding of them (or the preserving of them from misunderstanding) as best it can.

Is nature an “autonomous realm”? No, nature is not a purely secular realm, the product of blind forces. This nature is the effect of God’s creative agency. He created human beings with reason, and he sustains human reason, and the senses, and memory, and conscience, all gifts of God. Is it the gift of common grace? Certainly. But there is no “dualism” between nature and grace. The crucifiers of Jesus saw and handled the same body. These structural powers – nature, reason, the senses – are upheld by sets of secondary causes, and God, the primary cause, in turn holds these in being. The whole set-up is “common” – not correlated with or determined by the incidence or power of God’s regenerating grace but distributed to human-kind in general as a result of God’s undeserved goodness.

Both the senses and reason, when used instrumentally in theology, remind us of their objective character. The appropriate use of our senses and reason does not settle all disputes, but they do make clear that faith cannot be the product of the human imagination or of the emotions. The Christian faith testifies to what has happened, and it offers reasoned elaboration and discussion of this. But not only does the faith that is confessed have objectivity, but also the subjective responses to the faith may have this same character. Here also grace builds on nature. I wish to highlight the sort of objectivity that grace has. Think for a moment of the regenerating and illuminating work of the Spirit. How does this go? The indwelling of the Spirit is not that of a new visitor who comes to the house and proceeds to do all the housework. What results from his work is a new person, a new creation, but this is not creation *ex nihilo* but the making of all things, the old things, new.

The faculties which produce the old things are not replaced by a “new sense,” a sixth sense, but they are old faculties which (through Spirit-given penitence and mortification) lose certain propensities, or have them weakened, and (through the enlightening of the Holy Spirit) gain new propensities, or a strengthening of those that exist. The old nature is not expelled like an evil spirit, but marvelously and mysteriously, although gradually and fitfully, renewed. In this way men and women are set on the road to becoming truly human, not immediately transformed into angels. Thus, while the regenerating work of the Spirit is supernatural, it cooperates with the natural, taking the initiative and fitting human nature for such cooperation.

As the employment of the natural powers of the soul give us a sense of objectivity – of the distinction between the objective and the subjective, the difference between sense and nonsense, the true and the false – so the regenerating of these faculties is an extension of the range of that objectivity through a healing of human powers.

Nature discloses to us the objectivity of divine realities, as grace builds upon nature, and we experience those realities through the character of a covenantal relationship with God. What is that relationship? At its vaguest, it is the relationship of *compliance and resistance*. As we, in negotiating our way through our physical environment, experience cooperation (as we lean on the chair) and resistance (as we skid on the ice, or crack our shin against the table leg), so the Lord calls his people into covenant relationship with him, and to experience its objective reality through the same mix of compliance and resistance, but now at a moral and religious level. The presence of this mix provides evidence of the objectivity of that covenant relationship, and of the Lord, with whom we are in covenant partnership. Thus that partnership is self-involving (a phrase Donald Evans coined), not automatically, but by the Spirit.

In any effort to rework the classic nature–grace relationship in the modern theological world, those who do so have Roman Catholics as allies. After all, we have a common ancestry. But the alliance is made difficult by the degree of abstraction with which Roman Catholic participants discuss nature and grace. They are keen to purge the historic nature–grace thinking from mistakes made (they judge) in late medieval theology and even in Thomas himself. Louis Dupré comments on a routine Roman Catholic way of discussing nature and grace:

Was innocency a purely natural state, or was it a state of grace? Is the concept of “pure nature” independent of, and juxtaposed to a supernatural order?

These questions are too abstract for the taste of the Reformed appropriation of Augustine and Aquinas. It must be noted that Augustine refers to human nature in its concrete, divinely dependent reality, and its relation to the “four-fold state” of innocence, fallenness, grace, and glory. We need to hold fast to that concreteness. (Dupré 2000, x)

Conclusion

The aim in this chapter has been to show that the trajectory of Reformed theology continued that set by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Grace builds on nature, and perfects it, or is to perfect it. The faith is not built on a Gnostic or fideistic foundation, but on human nature created after the image of God, but fallen. Fallen human nature is sufficiently intact to enable family and civic life together, and fallen humankind contains unusually gifted individuals in the arts and sciences. The fallen race has the potential for some knowledge of God through nature, and possesses civic virtue to a degree, yet fails to follow this up so as to worship and serve the Lord God their Creator, until the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is made evident.²

Notes

- 1 For further discussion on pure nature, see Vos (1985, ch. 6). For a Reformed discussion roughly contemporaneous with Baius, illustrating the slipperiness of the term “nature,” see Turretin (1992–97, I: 470–1).
- 2 I am most grateful to Professor Aza Goudriaan and the editors for making a number of helpful suggestions.

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Aquinas's Doctrine of Justification and Infused Habits in Reformed Soteriology

J. V. Fesko

How can the heirs of the Protestant Reformation positively employ Aquinas's doctrine of justification for constructive theology? Such a question might elicit responses of doubt and perplexity because, after all, the Protestant Reformation made a clean break with the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of justification. The Council of Trent condemned justification *sola fide* and codified an Augustinian-Thomist understanding of the doctrine. Protestant theologians responded in kind and rejected Rome's doctrine. So is this chapter dead on arrival? The answer to this question is, no, not necessarily. As vehemently as Protestant theologians rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification, and Aquinas's doctrine with it, they did not completely scuttle it. A key difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant doctrines of justification is that the former merges justification and sanctification while the later distinguishes them. This means that a Protestant can reject what Aquinas has to say about justification but still employ elements of his doctrine as it relates to sanctification. As a matter of history, this is precisely what many Reformation and Reformed Orthodox theologians did. They rejected what Aquinas had to say about justification but continued to employ his insights for their doctrines of sanctification.

This chapter, therefore, historically explores the Reformed use of Thomist categories of infused habits in the doctrine of sanctification. But it also proposes to retrieve this Thomist concept for contemporary Reformed soteriology. Reformed theologians have either explicitly rejected the concept of infused habits or they have become unfamiliar with the category even

though it appears in historic Reformed confessions and the works of the tradition's brightest luminaries. Given its historic use but present absence from contemporary Reformed theology, the better part of wisdom dictates that we familiarize ourselves with this concept and explore its utility for constructive Reformed theology.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. It first briefly explains Aquinas's doctrine of justification and the role of infused habits. Second, it explores the initial Protestant rejection of infused habits in the theology of Martin Luther (1483–1546). The third section examines the Reformed use of infused habits. The fourth section explores the utility of infused habits for the doctrine of sanctification against the backdrop of contemporary Reformed rejections. While present-day critics note areas of weakness in how seventeenth-century theologians employed the category, it should not be entirely rejected. Contemporary critics want to emphasize the performative nature of God's word and the critical function of the doctrine of the covenant. Rather than merely ontological categories, they promote a word-centered covenantal ontology and therefore reject infused habits. Yet, as important as word and covenant are, we must account for the *ontology* in a covenantal ontology, and infused habits provide a useful metaphysical structure to explain the nature of the doctrine of sanctification. Additionally, a casualty of rejecting infused habits has been the loss of virtue ethics, once commonplace in Reformed Orthodox theology. A benefit, therefore, of retrieving the category of infused habits is the revitalization of Reformed virtue ethics and a more robust doctrine of sanctification.

Aquinas on Justification

Before considering the Protestant reception of Aquinas's doctrine of justification, we must first briefly set forth its chief elements. Aquinas built upon Augustinian foundations of ontological-realistic categories and argued that justification was a fourfold process. In *Summa Theologiae* (1972, *ST* 1a2ae.113.8) Aquinas argues that the four parts of justification are:

1. Infusion of grace;
2. Movement of freewill (*liberi arbitrii*) towards God by faith;
3. Movement of freewill against sin;
4. Remission of sin (*remissio culpae*).

The infusion of grace is the cause of everything else that occurs in justification. For Aquinas, the infusion of grace is actually the implantation of a divinely given *habit*, or disposition – the habit of justifying faith (*ST* 2a2ae.4.1; cf. Kent 2002). In contrast to the original Aristotelian concept, in which all habits are the result of training, medieval theologians distinguished between *acquired* and *infused* habits (Wisse 2003, 175). When God infused the habit of faith into individuals, they were enabled to perform good works, which caused them to grow in righteousness and make them fit for eternal life (Davies 1993, 337). On a foundation of divine grace, namely, the infused habit of faith, believers are positively disposed to righteousness (*ST* 1a2ae.49.1). Aquinas believed that faith, as a habit, could increase or decrease (1a2ae.52.1; 53.2). Therefore, believers have to exercise their faith in order to become more righteous (McGrath 2005, 59–60). In contrast to classic Reformed soteriology, Aquinas does not distinguish between justification and sanctification – they are one and the same. But Aquinas never argues that justification, therefore, is by works. On the contrary, because everything originates with the divine infusion of grace, justification is the outworking of God’s love upon fallen sinners (Davies 1993, 338–9).

Luther’s Rejection of Habit

In one of the earliest volleys of the Protestant Reformation, Luther lodged his disagreements with the common medieval view of justification in his 1517 “Disputation Against Scholastic Theology.” Luther did not articulate a fully Protestant doctrine of justification here, but he did begin to hack at the philosophical roots of the common medieval view. Luther did not have Aquinas solely in view when he presented his disputation, as he specifically mentions John Duns Scotus (1265–1308) and Gabriel Biel (1420–95) as targets (Luther 1957a, §6). Nevertheless, Luther took issue with the role of habits in the acquisition of righteousness. In contrast to Aquinas, who argues that the infusion of grace is the first step of justification, Luther contends: “The best and infallible preparation for grace and the sole disposition toward grace is the eternal election and predestination of God” (Luther 1957a, §29). Luther moves the impelling cause for redemption into divine election, which naturally explains why he rejects the idea that human beings somehow prepare themselves for salvation: “We do not become righteous by doing righteous deeds but, having been made righteous, we do righteous deeds. This in opposition to the philosophers” (Luther 1957a, §40).

Whom does Luther specifically identify as the corrupting culprit in medieval theology? Luther writes: “Virtually the entire *Ethics* of Aristotle is the worst enemy of grace. This in opposition to the scholastics” (Luther 1957a, §41). Luther’s axe may have been specifically aimed at Scotus and Biel, but he also struck Aquinas and Aristotle in the process. As early as his 1509 commentary on Lombard’s *Sentences*, Luther leveled his Teutonic ire at Aristotle, the *rancidus philosophus* (“rancid philosopher”) and his concept of habit (Luther 1893, 43). Aquinas was explicit in his reliance upon Aristotle in his doctrine of justification (*ST* 1a2ae.113.8 *ad* 3). But more generally, Aquinas relied upon Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* to make his arguments for the necessity of grace in salvation (1a2ae.109.4 *ad* 2). Built into the concept of a habit, as Luther notes, is that one can strengthen it through repetitive exercise: “As habits are acquired by practice, they must be preserved by practice, for everything is preserved by its cause” (Aquinas 1964 §1597; cf. Aristotle 1941, VIII.v).

In his more developed thought, Luther posited two types of righteousness, that which is internal and that which is external to the redeemed sinner. In his famous 1519 sermon, “Two Kinds of Righteousness,” Luther spoke of alien righteousness, “that is the righteousness of another, instilled from without. This is the righteousness of Christ by which he justifies through faith” (Luther 1957b, 297). The second type of righteousness is “our proper righteousness,” which works and springs from the alien righteousness of Christ (Luther 1957b, 299). Luther employed another set of terms, namely, passive and active righteousness. Believers receive passive righteousness through imputation and active righteousness is inherent (Mattes 2014, 263–6). Unlike Aquinas, Luther did not locate justifying righteousness in an infused habit of grace but ultimately in Christ, and redeemed sinners receive it by imputation. Like Aquinas, Luther acknowledged that faith could be weak but believed that it was ultimately perfected by imputation until the consummation (Luther 1963, 230). In contrast to Aquinas, who viewed justification as an ongoing process driven by an Aristotelian conception of habit, Luther characterized justification as punctiliar, or in contemporary terms, eschatological. God moved the final judgment for justified sinners into the present and declared them righteous on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ (Hampson 2001, 27–30). Luther, therefore, argued that redeemed sinners are both “righteous and a sinner at the same time” (*simul iustus et peccator*) (Luther 1963, 232).

Luther did three things that shifted Protestant soteriology away from a common Augustinian-Thomistic understanding. First, he rejected the concept of an infused habit in connection with the acquisition of

righteousness for justification. Instead, he spoke of imputed rather than infused righteousness. Second, he moved away from ontological categories and opted for legal-forensic categories. Third, unlike Augustine and Aquinas, who merged justification and sanctification, Luther distinguished them. Luther affirmed inherent righteousness, but this rested upon the alien imputed righteousness of Christ. In technical terms, Aquinas believed that love was the form of faith (*fides caritate formata*) (ST 2a2ae.4.3). In other words redeemed sinners seek their justification by using their infused habit of grace – faith working through love. By contrast, Luther believed that Christ was the form of faith. Only the alien righteousness of Christ justified sinners (Luther 1963, 129). To say the least, Luther’s doctrine of justification spread like wildfire, but infused habits were not destroyed in the blaze.

Infused Habits in Reformed Theology

A host of Protestant theologians retained the concept of infused habits even while they rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of infused righteousness as the legal basis for justification. Scottish theologian Robert Rollock (1555–98), for example, discusses faith as “an infused habit” (2008, 200). John Davenant (1572–1641), an Anglican bishop, acknowledges the Thomist claim that there are acquired and divinely given habits: “In Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and the rest of the heathen writers, that wisdom in which they excelled was an acquired habit; but in the faithful, saving wisdom is an infused habit” (Davenant 1831, 121). Other early modern Reformed theologians, such as John Preston (1587–1628), John Owen (1616–83), and Thomas Goodwin (1600–80), speak of faith as an infused habit of the Holy Spirit (Preston 1631, 62––3; Owen 1674, 182–3; Goodwin 1681, 259). But just because theologians embrace the category of an infused habit of grace does not mean they uncritically adopt the concept.

Like Luther, Reformed theologians distinguished between justification and sanctification but, unlike the German reformer, they were willing to employ the concept of an infused habit of faith. Owen, for example, readily affirms that the Holy Spirit infuses a spiritual principle, an infused habit of grace, in the act of regeneration (1674, 183). He shares this conviction with Aquinas, but nevertheless has critical words for him concerning infused habits and justification:

It is therefore to no purpose to handle the mysteries of the Gospel, as if *Holcot* and *Bricot*, *Thomas* and *Gabriel*, with all the *Sententiarists*, *Summists*,

and *Quodlibetarians* of the old Roman Peripatetical School, were to be raked out of their Graves to be our guides. Especially will they be of no use unto us, in this Doctrine of *Justification*. For whereas they pertinaciously adhered unto the Philosophy of *Aristotle*, who knew nothing of any Righteousness, but what is an *habit* inherent in our selves, and the Acts of it, they wrested the whole Doctrine of Justification unto a compliance therewithal. (Owen 1677, 8)

Owen targets Robert Holcot (ca. 1290–1349), Thomas Bricot (d. 1516), Gabriel Biel, and Aquinas as those who have erroneously built the doctrine of justification upon the foundation of an infused habit.

Owen explains how Reformed theologians debated with Roman Catholics regarding their formal cause of justification, namely, the inherent personal righteousness of the believer, not Christ's imputed righteousness (1677, 81; cf. Cleveland 2013, 116–19). According to common Roman theology, as in Aquinas, this inherent righteousness comes from an infused habit of faith. Owen avers:

That there is an *habitual infused habit* of Grace which is the formal cause of our personal inherent Righteousness they grant. But they all deny that God *pardons our sins*, and *justifies our persons* with respect unto this Righteousness as the *formal cause* thereof. Nay they deny that in the Justification of a sinner there either is, or can be any *inherent formal cause* of it. And what they mean by a *formal cause* in our Justification is only that which gives the denomination unto the subject, as the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ doth to a person that he is justified. (1677, 82)

Owen, therefore, readily grants that Reformed theologians affirm the reality of an infused habit of grace, and this habit is operative as the formal cause of a person's inherent righteousness. But inherent righteousness is not the legal ground of a person's justification. Rather, the perfect imputed righteousness of Christ is the legal ground and formal cause of a person's justification (1677, 82). For Aquinas, justification rests upon inherent righteousness and thus the infused habit of grace plays a crucial role, whereas for Owen justification rests upon the imputed righteousness of Christ. But if Owen employs the concept of an infused habit of grace, how does he cordon it off from justification if faith is the core element of this habit? Does not faith play an instrumental role in justification according to classic Reformed theology? Does this fact admit a place for an infused habit in the Reformed doctrine of justification?

An answer to these questions appears in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), which Owen and other Independent theologians modified and adopted at the Savoy conference in 1658. In the chapter “Of Justification,” the Confession rejects the concept of infused righteousness (XI.1). The chapter then explains: “Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of Justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by Love” (XI.2). So faith as an infused habit works by love, a key element in Aquinas’s view, but this is not the basis of justification according to the Confession. Rather, concerning the infused habit of faith, the Confession uses passive language – believers “receive” and “rest” upon Christ alone. In fact, the Confession’s treatment of the doctrine of faith identifies receiving, resting, and accepting as the “principall Acts of saving faith” (XIV.2; cf. *Canons of Dort III/IV*, art. 14 in Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003).

The Westminster Larger Catechism (1648) sheds some light on how the Westminster divines, as well as Owen, understood the place of an infused habit vis-à-vis justification and sanctification. The Catechism asks, “Wherein doe justification and sanctification differ?” and then contrasts imputed with infused grace (q. 77). The divines and Owen affirm the presence of an infused habit of grace but assign it a function related to justification different from what Aquinas assigned it. The infused habit of faith is passive in justification and receives the imputed righteousness of Christ. But the habit is active in sanctification and participates in the process. This construction mirrors Luther’s categories of passive and active righteousness, but the divines nevertheless employ the concept of an infused habit in their doctrine of sanctification. Aquinas merges justification and sanctification but the Confession and Owen distinguish them.

Consequently, the infused habit has a different function depending upon what doctrine is in view. Unlike Luther, who completely evicted the concept of a habit from his soteriology, the Reformed theologians escorted it away from the doctrine of justification and gave it a home in the doctrine of sanctification.

Infused Habit and Sanctification

The fact that Reformed theologians never completely parted company with infused habits presents a historical platform to recover the idea and discuss its utility for constructive Reformed theology. For people who have accepted

the mythological narrative that the Reformation was a total break with medieval theology, such a proposition might evoke the cry, “What has Aristotle to do with the apostle Paul?” Should we not follow Luther’s lead and reject infused habits in our soteriology? Despite the Reformed pedigree of infused habits, some have followed Luther and excised the concept. Therefore, I first set forth the objections to the continued use of infused habits soteriology and then, second, make a case for the retrieval of this category.

Rejection of Infused Habits

Kevin Vanhoozer has rejected the concept of infused habits and reoriented the doctrine of effectual calling away from causal to communicative agency. Rather than understand effectual calling as the exertion of brute force he opts for communicative force. To this end Vanhoozer employs the insights of speech-act theory to provide the metaphysical framework to understand effectual calling as a performative utterance of God. In other words, when God publishes the gospel he does not merely convey information but also accomplishes something (Vanhoozer 2002, 117–18). Following Vanhoozer’s lead, Michael Horton has taken aim at perceived problems that arise with infused habits (2007, 223–30).

In Horton’s analysis, postconfessional Reformed theologians spoke of the infusion of habits and the doctrine of regeneration as distinct prior acts to the effectual calling of the sinner. Horton interacts with Petrus van Mastricht’s (1630–1706) doctrine of regeneration. According to Mastricht, the Spirit first regenerates individuals and infuses a principle of life within them, but they may not, as of yet, be true believers. When people are born they have the capacity (or habit) for speaking, reasoning, and writing, even though they do none of these things (Mastricht 2002, 26; Horton 2007, 26). This is an analog for regeneration. Mastricht speaks of regeneration as the sowing of the seeds of grace, a phrase and concept that also appears in the Westminster Larger Catechism (q. 75), arguably based upon 1 John 3:9 (Mastricht 2002, 24). According to Mastricht, therefore, regeneration is distinct and prior to effectual calling.

Horton aligns Mastricht’s construction with Aquinas and counters: “We do not need infused habits prior to speech, since God’s speech itself comes from the Father in the Son and reaches its appointed goal through the Spirit” (2007, 227; cf. Horton 2011, 608–11). Rather than posit two distinct acts, Horton argues that we must connect regeneration and calling – God

utters his performative word and effectually calls (regenerates) sinners. He writes: “Why do we need an immediately infused *habitus* to intervene between these mediated events? Why not just say that the Spirit regenerates through the proclaimed gospel ... just as the Reformed confessions and catechisms affirm? Do we really need to appeal to the medieval category of infused habits, however revised in content, in order to refute synergism” (2007, 239)? In Horton’s assessment, the concept of habit is an unnecessary middleman. He offers a communicative paradigm, ultimately a covenantal ontology, where there is no place for infused habits (2007, 241).

In response, I note three points of agreement with Horton’s proposal. First, Horton rightly realigns regeneration and effectual calling in concert with the Westminster Confession (X.2) (2007, 235). Regeneration and effectual calling go hand in hand. God regenerates through the effectual calling brought by the pneumatic proclamation of his word. Second, the categories of speech-act theory helpfully remind us of the performative nature of God’s word – when God speaks things happen. God accomplishes the redemption of the elect through his word, “which is at work in you believers” (1 Thes. 2:13). The message of the gospel is the “power of God for salvation” (Rom. 1:16, 10:17; 1 Thes. 1:5) (Horton 2007, 239). Third, Horton rightly seeks to contextualize God’s effectual call within the framework of the doctrine of the covenant. We should not speak merely of ontology but of a covenantal ontology, as God only relates to humans by means of covenant. But contra Horton, acknowledging these points of agreement does not create an inhospitable home for infused habits.

Positive Case for Infused Habits

Before I set forth a proposal for the viability of the Thomistic category of infused habits, I offer two qualifications. First, Reformed theologians do not always employ *habit* in the exact manner as Aquinas. As noted above, Owen rejects Aquinas’s use of infused habits in justification but not in sanctification. Hence, Reformed theologians are not unreconstructed Thomists. The fact that Reformed theologians distinguish between justification and sanctification provides an important point of difference between the Reformed and Thomistic uses of habit. Second, one of the key differences between Aquinas and Reformed theologians is the category of created grace. Aquinas believed that mere creatures were incapable of receiving the immediate operations of the Spirit, hence he distinguished between created and uncreated grace. Uncreated grace is the immediate operation of the

Spirit and created grace is the work of the Spirit (*ST* 1a.43.3). Aquinas's doctrine of created grace stands in contrast to other medieval views, such as Peter Lombard's (1100–60), who argued that the Holy Spirit immediately indwelt believers. Hence, Aquinas maintained that believers receive the Spirit's gifts whereas Lombard argued that they actually received the Spirit (Aquinas 2010, 271–2; cf. Lombard 2007, I.xiv.2). Reformed understandings of habit align with Lombard's view. When Aquinas speaks of an infused habit he refers to the infusion of created grace, whereas Reformed theologians have no such category. The Westminster Confession, for example, states that Christ and the Spirit are the source of a believer's sanctification and that they are “really and personally” sanctified “by his Word, and Spirit dwelling in them” (XIII.1). Westminster divines, such as William Bridge (1600–70), closely linked infused habits with the indwelling of the Spirit (Bridge 1845, 373). So in contradistinction to Aquinas, the Reformed concept of habit arises from the indwelling presence of the Spirit, not an infused gift.

Given these two caveats, what positive role do infused habits have in Reformed soteriology? The answer lies in dissecting the term *infused habit*. *Infused* historically denotes two things: (1) something received from without, not from within, as the human soul is infused into the body (Gen. 2:7); (2) when God works in the soul by a supernatural act of grace, not by ordinary development, such as with natural knowledge (Wuellner 2012, 161). Reformed theologians, for example, distinguish between infused and imputed righteousness, that which is native versus that which is alien to redeemed sinners. Therefore, while it may sound strange to modern ears, the term *infused* should be demystified – it is a medieval and early modern term to denote the intimate connection between two things, such as the soul's connection to the body. Theologians also use the term to differentiate between what is natural to fallen human beings versus what God supernaturally gives.

What about the second part of the term, infused *habit*? As Aquinas has explained in reliance upon Aristotle, a habit is a disposition towards a particular end. John Owen employs this category to explain that, as fallen creatures, we have a habitual disposition towards sin, but when God redeems us through the work of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit, he infuses in us a habitual disposition of grace (Owen 1674, 182; cf. Cleveland 2013, 69–120). Owen employed this category to refute the claims of Socinians, who argued that fallen humanity's quest for salvation was an entirely natural process (see also Canons of Dort, III/IV, rejection of error, §6 in Pelikan and

Hotchkiss 2003). Owen stressed the idea that redemption is monergistic, using Aquinas's concept of an infused habit – redemption is initiated and completed by God, not native to fallen humans. At this point, Horton's objection should be addressed: why not eliminate the middleman and simply say that God's word regenerates sinners apart from any reference to infused habits (Horton 2007, 238)?

Horton correctly emphasizes the performative nature of God's word as the means by which God effectually calls fallen sinners. But Horton's claim has two sides – God speaks and fallen sinners are regenerated. Horton rightly addresses the first half of the equation – the power of God's speech. But what specifically happens to regenerated sinners? Horton readily acknowledges that the Spirit-empowered word regenerates the sinner, but what does this look like? In biblical terms, what happens when God replaces the heart of stone with a heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26)? What does it mean to be "renewed in the spirit of your minds" (Eph. 4:23)? While one may legitimately use this biblical language and go no further, Reformed Orthodox theologians like Owen employed Aquinas's concept of infused habits to explain the nature of our Spirit-wrought sanctification. In a move that closely parallels Aquinas's exegesis of the same text, Owen comments on 2 Peter 1:4, "He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature" (cf. *ST* 1a2ae.110.3). Owen explains that, in redemption, we become new creatures – we do not merely conduct ourselves in new ways but have renewed faculties, new dispositions, powers, and abilities. Whence arise these new dispositions? They come from the "promises" – like Horton, Owen highlights the performative character of God's word. We partake of the divine nature by virtue of the promises by which the Spirit infuses new habits into the redeemed sinner (1674, 184). Like Horton, Owen explains this salvific work in terms of the covenant: "The Method of God's proceeding with us in his Covenant is, that he first *washeth* and *cleanseth* our *Natures*, takes away the Heart of Stone, gives an Heart of Flesh, writes his Law in our Hearts, put his Spirit in us, wherein as shall be evidenced the Grace of Regeneration doth consist." Borrowing from Christ's parable, Owen argues that God first changes the tree's roots in order for it to produce good fruit (Luke 6:43) (1674, 185).

The main reason Owen finds the concept of an infused habit useful and even biblical is because he, like Horton, wants to highlight the divine source of sanctification. He does not want people to confuse effects for their causes or natural for God-given abilities: habits versus actions, infused principles

versus naturally acquired habits, spiritual versus merely moral, or grace versus fallen human nature (Owen 1674, 416). For Owen and the Reformed Orthodox, the concept of infused habits provides the metaphysical architecture to delineate natural fallen ability from the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. This framework provides the necessary distinctions for two important functions regarding the doctrine of sanctification: (1) to delineate between natural and supernatural abilities; and (2) to provide a conceptual context for a theology of virtue.

On the first point Owen explains the relationship between habit and act in sanctification: “A Virtue, a Power, a Principle of Spiritual Life and Grace, wrought, created, infused into our Souls, and inlaid in all the Faculties of them, constantly abiding, and unchangeably residing in them, which is antecedent unto, and the next Cause of all Acts of true Holiness whatever” (1674, 416). Owen states that the infused habit, which comes about by participation in the divine nature, is the source of all acts of true holiness. In other words, in redemption God does not merely produce holy conduct in the believer but creates an entirely new nature, and this new nature is the source of holy acts. In reliance upon the Holy Spirit the believer manifests good works and responds with godly affections to the various circumstances in life. These works and affections are not the result of acquired habits, or natural abilities, but ultimately the fruit of the believer’s union with Christ. Moreover, these infused habits immutably reside in the believer. According to Aristotle one can lose a habit by ceasing to exercise it, but this is not the case with an *infused* habit.

The second area in which infused habits prove useful is in supporting a theology of virtue, a potential casualty of Horton’s rejection. At the beginning of the above-cited statement Owen, in line with Aquinas, links infused habits with virtues, such as faith, hope, and love (*ST* 1a2ae.62.1). According to Aquinas, virtue is the perfection of a power (3a.55.1). Since these virtues are infused from without, they arise entirely from God, not natural fallen humankind. Owen explains:

Let us then take all the Habits of *Moral Virtue*, and we shall find, that however they may incline and dispose the Will unto such Acts of Virtue as *materially* are Duties of Obedience, yet they do it not with respect unto this End. If it be said, that such *Moral Habits* do so incline the Will unto Duties of Obedience with respect unto this *End*, then is there no need of the *Grace of Jesus Christ* or the Gospel, to enable men to Live unto God, according to the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace, which some seem to aim at. (1674, 441)

Owen's point is that all Christians have the moral obligation to obey God's law, but the believer's obedience must arise not from naturally acquired but infused habits of grace. Virtue must arise from the indwelling power and work of the Holy Spirit, not a person's natural abilities. People might give alms to the poor, but if this action comes from their own naturally acquired habit, then their motivation might be self, merit, reputation, praise, compensation, or a host of other reasons except the glory of God in Christ (Owen 1674, 441).

The distinction between acquired and infused habits provides valuable categories to explain how sanctification functions on the human side of the sanctification equation. Yes, God regenerates and sanctifies redeemed sinners through the effectual call and proclamation of his word. But what occurs in redeemed sinners? The category of infused habits distinguishes the moving parts of a biblical doctrine of sanctification. They delineate how God replaces the heart of stone with one of flesh and how the two, in some sense, coexist in the believer. The Westminster Confession offers a description of this condition when it states that "Sanctification is throughout, in the whole man," which means that sanctification affects every faculty. But there "abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part" (XIII.2). Where and how do the regenerate and unregenerate parts reside in the same person? Employing the metaphysical concept of an infused habit assists us in sorting through this question.

The concept of infused habits reminds us of the divine source of redemption because, even though the human being performs an act of obedience, the act's ultimate source lies in a Spirit-wrought infused habit – something that has come from without, not within, fallen sinners. Moreover, as Owen notes, infused habits cannot be acquired by any natural means, but once received they can be preserved, increased, strengthened, and renewed (1674, 417). In other words, in the language of the Westminster Confession, the saints can "grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (XIII.3; cf. *ST* 1a2ae.54.4). Contra Horton, it seems that one can embrace both the performative nature of God's word and infused habits. They enable believers to have a better understanding of how God sanctifies without trying to explain the precise nature, whether biologically or scientifically, of how the Spirit sanctifies redeemed sinners. There is still great mystery surrounding the nature of our union with Christ and how the Spirit gives us new hearts. But infused habits help us to account for the ontological side of a covenantal ontology.

One of the greatest benefits in recovering infused habits lies in retrieving the concept of virtue, once a common staple in Reformed Orthodox treatments of sanctification and ethics. With the rejection of infused habits, virtue ethics has fallen by the wayside. The move away from virtues has slowly evolved to discussions about values, and especially in the twentieth century, in the wake of Karl Barth's (1886–1968) rejection of infused habits, greater attention has fallen upon command ethics, expositions on the law of God (Nolan 2014, 37–61; Wells 1998, 13–19). As important as it is to account for the commands of the covenant Lord, we should also account for the actions of the covenant servants. God not only made a covenant with Abraham and swore a self-maledictory oath to bear the curses on his behalf (Gen. 15) but also told Abraham, “Walk before me, and be blameless” (Gen. 17:1).

In Thomist and Aristotelian fashion, therefore, Reformed theologians devoted significant attention to virtue ethics. In his reflections upon the Christian life, for example, John Calvin (1509–64) notes the benefit of reflecting upon virtue ethics, especially from the church fathers. He explains that devoting space to each of the virtues would fill many tomes, so he instead opted to reflect upon the principles of the Christian life, God's law (Calvin 1957, III.4.1). Other Reformed theologians such as Amandus Polanus (1561–1610), Lambert Daneau (1530–95), Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), William Ames (1576–1633), Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639), and Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711) embrace infused habits and consequently have extensive treatments of virtues (Vos 2015, 201–12; Baschera 2013, 522–24, 527–40; à Brakel 1994, 100–04). The concept of virtues even appears in the Westminster Larger Catechism where inferiors are encouraged to imitate the “virtues and graces” of their superiors (q. 127). In more recent years Herman Bavinck (1854–1921), who was positively disposed towards Thomism, once commented, “We can profit from Aristotelian thought, and without doubt Aristotle's ethics is basically the best philosophical ethics” (Van Keulen 2010, 47–8). Bavinck embraced the ideas of habits and virtues (Bavinck 1979, 215; Cooke 2014, 97–100). With the recent renaissance of virtue ethics in the broader Evangelical world, even among Lutheran theologians, people in Reformed churches might be surprised to discover that their theological forefathers made significant contributions to this field of ethical study and plied the insights of Aquinas (MacIntyre 2007; Hauerwas 1991; Biermann 2014).

Conclusion

At the end of the day, Reformed theologians can constructively employ Aquinas's doctrine of justification – this is not a fool's errand after all. If we take into account that Aquinas's doctrine of justification includes his doctrine of sanctification, Reformed theologians committed to justification *sola fide* can set aside the role of infused habits as the legal ground for justification. But this still leaves significant insights and categories for the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. Infused habits provide a helpful metaphysical rubric to explain sanctification and a theological platform to discuss virtue ethics. God indeed speaks and raises people from the dead and justifies them by faith alone, but he also changes and sanctifies by infusing a new heart, or habit, into redeemed sinners. Reformed theologians of both the Reformation and Reformed Orthodox periods recognized these truths and constructively employed infused habits in their doctrines of sanctification. Today, Reformed theologians either reject the idea or know little about it. Yet, given the historic Reformed use, the better part of wisdom instructs us to learn from the past, retrieve the idea, and employ it for constructive Reformed theology. Indeed, one might say that we should develop a positive habit for infused habits in the doctrine of sanctification and ethics.

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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

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 Melancthon 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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“Justice,” the “Common Good,” and the Scope of State Authority: Pointers to Protestant-Thomist Convergence

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This chapter seeks to identify a line of fruitful ecumenical conversation between Thomist political philosophy and one strand of (Reformed) Protestantism over the question of the scope of legitimate state authority.¹ In addressing that question, thinkers in these two traditions have characteristically turned to the concepts of the “common good” and “justice” as ways of justifying, defining, and delimiting state authority. Yet the meanings of and interrelationships between these load-bearing terms, in both popular and scholarly treatments, have often been left imprecise. While it is possible to assert that “common good” has been relatively more prominent in Thomist discussions, and “justice” relatively more prominent in Protestant ones, beyond this we encounter an array of diverse renditions, often developed in parallel discourses that do not meet, leaving the substantive question unresolved and the prospects for ecumenical convergence unexplored.

There already exists a certain baseline consensus across the two traditions on the broad parameters within which the question of state authority should be construed. Both have defended a positive mandate for state authority, rejecting the view that the state is only a necessary evil. Equally, both have insisted on the need to circumscribe such authority carefully so that the goods (however defined) realized by the state do not, at best, inhibit the promotion of goods assigned to persons or other social agencies or, at worst, corrupt or destroy those goods or those agencies.

Yet Protestant thinkers have often expressed anxiety over the apparently “collectivist” tendencies inherent in the expansive language of the “common good.” Herman Dooyeweerd claims to find in Thomism a “universalistic” social theory “wholly oriented to the Greek view of the state as the totality of natural society” (1979, 127) and a political theory in which “there is not any inner material restriction of the competence of the *polis* as supreme legislator,” thereby leaving Thomist political thought incapable of offering any “fundamental guarantee” against “totalitarianism” (1979, 209).² Oliver O’Donovan, although displaying greater affinity with Thomism than does Dooyeweerd, warns against construing the state’s responsibility for the common good as if it amounted to the construction of an overarching “millennium dome” (2005, 57).³ He thus repudiates “the Prussian doctrine of the state” according to which the state is “comprehensive of all actual and possible communications” (O’Donovan 2015, 8). Albeit from a rather different perspective, Nicholas Wolterstorff (2012) offers a political theology premised on the primacy of “rights” and favoring a limited, “protectionist” (Pauline) account of state authority over against a “perfectionist” (Aristotelian) one.

A classic statement of the common good by Jacques Maritain only seems to feed these Protestant anxieties. He defines it as

the sum or sociological integration of all the civic conscience, political virtues and sense of right and liberty, of all the activity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, of unconsciously operative hereditary wisdom, or moral rectitude, justice, friendship, happiness, virtue and heroism in the individual lives of its members. For these things all are, in a certain sense, *communicable* and so revert to each member, helping him to perfect his life and liberty of person. They all constitute the good human life of the multitude. (1966, 52–3)

Even where Protestant political thinkers have not overtly criticized Thomist accounts, they have implicitly indicated their indifference to or dissatisfaction with them by neglect (but see Tillich 1954). Thus Emil Brunner’s *Justice and the Social Order* (1945), possibly the most sustained treatments of political justice by a twentieth-century European Protestant theologian, ignores Thomist political thought and has no index entry for “common good.” Reinhold Niebuhr (1960) offers much wisdom on the need to curtail the excesses of the modern state in the light of the “immoral” tendencies of all human collectivities, but nowhere engages Thomist conceptions of the common good or justice.⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, the leading

late twentieth-century Reformed political theologian, has much to say about justice – for example, in his major political work *On Human Dignity* (1984) – but largely bypasses Thomism (McIlroy 2009).

In the latter part of the twentieth century, especially in North America, even Roman Catholic political thinkers interested in the concept of “the common good” have chiefly engaged with the challenges presented to it by religious and moral pluralism rather than with its broader significance for the role of the state (Murray 1993; Hollenbach 2002). Their concerns have mainly been epistemological and dialogical rather than ontological.

So there is a case for exploring further how these two concepts as understood in the two traditions might clarify the scope of state authority. That would be one step towards the development of a broader-based, contemporary ecumenical political theology. Pursuant to that larger goal, this chapter attempts two more limited tasks. First, it expounds Thomas’s own central usages of these terms and how he deploys them to determine the scope of state authority. Given that the recent revival of Protestant interest in “Thomism” is largely focused on Thomas himself rather than on the scholastic political thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries or modern Thomists such as Maritain (1951) or Simon (1993), this *ad fontes* approach seems justified. Here it draws on John Finnis’s reading of Thomas which, I suggest, is especially helpful towards allaying the Protestant anxieties noted above. Second, it presents Brunner’s Protestant accounts of justice and the state and compares them to Thomas’s.⁵ The Conclusion identifies points of ecumenical convergence between the two thinkers from which future dialogue might profitably proceed.

Thomas

A useful entry point into Thomas’s understandings of the scope of state authority is his extended discussions of “right” and “justice” in *ST* 2a2ae.57–8.⁶ In the light of these, I then turn to his account of the relationship between law and the common good in *ST* 1a2ae.90–7.

The moral field captured by the notion of “justice” (*iustitia*) is “right” (*ius*) (*ST* 2a2ae.57.1); “right” is a synonym of “the just.” *Ius* is an objective criterion rather than an assemblage of shifting human customs or subjective claims (*ST* 2a2ae.58.10); it is “rightness” or “right order.”⁷ Acts affecting only oneself are regulated by other virtues, while justice is, uniquely, the virtue regulating acts affecting others (*ST* 2a2ae.58.2 *ad* 4). Justice is

distinctive among the virtues by being essentially interrelational; it is a “general,” or intrinsically social, virtue. Its “proper function” is to direct humans in their relations with others (*ST* 2a2ae.57.1).

Justice realizes a certain kind of equality: “A right or just act is one which is ‘adjusted’ to someone else according to some kind of equality” (*ST* 2a2ae.57.2). “Equality” – Dyson suggests the term “reciprocity” – requires that each party to a relationship of justice or right receive *what is proper to them*. Thomas broadly endorses the widely accepted Justinian definition of justice as “a constant and perpetual will to render to each his right” (*ST* 2a2ae.58.1) or his “due” or “own” (*ST* 2a2ae.58.11). This turns out to be determined by a complex set of factors. What is “due” someone will in some cases be identical to what is owed to all human beings, in other cases not. A “just” act must be “adjusted” to someone precisely by attending to what actually is, in any specific case, that person’s due (*ST* 2a2ae.57.4).⁸ Thomas strongly affirms the equal worth of all human beings, but the sense in which for him justice implies equality is very different from the modern liberal sense according to which individuals possess an identical suite of individual rights or entitlements which is the essential task of the state to realize.

Thomas elaborates this line of thought via a series of further distinctions which bring to the fore the implications of “justice” and “common good” for the scope of state authority. One is the distinction between things due to humans naturally (“natural right”), and things due to them by agreement among human wills (“positive right”) (*ST* 2a2ae.57.2). Not just anything, however, can be made just by common agreement, but only that which “has nothing about it which is repugnant in itself to natural justice” (*ST* 2a2ae.57.2 *ad* 2). A second is that between the “unqualifiedly” and “qualifiedly” just. The parties to a just relationship may stand to each other as “complete” equals, namely, as independent human agents with “natural rights” (Finnis 1998, 134). This is an example of “‘the just’ in an unqualified sense.” Or they may stand in a relationship of inequality and dependence in which one party belongs “in some way to that something else,” such as son to father, wife to husband, slave to master. These are examples of the just in a “qualified” sense – in these specific cases, “a kind of just called ‘paternal’” (*ST* 2a2ae.57.4). But Thomas does not regard the just claims of son, wife, or slave as exhausted by such relationships of inequality. On the contrary, each also stands in unqualifiedly just relationships, such as that of equal membership of the state (*ST* 2a2ae.57.4 *ad* 3).

A third distinction is between “general” (or “legal”) justice and “particular” justice (partially overlapping with the second). Justice is a “general” virtue

because it directs us in our relations with others, both “considered as individuals” and “considered as members of a community” (*ST* 2a2ae.58.5). Now, in any community, all members are related as “parts” to a “whole” and since the part “belongs” to the whole, “whatever is a good of a part can be directed to the good of the whole” (*ST* 2a2ae.58.5). But the status of being a “part” of a human community does not in any way signify a relationship of inferiority or subservience. While the whole is “prior” to the part, it is so only in the sense that it is a constitutive condition for the flourishing of the part (see Finnis 1998, 245). In this context, “part” simply means “member”; and Thomas never construes the goods or interests or needs of a community as standing in a zero-sum relationship to those of its members. On the contrary, communities have no *raison d'être* apart from the particular purposes of the persons who constitute them. Thus, justice requires that “the individual members of a community must be left to fulfil their own responsibilities on their own self-directed initiative” (Finnis 1998, 120).

Put more technically, Thomas regards human communities, including the state, not as “substantial unities” (“things,” like natural objects) but “unities of order” – structured arenas of cooperative coordination – among free, responsible, acting human persons,⁹ who continue to engage in their own acts quite apart from the acts of any communities in which they participate. Moreover, each community has its own distinctive “common good,” given by its characteristic purpose (*finis*). Thomas regards the flourishing of persons as deepened and enhanced, rather than constrained, by membership of such communities – at least when they are functioning virtuously, namely, pursuing their proper purposes responsibly (that is, acting according to “reason”). This is merely a more specific implication of the larger claim that humans are “social and political animals” (Aquinas 2002, 6 n.17; see Finnis 1998, 245–6).

It could therefore scarcely occur to Thomas that the flourishing or freedom of human persons could (as in much modern liberalism) be conceptualized by abstracting their individuality, interests, desires, or capacity for choice from their constitutive sociality. Thus, “the common good is the end of each individual member of a community, just as the good of the whole is the end of the part” (*ST* 2a2ae.58.9 *ad* 3). We should note that this implies not only a dependence of the flourishing of persons on that of the communities of which they are parts but also the reverse: what persons do, and what they are – what kinds and degrees of virtue they possess – is decisive for the quality and effectiveness of the communities of which they are members.

This allows us to make sense of Thomas's initially elusive claim that, while justice is uniquely the virtue that is essentially directed to others, the good of *any* virtue "is ultimately referable to the common good to which justice directs: so that all acts of virtue can pertain to justice insofar as justice directs man to the common good" (*ST* 2a2ae.58.5). That is, the health of a community is not only determined by the extent to which members act justly but also, even if indirectly, by how they display *all other* virtues. For: "Everything that relates to oneself can relate also to another, especially with reference to the common good" (*ST* 2a2ae.58.5 *ad* 3). This does not make general justice simply virtue in general. Rather it is *the relatedness of all virtues to the common good* (*ST* 2a2ae.58.6).¹⁰

Thus far we have not even raised the question of the scope of state authority. Thomas is expounding justice as a norm for social interactions in general and it is clear that he assumes that *most acts of justice*, including general justice – and most acts conducing to the common good – *will be performed by nonstate actors*. This will become clearer as we now explore his notions of law and common good, which occasion the specific question of state authority. While his account of law is detailed and precise, his descriptions of "common good" in the passages in question are slim and elusive, making it necessary to infer its content from other features of his thought.¹¹

It will be helpful to begin by clearing up a potential confusion. At first sight, Thomas's practice (following Aristotle) of speaking of general justice also as "legal justice" seems needlessly to muddy the conceptual waters.¹² Yet it has a clear rationale, an examination of which will help clarify his notion of "the common good." Thomas regards law as essentially directed towards the promotion of the common good of a community. In fact, we need to be more precise than that. For he generally speaks of "human" or "positive" law as referring specifically to the law of a "perfect community," namely, a state, and of the state as having a unique responsibility for "the common good." There is a sense in which general justice shares the same objective as law and in this specific sense may intelligibly be termed "legal justice." General justice is that form of justice which pursues the same purpose as that attaching to the law of a state: "since it is the function of law to direct to the common good ... it follows that the justice which is general in this way is called 'legal justice,' because by it a man is brought into harmony with the law which directs the acts of all the virtues to the common good" (*ST* 2a2ae.58.5). Accordingly, the distinctive type of virtue pertaining to persons in their role as citizens, members of the state, is, necessarily,

general or legal justice since it is this which directs them to the distinctive purpose of the state. Equally, it is general justice by which officers of the state must also be guided since they are also “parts” of the same political community having the same end, that is, the common good.¹³ Thus “legal justice” adds no new content to “general justice” but only puts the spotlight on the fact that general justice orders our acts to a common good which it is the essential function of law to protect. To avoid confusion, I shall now only use the term general justice.

If general justice were the whole of justice, and justice assigned solely to the state, we might legitimately wonder whether Thomas was about to offer a charter for a truly expansive state authority. But, first, most acts of general justice do not fall within the remit of the state. Nor is the state responsible for all the acts necessary to promote the common good. Defining the role of the state, and law, as promoting the common good is as much restrictive as it is permissive: the state may *only* act pursuant to the common good.

Second, there is also “particular justice.” Thomas distinguishes between the common good of a (perfect) community and the particular good(s) of private individuals or of “imperfect” or “partial” or “lesser” communities, each of which have their own “rights” (Finnis 1998, 133). Thus, as well as the general justice directing persons immediately to the common good, there are other virtues directing them immediately to particular goods (*ST* 2a2ae.58.7). While some particular virtues, such as temperance or fortitude, pertain to the interior character of persons, others relate persons to other persons and these are instances of particular justice. The common good of the state and the particular goods of the individual differ not only in degree but in kind, namely, as the good of a whole in contrast to that of a part (*ST* 2a2ae.58.7 *ad* 2). Particular justice consists of relations that, as noted, are defined as “qualified justice,” such as “domestic justice” (*ST* 2a2ae.58.7 *ad* 3; 182), and as such have a specific, not a general, field of concern (*ST* 2a2ae.58.8). When the state, through law, protects the claims of particular justice (of persons or communities), its proximate concern must be to vindicate those immediate claims, even though, as in all its acts, its ultimate goal is to safeguard the common good.

This conclusion is underscored in Thomas’s treatment of law. Law “looks first and foremost to the ordering of things for the common good” (*ST* 1a2ae.90.3). It is a rational ordering of an authority: “a certain ordinance of reason for the common good, made and promulgated by him who has care for the community” (*ST* 1a2ae.90.4).¹⁴ The common good is defined here simply as that good which is shared in common with all members of a

community as distinct to that which is a matter of “private advantage” (*ST 1a2ae.90.2*).¹⁵ Here again we encounter an important conceptual connection between justice and the common good: it is a necessary condition of the justice of laws that they are directed to their end, the common good (*ST 1a2ae.96.4*); and the common good is advanced by everything required by justice. This does not mean that the two are identical: much of what pertains to the common good goes beyond the moral field named “justice.” Nor does it mean that law only concerns itself with generalities. Indeed, it necessarily orders private or particular things (actions, goods, or ends – governed by particular justice) insofar as they impinge upon the common good (*ST 1a2ae.90.2 ad 1*). Particular things can be ordered in this way simply because the common good is the end shared by all humans – in their particularity as well as their generality (*ST 1a2ae.90.2 ad 2*). The promotion of the common good – whether by the state or some other agency – can never be essentially inimical to any particular goods, even though its realization may involve difficult practical choices between alternate instantiations of those goods.

The foregoing applies to all forms of law: eternal, divine, natural, and human. The question of state authority proximately concerns the latter.¹⁶ Human (or positive) law is needed both to derive specific provisions and rules of human conduct from the generalized precepts of natural law (*ST 1a2ae.91.3 ad 1*) and to establish social peace among humans who are prone to vice (*ST 1a2ae.95.1*). It is a complex enterprise: as it directs human actions toward the common good, it necessarily finds itself having to attend to many factors and address many particulars (“persons and matters and times”). The good promoted by the state through law is never simply a matter of issuing a few blanket imperatives but is “procured by many actions” (*ST 1a2ae.96.1*).

As with “general justice,” this line of thought may again initially appear to permit, even mandate, a potentially very expansive role for the state. Such an impression seems confirmed when we confront Thomas’s insistence that it is the business of the state not merely to maintain order but also actively to *promote the virtue* of its citizens. The “proper effect” of human law (as all law) is to “lead its subjects to their proper virtue” (*ST 1a2ae.92.1*) – to that extent, law “makes men good” (*ST 1a2ae.92.1 ad 1*).

On closer inspection, however, what this actually amounts to regarding the task of the state is carefully circumscribed. Thomas makes this clear in four ways. First, immediately after the passage just quoted he significantly lowers the bar on the state’s virtue-promoting role by conceding that it

could be enough that only rulers are possessed of virtue, and that citizens are merely “virtuous enough to obey the commands of their rulers” (*ST* 1a2ae.92.1 *ad* 3). Second, human law can in any case only operate upon “outwards acts.” This is both because humans, including rulers, lack the capacity to judge “inward acts, which are concealed,” and because, if human law attempted to punish all evil acts it would in the process remove many good things from society, thereby inhibiting the common good (*ST* 1a2ae.91.4). The directing of inward acts is the proper province of divine law (*ST* 1a2ae.91.4 *ad* 1). Third, human law must take citizens as it finds them and so must be “framed for a community of men the majority of whom are not men of perfect virtue,” and “especially those which do harm to others, without the prohibition of which human society could not be maintained” (*ST* 1a2ae.96.2). Fourth, human acts are, in any case, only ordered by law insofar as they bear upon the common good. While, on the one hand, “there is no virtue whose acts may not [in principle] be prescribed by the law,” on the other,

Human law does not prescribe all the acts of every virtue, but only those capable of being ordered to the common good either immediately, as when certain things are done directly for the common good, or mediately, as when a legislator ordains certain things pertaining to good order, by which the citizens are instructed so that they may uphold the common good of justice and peace. (*ST* 1a2ae.96.3)

The initial specter of an overweening paternalistic state engaging in intrusive “soulcraft” thus quickly recedes. We find yet further confirmation of this conclusion when we take cognizance of yet another distinction in Thomas, that between “the common good” and “the public good” (*bonum publicum*), the implications of which Finnis helpfully draws out and elaborates.¹⁷

Finnis renders “public good” as the “specifically political common good” and finds in it the basis for a narrower specification of the limits on state authority than is often attributed to Thomism. He acknowledges that Thomas’s account of the state evokes the question, “Can a state’s common good, being the good of a complete community, be anything less than the complete good, the fulfilment ... of its citizens?” (1998, 221). The question naturally arises from Thomas’s understanding of the state as a “perfect” or “complete” community which, as Finnis puts it, is one “so organized that its government and law give *all* the direction that properly can be given by

human government and coercive law to promote and protect the common good, that is, the good of the community and thus of all its members and other proper elements.” He concedes that this could on the surface be read as implying that “the state’s common good is the fulfilment ... of each of its citizens” (1998, 221–2). Yet he argues that, strictly, Thomas’s position is that the deeper ontology of the state – its “essence” – implies substantial and principled limits to its authority. He quotes Thomas thus: “human law is directed to civil community, which is a matter of people relating to one another ... [that is, by] external acts. But this sort of communicating ... is a matter of justice ... So human law does not put forward precepts about anything *other than* acts of justice” (1998, 224, emphasis added, quoting *ST* 1a2ae.100.2). Thus it does not directly command the nongeneral virtues, and nor does it command all that is required by general justice. This restriction, he notes, is reinforced by Thomas’s repeated affirmation that there are many “private goods” whose good is not part of the “public good” (*bonum publicum*):

State law does not properly have as its responsibility the preservation or promotion of the all-round virtue, let alone the sanctification, of the individual subject, precisely as such. Its role is only to preserve and promote the common good, understood not as every true good in which human beings can share, but as the public good – a matter of interpersonal dealings, of specifically social life. (Finnis 1998, 224 n.23)

Finnis’s rendition of “the specifically political common good of the state” yields a helpful precision often lacking in Thomas’s (1998, 225; cf. Finnis 1980, chs. VII–X). This good is restricted to “goods (and virtues) which are intrinsically interpersonal, other-directed ..., person to person ...: [namely,] justice and peace” (1998, 226–7). In respect of “justice,” we have already seen that much of what counts as general justice, and many of the claims of particular justice (“rights”), fall outside the remit of the state. “Peace” has similarly delimited horizons, consisting of the necessary external conditions of civic stability and concord; it “falls short of the complete justice which true virtue requires of us” (1998, 227–8). Thus, “those vices of disposition and conduct which have no significant relationship, direct or indirect, to justice and peace are not the concern of state government or law” (1998, 228). Even though it is true that the “preservation of the public good needs people to have the *virtue*, the inner disposition, of justice” (1998, 232), it is beyond the scope of law to demand that people actually internalize that

inner disposition (1998, 233). The acquisition of virtue by citizens may be a “legitimate objective” of law but not a “requirement” of it (1998, 234) – a somewhat elusive distinction to which I return.

Thus, while there is a sense in which the common good of the state is “all-inclusive,” it is not the case that government and law are “responsible for commanding all the choices that need to be made if this all-inclusive good is to be attained” (1998, 236). Most of that responsibility falls to other agents. The specifically political common good “does not supersede their responsibility to make good choices and actions on the basis of their own deliberation and judgements. These choices and actions are ‘private’” (1998, 236). The public good is only that part of the common good that

provides an indispensable context and support for those parts or aspects of the common good which are private ... It thus supplements, sub-serves, and supervises those private aspects, but without superseding them, and without taking overall charge of, or responsibility for, them ... And here we may add Aquinas’ partial anticipation of the principle of subsidiarity: “it is contrary to the proper character of the state’s governance ... to impede people from acting according to their responsibilities – except in emergencies.” (1998, 237)¹⁸

Finally, Finnis, while denying that political community is “natural” in the sense that it is (in his term of art) a “basic good” (1980), holds that it is natural in the sense that it is “a rationally required component in, or indispensable means to instantiating, one or more basic human goods ... the common good specific to the *civitas* as such – the public good – is not basic but, rather, a means to securing human goods which are basic” (1998, 247). Individuals’ and families’ instantiations of basic goods are made more secure “if public justice and peace are maintained by law and other specifically political institutions and activities, in a way that no individual or private group can appropriately undertake or match. Individuals’ and groups’ need for political community is *that* need, and the political community’s specific common good is, accordingly, that *public* good” (1998, 248):

[T]he state’s rulers cannot rightly intervene in private relationships and transactions to secure purposes other than justice and peace; individual good, the common good of a family, and the common good of the state are irreducibly diverse; and private persons need not regard their lives as lived for the sake of the state and its purposes. The human common good ... is promoted ... when the common good that specifies the jurisdiction of state

government and law is acknowledged to be, neither all-inclusive nor ... basic, but limited and ... instrumental. (1998, 252; cf. 245)

Finnis adds that this position “is not readily distinguishable from” J. S. Mill’s harm principle (1998, 228). We need not accept that particular (and contestable) judgment to recognize that the position he advocates amounts to a substantial circumscription of the scope of state authority – one that should help allay Protestant fears of Thomistic “collectivism.”¹⁹

A Protestant Interlocutor: Emil Brunner

In this section I expound Brunner’s notions of justice and the state, noting along the way evident convergences between his conception of the scope of state authority and Thomas’s.²⁰ Reading Brunner’s *Justice and the Social Order* one is struck by his deep indebtedness to concepts deriving from the classical Christian tradition for which Thomas has been so formative, even while barely mentioning Thomas himself. Brunner endorses an essentially Thomistic notion of natural law as the objective moral order grounding the content of justice (1945, 16–17), accepts the classical definition of justice as “rendering to each his due” (1945, 20), acknowledges that justice embraces the nature and rights of both individuals and communities (1945, 25), and affirms it as the yardstick of positive law.

Justice is grounded in an “underived, primal order of things established by no human law-giver.” It “stands above all human apportioning and must be the standard for all human apportioning if it is to be ‘just’” (1945, 24).²¹ Justice is rooted in the “order of creation” and creation is “primal allocation” (1945, 49; cf. 83–4). Brunner further distinguishes between the “absolute” (“immutable”) law of creation and the “relative” justice realized in human orders, such as the state, which can only be the “best possible” accommodations to historical circumstance (1945, 92–3).²²

Again in line with Thomism (albeit invoking Calvinism as authority), Brunner holds that justice establishes an order consisting of both equality and inequality: a radical equality of “concrete and unique individuals,” grounded in the image of God, and an inequality arising from created differences in human communities and institutions, such as marriage, family, work, and state (1945, 29 ff., 37–8, 41–2, 52). “Community” can only exist where there is a mutual complementarity arising from difference, without which there is only “unity” (1945, 43–4). For example, while work may

originate as an individual activity, “organized labour is intended by the Creator to be a communal and not merely an individual activity” (1945, 67; see ch. 18). That which is “due” to humans, then, embraces both a “primary” equality of dignity and a “secondary” difference of function, the latter making possible a “fellowship of mutual completion by service.” In such a bond the individual is never rendered subservient to the larger “whole,” for equal dignity is “anterior to fellowship” (1945, 45).

Equality, then, takes precedence over inequality (1945, 53). It grounds a wide range of “primal rights to freedom” grounded in created order and not conceded by the state (1945, 54–62), including rights to life, conscience, movement, family, property, work, and education – rights which are “due” in all circumstances (although not everything claimed today as a “human right” is a “primal right” conferred by creation, 1945, 61). Yet the “natural forms of community” are also “primal ordinances of the Creator” and as such also possess their own “intrinsic rights” which “are of such a nature that they enable the diversity of human beings to serve the functional whole... Man is not master of marriage, but marriage of man” (1945, 64): “Forms of community, in so far as they are orders of creation, are not dependent on the will of man, but confront him as independent powers with their own laws and claims and their own rights” (1945, 65). But community rights never override the primal rights of persons (1945, 121).

Brunner sums up the larger social vision to which the foregoing points as “fellowship in freedom, freedom in fellowship” and asserts that the “concrete form of such free fellowship is the federation” (1945, 79). The “federative principle” is not based on contract but expresses the balance of equality and difference given in creation. Beginning in the family, it opens out to embrace an array of intermediate communities, each of whose rights take precedence over those of the state (1945, 122). Echoing the “instrumental” notion of the state Finnis claims to find in Thomas, Brunner holds that the state “comes later, protecting, preserving, regulating, but not itself as a creative or constitutive agent” (1945, 123). Federalism thus charts a distinctive route away from the errors of both individualism and collectivism. It is “the just order of the State ... the State built up from below. That is the order of creation. All institutions exist for the sake of man; man never exists for the sake of institutions” (1945, 120).

Invoking the principle of, if not the term, subsidiarity, Brunner asserts that the state should only assume tasks that are beyond the capacity of other communities (1945, 124; cf. 182). Closely echoing the language of *Quadragesimo Anno* (Pope Pius IX, 1931), he warns that today the state has

become overburdened “in exact proportion to the decay of the communities antecedent to [it], to the structurelessness of human society... The State thus created is the substitute for the lost community of the people” (1945, 124). It was this evisceration of free social institutions that paved the way for totalitarianism. “This inversion of the structure of the State which, instead of being built up from below, is organized from above, is the one great iniquity of our time... The order of creation is turned upside down; what should be last is first, the expedient, the subsidiary, has become the main thing” (1945, 120).

Again in line with Thomas, Brunner holds that the state too finds its ultimate grounding in the order of creation. It is true that its coercive power is necessary on account of the presence of “evil,” so that in the present age the “primordial function” of the state is criminal justice (1945, 69), its possession of the “monopoly of coercive force” its most characteristic feature, and its “essence” power (1945, 123, 174, 195). But even apart from evil, the state would be necessary “as a supreme centre of co-ordination” (1945, 195; cf. 68–9).

As in membership of any human community, individuals retain their primal rights against the state (1945, 70). Yet the authority of the state does not derive, as in contract theory, from the pooled rights of the people. “Neither State nor people is sovereign. Both stand under a law which is binding upon them, which sets limits to their rights.” “Sovereignty is a concept which cannot with impunity be transferred from God, to Whom alone it belongs ... The theory of sovereignty ... is the beginning of political atheism with its double potentiality, individualistic anarchy or the collectivist totalitarian State” (1945, 71). The antithesis to the totalitarian state, then, is not democracy but the “federally organized commonwealth of nation or State” (1945, 120).

The parallels with Thomas’s conception of the scope of state authority, especially as clarified by Finnis, are clearly evident. It is worth noting, however, that Brunner can affirm all the above yet without once invoking the concept of the common good. In effect, a good deal of what Thomas and Finnis embrace under that concept is rendered by Brunner under a capaciously understood concept of “justice.” What seems to be lacking in Brunner, however, is the attempt to capture the complex interrelatedness and mutual, multifaceted interdependence of society’s various parts (individuals and communities) – precisely what Thomas seeks to comprehend under “the common good.”

Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by summarizing five promising points of conversational departure between Thomas and Brunner that could inform ecumenical dialogues on the role of the state more broadly.

First, both share a fundamental commitment to the principle that states must conform to, and establish, just law (Finnis 1998, 251ff, 258–66): they assert not merely the rule of law but also that law must be substantively and not only procedurally just. Since law is (for Thomas) an ordinance of reason, or (for Brunner) subject to ordinances of creation, this means states may never act arbitrarily or irrationally but always pursuant to some objective measure of justice.

Second, for both Thomas and Brunner, justice (*iustitia*) means respecting that which is “due” to the persons, communities, and institutions within the territory of the state. This includes protecting a wide array of substantive personal and corporate goods not originally created by the state and to which the state must defer. These goods ground both an extensive range of equally distributed fundamental personal rights and a complex array of (variously equal or unequal) corporate rights.

Third, the role of the state can therefore only adequately be determined and delimited against the background of a well-articulated, pluriform social ontology which honors the many, qualitatively distinct communities and institutions needed for human flourishing. Against a secular liberal individualism in which justice is merely the procedural adjudication of individual freedom-rights, this approach asserts that for the state to render adequate justice and the common good it must correctly discern what makes for the normative design of a healthy society.

Fourth, while the scope of justice potentially extends across a whole state (its authority is “extensive,” in the sense that there are no *territorial* areas of immunity from its claims), the state is not charged with administering all the acts required by justice and the common good (its authority is not “intensive”). For Thomas, the state is only responsible for promoting justice pursuant to the “public good,” not for engaging every just act required by the wider “common good.” For Brunner, in promoting justice the state must respect the independent rights and responsibilities of persons and natural communities according to the “federative principle.” Responsibility for most acts of justice fall to nonstate agents in society. For Thomas, the “parts” of the social “whole” which is the state (and which is only a “unity of order”)

retain their independent agency, purposes and claims; the state is prohibited from usurping responsibilities for particular justice.

Fifth, the state's authority to promote "virtue" is significantly circumscribed. I noted that, for Thomas, all acts of virtue (or vice) have at least an indirect bearing upon the common good, and in that sense fall within "general justice." Moreover, the state, acting through law, has a broad remit to "promote" virtuous conduct among its citizens. Yet this seemingly wide remit is subject to four constraints. First, most acts of general (and particular) justice fall outside the state's direct remit. The state may not directly command the nongeneral virtues, and nor does it even command all that is required by general justice. Second, the state may *only* act pursuant to justice – that is *its* contribution to the common good; as Finnis puts it, "human law does not put forward precepts about anything *other than* acts of justice" (1998, 224). Third, the state may only constrain external acts of virtue that are necessary for the common good and within reach of performance by the majority of citizens. Fourth, the justice-promoting activity of the state must confine itself to the specific field of the "public good," that is, the public conditions of "justice and peace," which are "instrumental" to those parts of the common good which are "private" (Finnis 1998, 237).

Brunner, along with many other Protestant political thinkers, would entirely endorse these constraints. We may ask, then, what remains of Finnis's claim, noted above, that the acquisition of virtue by citizens may be a "legitimate objective" of law but not a "requirement" of it (1998, 234). I take this to mean that such acquisition is something towards which state acts *may* be intentionally oriented even if this is not *obligatory* for the state. That might still seem to allow a more permissive scope for state action than would Brunner. Here I propose reading Finnis (if not Thomas) as implying that the state has permission actively to promote the *specifically political virtues required of people in their role as citizens*, since this arises immediately out of the state's duty to promote the public good ("the specifically political common good"). This could exceed merely enforcing citizens' obligation to obey the law and might include promoting the acquisition of civic virtues of mutual respect, civility of public speech, acceptance of democratic decisions, social and political participation and the like. Brunner clearly recognized the importance of civic virtues if the state was to effectively discharge its own, even if he was ambiguous on the state's role in promoting them (1945, 182). What the "active promotion" of political virtues might amount to remains to be spelled out, but one would expect

Finnis and Brunner, at least, to caution against the state itself directly assuming the task of forming such virtues in citizens and look to it rather for only indirect support (through, for example, coordination, funding, licensing, informal guidance) to communities and institutions better placed to promote political virtues – families, schools, voluntary associations, the media, NGOs, political parties, and so forth.

This is obviously very far from a comprehensive review of the prospects for convergence even within the selected themes treated in the thinkers considered here.²³ It may however, offer some starting points for profitable ecumenical conversations regarding the enduringly important question of the scope of political authority, one which formidable challenges such as the spread of globalized liberal capitalism, the pluralization and liquidization of society, and the crisis of legitimacy facing most political institutions are making more pressing by the day.²⁴

Notes

- 1 Following Dyson (Aquinas 2002) and Finnis (1998, 219–20), “state” here refers to political authorities generally, not only to the modern “nation-state.”
- 2 For a critique of Dooyeweerd’s reading of Thomism as “collectivist” see Chaplin (2006).
- 3 This is a massive exhibition structure built in London to mark the new millennium.
- 4 Niebuhr writes extensively, in “realist” vein, on the relation between love and justice (see Lovin 1995, ch. 5). But one of his major statements of justice rejects “Catholic natural law” theory in a single note as “pretentious” (1943, 262 n.2). For a longer critique, see Niebuhr (1989, 202–12).
- 5 Space prevents engagement with other promising Reformed Protestant interlocutors, such as Dooyeweerd (see Chaplin 2011) and O’Donovan (2005, 2015). I must also bypass the Reformed “two kingdoms” theology recently revived by, for example, David VanDrunen (2010).
- 6 Translations of the *Summa Theologiae* (ST) are from Aquinas 2002.
- 7 According to Finnis (1998, 134) the scope of *ius* can also embrace the plural term “rights” (*iura*), including individual rights.
- 8 Thomas further distinguishes, within “particular justice,” between “distributive” and “commutative” justice (see Aquinas 2002, 181 n.105; cf. Finnis 1998: 215 n. a).
- 9 See Finnis 1998, 24–8. The state is classified further as a “natural accidental whole” (Gilby 1953, 107–16).

- 10 It is “virtue considered *explicitly* and precisely oriented to the good of other persons precisely as persons with whom one is in community” (Finnis 1998, 118–19).
- 11 For more precise accounts of “common good” see Finnis 1980, ch. VI; O’Donovan 2015.
- 12 For a thorough analysis of “legal justice” see Newman (1954).
- 13 General justice pertains to both state officials (as giving direction) and citizens (as receiving direction) (*ST* 2a2ae.58.6). See Finnis (1998, 257, cf. 264).
- 14 What Thomas says about justice, common good and the scope of state authority applies equally to all types of regime (cf. *ST* 1a2ae.95.4) and to all modes in which law directs human acts: commanding, prohibiting, permitting and punishing (*ST* 1a2ae.92.2).
- 15 On Thomas’s broader discussion of “common good” see Finnis (1998, 111–17).
- 16 Thomas acknowledges that nonstate communities establish their own internal rules (pursuant to their particular common goods), but reserves the term “law” to rulings promulgated by the state (*ST* 1a2ae.90.3 *ad* 3).
- 17 The distinction is already noted in, for example, Murray (1993, 144–6).
- 18 The citation from Thomas is from *Summa contra Gentiles* (III c. 71 n. 3 [2470]). This does not imply sovereign immunity on the part of lesser communities for their members still possess natural rights (Finnis 1998, 251).
- 19 Finnis reads *De regimine principum*, perhaps optimistically, as essentially consistent with this interpretation (1998, 231).
- 20 I focus on this specific question and bypass the wider theological frameworks in which his thought is embedded. See Brunner (1937, 1948–9) and commentaries on Brunner by McGrath (2014) and Williamson (1976, ch. IV).
- 21 Brunner asserts, problematically, that justice in the sense he will discuss it in this book (justice as concerned with “mine and thine”) is “incidental to the gospel” (1945, 18), construing it as standing in a “dialectical” relationship to love (1945, 23; cf. ch. 15).
- 22 Brunner’s speaking of an “absolute” law of nature which is “static” and “immutable” (1945, 83) reflects his overriding concern in this work to counter mid-century totalitarianism. On the relation between stability and variability in natural law, Thomas has the more nuanced account.
- 23 I note too that the thinkers considered here all espouse some version of moral realism grounded in a strong doctrine of a created (or natural) order which is in principle rationally knowable by humans, however imperfectly. I do not suggest that the ecumenical convergence I seek is only attainable on the basis of such moral realism, but exploring how it might proceed otherwise is beyond the scope of the chapter.
- 24 One attempt to take this conversation further is Heffernan Schindler (2008).

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