

philosophical importance Kilwardby raised, and on which he often took a distinctive view.

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**AQUINAS ON BEATIFIC CHARITY AND THE PROBLEM OF LOVE** by Christopher J. Malloy, *Emmaus Academic*, Steubenville, Ohio, 2019, pp. 288, \$34.95, hbk

A title is not insignificant. In this case it draws the reader immediately into the complex problem both ancient and new – the problem of love. Augustine synthesized the problem centuries ago in two simple statements quoted in the opening lines of Malloy’s book: ‘The love of self unto the contempt of God’, and ‘the love of God unto the contempt of self’ (p.1).

Are love of self and love of God mutually exclusive; is self-love *necessarily* egotistical such that true beatitude as union with God negates any form of authentic love of happiness *per se*? Eloquent philosophers and theologians, including Ramírez, Gallagher, and Sherwin, to name only a few, have employed Thomas Aquinas’s writings to resolve the dilemma. Malloy’s extension of the discussion suggests that these expositions are neither exhaustive nor completely successful. Here, lack of success indicates not lack of intelligence or effort, but rather, the *gravitas* of a topic. One does not have to be learned to understand what is at stake: How can one rightly acknowledge the coexistence of love of God and an individual’s pleasure? If human pleasure necessarily implies egocentrism and selfishness does it not negate true love of God? Must not true love of God be totally disinterested?

Malloy enters the arena prepared to defend love of God above all things as the *bonum proprium* of man, while at the same time arguing that based on the Creator-creature relationship, God can be called ‘most perfectly one’s *bonum suum*’ (p.127). This relational aspect of human nature leads him to conclude that ‘God allows to flourish in the human person the natural order of love that emanates from His creative hand’ (p.252). To achieve his goal Malloy first speaks to contemporary and historical critiques of Aquinas and distorted teachings. Mentioning Luther, Kant, Feuerbach, *et al.*, in passing, he accents contemporary critics such as Lutheran theologian Anders Nygren, who describes Aquinas’s teaching on love as eudaimonism at its finest (pp.87ff). Though the critics’ arguments and conclusions differ, traces of voluntarism often emerge; thus the debate inevitably makes reference to Duns Scotus. Malloy does not dedicate copious pages to Scotus, but he opens by conceding that Scotus and

Aquinas both attempted to harmonize love of self and love of God (p.2). More significant is his placement of two arguments on Scotist teaching in chapter four and chapter nine, that is, at the beginning of the heart of the text and at its conclusion. This arrangement both highlights Scotus's enduring relevance and contextualizes everything that lies between the two presentations.

Chapter three offers a brief treatment of love of God and beatitude, including the distinction between the act of attainment (*finis quo*) and God as the loved object (*finis cuius*). It leads nicely to the opening of chapter four – a detailed analysis of love and an introduction to Scotus's discussion of *affectio iustitiae* and *affectio commodi*. Malloy argues that although Scotus grants a place for *affectio commodi* (the will's inclination to one's own perfection), he explicitly defends a primacy of *affectio iustitiae* (the will's inclination to what is just and good in itself), going so far as to contend that without *affectio iustitiae* rooted in the freedom of the will, man could not love God more than himself. More radical is a passage Malloy calls 'startling' for any Thomist, is Scotus's argument that *affectio iustitiae* alone leads man to love God as the greatest good, 'even if, *per impossibile*, He were not our good' (pp.89-90).

What follows is an erudite examination of charity as love of God, love of friendship, love of beatitude, in the context of the other theological virtues and human perfection, ending in chapter nine, with a revisiting of Scotus's distinction – this time referencing the centuries old Dominican – Franciscan polemic. This chapter, notably entitled 'Towards a Resolution', reveals that despite Malloy's contribution of original exegesis and fresh questioning, his attempt to reconcile the love of God and *bonum suum* ends where it began with the inevitable debated topic of the human being's 'ultimate operation', and the Thomistic position that this operation must be an act of the intellect and not the will.

He opens his refutation of Scotus with a citation from the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the Angelic Doctor's argument that as an appetite, the object of the will 'is naturally prior to its act'. It necessarily follows that the ultimate end, happiness, is prior to the act of the will, and 'it is impossible for happiness, or felicity, to be the very act of the will' (*SCG* 3.26, par.9; cf 233–234). More intriguing and nuanced than these often revisited arguments is Malloy's presentation of the Franciscan problematic.

Here again, there is acknowledgement of the natural attractiveness of arguments by those proposing the primacy of the will and love as the act of the will as the ultimate operation. Any good Christian condemns self-centered eudaimonism and suppression of freedom, and of Aquinas, if these are the logical result of his teaching on the *bonum suum* and excessive emphasis on beatitude as an intellectual act. Christ's message is one of sacrifice, taking up one's cross, and a reiteration of the core Gospel teaching that one must love the Lord your God with your whole mind and your whole heart and with your whole soul. God is love and truth, but surely love has priority. Accordingly, it seems both illogical and contrary

to faith to argue that man's final beatitude consists primarily in a sterile act of the intellect rather than a dynamic act of the will.

Malloy dramatically lays bare the implications of this erroneous view, including reference to Rousselot's terrifying claim that this radical defence for freedom and love 'is both extremely violent and extremely free. It is free because no reason can be found for it other than itself, independent as it is from the natural appetites. It is violent because it runs counter to these appetites and tyrannizes them' (p.237). No less striking is Aquinas's own warning that this freeing the will from the intellect would lead either to unending desire and action without terminus, or to paralysis of the will (p.238).

These problems provide a rationale for Malloy's two opening chapters on the ordering of the passions and dilection as related to choice. The first chapter offers a somewhat heavy exegesis of Thomas's writings on the ordering of the passions, specifically aimed at distinguishing between what Malloy describes as Thomas's 'immature teaching' where desire seems to precede love, and his 'mature' teaching where love is clearly identified as the primary passion preceding all others. Chapter two develops the discussion of the natural inclination to beatitude, love of beatitude, as the cause of all other desires and the free willing of the means of achieving this end.

One might argue with Malloy's interpretations of specific texts, but not as to the importance of love preceding desire, nor his analysis of Aquinas on the relationship between love, desire, and delight, and substantial union, union of affection (love), and union of possession.

Thus, he achieves his goal of defending Thomas's teaching against charges of eudaimonism by articulating on his teaching on 'the relationship between love of beatitude and love of God for His own sake, especially as this relationship comes to fruition with respect to beatific charity and the vision of God' (p.7). But I doubt the debate is over. We must justly grapple with the profundity and simplicity of Aquinas's words; 'A man truly loves himself by ordering himself to God' (*ST* 1–2.100.5, ad 1; p.127).

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**VISIONS AND FACES OF THE TRAGIC: THE MIMESIS OF TRAGEDY AND THE FOLLY OF SALVATION IN EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE** by Paul M. Blowers, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2020, pp. 320, £65.00, hbk*

George Steiner famously declared that 'Christianity is an anti-tragic vision of the world', with its hopeful message of transcendence of earthly suffering and final resurrection (*The Death of Tragedy*, 1961). Indeed, when all