

The remainder of McGinn's book (Chapters Four ['The Tides of Thomism'] and Five ['The Rise and Fall of Neothomism']) take us through the way in which people have reacted to Aquinas and the *Summa Theologiae* since Aquinas's death. There is a long and complicated story to tell here, one in which both friends and foes of Aquinas feature. But McGinn tells it very well while being brief and to the point, and he manages to do so without having a pro-Aquinas or an anti-Aquinas agenda. The result strikes me as a balanced and non-partisan account of considerable value.

If pressed to find fault with McGinn's book I would suggest that it might have noted how much of the teaching of the *Summa Theologiae* is open to question because of its commitment to a kind of biblical fundamentalism that requires us to read the book of *Genesis* as literally true and which also requires us to think that the New Testament gospels give us accurate information when it comes to what Jesus of Nazareth did and said. Much of what Aquinas writes in the *Summa Theologiae*, especially what he says concerning Adam and Eve, rests on the assumption that the book of *Genesis* can be read as an historically accurate document. And Aquinas's account of the theological virtue of faith assumes that we have very thorough access to the words of Jesus. Aquinas takes those with faith to be believing what God has said to us in the teachings of Jesus, who is God incarnate. That the theology of the *Summa Theologiae* rests on such assumptions has to be reckoned with by people trying to defend Aquinas these days since the assumptions I now refer to have been seriously challenged by many biblical scholars, scientists, historians, and theologians. And even those scholars who think that they can give us an accurate account of the life and teaching of Christ seem to present us with remarkably different accounts of 'the historical Jesus'.

BRIAN DAVIES OP

DUST BOUND FOR HEAVEN. EXPLORATIONS IN THE THEOLOGY OF THOMAS AQUINAS by Reinhard Hütter, *William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company*, Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K., 2012, pp. x + 511, £ 32.99, pbk

The latest book by Reinhard Hütter is a real *tour de force* spanning the thought of Thomas Aquinas and many of its interpretations. Converted to Catholicism with his wife in 2004, Hütter – as Professor of Christian theology at Duke University School and as a lay Dominican – expresses in this book his deep conviction about the actual importance of Aquinas in the field of Catholic theology. Written to convince of the 'perennial relevance of the theology of Thomas Aquinas' (p. 1), *Dust bound for heaven* intends to overcome the common objection to the cultural actualization of this medieval thought. For Hütter, 'the very indetermination of the late modern supermarket of ideas' (p. 4) permits a new reception of the Common Doctor in order to re-think the contemplative and sapiential character of theology. This programme is called by Hütter 'ressourcement in Thomas' and aims to offer the light of Aquinas's anthropological insights (hylemorphic body/soul and ordination to the eternal communion with God) as an answer to the double Western crisis of reason and faith. So the 'Prelude' is devoted to showing how 'Thomas's account presupposes the very horizon of a redeemed judgement in which theology's discursive knowledge is informed by *sacra doctrina* increasingly bearing the stamp of the *scientia Dei* itself' (p. 45). In assonance with the relationship

between faith and reason, the 'Postlude' ends the book with a reflection about 'mystery and metaphysics' starting from Eucharistic adoration.

As well as this frame, Hütter's book includes four sections. The first intends to develop the Catholic principle according to which 'human nature is wounded but not destroyed', regarding the following topics: passions, common good and natural love of God under the condition of sin. Two chapters constitute this section. While the former shows how Aquinas's position on passions differs from Descartes's and Hobbes's theories, underlining the spiritual dimensions of the passions in the 'body politics' of the medieval Doctor, the latter aims to offer an account of the Thomist political theology, based on the consideration of the natural love of God and man's condition after the Fall. Starting from these premises, Hütter claims that Aquinas can offer – beyond sovereign secularism and mere liberalism – the philosophical and theological resources for a 'theologically enlightened liberalism'. So, recognising itself limited and dependent, 'genuine liberalism has a lingering intuition that the natural love of God above all is necessary for it to flourish comprehensively, and that it cannot restore, let alone produce, on its own the natural love of God above all' (p. 108).

The second section, called 'Created for Happiness – Bound for Heaven', also consists of two chapters, devoted to the pivotal question of the relationship between grace and nature in the Common Doctor's thought, starting from the disputed theme of the natural desire for the vision of God. At the centre of discussion – that is in my opinion the glowing core of the book – there is the attempt by Hütter to overcome two opposite positions. On the one hand, he considers the renowned position of Henri de Lubac who claims that the spirit is the desire for God and, on the other hand, the conception proper of Jansenism as well as Lutheranism and Calvinism, according to which humanity after the fall is dust and only the elect are re-created for heaven. The two chapters of this section correspond to two strategic steps. In the first, Hütter outlines the hermeneutical horizon advocating the interpretation of Lawrence Feingold from the attack of John Milbank. The second step coincides with the attempt to read the work of Aquinas as a third and subtle way that differs from the alternatives in conflict in the contemporary theology. In accord with an old interpretation of the Dominican theologian Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, Hütter claims that 'human nature is *capax Dei*, is ontologically oriented towards the beatific vision', but 'the affirmation that the created intellect has only one concrete ultimate end is fully compatible with the distinction between two orders of finality' (p. 243). So humankind can be conceived as 'dust bound for heaven', without deconstructing the moderate dualism of grace and nature, theology and philosophy, faith and reason – as happens from the thomistic point of view maintained by de Lubac/Milbank. Although Hütter rejects the accusation of 'paleothomism', setting himself on Feingold's side, it is very difficult to distinguish his position from the Baroque or the Neo-Scholastic one (and the affinity between these interpretations of Aquinas and the modern way of thinking).

Three chapters constitute the third section 'Bound to Be Free, Suffering Divine Things – Grace and the Theological Virtues', in which the author explores the way chosen by God to lead human beings to their last end 'without frustrating God's will and without destroying human freedom' (p. 14). Therefore, in chapter 7, we can read a relecture of Aquinas (in Augustine's wake) that aims to overcome the modern controversy *De auxiliis* according to two fundamental elements: the idea of causality that excludes a competition between divine and human agency, and the peculiar conception of the actualization of the call to glory by grace. The following chapter is devoted to the recovery of how the theological virtues of faith and hope are deeply united according to Saint Paul, Aquinas and Benedict XVI, while the chapter 9 insists on the value of theological

faith for theology's inner unity compared to 'the pervasive fragmentation of contemporary Catholic theology' (p. 313). The last section 'Seeking Truth – Wisdom and Contemplation' contains two essays on the actuality for theology of the wisdom of analogy (against the opposite interpretations of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Eberhard Jüngel) and of the role of philosophical contemplation (in dialogue with Alasdair MacIntyre and Benedict Ashley OP).

Ultimately the 'explorations' offered by Hütter can be read as a precise and challenging contribution to the thomistic *ressourcement* in theology, even if the perspective remains too bound to the Neo-Scholastic conception of *duplex ordo*. Should we not seek a reason for this hermeneutical choice in the political desire to construe a so-called 'genuine' liberalism on the basis of Aquinas's magisterium?

MARCO SALVIOLI OP

VERNACULAR THEOLOGY. DOMINICAN SERMONS AND AUDIENCE IN LATE MEDIEVAL ITALY by Eliana Corbari, [Trends in Medieval Philology,22], *De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston, 2013, pp. xiv + 248, €99.95, hbk*

This monograph originated with doctoral research conducted by the author under the direction of the distinguished historian of medieval preaching Carolyn Muessig, and represents the recent turn in sermon studies toward greater sensitivity to the sermon as a place of encounter between preacher and audience. While still primarily a study of texts and textual communities, rather than performance and event, the basic concern of this project is to examine the interaction between clerical sermon writers and preachers and their lay, often female, readers and hearers. Rather than understanding the preacher as 'active' and the audience as 'passive', this optic emphasizes the interpenetration between the two groups.

As Dr Corbari explains in her introduction, the book seeks to demonstrate that medieval sermons, especially those preached or written for reading in Lent, by their use of the vernacular idiom, present an unusually rich opportunity to map out the theologies of the laity, especially women. The emphasis here is on the diversity of approaches and conclusions. She believes, correctly I think, that a perception of preaching as an monochromatic presentation of the conclusions of the scholastic theologians for lay consumption is profoundly mistaken. Nevertheless, the sermon was a bridge between the concerns of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the religious world of the laity. Lenten preaching is the primary focus of the study because *Quadragesimales* are among the most common sermon collections and, as Carlo Delcorno has already noted, probably the most widely diffused. More important than the sermon as an interface and the abundance of Lenten sermonaries as evidence, this project is guided by Bernard McGinn's call for the study of the theology of lay people as a third idiom alongside the theologies of the monastery and the university. This 'vernacular theology' is not limited to writing in the vernacular, rather it is a mode of thinking found also in lay authors, such as Angela of Foligno or Bridget of Sweden, whose works are preserved in Latin.

To accomplish this project, Corbari focuses on three Dominican preachers active in Florence, Jacobus de Voragine (c. 1230–1298), Jordan of Pisa (c. 1255–1311), and Jacopo Passavanti (c. 1302–1357). This allows examination of a Latin sermon collection (Voragine), a collection of vernacular *reportationes* of sermons