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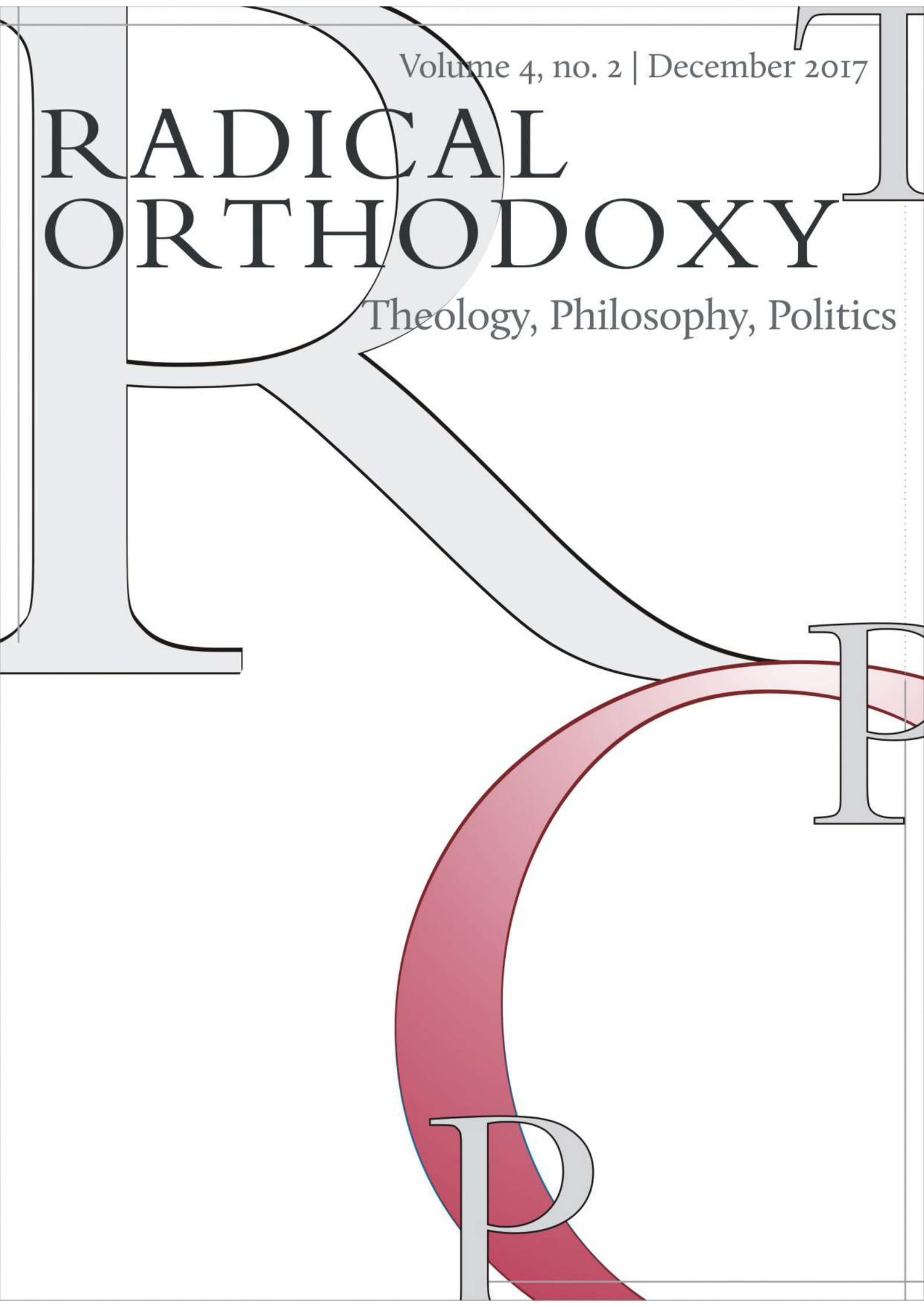
RADICAL ORTHODOXY

Theology, Philosophy, Politics



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Theology, Philosophy, Politics

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Radical Orthodoxy: Theology, Philosophy, Politics

Reformation 500: Any Cause for Celebration?

John Milbank

1.

The 500th anniversary of the European Reformation has not fallen in an auspicious year. In the British Isles, where arguably the divisions over this event most of all still linger (subtly and not so subtly), they have once again covertly resurfaced. The referendum vote to leave the European Union appears in many ways to repeat the old suspicion of Rome and a Protestant desire to cast adrift–to opt for an island, maritime and individualist destiny, rather than a Continental, cross-border and communitarian one. The mood may be populist, yet it oddly coincides with a British liberal revival of anti-Catholicism, culminating in the TV adaptation of Hilary Mantel's execrably tedious novel *Wolf Hall,* which sought, in denial of the facts, to render the first real modern authoritarian, Thomas Cromwell, a hero, and the Humanist Catholic martyr and genius, Thomas More, after all a sadistic villain. No doubt most of those who applauded the superb acting talents wasted on this material voted to remain in the EU–yet a significant and perhaps controlling minority of extreme liberals, in both cultural and economic terms, voted to leave. Often such

people articulate a specific avowal of an Anglo-Saxon, Protestant and anarchically individualist destiny.

Viewed in more measured terms, one might regard such a supposed destiny as dubious–as a premature impulse to depart, in despair of slow reform, that tends to cause rupture, upheaval and eventually war. For just this reason, 2017 appears to be an unfortunate year in which to seek to celebrate a half-millenium of Protestantism. But another reason also is likely to render our time uncomfortable with any unqualified commemoration. This is our awareness of the danger of Wahabist and Salafist Islam. In so many ways its textual fundamentalism and iconoclasm seem akin to the spirit of the Protestant reformers–and we are bound to recall the quite staggering destruction of the medieval legacy of religious images in Britain, which had commenced earlier in Bohemia under the hands of the Hussites. No less are we bound to recall the justification of religious murder and massacre by Protestants in Ireland, Germany and elsewhere, even if this was imitated by the other side. By the same token, we have to blame also Catholics and nationalists, besides Protestants, for the many wars of religion which raged and then simmered for practically 300 years. Yet the ultimately instigating factor in these wars was the Reformation itself. Were disagreements over the Papacy and the Eucharist (especially) really worth the shedding of so much blood, especially given the many intellectual and local compromises in practice that were in fact reached in many different places?

Even if we acknowledge that in some ways a military, political and iconoclastic image of the prophet Mohammed has been reinforced by Islam's experience of the West since Napoleon and its desire to exert a counter-force, then we have to recognise the iconoclastic and often terroristic aspects of the modern revolutionary legacy are themselves in a Reformation lineage.[1] As both Edmund Burke and William Cobbett contended, the paradigmatic French Revolution was in several precise ways the belated reformation of France, given

[1] See Tom Holland's remarkable British Channel 4 TV Documentary, *Isis: The Origins of Violence*.

the influence upon it of Jansenists, Freemasons, Unitarian modes of belief and an apocalyptic desire to destroy and begin again.[2]

It is therefore scarcely surprising that many, including Protestants themselves, are approaching this anniversary in a muted manner. And there are also academic reasons for this muting. Over the past half-century, three different trends in historiography have contributed to a dampening of any unqualified enthusiasm for the Protestant reform. The first is the realisation that we should speak, not primarily of a single 'reform', but of a long series of attempted reforms, beginning far back in the Middle Ages themselves and continuing in early modern times in the instance of the so-called 'Counter-Reformation' as well as 'the Reformation proper'. Throughout this long period there was a consistent awareness that the Church and Christendom were not just failing to live up to a Christ-like image, but were severely compromised by pervasive corruption. The Gregorian Reform itself had sought both to remove the contamination of the clerical by the secular life and to establish the supremacy of the former over the latter, in order to insist on the primacy of the spiritual and of reciprocal respect in the governing orientation of the West.[3] Yet the resultant, if unintended further secularisation of the laity, led in turn to movements meant to avert also that drift: movements of mendicant priestly involvement in the life of the people and of the poor, of many lay guilds of devotion, intercession and work, of lay communities, like those of the Beguines, seeking to combine worldly work with liturgical patterns of order and renunciation.

Yet despite all this, prevailing patterns of clerical corruption and lay dissolution remained. And reform itself might quickly turn decadent. The great English 14th century alliterative epic poem, *Piers Plowman,* by William Langland, contains an intermittent denunciation of the way in which the Mendicant friars have corrupted the primacy of the parish by encouraging donation for special prayers, masses and chapels, upon which reliable stream of 'gifts' they have

[2] William Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (Charlotte NC: TAN books, 2012), Chap XV, §§ 429-449, pp. 354-472.

[3] See Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (Providence: RI, 1969), 516-562; Harold J. Berman, 'The Religious Foundations of Western Law' in *Faith and Order: The Reconciliation of Law and Religion* (Grand Rapids Mich: Eerdmans, 1993), 35-53.

grown wealthy.[4] Meanwhile, more traditional monasteries, like those of the Cistercians, through the systematic employment of unlanded labourers, were starting to establish something like a proto-capitalist rural economy. Lay guilds of work could readily become exploitative monopolies of trade, while those of devotion might encourage a burgeoning trade in indulgences. Above all, papal primacy degenerated into an attempted exercise of supreme sovereign power, rather than one of spiritual persuasion.

All that might sound as if it belongs to a traditional Protestant apologetic. And it might well do so: but the point newly stressed by historians is that the Middle Ages themselves were frequently aware of multiple corruption, and in multiple ways constantly sought further reform.[5] Just for this reason, the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable reform movements was fluid: there were several sects whose charismatic and eschatological character placed them beyond the pale, yet the Franciscans and especially the spiritual Franciscans exhibited several resemblances to these (and even in rare instances to the positions of the Cathars), yet remained precariously within the embrace of Catholicism. Reformers like John Wyclif and Jan Hus were eventually ejected from the Church which they desired to renew rather than abandon, partly on the grounds that they wished to transfer the material and political dimensions of the Church into the hands of the state, yet William of Ockham sustained a roughly similar position while managing to remain within the fold, albeit in conflict with one of the popes, within a time of split papacy.

Thus to begin with, the various movements that led to the Reformation, including that of Martin Luther, were characteristically mediaeval phenomena, that might in theory have led to change rather than expulsion. They were, moreover, preceded by several humanist endeavours for reform, focused more on the lay life, on rhetoric rather than debate and ethical improvement before complex liturgical practice. These suffered a highly mixed fate – some

[4] William Langland, *Piers Plowman* [B text, parallel text edition with modern translation by E. Talbot Daivdson] eds. E. Robertson and S.H.A. Shepherd (W.W. Norton: New York, 2006).

[5] Steve Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven CONN: Yale UP 1980); James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution [The Oxford Literary History Vol2: 1350-1547]* (Oxford: OUP, 2002); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007), 25-218.

persecution, some rejection, but also much integration on both sides of what eventually became a Catholic/Protestant divide. And although the Catholic Church itself was never to reach a compromise with the Reformers, the Anglican Church *eventually* became, in several and constantly contested ways, to a degree the site of just such a compromise.

This reality of 'reform' in the plural and not in the singular is in keeping with the second new insistence on the part of historians. This is on the diverse character of 'the Reformation' itself.[6] Luther was simply one voice amongst many, and there was no theoretical or practical consistency amongst these voices. In many ways what characterises Luther (though he was somewhat anticipated by Wyclif and Hus) is not an extremity of reforming impulse, but an abandonment of this impulse in quietist despair that falls back upon the mercy of God alone. It was just this despair of spiritual shaping which meant that it was the Lutheran and cognate reforms that received the backing of secular power, eager to exploit the consequently opening gulf of legitimacy. In turn it was this support which ensured the eventual triumph of Lutheranism and Calvinism over alternative and in a sense more genuine reforming tendencies.

For Luther, sufficient ascesis and charitable effort is now seen to be beyond the reach or even the aspiration of a totally depraved humanity. Thus a salvation that is no longer a matter of works is also no longer a matter of 're-forming' or re-shaping, at least in the first instance. It is rather a matter of faith in the grace of God who is alone righteous. The bought gifts of the mediating Church are refused, but a pure dependence on the unmediated gift of God is embraced. Already, in obliquely criticising Wyclif, the poet and vernacular theologian Langland had seen the concealed *continuity* here: an overstress on unilateral gift, now rendered free, continues to suspend the ordinary operations of measured exchange, and so of justice, besides charity as reciprocity and relationship.[7] But other reformers in Luther's time, in partial continuity with both Langland and the German, in part vernacular theologian Meister Eckhart, had not abandoned

[6] Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); *The Unintended Reformation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012),1-128

[7] See John Milbank and Arabella Milbank, 'I am Imagynatyf: Some Comments on David Aers' accounts of *Piers Plowman* in *Syndicate* [online journal] March 2017.

the centrality of actual, concrete, realised human justice. Instead, they proposed the Church as a utopian just community, or else, as with the Lutheran medical reformer Paracelsus, in an extension of Luther's own linguistic insights, saw faith as from the outset including a specifically 'imaginative' re-envisioning of material reality, and a kind of extended eucharistic 'working' that would liberate the secrets of nature in anticipation of the eschaton and integrally conform the human body as well as soul to a more Christomorphic shape.[8]

Reformation then, might mean 'no reform' and 'no works', at least not as the initial focus; yet it could have the very opposite meaning of 'ultra-reform' and 'much more transformative works'. This contrast is, however, too gross, and presently I will try to mediate it. For the moment, however, one can note that just as the 'no works' fork tends to mean a downgrading of the mediating human role of Mary, the Mother of God, so also the 'ultra works' fork could mean the very opposite. Thus Paracelsus' extremity of Marian devotion, allied to his Lutheran-mediated alchemical programme, led him to consider that the birth of Christ in the flesh had its eternal and celestial prototype: in consequence he reconceived the divine essence as a kind of 'goddess', corresponding to the figure of Sophia in the Bible.[9] In a folkloric and narrative account of the Trinity whose apparent heterodoxy might simply be a reflex of this idiom, Paracelsus thought that the 'monarchic' Father, from his *ungrund,* had first generated the goddess Sophia as the divine essence and then in her womb the Son and the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, by way of the later 'Lutheran Left', especially Valentine Weigel and Jacob Boehme, this is the ultimate source of 'sophiology' in modern theology since the 19th century, first with the Russians but then also more mutedly with Catholic theologians like Louis Bouyer and Hans Urs von Balthasar.[10]

Of course, by highlighting Paracelsus I seem to be eccentrically looking at a supposedly marginal phenomenon in the course of a short general paper on the Reformation and its impact. But that is just the point. To begin with, there were

[8] Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (New York: SUNY, 1997).

[9] Weeks, *Paracelsus,* 81-85.

[10] See Michaal Martin, *The Submerged Reality: Sophiology and the Turn to a Poetic Metaphysics* (Kettering, OH: Angelico, 2015).

a plethora of discontented prophets, of whom Luther and Paracelsus were but two. We must not read Luther's importance anachronistically, from the perspective of his soon to come triumph. Moreover, historiography suffers from a division of labour: the consignment of Paracelsus to the 'history of science' obscures the truth that his 'medical' thought is really a mode of lay theology and that it continued to have an enormous influence in shaping the so-called 'scientific Revolution' which, in the case of several figures like Bacon, Descartes and Hobbes was in some respects, and traceably, a secularisation and mechanisation of his alchemical-eschatological vision. The same division of labour tends to mean that historians of doctrine relatively downplay tendencies, as with Paracelsus (and even with Luther himself) to blend Reformation with the continued power of Renaissance pieties–not just with literary humanism and Erasmian allowance for human free will, but also with Neoplatonism and Hermeticism (for example amongst the Puritans during the English Civil War). Just such currents were also often linked with never-abandoned efforts at ecumenical reconciliation and the re-uniting of Christendom.[11]

We have seen in the first place that a reforming discontent was nothing new for the Medieval period. In the second place we have seen that, at the time of the Renaissance and Reformation, this discontent became both more multiple and more radical. The third new historiographical stress, in this case deriving from British Catholic historians like J.J. Scarisbrick and Eamon Duffy, might seem to be in tension with the first two.[12] For this is to the effect that the decadence in practice of the later Middle Ages has been much exaggerated, along with the initial popularity of the Reformation. However, there is, in the main, no contradiction: just because corruption was always prevalent in the Middle Ages, if not dominant, one can only talk, at best, about an increase in the later period. Equally, pressures for reform were usually a minority concern: most people cleaved to what they knew and found immense comfort in the parish and pictorially based modes of mediation. Furthermore, as Charles Taylor and James

[11] See, for example, Francis Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: RKP, 1972). For all its inaccuracies and questionable claims, this work helped to opened up the proper investigation of the undoubted intellectual and cultural importance of 'esoteric' currents of Christianity.

[12] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

Simpson have stressed, insofar as reforming efforts tended to focus on morals and discipline, they tended to downplay or suppress the more ritual and above all festive aspects of popular piety.[13] In this sense religious reform ironically ran the danger of encouraging secularisation, since it unintentionally suggested the possibility of an ethical and political order without God, in a way that started to become a reality in some Renaissance Stoic and Republican thought, supremely with Machiavelli. Of course, Luther and Calvin's emphasis on faith and grace seemingly countered this ethical reduction, yet it could also reinforce it in an opposite manner, to the degree that a despair of human works and a continued suspicion of image and ritual might hand these over to a mere disenchanted pragmatic convenience.

One can, therefore, agree with Duffy and now many others, that the Reformation was not, initially, a widespread popular phenomenon–with the earlier exception of Hussitism in Bohemia where an official embrace rendered it also a matter of prodigious nationalism. In general the Reformation was more an affair of scholars and burghers, with peasants and artisans increasingly discontented for primarily material reasons, if anything attracted to the more active, 'works exacerbating' wing of reform. Nevertheless, it is arguable that Duffy and his followers tend to miss, as other scholars like Gregory, Gillespie and Pfau have indicated, the degree to which a decadent scholastic theology did tend to encourage an increasingly Pelagian and transactional approach to salvation, which underwrote the burgeoning trade in indulgences that was Luther's prime initial target.[14] The more the notion of a symbolic, participatory link between God and Creation was undone by the theologians of the *via moderna* in favour of the vision of an inscrutably powerful God laying down arbitrary conditions of redemption, the more conceptions and practices of the Church's mediation tended to become purely power-based, jurisdictional, instrumental and mercenary. If not at an entirely popular level, then at least at a vernacular one, the witnesses of Langland, of Chaucer in his *Pardoner's Tale,* of

[13] Taylor, *A Secular Age;* Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution.*

[14] Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation,* 25-73; Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), 19-43; Thomas Pfau, *Minding the Modern: Human Agency, Intellectual Traditions and Responsible Knowledge* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2013), 160-213.

Dante, Boccaccio, Eckhart, Ruysbroeck and a host of other literary and mystical writers would seem to bear this verdict out.

2.

A fourth recent historical current, most represented by Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation,* has blamed Protestantism for the eventual advent of secularisation. This obviously counters a still far more popularly dominant narrative which regards it, to the contrary, as a beneficial harbinger of modernity. There is clearly an entire cluster of problems and cruxes involved here.

First, many secular historians have nevertheless noted tensions of the Reformation with a humanist optimism that they take to be modern. Second, if one is Protestant, one cannot straightforwardly celebrate the road from 1517 to 2017, but will either have to identify the Enlightenment as anti-Protestant or to argue that we have fatally forgotten the Protestant theological grounding of the latter. Against this background of perplexity, Gregory's thesis seems both more subtle and plausible: the Reformation's very anti-humanist despair of this world tended in the long term and unintentionally to hand it over to worldly forces. In this way, as Pierre Manent has also argued, the Reformation's pious downgrading of sacramentality in the name of transcendence proved fatal.[15] For sheer divine distance is not the concealed essence of Christianity which Protestantism finally brings to the fore; rather, as Manent argues against Marcel Gauchet, since monotheisms offer a *cult* of the hidden highest, their manifest focus must be upon a seemingly impossible and unlikely *mediation.* To try to refuse, or at least marginalise the latter, as with extreme versions of Sunni Islam, is inevitably to substitute a positive, non-negotiable and authoritarian mediation in the guise of a literally revealed divine will. But Christianity is the monotheism that, of its essence, rather most refuses this evasion, since God has drastically mediated himself through the Incarnation and its perpetuation as the Church. Insofar as Protestantism has been in danger of removing the Incarnational focus for one upon Christ's passion, transactionally regarded (and this is by no means wholly the case) then it tends simultaneously to encourage the supposed

[15] Pierre Manent, *Metamorphoses of the City,* 304-327.

opposite of secularised disenchantment and of non-negotiable text-based fundamentalism.

However, to reach this verdict is not to say that the Reformation alone is responsible for secularisation. Gregory himself, at times somewhat *sotto voce,* allows that, in theological terms, it was only building on a late scholastic legacy that was already problematic, in agreement with the longstanding theses of the Catholic scholars Louis Bouyer and Josef Lortz.[16] More recently the notion that Reformation theology was substantially both Scotist and nominalist has been challenged, but in my view with insufficient discernment of the crucial conceptual depths.[17]

It is of course the case that both Luther and Calvin, largely to their credit, reacted against the sheerly logical and rationalist style of late scholasticism. It is also the case and again to their credit, that they reacted against its semi-Pelagianism and relative downplaying of the centrality of the work of Christ in favour of a focus on the eternal divine decree.[18] For both reformers we should instead focus on the wonder of God's incarnate suffering on our behalf, in which we somehow participate, both ontologically and affectively. This was an enormous gain and involved a new Christocentricity not always maintained previously even by the Catholic mainstream, for which an ascetic and often monastic ascent to God had at times inhibited reflection on the priority of God's descent to us, in Creation as well as redemption.

Nevertheless, even in the mode of their reaction against nominalism, as found especially in the perspectives of William of Ockham and Pierre d'Ailly, the reformers scarcely escaped the terms of logical reference which those thinkers had laid down.[19] Thus nominalist semi-Pelagianism assumes that creative and

[16] Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* (Strongsville, OH: Scepter, 2001); Josef Lortz, *Reformation in Germany* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968).

[17] Richard A. Muller, 'Not Scotist: understandings of being, univocity and analogy in early-modern Reformed thought', *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 14, No. 2 (2012): 127-150.

[18] D.V. N. Bagchi, 'Luther and Scholasticism' in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment,* eds Carl R. Trueman and R.S. Clark (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 3-15.

[19] See Graham White, *Luther as Nominalist: A Study of the Logical Method Used in Luther's Disputations in the Light of Their Medieval Background* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 1994).

created will are in some sense on the same 'concurrent' level, such that more of one means less of the other. Luther does not escape metaphysical concurrence because, in order rightly to insist on the incommensurable otherness of the divine will, he eventually denies altogether the capacity of the human will, and does not, like Aquinas, see the very effectiveness of the divine will as disclosed in its synergy with the human.[20]

The very fine Norwegian theologian Knut Alfsvåg seeks to deny this, yet appears to contradict himself in admitting Luther's essentially Ockhamist alienation of all real activity to the side of God, something only compounded by the strange Platonic element in Luther that tends to embrace a monistic reading of Plato's *Parmenides,* and to ignore the more elaborated Platonic philosophy of the near equality of the One with the Many.[21] It is true that Luther allows a genuine synergy, presupposing incommensurability in the case of genuine human merit under grace, yet this is ultimately overridden by God's inscrutable predestinating decree. In Platonic terms this corresponds to the view that creatures only participate in divine activity, and not, paradoxically in the ultimate imparticipable divine essence. Just such a Proclean paradox, as Alfsvåg does not see, was upheld by Nicholas of Cusa, but not by Luther.[22] In this fashion a link is forged in Luther between a continued if subtle adherence to Ockamist concurrence, and a certain (ultimately more Plotinian) mode of Platonism, that reserves the ultimate One from any mediation. There is also a parallel to be drawn here with the dubious Palamite duality of divine essence and energies in the contemporary Christian east.

A similar relationship to nominalism is apparent in the case of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. The nominalists had struggled with the realist

[20] Martin Luther, 'The Bondage of the Will' in Erasmus/Luther, *Discourse on Free Will* (London: Continuum, 2005), 85-115.

[21] Knut Alfsvåg, *What No Mind Has Conceived: On the Significance of Christological Apophaticism* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 177-259.

[22] See John Milbank, 'Christianity and Platonism in East and West', in *A Celebration of Living Theology: a Festchrift in Honour of Andrew Louth,* eds. Justin A. Mihoc and Leonard Aldea (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 107-160.

Patristic accounts of 'nature' in the former case and of the realist Thomist account of 'substantive relation' in the latter. A consequent insistence that God has only assumed in the Incarnation a single individual with certain properties appears to verge on Nestorianism. Equally, an insistence that the persons of the Trinity must be first identified by individual properties before relational ones–distinguished from the divine essence by a Scotist 'formal distinction' which Ockham inconsistently allows only for God–appears to verge on tritheism. By comparison, Luther proclaims that Christianity offers a 'new language' in which the normal ontological considerations do not apply: somehow the particular properties of Christ fail to coincide with his personal individuality; somehow the persons of the Trinity fully coincide with their relations which are therefore real.[23]

However, this does not betoken any conversion to metaphysical realism on Luther's part. Instead, in a demonstrably still Ockhamist manner, for Luther God does not assume a universal human nature as such, but only the particular attributes of the individual Christ: Christ was 'thirsty, a servant, dead', but not 'thirst, servitude, death', as he puts it.[24] Nestorianism is only avoided by a radical insistence that the divine Son is the personal subject of these attributes. But in this way it would appear that the God-Man is less an ontological amalgam than simply God who has tacked onto himself a random set of isolated, individual properties. If there is, in consequence, no integrity of human nature, and indeed no divine nature apart from his singularity, then how is one to escape the monophysite conclusion that the God-Man is a pure fusion, such that human properties have become one with a divine nature that is indistinguishable from a divine individuality?

It is true that (against Graham White in this respect, whose analysis I have nonetheless just deployed) Luther's notion of a 'new language' in his *Operationes* and in *Anti-Latomus,* did go beyond these drily semantic considerations of Terminism. Invoking Quintilian, in a humanist mode, Luther celebrated the power of rhetoric to invoke the entirely absent and in a thoroughly Renaissance manner he links this capacity with a certain Platonism. Rhetoric is *indispensable*

[23] White, *Luther as Nominalist,* 299-348.

[24] White, *Luther as Nominalist,* 283.

to truth, just because literal speech is complicit with sinful appearances: only the figural invocation of what is not can allow us to invoke the invisible divine and healing reality which is not in any way manifest or present. Yet the Incarnation has rendered the hidden real once more an available reality. For this reason it has altered language and disclosed its hidden capacity: a primacy for metaphor and the greater truth of the figurally transferred over the literal. Christ is *apparently* a human sinner who dies, but through the 'marvellous exchange' is really also God who has taken on human properties. We can only express this in metaphorical terms of *translatio.* And the same applies to the reverse process of human deification: in Christ we remain human creatures who have nonetheless really started to assume divine attributes by grace. In natural, finite terms this is improper, and so can only be spoken of improperly.[25]

This primacy of poetic, metaphorical language over the rules of logic was applied to scriptural exegesis by Luther's Croatian fellow-reformer Matthias Flaccius Illyricus, and later further developed by radical pietists like Oetinger and Hamann in the 18th century.[26] As with Paracelsus and Boehme's in part Luther-derived view that faith is also imagination, the divine power to transfigure, their contribution later shapes the spirit of Romanticism, which is in these respects less novel and modern than many suppose.

In the later pietist instances, a shift away from nominalism to a new sort of linguistic realism allows for the fully paradoxical import of the metaphorical and Christological exchanges. In keeping with the Cusan coincidence of opposites, one should understand such paradox as a full admission of the breaking with the law of non-contradiction always really implied by Proclean-derived 'analogy of attribution'. But in Luther's case (and again in criticism of Alfsvåg here), the non-analogical import of metaphor opens the way for a dialectical dissolution of paradox that will eventually have fatal historical consequences. For Luther's theological metaphorics are more obliterating than unitive: Creation, humanity and sin are ontologically *as nothing,* and thus the metaphorical transfer tends altogether to remove the literal vehicle, resulting strangely in an ultimately *literal*

[25] See Alfsvåg, *loc. cit.*

[26] For Illyricus, see Debora Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 65-106 and *passim.*

triumph of the transferring dimension of metaphor and of the rhetorical gesture of abstraction over its concrete verbal ground. In ultimate reality there is only the One, only inscrutable divine action. Everything created exists only as participation in the One but any real sharing that would allow creatures as creatures to be God in their depths (as with Augustine and Eckhart) is trumped by a final construal of participation as alienation to the side of God.[27]

It is true that for Luther this Parmenidean primacy of the One as transcendent 'nothing' is massively qualified, as Alfsvåg argues, by his Christology which divinely confirms the One as also the multiple actual unities of created things. The Incarnation is the ultimate divine gift in which we substantively participate and is not just forensically transferred to us. And yet, still in *via moderna* mode, behind this recognisable good gift stands the morally inscrutable decree of divine grace, as if Luther had effectively detached the Platonic One from its identification with the divine Good. One cannot here agree with Alfsvåg that Luther provides a Christological qualification to Dionysius's excessive apophaticism. For in the case of Dionysius the mystical transcending of either affirmation or negation is precisely allied to the liturgical conveying of the Christological manifestation of this transcendence. In Luther by contrast, a much more ultimate negativity of the *Deus Absconditus* is in unmediated dialectical tension with the merely positively decreed manifestation of what is recognised by us (and no more!) as a positive created goodness in Christ.

In this way predestination appears to trump Christology. But it also undermines the orthodoxy of Christology insofar as Christ's created, human nature can have no really secure ontological standing. Thus the nominalist unity of Luther's Christ must inevitably merge with his nominalist and pseudo-Platonic henology. Insofar as Christ's human nature is fully real it must altogether be subsumed into the divine One.

[27] Alfsvåg is surely wrong to say that Luther is original in stressing the positive, 'all things exist as unities' (as opposed to the negative 'the true absolute One is nothing') dimension of the *Parmenides*. For this is already just the way it is read by Plotinus and Proclus.

In order to avoid this monophysite reduction Calvin later insists, surely within the same nominalist, or possibly at least Scotistic *episteme,*[28] that something in the divine personhood is reserved from its involvement in the hypostatic union, as is witnessed by his 'humanist' reduction of the Patristic *communicatio idiomatum* to a *mere* figure of speech, lacking the profound ontological import that it has in Luther, and his referral of the sense of this figure of exchange *solely* to the transactional exchange of substitutionary punitive atonement (as Calvin conceives it) and not to an ontological reciprocity. In this way the absolute linkage of the human and divine natures becomes merely 'improper, though not without reason', but the reason is merely the divine instrumental usage of a sheerly human sacrifice.

Any Cyrilline paradox of a divine 'impassable suffering' does not figure here, as it does later in the more Thomistic Christology of the Anglican Richard Hooker.[29] Similarly, Calvin simplistically supposes, in defiance of the imagery of Christ's eternal offering in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, that the divine Son will eschatologically 'cease to the ambassador of the Father' and 'discharge the office of the Mediator'. This offends any notion of divine simplicity for which nothing can possibly begin or cease to happen to the divine persons or the divine nature.

To insist upon this *extra Calvinisticum* (as Lutheran scholastics later termed it) is inevitably to entertain the idea that Christ's human set of properties are set apart from the divine person and so must be in some fashion of themselves hypostasized–especially if they are not generally or universally bound together.[30] Equally, the notion that the divine person of the Son can be in any way 'reserved' from the human nature that he has assumed again implies an accidental property of the *Logos* that contradicts the divine simplicity. In this way Calvin appears (despite his apparently impeccable Chalcedonian credentials) to

[28] David C. Steinmetz, 'The Scholastic Calvin' in Trueman and Clark, *Protestant Scholasticism,* 16-30. Scotus affirmed, unlike Aquinas, a human *esse* for Christ and a continued purely human unifying formality of the human nature.

[29] See my as yet unpublished essay, 'On Anglican extremism'.

[30] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* Book Two, Chap XIV.

sustain the Nestorian tendencies of nominalist and, indeed Franciscan scholastic Christologies in general in a longer term.[31]

In the case of the Trinity, a unique reality requires for Luther that again a 'new language' speak of relation as substantive. But unlike Aquinas, Luther is unable to offer any metaphysical reasons for, or inklings of such a reality–allowing of course that it escapes any complete rational grasp. He is forced to leave it as sheer surd mystery, metaphorically expressed, and again in such a way–given the ontological denial of both analogy and real relation[32]–that must favour an ultimate real and literal 'transference' to the pole of unity and paternity.[33]

The same applies to his eucharistic thought which, encouraged by the reasonings of Pierre d'Ailly,[34] embraces a substantive change of the elements as 'sacramental union', yet refuses to give any sufficient metaphysical grounds for this. Insofar as he does so, then he seems, and interestingly, to regard the mystery of the Mass as a direct continuation of the Incarnation, such that the substance of Christ's body entirely perfuses the substance of the elements, just as the divine nature entirely perfuses the human one in the case of Christ's personhood. Thus Luther sarcastically asks whether the doctrine of transubstantiation would not require, by analogy, the flesh of the Virgin to be marginalised as merely 'accidental'.[35]

But this analogy seems, first, to compound Luther's 'monophysite' version of the *communicatio idiomatum,* by thinking in terms of a quasi-physical 'mingling' of the natures, rather than their personal union of idiom as 'style' or personification. Secondly, to confuse a perfect integration brought about by a single divine

[31] See Aaron Riches, Ecce Homo*: On the Divine Unity of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016).

[32] I can see little evidence that Luther espouses, as Alfsvåg asserts, an ontology of relation over one of substance. Rather I think he clearly espouses a nominalist theology of substance–though ably sees how this can re-open Platonic *aporiae* as to wherein lies unity.

[33] White, *Luther as Nominalist,* 181-230.

[34] Martin Luther, 'On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church' in Timothy F. Lull ed., *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 285. D'Ailly accepted transubstantiation merely on the grounds of Church authority, which surely throws into a very dark light his chairmanship of the committee at the Council of Constance which sent Jan Hus to the stake.

[35] Luther, 'On the Babylonian Captivity', 288-289.

personhood or hypostatic 'character', with one brought about by a material substance (Christ's body, which retains a human materialised soul as 'form', though not a human individuating substance), which cannot be perfectly blended with its accidents in the way that individuality or personhood can. Quite simply, Christ's body can be manifest in the modes of bread and wine (for Aquinas), but it is obviously not of its essence eatable or potable. Therefore it is inappropriate to compare the sacramental union with that of fire and iron when iron has been heated red-hot, for fire is not of its nature iron and *a fortiori* Christ's body cannot as eternal have anything 'added' to it, just as the divine nature cannot 'become' human in the Incarnation, as Luther is in danger of affirming. The folkish metaphor deployed here will simply not do the metaphysical job required.

The same metaphysical deficiency applies yet again to his account of predestination, where (as admittedly for Aquinas, who is very inadequate in this regard) he affirms salvation only by election, which involves the divine withholding of election from some sinners, yet inconsistently (again like Aquinas) denies that this implies divine election to reprobation, since if omission can ethically be commission for us, then all the more must this hold for an infinite power. Long before Calvin, Gregory of Rimini had already fully owned up to this latent grim conclusion of Western theology in the wake of Augustine's final writings.[36]

In all these instances, Luther's metaphysical undernourishment encourages a fideism that is the natural ally of authoritarianism. It could only be escaped by stronger doctrines of mystical participation, required to understand how the saved were able to enter into a Christ-space nominalistically foreclosed against any substantive or really relational sharing. Inevitably then, Lutheran Mystics like Weigel began to develop more realist modes of metaphysics, and this was even to a degree true of Protestant scholasticism.[37]

[36] Peter Martyr Vermigli was familiar with Gregory of Rimini in this respect. See Frank A. James III, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli: At the Crossroads of Late Medieval Scholasticism, Christian Humanism and Resurgent Augustinianism' in Trueman and Clark, *Protestant Scholasticism,* 62-78.

[37] See Muller, 'Not Scotist'.

Yet it is easy to be misled here by some later apparent Protestant scholastic espousals of Thomistic analogy: a frequent primacy in their writings of the analogy of proportionality as equivalence of ratio between the divine and human can conceal an effective espousal of univocity, as can even an embrace of the primacy of attribution if this is seen in terms of efficient causal instigation by a therefore entirely unknown goodness, truth etc as opposed to a real participatory communication of a formality and a teleology.

Equally, the confinement of a general metaphysics to 'being' as univocal, and the positing of a 'special metaphysics' or 'natural theology' for God by Goclenius and others at the turn of the 16th century is not evidence, as Richard A. Muller suggests, of a departure from Scotist univocity, but precisely evidence of the embrace of a new *schemata* for metaphysics which only Scotism allowed, whereby metaphysics is not equally and aporetically about God and Being, nor does God lie as cause of finite being altogether outside the scope of metaphysics, as for Aquinas, but rather he is regionally and secondarily located within the scope of a metaphysics whose subject is univocal being, even though as incommensurable infinite being he is the cause of being insofar as it is finite.[38] Where some Protestant scholastics experienced unease about this subordination of God to being, they tended, as Muller notes, to appeal, in line with Luther's 'Parmenideanism' to a Neoplatonic notion of God as *supra-ens,* though often in such a way as to increase a rupture of sheer distance between God and his creation, since they did not usually embrace a Neoplatonic emanationist *schema.*

It is also the case that the Protestant insistence on the primacy and absoluteness of the divine will meant that they tended to embrace what is, at least genealogically a Scotist account of contingency, whereby the contingent is not, as for Aquinas, simply utter dependency upon God who is alone pure necessity, but is only genuinely contingent if always shadowed by a possible 'might have been otherwise', even after the enactment of the divine decision.[39] Antonie Vos and others have shown how pervasive this 'synchronic

[38] See Olivier Boulnois, *Métaphysiques rebelles; Genèse et structure d'une science au Moyen Ăge* (Paris: PUF, 2013), 261-311.

[39] One can note here that Luther clearly espoused the Scotist view that God could have create matter without form. See Alfsvåg, *What no Mind has Conceeived,* 193-194.

contingency' is for Protestant thought.[40] Vos, as Dutch Reformed, wishes to celebrate it as offering a new and valid Christian ontological paradigm, but, to the contrary, it tends to diminish God by denying the inscrutable necessity and disclosive character of all that he has done, which essentially belongs to him as an infinite simplicity to whom nothing can be really added. Once more the post-Scotist retreat from Patristic and Dominican (Albertine or Thomistic) realism involves a weakened sense of the ontological difference which threatens the divine majesty in the name of a merely onticising attempt to elevate it.

Finally, against Muller's attempted (and to a degree successful) rebuff of the common claim that Protestant thought was Scotist and univocalist, it must be insisted that Luther was metaphysically Ockhamist (in accordance with his university education)[41] and that this position assumes and indeed exacerbates univocity, not just with respect to being–where it applies to each existing thing not simply *in quid,* but also, beyond Scotus, directly *in quale,* with respect to its specifying difference–but with respect also to essential identity. For as Olivier Boulnois has argued, later medieval nominalism was built upon univocity of being and of meaning because, just as Scotus reduced 'being' to a property semantically generalised from its always particular and complete occurrences (whether as infinite or finite, substantive or accidental etc), so, also, Ockham reduced any shared quality to a nominal or (in his mature thought) mental generalisation from specific instances that were always, in reality, entirely particular and contingent.[42]

It is, indeed, in part Luther's nominalistic confinement which disables him from placing the participatory at the ontological outset–instead, it tends to be for him a secondary and impenetrably mystical phenomenon, in accordance with his mode of 'Parmenidean' and Plotinian Platonism for which there is an unambiguous 'reserve' of the imparticipable. As we have already seen, just this foreshortened perspective on *methexis* encourages the over-literal notion of an ultimate 'region' infinitely distanced from us, and yet thereby after all within the

[40] Antonie Vos, 'Scholasticism and Reformation' in William J. van Asselt and Eef Decker eds., *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumencial Enterprise* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 99-119.

[41] D.V. N. Bagchi, 'Luther and Scholasticism'.

[42] Olivier Boulnois, *Métaphysiques rebelles,* 343-379.

same ontic space. This can then subtly sustain after all a 'concurrence' perspective upon causality, placing the One-God ultimately in competition with created action and freedom.

Thus, for all his Christocentricity, eventually in the evolution of Luther's thought the forensic comes first: the interval from the ineffably individual God to us can only be bridged by a descending decree to which we must ineluctably submit.[43] Even in the case of Christ, transmission of this decree is his 'proper' work and only 'accidentally' is he our example, as encouraging our sanctification.[44] Similarly, we must first have faith in God as all-powerful and only secondarily do we receive his love as this is revealed to us. This love is moreover dominated by God's powerful will–a love that wills, disinterestedly, our well-being and in so sense offers, as Anders Nygren realised, an erotic fusion.[45] Just by token of its agapeic unilaterality it is at first purely received without supposed taint of mutuality, despite the fact that a love received entirely prior to our loving response would be indistinguishable from a violent blow. Again here, Luther's theological conceptuality runs up against the metaphysical limits of his envisioning of causation and the infinite/finite ratio. The irony of Protestantism is that, in trying to sideline metaphysical reason, it falls victim to it, save when it realises that it must retreat from this sidelining.

Even where metaphysical participation plays in Luther a strong secondary or even primary role, it is not clear how this can be compatible with his fundamental Terminism, whose logic cannot readily (despite some recent, anachronistically 'analytic' opinions to the contrary) be separated from its metaphysics.[46] Within a fundamental, if not explicit univocal and nominalist outlook, this can even, as we have seen result in an *excessive* 'Parmenidean' mode of participation, if there is no medium between difference and identity. In consequence, the divine presence in the world is too much seen by Luther, as Thomas Torrance argued, as God's entering within and under the spatially finite

[43] For the relevant debates here, see Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, *Union with Christ: the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

[44] See Sun Young-Kim, *Luther on Faith and Love: Christ and the Law in the 1535* Galatians *Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2014).

[45] Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip Watson (London: SPCK, 1983).

[46] Boulnois, *loc cit.*

to pervade it, as if it were a kind of literally bounded receptacle or container, thereby risking a sort of panentheism.[47] Equally, the participation of the believer in Christ is seen as a repetition of the *communicatio idiomatum,* exchanging perfection with sinfulness which, if it is to be seen as more than forensic (on a Calvinist model) tends to imply, given terminist assumptions, not simply a deifying entry by humans into divine personhood (though this is sometimes the language which the earlier Luther deployed) but a mystical fusion of the corrupted and the incorrupt and of death and life.[48] The implications of this fusion are compounded by Luther's ambivalent hints as to the divine causing of human 'hardening' and so evil, and insistence that the divine essence lies completely outside the reach of human ethical assessment–just as, Alfsvåg appropriately says, zero cannot genuinely be divided. The path towards a heterodox tensional fusion of even good and evil and the grounding of this in God, as with Jacob Boehme and his German Idealist successors, Schelling and Hegel, would seem clearly to be opened up.

Calvinism was indeed more rationalist than Lutheranism and so tended to refuse a fideistic mysticism, even if from the outset it could also embrace a mysticism of reason. The hypostatic union must accordingly be more explained

[47] Thomas Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation* (Edinburgh: T.and T. Clark, 1997).

[48] See Sammeli Juntunen's fine article, 'Luther and Metaphysics; What is the Structure of Being according to Luther?' in Braaten and Jenson, *Union with Christ,* 129-160 especially pp. 154-155. Juntunen would not endorse my conclusion here, but he astutely points out that Luther appears trapped between metaphors of one substantial union of the human being with Christ, and other of a consubstantial 'two substances' in us, tending to a kind of schizophrenia. As he rightly says, *neither* is what Luther intends, but I would argue that he lacks a realist metaphysics which would allow him properly to understand our incorporation into Christ's divine humanity (into his human body and divine spirit) as an ever-increased sharing in his divine personhood, a non-identical repetition of his divinely articulate character. My reading is also confirmed (though again the author would deny it) by Dennis Bielfeldt's plausible objection to Juntunen (and the Finnish reading of Luther in general), that, with respect to our union with Christ, Luther is not talking about participation, but about 'the relation of being *present in'*. Bielfeldt takes this 'perichoresis' as more avoiding any dangerous confusion of the human with the substance of the infinite (failing to understand that Proclean, Thomistic and Cusan participation in the infinite substance does not involve such confusion), yet does not see, for the reasons given above in the main text, that precisely *this* model of perichoretic presence is likely to imply, in Luther's nominalistic terms, just the divine-human fusion–more *drastically* than does 'participation'–which he is trying to avoid. See Dennis Bielfeldt, 'Response to Sammi Juntunen, "Luther and Metaphysics" in *Union with Christ,* 161-166.

and not left as an entirely indiscernible and miraculous fusion, even though the cost of the Calvinist mode of explanation, as we have seen, is to weaken the union itself. Relations in the Trinity must be subordinated to individual possessed properties, although that borders on heresy.[49] Substantive eucharistic presence must be denied in terms of a more spiritual real presence, despite the fact that this seems to deny the words of Christ at the last supper. Above all, double predestination must be logically embraced (and still more clearly by Calvin's followers than by Calvin himself) even though this threatens divine goodness and love and thereby the entire substance of Christianity.

What we can see, therefore, is that John Henry Newman was even more right than he realised: the Reformers were nearer to repeating Patristic-era heterodoxy than might be thought. However, this was already true of the univocalist and nominalist theology whose legacy they could not free themselves from, through lack of sufficient philosophical reflection. In either case, the problem is distortion of theology by a mutated metaphysics—even if ultimately there are theological reasons, lying often in the Franciscan legacy, for this mutation.

3·

We should confirm then, the entanglement of the Reformation with both univocity and nominalism. These two can be taken, as so many have now argued, as the main theoretical motors of secularisation. Univocity of being at once eventually renders finite being fully self-standing and God irrelevantly remote. Nominalism disconnects and disenchants reality, rendering it at once both meaningless and the playground of divine arbitrariness and impenetrable

[49] Calvin, *Institutes,* Ch. XIII, 6: 'Now of the three substances I say that each one, while related to the others, is distinguished by a special quality'. Calvin goes on to explain that the Son is 'intermediary' Wisdom, embarrassedly rushing through his immanent eternal nature to focus on his economic function in Creation and Incarnation: 7-13. Similarly the Spirit is dynamic life (14-15) but the distinctness of this function is to be understood from his economic role (which actually can give no account of its distinctness whatsoever: that can only be articulated as substantive relation analogically intimated in the ontological structures of the Creation and especially in their grace-filled renewal—this is a more genuinely participatory account of the economic function).

decree. Taken together, these conclusions suggest both that the Reformation was *not* the main long term source of secularisation and *equally* that it played a big part in the latter eventual outcome.

We can, very briefly, summarise the latter, as well detailed by Brad Gregory and several others.[50] Protestantism has tended to disenchant nature, often encouraging ideas of the natural world as dead mechanism or meaningless force, even though the course of later scientific research has often shown, experimentally, that this desired vision does not fully correspond to reality. Yet the vision often prevails and leaves us with an inexplicable residue of consciousness and free will. We are then tempted to reduce these psychic phenomena respectively to mere representational record and the operation of force, or else to cling to spirit in the mode of cheer choice or impulse, that can itself be equated with Newtonian motion in a void, suffering no obstacle.

Our vision of nature and of ourselves within nature has thereby become debased, to our imminent ecological and cultural peril. Equally, the Reformation debased our notion of language, to which it uniquely cleaved. It failed fully to allow that texts are only constituted within, and become readable by, complex contexts of oral tradition, shared liturgical practice and educative formation. To subtract the text of the Bible from this context as a foundational authority is falsely to suggest that it can operate unequivocally and non-enigmatically, which requires it to be denatured as a set of univocal propositions and commands, as though it were the Koran as envisaged by much Sunni orthodoxy. Since it is clearly no such kind of text, even by intention, this effectively hands its reading over to hidden mediators, to clerical forces claiming merely to read when in reality they are construing. And even they, in order to prevent hermeneutical chaos amongst their own kind, must focus mainly on the doctrine of predestination in a search for God's inscrutably elective, but literally unambiguous decree. If only a revealed text is normative and normative only a literal, then only the signs of an arbitrary eternal decree can count as to real textual content. Moreover, without mediation, the problem of application of this text to life can only mean construing life as the extension of a bleak Bible. In

[50] Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation.*

James Simpson's words, 'what remains for the Christian is to search for signs of election: all of life, that is, becomes an opaque book, full of doubtful signs'.[51]

Where this authority of Protestant orthodoxy was quickly refused, then it tended to be replaced by an unmanageable plethora of individual and private authorities, imposing their own wills and desires on the text, with a resultant cultural and social chaos. The only way out then became a public appeal either to a fideistic ideology (able to organise, like Salafist Islam, in a relatively formless manner) or to the supposedly transparent text of a disenchanted nature, including human nature, as with the more Socinian and rationalist tendencies of the Reformation, which were *also* there from the outset and later *became* the enlightenment. As James Simpson puts it, 'repress the material institution and you will land up with an ideational institution'. He rightly adds that 'given the quirkiness of the human psyche, ideational institutions can be, and usually are, more punishing than material ones' and bears this out with a demonstration that the vast increase of religious persecution in the early modern period can clearly be correlated with Biblical literalism (to some extent on the Catholic as well as on the Protestant side).[52]

The same Protestant refusal of mediation resulted in various degrees of iconoclasm, strongest in first Bohemia, then the British Isles and Southern France. Just as nature became disenchanted, so too did the image: no longer a conveyance of the transcendent, it sunk to the level of mere 'art' to be regulated by taste and collected in museums. The Kantian view of beauty as a meaningless but enjoyable immanent play of the faculties is the most logical transcription of this resultant attitude. However, as James Simpson has argued, iconoclasm does not stop with the image; once commenced as a suspicion of idolatry it can, by

[51] James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 140-141; Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation,* 74-128.

[52] James Simpson, *Burning to Read,* 142-183, 260-282. Burning for heresy had only become civil law in England in 1409, but few heretics were actually burnt before the following century. Writers like Thomas More were embarrassed in their recognition that the Church Fathers did not admit the death penalty for religious fault, and justified it in terms of the dire threat to *civil* order posed by Luther, which More linked to a misreading of Erasmian texts that he was later purportedly quite happy to have banned in favour, as Simpson points out (despite all his own Biblical scepticism), of a more draconian public policing of the reading of scripture and assurance of the dominance of single authoritative meanings.

definition, never stop, and eventually tends, as in the French Revolution to terror.[53] Idols were held to bind by their power or imagined power; liberty was thereby defined as negative freedom from idolatry. Not just the idolising of images but soon also, after Bacon, of concepts, traditions and authorities. In the end, only the originally self-authenticating, which means the pure isolated will itself can be allowed to stand–giving us, as Simpson points out, the ultimate paradox of the 'statue of liberty', the idol of non-idolisation.

What end could there ever be in sight to this since, as Kant realised, we can never be quite sure of the authenticity of our own freedom? Today the process of suspicion has ceased to distinguish the dead idol from the living image of God that is the human being–even the sacred imaging status of the latter must be torn down, and especially the confines of the body that render that image manifest: thus the ultimate as it were 'Protestant' iconoclasm is the insistence upon the absolute rights of the will over a body reduced to a possession, which must necessarily include a denial of the human status of the foetus and of the objective significance of gender-difference.

Finally, if universals and relations are unreal and nothing mediates, then only money, increasingly torn away from sign and image, can truly do so. Not Luther himself, but Calvin and other reformers gradually lifted the restrictions on usury and the social obligation to ensure just prices and wages. A world without value and a world of total human fallen depravity is a world that can only be governed by contract and convention, supply and demand. This is now a self-governing world without God, but it was originally, for a post-Protestant vision, a world that God was held to govern by the perverse means of passion tempering passion, vice tempering vice. As Brad Gregory has argued, the Protestant vision of a world naturally abandoned to pleasure tends to ensure in the long run the eventuation of just such a world, given a despair of the reprobate and a limited account of how far the redeemed can recover fallen nature, or even the relevance to eternally ultimate concerns of doing so.

Nevertheless, not even in the modern period is Protestantism the only, or necessarily even the main vehicle of secularisation. As Eamon Duffy has argued,

[53] James Simpson, *Under the Hammer: Iconoclasm in the Anglo-American Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

after John Bossy, the early modern Catholic Church departed, as much as the Reformation ones, from the high mediaeval priority of a sacramental community of fellowship, directed towards the harmonising of society, the encouragement of social virtues and the realisation of charity as a state of being in a way that gave almost as much scope to feasting as to fasting (to link this to Charles Taylor's thesis).[54] Instead, in either case, a confessionalised religion became more a matter of formal belief, prescribed rule, private beneficence and clerical surveillance. If the word was sundered by Protestants from tradition and liturgical practice, then the same applied to Catholic exercise of authority. That too, as Michel de Certeau argued, was rent from the time of development and rendered something fully present, over-against the laity, rather than something arising from them as part of the Church and coursing through them by participation.[55]

All this ensured that it fared little better with the Catholic treatment of nature, word, knowledge, image and money than with the Protestants. Catholics now tended to confine sacramentality to the lone officially sacramental seven instances, and thus Catholic natural philosophers also, like Mersenne, Gassendi and Descartes, embraced mechanisation for largely theological reasons. Albeit the Bible was at first more critically seen by Catholics like Thomas More, John Fisher and later Richard Simon as subject to historical vagaries and so in need of interpretation, this tended to be handled by rigid ecclesial imposition of meaning outside any allowance, before Newman (significantly first an Anglican) of the reality of organic development.[56] Faith was in consequence here also sundered from reason and the latter remained equally captivated by a Scotist and Suarezian conception of metaphysics, idolising God as merely the highest being rather than Being as such, corralling the finite from the infinite and nature from grace.

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[54] Eamon Duffy, *Reformation Divided: Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 1-15; Charles Taylor, *loc. cit.*

[55] Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable,* trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

[56] Simpson, *Burning to Read,* 10-33, 222-282. Simpson notes how Thomas More retreats in an ironically 'Protestant' fashion from his earlier Erasmian fluidity about texts, in order to confront the Protestant civil danger. But he also rightly dismisses Brian Cummings's charge that More was threatening both the Scriptural foundation of Christianity and the integrity of textual meaning. Instead More more radically sees, in the face of Protestant denial, the inextricable links of text to historical contingency, institutional transmission and oral tradition.

As to images, they indeed proliferated all too much, but little recovery was made of an authentic sense of the iconic or theophanic, of the invisible shining through the visible, though not fully captured by it. By perpetuating and extending the mere rhetoric of instructive representation, a popular misreading of this as inviting adoration of the material image as material (which the stronger iconic vision ironically tends to avoid) was further encouraged, thereby ensuring that Protestant horror at idolatry was not altogether misplaced.

Finally, early modern Catholicism also much diluted its opposition to usury and it was Jansenists still more than Calvinists who started to shape the science that became 'political economy', largely predicated on the supposedly inevitable need for an amoral regulation of contract, transaction and the employment of Labour. The most that can be said here in mitigation is that Catholics retained marginally more than Protestants a suspicion, sometimes tending to outright critique, of modern Capitalist processes.

And it general it can be said that, while modern Catholicism has shared with Protestantism in a philosophical, theological and cultural *episteme* that has eventually engendered secularisation, it has done so in a somewhat more muted degree, more persistently recalling elements of a different Christian past.

4.

But is that all there is to be said about the Protestant legacy? Are we bound to reach such a *purely* negative verdict, especially if it leads to Brexit, and in its Islamic parallel version to iconoclastic destruction and righteous slaughter, of which Oliver Cromwell was already capable?[57]

I would suggest not. First, we need to mediate the contrast between Luther and the 'Lutheran left'. There is another way of reading the secondariness of works and love in Luther, especially if we allow, like Lutheran mystics, that our divine election (properly extended, after Origen, into the election of all spirits) is our very substantial, eternal reality in the light of an entirely loving God. Then we can say that doing good works and loving others are not of their true nature

[57] Robert Tombs, *The English and their History* (London: Penguin, 2015), 213-248.

reactive: not originally designed to correct a prior bad or impaired situation, exactly as St Paul envisages the surpassing of the Law.[58] Instead, if to be justified by faith means to begin with our eternal real being which is our 'salvation' in God, then the works of love are a gratuitous extra, even though such an extra is the very being of Creation itself and even of the infinite Trinitarian God.

Regarded in this way, Protestant works are *more radical* than Catholic works. The latter can be sometimes conceived as simply trying to meet an asymptotically receding mark, or as minimally trying to make up for a deficiency. But Protestant works as 'sanctifying' aim towards perfection, as John Wesley later brought out. In this sense, they become more akin to ongoing deification in the Greek Patristic meaning as regards the individual person. But the Lutheran and later the Puritan Left tended to extend that inheritance towards a perfecting of the social and even the cosmic order–because it often preserved the Renaissance alchemical impulse, besides the more 'materialist' (non Joachite) apocalyptic tradition of the Dominican Savanorola, which intensified and optimised the Augustinian anticipation of a purer Church on the cusp of the *eschaton,* alongside an increased conflict with an increasingly debased world.[59] Since we are already eternally saved in God, we can set about restoring the world in anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ–and a world restored means a world reverted to that Edenic freshness where the first state of goodness was itself the state of the ever-new producing of further gratuitous goods.

In Luther's case, this radicalism is most apparent in his authentically antinomian ethics: we are now to do good, like God, purely creatively and expressively, solely for *the sake* of doing good and not to earn heaven or even to

[58] See John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), Chapter 9, 'Can Morality be Christian?', 219-232.

[59] Henri de Lubac emphasised that the Florentine prophet did not share the Joachite and Franciscan vision of a increasingly 'spiritual' final epoch, surpassing or at least reducing the incarnate character of the era of Christ. See Henri de Lubac, *La posterité spirituelle de Joachim de Flore: De Joachim à nos jours* (Paris: Cerf, 2014), 172-173. See also on Augustine's eschatology in John Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (London: Routledge, 2008), 132-133. But the whole issue of a typology of eschatologies and apocalyptics in the modern era is highly complex.

contain a preceding wrong.[60] We copy God's unmerited grace in this way and the proud record of Protestant charity would seem to show a significant gain here. Thus the law of the gospel is also the created, *natural* law, and Luther affirms this point more emphatically than Aquinas, who tended to underrate the *imperative* as opposed to motivational innovation of the gospel, just as nearly everyone before Luther overrated the coincidence of the Old Covenant with the law of nature.[61] For Luther, in a novel fashion, all human law-codes, even those of the Old Testament and the Church's canons are correspondingly regarded with a suspicion that recovers St Paul's antinomian recognition that all human rule-making is as marred by our fallenness, as much or more than transgression of these same regulations. Some English Protestant radicals, culminating with William Blake, sustained and elaborated this by no means necessarily heterodox recognition.

This is not to deny that there is, in the Reformation legacy, as already noted and as Blake recognised in his later writings, an undeniable loss of the Catholic sense of charity as mutual, celebratory love and reconciling community, and of the Catholic view that we cannot trust in God's grace if we are not already loving him and actively loving our neighbour.[62] Faith should not displace the primacy of charity if we are really reading St Paul.

But there is a second and equally interesting point to be made about Luther. The unintended secularisation brought about by the Reformation derives, as we have seen, from its instigation of a dualism. God over against the world, grace over nature, faith over reason. As a result of the pious desire for a religious purity, the world, nature and reason are stripped of significance, left to their own sordid devices. However, although the priority of grace and the suspicion of *ascesis* are linked, these two marks of Protestantism are also in tension with each other. Grace in opposition to nature, divine action overly contrasted with

[60] Martin Luther, 'Treatise on Good Works', in *Luther's Works* (New York: Augsburg-Fortress, 1959 --) Vol. 44, ed. James Atkinson, pp. 3, 109, and 'Lectures on Galatians' in Vol. 26, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, 158-163.

[61] Antti Raunio, 'Natural Law and Faith: the Forgotten Foundations of Ethics in Luther's Theology' in Braaten and Jenson, *Union with Christ,* 96-122; Aquinas, *ST* II.I q. 108 a.2. Raunio extends here the respective existing insights of Gustav Wingren and Oswald Bayer.

[62] See John Milbank, 'The Ethics of Honour and the Possibility of Promise', in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 82 (2008): 31-65, issue on 'Forgiveness'.

human, produces duality. Indeed one could argue that the Lutheran theology of *anfechtung* is a kind of asceticism so extreme that it must refuse asceticism itself as pointless. Comparisons with the Bhagavad-Gita here are by no means far-fetched and there is a road from Luther to Schopenhauer. For Luther carries to an even further extreme the dubious inherited view (clearly rejected by Dante in his account of his love for Beatrice) that one must love God rather than or even 'more than' everything and everyone else, as if they truly lay on the same comparative plain. Luther is more extreme here because for him world-refusal includes even all the attempted techniques of world-refusal, and includes even the relative refusal of the divine Christological gifts granted by God in order to heal the world.[63]

Thus Luther says that we must utterly devalue these gifts as compared to the giver. Grace trumps gift, just as forensic imputation assumes priority even over justification. The latter, indeed, is for Luther, in contrast to later simplifications, a seed of real sanctification, but still more drastically both these works within us are effectively cancelled in their primacy by the divine gratuitousness. This is held to be only the true source of a true gift if it is absolutely free and unconstrained. But this implies a chronically bad and incoherent, unilateralist gift-theory: if the content of the gift is subordinate then how can we identify the giver as such and not rather as forcer and abuser, if the bond he has established with us is but incidental to his nature? Likewise, if the mark of the true giver is that he might not have given, then his giving is a mere whim and he is not really committed to his gift at all. In his refusal of analogy of attribution here and so of paradoxical participation in the imparticipable, Luther simply erects an ontic idol of absolute power, whose supposedly 'personal' mark of freedom is actually that of impersonal material unconstraint, in anticipation of Hobbes and Locke.

But the theoretical and practical suspicion of *ascesis* can also result in an opposite and genuine anti rather than ultra *ascesis*. It can rather encourage the view that there should be *no* secular/religious divide at all. That the fully religious life can be lived, as Luther and Calvin argued, and as Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler had already taught, in any ordinary worldly vocation, if it be honourable and honourably undertaken. Likewise, we can praise God in the

[63] See Alfsvåg, *What No Mind Has Conceived,* 226-236.

vernacular and we can be as fully Christian as sexual partners and parents as we can as celibate people–even if that vocation becomes unnecessarily undervalued.

The trouble, of course, is that a spiritual vocation undertaken in a disenchanted world tends to undo itself and not really to figure as a role within the Church–such that, as many scholars have noted, the ecclesial participation of the laity was often *reduced* in the Protestant Church, compared with the medieval one (even if the familial, domestic sphere became more of a site of piety and care).[64] And the Calvinist version of redeeming the world through a Church polity, though much stronger than the Lutheran one which had handed Church jurisdiction over to the secular arm, was conceived too much in terms of Old Testament law and a chain of obedient command.

Nevertheless, in the Lutheran sense of a Christian social practice beyond the law lay the seeds of a more transformative vision. Above all, Luther had a perhaps unprecedented and intense vision of the goodness of matter and the degree to which, as of itself blameless, it had remained uncorrupted by the Fall.[65] It is considerably for this reason that he sees the Incarnation and the Eucharist as necessary sources of uncontaminated grace, and this vision encourages a later possibility of extending the importance of a purification of matter and of the human benefits thereby gained. It is in this regard that one can reconsider the Lutheran emphasis upon a theology of descent: the *theologia gloriae* is refused as the false aspiration of ascending *ascesis;* instead we are to consider and receive the divine *kenosis* in the stable, on the Cross and in the Bread and Wine. Thus an element in Luther points to a 'left' Lutheranism that would no longer sunder grace from gift, *kenosis* from ineffable height and the divine Unity from an eternal emanative othering in the act of creation, whereby Creation's own nullity is ontologically exceeded by the eternal divine Trinitarian embrace of this 'is not' as the possibility of difference, after Plato's *Sophist* and *Seventh Letter,* rather than the *Parmenides.*

This contrast can bring a seemingly bizarre parallel to mind: namely the contrast between a Plotinian Neoplatonism of psychic ascent to the One and the

[64] See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars.*

[65] Sammeli Juntunen, 'Luther and Metaphysics', 151; Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity,* 125-127.

theurgic Neoplatonism of Iamblichus (and then Proclus and Damascius) which stressed in addition, and in accord with the paradox of participated imparticipability, the descent of divine powers towards us in ritual acts–a perspective whose Christian variant is found in Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor.

Yet not so bizarre after all. Because the Lutheran left, beginning with Paracelsus, was precisely fusing a Lutheran descent with a theurgic one, under both neoplatonic and Hermetic influences. It is also such a fusion which allows descent to become more synergic and more merged with human action and working, in an, as it were 'alchemical' expansion of the priestly action of the Eucharist.

In these respects, one can argue that there have also been positive consequences of the Reformation, at first unintended, but later intended, albeit by a minority, all the way from Paracelsus to William Blake, Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel and Franz von Baader. In rather broader terms, while one can deplore indeed the loss of the human cycle of fasting and feasting, at the same time there is a sense in which it took Protestants to be yet more radically non-dualist and so more fully *Catholic* than earlier Catholic tradition. If there was a final abandonment of the theophanic image and the sacramental, then, in compensation, both could now be more radically be envisaged as arising everywhere, as even the poetry of John Milton shows.[66] Thus the Anglican Thomas Traherne celebrated the abiding sacrality of the cosmos in a new way; Anglican poets and prose-writers celebrated nature for what she was in herself as well as for what she symbolised of the transcendent. Similarly, art and aesthetic theory by no means always confined art within the bounds of the divertingly beautiful, with transcendence negatively confined to the terrifying sublime, but sometimes (from the 'picturesque' to the early Romantic) now intimated a sacramental glory as breaking through all beautiful artefacts. Already indeed, the death of the icon was balanced in the 17th century by the rise of the enigmatic

[66] See Regina Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008).

emblem, expanding the metaphoric word in the direction of the disclosively symbolic.[67]

Equally, Lutherans like Herder and Hegel allowed the lost authority of time to return by rediscovering the Biblical sacrality of the historical process and the event, as opposed to the ascetic focus on the liberation of the individual soul. Other Lutherans like Jacobi and Hamann and the originally Anglican John Henry Newman realised anew that all reason needs faith and all faith reasoning. The Danish Lutheran Søren Kierkegaard produced the beautifully non-snobbish picture of the new Abraham as a plump Copenhagen Burgher, strolling through the park on Sunday afternoon but renouncing everything in his heart just so that he may re-receive it and enjoy it as pure non-reactive gift, in a manner that perfectly fuses the Catholic with the Lutheran attitude.

Modern Catholic thought and practice has recognised all this and learnt in the end from Protestants–including the significantly once Anglican Newman, as likewise G.K. Chesterton. It has renounced Baroque neo-scholastic decadence by re-integrating nature and grace, faith and reason. It has embraced the vernacular and married life more fully. It has learnt from Protestant poetry and landscape art; it has grown tired of Cartesian mechanism and dualism in a way partially indebted to the integrating attitudes of the Puritan Cambridge Platonists and then to various Protestant German and British Romantic philosophers.

We need, therefore, an ecumenical and long-term approach when we assess the legacy of the Reformation and its relation to secularisation. A great deal of the dualism that marks Protestant thought was taken over from late Mediaeval thought, and sustained as much by Counter-Reformation as by Protestant thinkers. Similarly, while the Reformation and its legacy was in some ways a disaster that broke Europe apart, as it today incipiently remains, and blinded us to nature's real enchantment, at the same time and from the outset, it pointed in an opposite way towards a more radical cure of a much older disease and so to a more authentic mode of the Catholic.

In short, to a way of being Christian in the ordinary. Of course asceticism is required in the Christian life. But it took Protestants fully to see that individual

[67] See Aby Warburg, *Atlas Menmosyne* (Madrid: Akal Ediciones Sa, 2010).

asceticism could become another sort of idol. For if God is truly the transcendent God, then he is not an ontic *alternative* to the world that he has made, including the pervasive sexuality of all life, as if we had to choose between the two, or love creatures less by loving God more,[68] any more than created being can be redeemed if individual souls alone are rescued, without the rescue also of their fellow creatures and all the linkages between them. To go up to God is to go simultaneously outwards to the cosmos, which persists, but is transfigured, as Traherne saw. 'Further up' is also 'further in', as another Protestant writer, C. S Lewis put in, in the course of offering a Christian and Platonic vision also to children and on children's terms–yet another way in which the Protestant legacy has helped to enrich our understanding and enactment of the Catholic gospel.[69]

In short, a radicalised Orthodoxy of the future should cleave to Catholic tradition, yet learn also from the more transformative works envisaged by Protestantism, especially in its more radical and exotic varieties.

[68] In some passages of Dante's *Commedia* it is already clear that the poet's love of Beatrice is regarded as being as equally absolute as his love for God. One can construe this as meaning that the greater our love for God, who is all in all, then the greater and less qualified become all our loves (in their differentiating intensities, since we are limited creatures) for creatures. On the occasion when I delivered this paper at Westfield House, Cambridge, Slavoj Žižek in his own paper rightly described as 'obscene' the common notion that our love for creatures should be but 'partial' when compared to our absolute love of God. But (against Žižek's unqualifiedly pro-Protestant position) one could say that an iconoclastic attitude tends to intensify such an obscene stance (the lover should supposedly not 'idolize' the beloved etc), whereas a radically incarnational one refuses it. Again, Protestantism points in two opposite directions here.

[69] C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (London: Harper Collins, 2002).

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AUGUSTINE'S ANALYSIS OF *AMOR LAUDIS*
A Case Study of the Supreme Drive in Roman Political Life

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INTRODUCTION: AUGUSTINE'S CRITIQUE OF ROMAN POLITICAL LIFE IN THE *CITY OF GOD*[2]

Augustine's attitude towards Roman politics in the *City of God* is highly complicated, arguably to the point of being ambivalent. On the one hand, Augustine never tires of disclosing the dark side of Roman politics: the slaughter of Roman citizens in civil wars and of foreign peoples during the expansion of the Empire; bloody crimes committed by generals in the pursuit of supreme power; and horrific deeds perpetrated by emperors like Nero and Caligula. On the other hand, Augustine does not hesitate to praise Roman heroes like Cato and Regulus for the firmness of their character and their remarkable courage when faced with dangers and cruel death, as well as their noble spirit of self-sacrifice for the motherland. Roman heroes despised personal interests and even their own lives, in order to attain glory within and outside Rome. As Augustine puts it, "This glory they most ardently loved. For this sake

[1] I must thank my supervisor Prof. William Desmond for giving me the most important inspiration of this article. In writing and polishing its argument, I also received valuable instruction and warm help from Prof. James Wetzel, Prof. Gábor Kendeffy, Prof. Gàbor Boros, Prof. Martin Moors, Prof. Karin de Boer, Prof. Dennis Vanden Auweele, and my friend Tyler J. W. Dickinson, to all of whom I must express my deepest gratitude here.

[2] *Civ. Dei.* denotes *De civitate dei* and *Conf.* denotes *Confessiones*. The English translation for the former comes from Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans,* volumes II, trans. William M. Green (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963), while that of the latter comes from Augustine, *Confessions,* volume I, trans. William Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Words in parentheses are supplemented by the author of this article in order to complete the meaning of whole sentences.

they chose to live and for its sake they did not hesitate to die. They suppressed all other desires in their boundless desire for this one thing" (*Civ. Dei*, 5.12). Moreover, God recognized this virtue and justly gave Rome what was their due: i.e., the greatest empire and the highest glory the human race has ever seen.

With Augustine's ambivalent attitude in mind, Rome can be reasonably suspected (unlike "Babylonia", i.e., the uncontroversial name for the earthly city) as a representative of a neutral political space, or, a representative of *saeculum* according to Robert Markus.[3] This *saeculum*, which includes all political communities and social institutions throughout human history, exists from Adam's fall to God's final judgment. Within this *saeculum* are good and evil, light and darkness, and most importantly, the heavenly and earthly cities being intertwined. As a whole though, *saeculum* has its own significance which is

[3] For Robert Austin Markus' secularist reading of Augustine, see Robert Austin Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970) and *Christianity and the Secular* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006). Markus's interpretation of *saeculum* is inspired by Henri-Irénée's Marrou, "Civitas Dei, civitas terrena: num tertium quid?", in *Studia Patristica: Papers Presented to the Second International Conference in Patristic Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford*, eds. K. Aland and F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), pp. 342-50, and also influenced by John Rawls' theory of political realm as an independent sphere grounded on consensus. Since its birth, Markus' secularist interpretation has triggered controversy among scholars. For a reading of Augustine directly opposed to Markus', see John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1990, 2006, especially 404-40), which is one of the most influential works in the Radical Orthodoxy movement. Michael J. S. Bruno provides a detailed introduction to the long history of this controversy in Michael J. S. Bruno, *Political Augustinianism: Modern Interpretations of Augustine's Political Thought* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014, especially in chapter three 'Disputing the *Saeculum*: Robert Markus, John Milbank, and Contemporary Augustinian Interpretations', 119-170). As Bruno points out, modern study of Augustine's political thought arose among French scholars and began to thrive in Anglo-American academia since Reinhold Niebhur's *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953) as well as his other books. Besides works of Marrou, Niebhur, Markus, and Milbank, important contributions to this topic include (to name just a few among many others): Neville J. Figgis, *The Political Aspects of St. Augustine's City of God* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1921); Gustave Combès, *La Doctrine Politique de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Plon, 1927); Herbert Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); Ernest L. Fortin, *Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine* (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1972); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); R. W. Dyson, *The Pilgrim City: Social and Political Ideas in the Writing of Saint Augustine of Hippo* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005); Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Eric Gregory's *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

independent of that of the earthly city, as well as an existence that is at leas partly justifiable. This secularist understanding of Rome is expressed by Markus as follows:

> Taken by itself, it is neutral. It is neither to be repudiated as Satanic, nor to be endorsed as holy...Rome is here suspended...between two 'cities', that of the righteous and that of the unjust. The possibilities of Rome being assimilated to either the one or the other are both left open. This radical indeterminateness of human achievement, and especially of human achievement in society, is profoundly characteristic of Augustine's final estimate of the Roman state...[4]

In sharp contrast, John Milbank rejects Markus' secularist reading of the political realm in general and neutralization of Rome in particular:

> While all human association is in some measure 'good' (insofar as it 'is' at all), it yet remains the case that the most predominant governing purpose of an association is not automatically justice or communality. Its most consistent desire can be for a false goal, which means a goal *denying* its own being, and its own social nature... when he explains what it is that the Romans collectively desire, this turns out to be precisely the pursuit of individual *dominium*, honour and glory. The Roman commonwealth, therefore, is actually condemned by Augustine for its individualism, and for not really fulfilling the goals of antique politics.[5]

I agree with Milbank's criticism of Markus. However, given the limited goal of this article, I will not comment on Augustine's political thought as a whole, but only carry out a case study of his discussion of Rome in Book V of the *City of God*. Furthermore, rather than discussing every concrete aspect of Roman politics, I will focus on its supreme drive as embodied in Roman heroes, i.e., *amor laudis*. Although *amor laudis* often occupied little space in works about Augustine's (political) thought, it has begun to receive more detailed commentary in recent decades; of which I will give a few examples. John Rist argues, "It is an aim of Augustine... if not to collapse love of glory into lust for

[4] Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, 58.

[5] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 404-5.

domination, at least to band them together."[6] For John von Heyking, Augustine pinpoints the failure to provide a reliable judge in endowing praise as the main reason why Romans necessarily loved praise more than virtues and why their love of glory necessarily degenerates into vice.[7] Thomas Smith offers an analysis of why ancient politics, which is centered around love of glory, is intrinsically tragic.[8] Brian Harding, by comparing relevant texts of Latin writers, proves that Augustine follows Sallust's criticism of Roman history and sees *libido dominandi* as its driving force, with *amor laudis* being a refined expression of this dark energy under the mask of civic virtue.[9]

The conclusion of my article generally coheres with these scholars, however my methodology does not. Inspired by William Desmond's discussions of different ethical ways,[10] I will offer a more systematic analysis of Augustine's judgments of *amor laudis* scattered throughout Book V of the *City of God* than previous research has done, re-organize these judgments, explore their interconnections, and disclose an inner logic of *amor laudis* through which it degenerates into *libido dominandi*. My argument will take the following steps. First, I will discuss the positive side of *amor laudis*, which helps sustain virtues and a proper political order. Afterwards, I will illustrate how this positive side of *amor laudis* turns negative, i.e., threatening virtues and corrupting politics, as well as how a lesser evil deepens itself and develops into a larger evil. In particular, I

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[6] Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, 221.

[7] Heyking, *Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World,* 156-7, also 165. As Hekying shows, Augustine uses Cicero's understanding of glory to develop his own criticism of love of glory. Cicero defines glory as "praise accorded to right actions and the good reputation that is attested not only by the multitude but by all the best people." In this sense, both virtue and receiving praise from reliable judges are necessary constituents for true glory. However, the latter of these two is regarded by Augustine as impossible for pagans, because the only reliable judge is God.

[8] Thomas Smith, "The Tragedy and Glory of Politics," in *Augustine and Politics,* eds. John Doody, Kevin L. Hughes, and Kim Paffenroth (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 187-213. According to Smith, the reason why love of glory is tragic can be summarized into two points: first, love of glory, which seeks Rome's eternity, was also the cause of its disintegration; second, the majority of Romans passed away into oblivion and the dead could not enjoy the glory of Rome.

[9] Brian Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue* (London: Continuum, 2008), 35-102.

[10] William Desmond, *Ethics and the Between* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), especially Part II: Ethical Ways, which offers the most important inspiration to my article.

will pinpoint the core of this dramatic turn by reconstructing a dialectical movement based on Augustine's texts. This movement arises from the inner tension of *amor laudis* itself and transforms it (which at the beginning seems good) into *libido dominandi*, i.e., the evil principle of the earthly city.

In conclusion, through reconstructing the inner logic of *amor laudis,* i.e., the supreme drive in Roman political life, I will see through its dazzling phenomena, examine its essence as wrapped in *amor laudis,* and determine *libido dominandi* as its secret truth and grounding principle. In this way, I will confirm that Augustine's overall judgment of Rome is essentially negative, and this judgment also indicates his profound insight into the intrinsic evil within all pagan virtues and earthly politics.

1. The *Prima Facie* Positive Side of *Amor Laudis*

According to Augustine, "since they (Romans) held it shameful (*inglorium*) for their native land to be in servitude (*servire*), and glorious for it to rule (*dominari*) and command (*imperare*), their first passion to which they devoted all their energy was to maintain their independence (*liberam*); the second (passion) was to win dominion (*dominam*)" (*Civ. Dei* 5.12). So, "In this way their love of liberty (*amore...libertatis*) at first, and later their love of dominion as well, as well as their passion for praise and glory (*cupiditate laudis et gloriae*), led to many great deeds" (ibid. 5.12). These citations tell us two distinct aspects of *amor laudis*, i.e., desire for freedom from slavery and desire for dominion of others, which in fact revealed themselves one after the other in Roman history: first, Romans hated servitude and liberated themselves from kings within Rome and invaders outside Rome; then, after gaining political freedom, they were not satisfied with peacefully settling down, but managed to expand their political power all over the world.

Moreover, these two aspects of *amor laudis,* as expressed in Roman history, are more than mere historical facts: on the one hand, they concretized a logical development I will discuss in more details later; on the other hand, they contain one and the same essence, i.e., superiority over others in interpersonal

relationships. In this sense, it is easy to understand why Romans were not satisfied with independence already won, but strived with all their efforts for dominion over other peoples. After all, shame is only the depressed form of *amor laudis* under political oppression. Once permitted, *amor laudis* will reveal itself more fully in the pleasure won by dominating others.[11]

Of the two aspects of *amor laudis*, political freedom seems morally justified, but ruthless dominion is not morally acceptable at all. From this inherent tension between the two aspects of *amor laudis*, we can have a glimpse of Augustine's complicated judgment of Rome. According to Augustine, *amor laudis* is a vice in itself, so a man who has a saner view recognizes that even the love of praise is a vice (*vitium*) (ibid., 5.13). However, *amor laudis* is also a vice that comes close to being a virtue (*propius virtutem*) (ibid., 5.12), so "the one true and just God gave his aid to the Romans that they might win the glory of so great an empire, for they were good men by the particular standard of the earthly city (*secundum quandam formam terrenae civitatis bonos*)" (ibid., 5.19).

If we pay attention to Augustine's wording, it is easy to see that his double judgments of *amor laudis*, i.e., as both "vice" and "virtue", are not contradictory in the strict sense, but merely show an opposition between two levels, that is, between "in itself" and "by the standard of the earthly city." Given Augustine's theology, which grounds all his ethical claims, we can find a hint that his overall attitude towards *amor laudi*s might be negative, for the principle of the earthly city, according to which *amor laudis* is a virtue, is our fallen freedom corrupted by original sin. However, in order to determine whether this hint is correct, let us embark on a systematic investigation into Augustine's positive and negative judgments of *amor laudis*. Now, let us examine the positive side of *amor laudis* in his texts, which seems beneficial for both morality and politics, and can be summarized into five points as follows.

[11] At this point, Heyking's view is slightly different from (but not opposite to) mine, as he claims, "Augustine indicates that the love of liberty is a necessary but insufficient element of the love of glory, which was the goal of the Romans...The political passion for liberty necessarily precedes the more substantial love of glory because it eliminates their condition of shame or ingloriousness (*ingloriam*). In other words, liberty from external threats does not constitute sufficient glory but is only the negation of shame. True political glory consists in something more." See Heyking, *Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World*, 162.

First, Augustine mentions many times that *amor laudis* can *check other more disgusting vices*, such as greed for riches and indulgence in sensuous pleasure. Roman heroes were willing to sacrifice pleasures from these vices, so as to win good judgments from their fellow citizens. In seeking glory through dominion,

> The Romans practised these arts (i.e., reigning, commanding, subjugating, beating down nations in war) with the more perfection, the less they devoted themselves to pleasure (*voluptatibus*), the less they weakened mind and body by the love and pursuit of wealth, for wealth undermined morals and led to the plundering of poor citizens, while bounty was lavished on vile actors (ibid., 5.12).

Therefore, it seems that preferring glory to other vices is like choosing the lesser of two evils, and *amor laudis* is instrumental in preventing more severe immorality. As John von Heyking points out, *amor laudis* creates an order of political loves, in which lesser and private loves such as that of wealth are suppressed, because glory can be better shared with others and have the power to inspire deeds for the common good.[12]

The second positive point of *amor laudis* is that it can *promote the four cardinal virtues* in the ancient world (fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence), i.e., a more active use than merely preventing vices. According to many classical writers, Roman heroes pursued glory through the honest path, i.e., virtues. The relation between virtues as the path and glory as the ultimate end calls to mind that familiar relation between virtues and happiness in eudemonistic ethics, with both Aristotle and Augustine as its representatives. Yet, the similarity is only apparent. For Aristotle and Augustine, virtues are not only *paths to* but also *constitutive elements* for happiness. All paths, as mere instruments, can be abandoned for more convenient and manageable ones. The link between paths and goals are unstable, and in most cases contingent. But constitutive parts cannot be given up without destroying the constituted whole. The link between elements and the whole is stable and necessary. In this sense, there is a clear-cut boundary between eudemonism and hedonism.

[12] Heyking, *Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World,* 64.

According to Augustine, the Roman view of the relation between virtue and glory is closer to that in hedonistic ethics. Or, we could say that the significance of virtue for glory is at best ambiguous, if not overtly instrumental.[13] As we will see later, instrumentalizing virtue directly led to perverting the order of values. Also, since it is only possible for a few heroes with a firm character to pursue glory through true virtues, most glory-seekers developed a tendency to cheat praise from their fellow citizens by pretending to be virtuous. In short, moral elitism resulted in widespread hypocrisy.

The third positive point in *amor laudis* issues naturally from the first two: *amor laudis made Rome great*. On the one hand, it prevented more disgusting vices and promoted virtues; and on the other hand, it drove Romans to establish the greatest empire in the world. Moreover, the glory won by Rome was not brought about by any self-rewarding mechanism, but ordained by God. According to Augustine, we can discern two levels of significance with regard to the status of Rome in God's providence.

First level: Rome is a useful instrument for God to overcome grievous vices of many other nations:

> Hence, when splendid empires had long been known in the East, God willed that an empire of the West should arise, later in time, but more splendid for its extent and greatness. To overcome the grievous vices of many nations (*gravia mala multarum gentium*) he granted supremacy to men who for the sake of honour, praise and glory (*causa honoris laudis et gloriae*) served the country in which they were seeking their own glory, and did not hesitate to prefer her safety to their own (*salutemque eius saluti suae praeponere*) (ibid., 5. 13).

Clearly, Augustine's claim is in line with his theodicy, which justifies God using evil for the sake of a greater good.

[13] According to Penelope D. Johnson's, the oldest meaning of *virtus* in Latin is miraculous power possessed by warriors, the earth, or merchants. Later, *virtus* began to indicate manly characteristics of soldiers. Cicero applied *virtus* to political realm, using it to describe excellent features of ideal statesmen. Hence, *virtus* is the natural path to personal and national glory. In the *City of God*, Augustine in a certain sense revived the original meaning of *virtus*, contrasting *virtus* of the heavenly city, which aims at beatitude, with *virtus* of the earthly city, which aims at glory. See Penelope D. Johnson, 'Virtus: Transition from Classical Latin to the "De Civitate Dei"', *Augustinian Studies*, 6 (1975): 117-24.

Second level: something more than instrumental good and really noble, i.e., quasi-intrinsic value, lies in Rome's achievements, so God, out of divine justice, could not deny Romans the reward that is their due:

> If he were not to grant them even this earthly glory of pre-eminent rule, he would not be granting a proper reward for their good arts, that is, the virtues by which they pursued the hard road that brought them at last to such glory. For it is such men, men who give the appearance of doing something good in order to gain human glory, of whom the Lord himself says: 'Truly I say unto you, they have received their reward'. It was the same with the great Romans. They disregarded private wealth for the sake of commonwealth, that is, for the republic and for its treasury. They stood firm against avarice, gave advice to their country with an unshackled mind and were not guilty of any crime against its laws, nor of any unlawful desire (*neque delicto secundum suas leges neque libidini obnoxii*). By all these arts, as by a proper path, they strove to reach honor, power and glory (ibid., 5.15).

However, Augustine's wording betrays how far his recognition of the intrinsic value of *amor laudis* goes, and what his true attitude towards *amor laudis* might be: "Truly I say unto you, they have received their reward." This is Christ's comment on the Pharisees, i.e., the most notorious representatives of all hypocrites. But Augustine applies this comment to Romans: "it was the same with the great Romans."

The fourth positive point of *amor laudis* goes beyond the moral field and reveals a religious significance, for it *provided good examples for Christians*. Touched by what Roman heroes were willing to sacrifice for their earthly motherland and rewards, the greatest of which is only glory among mortals, Christians should beat down their own pride, devote a firmer and deeper love to their heavenly homeland, and gain more strength and courage to strive for their heavenly rewards in contrast to which the earthly glory is nothing, as I quote,

> Let them (Christians) give careful and sober attention to those examples, and see how much love is due to the heavenly city for the sake of eternal life (*propter vitam aeternam*), if the earthly city was so much loved by its citizens for its gift of human glory (*propter hominum gloriam*) (ibid., 5.16).

The fifth positive point of amor laudis goes further than Christians' self-education, and *owns a dazzling halo of divinity*. Although Augustine does not make this point very clearly, he would probably agree that glory among later generations can create a sense of immortality:

> Since there was no eternal life for them (Romans), but merely the passing away of the dying, who were succeeded by others soon to die, what else were they to love apart from glory, whereby they chose to find even after death a sort of life on the lips of those who sang their praises? (*qua volebant etiam post mortem tamquam vivere in ore laudantium*) (ibid., 5.14).

> They (Romans) were honored among almost all nations; they imposed the laws of their empire upon many nations, and today they enjoy the glory conferred by literature and historical writing among almost all nations (*litteris et historia gloriosi sunt paene in omnibus gentibus*) (ibid., 5.15).

In fact, before the idea of immortality was Christianized, one of the most attractive imaginations about immortality for pagans is only a life on the lips of later generations. Mortals are always mortals, but immortality is born through the memory of mortals one generation after another. As long as later generations glorify my deeds and praise my achievements, my name will live on forever. And as long as my name lives, I live along with it.

Therefore, love for glory among humans, who are only mortal and finite beings, reveals an *eros* deep within their hearts. This *eros* struggles to break down the ultimate limit set by death, seeking immortality within mortality and pursuing infinity through finitude. Given this quasi-divine aspect of *amor laudis*, although it is always a vice in itself, it still deserves our compassion and limited justification. After all, before the true God revealed himself, the erotic energy within human nature could be nothing but a blind power that sought dim illusions of true immortality among mortal beings.

2. The Dialectic Turn from the Positive Side of *Amor Laudis* to Its Negative Side

After analyzing the five positive points of *amor laudis*, let us turn to its negative side. As already implied, potential dangers lurk in these positive points. In this section, I will show a dialectic development of *amor laudis*, through which (1) its positive points become negative, and (2) *libido dominandi* arises within *amor laudis* as both its logical consequence and secret truth.

First: moral elitism. Virtues, as the single path to glory, were available for only a few heroes who possessed a firm character. According to Sallust, in Roman history, "…important affairs were managed by a few, who were good citizens according to their own standards…it was the unusual character of a few citizens (*paucorum civium egregiam virtutem*) that had accomplished everything…" (ibid., 5.12). This witness indicates the tendency of moral elitism in Rome, which limited the possibilities of virtues only to a small group, normally to aristocrats, while excluding the majority of the people from pursuing virtue.

Second: widespread hypocrisy. On the one hand, moral elitism excluded the majority of glory-seeking Romans from the single honest path to their goal; but on the other hand, their burning desire for glory was inextinguishable. Two facts, combined together, opened up a downward road towards hypocrisy: since the judgment given by other people is the only standard for evaluating one's character, what really counts is not how one's character truly is but how he behaves in the eyes of others. As evidenced by many classical writers, except for a few heroes who could pursue glory through that single honest path, a great many glory-seekers cheated good reputation from their fellow citizens by pretending to be good. Quoting Sallust again, Augustine describes this situation as follows: the heroes pursued glory by good arts (i.e., *virtues*), but the cowards sought the same goal by treachery and deceit (ibid., 5.12).

In fact, the historical development in Rome concretized a logically necessary degeneration from moral elitism to widespread hypocrisy. After all, both heroes and cowards desired glory, but only the former group, which was only a small minority in Rome (or, perhaps always remains a small minority in any society), was able to acquire the true instrument. Therefore, it is natural for cowards, who were the great majority, to use the false instrument that could produce the same

effect. However, instruments possess no intrinsic value in themselves, and their only worth lies in their usefulness for certain purposes. So, as long as pretending to be virtuous can bring about similar (or even better) influences upon observers' judgments as true virtues can, genuine virtues and their counterfeits have equal worth with regard to the pursuit of glory. People are justified in their indifference towards the essential moral distinction between the two (i.e., with or without moral worth), and are also justified in choosing an instrument that is more available and convenient. In other words, cowards are justified in pursuing glory through fake virtues, just as heroes are justified in seeking this same goal by means of true virtues.

Third: the self-defeating nature of seeking glory through virtues. Yet, it is a sad truth for both groups, heroes and cowards alike, that seeking glory through virtues is essentially self-defeating. Human beings possess a morally justifiable tendency to give more glory to those who behave well but disregard good reputation. The more intensely one disregards glory, the more eagerly goddess Gloria flatters him, just as what happened to Cato (ibid., 5.12). On the contrary, once it is suspected that somebody who behaves well is only driven by the motive of winning a good reputation, the evaluation of his deeds will be considerably lowered. A particular moral judgment could be either right or wrong, but the universal standard behind it remains reasonable. The self-defeating feature of seeking glory by virtues lies here: one approaches glory through virtues, but when his virtues are found to be merely a path to glory, the aimed glory will never be reached (ibid., 5.19). Now a deeper question presents itself: why is seeking glory through virtues self-defeating? Our tendency to endow a lower worth upon overt glory-seekers offers a clue. This tendency reveals a deeper moral intuition that devaluating virtues to the status of instruments is wrong. This leads to the fourth negative point in *amor laudis*.

Fourth: perversion of the order of values. As a Neoplatonist, Augustine believes there is an order among different levels of beings, and this order of being is also the order of good. Ontology grounds ethics and value theory. A higher being or a higher good should be loved more than lower ones, and evil arises from perverting this order by giving more love to the lower good than to the higher one. To describe the perversion of the order of value in Rome, Augustine borrows the comic-picture of Epicurean ethical teachings: bodily pleasure

(*corporis sanitas*), which is imagined as a vulgar and domineering woman, is enthroned as the queen, and the four cardinal virtues are made slaves or handmaids who take care of the queen's needs:

> She (the queen) orders Prudence (*prudentiae*) to inquire carefully how Pleasure (*voluptas*) may reign and be safe. She orders Justice (*iustitiae*) to bestow such benefits as she can, in order to gain the friendships necessary for physical satisfaction, and to wrong no one, lest, if laws are broken, Pleasure be not able to live untroubled. If there should be some bodily pain that does not drive the victim to suicide, she orders Fortitude (*fortitudini*) to keep her mistress (that is, Pleasure) steadfastly in view, and to soften the pangs of present pain by the recollection of former delights. She orders Temperance (*temperantiae*) to take just so much food, even if some kinds are tempting, for fear that some harmful result of excess should interfere with health, and Pleasure–which the Epicureans think is also largely a matter of physical health–should be seriously hindered (ibid., 5.20).

Then, Augustine points this out:

> ...if another picture also were painted, where the virtues are in the service of human glory (*ubi virtutes humanae gloriae serviunt*), I do not think that it would have the beauty that it should. For though Glory herself is not a dainty (*delicata*) woman, she is puffed up (*inflata*) and swollen with vanity (*multum inanitatis*). Hence it is not appropriate for her to be served by any firm and solid virtues (*non ei digne servit soliditas quaedam firmitasque virtutum*), so that Prudence should foresee nothing, Justice bestow nothing, Fortitude endure nothing, Temperance regulate nothing, except with the aim of pleasing men and serving a glory that is inflated with wind (*nisi unde placeatur hominibus et ventosae gloriae serviatur*) (ibid., 5.20).

Fifth: libido dominandi. We have explained how the positive side of *amor laudis* becomes dialectically negative. Now I will push this dialectic development to the extreme and shows its logical consequence, i.e., *amor laudis*, which seems to be a friend of virtues at the very beginning, ends up as *libido dominandi*, which is the arch-enemy of all virtues.

Let us first examine what Augustine himself says about the *difference* and *continuity* between these two concepts. On the one hand, Augustine affirms the obvious difference between them:

> Although it is an easy step for one who finds excessive delight in human glory to conceive also an ardent eagerness to rule, still those who covet true glory, though it be the praise of men, take pains not to give offence to good judges (*dant operam bene iudicantibus non displicere*). There are many good traits of character of which there are many good judges, even though but few possess them. It is by means of these good traits that men climb to glory and power and rule (ibid., 5.19).

But,

> ...whenever anyone desires to rule and command without the desire for glory (*sine cupiditate gloriae*) that will deter him from offending good judges, he commonly seeks to obtain the thing that he loves even by the most unconcealed deeds of crime (*per apertissima scelera*) (ibid., 5.19).

On the other hand, Augustine also confirms there is only a tiny distance from *amor laudis* to *libido dominandi*: "it is an easy step for one who finds excessive delight in human glory to conceive also an ardent eagerness to rule" (ibid., 5.19). So, how can we make sense of both the *difference* between these two concepts and their *continuity*?

To answer this question, I will refer to a higher unity of the *otherness* and *sameness* between *amor laudis* and *libido dominandi*. The difference between *amor laudis* and *libido dominandi* can be explained by whether they depend upon the judgments of other people. *Amor laudis* is bound by others' opinions, so morality can impose a constraint on it. However, this moral constraint is only apparent and provides no true guarantee for virtues. If the entire moral tradition of a society is corrupted, as what actually happened in Rome, and if one can gain a good reputation by merely appearing to be virtuous, morality will only receive a lip service. Nevertheless, we must admit that a lip service is still a way of paying reverence to morality, although in fact they are only insincere flatteries. On the contrary, *libido dominandi* takes no consideration of assessments by other people at all. It is an unbridled, shameless, and unconcealed self-assertion. Lip service to morality is totally lacking in *libido dominandi*. A full-fledged power-seeker feels no hesitation nor guilt when committing the most horrible crimes.

However, this difference between *only apparent constraint* and *no constraint at all* cannot cancel a deeper continuity between *amor laudis* and *libido dominandi*.

As I have pointed out, both of them seek superiority in inter-personal relationships, i.e., a higher status above others. In other words, glory and dominion are only distinct expressions of this superiority. Furthermore, dominion can be regarded as the most direct approach to superiority and the highest form of glory, just as the second side of *amor laudis* shows: Romans strived to conquer other nations after they had won political independence, for they considered this political superiority as the supreme glory mortals can enjoy. So, *with regard to their final goal*, *amor laudis* and *libido dominandi* are essentially the same, with the latter being the most straightforward self-realization of the former.

However, *with regard to their means, instruments or paths to this goal, amor laudis* and *libido dominandi* are indeed different at least *prima facie*. But since no instrument has any intrinsic value in itself, it can be abandoned for other better instruments without scruple, so the difference raised above is only apparent. When the desire for inter-personal superiority is pushed to the extreme, a glory-seeker will be desperate to use whatever means to reach his goal. This burning desire will sharpen his insight and make him realize sooner or later the following truth: virtues as the path to glory are too hard to manage properly, so he should find a better path. Finally, after carefully investigating all the available paths, our glory-seeker will come to the ultimate conclusion that the most straightforward, effective, and secure path to glory is through sheer power. Now let us put ourselves in the shoes of this imagined glory-seeker, and reconstruct how he reasons along the aforesaid path, step by step.

Step One: Only a few heroes have a firm character to acquire virtues, so strictly speaking, the sole honest path to glory is only available to this exclusive group.

Step Two: Now there are two possibilities. Either I am a hero, or I am a coward. This means I can seek glory either through true virtues (small chance) or through their counterfeits (big chance).

Step Three: However, for heroes and cowards alike, the danger of being misjudged and wronged by others always exists. I cannot always control the opinions of my fellow citizens. This dependence upon others' opinions makes my endeavor highly vulnerable.

Step Four: Even if all dangers of misjudgment were eliminated, seeking glory through virtues is still essentially self-defeating. If observers discover that my virtues are devalued to the mere status of instruments, the glory I eagerly seek will be denied to me. Nevertheless, in that case, I will have no right to protest, for this denial is justified by a widely shared moral intuition.

Step Five: On the contrary, since almost everybody, out of self-love, fears violent force and threat of death, and since almost everybody, for the sake of his own safety, bows down to overwhelming power, it would seem that unconcealed dominion is the most straightforward, convenient, effective, and secure way of guaranteeing my superiority over others. In this way, my *amor laudis* completely degenerates into *libido dominandi*.

Now, after reconstructing the entire reasoning of our imagined glory-seeker, we can conclude that *libido dominandi* is the full-fledged form of *amor laudis*, or, *libido dominandi* is the logical consequence of a dialectical development that arises within *amor laudis*.

At first sight, *amor laudis* does relate itself to moral standards, which function as its constraint. In order to win glory, one needs positive judgments from his fellow citizens. In this way, *amor laudis* not only prevents moral evil but also promotes moral good. However, this relation between *amor laudis* and morality is only apparent, because in order for morality to function as a true constraint, two preconditions must be satisfied: (1) the overall order of values, under which the glory-seeker lives, is not perverted, so virtues can keep their essence and do not degenerate into their counterfeits;[14] (2) the glory-seeker regards good reputation as the indispensable path to glory.

[14] Christian Tornau argues that in Augustine we can find two perspectives to evaluate virtues. First, from the *teleological* perspective, virtues are evaluated with regard to their *telos*, which is either God or human glory. In this sense, pagan virtues, which are not directed at God but centered around human glory, are merely hidden vices. Actually, only Christians can be truly virtuous. Second, in book five of the *City of God*, Augustine also admits a relatively independent realm for virtues which, independent of God, can help fight evil and keep the natural order. My stance is not opposite to that of Tornau, but more nuanced than his. According to my analysis, Augustine's two perspectives to evaluate virtues, i.e., *with regard to their telos* and *in themselves*, are not juxtaposed to each other at the same level, but ordered in a hierarchy. On the one hand, the *in themselves* perspective, according to which virtues have relative independence from God and can help keep the natural order, only shows how they appear to us *prima facie*. On the other hand, the *teleological* perspective, according to which

Nevertheless, the first precondition is never satisfied in seeking glory through virtues. And that is because glory is made the domineering queen and virtues are degraded to the status of her handmaids; in other words, the order of values is completely perverted. With the breakdown of the first precondition, the asserted constraint of morality upon *amor laudis* stumbles. Hypocrisy becomes widespread and morality only receives lip service.

Hypocrisy is only the first fruit of perverting the order of values and the initial step towards the overall moral collapse of the whole society. The breakdown of this first precondition holds more dangerous seeds, which will sooner or later lead to the breakdown of the second precondition. The most ominous seed is a cold-blooded logic within instrumentalizing virtues: just because virtues are only instruments for reaching glory and nothing more, the link between glory and virtues (even fake virtues) is extremely vulnerable. For this link can be cut off without any scruple whenever we can find more convenient instruments.

Widespread hypocrisy prepares a social environment that seduces people into gradually dissolving the vulnerable link between virtues and glory. In this hypocritical environment, virtues, more and more, are judged only in accordance with their instrumental value. To make matters worse, the more sharp-eyed a glory-seeker is and the more desperately he desires his final goal, the less he will feel satisfied with these instrumentalized virtues due to all the disadvantages of virtues as mere instruments (disadvantages we have discussed before). As we have pointed out, morality never imposes any real constraint upon our glory-seeker. When his desire for superiority and impatience towards hard-to-manage virtues are both pushed to the extreme, he will sooner or later decide to turn to a better path, no matter what the moral nature of this new path is. On this point, his previous pretense to be virtuous is overtly abandoned.

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virtues absolutely depend on God, reveals their ultimate ground hidden beneath this appearance. Once abandoning their ground, virtues cannot keep their goodness anymore and will be doomed to self-corruption. This is just the inner logic of *amor laudis* I have disclosed in this article. See Christian Tornau, "Does Augustine Accept Pagan Virtues? The Place of Book 5 in the Argument of the *City of God*," in *Studia Patristica: Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference of Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003* (Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 2006), vol. XLIII, pp. 263-75. For his more detailed treatment of this issue, see Christian Tornau, *Zwischen* Rhetorik *und Philosophie: Augustins Argumentationstechnik in De civitate Dei und ihr bildungsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 295-339.

However, this desperately-sought-for new path will not show itself until our glory-seeker turns to his own heart, reflects on the essence of his goal, and discerns what he truly strives for. As the double-side of *amor laudis* clearly shows, the essence of glory is a special inter-personal relationship, i.e., superiority over others. Once this essence of *amor laudis* is revealed to our glory-seeker, a new path to glory will be revealed to him automatically, i.e., through unconcealed dominion. In this manner, the last trace of moral scruple is lost in the heart of our glory-seeker, and *amor laudis* fully realizes itself in *libido dominandi*, which is its truth, full-fledged self-expression, and logical consequence after a long dialectical development. Although arguing along a slightly different line, Rist reaches the same conclusion with mine:

> ... the lust for power is seen not just as a perversion of the search for fame, but, in politics at least, as its natural last stage... It is important to recognize that Augustine is not just saying (in the Stoic manner) that lust for power is a virtuous thing, namely love of glory, which has got out of hand. He is identifying it as the ultimate 'natural' product of the love of glory itself.[15]

Now we have demonstrated the complete dialectic development from *amor laudis* to *libido dominandi*. However, in order for this inner logic of *amor laudis* to be actualized in real history, crucial catalysts are required. As many scholars notice, Augustine follows Sallust and pinpoints peace and luxury as main triggers for *amor laudis*' degeneration in real history. Among these two, luxury is an undisputable trigger for moral corruption, but how could peace play the same role with luxury? With the light shed by our analysis of *amor laudis*, this *prima facie* ironical truth of Roman history can be properly explained. If, as I have argued, *libido dominandi* is the secret truth of *amor laudis*, then this truth will disguise itself under the mask of *amor laudis* only when Rome is threatened by enemies and only when virtues (the highest expression of which is heroic patriotism) are required for the survival of Rome and her citizens. In other words, fear of enemies is the indispensible glue that binds all Romans together and directs their *libido dominandi* outward against their common enemies. In this situation, *amor laudis*, i.e., the noble mask for *libido dominandi*, realizes itself both

[15] Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, 222.

through conquering enemies *outside* Rome and through promoting patriotically-orientated virtues *inside* Rome.

However, once Rome's enemies are destroyed and fear of them disappears, her ever-present *libido dominandi* cannot help but turn inward against herself and divide her own citizens. After all, one man's desire for superiority is necessarily incompatible with that of others. So, if this desire cannot be constrained by fear of enemies, and if it cannot be satisfied by patriotic conquests of enemies as well as virtuous deeds orientated to patriotism, then it can only be satisfied by oppressing one's fellow citizens. In this situation, the noble mask of *libido dominandi* (i.e., *amor laudis*) will be unavoidably torn apart, and this brutal power will reveal its dark essence without any disguise. This is exactly what the inner logic of *amor laudis* entails: lacking fear of enemies and tempted by luxury brought with peace, *amor laudis* is doomed to degenerate into *libido dominandi*, which is both the necessary consequence of its inner dialectic and its deepest truth.

Admittedly, one might suspect that peace, which is a necessary trigger for the degeneration of *amor laudis*, cannot be truly acquired by Rome. In *Beyond Secular Order*, John Milbank argues that Augustine admits the 'stern necessity' of just wars in the face of injustice: good people are sometimes required 'to make war and to extend the realm by crushing other peoples', so as to avoid being ruled by the unjust.[16] Strictly speaking, no peoples of the earthly city are truly good. However, each can still assert themselves as good in relation to their enemies. Moreover, given the fallenness of the human condition, this stern necessity of just wars will never come to an end, nor will the threats from enemies be totally dissolved. So, thanks to this stern necessity, Romans can always find 'bad peoples' and wage 'just wars' against them. In this sense, *amor laudis*, which binds all Romans together against her enemies, seems to be able to perpetuate itself and prevent its inner degeneration from taking place.

My response to this objection is double-sided. On the one side, I agree that it is an unrealizable idea for the earthly city to absolutely exclude the necessity of wars and the threat from enemies. This means *perpetual peace* and *perpetual absence of enemies* are impossible on earth. On the other side, however, the

[16] John Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 230.

degeneration of *amor laudis* into *libido dominandi* does not require such an unrealistic catalyst. Rather, *temporary peace* and *temporary absence of enemies* are enough to trigger the inner logic of *amor laudis*. The term 'temporary' can indicate a very short time: even shorter than one generation. Furthermore, temporary peace and temporary absence of enemies are not necessarily *objective realities*, but can be *subjective illusions*, or, *self-deceptions* as well. This explains why, during the last decades of some empires, their citizens who lived in the capital city (especially the aristocratic class) could still indulge in sensuous pleasure and fiercely struggle for power, even when the borders of their empires were already torn down by invaders: after all, the dangers were still too far away to be truly felt.

A crucial piece of evidence for my argument comes from Augustine's account of the early history of Rome when the changing predominance of *amor laudis* (which promotes virtues and keeps political order) and *libido dominandi* (which arouses vices and disrupts politics) correspond to the rhythm of war and peace:

> After the kings were expelled, men acted with justice and moderation only so long as there was fear of Tarquin, that is, until the end of the serious war with Etruria that the Romans engaged in on his account. After that, however, the patricians treated the plebeians as if they were slaves, scourged them tyrannically, drove them from their land and exercised power alone, excluding all others. The one class were bent on being masters, the other refused to be slaves, and the end of these dissensions came only with the Second Punic War. For then once more they felt the pressure of a great terror: a new and greater anxiety restrained their restless spirits from those disturbances and recalled them to domestic harmony (*Civ. Dei,* 5. 12).

Clearly, temporary peace and temporary absence of enemies are already enough to awaken *libido dominandi*. In contrast, if only the absolute exclusion of wars and enemies (an impossible task on earth) could do this job, then we would not be able to explain the real Roman history, and even the decline of every empire as well.

Indeed, this citation also confirms a reversal from *libido dominandi* back to *amor laudis* in times of crises: the patriotic pursuit of honor was re-ignited among Romans by new wars and new enemies, while their divisive passion for power

was suspended. However, according to the Roman history, this kind of reversal was both short-lived and far from complete, so could not counteract *amor laudis*' degeneration into *libido dominandi*. It seems the inner logic of *amor laudis*, once triggered, will become irreversible in the long run. Perhaps this is the reason why every pagan *polis* (either a small city-state or a great empire), whose rise and fall hinges on the unifying power of *amor laudis*, is doomed without exception to a limited lifespan and deprived of true immortality: insofar as the people's commitment to the glorious tradition of this *polis* weakened and they gradually lost interest in adding their own names to this tradition, the *polis* itself would die away.

At the end of our discussion, it must be mentioned that in my reading of Augustine, he is aware of the ambivalence of *amor laudis*, its inner tension with morality, and its dialectical transformation into *libido dominandi*, although his reasoning is scattered throughout Book V of the *City of God* and far from clear. The most convincing evidence to his awareness is that Augustine himself provides all the essential elements for reconstructing a dialectical development through which the positive side of *amor laudis* becomes negative and *amor laudis* ends up as *libido dominandi*. So, I am confident that this reconstruction is in line with Augustine's complicated attitude towards Rome.

Conclusion: The Limit of Pagan Ethics and Earthly Politics

Augustine's analysis of *amor laudis* can be regarded as a case study of the supreme drive of Roman political life. Through this analysis, he not only unveils the positive and negative sides of *amor laudis* in relation to morality and politics, but also shows how *amor laudis*, which is *prima facie* good, dialectically develops into *libido dominandi*, i.e., the greatest evil confronting morality and politics. Moreover, Augustine's case study of *amor laudis* has a more profound significance than establishing an overall judgment about Rome. If, as indicated by Augustine, *amor laudis* is the underlying motivation for pagan ethics, which had no knowledge of the true God, and, if the glory of Rome represents the highest achievement the earthly city can reach, then no pagan virtues nor earthly politics

can escape Augustine's criticism. So, if we place Augustine's analysis of *amor laudis* into the grand framework of his theology of history, then we must acknowledge that neither morality nor politics constitutes an autonomous sphere for Augustine that can escape critical reflection from a theological perspective.

Moreover, in book two of *Confessions*, Augustine gives a vivid description of how various vices pretend to be virtues, as well as how these virtues find their full completion only in God. When reflecting on his own adolescent theft of pears at a deeper level, Augustine argues that even in this most unproblematic example of *gratis malus* (i.e., gratuitously evil), he is still imitating God secretly (*Conf. 2.6*). From this important witness of Augustine, we can reach a two-fold conclusion. First, all creatures, even in their deepest corruption, are unable to get rid of the presence of their creator. Second, just due to this absolute dependence of creatures upon their creator, creatures will experience an inevitable corruption (more accurately speaking, self-corruption), when they turn away from Him. This explains why Augustine must deny autonomy to human morality and politics, and also indicates the doomed degeneration of virtues into vices when the former are not directed at God. In this sense, we might even regard Augustine's analysis of *amor laudis* in the *City of God* as a further explication and substantiation for his analysis of vices and virtues in book two of *Confessions*.

However, this does not mean Augustine's analysis of *amor laudis*, if separated from his grand theological framework and examined merely on its own, only makes sense for those who have been convinced by Augustine's conclusion *a priori*, i.e., for Christians. In other words, at least after our reconstruction, this analysis is valid for Christians and pagans alike, and the force of Augustine's argument lies in the methodology he depends on.

In the first place, Augustine does not base his analysis of *amor laudis* upon any Christian presupposition. He only gives a fair report to its pros and cons, just as a neutral observer who calmly focuses on pagan virtues and earthly politics, without allowing any prejudice to interfere with his thinking. In this way, Augustine places himself in an equal dialogue with pagans, and establishes his argument upon a ground agreeable to both sides. However, in observing moral corruption in Roman history, Augustine digs through the phenomena, probes into the ambivalence of *amor laudis,* and explores its potential threats to virtues. From his calm observation, a dialectical transformation from *amor laudis* to *libido*

dominandi naturally reveals itself. Pagans might be shocked at this dramatic turn, but they cannot charge Augustine of making unjustified claims, because this turn is not any artificial framework imposed from outside upon *amor laudis* by Augustine as a defender of Christianity, but a natural change arising within *amor laudis* itself and faithfully recorded by Augustine as a fair observer.

By admitting the goodness in pagan virtues and earthly politics at first and then revealing how their supreme drive (*amor laudis*) dialectically turns into evil, Augustine successfully pins down *libido dominandi* at its center. This dark power breaks down all self-established boundaries of pagan ethics and earthly politics, and raises the ultimate question with regard to their deepest ground, or, their groundlessness. In this sense, although I use a different methodology from that of Harding, I agree with his conclusion about Augustine's discussion of Roman virtue, at least in the case of *amor laudis*: Augustine, following Sallust and placing himself "in the Roman tradition of historian as cultural critic," carries out "his critique of pagan virtue as an immanent critique rather than mere anti-pagan prejudice and counter-narrative".[17]

[17] Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 51.

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Luther and Radical Orthodoxy

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> For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.[1]

I presume that there is a canon of great Christian theologians, a canon which represents what might be called "the Christian tradition." To speak of a Christian tradition and of such a canon presupposes an inner coherence of this tradition and of these theologians. There might be some differences and controversies between them but, regarded after a longer process of reflection, one would have to agree that the controversies between them concern matters not of the first importance or that they could be intermediated. In such a way this canon of theologians may represent what is Christian and what is true. If someone really drops out of this canon one would have to regard his doctrine as heretic: it would not support the inner coherence of this tradition but would destroy it; it would not give an insight into truth, but it would darken and distort it.

I want to show in my presentation that Martin Luther has to be regarded as a member of this canon of great Christian theologians. For a Protestant theologian

[1] 1 Cor 2:2.

this seems to be self-evident while it might be still questionable for members of other confessions. However, after Vatican II German Roman Catholic theologians have started to regard Luther as such a figure–I want to name Otto Hermann Pesch[2] and Peter Manns, who called Luther a "father in the faith."[3] I claim that if one is searching "a richer and more coherent Christianity" as the Radical Orthodoxy movement wants to do,[4] and to gain strength from this in the conflict with modern secularization, one will also have to study Martin Luther and his theology and to acknowledge him as a member of this canon of great Christian theologians together with Athanasius, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Thomas Aquinas, and so on. I am aware of the critique Radical Orthodoxy has expressed towards him, and I think it is instructive to commit oneself to this critique.

Certainly, Luther's theology is often formulated in a very provocative way and one has to get provoked by it in a constructive sense.

1. Core issues and general issues of theology

Let us start with Luther's first statement on theology–and on philosophy–which is found in a private letter to his friend Johannes Braun written in 1509. Luther was a monk in the Augustinian order since 1505, he studied at the University of Wittenberg, and he wrote to his friend: "I am therefore now, as God commands or allows it, in Wittenberg. If you want to know something of how I am doing: I am doing well, by God's grace, if not my study is so violent, especially in philosophy. I would have changed it already in the beginning for theology, I say,

[2] Otto Hermann Pesch, *Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin: Versuch eines systematisch-theologischen Dialogs* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1967).

[3] Peter Manns (Ed.), Martin Luther, "Reformator und Vater im Glauben," *Referate aus der Vortragsreihe des Instituts für europäische Geschichte Mainz* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 1985).

[4] John Milbank, Graham Ward, and Catherine Pickstock, Introduction to: *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999), 2.

this theology which explores the kernel of the nut, the core of the wheat and the core of the bones. But God is god, man often, yes, always deceives himself in his judgment. Here there is our God, he may reign us in gentleness and in eternity."[5]

If someone it committed to the relationship between theology and philosophy, to the conviction "that these two disciplines cannot be adequately understood or further developed, save with reference to each other,"[6] one might be brought into a light distance by this remark. However, here one would have to start to think about the matter: From *which* philosophy does the young student Luther shrink from? To *which* theology is he attracted? What does he mean by a "theology which explores the kernel of the nut, the core of the wheat and the core of the bones"? To give a very short answer: the philosophy he shrinks from and the theology that does not explore the "kernel of the nut" is that of nominalism, in which he was instructed in Erfurt and Wittenberg.[7] And the theology "which explores the kernel of the nut, the core of the wheat and the core of the bones" is a theology not situated in the spectrum of the various traditions of scholastic theology, but the theology which has been called "monastic theology."

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[5] "Sum itaque nunc iubente vel permittente Deo Wittembergae. Quod si statum meum nosse desideres, bene habeo Dei gratia, nisi quod violentum et studium, maxime philosophiae, quam ego ab initio libentissime mutarim theologia, ea inquam theologia, quae nucleum nucis et medullam tritici et medullam ossium scrutatur. Sed Deus est Deus; homo saepe, imo semper fallitur in suo iudicio. Hic est Deus noster, ipse reget nos in suavitate et in saecula." Luther to Johannes Braun, March 17, 1509, *Weimarer Ausgabe Briefe* (Letters) 1. 17, 39-46, no. 5.

[6] http://theologyphilosophycentre.co.uk/about/. Accessed online: October 6, 2015.

[7] Reinhard Schwarz, *Luther*, Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte Bd. 3 Lief. I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 17-19; Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Sein Weg zur Reformation 1483-1521* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1981), 96-101. The issue of nominalism in Luther concerning his use of logic is very thoroughly discussed by Graham White, *Luther as Nominalist: A Study of the Logical Methods used in Martin Luthers's disputations in the Light of their Medieval Background* (Helsinki, Schriften der Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1994). See the conclusion of this work, ibid., 344ff: Luther is not a nominalist concerning the question of the universals, but a theologian trained in late medieval logic. He uses it also in his late disputations, e.g., the *Disputatio de divinitate et humanitate Christi* (1540), about which I will speak later in this essay (White writes about it 231-298). The position Luther has in this disputation is not "nominalist" in this more specific sense. It is an explication of the Chalcedonian doctrine, as I shall show below.

The French Benedictine and theology historian Jean Leclercq formed the term "monastic theology" in distinction to "scholastic theology" in order to register and to appreciate a broad and essential stream of medieval theology which might easily be overlooked or underestimated by scholars committed to intellectual history. Not only Alexander of Hales or Albert Magnus, Thomas Aquinas or Bonaventure (in his commentary on the Sentences), nor are only John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham worthy to be paid attention to, but also the writings of Benedictine, Cistercian, and Carthusian monks and other ones in their tradition which do not have nor aspire to the intellectual level and the questions of scholastic theology but focus on other themes in a different way. In general one might say that monastic theology is committed to the heart of Christianity: the mystery of salvation, the relationship between God and the soul, the destination of the human: the union of the soul and God. Here monastic theology overlaps with what is called mystical theology or simply mysticism. While the themes might be partially the same as in scholastic theology, the manner in which they are treated is quite different. Monastic theology teaches *how* to go on this way to God, how to deal with difficulties which are obstacles on this way. What's more, the way in which this theology is taught, read, or heard is already a praxis of the human way to God. The literary forms are prayer and meditation, and this means: a very slow, repeating, ruminating way of exegesis of the Bible, and treatises on practical matters of spiritual life.[8] The master of monastic theology was Bernard of Clairvaux, who was taught to Luther in his first year in the monastery,[9] and we also have traces

[8] Jean Leclercq, "Saint Bernard et la théologie monastique du XII^{e} siècle," *Saint Bernard théologien: Actes du Congrès de Dijon 15-19 Septembre 1953*, Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis IX/2 (Rome, 1953), 10-16, in a further extense: idem, *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu* (Paris, 1957).

[9] It was an old monk, probably Johannes von Greffenstein, who consoled Luther by hinting to a thought of Bernard concerning the necessity of "reflexive faith" in *De Annuntiatione Dominica Sermo* I, 1.3f, in: *S. Bernardi Opera*, ed. by Jean Leclercq, H. M. Rochais, and C. H. Talbot, vol. 5 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1968), 14f; see Melanchthon, in: *Philippi Melanchthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Karl Gottlieb Brettschneider, Corpus Reformatorum 6 (Halle: C.A. Schwetschke, 1839), 159; about this: Sven Grosse, *Der junge Luther und die Mystik: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Werden der reformatorischen Theologie*, in: *Gottes Nähe unmittelbar erfahren: Mystik im Mittelalter und bei Luther*, ed. Berndt Hamm and

of a very early study of John Tauler and John Gerson.[10] In general, one may summarize that Bernard, Tauler, Gerson, Bonaventure–not in his commentary on the Sentences but in his mystical treatises–were usually read by a monk around this time.[11]

In the late Middle Ages the themes of monastic theology were adopted by what has been called "piety theology." This theology was not restricted to the monastic milieu, but extended to all members of Christendom who wanted to live a pious life. The most prominent figure of this pious theology was John Gerson.[12]

So while we see that the young monk and student Luther was attracted by this kind of theology and that he wanted to focus on such *core* issues of theology and that he thought that good theology should be focused on these issues, the late Luther gives this definition of theology:

"The subject-matter of theology is the guilty and lost man and the justifying and saving God."[13]

Volker Leppin, Spätmittelalter und Reformation. Neue Reihe 36 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2007), 190ff.

[10] Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar, 1883-2009), 73 vols, here vol. 9, 99f (*Weimar Ausgabe*, hereafter WA); *[Bonner Ausgabe] Luthers Werke in Auswahl unter Mitwirkung von Albert Leitzmann*, ed. Otto Clemen (Bonn, 1912–1933; Berlin, 1955–1956), vol. 5, 308 (hereafter BoA).

[11] Cf. Karlfried Froehlich, "Pseudo-Dionysius and the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. and ed. by Colm Luibheid, et al. (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 41: "Along with Bernhard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, and more recent authors as John Tauler and Jean Gerson, Dionysius belonged to a serious monk's spiritual diet."

[12] Berndt Hamm, *Frömmigkeitstheologie am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Johannes von Paltz und seinem Umkreis* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1982); Sven Grosse, *Heilsungewissheit und Scrupulositas im späten Mittelalter: Studien zu Johannes Gerson und Gattungen der Frömmigkeitstheologie seiner Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1994).

[13] "Subiectum Theologiae homo reus et perditus et deus iustificans vel salvator." Martin Luther, *Exposition of Psalm 51* (1532, printed 1538), WA 40 II, 328,1f. Cf. Oswald Bayer, *Theologie*, Handbuch systematischer Theologie 1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), 36ff.

Of course this definition presupposes a series of articles of the Christian doctrine as known and accepted: that there is a God and what or who this God is; that there is man; that he is created as a part of the whole of creation; that there has been the Fall; that every human being is guilty and lost before God; that there is a destination of man to become blessed by the communion with God; that there is the son of God as the second person of the Trinity who becomes man and dies a death of atonement for the sin of mankind.

Luther's definition of the subject-matter of theology is much narrower than that of Aquinas, who says that the subject-matter of theology is God and all things, so far as they have a relation to God as their principle and their destination.[14] However Aquinas does not overlook that theology must have a soteriological use and intensification. He introduces the concept of a theology which is beyond the merely philosophical theology by the necessity that man has to know something about the destination of his being, so that he can adjust his will and his acts according to this destination.[15]

Luther stressed the importance of the article of justification as the master and prince over all other kinds of doctrine, as it provides the legitimation in which the human subject of theology speaks about all matters of theology and about the use which all these matters may have for him.[16] On the other hand, he clearly sees that there are matters of theology which presuppose this article of faith, so that one cannot understand this article if one has not understood and accepted the articles concerning these matters. So at the beginning of his Smalcaldean Articles he gives account of the article of the trinity and of God the Son: that he has become man, has died, and is risen and so on (ASm I, 1-4). This is the presupposition of the following article (ASm II,1): that Jesus Christ has died for our sins (Rom 4:25), that this is a completely sufficient sacrifice (Is 53:3; Acts 4:12), and that man is saved by faith in

[14] "Omnia autem tractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei: vel quia sunt ipse Deus; vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum, ut ad principium et finem" (*ST*, I, q. 1, a. 7 c.).

[15] "Sacra doctrina," theology beyond philosophical theology, is necessary, "quia homo ordinator a Deo ad quemdam findem qui comprehensionem rationis excedit … Finem autem oprtet esse praecognitum hominibus, qui suas intentiones et actiones debent ordinare in finem. Unde necessarium fuit homini ad salutem, quod ei nota fierent quaedam per revelationem divinam, quae rationem humanam excedunt" (*ST*, I, q. 1, a. 1c.).

[16] *Promotionsdisputation Palladius und Tileman* (1537), WA 39/1, 205, 1-5.

Jesus Christ (Rom 3:28).[17] Certainly, the doctrine of justification cannot be treated in isolation. At first, the deciding matter is not the mere doctrine, but the reality of justification and second, this doctrine has to be regarded as embedded in the web of articles in which the Christian doctrine consists.[18]

Let us now give a preliminary comparison between Luther and Radical Orthodoxy. One can distinguish *core issues* and *general issues* in theology. Core issues are concerned with "the kernel of the nut, the core of the wheat and the core of the bones." This has to do with the way in which God saves the guilty and lost man as well as how therefore man must adjust his mind to God's work of redemption. The general issues of theology are presuppositions of these core issues. One can imagine here concentric circles of presuppositions. One can step from the core, the center of the circle, to a first circle of presuppositions; these have their own presuppositions and so on. So the more one enters the outer circles, the more general become these presuppositions, so the more abstract they become, also the more distant are they from the core. RO's reflection on the participation of created being in the being of God, its conceiving of Christ as "gift," as a maximum degree of the taking part that God grants his creatures, and RO's proposal for philosophy's involvement in theology is a movement of the thought to always more outward circles and more general presuppositions.

To say that this movement of thought removes itself from the center does not have to mean that it is wrong to search for more general presuppositions for the Christian doctrine of salvation. That these presuppositions are general means that

[17] Irene Dingel, ed., *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 10th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 414-416 (hereafter BSLK). Luther says that there is no controversy with the Roman magisterium concerning the first two basal articles. The controversy begins the third article (II,1), which he sees questioned by the Roman practice and doctrine of the mess as an atoning sacrifice.

[18] It should be superfluous to say that Luther's definition of theology by its double subject-matter does not want to replace the creed in its trinitarian structure. In Luther's catechisms the apostolic creed is the summary of Christian faith; in *Schmalkaldischen Artikel* I,1-4 he follows the Nicaenum, and so on. Luther's definition has the same status of an intensified concentration as Paul, when he says that "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). And similar as Anselm of Canterbury claims, that everything in the Old and in the New Testament is contained in the answer to the question, why God has become man (*Cur Deus homo* II, 22), Luther can claim, that everything in theology is contained in his definition of theology.

they are necessary to think and to conceive the Christian proclamation of salvation. It is only important to *relate* them to the core act of salvation: Christ, true God and true man, on the cross, the believing man, the pardoned sinner before him. Two dangers become visible now: in one direction there is a forgetting of this relating, of this tying back. In this case one would forget that the case of Christianity concerns something very concrete: man, who is overwhelmed by the recognition of his sin before God and comforted by the God fixed onto the cross. Luther diagnosis was that Dionysius the Areopagite succumbed to this danger when he wrote:

"In the 'Mystical Theology' he is in the highest degree pernicious, he is more dealing Plato's matter than that of Christ … You do not learn Christ there, you will even lose him, when you have already known him … Let us hear Paul, that we learn Christ, and this one as the crucified [1 Cor 2:2]. He is the way, the life, and the truth; this is the ladder by which we come to the Father, as he has said: No one comes to the father if not by me." [John 14:6][19] One might perhaps save Dionysius from condemnation by a more cautious and benevolent reading, but one has to admit that a doctrine which does not *lead* to the practical recognition of the crucified Christ does not lead to salvation."

On the other hand one can imagine an opposite danger. This would consist of forgetting the notional presuppositions, the implications of the Christian core message. Then one would speak only of salvation and sin, but not of creation. One would speak only of the redemption of the individual soul and not of the renewing of the whole creation, the whole society, and the whole nature. One would be sacrificing reflection and the conceptual in favor of proclaiming the gospel in a basic language. I think it is absurd to blame Luther for this tendency, and it is obvious that he did not succumb to this danger. However, it is necessary to state that an isolated focus on the core issues of Christian faith would lead to this danger.

Luther explicitly presupposes the dogmas of the Old Church: the trinity, the two natures of Christ, and the Christological doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* that is handed down by the church fathers. He has also made some

[19] "In 'Theologia' vero 'mystica', […] etiam pernitiosissimus est, plus platonisans quam Christianisans […]. Christum ibi adeo non disces, ut, si etiam scias, amittas. [...] Paulum potius audiamus, ut Iesum Christum et hunc crucifixum discamus. Haec est enim via, vita et veritas: haec scala, per quem venitur ad patrem, sicut dicit 'Nemo venit ad patrem nisi per me'" (*De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* [1520], WA 6, 562, 8-14).

contributions to the doctrine of creation, on God's immanence in the creation, and the impact of Christian faith on human culture; I will later touch these points. Next, I want to think about his critique of nominalism: did this critique recognize what is pernicious in nominalism? Did his critique help extricate European thinking from the pitfalls of nominalism?

2. Luther and Nominalism

Luther's focus on core issues of theology is also apparent in the fact, that he never–as far as I know–dedicated himself to the problem that game nominalism its name: the problem of universals. Nor did he write–as far as I know–anything on the univocity of being or analogous speech concerning God. He addressed nominalism from quite a different side: the one concerning the doctrines of sin and of grace–typical for a theologian who focused on the core issues in the tradition of monastic theology and the theology of piety.

His *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* from September 4, 1517 is actually not against scholastic theology in general but against both the Ockamist Gabriel Biel and John Duns Scotus.

Appealing to Augustine in his work against the Pelagians, Luther writes about the human nature after the Fall. He says that is is completely absurd to draw the following conclusion: erring man can love the creature over everything, *therefore* he can also love God over everything (Thesis 13). Rather, the truth is: Man by means of his nature cannot desire that God is God. Rather, he wants to be God and that God is not God (Thesis 17). Luther says that it is a fiction that man after the Fall can love God over everything (Thesis 18).[20] It is obvious that he

[20] Th. 13: "Absurdissima est consequentia: 'homo errans potest diligere creaturam super omnia', 'ergo et deum'"; Th. 17: "Non 'potest homo naturaliter velle deum esse deum', Immo vellet se esse deum et deum non esse deum"; Th. 18: "'Diligere deum uper omnia naturaliter' Est terminus fictus, sicut Chimera" (WA 1, 224f. / BoA 5, 321). Thesis 13 is expressively against Scotus and Gabriel Biel. The references are: Biel, *In Sent. III*, d. 27, q. un. a. 3 dub. and Scotus, *In Sent. III*, d. 27, q. un. n. 13. 15. 21. For Biel, see *Collectorium circa quattor libros Sententiarum*, ed. Wilfried Werbeck and Udo Hofmann, Bd.3 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1979),

charges Biel, Scotus, and other scholastic theologians to be Pelagians. I want to touch only a little bit on what Biel and his master William of Ockham have said. They state that man is able to achieve a meritorious act without grace and that God is able to accept such an act and to give man eternal beatitude. Biel and Ockham stress that God *can* do so. Actually, they add, God has decided in his *potentia ordinata* to give eternal beatitude only to those men who are formed by sacramental grace. Biel and Ockham obviously know that they can be charged with Pelagianism. They reject this allegation by saying that according to Pelagius God has to give someone eternal life not because of grace, but because of a morally good act. They however teach that it is God's absolute power which makes a human act meritorious.[21]

Surely, the construction of a decision of God to give eternal life only to those to whom he has given sacramental grace protects Ockham and Biel against the charge of Pelagianism. The question is whether or not it is right to say that man can love God over everything by pure nature and that it is only God's arbitrary decision, according to which this love is not sufficient to grant man eternal life. Luther's horror at such a theology is founded on the conviction that man after the Fall is not able to love God over everything. *Therefore*, *if* man is to be saved, he can only be saved by *grace*. Luther is shocked that one can speak of God's grace as just God's decision without being aware of the reality of sin which can only be healed by grace.

Luther's critique of nominalism is related to the doctrines of grace and sin and these are core issues of theology. However, embedded in this statement is also a reference to the global issues of theology. Luther protests against a theology that overlooks the reality of man and therefore also the reality of God. He criticizes a theology which is satisfied with intellectual constructions, by which the necessity

503-507, esp. 504,23f: "Viatoris voluntas humana ex suis naturalibus potest diligere Deum super omnia." Biel appeals to Ockham, Scotus, and Pierre d'Alli.

[21] Gabriel Biel, *In Sent I*, d. 17, q.1: *Collectorium*, Bd.1, (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973), 413-425, cf. Ockham, *Quodlibeta* VI.1: William of Ockham, *Quodlibetal Questions*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso and Francis E. Kelley, Vol. 2, (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1991), 491-494.

of grace is proved and is not aware of the reality of sin and sin-healing grace. He hits upon feature of nominalism that exists in the realm of global issues: the conviction that the relation between God and man can only be regarded according to a conceptual construction and not in reference to reality itself.

3. Luther and Chalcedon: the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*

Luther adopts the doctrine of Chalcedon and develops it in the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*. Human and divine nature both consist in Christ, not mixed, not transformed, not separated, not divided. As they are unified in one person, the qualities of each nature are transferred to the person in acts which are originally an exclusive feature of the other nature. Luther exposes this in this way that what is human is now truly said of God and what is divine is now truly said of man.[22] By this communications of idioms, the words used in relation to Christ receive a new signification. In the old language used prior to the incarnation, "creature" means a being which is, before any other relation, infinitely separated from the divine. But in the new language used in relation to Christ, it means a being which is in the divinity unseparatedly united to one and the same person.[23] So the words "creature," "man," "humanity," "suffered," etc., receive a new meaning in Christ. However, this is an extension of what created nature is. It is not a transformation from human nature to divine nature. The

[22] Thesis 1: "Fides catholica haec est, ut unum dominum Christum confiteamur verum Deum et hominem"; Th. 2: "Ex hac veritate geminae substantiae et unitate personae sequitur illa, quae dicitur, communicatio idiomatum"; Th. 3: "Ut ea, quae sunt hominis, recte de Deo et e contra, quae Dei sunt, de homine dicantur"; Th. 4: "Vere dicitur: Iste homo creavit mundum et Deus iste est passus, mortuus, sepultus etc" (*Disputatio de divinitate et humanitate Christi* [1540], WA 39/II, 93, 2-9).

[23] Ibid., Th. 21: "Nam creatura veteris linguae usu et in aliis rebus significat rem a divinitate separatam infinitus modis"; Th. 22: "Novae linguae usu significat rem cum divinitate inseparabiliter in eandem personam ineffabilius modis coniunctam" (WA 39/II, 94, 19-22).

human in Christ remains human but it is now something which includes divine features. Therefore, Luther expressively rejects Euchyches.[24]

Luther models a series of theological doctrines around the structure of *communicatio idiomatum.*[25] So, in the *admirabile commercium* (the "wonderful change"), the whole of humanity receives Christ's immaculate righteousness (see 2 Cor 5:21) while still remaining human and does not become God.[26] The distinction between what is God and what is human is always preserved in the communication. Nature receives an ability to say something about the history of salvation in a parable, in an emblem, an ability which it would not have without the fact of salvation history. On the other hand, it always remains nature; the certitude of salvation which is provided by these parables or emblems does not have the same level as the certitude contained in the proclamation of the gospel.[27]

In a similar way, Luther thinks about the use of images, the figural exegesis of the Bible, the virgin Mary, and the use of examples taken from general history. Images do not have an inherent or a direct relation to divine grace, nor do they have the power to deliver grace. But in communication with the word which preaches Christ, they receive this power and take part in the work of salvation.[28] The figural exegesis takes part in the validity of the literal sense, insofar it is based on it.[29]

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[24] Ibid., Th. 31: "Sed occultus Eutyches habitat in talibus haereticis, negare paratis aliquando, verbum esse carnem factum" (WA 39/II, 95,1f) – The theses are against the doctrine of Schwenckfeldt, who taught that after the glorification Christ's humanity was no longer a creature.

[25] See Johann Anselm Steiger, *Fünf Zentralthemen der Theologie Luthers und seiner Erben: Communicatio–Imago–Figura–Maria–Exempla*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 104 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[26] Ibid., 10-15.

[27] Ibid., 23-51.

[28] Ibid., 105-143.

[29] Ibid., 145-179.

The virgin Mary is a purely human creature but by her faith she takes–*per analogiam*–part in the two natures of Christ. This means that she becomes the highest jewel in Christendom–after Christ himself–but she is also humiliated to the state of a whore.[30] Finally, examples taken not only from the post-Christ history of the church, but also from general history can be used to say something about the events of the history of salvation and by this way participate in the power of this history.[31]

One can foresee that by this use of the doctrine of the communication of idioms all productions of man–let us say: human culture–can become involved in the work of salvation.

4. Luther's hermeneutics of Scripture

The insight the young Luther received in his first time in a monastery by way a hint from Bernard of Clairvaux, concerned the soteriological relevance of the right understanding of the Bible. Referring to Romans 8:16, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," Bernard says that this testimony of the Holy Spirit contains the forgiving of sin, the doing of good works, and the gift of eternal life, and that they are only by the grace of God. However, this description of the Spirit's testimony is insufficient: the Spirit also witnesses to the fact that *your* sins are forgiven, etc. So, every believer has to believe that his *own* sins are forgiven, or else he rejects the witness of the Spirit and does not receive forgiveness of sins.[32] I want to call such a faith a *reflexive faith*–"reflexive" not because there is a self-introspection by the human mind, using its own power, but because the faith of the believer believes something

[30] Ibid., 243-248, in the context of 217-249.

[31] Ibid., 251-267.

[32] Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Annuntiatione Dominica Sermo Primus*. De versu Psalmi: Ut inhabitet gloria in terra nostra, 1.3f., in: *S. Bernardi Opera*, 14, 22-15, 2: " [...] sed adde adhuc ut et hoc credas, quia per ipsum tibi peccata donantur. Haec est testimonium quod perhibet in corde nostro Spiritus sanctus, dicens: Dimissa sunt tibi peccata tua. Sic enim arbitratur Apostolus hominem iustificari gratis per fidem."

about himself which the Spirit by the word says to him. In his later study of Scripture Luther found the basis of the necessity of reflexive faith in words in which Jesus praised or demanded the faith of those people from whom he healed.[33] Luther consequently developed the insight that every theological proposition has to include a relation to that one who speaks it. The article of creation, for instance, he formulates thus: "I believe that God has created *me* together with all creatures," etc.[34]

This structure can be regarded in two directions. The first one: the subjectivity of man may not be neglected but must always be involved in all theological propositions,.not as the basis of them but as something to which the intention of the divine word is directed to: the "me" of man may not be kept outside.

The other direction: If the "me" of everyone who speaks a theological proposition has to be included in this proposition also, his whole story is involved as well. As the Bible is the foundation of all true theological propositions, the Bible can only be adequately understood if the reader—or hearer—of the biblical text includes himself and his story in the biblical narrative. He understands the Bible only then in a full sense when he understands *himself* as the receiver of the divine promises that are pronounced in the Bible.

So on the one hand the Bible is a book distinct from all other books—and all other texts—of humankind. It is distinct from them and superior to them—or else it would not be the sacred book, the *scripturae sacrae*. On the other hand, *because* the Bible is this only holy book, it incorporates in itself all human stories, all other possible human books, identifying every human being with his story as a receiver of God's judgment and of God's acquittal.

[33] Matthew 5:28; 9:28f, 8:8; John 4;50, in a long list of biblical arguments, *Acta Augustana* (1518), WA 2, 14, 13-29.

[34] Small Catechism, BSLK 510,33f.

5. The into-each-other and against-each-other of divine and human action

The relation between God's acting and man's acting is regarded by Luther in a twofold way. On the one hand, he regards them as something interwoven into each other. God acts in that way that man–or more generally: creature–acts something. "All creatures are God's masks. He makes them work with him and help to do many things that he also could do without their cooperation and actually does without them."[35] In this fashion God is in all his creatures, more interior then themselves but he cannot be confined by them.[36]

When God acts in this way, the acting of the creature and God's own acting are in the same proportion to each other. When a creature does something, God does it as well, and reverse. So the more the creature does it, God does it, too. This is a relation between divine acting and human acting which we can find in Aquinas as well.[37]

At the same time, God is also able to act in quite a different way. There he acts quite alone and his acting is hidden; it can only be seen by the eyes of faith which look into that which is hidden. Luther calls this type of act one of "God's arms." In his exposition of the 'Magnificat' when he meditates on the verse that reads "He has shown strength with His arm" (Luke 1:51a), he brings out the features of this way of God's acting.[38] This kind of divine act is only a reference to the distinction between the pious and the evil ones. Here there is a reverse proportion between divine acting and human acting. In the pious, God makes

[35] "Alle creaturen sind Gottes larven und mumereyen, die er will lassen mit yhm wircken und helffen allerley schaffen, das er doch sonst on yhr mitwircken thun kan und auch thut" (*Fastenpostille 1525*, Sermon on Matthew 4:1ff [WA 17/II, 192, 28-30], cf. *Der 127. Psalm ausgelegt für die Christen zu Riga in Liefland* (1524) [WA 15, 373,8]).

[36] Daß diese Wort Christi 'Das ist mein leib' noch fest stehen (1527) (WA 23, 133,21f; 23, 137, 31-35).

[37] See *ST* I, q. 22, a. 4; q. 103, a. 5-8.

[38] "Gottis arm wirt in der schrifft genennet sein eygen gewalt, damit er on mittel der creaturn wirkt, dasselb geht stil und heymlich zu, das sein niemant gewar wirt, bisw das geschehen ist" (*Das Magnificat verdeutschet und ausgeleget* (1521) [WA 7, 585,23-25]). [Das andere Werk Gottes. Geistliche Hoffahrt zerstören]

their own acting to nothing and is acting alone. In the acts of the evil ones, God withdraws his own action and lets them act alone. Luther's deliberations are lead by the meditation on God's action in the crucifixion of Christ and on Paul's words when he says, "when I am weak, I am strong," for God's strength is powerful in the weak (2 Cor 12:9f.).

While in the first kind of divine action one can easily see that God is acting, as his action is in proportion to the acting of the creatures which is visible, it is hidden in the second case because, what one sees is only the misery of Christ at the cross or the weakness of Paul and not the power of God in them. Therefore, only faith can become aware of this divine power.

One would misunderstand this twofold determination of the relationship between divine and human action if one thinks that they would be set on the same level of thinking. Already Luther's restriction that the second determination is only accessible by faith should preserve from this implication. In the first determination, Luther stands in for what one can call a metaphysic of participation: God is in all his creatures, they can only act by him being in them and so on. There is no room where two players can meet on the same univocal field and one occupies a bigger part of this field than the other. In the level of thinking in which we have to set the second determination there is a personal encounter between God and man and therefore they meet on the same field. Surely this can only happen by a condescendence of God. This kind of relationship has an existential character, and this is specific for monastic theology or a theology of piety.

I think these deliberations grant access to Luther's doctrine of the unfree will. Luther has developed this doctrine on the basis of biblical passages in conjunction with Augustine.[39] The first reason Luther gives as to why this doctrine has to be promulgated is the humiliation of human pride and the recognition of God's grace. He explains:

[39] Luther takes the title of his writing 'De servo arbitrio' from Augustine in *Contra Iulianum* II, 8,23: " … et non libero, vel potius servo proprie voluntatis arbitrio…" Augustine's–and Luther's–position should not be considered as something against the Roman magisterium since the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification of 1999.

> God has promised certainly His grace to the humbled: that is, to the self-deploring and despairing. But a man cannot be thoroughly humbled, until he comes to know that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsel, endeavours, will, and works, and absolutely depending on the will, counsel, pleasure, and work of another, that is, of God only. For if, as long as he has any persuasion that he can do even the least thing himself towards his own salvation, he retain a confidence in himself and do not utterly despair in himself, so long he is not humbled before God; but he proposes to himself some place, some time, or some work, whereby he may at length attain unto salvation. But he who hesitates not to depend wholly upon the good-will of God, he totally despairs in himself, chooses nothing for himself, but waits for God to work in him; and such an one, is the nearest unto grace, that he might be saved.[40]

In such a man, his own action has come to an end, while God's act reaches a maximum. This is true when one regards the act of God and the act of man at odds with one another, in the personal encounter of both. One can think of the man Paul speaks about in Romans 9:19, who complains: who is able to resist God's will? On the other hand, one can regard this constellation also as an into-each-other of divine action and human action: The man who still "waits for the work of God" is not fatalistic but ready to trust in God's promise to save him. There is no salvation without faith. Faith, however, is an act of man–and in the same time an act of God who acts in the human soul.

[40] "Primum, Deus certo promisit humiliatis, id est, deploratis et desperatis, gratiam suam. Humiliari vero penitus non potest homo, donec sciat, prorsus extra suas vires, consilia, studia, voluntatem, opera, omnino ex alterius consilio, voluntate, opere suam pendere salutem, nempe Dei solius. Siquidem, quamdiu persuasus fuerit, sese vel tantulum posse pro salute sua, manet in fiducia sui, nec de se penitus desperat, ideo non humiliatur coram Deo, sed locum, tempus, opus aliquod sibi praesumit vel sperat vel optat saltem, quod tandem perveniat ad salutem. Qui vero nihil dubitat, totum in voluntate Dei pendere, is prorsus de se desperat, nihil eligit, sed expectat operantem Deum, is proximus est gratiae, ut salvus fiat" (WA 18, 632,29 – 633,1 / BoA 3, 123,35–124,9). English translation from Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will: Written in Answer to the Diatribe of Erasmus on Free-Will*, trans. Henry Cole (London: T. Bentley, 1823), §24

6. Two ways by which the church can become like the world

A chief motive of Radical Orthodoxy is its rejection of secularism and its concomitant critique theologies that supports secularism. There may not remain any space in which God is *not* present; there may not exist anything which can be thought without God. Has the Reformation of the 16th century to be regarded as a movement that worked for or against secularization? Or did it want to work against it but did not succeed in doing so?

For a fair assessment of these questions one has to look for the motives of the reformation–or better, the reformations, because it is more adequate so speak of several distinct movements with the intention to reform the church, although they certainly had many things in common.

Deliberating upon which dangers exist for the church, a main danger is surely that it becomes "like the world," a danger of which Paul warns in Romans 12:2. The church can, however, succumb to this danger in a twofold way. There may be a religious and a secularist becoming-like-the-world. To understand the first way one has to define what "religious" means. I presuppose here the definition of Karl Barth, who, very typical for the Reformed tradition, says: the realm of the human attempts to justify and to sanctify himself before an image of God which is designed by himself in a stubborn and unauthorized way.[41]

So what is believed to be beyond the world by the religious man is actually designed by this man himself. This man is the creator of what he believes, that it is independent of him and outside of this world. By this approach the world does prolong itself into the transcendent. The religious man outstretches himself in a desire to touch something that is not of this world, but what he touches is an echo or a mirror image of his world. Regarded in this way, religion is something very worldly.

So the church can become like the world when it becomes religious in this way. It is obvious that it can keep all its symbols when it becomes religious and loses its

[41] Religion ist der Bereich "der Versuche des Menschen, sich vor einem eigensinnig und eigenmächtig entworfenen Bilde Gottes selber zu rechtfertigen und zu heiligen" (Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* I/2, 304, Thesis to § 17).

identity. It can also keep its structure. It can also keep its doctrines to some extent, however, they are changed in a certain way.

In a classical manner, the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli has criticized a church which has succumbed to this danger, in his "Commentary on the true and the false religion," in the tract on the Eucharist, that "we"—he turns his view critically back toward the past—"intended to touch holy things or to be with holy things, instead of being holy ourselves." He continues:

> Now we are all bent upon handling holy things, or upon having them about us–yea, I will say it plainly, upon making holy by our own merit, forsooth, things that perhaps are not holy [...] –rather than upon making ourselves holy. The result is that we worship with embraces and kisses wood, stones, earth, dust, shoes, [and so on], and anything that pious men have ever handled. And (most foolish thing of all) we think ourselves distinctly blessed if we have got just a look at any such thing; we promise ourselves the remission of our sins, prosperous fortune, and the whole world. But true piety, which is nothing else than blamelessness preserved through love and fear of God, we have abandoned so completely that not even among infidels do we see ordinary, that is, human righteousness so utterly prostrate among us Christians.[42]

[42] "Nunc, qum omnes ad hoc intenti fuimus, ut sancta potius attrectaremus, aut circum nos haberemus, quin palam dicam, sancta faceremus, nostra virtute scilicet, quae fortasse sancta non erant (nemo enim ignorat, quantum sit in ossa piorum, ut adoratur etiam insumptum!), quam ut ipise sancti fieremus, factum est, ut lignum, lapides, terram, pulverem, soleas, vestes, annulos, galeas, cingula, ossa, dentes, pilos, lac, panem, quadras, tabulas, vinum, cultros, amphoras et quicquid unquam attrectarunt pii homines, adoraverimus amplectendo, osculando; et quod stultissimum erat, nos plane beatos existimabamus, si quid talium solummodo aspexissemus. Promittebamus nobis ipsis abolita esse peccata, propiciam fortunam ac mundum totum. Veram autem pietatem, quae niil aliud est, quam ex amore timoreque dei servata innocentia, sic deseruimus, ut communem iusticiam, hoc est: humanam, ne apud infideles quidem sic frigere videamus, ut apud Christianos." *De vera ac falsa religione commentarius* [18], *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, ed. Emil Egli, Georg Finsler, and Walther Köhler, Vol. 3, Leipzig 1914 (=Corpus Reformatorum 90), 774,27-775,7. The passage is in modern German translation in: Huldrych Zwingli, *Schriften*, ed. Thomas Brunnschweiler and Samuel Lutz, Vol. 3 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1995), 254f. English translation here is from Ulrich Zwingli, *Commentary on the True and False Religion*, eds. Samuel Macauley Jackson and Clarence Nevin Heller, trans. Henry Preble (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 199.

So much for Zwingli. I think these words illuminate both the situation of the church on the eve of the Reformation and the intention of a good part of the reformers very well.

The situation is a very religious one. The problems is not a lack, but a too much of religion or of what is believed to be God's presence. Man himself creates the presence of God. Man can keep on producing holy things. Like producing money by the note press one can produce holy things–the result is an inflation of the religious.

The remedy of this disease of the church was for Zwingli and many other reformers,

(a) to ask for the true authorization of what is called holy in the church, for instance, to ask for the divine institution of the Eucharist.

(b) it was stressing the difference between God and the creature. The creature is not divine, it is not to be adored. The transcendence of God is stressed. The things in this world lost their divine quality. The omnipresence of the holy, by which man was surrounded, was diminished.

(c) instead of the presence of holy things, the moral responsibility of man was stressed. If a man behaves morally, that is, if he obeys God's commandments, he submits–by God's grace–his life and the world to God's will.

One sees the consequences of this evaluation in Zwingli's doctrine of the Eucharist: the Eucharistic species are nothing but symbols. They are only something created without any divine presence. God must be searched and found within the transcendent.

The secularist who is becoming-like-the-world goes in the opposite direction of the religious one. Here the "world" clearly confesses that it is something which does not want to depend on God. Secularism is the fixing or establishing of human expectations and acts in something *in* the world–in the capacity of human understanding, in human will, and in the possibilities of a world that are self-sufficient.

We can recognize three features of secularism where it adopts, extends, and transforms the three features of the Reformed tradition. The main feature of secularization is the diminishing of the religious elements in society and in personal life, a process that tends toward their total extinction. This process is critical to any religious convictions (a). The transcendence of God is exaggerated in such a way that he cannot take part and is not present in the things of daily human life (b). Man is morally responsible for his world (c).

To be fair, one cannot blame Zwingli or the other reformers who thought like him for having prepared the secularization that begin in the 18th century.[43] A Protestant of this kind would not be skeptical or reject *all* religious convictions. He would not stress God's transcendence in such a way that God is banned from the world, and he would always maintain that man is morally responsible *before God*–and not solely before anything within the world.

In the course of history it is always an art to avoid the extremes. In the 16th century it was the church's task to avoid the extreme of a religious becoming-like-the-world. Now, secularism poses the opposite danger. What can be said against the "Reformed" line of the Reformation and its descendants is that they often had and have an idiosyncratic blindness against the danger from the other side. But when we turn again to Luther, we see that he had an awareness of a twofold danger from opposite sides and therefore designed something like a *via media*. This issue is also linked to his critique of Zwingli with regards to the

[43] What follows, is said also in response to Brad S. Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation*: *How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012). I do not want to enter a closer discussion of Gregory here. However I want to indicate that there are very grave historical misunderstandings and errors in Gregory's book. E.g., the confrontation of different doctrines which all claim to be based on the principle of *sola scriptura* does not necessarily lead to "Relativizing doctrines", as ch.1 claims. This is a conclusion, only few thinkers of the reformation era drew (Sebastian Franck, Sebastian Castellio) and surely many modern thinkers do so, but there are better alternatives to it. Also Luther's doctrine in 'On Secular Authority' does not intend to surrender the soul also to the state ("For there were no disembodied souls on earth …", Gregory, 148), but it was an effective limitation of the state's power in affairs on the conscience and a repudiation of the medieval state's law concerning heretics.

sacraments, especially the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist.

In his *Von den Konziliis und Kirchen* (*On the Councils and the Churches*) from 1539, Luther gives a brief history of the Reformation up until this date. In the beginning, he says, Christendom was deceived by a number of things, which seemed to be something like a sacrament, but did not have the power to give salvation: holy water was believed to cleanse from sins, similar qualities were accredited to holy salt, the ringing of bells, blessed herbage, special blessings, and so on.[44] Luther said that he started to teach that such external things did not deliver grace but were mere creatures. The devil however changed his strategy to deceive Christians. He turned to the opposite extreme and made the people believe that *no any* external thing was able to deliver grace, that baptism was nothing but external water, the word nothing but external human speech, the Scripture nothing but external letter made of ink, the bread–of the Eucharist– something baked by the baker and nothing else; they were all external, perishable things. People cry now: "Spirit, spirit, the spirit must do it, the letter kills."[45]

This dispute about the use of corporeal things–*do* they, *can* they deliver grace and cleanse from sins? (a place where decisions are made)–is about how close God can be to the human creature and to which extent God can be present in life.

Luther decided against too simplistic a solution in response to this question: neither a withdrawal of the divine into a spiritual transcendence nor a binding of the cleansing and justifying presence of God to everything or everything human

[44] WA 50, 644,12 – 646,8.

[45] "Da wir durchs Evangelion anfiengen zu leren, das solch eusserlich ding nicht selig machen kündte, weil es schlechte, leibliche Creaturn weren, und der Teuffel offte zur zeüberey gebrauchte, filen die Leute, auch gros und gelerte Leute, dahin, das die Tauffe als ein eusserlich wasser, das Wort als ein eusserlich Menschliche rede, die Schrifft als ein eusserlicher buchstabe von tinten gemacht, das Brot und Wein als vom Becker gebacken, solten schlecht nichts sein, denn es weren eusserliche vergengliche ding. Also gerieten sie auff das geschrey: Geist, Geist, der geist mus thun, ‚der Buchstabe tödtet" (WA 50, 646, 25-33).

tradition has regarded as holy. God's cleansing and justifying presence is where he has decided to be: in Scripture, in the preached word, in the word of absolution, in baptism and in the Eucharist. In this way Luther also takes a middle stance between a religious and a secularist becoming-like-the-world of the church.

I come to an end: I think, Radical Orthodoxy and Luther's theology can get into a constructive relationship when some misunderstandings of Luther are overcome. There are agreements, complementary areas, and constructive critique, where RO can learn from Luther. Acknowledged as a member of the canon of great Christian theologians, Luther shows his power of inspiration as a theologian, who

1. Referred everything in theology to the core issue: Christ, the crucified.

2. Criticized all theology, which deviated from reality, which was revealed in Christ, and therefore repudiated nominalism.

3. As he regarded the incarnation of the Word as the center of God's presence in the world, he tried to conceive every human act as something that participates in it by the communication of idioms, without losing its identity as something creaturely, which cannot contribute anything to the salvation.

4. Just because the Holy Scripture is holy–and this means separate from all other human texts–it demands the submission and inclusion of the human self and all human narratives in it.

5. Divine and human action are interwoven into each other, and at the same time, God's saving action comes to its perfection, when man acknowledges that his will is nothing before God.

6. The right way of the church is one between two extremes: a) a separation of the world from God–and an actual annihilation of God in the world, and b) an arbitrary acting of man, who pretends to make "God" present in his world.

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Reviews

Scott A. Davison, *Petitionary Prayer: A Philosophical Investigation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, 189+ pp.

'Assuming that the God of traditional theism exists, is it reasonable to think that God answers specific prayers?' (5) This is the question at the heart of Davison's investigation. But in offering a response, Davison gives a much more interesting answer than a simple "yes" or "no". The fact is that such a consideration of prayer throws up all sorts of other issues that are (in my view) probably more important ultimately than the initial question itself, and which have all sorts of practical relevance. A number of times Davison refers to C.S. Lewis' little book *Prayer: Letters to Malcolm* and the attractive humility of Lewis' approach to the subject is mirrored in Davison's equally humble and unassuming manner. Several times, for example, he laments that he might be taken to mean that he intends his work 'to inform anyone's personal decisions concerning whether or not to pray in the petitionary way' (170). Protest as he might, it seems to me that the value of such a work is to give us clarity as to the *practical* implications of petitionary prayer and other sorts of communication with the divine. And, even though this is a work of analytic philosophy, it must be said in praise of Davison's approach that it is not an attempt to colonise the subject area of prayer in the name of that discipline. Davison is cautious about his expertise and knowledge of theology and he does not assume that his arguments amount to some kind of final statement. Conversely, I must say that my field of study *is* theology and that I venture into the territory of analytic philosophy warily, with fear and trembling.

To summarise this book is tricky because it is a highly focussed précis of the philosophical conversation on petitionary prayer. Therefore, skipping over various laudatory features I could discuss, I will merely observe that this book is about 'the puzzles and questions surrounding petitionary prayer' (5). The puzzles are various[1] but I think they break down into two broad questions: firstly, does it make sense to believe that God answers petitionary prayers? And, secondly, could we ever know that he does so?

The first question can be teased out by asking further, 'Are there 'plausible candidates for something "significant enough to be worth foregoing the (lesser) good of the provision being made without the request"?' (Quoting Murray and Meyers, 1994, p. 131) In other words, why would God *need* petitionary prayers to be offered to him? Why would he not simply provide the good things that might be prayed for rather than wait until people offered prayer for them? Is it not morally reprehensible of God, for example, to *not* heal a child of cancer unless or until somebody prays for his healing? If not, then petitionary prayer must be an extremely significant good to justify such a requirement. Davison, in his candour, comments thus in his introduction:

> The original title of this book was "On the Pointlessness of Petitionary Prayer," and the main conclusion I had planned to defend was that the philosophical arguments showed that almost no petitionary prayers could influence God's action in the world. But as my study of the arguments progressed, and new ways of understanding how things might work became clear to me, I discovered that I simply could not defend this conclusion philosophically…in the end, my conclusion is best described as lying in between the view that all petitionary prayer is pointless and the view that none of it is (3).

[1] One of the most interesting to my mind is Davison's exploration of Lewis' observation that Christ's teaching on prayer seems to fall into two mutually-contradictory categories: the first, as modelled by Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he prayed, "Thy will be done," (Matt. 26.39), the second when he teaches that God will bring about a request if the believer truly believes that he will do so. In Matthew 21:21, Christ states, for example, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." But how is the sort of faith possible if there must always be a doubt in the mind as to whether or not the object of one's prayer is God's will? cf. pp. 82-23.

Examples of types of petitionary prayer that are clearly not pointless are, for example, those that are offered for oneself for 'permission-required, direct divine goods' (165). These are the sorts of prayers that one makes for oneself that give God permission, as it were, to bring about something directly that will contribute to one's relationship with him. The decision to pray or not provides, in the words of Eleonore Stump, the possibility of "autonomy" for the person in his or her relation to God. In other words, true friendship cannot be forced upon a person but must be requested, and the acceptance of this request must be freely given. This type of petitionary prayer works for prayers on behalf of oneself but not to others for the obvious reason that it would override *their* autonomous decisions to grant God permission to do a particular thing: "I pray that my friend John would freely give You permission to love him" is clearly an absurd thing to pray, for example. Other types of petitionary prayer that are not pointless are those which Davison defines as 'cases in which there are other goods at stake that are significant enough to be worth forgoing the provision of something in the absence of a petitionary prayer requesting it' (164). But he is ultimately ambivalent about what these might be without denying the possibility of their existence (166).

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the question of whether or not we could know if God has ever answered our petitionary prayers by giving us specifically what we asked for. After a consideration of the literature, he concludes on this score:

> In the typical cases in which traditional theists believe that their petitionary prayers have been answered, there is no convincing evidence that something miraculous has occurred, no good reason to think that the event in question would not have happened if no petitionary prayers had been offered, and most importantly, no way to discern what role petitionary prayer might have played in God's decisions (and hence no way to tell whether or not a given event is an answer to prayer) (87).

Davison says these things because in every situation he envisages of ostensibly answered prayer there are always other possible explanations that are equally or more likely to be true: for example, the circumstances which could be counted as answered prayer might have come about for any number of reasons independent

of petitionary prayer *or* some other person or persons might have been praying for the same things and God's answer might have been to *their* prayers instead.

I cannot do justice to the nuance and scope of Davison's arguments for these various conclusions here but I hope that the above gives a general idea of where he ends up. To see how he gets there, one really must read the book and follow his close engagement with the literature. In the remainder of my time, I would like to raise a few points about Davison's project in general from a more continental perspective. When I use the word 'continental', I do not mean to sound dismissive of the analytic tradition of philosophy, which I hold in the highest esteem, or to imply that I believe that continental philosophy elides unambiguously with theology. But given the nature of this particular journal, it seems the most interesting thing to raise certain questions not simply about the intricacies of Davison's argument but of the presuppositions he might bring to the project from his analytic perspective that could perhaps be critiqued from an alternative viewpoint.

To begin with, it is worth asking why *at all* it is valuable to approach this project in this way. Isn't prayer an experiential activity that one understands by participating in it? Isn't its very nature incomprehensible to those who would stand outside and analyse? More than that, is it not the case that, if this is the kind of universe in which prayer is valid, that it would be necessarily impenetrable to those who refuse to humble themselves and actually do it (not that I am accusing Davison of that)? Indeed, Davison's initial question–'Assuming that the God of traditional theism exists, is it reasonable to think that God answers specific prayers?'(5)–seems to imply something of this sort. A simple answer to the question from a Christian perspective (I am not qualified to answer from any other) would be "yes". And the reason would be that God has commanded it in the person of Christ and in the New Testament in various ways, and that the Church has embodied in its traditions. So it *must* be reasonable. And where, from a limited and created perspective we cannot have access to these reasons, it has no bearing on whether or not we are justified in believing in its reasonability. But I suspect Davison would admit as much and would appeal to the limited nature of his study.

Bearing that in mind, the following may be an example of where a certain commitment to the principles of analytic philosophy may lead to a disagreement. In his discussion of the epistemological possibility of knowing that a specific prayer has been answered by God, Davison gives a thorough consideration of what might be considered sufficient grounds for this type of knowledge. In the course of his discussion, he gives the example of a man called Bill who 'sends a letter to a company recommending an improvement in one of its products but receives no reply to his latter' (67). Then, a year later, he notices that the improvement he recommended has indeed come about, but he does not know if it is was in response to his letter or not. If Bill believes that the company did it in response to his letter and it turns out to be true that they did then, Davison argues, his belief was not really knowledge but constitutes 'a lucky guess' (68). He goes on:

> The most reasonable thing for Bill to do here would be to withhold belief on the question of whether or not the change in the product was due to his suggestion. [This case supports] the general principle that if a person cannot distinguish which of two (or more) possible and incompatible explanations of the occurrence of some event E is operative, then S does not know that one of the explanations is operative, even if S believes this and it is true (68).

Applied to petitionary prayer, this principle presents us with quite a serious problem because (as mentioned above) we can never rule out the possibility that there are other explanations for why our prayers are answered: other people could have been praying for the same things or God could have intended to bring them about anyway.

Later on, he gives an example of a situation of this type. Suppose my friend has cancer and has a small chance of recovery, but she recovers spontaneously after petitionary prayers are offered for her. Davison appears to reject the possibility that she might know that God has healed her because people sometimes recover with no medical explanation and we could never be in a position to know God's specific reasons for bringing about such a recovery anyway (79-80).

But why do we need to rule out these alternatives before we can believe with justification that our prayers are answered? In response Davison writes,

> In a context such as the one in this book […] in which we are involved in a philosophical discussion that is determined to consider all possibilities, the threshold for counting something as a case of knowledge is surely high (94).

This is fair enough but, outside of the context of analytic philosophy, in the realm of prayers really offered and possibly answered, then surely the threshold for knowledge is much lower. It clearly serves a beneficial purpose to have such a high threshold for knowledge in order to help us think carefully about the issues involved (and so that we are not susceptible to the spurious claims of clammy-handed televangelists in shiny white suits). But ultimately if one really believes that God exists and that he providentially orders creation and that he has directed us to pray for specific things to happen, one is perfectly reasonable in believing that God has answered one's prayer when one prays for something particular to happen and it happens, particularly when it is something like the disappearance of an inoperable tumour or something of this sort. The issue, it seems to me, is not whether or not God answers petitionary prayer, but whether or not God exists *at all*. C. S. Lewis, in discussing the problem raised by Davison, dismisses the challenge by saying that one cannot know even if a friend has done something in response to one's request because that friend could always have done it for another reason: he may have been intending to anyway, or someone else might have asked him. That being so, surely one is still reasonable to believe that he did it because you asked him. Why not the same approach to God (if he exists, that is)?

I suspect that the type of petitionary prayer that Davison is particularly interested in exploring–that is, prayers directed outwards from oneself into the world for particular things–are impossible. Rather than series of punctiliar ejaculations, it is probably better to think of prayer as a continuous stream in which one swims for a time, or, to use a biblical image, as sweet-smelling incense–ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων (the prayers of the saints)–which rises (as one) before God's throne in heaven before he answers and acts (Rev. 8:4). In the

biopic *Shadowlands*, Anthony Hopkins utters C. S. Lewis' dictum on petitionary prayer: "It doesn't change God; it changes me." And I think that something of this sort is probably true. The fact that prayer changes the pray-er does not mean, however, that God does not answer petitionary prayer by changing the world: the change may occur providentially in all the billions of people in the world who offer prayer and become themselves answers to it in manifold ways of which they might not be aware. How else God might change the world in response to prayer, I am not precisely sure, but I believe that he does. Admittedly this is more of an intuition than an argument.

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Kevin Wagner, M. Isabell Naumann, Peter John McGregor, and Paul Morrissey, eds. *Mariology at the Beginning of the Third Millennium*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2017, 254+ pp.

This volume forms part of the Australian-based series, *Theology at the Beginning of the Third Millennium*, which explores themes in contemporary Catholic theology. In general, the book will please a traditional Catholic readership, because there are several chapters which are deferent to Church documents and, in particular, the legacy of Pope St John Paul II. Mariusz Biliniewicz gives us a respectful overview of the Mariology of Pope St John Paul II; Renée Köhler-Ryan explores the tradition of Mary as the seat of wisdom with John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio* as a major source; Christopher John Wolter considers Mary in the Eucharistic liturgy. There is not much analysis in the book of the more challenging Third Millennium questions of feminism, gender, and sexuality which could arise from the fact Mary is a Christian icon of the feminine and of motherhood.

The opening chapter, by M. Isabell Naumann, in title the same as the book, promises to explore these areas because of some of the sources she cites: feminists like Levine, Johnson, Maeckelberghe, Gebara & Bingemer. However, these are mentioned but not discussed: much of her chapter is more useful as a resource list rather than a fresh analysis. Ultimately, it is von Balthasar who gets the final word, and Naumann restates Vatican II formulations of Mary as the ecclesial icon of faith. Naumann seems to be arguing against the seeping indifference about Mary in some sections of the Church, but whether a restatement of *Lumen Gentium*, *Marialis Cultus*, and *Redemptoris Mater* will be sufficient to convince them, I am not sure. Establishing the relationship of Mary to contemporary questions of culture and society might better stimulate a

revival; Naumann's treatment of culture is simply a reference to the nuances of Marian imagery in various parts of the world derived from the work of Johann Roten.

On the other hand, the most radical exploration comes from Matthew John Paul Tan, who considers 'Marian epistemology'. Tan wants to remind the Catholic world of its own legacy of uncertain knowing as opposed to dogmatic faith, expressed in the *Lumen Gentium* articulation of the Church as a pilgrim people. Mary, as Tan rightly observes, quoting the ARCIC document *Mary, Grace and Hope in Christ*, is the person regarded in Catholic (and Orthodox) theology as the one closest to Christ, the exemplar of believing in and relating to him. However, in the gospels, Mary—echoing Paul in 1 Corinthians 13—does not know perfectly what is happening, but 'in part'. In Luke, she wonders about the events that are unfolding, and her developing understanding emerges only from living and relating. In this respect, according to Tan, she represents a postmodern view of knowledge as partial and communal, against sections of the Church aligned with 'certain institutions, practices, and premises that embody modern forms of knowing' (196), based on 'bureaucratic or instrumental reason' (195). Tan suggests an engagement with standpoint feminism as a dialogue partner for Mariology, because it relativizes knowledge according to the position of the knower, thus necessitating relationship and community as the way forward to a better knowing. Tan's chapter is thus an example of a radical drawing out of those tendencies in Vatican II which act as insider criticisms of some of the overly dogmatic and hierarchical tendencies of the Church, and he uses the iconic tradition of Mary as Church quite tellingly in making his argument.

Four chapters look at Marian themes in the gospels. Joseph Azize, a Maronite, wants to defend the Gospel of Mark from the recent commonly held view among scholars that it downplays the importance of Mary and the family of Jesus (I wonder if this chapter underwent a substantial late edit, as Azize does not include elements that are promised in the pre-chapter abstract, i.e. post-biblical traditions). The fact that Mark is thought to be the earliest gospel and Mary is only briefly mentioned in it might be seen to be an obstacle to an

argument that Mary was a figure of importance at the very beginning of the Church (as Luke-Acts and John seem to imply). Azize denies this and defends the unity of the gospels on this point; Mark is merely stressing the priority of faith in God above family loyalty. Azize might have made more use of recent scholarship that explores the sidelining of James, the brother of Jesus, in the early Church; this surely has relevance to Mark's view of the family. James' removal from the gospel tradition is at the same time the marginalisation of Jewish Christianity. A post-Holocaust view of Mary, I suggest, should place some emphasis on the fact that she was a believing Jew, but I did not find this perspective in the book.

Peter John McGregor and a second chapter by M. Isabell Naumann focus on Mary as a model of dialogue, based on the gospels of Luke and John. McGregor draws on Joseph Ratzinger's writing on Mary's prayerfulness and her dialogue with Christ at the wedding of Cana. In his chapter, Mary as icon of the Church is related to the Christian participation in the three-fold ministry of Christ: Priest, Prophet, and King. Naumann includes a discussion of the meaning of the Greek word *kecharitomene*, usually translated as 'full of grace' or 'highly favoured', and follows René Laurentin in seeing the divine grace as not merely being in or on Mary, but also transforming her. It refers to her vocation, one which is shared by everyone in the Church.

These chapters I found to be useful but fairly standard reiterations of Church teaching on Mary. I was more intrigued by the contribution of Robert Tilley on Mary as the Temple drawing on the Gospels of John and Luke. He argues that the modern (and postmodern) world may have lost the sense of how the structure of buildings expresses meaning; there is too much focus on immediacy and function. The Temple's structure, with its Holy of Holies, articulates hierarchy of space, and the Bible too can be read with a hierarchy of meanings (using the pre-modern concept of *Quadriga*). So the crucifixion narrative in John is more central than other passages, and there stands Mary, as anticipated at the wedding of Cana. In Luke, we see the Temple mentioned at the beginning of both the Gospel and Acts, and again there is Mary. Mary is thus an icon of the

Temple, the locus of God's presence. Tilley's writing conveys a sense of the mystical wonder of scripture and of Mary's place in it.

Bernard Doherty helps us understand Catholicism in the Third Millennium context by looking at some of the divergent cults that have evolved recently around Marian apparitions. His examples are Australian: the 'Magnificent Meal Movement International' and the 'Order of Saint Charbel'. He shows how the groups have reacted against the Church's downplaying of a 'high' Mariology and its perennial caution about private revelations. To these movements, Doherty applies a sociological model: that of Bromley and Bobbitt in 2001. It is refreshing to see an exploration of apparitions that have not been approved, something I have included in my own research, as these can inform us a great deal about contemporary Catholic society and its diversity (for both Doherty and myself, this interest does not necessarily lead to support for the claims of the visionaries involved, as some of these are quite questionable and clearly based on self-promotion).

Kevin Wagner tackles an interesting subject with respect to Mary and motherhood: that of barrenness. He finds patristic theological resources in order to reflect on this condition. Barrenness is a common motif in the scriptures, although usually with the happy resolution of late pregnancy (Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth). Early Christian literature on unresolved barrenness stresses its purifying nature along with the possibility of 'spiritual parenthood', while reminding Christians about the difficulties of actual parenting, the avoidance of which may compensate for the sense of loss. Altogether, this is an interesting and thought-provoking reflection on a neglected subject, although Mary is only tangential in this chapter.

Along with the preface by Paul Morrissey and a couple of other contributions that express some concern about the diminution of the importance of Mary in modern Catholicism, Robin Koning is critical of the replacement of Mary by the Holy Spirit in the Triple Colloquy of the Ignatian Exercises. The rationale for this seems reasonable at first: the Trinitarian logic of this revision and the desire

for an ecumenical approach given that many non-Catholics engage with the Exercises. However, Koning shows that the change is inauthentic when we consider Ignatius' theology and that of his sources. Mary is at the heart of Ignatian spirituality. In the Triple Colloquy, Mary prays to Jesus, Jesus in his humanity prays to the Father, and thus Mary and Jesus are 'two mediators' although different in kind. To replace Mary by the Holy Spirit at this point is to alter the original thinking behind these mediations. Therefore, Koning cogently provides a critique of ecumenical thinking which sloppily overlooks the integral place of Mary in Christian theology.

The Orthodox scholar Mario Baghos' article on the Theotokos as protectress of Constantinople and Rome is the only one from outside the Catholic communion. This chapter contrasts the religious imagery of pre-modern Christian cities with modern and ancient pre-Christian cities, both of which he sees as bastions of the 'cult of the soldier' while the Christian cities exemplified the cult of the saints. This has a romantic, 'golden age' feel to it. Modern cities certainly express a triumphalist sense of national glory and there are numerous grand memorials of military victories (and defeats). That much is true, but should we really accept such a strong contrast with pre-modern Christian citizens, their civic pride and military ambitions? I certainly prefer a medieval chapel with mural of Madonna and Child to a nineteenth century military statue but yet I don't think so. Baghos does offer some caveats, but there is the danger of a simplistic analysis here. The chapter scarcely hides the fact that, really, Baghos wants to teach us about the Theotokos in historical Constantinople and Rome in a volume about Mary in the Third Millennium. At least it will guide the religious tourist around the historical sites in those cities.

Overall, we have a book that is intended to appeal to Catholics and scholars of modern Catholicism. Given the title, I would like to have some more grappling with Third Millennium issues and how Mary speaks to them: as well as gender and sexuality, also Christian-Muslim relations, asylum seeking, climate change, the global economy. The figure of Mary relates to all of these contemporary challenges; Mary most definitely does have a place in Catholic public theology. Yet the book stays mainly within the field of Mariology and the

scriptural Mary inside the safe walls of an inward-looking Roman Catholic thought world. Within those limits, however, it does the job well with plenty of interesting insights and so it will be a valuable addition to the Catholic library.

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