Theologies of Hope in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

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TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

This Contextual Essay outlines some modern viewpoints on the area of medieval theology researched by J.-G. Bougerol, having a Franciscan focus. The evidence for fruitful religious experience from past ages has always had to be sought out with care. But a larger range can now be traced through many buried, but striking moments of people turning to God. A select survey of medieval writings provides versions of this, even in everyday academic reflections. When a group of past believers talked, during scholarly training, about their shared religion, the more alert members generally saw the value of recording such moments too. They accepted a vocabulary about how relating to God acquires a certain shape, and then also how this guides a larger process of conversion. Faith, hope and love are frequently mentioned as key topics in that search, but perhaps scholars have too easily mentioned them and moved on. The similarities and differences between these three key Pauline and Augustinian terms have too often gone unexamined. In 1121, we can observe William of Champeaux reflecting on how to improve the then current understandings of the virtue of hope. He spoke of the hopes "of pardon, of grace and of glory."[1] For these three hopes "punctuate the rhythm of humanity's spiritual destiny," as Bougerol puts it. Through a study of numerous manuscripts it becomes easier to decipher views of this Christian conversion process, explored in detail by scholastic writers of the thirteenth century.

A broad history of ideas has to consist of a partly tentative weaving together of several writers' texts. Their internal evidence of intellectual breakthroughs occurs as modified spiritual awareness. Major contributing factors can, nevertheless, get carelessly left aside. Invisible allegiances and potential sympathies need to be detected and sketched in, but we notice this with variable degrees of confidence and exactness. The same is true of any history of religious beliefs: whatever official and even dogmatic statements we may formulate, areas of real interest remain barely charted. There are dimensions of awareness that lie hidden within the hearts and surmises of multiple authors' disparate personalities. There have been certain sorts of historian (such as Otto von Ranke) who wanted to pin down "what actually

[1] J. G. Bougerol, 'Espérance', in A. Vauchez and C. Vincent eds., *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Moyen Âge*, 2 tomes, (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1997) t. 1, 544.

happened" empirically. We might like to ask them how to include, more calmly, the uncharted waters of interior lives. How would we ensure a place in history, for instance, for the statement by the Franciscan theologian Alexander of Hales, recorded and translated into French by Bougerol, which asserted that “the habit of hope is infused by God without any merit on our part”? We must not imply here a rejection, of course, of every word of praise addressed to human kindness or forgiving behaviour. For when human realities are praised they can and should be aligned with the merits of Christ himself, while we construe their impact in the lives of genuine Christians. Alexander's statement insists on a spiritual dimension to conversion and relationships, which cannot be cut down to merely practical goodness, however welcome and valuable this must be. The gift of the presence of Christ guided the first Franciscan scholars and preachers further. His grace of salvation, with forgiveness at its core, could be seen even to outweigh the attractions of devout moral living, for people of faith. The French title of Bougerol’s book indicates a larger reality than any individual brand of piety: *the theology of hope in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries*.[2]

Yet how uncharted are those waters? Practices of self-scrutiny that were passed along by people of strong religious convictions have been recorded, presenting us with a long Christian history to consider. Scholarly versions of those convictions were substantial and often, if not always, significantly profound. The singular features of human self-disclosure are, nevertheless, too rarely acknowledged as being intrinsic to any dynamics of conversion in Church members' lives. Theologians have sometimes done themselves no favour, when they isolated their theories about the more philosophical religious texts, to keep them well clear from the taint of human experience. At the same time, we should note that merely applying the word ‘experience’ to unseen dimensions of reality will never be an entirely satisfactory step. The concept of mercy, for instance, was seen by Bonaventure as a gift of sympathising ("*compatir*") with neighbours, in the manner indicated by Eph. 4:32, 'Show yourselves merciful and good to one another, forgive one another, as God has forgiven you in Christ.'[3] God also

[2] J. G. Bougerol, *La théologie de l'espérance aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, t. 1 Études, (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1985). In front of my translation of this volume, given here, I am placing this twenty seven page contextual essay, a Foreword, on the modern historical idea of a faith context, from a Franciscan point of view. We investigate a sequence of medieval writers whose texts can be read as a gradual unfolding of convictions about the 'image of God,' as a mode of self-awareness amongst theological writers and preachers.

[3] J. G. Bougerol, "Misericorde" in Vauchez and Vincent, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Moyen Âge*, t. 2. The reference is to Bonaventure’s Sunday Sermon 28, which also

sent his Son to show us the sweetness of his mercy. We must appreciate that Christ "has shouldered our destitution so as to help us to confront the difficult path with hope." This factor has sometimes been attuned to St. Paul's phrase about communities 'having the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. 2:16).[4] It was the unsatisfactory character of what people determine as variant meanings of their faith, hope and love that led Jacques Bougerol to write this book. In Augustine's survey of these three virtues from 1 Cor. 13, they operated jointly, to awaken a view of the character of all human beings, as people created "in the image of God." But the very elusiveness of definitions can ask people to try rather too carefully to identify the points of most telling difference. We might ask what definitions can have to do with any history of conversion? Bougerol conceived of his book as being like an invitation to take a voyage, through the thought and literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in order to expand scholarly awareness of popular spirituality, as this ran through the great centuries of the Middle Ages. That metaphorical voyage for him centred upon discoveries of what the people of those times had been able to think and write about the theme of hope. Our outline here embraces allusions to how they lived it out. It is worth bearing in mind, since some of the people he considers were members of the mendicant Orders, that they will have expected their scriptural and theological investigations to make sense to readers who also listened to many kinds of hagiography. Medieval scholars recognised versions of hope there too, in popular literature which included miracles. These often do not come particularly close to historical authenticity, as a modern student expects this to be demonstrated.

We know the Middle Ages nowadays more in terms of their societies' demographic growth and the population's agricultural concerns, or in terms of a range of urban and commercial forms of renewal, where 'renewal' might be understood purely in terms of marketing and employment opportunities. The spiritual components of this word - essential to achieving integrity as a feature of a communal set of relationships - can be passed over much too blandly. For we are also now more aware, thanks to numerous, minute studies and well-documented compilations, in what senses the Church dominated medieval civilisation and ensured its legal unities. It was an epoch of cathedrals, great pilgrimages and sad crusades, an epoch also during which intellectual life developed, beginning at first in the monastic

refers to Lk. 6:36 "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is," and speaks of God as always ready to throw himself with open arms upon our necks.

[4] For instance, S. Gillow Reynolds, *Living with the Mind of Christ* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2016) presents a range of Christian mystics in relation to modern views of 'mindfulness,' while clarifying the New Testament concept.

centres, then around some of the bishoprics, until the university was born in Paris in the twelfth century. This came to a first peak of achievement in the thirteenth century. Hope as an academic concept emerged in this setting, as this study by Bougerol makes clear.

In Bologna towards 1140, Gratian had put together a form of agreement between the different canonical collections, while in Paris Abelard was writing, at about the same time, his *Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian*. Peter Lombard left his *Book of Sentences* to encourage the schools of theology in 1155-1157, and Peter Comestor wrote the first *Sacred History* around 1170, while in Toledo, and also in Venice and Palermo, the Greek and Arab philosophers were being translated. Out of this blend, a language of scholastic debate was devised, within which both law and philosophy insisted on definitions. However, there were other academic developments breaking through, new approaches to the text of Scripture, for instance. These were to seek out a different attitude to definitions, based not on ways of reasoning alone but through examining the greater scholarly worth, to Christians, of the language of revelation about conversion. In this context, forgiveness was a gift which had implications for facing the future. It was also preparing worshippers and workers for the divine Last Judgement, affecting lives of integrity. Hope had to overcome fears of a religious nature too. It could only show its potential for doing this where it was enabled to expand societal concern about future dimensions of the language of conversion.[5]

Within a presentation of the central themes touching on conversion, a key quality of the virtue of hope is that it can express either well or badly a Christian's readiness to face the future with courage. Robert Markus, in his book *Saeculum*, added an appendix to explain how the eschatology of Augustine, the theologian with whom his research was mostly concerned, differed from that of Bonaventure. Yet they shared a common sense of the call to seek the kingdom of God as urgent.[6] It is a valid point to make, and a necessary one, that scholars should distinguish quite precisely the distinct theological concerns and styles of very separate periods. Even though Augustine was central to medieval academic theology, the uses made of him there departed substantially from the outlook he had imparted to his fourth or fifth century contemporaries. Hence this book by Bougerol - in which

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[5] Thus K. Hide, *Gifted Origins and Graced Fulfilment (The Soteriology of Julian of Norwich*), (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2001) 159 states that Julian's 'preference for the participle *fulfilling* creates an interplay between present and future.'

[6] R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and society in the theology of St. Augustine*, (Cambridge, 1970; 2nd ed. 1989).

both Augustine and Bonaventure play an essential part - could effectively be viewed as a response to the early period research done so skilfully by Markus. But Markus is not mentioned here. It is possible that Bougerol had not read his work, so we need not look for any specific disagreements. However, his collaboration with David d'Avray does indicate his attention to the history of preaching. There also exists valuable scope for further comparisons between the two theological periods, in examining the extensive and unedited writings which Bougerol brings together here. There is a great deal to be learned, through clarifications of how the two theologians took up, formulated and developed their separate paths. Eschatology can be seen as a topic extended from what Jesus and St. Paul taught about faith in the kingdom of God, as transcending human achievement. A cultural context will occasionally be involved too. To grapple with this, theological language could call into question what the German knight and poet Hartman von Ouwe (possibly a Swabian, who died a short time before 1220) would assert about good breeding and moral development, for instance. He had a medieval and thus hierarchical view of vocation, which relied on the concept of warriors conforming to a moral law of "order" that was lower than a monastic calling.[7] Knight Bostock's edition of his long poem *Der Arme Heinrich* claims that he would have viewed society in modes close to criteria preached by the Franciscan Berthold von Regensburg. This approach to cultural values assumes that one Franciscan view of the knight's calling could find *merit* in making "severe demands on his energy and strength of character," even though in earlier ages this might have been recognised as unacceptable Pelagian phrasing. A contrast is admired by the poet between "the glitter of the world" and "long penance." However, this contrast can be problematic: it would not need to contain a path of conversion through grace, it seems, nor would it require the knight to deepen the gift of hope. All might be done from duty alone.

Studying the language of hope is valuable because we assume it has been a regular feature of the prayer of thousands of Christians, alongside faith

[7] Hartman von Ouwe, *Der Arme Heinrich*, J. Knight Bostock ed., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969) pp. xxvi, xxvii, xxxi, xviii-xix. Heinrich's healing from harmful "pride" might be viewed as grace acquiring a preferable beauty over any strength attributed to him. There is a reading of his devoted service as ready to help his overlord's salvation, even by losing "half the merit he expected to acquire" by crusading. A further complication involved, when we assess the impact of Berthold of Regensburg, is his highly destructive attitude towards the Jewish populations of Europe. Not all users of the word "merit" assess this as a theological term, which can be used either wrongly (with overtones of inflated dignity) or with a specific and sensitive meaning in terms of faith in Christ.

and charity. We also presume that many thousands have used it as a preaching topic for two thousand years. This would often not have been quite what actually happened, as Robert Markus explains. Religion could be a routine mode of piety. Then surely, we might protest, without any attention paid to hope, all that was left would have been a Christianity of temporal power and prestige? For even where the elusiveness of hope was honoured, of course, temporal advantages could assert a strong grip on the loyalties of large (but not all) parts of literate Christianity. A couple of centuries later, Cesare Borgia did defend the worldly interests of Alexander VI, the Pope, his father. He expanded the territories under papal control, and his sister Lucretia was feared and dangerous. Yet Lucretia's daughter joined the Poor Clare sisters, a religious order in the Franciscan tradition. Her life reminds us that penitence, and changes of heart that turn away from temporal power, formed a significant process for those who undertook that sensitive vocational direction. Also, this young woman's experience of the process acquired a specific character, one that linked social activities of a merciful kind to divine grace. How this linking was understood involves viewpoints that were shaped by the scholarly developments explained in this book.

St. Bonaventure completed his *Journey of the Soul into God* in 1259, while St. Thomas left his *Summa Theologica* unfinished in 1274 - the year in which Bonaventure died, Thomas likewise dying soon after. A work about affectivity within conversion came from the one man; a work on structuring virtuous minds from the other. Many practising theologians today might be able to tell us little more than this about the writings of the scholastics. Was this the full capacity for an understanding of the dynamics of hope that existed in this period? Aquinas and Bonaventure differed in their theologies, especially in how they would explain humility. For St. Bernard it had meant self-knowledge, and then the love "which gives birth to the self-emptying of Christ."[8] For Aquinas, it "prevents the soul from desiring grandeur excessively," and included awareness of our weakness. For Bonaventure, humility is the sister of poverty, and should overcome our unloving qualities: "the gateway of wisdom, the foundation of justice, the residence of grace, since grace makes a person agreeable to God." These different approaches are significant. The ordinary people travelled the

[8] J. G. Bougerol, "Humilité", in Vauchez and Vincent, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Moyen Âge*, t.1. He points out that Aquinas saw humility as leading the soul to pursue great things which right reason sets before it. This he contrasts with Bonaventure, for whom its action lay in an inner and outer overcoming of the (wayward and straying) self. This separate insight illustrates how other contrasts between the two may be discerned, in this volume.

Christian highways, while intellectuals took part in the conquest of learning. Many medieval human hearts had a kind of hope and humility, of course, in the midst of human fears, and they also waited apprehensively for their spiritual "soil" to render them enough of a harvest, from the seeds they had sown, through the impact of their manner of caring for their neighbours. On their travels, they hoped to escape from brigands, and likewise from the diverse terrors of the night and the forest. But above all else, Christians will have hoped for the fellowship of peace-filled happiness promised by God.

We can realistically guess that, already in the final days of the twelfth century, the word "hope" was clothed with diverse connotations, from its rudimentary meaning, about which Raoul Ardent speaks, to the elevated spiritual senses found in William of Saint-Thierry. The theologians whose writings we are going to consult had great difficulty in disentangling, from amongst the different meanings of the word, a true definition of its reality. All the same, they distinguished very intelligently between the descriptions that one could make of its beneficial activity and rigorous definitions of a theological virtue to be considered as hope. Notions of mercy and humility might be only indirectly expressed: sometimes, through use of the word "predestined," for instance. This word presupposed that mercy and humility could include heightened experiences of ongoing guidance from God, or, just as frequently, awoke an anxious search for individuals who were able to provide versions of this guidance.

The voyage on which readers of this present book are invited to embark is not strictly speaking a study of mentalities (something which Bougerol did not feel himself well suited to give). It is rather a documented search for viewpoints, beginning from sources that have already been edited for long or short periods of time, but also others which have long stayed buried amongst the manuscripts of numerous libraries. He has used some notable edited works, but had to transcribe many that were unedited, which he demonstrates are intriguing and rewarding to investigate. We have translated here only the first volume of Bougerol's two volume work. His volume two consists precisely of Latin texts of the transcribed extracts relevant to this topic.[9] Those specialists in Latin theology who wish for greater detail should consult that volume in the French edition for the more precise phrasing, taken from many unpublished manuscripts. The introduction of key words such as *adipiscor* (to attain, overtake or reach) into the vocabulary of theologians is charted most carefully by that original

[9] Bougerol's second volume, which we refer to as Tome 2, consists of Latin texts which Bougerol describes as his Appendix. Some valuable quotes and details from this appear in our text or in footnotes. They will be acknowledged as both Tome 2 and Appendix, yet are not available in full in this English edition.

research. Here we therefore include occasional Latin passages in footnotes, especially where these seem likely to make a full understanding easier to obtain.

How wide-ranging an insight into conversion, then, have the texts resulting from such minute study provided? The academic details presented here are of particular interest to students of theology. These will include students of divergent modes of Christian religion that we now call Catholic and Protestant. Trusting Christ to ensure a beneficial path into the future was to become an important theme again in the sixteenth century. Arguments for preferring "grace" to "merit" have remained an area of ecumenical debate. Here we examine their paired medieval origins. An indispensable preamble will be to establish the state of our knowledge of the question, "What is hope?" at the stage when our itinerary sets out, in the twelfth century. That is the aim of chapter 1. At the threshold of the period which forms the object of this research, a summarising overview of the fundamental themes is developed, and presented in a triptych, the first wing of which follows the advance (and unfolding practice), of writing glosses on a central verse from the letter to the Hebrews, Heb. 11:1: "Faith is the substance of that in which we hope." The second wing serves to open up new horizons, which begin from the reflection already mentioned, from the pen of William of Champeaux. These take the form of a triad: "*spes venie, spes gratie, spes glorie*," "hope of forgiveness, hoping for grace, and the hope of glory." With its spiritual aura, this mode of reflection facilitates a deepening view of the mystery of hope. The third wing recounts the slow and difficult formation of the two definitions of hope handed on by Peter Lombard and his collaborators in the four volume *Book of Sentences*.

We can thus unfold our history of the theology of hope by setting out from these definitions.[10] Will it show us humility as chiefly related to forgiveness, or as shaped by aspects of grace? In chapter 3, we shall focus on the heritage of Peter Lombard and the users of his *Sentences*, and alongside these the academic writers who provided glosses (possible interpretations) on the Psalms and on the letters of St. Paul. This heritage was to experience a diversity of fortunes. The *Sentences* were to remain the manual of Christian theology for almost three centuries, while the glosses made on them by students with varied levels of competence would form the

[10] N.B. The distinctions made by the medieval writers, which Bougerol treated as defining their range of viewpoints, are highlighted **in bold**, from the first section of this book onwards, to present a field of reflective sensibility whose scope is here being steadily mapped out.

obligatory starting point for all the subsequent commentaries.[11] The schools that were to develop out of these beginnings came into being firstly through that of Peter Lombard (d. 1160), while a second academic focus may be designated, somewhat arbitrarily we may admit, as that formed around the name of Gilbert of Poitiers, the Poitiers school. Finally, the sermons from this period had contributed their testimonies, but as a theology are only substantial to variable degrees.

We shall embark on the thirteenth century with the topics in chapter 4, at a moment when theology found itself at a watershed in its evolution, passing from a positive theology to a speculative one, with William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales and Philip the Chancellor.[12] Some fresh light would be shed on it after these first masters, with the development of the schools and the arrival of the mendicant orders, particularly the Dominicans and Franciscans. Chapter 5 will study the Dominicans, Hugh of Saint Cher and Richard Fishacre; then the Franciscans, John of La Rochelle and Richard Rufus, and the gloss from MS Vat.lat. 691; then lastly, the Chancellor, Eudes of Châteauroux, an extremely captivating character, a great friend of the mendicant orders, a theologian, pastor and renowned preacher. Thus we come to the two theologians studied in chapter 6, the still little known Franciscan Eudes Rigaud, and the Dominican St. Albert the Great.

Fr. Bougerol was keen to insert at this point in the journey a stopover point, chapter 7, concerned with hope in popular religion, using works written entirely outside of any university environment, touching on works by the Dominican William Peyraud, (the *Summa de virtutibus*), and by the Franciscan Maurice of Provins, (his biblical *Distinctiones*). In addition to these, he examines a homily from one of the most famous collections of model sermons, the *Collectio fratrum*. This chapter closes with some modest notes on hope in medieval art, notes which are more of an invitation to pursue research than the outcome of documentation that is already

[11] Two Franciscans, Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle, promoted a version of this reference work which had already been explored for its Scriptural soundness by Stephen Langton and others. Mark Clark has explained certain outcomes of this for users of St. Paul. Modern scholarship has also begun to identify theological ideas from medieval authors embedded within the text of the *Summa Halensis*. See L. Schumacher, ed., *The Legacy of Early Franciscan Thought* (Boston/Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 2021).

[12] The chapter numbering here follows the original French, which means the first three chapters provide a long emphasis over a hundred pages on prescholastic writings. This can highlight what Bougerol calls the "watershed" factor in the development.

available. Nevertheless, we should realise here that outside of the university setting there was a rapidly expanding interest in a more focussed understanding of physical light, which brings out the greater complexity of human experience, amongst artists as much as amongst philosophers, historians and natural scientists. It is therefore worth bearing in mind Bougerol's pioneering article on how a vocabulary for the theological and spiritual counterparts to this language of experience was developed.[13] He studies the concept of "*influentia"*, first used by John of La Rochelle, which refers to God's Spirit personalising his presence through the light of faith, hope and charity, in each believer. For John, grace is not just like the inpouring of light, it actually is a mode of spiritual light. It is worth recognising how readily John would agree with the twentieth-century metaphysics of Gabriel Marcel. Marcel taught that "the only genuine hope is hope in what does not depend on ourselves, hope springing from humility and not from pride."[14]

Finally, chapter 8 brings our progress to its culmination with the two great theologian saints, Bonaventure and Thomas, with regard to whom we shall study the aspects they dedicated to hope within their respective theologies. It will be valuable when reading this section to have in the back of our minds this topic of *influentia*, which is used a hundred times by Bonaventure in his writings. It implies, says our author, that as we walk in faith and love we are "swept along by the divine dynamism towards an... awareness that the Spirit of the one who has been raised up lives in our hearts."[15] Those who are baptised have their "Being-for-God" renewed repeatedly. God "repairs" humanity's thirst for loving, to be able to reach out again for him. In this version of St. Paul's theology of grace, Rom. 5:5 "has exercised a primordial influence."[16] When charity "is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us", this implies participation in Christ's presence as the sun of justice, his light being "the gift of the pure liberality of God."

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[13] J. G. Bougerol, 'Le rôle de l'influentia dans la théologie de la grâce chez S. Bonaventure', *Revue Théologique de Louvain*, 1974 (fasc. 3).

[14] G. Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, M. Harari trans. (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1995) 32.

[15] Bougerol, 'Le rôle de l'influentia,' 299, 298.

[16] Ibid., 284, 281, 285-6. Bougerol notes that where Philip the Chancellor had spoken of comparing grace to a luminous ray, with the light being virtue itself, John of La Rochelle says the opposite: "in the soul the light is grace, and its ray is virtue," ibid., 278. He sees this difference as also important for Bonaventure's reflection on created grace in relation to uncreated grace.

We should then be ready to draw conclusions, and to ask ourselves whether speculative theology has genuinely contributed fresh illumination to the topic of Christian hope, and whether it has further enriched the great treasure bestowed on us by the biblical commentaries, and by the writings which drew on these. To speak of the treasure of academic insight might be to lay claim to merit, of course. In his Advent hymn, "Come, thou long-expected Jesus," Charles Wesley included a reference to hearts ruled by the eternal Spirit, and lives raised up by Christ's "all-sufficient merit." The word 'merit' occurs at a number of points in Bougerol's book, and it was an important one in the middle ages. Over-critical attitudes towards it have been seen in recent times as failing to grasp the Hebrew sense of behavioural guidelines as a gift.[17] Yet this point is not without problematic aspects for today's theological discourse.[18] Thus the lawyer Helena Kennedy, QC regards "merit" as a concept "designed to regulate the allocation of prestigious positions." Its effect has often been to make too many social and ecclesiastical structures immune to the challenge of equality and justice.[19] When the Waldensians were instructed to give up their criticisms of ill-mannered and notoriously bad clergy life-styles, this again is the word that was used. They were told to profess that they now believed that any Eucharist is effected "not by the merit of' the man ordained by the bishop" for the celebrant's role. The word therefore designated something that was desirable, but something not achievable by anyone's own effort. The question still remained as to what kind of desirability is brought to life-giving fruition by people in public roles, and how they could ever do it well. Used in strictly theological terms by Bonaventure, to apply to the death of Christ, it implied that "the second Adam" had defeated the enemy of the human race: "The cross and the empty tomb are the centre of a cosmic drama where sin, death and the enemy have been defeated."[20] Scholastic statements

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[17] K. J. O'Mahony, 'Was Paul a Lutheran?' *Doctrine and Life*, vol. 65 No. 5 (May-June 2016) 28-45, esp. 34 explains E.P. Sanders' important demonstration that Paul was not "opposing meritorious works."

[18] Criticisms of exaggerations in Sanders' analysis should be noted.

[19] H. Kennedy, *Eve was framed*, (London: Vintage, 2005) 61. Merit is not, therefore, a 'neutral' concept, as she points out in detail. "Like other institutions, law uses the meritocracy argument to immunise itself against any challenge about how it makes its appointments. The merit test is rarely made for jobs of low status. Merit is a concept designed to regulate the allocation of highly paid, prestigious positions, and the grander the appointment the more elusive and invisible the evaluative process becomes."

[20] J. L. Gonzalez, 'The Work of Christ in Saint Bonaventure's Systematic Works', *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*, (Grottaferrata (Roma): Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974) 382, 378, 377-8, 379. "[The] habitual merit [in Christ]… is due to the plenitude of

regarding Christ's passion, in one modern author's view, would imply that "God should accept this means of reconciliation, which is better and higher than any other means."

Ambiguity attached to the word has at times been reinforced by the use of classical philosophical writings, in which purely pagan virtues were admired, and their cultivation encouraged. For these too could be regarded as ensuring that one person had more merit than another, not in relating to God, but in the eyes of society. For us today, it will perhaps be best to regard it as relating to the biographies of holy people or notable Christians. To have genuine Christian faith, hope or love is better, theologically, than to live without these facets of one's relationship with God. They are gifts, but they may be sustained by prayer, meditation, and practices of a devoted and caring kind, whereby the relationship is most likely to deepen. In this sense, we can and must cooperate with God. And that may be called religious merit, even while we agree with Charles Wesley that the merit is conveyed to us entirely by the pre-eminence of Christ. This view is well summed up in the *Magnificat* antiphon provided in the Divine Office for celebrating the memory of St. Leonard of Port-Maurice: "The Lord endowed him with fortitude and with its enduring strength he scaled the heights and won his inheritance." St. Bonaventure does in a few places use "merit" to mean a positive gift, but one which included a readiness to be humbled, as with Nicodemus visiting Jesus at night in John 3:9-10, "who is captivated by intellect and faith [and] merits the Lord's more complete instruction."[21] The same understanding is applied by him in the *Legenda Major* to St. Francis' early companion Bernard of Quintavalle.[22]

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grace which is in him," and relates to the ancient doctrine of recapitulation. This example of Christ includes his teachings, but "it is not a cold and objective lesson given to us as to how we should love"; we say, rather, that it "takes hold of man's emotions" through '*exercitatio*' and involves us in living by "examples".

[21] St. Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, R. J. Karris trans., ch. 3, Works of St. Bonaventure XI, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2007) 181. Here St. John's account is teamed up with St. Paul, 2 Cor. 10:5 on "taking every thought captive to obey Christ". We might add Bonaventure's notion of thriving as pilgrims (*statu viatorum*), which Bougerol calls "satisfying a thirst for living." See A. W. Astell, *Eating Beauty*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006) 37, 46-7.

[22] St. Bonaventure, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*, III.3, in R. J. Armstrong et al, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University, 2000), FA:ED II, 543 where he says Bernard was "made a sharer in the divine vocation" and in this he "merited" the holiness of being a much welcomed son in Francis' fraternity. The fervour of St. Francis faith and preaching, he says, opens up a road of penitence "common to all

Nevertheless, we wonder whether this did describe a well-established historical understanding amongst the medieval populations. Or do we derive it, with theological hindsight, from a range of mostly hagiographical sources about the early friars? In other words, is this theological topic - the combined commitment of believers to faith, hope and love - one that emerged out of a readily observable historical language, amongst a body of articulate believers? Or is it based on an over-neat Augustinian version of imagination, a reconstruction that now makes use of various phrases cropping up in choir legenda? A principle of equality should enter into any genuine story of people consciously living out their faith "through the merits of Christ." For all are equally called, as adopted children of God. Some ways of re-telling the community stories will express this better than others. Bonaventure, in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* used the word in the story of Jesus' meal-time visit to Simon the Pharisee. Simon harbours suspicious thoughts about the woman who is among the visitors and pours expensive oil onto Jesus' feet. Simon fails to see her "merit," the fact that her actions stem from her reality of forgivenness.[23] He too needed to speak in favour of a generosity that developed through forgiveness, and in doing this he passes judgement on his previously suspicious self, says Bonaventure. Only then, through this judgment, is his inner mode of thinking about sin 'rightly' made, and applied to himself. Appeals to conscience remain essential within the observable historical language, as legitimate resistance to overbearing abuses of power. St. Francis ensured that this resort to conscience was included in his Rule (*Regula Bullata* 10).

We might assume that this factor could easily be linked into the language of faith, hope and love, both through the growth of scholastic formulations, spelt out in the present volume, and in the multiple Lives of Francis that were produced in the first half of the thirteenth century. Michael Cusato cautions us to be aware of a gradual modification in styles of writing *Vitae* in this period. After the official reining in of Francis' ideals, which began with the bull *Quo elongati* (1230), whatever was written about Francis was also generally a statement about the intentions of his community members. Cusato says that "the friars, while ostensibly still concerned with telling the Francis story in their texts, actually began a process of talking about themselves – of telling the story of their Order *within* the narrative of the

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those striving towards heaven." On this basis, he adds "how meritorious it is before God is clear," from the inner life which he enabled people to share (FA:ED II p. 553).

[23] St. Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, R. J. Karris tr., (St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 2001), Works of St. Bonaventure, VIII, part 1, 644, 639.

story of their founder."[24] History was allowed to be constructed around hagiography, and could displace that genre. Other scholars have commented on how exemplary structures get built into a simpler picture, to make this more powerful amongst the clerical readership. Hester Goodenough Gelber points out that Julian of Speyer and Henri d'Avranches both made "different and revealing choices" in their selective uses of Thomas of Celano.[25] Celano himself made his *Second Life of St. Francis* (or "Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul") a critique of ways in which the early ideals had lost their hold on the friars' lifestyle. This is where the relationship between an ideal of simplicity in living arrangements, and a virtue such as hope, became a matter for debate, independently of any specific historical circumstances that made community collaborations a living experience.

It is likely that readers of this book about hope, even if concerned mostly with theology as a distinct discipline, will want to draw conclusions about some connections between developments in Franciscan theology, and several hagiographical or literary processes. Both together have contributed to the Franciscan charism being set down in written versions. Although we lack space to explore the many facets and complications that belong within such an analysis, it is right that we should, in introductory remarks, point out a body of scholarship that has been coming into existence, which relates to such a meditation. Lester K. Little, for instance, made the following observation: "Strong assertions about the Christ-like qualities of holy people had been made before Francis' time and have continued to be made since, but the rhetoric of the merging of the lives of Francis and Jesus is without parallel."[26] We may picture early readers of the sources asking themselves where they stand, in such a great enterprise. Am I like Aaron, or Ruth, or Jacob, like Barnabas, Lydia or Zacchaeus? How firm is my faith, how

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[24] Michael F. Cusato, 'Talking about ourselves: the shift in Franciscan writing from hagiography to history (1235-1247)' in *Franciscan Studies* 58 (2000) (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute) 38. See also, in the same volume, Bernard McGinn, 'Reflections on St. Francis at the New Millenium' for ideas about Francis as a prophet.

[25] Hester Goodenough Gelber, 'Revisiting the Theater of Virtue', in *Franciscan Studies* 58 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, 2000) 25. She also comments that the genre of biography hardly existed in this period, although thoughts about reliability may have been important to Arnold of Bonneval, for instance, when he revised and extended the Life of Bernard of Clairvaux, as compiled by William of St. Thierry.

[26] Lester K. Little, 'Imitatio Francisci: The influence of Francis of Assisi on late medieval religious life', in Michael F. Cusato and G. Geltner eds., *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life (Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 195.

confident my hope, how reliable my love? Do we have the gifts which the saints have held dear, when facing the breakdown of social circumstances? Thomas of Pavia included a section in his appreciation of St. Anthony whose very title advised restraint: "It is neither easy nor safe to compare the merits of the saints."[27] The scholastic debates about virtue and justification were not expected to ignore such cautious questioning. But they might not expect to resolve every complication of their understanding of how God's gifts can include human initiatives.

When Christ proclaimed that "whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it" (Mk. 10:13-16), he took away the basis for insensitive appeals to merit and status. St. Bonaventure's acknowledgement of this problem is made evident in his collection of Sunday Sermons. There he specifies that merit occurs in "recognising the truth," meaning specifically recognising Christ, as St. Paul did, when helping people to turn to God.[28] Acts 26:20 is cited, along with what St. Ambrose says about avoiding a lazy reading of the word of God. I have compiled material for this opening essay to frame a few pages of the preface, supplied by Bougerol, partly because his original told little of the main focus of his text. In providing these extra comments, I also want to reflect on several trends in scholarship, which have flourished during forty years since he gathered his material. I believe I have not strayed too far from his intentions. When Rowan Williams connects doctrine with some "rather abstract accounts of holiness in monastic literature" he mentions the problem of the "ideological story," which might be a way of referring to the language of merit.[29] He comments helpfully that "the Church's integrity is not primarily an achievement." In Thomas of Celano's two lives of St. Francis there are inconsistencies concerning this. In the first, we see the young Francis clashing with the typical values of his Christian contemporaries. In the second, Francis is shown as fitting in with religious standards, with his mother telling neighbours prophetically, "You will see

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[27] Thomas de Pavia, *A dialogue on the deeds of some holy Friars Minor*, C. Murray trans., in *Early Franciscan Ascetical Writings*, vol. 1, (Phoenix, AZ: Tau Publishing, 2012) 42-3.

[28] *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, T. J. Johnson ed., Works of St. Bonaventure, vol. XII, (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 2008) 170-171.

[29] R. Williams, *Why Study the Past? (The Quest for the Historical Church)*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005) 47, 46, 58. A related discussion would be concerned with possibly Pelagian features in the *Life of Martin of Tours* as written by Sulpicius Severus. C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and his hagiographer: history and miracle in Sulpicius Severus*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983) 15-16, 228-233.

that he shall merit becoming a son of God."[30] Yet Bonaventure, evidently wanting a true doctrine, reflected that "we cannot pride ourselves on our own merits."[31] Williams agrees with MacIntyre that there are "continuities of conflict" to be recognised. Another writer who similarly touches upon the plainly troublesome concept of merit is Ignace Lepp, a psychologist. He refers to Christians who lack the courage to take risks, or to make important decisions. He notes that the circumstances of their lives may, nevertheless, compel them to make decisions, and ones that they regret. In his view, if they "refuse to make binding decisions they [may] condemn themselves to submitting passively to an unreal, lustreless existence."[32] But if we wonder as to which of our decisions embody religious integrity, are we not then relying on faith, just as much as merit? Humility and mercy, forgiveness and grace are all aspects of our desire for intimacy with Christ. Realising this is itself, of course, a merit, but one which only Christ himself could foster in individuals, and pour into their hearts and minds.

Some of Bougerol's observations indicate a necessary sensitivity to a mix of imagination and fact, hagiography and history that was typical of medieval mentalities, even amongst scholastic theologians and preachers. Bougerol concluded his introductory reflection with the poetic thought that, after steady attention to the stages of his presentation, it might then be possible to pass through a gateway into the mystery of the second virtue, whose frail appearance ventures constantly to surprise us. "Hope seems to be speaking to us during the night, about a dawn that is very close. It shows us Jesus dying for the sins of the world in the moment when we are pleading for forgiveness. It makes us feel the breath of the Spirit at the moment when we seek its presence and its grace. It launches an irresistible call at the moment when we seek the face that will satisfy us." It was in these poignant terms, he explains, that one follower of St. Bernard sang, at the height of the Middle Ages. However, we can add an exegetical dimension to this statement. Beryl Smalley has pointed out a dispute between St. Bernard and Peter Abelard in which, allegedly, Bernard supported the "pre-eminence and superiority of the Baptist among the saints," while Master Peter "preferred

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[30] Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, I.1.3, Armstrong, R.J. et al., eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, (New York: New City Press, 2000) II, 242. This dates from 1247.

[31] St. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.6.3, ed. D. V. Monti, (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 2005) 182. Bonaventure wrote this in 1257.

[32] I. Lepp, *The Challenges of Life*, (New York: Image Books, 1971) p. 93. We would add that faith is involved in saying that "Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even while 1 Tim. 1:15 describes these words as "worthy of full acceptance"and thus presumably as conferring the specific merits which are Christ's.

St. Paul to Christ's forerunner, because Paul toiled more than any other saint on the Church's behalf, and therefore deserved the greater reward."[33]

Even if this dispute is more of a suggested contrast than an actual encounter between rival theologians, the difference is relevant to how merit, hope, reward and forgiveness were considered in the schools of the twelfth century. By homing in on one key figure rather than another, as the individual who shaped modes of illumination about these matters, the whole experience of prayer and charitable activity can acquire a different character. Smalley refers to John of La Rochelle's skill in addressing a symbolic interplay between John the Baptist's liturgical action and Jesus's actions at Cana. Both baptismal cleansing and festive concerns with wine are telling us, the listeners or readers, about illumination that can guide people to intimacy with God. But is all illumination equally indicative of merit learned "in Christ"? The twelfth century (in Hugh of St. Victor, for instance) was prepared to speak of Socrates as having the "merit" of preparing humanity to learn some moral theology. But that is not the same, in strict theological or biblical terms, as receiving the saving gifts of forgiveness or hope. Twelfth century writers could realise that such casual uses of the word "merit" may be problematic and misleading. P. Delhaye says that Godfrey of St. Victor was impatiently "disdainful" towards those who ask whether "an external act adds some merit to the internal act and, conversely, whether the exterior sin aggravates the fault of a bad intention."[34] The allusion is to Ps. 106:39-40 where the people of Israel, during the Exodus, "defiled their works." Differences between good pagans, using this word "merit", and the later Christian concern with genuine faith narratives, did become difficult to clarify, and a blurred combination had to be explicitly contested. Although Godfrey is noteworthy for his positive assessment of human nature, he believed that human nature was "not an end in itself." There are secondary ends making earthly life more happy, or less so, but we must be clear that God "destined man for supernatural life." His favourite instance of hope is the Prodigal Son. A. Vauchez has pointed out that St. Francis, the Poor Man of Assisi, "did not concern himself with

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[33] B. Smalley, 'The Gospels in the Paris Schools in the late 12th and early 13th centuries', *Franciscan Studies*, XVII, vol. 39 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, 1979) 239. This ties in well with Bougerol's study.

[34] P. Delhaye, *Le Microcosmus de Godefroy de Saint-Victor*, (Étude théologique), (Gembloux: Éd. J. Duculot, 1951) 22, 22n, 77. See p.123 on *affectiones meritorie*, linked also to Abraham, but seen as able to improve anyone's negative motives. Revelation provides one's faith with merits through a relation to Christ.

meriting salvation, something he considered a free gift of God."[35] He therefore did not share the same "mindset" as Haymo of Faversham, who dreamed that having a cord around his religious habit "allowed him to go up to heaven." The "Spiritual Franciscans" who shared his views in Narbonne (after 1314), saw popular devotion to the holiness of Peter John Olivi as being a result of miracles. They "proclaim the benefits they have received and praise God who performs such mighty acts through the merits of his servants."[36] Olivi's own view of hope, however, would clearly include the partnership between Barnabas and Paul, as two "unworthy" yet exceptional preachers. For Bonaventure, philosophers can lose the stronger reality of faith by claiming a "false sufficiency of merits in the present world."[37] The distinction needs to be considered, if only because it remains relevant to ecumenism, of course, as modern Franciscan commentators have recognised.[38]

Godfrey (as Delhaye explains) was impatient with a growing trend for excessive, speculative nitpicking. It could kill dead a religious narrative, and stifle its salvation language. In doing this, it could also eliminate the core message of hope. We ought to bear this in mind, when we study Bougerol's analysis and presentation. Were some academic texts alien to the thoughts of St. Francis, Br. Leo, Br. Sylvester, Br. Giles and other early friars, or not? Could the religion and destiny language which they contain even have been sometimes likely to suppress awareness of the Son of God as Saviour? The manuscripts he assembled, and has carefully compared, were sometimes schoolroom exercises of very able thinkers, while others derived from earlier stages of their clerical training. Material of this kind was unlikely to evince finer religious use of the talents of an uneven mix of friar candidates. It would not spell out fully the significant understandings achieved and shared by those first companions of Francis. To connect the clerical with the non-clerical voices, we require authentic appreciation of the various versions of human destiny being then regarded as reliable. The full account would have to explore a diversity of outlooks as being defended or disputed

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[35] A. Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi (The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint)*, trans. M. F. Cusato (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012) 97.

[36] D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001) 173.

[37] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Six Days*, VII.12, De Vinck tr., (Paterson, N.J: St. Anthony Guild, 1970) 116.

[38] See G. Iammarone, 'Antropologia teologica di Lutero', *Miscellanea Francescana*, t. 76, 1976, I-IV 68-9: "di spontanea volontà, di cuore, di modo che non pecchi, ma anzi acquisti dei meriti." Augustine's language of willed spontaneity as an aspect of gift and graced merit was important for medieval Franciscans too.

amongst sincere medieval believers. Otherwise, we cannot apply these brief biographical extracts to established life-styles, or use them to characterise some specific communities of Franciscan-led worship, which developed during that period. Nevertheless, this collection of materials really can improve our view of preaching as it engaged with relationships in the thirteenth century. It has done this by ensuring that sufficient attention is paid to the key topic: Christian hope.

The destiny which God the Father made possible for Jesus, once he had him sitting at his right hand, is also a Christian's belief-based destiny: potentially, the destiny of every member of the human race. All of humanity is promised God's saving love. But the attitudes and activities of many members of humanity have made it difficult to suppose that a large number will ever welcome that destiny. Difficulties in this regard have given some Christians reasons to hesitate about the ongoing vitality of God's promises.

Much of what Bougerol explores in these twelfth to thirteenth century manuscripts is concerned with the phrasing and concepts used to overcome that hesitancy. By the end of the twelfth century, argumentative versions of religion were so widespread that the individuals who held strongly to the vigour of divine love, people like Ralph Ardent, stood out as distinctive. Rival psychologies of religious awareness were being acknowledged as far from easy to reconcile with one another. Bougerol has provided us with more evidence of this, with his edition of the *De anima* written by John of La Rochelle. John died in 1245, by which time he had played an important role in shaping the academic language that would be used by well-educated Franciscans. His *De anima* is a comparison of three approaches to the faculties, capabilities and free perceptions of the human mind and soul. One approach is the heterodox Islamic reading of Aristotle's *De anima* produced by Ibn Sina (Avicenna). The second, he took from *De spiritu et anima*, a Cistercian collection of roughly Augustinian notions and doctrines about the layers of human personality. John's third reading of how we view the soul is from similar material, taken from the writings of the Greek Orthodox Christian writer, John Damascene. The resulting compilation is an important reference work for those who want to decide how Christian doctrine can offer lively illuminationist and exemplarist language, as distinct from those who present it mainly in terms of an efficient 'faith and reason' programme. Nevertheless, John of La Rochelle was apt rather to lean to an "efficient causality," in his phrasing of the soul's capabilities (unlike the exemplarism of Robert Grosseteste, Adam Marsh and others).

For modern theological students, lively modes of human and religious interaction will often develop where diverse narratives are free to play off their buried messages against one another. This process cannot be pared

down to choices between neatly analysed propositions. Although Bougerol states his support for definitions, as a feature of religious reflection, these are supplementary to idioms of vitality and vision, which he has also carefully documented. *Narratio* and *spes* are surely, and frequently, just as central, in deepening these profound religious gifts, as *ratio* and *fides*. Any statement about virtues which connect us to Christ we expect to undergo some qualifications and variations of meaning. For among friendly rivals, each mind will blend several disputed or agreed statements into their separate outlooks. Faith and experience readily stir individuals to adopt dissimilar patterns when voicing their hope. The best hermeneutic, for making divergent expressions of faith available for modern readers to evaluate and appreciate, must be one which gives a sufficient compass of distinct voices an opportunity to be heard with respect and understanding. We regard this particular academic survey of texts as a worthwhile labour of love, because it does exactly this.

The relationships between 'pardon' and 'grace' in an individual's life, or in the life of a small community, such as we meet in the first fraternities of St. Francis, are a particularly sensitive area for us to assess theologically. They can reveal resonances in common with the world-view of fourth century monasticism. But they also depart from that world's New Testament approximations. Bougerol signals this compass when he describes the trio of terms – 'hope of pardon', 'hope of grace' and 'hope of glory' – as a trio "worthy of Augustine," yet not actually derived from him directly. Further nuances of hope appear in a gloss on 1 Thess. 3:13 (where hope is "patient"), and in Abelard's matching up of hope and "expectation" whereby the reader's "preoccupations" must incur adaptation, to consider how faith is "personalised" within accounts of hope. Augustine's narratives of Christian conversion can thus be framed in modified language about past, present and future. We should bear this in mind where medieval idioms are taken up, to fit together theology from late antiquity (such as Augustine's challenge to Pelagians) with readings of the personality of St. Francis, and communal conversion perspectives offered by his biographers. It is clear that Bonaventure wanted the friars who followed St. Francis to be regarded as non-Pelagian, and in tune with Augustine. St. Francis had described himself as the greatest of sinners, just as Augustine would wish. The first *Life of St. Francis*, written by Thomas of Celano (in 1229), aimed to uphold this view, depicting him as greatly in need of pardon, when his life-long conversion had to get underway. However, Thomas of Celano's second telling of St. Francis' life of faith, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, written c. 1245-7, directed the readers' thoughts to treat Francis' saintly ideals as his primary concern. Grace takes over from pardon as the guiding principle of

the narration. Yet self-accusations by St. Francis are still recorded, in which he names and regrets his failings of "hypocrisy" and "vainglory." Forgiveness, and changes of heart thus remained aspects of what his contemporaries (whether in his community or among the public at large) were asked to take most seriously.

What makes this later Celano narrative feel different, however, is its greater caution about possible resentment from higher clergy, or its desire to help a poor man to escape from feelings of hatred towards a secular lord.[39] Pardon appears then as a feature within social structures, at the same time as being a life-changing reality that would only enkindle directly from God. Thus it is appropriate to ask: is the picture we gain of ideals that can smooth away social clashes less authentic than a rough battle for the integrity of a new community against all the unfavourable odds (as seen in the *First Life*)? Did Thomas of Celano let go of the existential theology he had learned from St. Francis, and replace it with a more ecclesiastical mentality, which his later brothers felt they should develop, twenty years on? Also, how much was lost when ideals of wise piety were what set the tone, rather than risky integrity? Celano had already, in his first *Life*, however, shown some support for the idealised gospel. He wrote of the "steadfastness" of the mind of Francis. "More than anything else he desired to be set free and to be with Christ," words from Phil. 1:23.[40] Then we are told, "Thus his chief object of concern was to live set free from all things that are in the world, so that his inner serenity would not be disturbed even for a moment by contact with any of its dust," in order to "empty himself for God alone." What we are reading here is a blend of early Christian Stoicism with guidance from both St. Paul and some ascetical language, familiar to all of the Catholic traditions of religious community life, from the fourth century onwards. What still mattered, nevertheless, was not to claim a role that will displace God.

When St. Bonaventure came to write a version of the mental dynamism of St. Francis, which we call the *Major Life*, he had read both of the texts from Thomas of Celano, some more disparate materials such as the *Assisi Compilation*, and also the community formation materials produced by friars central to Parisian scholasticism, Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle (in their joint *Summa Theologica*). Both of these were known to him personally. He accepted that Alexander and John did their theology in a manner which they claimed to see as Augustinian, in its main characteristics. The relationships between "pardon" and "grace" in their

[39] Thomas of Celano, *Remembrance*, ch. LVI, FA:ED II 305.
[40] Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, Bk I, ch. XXVII, FA:ED I 243.

large *Summa* do owe quite a lot to fourth century readings of "faith, hope and love" (extending what was presented in 1 Cor. 13), as the truly Christian mindset for deeper self-awareness, for paths of conversion. But as Bougerol enables us to see, this "image of God" psychology had passed through the hands of a medley of theological writers since the days of Augustine. It would be fair to ask Bonaventure, if we could, what reappraisal of the Pelagian problem, so important to Augustine, could still remain, in contexts of variable social ambiguity, which blocked the faith of Christians in the mid-thirteenth century. Pelagians were governing class idealists involved in an "austere, reforming [crisis of piety]."[41] But their piety was tied into "the professional duty of a ruling class committed to maintaining the Imperial laws by administering brutal punishments," as if these were the laws of God. A weak theological factor was that Pelagius "never doubted for a moment that obedience was obligatory," and could even be "perfect" obedience. That was his "ideal" but it was not the teaching of Christ, and Augustine made that clear. It would therefore be important again in the thirteenth century to criticise excessive confidence in uses of the theme of "perfection". This became more difficult to cope with, because the Islamic Aristotelian morality of Avicenna pushed a concept of perfection into the argumentation of the Scholastics. Self-definition and self-control were both features of the medieval training establishments in law, logic and medicine. Albertus Magnus thought it was worthwhile seeking out "the perfect philosopher."[42] But Bonaventure advises masters to "beware… not to appreciate too highly the sayings of the philosophers," who present a false search for perfection.

Augustine was warning Christians about the young men of good families, who went to Rome to "make their careers as lawyers in the Imperial bureaucracy." Bonaventure's retort, whenever he saw how institutional machinery was taking over, is taken from Augustine's *Confessions* Bk X, in the tender prayer to God, "Command what you will, but give what you command." Grace is always a benign guiding light, for those concerned with sharing helpful instructions in multiple situations. St. Francis' desire for his friars to avoid being grabbed by hierarchical clerics and appointed as bishops was at least partly a valid wariness about an increasing social addiction to privilege and the language of merit. Franciscan theology could try to curtail this, by speaking of the merits of our faith or hope in Christ. This was a reality characterised in terms of enduring hardship and rejection, out of love for the poorer and the weak

[41] P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, (London: Faber, 1967) 348, 346-7, 342. See also his article in *Passatopresente*.
[42] B. B. Price, *Medieval Thought, an Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 86, 90-91.

members of society. Institutional learning might too easily lose sight of this dimension of life, unless it was ready to trim back the vocabulary of idealism from the philosophers, and would prefer New Testament terminology about witness and compassion. Narratives of everyday forgiveness and pardon needed to be brought to the fore, so that graces and gifts of interrelatedness in the Body of Christ will always reappear. Franciscan accounts of affective tensions, which enhance openness to the Lord Jesus, adhered more to spiritual issues than to philosophy. Community builders had to retain aspects of ongoing sensitivity, as a never quite completed process of rediscovering hope. Among modern scholars of gospel language, it is not perfectionism which provides a measure of good scholarship. There is more to be gained from considering vocabulary about changes of heart, given by the Spirit of God. Behind the familiar terminology of covenant and pardon, fruitful mercy and ultimate reality, encounters with God and with our neighbours have to be pictured, as the bedrock activity of community members who use these words. The beauty of loving friendships is to be unearthed, revived, and discovered by those around us, and celebrated in joyful worship. And any mission that takes place through the energies of the Spirit will readily share these benefits amongst marginalised members of society. This is how a forgiving faith, one that urges us to seek God's heavenly kingdom, can flower and become fruitful.

In looking at the Franciscan training texts, as we do here, we can also awaken a therapeutic psychology, formulated in terms of both inner openness to the Spirit's gifts, and of the liveliness of those gifts, when activated through preaching the New Testament message. 'Forgiveness' is not just an approved doctrinal terminology. It has to have a dynamic background of experience, alive in the hearts of any preachers who pay close attention to the writings collected together to form the New Testament. This dynamic memory of experience can also be detected in the writings that St. Francis himself dictated to his loyal followers such as Brother Leo. In these he let the early missionary preacher membership of his fraternity recognise how deeply he loved the New Testament itself, and the imagined and worshipped presence of Jesus Christ. This spoke to him whenever his communities prayed and proclaimed the kingdom of love.

Modern theologians have observed ecumenism undergoing changes of focus, in the range of agreed or disputed vocabulary between biblically acute Catholics and Protestants. The development of new Church patterns of preaching and worship has altered what can creatively be treated as a shared search for unity, in the language of faith, hope and love. An important assessment by Simeon Zahl in recent years (in 2018) aimed at

"revisiting the nature of Protestantism."[43] He observes that the doctrine of justification by faith has had to be examined not just for its "exegetical or philosophical plausibility" but for its fundamental trust in religious experience. Any arguments about what will "foster specific affective effects," such as consolation able to calm fears, or offer joy, as awakening some pastoral and psychological realism, have always attracted Protestant writers independently of biblical causality. But they have also been important to Catholic writers, both through spirituality and as exegesis, wherever Augustinian uses of the three terms – faith, hope and love – have been felt to provide a dynamic. This is obviously relevant to Franciscan theology, be it in hagiographical texts from Celano, or in homilies by a St. Anthony of Padua, or in the mixed modes composed for different purposes by Bonaventure.

Zahl is conscious that today "a great many Protestants are highly critical of sola fide," when a "critique of externals is simply too stark to endure for long [alongside] the realities of our irreducibly material and embodied lives as creatures in the world." But he adds that there is "a kernel of truth" in seeing Protestant suspicions of "external instruments of authority or grace" as typical of any Protestant "attempt to build up a theological framework" for salvation. The notion of "abolishing all outward pomp and circumstance" (as Zwingli put it) has had honest Catholic counterparts from Franciscan preachers and lecturers.[44] It is relevant, therefore, when Zahl states that "much of the most exciting work in Protestant soteriology," in recent years, has aimed to recover "categories of participation and *theosis*." He names Kathryn Tanner, T. F. Torrance and Paul Fiddes as leading the way here. Alongside Tanner's critique of any teaching that neglects participation, attention must be paid the to Pentecostal theologians such as Frank Macchia and Clark Pinnock, who dislike traditional protestant models which are "based on bare assent to propositions." It was not unheard of, likewise, in Catholic uses of catechisms in the past, to operate on this faulty basis for urging uniformity of doctrine.

Zahl points to ways in which "global Protestantism has been transformed by the astonishing success of Pentecostal and charismatic forms of Christianity [which tend to be quite unapologetically Arminian], highly optimistic about sanctification, and largely uninterested in classical Protestant theologies of justification." Since Paul's language of faith and justification made a large contribution to medieval, scholastic commentaries on achieving a wholehearted conversion, when praising the mystery of the

[43] S. Zahl, "Revisiting 'the Nature of Protestantism': Justification by Faith Five Hundred Years on," in *New Black friars*, vol. 99 (March 2018) 141, 140, 145, 142.
[44] Ibid., 143, 133, 134.

resurrection, we should take care to notice how much of the *metanoia* language in modern exegesis can still play a large part in ecumenism, from both Catholic and Protestant perspectives. This "change of heart" ideal is about learning fully from the justice and mercy of Christ, in any individual's awakening of compassion and love.

There have also been some Catholic responses to such potential insights within the psychological factors - an openness to hope which recognises the connectedness (through these) to the mission of the Holy Spirit. The writers we have reviewed in this neglected area of scholastic writing, such as Raoul the Ardent, can be treated as precursors to modern language about the action of the Spirit. Augustine's version of what St. Paul wrote about faith, hope and love is well-known as his handbook or *Enchiridion*. This contains a diverse language of transitions, between those three personality-shaping "theological virtues," the "gifts of the Spirit" and also the "fruits" of a life lived in celebration of the power of Christ. Jean Daniélou explored in some detail the thinking of the New Testament churches on this. "The Word of God has poured the Spirit into the Church; in other words, the Spirit has not been communicated strictly individually. He is given to the Church; he is confided to the apostles so that they can communicate him. The order God has ordained is such that the Spirit communicates himself first to a group of people, and then, through them, to the following groups. It is thus through us that the Spirit communicates himself to others. But in order for the Spirit to pass through us, we must first be open to him; we must be docile; we must allow him to instruct us: 'Only the Spirit of God sounds the depths of God' (1 Cor. 2:10)."[45] We meet here the dynamism of deepening openness, of becoming more fully rooted in Christ. It involves acquiring capabilities of discernment, and alertness to one another. This is, incidentally, what makes the movement for developing a synodality outlook valuable and meaningful.

None of us knows automatically what makes the insights of the New Testament significant to the people singing and praising God alongside us. The listening which is essential for those on a 'journey of faith' catechesis pathway, learning a new language of resurrection and compassion, is also that whereby long-term church-goers have to be awakened to life in the Spirit. Christian commitment to good listening is always a matter of patience and perseverance. The medieval users of the multiple interpretations of the gospels in Augustine's works set out to fill their memories and imaginations with such trains of thought, the mental

[45] J. Daniélou, *Prayer (The Mission of the Church)*, D. L. Schindler Jr., tr., (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996) 121.