

of the House of Habsburg, and Christian II of Denmark regarded the Bible as authoritative Scripture, we had better find out exactly what that meant if we want to understand the political history of early modern Europe. The history of biblical interpretation is not incidental to European cultural history but central to it. The debates between Steinbach, Luther, and Seripando, or More, Tyndale, Murner, and Henry VIII, or Melancthon, Eck, and Contarini are not a religious sideshow or pointless argy-bargy but reveal the aspirations, values, and failings of sixteenth century Europe as nothing else can.

4. Which leads me to a final and concluding personal observation. We have slowly become aware in America that it is not possible to conduct medieval, renaissance, and reformation studies in isolation from each other and that the lines which divide the Medieval Academy from the Renaissance Society of America and the American Society for Reformation Research are dictated by the demands of the professional guilds to which we belong and not by the nature of the subject matter with which we are dealing. I am not as certain that we are fully aware that interdisciplinary approaches are not a luxury in medieval and renaissance studies but a necessity. Nowhere has this fact come home to me with more force than in my study of the history of biblical interpretation.

Literary theory, the history of philosophy and theology, cultural and social history, political theory, and iconography all intersect in the history of biblical interpretation. Ockham could move with ease from logic to metaphysics to theology to political theory to epistemology. We who are expert in only one of the fields which Ockham mastered find that we need each other's help in order to understand our own special discipline correctly. Whatever breaks down the artificial barriers dividing the disciplines from each other will enable each separate discipline to fulfill its own unique task more adequately and so advance the common good.

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## V

# LUTHER AMONG THE ANTI-THOMISTS

Did Luther know the theology of Thomas Aquinas? Historians, particularly Roman Catholic historians, have raised serious questions about Luther's familiarity with the theological positions of St. Thomas. Joseph Lortz, for example, suggested that the tragedy of the Reformation was traceable in part to Luther's ignorance of the balanced synthesis of grace and free will in Thomas's theology. Luther lived in a time of theological unclarity, dominated by the "fundamentally uncatholic" theology of William Ockham and his disciples. Luther made a legitimate Catholic protest against the uncatholic theology of Ockham and Biel, only to press his point too far and fall into doctrinal error. Had Luther only known the Augustinian theology of Thomas Aquinas, argued Lortz, he would have found adequate Catholic resources to combat the decadent theology of the Occamists without lapsing into heresy.<sup>1</sup>

There is, of course, little evidence that Luther, whose theological course of study prescribed large doses of Biel and d'Ailly, ever spent much time in the direct reading of Thomas. Luther did read and annotate a *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, by the fifteenth century Thomist, Henry of Gorkum (d.1431), though the *Commentary* is scarcely more than a paraphrase of Lombard's own teaching and gives no insight into the world of late medieval Thomism.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, while Luther was not responsible for lecturing on Thomas Aquinas, there were two Thomists on the faculty of the University of Wittenberg when Luther arrived there from Erfurt: Martin Pollich of Mellerstadt (d.1513), a scholar better known for his writings on syphilis than for his defense of Thomism, and his mercurial junior colleague, Andreas Bodenstein of Carlstadt (1480-1541).<sup>3</sup> At the time of his break with Thomism in 1517, Carlstadt charged that scholastic theology (including the views of the Thomists) had capitulated to a new Pelagianism, a charge echoed by Luther several months later in his "Disputation against scholastic theology."<sup>4</sup>

Some historians, particularly Hennig<sup>5</sup> and Grane<sup>6</sup>, have pointed out the significance for Luther of the clash in 1518–1519 with such Thomist defenders of the Roman Church as Sylvester Prierias (1456–1523) and Thomas de Vio Cardinal Cajetan (1468–1534). Hennig in particular argued that Luther had met the theology of Thomas Aquinas in Cardinal Cajetan, its best and most authoritative interpreter, and rejected it.<sup>7</sup> In his own day, however, Cajetan was opposed by Bartholomew Spina and Ambrosius Catherinus, both avowed Thomists, who unlike Hennig thought that Cajetan had strayed from the path of authentic Thomism.<sup>8</sup>

Recent historians have also been divided over the role of Cajetan as an interpreter of Thomas. Scheeben, Mandonnet, Limbourg, Grabmann, and Caro have defended the reliability of Cajetan's reading of Thomas, while Gilson, Maurer, Pesch, McSorley, Jenkins, and Janz have expressed more or less serious reservations.<sup>9</sup> Janz, for example, believes that Luther could not have heard the authentic voice of Thomas on grace and free will through Cardinal Cajetan, who diverged significantly from Thomas in his more optimistic assessment of the capacities of fallen human nature.<sup>10</sup> On those questions, John Capreolus was closer to the original spirit and intention of St. Thomas than was Cajetan.

While it seems reasonable to assume that Luther's views on the theology of Thomas Aquinas were shaped in part by his encounters with colleagues like Carlstadt and with Dominicans like Prierias and Cajetan, we should not overlook the fact that Luther's understanding of Thomistic theology had already been influenced by the interpretation given to Thomas in Occamist theology.<sup>11</sup> Although Luther did not read Capreolus and the Dominican commentators on Thomas, he did study the Occamist theologians, especially Gabriel Biel, who cited Thomas at least 389 times in his *Collectorium on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, and Pierre d'Ailly, who argued with Thomas in his much shorter *Questions on the Sentences*. Indeed, it was an Occamist of sorts, the secular theologian, John Pupper of Goch, who attacked Thomas as a Pelagian long before Luther or Carlstadt were born. Whatever Luther owed to his colleagues and his enemies, it was in the school of William Ockham and not in the school of John Capreolus or Cardinal Cajetan that he first encountered the theology of Thomas Aquinas.

I want in the following essay to look at the image of Thomas Aquinas in the writings of two Occamist theologians from the 15th century, Gabriel Biel (d.1495) and John Pupper of Goch (d.1475). Although Luther read Biel at a beginning stage in his theological education, he did not read Goch until the early 1520's, after his views on the inadequacy of Thomism were already firmly fixed. But he found in him a

kindred soul and praised him as a "truly German and genuine theologian".<sup>12</sup> Both theologians have a good deal to say about the views of Thomas Aquinas on sin and grace, and both thereby provide an indispensable context for reconsidering the question, Luther and Thomas Aquinas.

## I

John Pupper of Goch was a secular priest who served as a rector of a house of Augustinian canonesses in Malines.<sup>13</sup> Very little is known for certain about his life. He may have studied at Cologne or Paris, though the evidence concerning his student days is sketchy at best. He wrote four theological treatises which attacked scholastic theology, especially the theology of Thomas Aquinas, in the name of a doctrine of Christian liberty.<sup>14</sup> The treatises were discovered and edited by two humanists, Cornelius Grapheus and Nicholas of 's-Hertogenbosch, who published them in Antwerp in 1521–1522.

Goch's main treatise on Christian liberty seems to have been occasioned by a controversy with mendicant friars, particularly with the Dominican, Engelbert Messmaker, prior of the convent in Zwolle.<sup>15</sup> The Dominicans had made what Goch regarded as exaggerated claims for the monastic life and buttressed their claims with citations from St. Thomas Aquinas. In response, Goch attacked monastic vows as antithetical to Christian liberty, a view hardly calculated to endear him to mendicant friars.

Goch's critique of Thomas centers on four points. Thomas errs (1) in teaching that the natural will of man cooperates with the grace of God in order to gain justification and merit eternal beatitude;<sup>16</sup> (2) in believing that merit is an act to which a reward is owed by a debt of justice;<sup>17</sup> (3) in arguing that one kind of good act—in this case an act performed as the result of a religious vow—is more meritorious than another;<sup>18</sup> and (4) in presupposing that an act informed by charity is an act proportionate to eternal blessedness by a debt of justice.<sup>19</sup> There are other differences, of course, such as Goch's blanket condemnation of Aristotelian metaphysics.<sup>20</sup> But these four points sum up for Goch what is fundamentally deficient in Thomas's theory of grace.

In opposing Thomas's position as he understands it, Goch appeals primarily to the Bible, St. Augustine, and certain themes out of the Occamist tradition. If we examine the first of Goch's objections to Thomas—that Thomas teaches a cooperation between the natural human will and divine grace—we discover that his criticism rests on a very curious doctrine of the human will. Goch posits not one but two

will in the Christian: a natural and a graced will.<sup>21</sup> The natural will, although it is freed from the weakness of concupiscence and the service of sin, is not able to cooperate with God since it has no inner principle which makes such cooperation possible. Goch compares it to a stone which will continue to fall downwards, unless thrown upward by an alien force.<sup>22</sup> Grace throws the natural will in a direction it could not move itself. The most the natural will can do—and then only under the alien influence of grace—is consent to the grace that moves it.<sup>23</sup>

The natural will is not turned into the graced will nor is it replaced by it. The graced will is a gift of God infused into the sinner. The two wills, the natural and the graced, coexist in the sinner as really distinct and mutually separable.<sup>24</sup> God cooperates with this graced will which he himself has bestowed as a supernatural gift and by such cooperation produces works which are good and meritorious. What Goch wants to reject is the notion that the natural free will is so healed by grace that it cooperates with God in order to merit final salvation.

At times, Goch can state his position more radically by appealing to the doctrine of divine acceptance, an idea current in Scotistic and Occamistic circles but uncongenial to Thomas. On several occasions, Goch baldly asserts that merit depends on the will and estimation of God alone, and not on the quality of the work performed or the moral and religious condition of the worker.<sup>25</sup> Like the Occamists, Goch emphasizes the gift of uncreated grace, the Holy Spirit who indwells the faithful, though unlike them, he denies flatly the existence of an infused habit of created grace.<sup>26</sup>

Objections two and four—that a work is owed a reward by a debt of justice and that there is a proportion between a good work and its reward—allow Goch to show what he considers to be the essentially unbiblical character of Thomas's theology. Thomas's fatal weakness from Goch's point of view is his understanding of the relationship between goodness (the moral value of human acts) and dignity (the religious value of those same acts).

Thomas, of course, makes a clear distinction between the ethical and the religious value of human acts.<sup>27</sup> While he does not deny that sinners can perform acts which are generically good, he regards them as imperfect virtues and denies all religious value to them. Human acts only have saving significance when formed by grace. There is even some debate among late medieval Thomists whether Thomas teaches the necessity of grace for all human virtue, a position affirmed by Capreolus but denied by Cajetan.

At any rate, Christians cooperate with the habit of grace and perform morally good works which God in justice regards as meritorious.

To be sure, God does not regard these works as meritorious by his justice in the strict sense of the term. God's justice is only justice in a certain sense, since the relationship between God and human beings is not a relationship between equals.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, God's indebtedness to Christians is not so much indebtedness to them as it is to himself to gain glory through the morally good acts of his creatures.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Thomas is willing to talk in a very restricted sense of "justice" in this relationship.

Goch uses the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matthew 20 in order to refute the notion that one can talk of justice in any sense in connection with divine rewards. God gives a reward to the workers not because of their merits but only because of his promise.<sup>30</sup> It is not the worthiness of the workers or the kind of works performed by them but solely divine acceptance which determines merit.<sup>31</sup> The first workers in the vineyard who had borne the heat of the day received the wage of one denarius. But so did the last workers, who worked for scarcely an hour. The parable celebrates divine goodness and pity and overturns all human notions of justice and proportionality.

Objection three—that good works performed as the result of a religious vow are more meritorious than the same works performed without a vow—weighs rather heavily on Goch's mind. Thomas does teach, after all, in the *Summa Theologiae* II-II q.189 a.2 that good works done because of a vow are higher and more meritorious than other works. He holds this view because he believes that a vow is an *actus laudis*, an act of devotion, the highest of the moral virtues, and therefore can confer an additional dignity on good works which result because of it.<sup>32</sup>

Goch emphatically denies that there is any New Testament warrant for the profession of vows.<sup>33</sup> The exegetical evidence traditionally adduced by the mendicants to buttress their claims is examined briefly by Goch and found wanting.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, vows are incompatible with the Christian freedom taught by the New Testament since they introduce an element of compulsion and constraint which is foreign to it.<sup>35</sup> Christians have been made free by grace to conform their wills to the will of God spontaneously out of filial love and do not need the compulsion and constraint of vows and rules to induce their grudging consent.

Goch dismisses with undisguised contempt the idea of Thomas that a vow increases merit.<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, since vows are incompatible with Christian freedom,<sup>37</sup> they tend to undercut merit.<sup>38</sup> Can a vow, however, considered as a discrete act of self-offering to God, ever be meritorious? That is a different question from the question whether a vow confers greater merit on the acts which result from it. Goch gives

a somewhat grudging and qualified yes to this question.<sup>39</sup> A vow can be meritorious if it springs spontaneously from the graced will. The key is that it must be free and must spring from grace.

If a vow is not automatically meritorious and even tends to undercut the merit of other acts which are performed because of it, of what use is a vow? Here Goch must tread very carefully indeed. The Church, whose absolute teaching authority he recognizes, has instituted monasticism and monastic vows. The mendicant orders were formed not against the wishes of the Church but with its explicit blessing. Can the Church be thought to have erred in this matter?

Goch is unwilling to draw that conclusion. What he does hold is that monasticism and monastic vows are a positive constitution of the Church.<sup>40</sup> Monasticism is not grounded in natural law nor in an explicit teaching of revelation, but in a tactical decision of the Church to establish certain structures in order to gain certain ends. Monasticism was founded not as the most exemplary form of the state of perfection but as a hospital where the spiritually weak can be supervised and assisted to make at least some progress in the Christian life.<sup>41</sup> The mendicant orders are the home of the spiritually infirm, not an encampment of the spiritual elite of the Church militants. With that polemical flourish, Goch deflates what he regards as the exaggerated spiritual claims of the Dominicans and their chief theological authority, St. Thomas Aquinas.<sup>42</sup>

## II

Unlike Goch, Biel is not out to show the essential weaknesses of the theology of Thomas Aquinas and his disciples, though he regards certain aspects of Thomas's thought as fundamentally unsatisfactory. Biel has a far more irenic spirit. He wants to interpret Thomas clearly, agree with him when he can, and absorb what he regards as Thomas's positive contributions into his own theology. Even when he finds Thomas's arguments unacceptable, he still is often able to find some sense in which he can agree with the general point Thomas is attempting to make.<sup>43</sup>

Biel differs in that respect not only from Goch but also from Pierre d'Ailly (d. 1420). In this *Questions on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, d'Ailly quotes Thomas fifteen times, though never on the issues of grace and free will. In ten of the fifteen quotations, d'Ailly contradicts Thomas. He is particularly concerned to refute Thomas's understanding of sacramental causality. On the whole, Thomas is not one of d'Ailly's favorite authorities; d'Ailly prefers to cite Augustine, Ockham, Gregory of Rimini, Scotus, Boethius, Bradwardine, and Holkot instead.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the most important passage in Biel's treatment of Thomas's doctrine of grace is his lengthy discussion in book II of the *Collectorium*, distinction 28.<sup>45</sup> What Biel is attempting to report and interpret is Thomas's teaching on the necessity for grace in order to fulfil the commandment to love God above all things. The principal text which Biel has in view is the *Summa Theologiae* I q.109 a.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Biel distinguishes between the *concursum generalis*, the primary causality of God indispensable to all human acts, and the *auxilium speciale*, the actual grace of God over and beyond the motions of nature. Does Thomas teach that the sinner needs both the *concursum generalis* and the *auxilium speciale* in order to perform actions which are morally good? It should be admitted from the outset that Thomas does not make it easy for his interpreters, since he uses the term *auxilium divinum*, divine aid, ambiguously, sometimes referring to the *concursum generalis* and sometimes to the *auxilium speciale*.<sup>46</sup>

It is clear to Biel that Gregory of Rimini demands both. Under the conditions which presently obtain, no sinner can perform an act which is morally good without the assistance of the special grace of God. Indeed, not only does the sinner need the *auxilium speciale*, the supernatural assistance of God, but so does the Christian. The presence of a habit of sanctifying grace is not enough to insure that the Christian will be able to avoid sin and love God supremely. Over and beyond the gift of sanctifying grace, the Christian needs the special assistance of God. Although Gregory concedes that sinners can do works which are good by nature (they can fight for their country or honor their parents), he nevertheless argues that such works are not morally good unless they are directed toward God as their end.

Biel regards Gregory's position as extreme and is happy to report that St. Thomas speaks on this question "more moderately." As Biel understands matters, Thomas argues that human beings before and after the fall were able to perform morally good works proportionate to their nature with nothing more than the concurrence of God as Prime Mover. However, even in the state of integrity before the fall, Adam and Eve needed the assistance of grace in order to be capable of meritorious works. Virtue was attainable through nature, but merit was not. In other words, even though Adam before the fall was capable of loving God supremely and so of fulfilling the law according to the substance of the deed, he was incapable of fulfilling the law in the proper manner—namely, meritoriously—apart from the infusion of sanctifying grace.

Biel is cautious in his approach to Thomas's teaching in the *Summa Theologiae* I q.109 and introduces his summary with the formula

"blessed Thomas seems to feel." Nevertheless, Biel finds five important points in this passage: (1) human nature cannot act meritoriously without infused grace; (2) supported only by the general *concursus* of God (i.e., his natural causality), the human faculty of free choice is capable of works which are morally good but not meritorious; (3) sinners can avoid both mortal and venial sins without infused grace, though they can only do so for a limited period of time; (4) sinners can prepare themselves to receive grace without infused grace; but (5) they cannot rise from sin without it.

While in the strictest sense most of what Biel has reported he has reported correctly, he has nevertheless managed to give a misleading impression. Leaving aside the question whether Thomas posits the necessity of grace for acts which are morally good, an issue disputed among the Thomists themselves, there is no question that Biel slights the importance for Thomas of the disposing grace of God which moves the human will toward God and prepares it for the reception of sanctifying grace. Although it is true that sinners can prepare themselves for grace without infused grace (to posit the contrary would involve the danger of an infinite regress), it is not true that they can prepare themselves for the reception of infused grace without the assistance of grace.

This misleading impression is continued in lecture 59 of Biel's *Exposition of the Canon of the Mass*.<sup>47</sup> In this case, Biel is interpreting question 114 of *Prima Secundae*. Again, Biel puts forward five propositions which he believes he derives from Thomas's discussion: (1) no human work, considered in itself apart from grace, can merit eternal blessedness; (2) no morally good work performed outside a state of grace can merit condignly, since condign merit presupposes a certain worthiness in the agent, and such worthiness cannot coexist with a state of mortal sin; (3) sinners can merit grace *de congruo*, however, since *de congruo* merits are based on the liberality of God rather than on the worthiness of the agent, and since God is too generous a Judge to allow any good work to go unrewarded; (4) even good works performed in a state of grace are, strictly speaking, not condign merits, since there is no real equality between temporal works and eternal rewards; and (5) that good works performed in a state of grace can nevertheless be regarded as condign merits is due less to the worthiness of the human agent than (a) to the grace which cooperates with human free choice, (b) to the Holy Spirit who moves the will of the agent, and (c) the promise by which God ordained an eternal reward for good works performed in a state of grace.

There is a nuanced shift, first of all, in the larger theological context which Biel provides for Thomas's points. While both Thomas and Biel

talk about divine ordination and preordination, Biel's emphasis on promise shifts Thomas's discussion into a voluntaristic framework. Biel gives the impression that for Thomas merit rests on a fiat of the divine will which is unpredictable and defies rational scrutiny. What worries Thomas, however, is what Farthing calls "the radical ontological deficiency of any creature—whether integral or fallen—with respect to the merit of an infinite reward".<sup>48</sup> The ontological element in Thomas's argument is slighted by Biel, who prefers to focus on voluntary and self-limiting covenants. The word *ordinatio* thus gains a meaning for Biel which is not altogether at home in Thomas.

Furthermore, it is simply not true that Thomas teaches that sinners can merit the grace of justification, not even by merits of congruity. While Biel, following the Franciscan tradition in theology, makes a temporal distinction between merits of congruity (which rest on the generosity of God) and merits of condignity (with rest on the inherent worth of the agent's activity), Thomas does not. For Biel, good works performed in a state of mortal sin will be rewarded as merits of congruity, provided that the agent dies in a state of grace. For Thomas, good works performed in a state of mortal sin (if they can be called truly good) will never receive eternal rewards at all. For both Biel and Thomas, good works performed in a state of grace will be rewarded as condign merits. For Thomas, those same good works are merits of congruity. The difference between condign and congruous merits is whether one focuses on the unworthiness of the agent (merits of congruity) or on the work of God in the agent which confers inherent value (merits of condignity).

If we stand back from Biel and ask what he has done in his discussion of Thomas's doctrine of grace, we can say that he has for the most part reported accurately what Thomas said but that he has misunderstood him at certain important points. He has not appreciated the extent to which Thomas insists on the gracious preparation of the human will for the reception of sanctifying grace. He seems unable to grasp the fact that Thomas's acceptance of congruous merit is not an acceptance of the Occamist thesis that sinners can merit justifying grace in a congruous manner. On the question whether Thomas teaches that grace is necessary for morally good works, Biel sides with Cajetan against Capreolus. The idea that grace is necessary for virtue is associated in Biel's mind with the name of Gregory of Rimini, but not with St. Thomas, who seems to Biel to speak more moderately. The general effect of Biel's interpretation is to move Thomas in a more Pelagian, even in a more voluntaristic direction, and away from the more Augustinian, more ontological framework in which he properly belongs.

John Pupper of Goch does not take Biel's more Pelagian reinterpretation of Thomas (which he obviously did not know) as his starting point. Thomas cannot be accused of teaching that human beings, by exercising their own natural powers to the full and assuming responsibility for their status in the presence of God, are able to merit justification by a merit of congruity. Gabriel Biel teaches that, but Thomas Aquinas does not. And Goch does not waste his time trying to caricature Thomas's Augustinian view of human nature. What Goch is out to show is that at its best, the theology of Thomas Aquinas maintains certain positions which render the whole system unbiblical and Pelagian.

To call a system Pelagian is not to render a historical judgment. Goch uses Pelagianism to describe a contemporary theology which ascribes to human beings a role in their own justification which, properly speaking, belongs to God alone. In order to avoid Pelagianism on Goch's terms, one must deny: (1) that the natural will, even transformed by grace, is capable of cooperating with God; (2) that one can speak of either justice or proportionality in connection with human merit; and (3) that good works performed as the result of a religious vow are more meritorious than works which are not. Furthermore, one must affirm: (1) that human merit rests on a supernaturally infused, graced will which coexists with the natural will as really distinct and mutually separable; (2) that human acts must be accepted by God in the sense in which Scotus and Ockham use the term divine acceptance; and (3) that the activity of God in the human soul must be ascribed to uncreated rather than created grace. Finally, one must admit that the study of Aristotelian metaphysics has proven detrimental to the knowledge and love of God and to a right understanding of eternal salvation. If that is the test of Pelagianism, then Thomas is a Pelagian. It will do no good to protest the adequacy of this test or the atomistic way in which it is applied to isolated propositions in Thomas's writings. It is the only test Goch will allow, and he applies it with the rigor of St. James. Whoever offends in one point has offended in all.

### III

No historian would seriously dispute the proposition that Luther's break with scholastic theology was primarily a break with the theology of his own Occamist teachers. Nevertheless, in his 1517 "Disputation against Scholastic Theology," Luther attacks all scholastic theology, including Thomistic theology.<sup>49</sup> He does not single Thomas out by name as he does Biel and d'Ailly, but it is clear, as Denis Janz ob-

serves, "that Luther did not regard Thomist theological anthropology as differing substantially from that of his nominalist teachers."<sup>50</sup>

Luther attacks the proposition that it is possible to do what is morally good or avoid sin without the help of grace. He denies that human beings can love God supremely by the exercise of their natural moral powers or prepare themselves for the reception of grace. While Luther is directly attacking the theology of Biel and d'Ailly, he has also indirectly attacked at several points the theology of Thomas Aquinas as presented by Biel. While Biel's Thomas denies the possibility of loving God supremely without infused grace, he does teach the other propositions condemned by Luther.

That Luther increasingly lumps the Thomist teaching on grace with the Scotist and Occamist is made explicit in a passage in his 1519 "Resolutions on Propositions debated at Leipzig."

For it is certain that the *moderni* (as they are called) agree with the Scotists and Thomists in this matter (namely on grace and free will) except for one man, Gregory of Rimini, whom they all condemn, who rightly and convincingly condemns them of being worse than Pelagians. For he alone among all the scholastics agrees with Carlstadt, i.e., with Augustine and the Apostle Paul, against all the more recent scholastics. For the Pelagians, although they assert that a good work can be performed without grace, at least do not claim that heaven can be obtained without grace. The scholastics certainly say the same thing when they teach that without grace a good work can be performed, though not a meritorious one. But then they go beyond the Pelagians, saying that man has the natural dictates of right reason to which the will can naturally conform, whereas the Pelagians taught that man is helped by the law of God.<sup>51</sup>

In this quotation, Luther accepts the judgment of Biel that only Gregory of Rimini taught the necessity of grace for moral virtue. Ironically, he is paired with Carlstadt, who as a former Thomist and disciple of John Capreolus ought to have known that on this question Capreolus put Thomas and Gregory of Rimini in the same camp.<sup>52</sup> Luther admits that the scholastics teach that grace is needed for merit, but argues that they eviscerate this point when they teach that human beings can conform their wills to the natural dictates of right reason and so prepare themselves for grace. Once again, Luther appears to accept Biel's reconstruction of Thomas as a theologian who believes that free will and the *concursum dei generalis* (the natural causality of God) are all the sinner needs to prepare himself for grace and merit justification with a merit of congruity.

Luther reads Thomas with Biel's eyes rather than with the eyes of Goch. Yet, one can easily understand how Luther found confirmation

for his negative judgment of Thomas's doctrine of grace in the slashing attack of this angry Flemish theologian. By 1522, Luther has abandoned all doctrine of merit and finds the radically Augustinian position of Goch too conservative for his own new theology of justification by faith alone. Nevertheless, Goch's attacks on justice and proportionality, on the cooperation of the natural will with grace, on the efficacy of religious vows, and on the negative role played by Aristotle in Christian theology help to confirm Luther's already negative judgment of Thomistic theology and to reassure him that he was on the right track when he numbered Thomas with the other modern Pelagians.

Of course, not everyone in the Protestant camp agreed with Luther. There were Thomists who were converted to the Protestant cause and who remained, to a greater or lesser degree, Thomists all their lives: theologians like Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr Vermigli, and Jerome Zanchi. Even Philip Melancthon could read Thomas with profit when he wrote his lectures on the gospel of John. The story of Thomas Aquinas and Protestantism has yet to be written, and it is not identical with the story of Thomas and Luther. What this more modest essay has attempted to show is that the shorter theme—Thomas and Luther—cannot be told correctly without seeing that it is only a chapter in the longer story of the place of Thomas Aquinas in the Occamist theological tradition.

## VI

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### LUTHER AND HUBMAIER ON THE FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN WILL

In 1527, Dr. Balthasar Hubmaier, a leader of the Anabaptist community in Nikolsburg, Moravia, and a former associate of Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, wrote two attacks on the theological anthropology of Martin Luther.<sup>1</sup> The two pamphlets, *On the Freedom of the Will* and *The Second Booklet on Human Free Will*, were clearly written with the debate between Luther and Erasmus over the freedom of the human will in mind.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, the dispute between Luther and Erasmus had stimulated a similar debate in Nikolsburg. Some Anabaptists (Erasmus claims to have been buttonholed by them himself) had declared themselves for Luther and were determined to eradicate completely the doctrine of human freedom. Hubmaier saw clearly, as the Luther partisans did not, that the doctrine of the bondage of the will undercut the Anabaptist understanding of conversion, baptism, the nature of the Church, and Christian morality. Therefore, while he confessed that he had been influenced by Luther (a claim which Luther bitterly disputed), and while he conceded the importance of at least some of Luther's observations, he nevertheless dismissed Luther's teaching on the bondage of the will as a dangerous half-truth.<sup>3</sup>

It is not clear whether Luther read Hubmaier's pamphlets. What is clear is that Luther did not write a response to them. The Catholic polemicist Eck criticizes Hubmaier in his *Enchiridion*, while Zwingli and Oecolampadius attack him repeatedly from a Reformed point of view. But Luther adds no postscript directed against Hubmaier to his *De Servo Arbitrio*. All we have are Luther's writings on the bondage of the will prior to 1527 and Hubmaier's critique of them. Yet, these documents from a debate which never quite took place are impressive evidence that theologians in the sixteenth century who had a similar education and who started their careers with a similar theological ori-