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According to St. Bonaventure – Towards a New
Reading of The Seraphic Doctor’s Thought on Faith
and Reason*

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**A Beautiful Mind:
The Knowledge of Christ According to St.
Bonaventure – Towards a New Reading of The
Seraphic Doctor’s Thought on Faith and Reason**

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Durham University

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Abstract

'I study only the crucified one'.

- St. Bonaventure's supposed response to St. Thomas Aquinas when asked: "Whence comes thy most excellent knowledge Brother Bonaventure?"

Whilst lost to the Latin West since the end of the Patristic era, the full reintroduction of peripatetic philosophy – more commonly known as “Aristotelianism” – into Christian Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries fundamentally challenged and reshaped the medieval interpretation of the relationship between faith and reason. The subject of much debate, the place of St. Bonaventure – the “Seraphic Doctor” – within the narrative of Aristotelianism’s assimilation into the Latin West, and his attitude towards philosophy and natural reason in general, has divided scholarly opinion for nearly a century. Where for some, Bonaventure is an ardent critic of Aristotle who rejects peripatetic philosophy from his very first contact with it; for others, by contrast, he is a respectful – though not uncritical – pupil of the Greek philosopher. Having generated significant disagreement amongst some of the most eminent Bonaventurian scholars – including Étienne Gilson, Fernand Van Steenberghen and Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI – contemporary scholarship has failed to reach a consensus as to the Seraphic Doctor’s attitude towards Aristotelianism and philosophy. Subsequently, a notable amount of confusion has also arisen as to what constitutes an authentically “Bonaventurian” reading of the relationship between faith and reason; indeed, it is sometimes asked if such a thing exists at all. By using Bonaventure’s much neglected writings on Christ’s knowledge as an interpretative tool for his statements on Aristotelianism and philosophy, this study seeks to offer the basis for a fresh interpretation of the Seraphic Doctor’s thought on faith and reason; one which explains both the subtleties and apparent

contradictions at work within his attitude towards peripatetic philosophy, whilst identifying the driving force behind the anti-Aristotelian narrative which develops throughout his works.

Key Words: Bonaventure, Christ's knowledge, Aristotle, Faith and Reason, Theology, Philosophy, Soul, Hierarchy of Knowledge, Salvation History, Apocalypse, Anti-Christ, Étienne Gilson, Fernand Van Steenberghen, Joseph Ratzinger/Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI.

Acknowledgements

*'All men by nature desire to know'.
- Aristotle, De Metaphysica.*

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Finally, one last thing remains to be said, and it pertains to the most important truth which I have learned during my PhD. Any serious piece of academic writing, either in the sciences or the humanities, begins with humility and the patient listening to the wisdom of others. This is particularly true in medieval theology, and indeed historical theology in general. This is so, because it involves discerning the voices of saints and scholars who are long dead, many of whom have all but slipped into oblivion in terms of what we know about their lives, behavior, and personalities. All that remains of them – and this is particularly true of St. Bonaventure – are their academic and pastoral works. During my PhD I have tried to engage with St. Bonaventure’s thought as deeply and as carefully as I could. It is hoped that I have listened carefully enough to the great Franciscan Doctor and I ask forgiveness from those more learned in his thought than I – and indeed from the saint himself – should I have misrepresented or misinterpreted his thought in any way. It goes without saying that any mistakes in this thesis are wholly my own and I take full responsibility for them.

Sanctus Bonaventura ora pro me.

William E. A. Crozier.

Durham University Theology Department.

15th July 2020 (Feast of St. Bonaventure).

**The dedication of this thesis is split three ways
to the trinity which has made me, known me, and loved me:**

To my Mum:

Margaret Ellen Crozier

(1954 -)

To my Dad:

William Lawson Crozier

(1947 -)

And finally

to my Nana:

Margaret Ellen Smith

(1911-2011)

‘The Ancient of Days’

(Antiquus Dierum)

Daniel 7:9

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‘And the LORD God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die’.

Genesis 2: 9-10, 16-7.

“But now tell me”, William was saying, “Why? Why do you want to shield this book more than so many others?”

“Because it is by the Philosopher [*i.e. Aristotle*]! Every book by that man has destroyed a part of the learning that Christianity had accumulated over the centuries. The fathers had said everything that needed to be known about the power of the Word, but then Boethius had only to gloss the Philosopher and the divine mystery of the Word was transformed into a human parody of categories and syllogisms. The book of Genesis says what has to be known about the composition of the cosmos, but it sufficed to rediscover the *Physics* of the Philosopher to have the universe reconceived in terms of dull and slimy matter, and the Arab, Averroes, almost convinced everyone of the eternity of the world. We knew everything about the divine names, and the Dominican [*i.e. Thomas Aquinas*] buried by Abo – seduced by the Philosopher – renamed them, following the proud paths of natural reason. And so the cosmos, which for the Areopagite revealed itself to those who knew how to look up at the luminous cascade of the exemplary first cause, has become a preserve of terrestrial evidence for which they refer to an abstract agent. Before, we used to look to heaven, deigning only a frowning glance at the mire of matter; now we look at the earth, and we believe in the heavens because of the earthly testimony. Every word of the Philosopher, by whom now even saints and prophets swear, has overturned the image of the world.

Dialogue between William of Baskerville and the Venerable Jorge of Borgos.

Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, p. 473.



St. Thomas Aquinas:

“Brother Bonaventure, where does your most excellent knowledge come from?”

St. Bonaventure:

“I study only the crucified one”.

Chapter I

Introduction:

Bonaventure and the Problem of Philosophy.

‘When I was a student, I heard that Aristotle taught that the world was eternal. And when I heard the reasons and arguments which were given to prove this, my heart began to be disturbed and I began to think, how can this be?’

- Bonaventure, *Collationes de Decem Praeceptis*, coll. 2, n. 28.

1.0) *The Seraphic Doctor: Life and Works.*

Cardinal, mystic, theologian and saint, the thought of John Fidanza – St. Bonaventure – remains one of the most studied, yet debated topics within contemporary medieval studies.¹ Born in 1217² in the small town of Bagnoregio, near Viterbo, Italy, Bonaventure was the son of a doctor, who – after being miraculously healed as a child by the intercession of St. Francis – entered the Franciscan Order in 1243, whereupon he took the name ‘Bonaventure’ (*bona*

¹ That this is so is confirmed by the wealth of new literature published on Bonaventure’s thought in recent years. Of particular note include: Berhard Pauleikhoff’s *Bonaventura und unsere Zeit: zum Menschenbild im Mittelalter* (Hürtgenwald: Pressler, 2006); Illia Delio’s *Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought and Writings* (New York: New City Press, 2013); Jay M. Hammond, Wayne Hellmann and Jared Goff (eds.) *A Companion to Bonaventure* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). Recent PhD theses to emerge on Bonaventure’s thought include: Jared Goff “‘Caritas in Primo’: A Historical Theological Analysis of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio’s *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Ss. Trinitatis*” (PhD Thesis, Saint Louis University, 2013) and Rachel Davies, ‘Yearning in the Dust: Bodily Aesthetics in the Soteriology of St. Bonaventure’, (PhD Thesis, Durham, 2016). Also bearing witness to the continued interest in Bonaventure’s thought are the various English translations of his works which have steadily emerged over the last few decades, particularly from the Franciscan Institute Publications series.

² Whilst most contemporary scholars date Bonaventure’s birth to 1217, earlier scholars tended to prefer 1221 as the year of the saint’s birth; cf. *S. Bonaventurae Opera Theologica Selecta*, vol. 1 (Florence: Quaracchi, 1934), p. vii.

fortuna)— meaning ‘good fortune’. Shortly after taking the Minorite habit, the young Franciscan began his theological education at the newly founded University of Paris, having already completed eight years as a student in the University’s Arts Faculty.³

As a direct contemporary of St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) and St. Albert the Great (c. 1200–1280), Bonaventure – although perhaps best known today as mystic, rather than a theologian and philosopher – is rightly considered one of the intellectual giants of the thirteenth-century. Alongside his Franciscan mentors Alexander of Hales (c. 1190–1245), John of La Rochelle (c. 1200–1245), and Odo Rigaldus (c. 1200–1275), as well as less well known Minorite scholars such as Richard Rufus of Cornwall (d. 1260) and Walter of Bruges (c. 1227–1307/8), his thought represents the pinnacle of the early Franciscan intellectual tradition; second only in terms of influence during the Middle Ages to that of his later Franciscan successors John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1288–1347).

However, despite being one of the most prolific and influential theologians of his day, like most of his contemporaries, very little – apart from that which can be gleaned from his writings and the fragmentary historical record – is known of Bonaventure’s life and person. Unlike Aquinas, no near contemporary account of his life has survived.⁴ Nonetheless all known references to the saint, including those by his critics – most notably Angelo Clareno (c. 1247–1337) – speak highly of Bonaventure, praising him for both his sanctity and generosity of spirit, as well as his firm devotion to the Franciscan cause.⁵ Famously, Alexander of Hales,

³ Cf. John Francis Quinn’s ‘The Chronology of St. Bonaventure’ *Franciscan Studies* (1972) 32, pp. 168-86. See also *Intro.*, p. 204, n. 23.

⁴ A life written by Zamorra has been lost for centuries.

⁵ Cf. Angelo Clareno, *Historia Septem Tribulationum Ordinis Minorum* translated in David Burr & Randolph Daniel (eds.) *A Chronical or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor* (New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), pp. 109-23.

Bonaventure's teacher, declared that when he looked upon the young Bonaventure he could easily have believed that Adam had not sinned on account of his simplicity and innocence.⁶

Despite the uncertainty as to the precise narrative of Bonaventure's life, several dates can be stated with relative accuracy. After completing his doctoral studies at Paris (c. 1250–1252) under William of Middleton (c. 1200–1257), Bonaventure occupied the Franciscan chair of theology at the University, only being formally recognized – at least according to the traditional scholarly narrative – as a *magister*, alongside Aquinas, by his University colleagues in 1256 after papal intervention.⁷ Shortly afterwards in 1257 he succeeded John of Parma (c. 1209–1289) as Minister General of the Franciscan Order, a position he occupied until a few months before his death almost two decades later in 1274. As Minister General, Bonaventure's first task was to preside over the trial of John of Parma, who had been forced to resign over charges of Joachism and to restore harmony to the already troubled Franciscan Order.

During the following years, whilst traveling barefoot across much of Europe to attend various provincial and general chapter meetings, Bonaventure made a pilgrimage to Mount La Verna in 1259 to mark the thirty-third anniversary of St. Francis' reception of the stigmata, whereupon he composed his famous *Itinerarium Mentis In Deum*. In 1267, at the request of the College of Cardinals, Bonaventure made his way to Viterbo, where he played an instrumental role in resolving the extended conclave to succeed Clement IV (c. 1200–1268) by suggesting the election of Teobaldo Visconti (c. 1210–1270) to the papacy, who was to take the name of Gregory X.

Finally, whilst Bonaventure was delivering his last major lecture series in Paris, his much celebrated *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, he was raised to the Cardinalate on May 28th

⁶Cf. Bernard of Bressa, *Chronicon XIV vel VX Generalium Ministrorum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* Analecta Franciscana, (3), 1903, pp. 693-707.

⁷ Bonaventure's inception as Franciscan Master needs to be re-evaluated in light of recent research which dates it to 1254. Cf. Jay Hammond, 'Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master' *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009), pp. 179-226.

1273 – having already refused nomination as Archbishop of York in 1265 – and was made Bishop of Albano in November of the same year. He died suddenly a few months later on July 15th 1274 whilst attending the Second Council of Lyon after having played an instrumental role in securing the short-lived reconciliation between the Western and Eastern churches.⁸ After a requiem mass at which his Dominican confrère Peter of Tarantaise (c. 1225–1276), later Pope Innocent V, preached the eulogy, the cardinal was buried on the same day as his death in the Franciscan church at Lyon in the presence of Pope Gregory X and the Council fathers.⁹ In 1432 Bonaventure was canonized by Sixtus IV and in 1588 he was declared a Doctor of the Church by Sixtus V, being awarded the title of *Doctor Seraphicus* – the ‘Seraphic Doctor’.

Filling ten large volumes within the definitive Quaracchi edition of his *Opera Omnia*, Bonaventure’s literary corpus, as it has come down to us, extends from his earliest writings as a student in Paris – his biblical commentaries, namely his *Commentarius in Evangelium Lucae* (c. 1248) and *Commentarius in Evangelium Ioannis* (c. 1254) – to his final and most magisterial work: the much later *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. The question of whether there exist other authentic Bonaventurian texts – primarily *quaestiones disputatae* – not included in the Quaracchi edition has divided opinion for nearly a century. Some of the implications of this will be discussed later in this chapter as well as chapter six.

Corresponding to the two main periods of his life, Bonaventure’s writings are commonly divided into two groups: his *magisterial*, i.e. academic, works which were produced as a student and lecturer at Paris; and his *post-magisterial* works composed whilst he was leader of the Franciscan Order. Amongst his early academic works, of particular note are his *Commentary on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard – his *Commentaria in Quator Libros Sententiarum* (c. 1250–1252) – his *De Reductio Artium ad Theologiam* (c. 1254), and his three

⁸ Bonvaneture’s secretary Peregrinus of Bologna claimed that the saint had in fact been murdered.

⁹ Cf. *1 Sent.*, praefatio generalis, p. X.

edited sets of disputed questions: the *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi* (c. 1254–1255), *Quaestiones Disputatae de Mystero Trinitatis* (c. 1255), and *Quaestiones Disputatae de Perfectione Evangelica* (c. 1256). Composed shortly after his election as Minister General, Bonaventure's final work as a university *magister* was his famous *Breviloquium* (c. 1257) in which he sought to offer a concise systematic account of the key areas of Christian doctrine.

Differing in style and tone, amongst his post magisterial works his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (c. 1259), *Collationes de Decem Praeceptis* (c. 1267), *Collationes de Septem Donis Spiritus Sancti* (c. 1268), and, finally, *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (c. 1273) stand out as of particular note. Although varying significantly, all of the above works, both *magisterial* and *post-magisterial*, are central to grasping Bonaventure's theological and philosophical vision and must therefore form the basis of any attempt to comprehend his system.

1.1) *Christ and Philosophy: Seeing the Problem.*

In recent decades many issues have arisen within Bonaventurian studies. Many of these have fallen in and out of vogue. However, some have persisted in terms of the degree of attention and academic controversy which they have inspired. This study examines one such area.

1.1.0) *Bonaventure and the Problem of Fides and Ratio.*

This thesis takes as its point of departure the much-disputed subject of St. Bonaventure's thought on the relationship between faith and reason. It focuses upon the contentious question of whether the Seraphic Doctor offers a coherent account of the relationship between revelation and reason, and whether, in turn, he can be said to respect the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders of human cognition. Of particular importance in this respect is the thorny issue of whether Bonaventure's thought, like that of say Thomas Aquinas or Albert the Great, contains a genuine philosophy; and if so, whether it can be considered independent of

his theology? A subject studied at length by many eminent Bonaventurian scholars of the last century, including figures such as Étienne Gilson, Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Fernand Van Steenberghen, the question of Bonaventure's attitude towards philosophy has led to great confusion surrounding his thought on the relationship between faith and reason as well as his views on the value of the natural light of human intelligence.

As even a cursory glance at Bonaventure's writings reveals, particularly those dating from his later years, there are times when the Seraphic Doctor offers a scathing critique of natural philosophy, openly attacking those who, in his opinion, mistakenly stress the autonomy of philosophical enquiry and thereby allow it to pronounce on issues which theology alone is equipped to address.¹⁰ The primacy of revelation over natural reason, he argues, means that the former, and not the latter, provides the surest foundations upon which we can evaluate the natural order. Curiously, however, there are other times when Bonaventure, seeking to distinguish meticulously philosophy from theology, claims that philosophy, like all the lower disciplines of the liberal arts, possesses its own unique tools of enquiry and is therefore a field of enquiry distinct from the data of faith.¹¹ In the eyes of many what this paradoxical situation reveals is that at the heart of Bonaventure's thought, like that of several of his disciples, is a profound confusion and contradiction concerning the relationship between *fides* and *ratio*, especially with regards to the nature and purpose of philosophical enquiry.

According to some, driven by a skepticism about the capabilities of our natural intelligence *post lapsum*, and wholly resistant to the idea of a distinct sphere of philosophical enquiry, Bonaventure stresses the poverty of natural reason to such an extent that he ends up subsuming it under the *lumen revelationis*, thereby dissolving the distinction which he proposes between the natural and supernatural orders of human cognition. The result, or so it is argued,

¹⁰ Cf. the scathing critique of Aristotelianism in *Hex.*, coll. 6-7 (V, pp. 360-68).

¹¹ Cf. *De Septem. Donis*, coll. 4 (V, pp. 473-79).

is that he – like later Franciscans – unwittingly helped to promote a complete severance between philosophy and theology, even though his ambition was quite the opposite. As Van Nieuwenhove puts it, ‘if confidence in reason dissolves there will be a tendency to subsume reason to faith’ which, in turn, ‘leads to a gradual separation of faith and reason, theology and philosophy’.¹² From this perspective, Bonaventure thus pays only lip service to notion of a distinct sphere of knowledge based on reason and creation alone. Instead, he offers us something akin to a pseudo-philosophy; that is to say, a theology dressed in the disguise of a philosophy. The result is a dangerous synthesis of *ratio* and *revelatio*; one which births a truly secular reason by driving unaided human intelligence outside of the fold of Christian wisdom.¹³

1.1.1) Ratio in Lumine Christi: Bonaventure, Christ, and the Riddle of Natural Reason.

Fundamental to understanding the confusion surrounding Bonaventure’s thought on *fides* and *ratio* is the centrality which he attributes to the person of Christ. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of Bonaventure’s evaluation of natural reason is his claim that Christ stands as much at the center of our natural light of intelligence – and by extension the center of philosophy – as he does at the center of faith and the revealed truths of grace. Christ, Bonaventure unashamedly tells us, is *the* ‘fontal principle’ of all cognitive illumination, be it by nature or by grace.¹⁴ As such, all certainty, both in terms of the *habitus fidei* and what we can discover through natural reason is derived from Christ. For he – and he *alone* – is the center and origin of all truth, both theological and philosophical.¹⁵ ‘It follows therefore that nothing can render things perfectly

¹² *ITM.*, p. 228.

¹³ Cf. the discussion of Radical Orthodoxy in chapter 6, *infra*.

¹⁴ *Christ*, p. 152.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

knowable unless Christ is present, the Son of God and the teacher'.¹⁶ As such, to succeed in any of the sciences, and not just in theology, it is necessary to acknowledge, confess, and even begin with Christ, for '*ipse est medium omnium scientiarum*'.¹⁷

Perhaps more so than anything else, it is this conviction that Christology underpins and determines the scope and legitimacy of natural reason, and in turn that of philosophy, which has generated criticism of the integrity of Bonaventure's thought concerning human *ratio*. If Christ is the center not just of the truths of revelation and faith, but also of the innate light of human intelligence then is not the integrity of natural reason, and thereby by extension the integrity of the various "secular" sciences (philosophy, mathematics, music, etc.), jeopardized? Does not the belief that *ratio* can only succeed *in lumine Christi*, suggest that within the Bonaventurian synthesis natural reason does not function according to the standards of nature, but instead is confused with the *habitus fidei*? Is Bonaventure, in short, guilty of eviscerating natural reason of any natural object? Regardless of how one approaches the issue, what is clear is that the person of Christ is central to resolving these questions and indeed the broader riddle of Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason. To understand the Bonaventurian synthesis of *revelatio* and *ratio* we must therefore look to his Christology for an answer; and it is exactly this which this study proposes to do.

1.1.2) The Importance of Addressing the Questions Surrounding Bonaventure's Thought on Faith and Reason.

As even a cursory glance at the available secondary literature reveals, the reasons why a much clearer grasp of Bonaventure's thought on the relationship between faith and reason is needed are manifold and obvious. Not only is the absence of such clarity highly damaging to the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.155.

¹⁷ *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 11, (V, p. 331).

reputation of Bonaventure's thought – for many it suggests that Bonaventure's thinking lacks any integral systematic unity and offers no scope for true philosophical dialogue – but unsurprisingly it also hinders the efforts of those who do seek to study Bonaventure's thought, in particular his place within the broader thirteenth-century theological and philosophical narrative. As we will see, the persistent confusion surrounding Bonaventure's evaluation of *ratio* and *philosophia* has led to a great deal of confusion concerning his relationship to the thought of figures like Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great. For some Bonaventure is a forerunner of the philosophical revolution instigated by Albert and Aquinas, whilst for others he is its most hostile critic and the architect of its near condemnation.

1.1.3) Christus Unus Omnium Magister: The Logic of This Thesis.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to resolve fully the debate surrounding Bonaventure's theology of faith and reason, or indeed to properly address some of the very difficult issues just touched upon, it nonetheless seeks to offer the preliminary outline of a fresh approach towards this aspect of his thought. In particular, it seeks to offer a credible basis upon which it is possible to begin to clarify some of the more controversial questions and points of debate surrounding Bonaventure's stance on philosophy and unaided natural reason. Taking its lead from the title of Bonaventure's most famous Christological sermon, '*Christ is the one Teacher of All*' (c. 1254), it argues that the key to understanding the Seraphic Doctor's thought on the relationship between *fides* and *ratio*, and thereby the key to resolving some of the debates which surround it, is his much neglected doctrine of Christ's human noetic. To illustrate how this is so, the thesis focuses upon one key aspect of Bonaventure's critical evaluation of natural reason – namely, his well-known polemic against Aristotelianism and unaided *philosophia* – and uses his writings on Christ's noetic as an interpretative tool for this critique.

The thesis focuses upon how Bonaventure uses his interpretation of Christ's experiential knowledge – specifically, his conviction that Christ could not learn through sense experience and the abstraction of intelligible species – to frame his evaluation of the role and significance of natural reason in the study of creation. It argues that for Bonaventure, Aristotelianism, like all unaided philosophy, be it pagan or nominally Christian, is to be viewed as a doctrine condemned. The reason for this is that it is unknown to Christ on account of his inability to learn through sense experience. Central to understanding Bonaventure's logic here is his belief that there exists a deep causal relationship between Christ's noetic and that of ordinary human cognition. Endowed with the fullness of all finite knowledge, Christ's soul, Bonaventure tells us, is the “archetype” and “exemplary cause” of all creaturely cognition. It serves to define the scope and limits of ordinary human cognition, both at the level of faith and at the level of reason. As such, what is alien to Christ's mind must, by the logic of formal causality, be alien to the natural order of human intelligence, and therefore must be shunned.

As we will see, the abstraction of intelligible species and the use of sensory experience to acquire knowledge are exactly those which Aristotelianism employs as its epistemological foundations.¹⁸ In Bonaventure's opinion, therefore, Aristotelianism – like all unaided philosophies – falls outside the legitimate schema of human intelligence defined by the *mens Christi*. As such, it is to be rejected, or at the very least treated with extreme caution, especially by those who wish to conform themselves to Christ. Central to understanding why this “illegitimate” mode of cognition has arisen is the fall. As we will see, Aristotelianism, philosophy, and indeed the very ability to learn through sensory experience, are, in Bonaventure's opinion, products of our proto-parents' first sin, specifically the loss of the perfect Christ-like noetic which humanity once enjoyed in Eden. They are the fruit of the ‘*lignum scientiae boni et mali*’ (Gen 2:17) which arose as a result the ignorance bestowed upon

¹⁸ *Infra*.

humanity for breaking God's original commandment: '*ex omni ligno paradisi comede; de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali ne comedas; in quoquumque enim die comederis ex eo, morte morieris*'. (Gen 2: 16-17). To this extent, they are alien to humanity's original noetic state and therefore represent un-natural, highly illicit modes of cognition; ones alien to the *verus ordo scientiae*. Moreover, as we will see in chapter five they possess a deeply eschatological nature.

But if we stoop (*declinamus*) to a knowledge of things acquired by experimenting them (*ad notitiam in experientiae*), investigating beyond what is conceded to us, we fall from true contemplation and taste of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as Lucifer did (*sicut fecit Lucifer*).¹⁹

1.2) *The Structure of this Introductory Chapter.*

As the foundational element of this study, the purpose of the present section is to outline the aims, context, and argument of this thesis, as well its underlying methodology and the various questions which it seeks to address. To achieve this goal, the chapter moves through three steps. **(1)** First, the complex and multifaceted nature of the modern debate concerning Bonaventure's attitude towards Aristotelianism and philosophy is outlined, paying attention to his comparative neglect in modern theology, and, more importantly, the various factors which have prohibited contemporary scholarship from reaching a satisfactory explanation of Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason. **(2)** Next, consideration is given to how Aristotelianism became established as the dominant philosophical influence within the Latin West during the thirteenth-century, and how the significant challenge it posed to theology – particularly with regards to the doctrine of Christ's knowledge – formed the background to much of Bonaventure's intellectual

¹⁹ *Collations*, coll. 1, n. 17, p. 9; cf. *Hex.* (V, p. 332).

development. (3) Finally, through an overview of the existing scholarly literature, the chapter explains how this study is able to advance the basis for a fresh interpretation of Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason by using his thought on Christ's knowledge to interpret his views on Aristotelianism and philosophy.

Section 1

1.3) *A Much-Neglected Thinker: Bonaventure and the Narrative of Modern Systematic Theology.*

As one of the most influential thinkers of his day, Bonaventure's theology has received official endorsement over the centuries from popes, saints, and official church pronouncements.²⁰ Similarly, it has shaped – and in many respects critically determined – the thought of many key twentieth-century Catholic thinkers; for example, Karl Rahner,²¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar,²² and Joseph Ratzinger.²³ A strong Bonaventurian influence is also be found in the thought of

²⁰ Through figures like Ratzinger, Bonaventure's thought deeply influenced Vatican II's document on revelation, *Dei Verbum*. Cf. Brian Daley, 'Knowing God in History and in the Church: *Dei Verbum* and 'Nouvelle Theologie' in Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (eds.) *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 333–54.

²¹ Bonaventure's influence on Rahner is particularly evident in the latter's 'The Doctrine of the "Spiritual Senses" in the Middle Ages: The Contribution of Bonaventure' in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 16, trans. David Morland (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979), pp. 104-34.

²² See the extended discussion of Bonaventure's thought in Von Balthasar's *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2 *Clerical Styles*, trans. John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), pp. 260-352.

²³ Cf. *History*. For a discussion of the Bonaventurian influences on Ratzinger's thought, see Lewis Ayres, Patricia Kelly, and Thomas Humpries 'Benedict XVI: A Ressourcement Theologian?' in Flynn and Murray (eds.) *Ressourcement*, pp. 423-39. Other texts of Ratzinger's which demonstrate a distinctly Bonaventurian – as well as Thomistic – influence include his 'Faith, Philosophy and Theology' in *The Nature and Mission of Theology*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), pp. 13-29; as well as several public lectures given during his papacy: most notably his 'Regensburg Address'. This is to be found in Benedict XVI, *A Reason Open to God: on Universities, Education and Culture*, J. Steven Brown (ed.) (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), pp. 1-45.

Jean-Luc Marion as well as contemporary Franciscan theologians such as Illia Delio.²⁴ However, despite this venerated, much celebrated position within contemporary theological enquiry, Bonaventure's thought remains largely unexplored outside the limits of historical theology. As the notable lack of any current sustained systematic or philosophical reflection on Bonaventure's writings demonstrates, there is an unwillingness, or at least a hesitancy, amongst contemporary systematic theologians to engage constructively with Bonaventure's thinking.

In part, this is due to the fact his thought remains largely overshadowed by that of St. Thomas Aquinas and is – on a speculative level at least – all too often perceived as somehow inferior to it. For many, the inherent value of Bonaventure's *oeuvre* lies not so much in any theological, philosophical, or metaphysical insight it may contain, but rather in its mystical and spiritual dimensions. All too often scholars are quick to subscribe to the deeply misleading, and profoundly inadequate, belief that where Aquinas – as a “true” speculative thinker – is a “theologian of the head” and, thus, the proper object of systematic and philosophical reflection; Bonaventure, by contrast, is a “theologian of the heart”, whose writings have little to offer modern systematic theology or philosophical speculation beyond the tools for spiritual and poetic reflection. In part, this situation has arisen as a result of Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* (1879). Whilst elsewhere Leo XIII could speak of Bonaventure as the ‘prince of mystics’, in his famous encyclical calling for the revival of scholastic theology and philosophy, he nonetheless argued that Thomas – and Thomas alone – was the unsurpassed scholastic *par excellence*.²⁵

As Étienne Gilson notes, the primacy accorded to Aquinas by *Aeterni Patris* has meant that many other great theologians, both scholastic and patristic, have been side-lined in favour

²⁴ Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being*, trans. Thomas Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

²⁵ Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris* 1879 www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_I-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris.html. Accessed: 2nd/1st/2020.

of Thomas.²⁶ Crucially, however, he adds, the primacy of Aquinas does not mean that there cannot be a plurality of “theologies” in the church. We must never forget that ‘in the large family of great theologians approved by the Church, each and every one occupies a particular place and fulfils a function of his own’.²⁷ He continues: ‘the church asks us to go to Thomas’; this, however, ‘does not mean that we are not to go to’ figures like Augustine, Jerome, Albert, Anselm, Scotus, and of course, Bonaventure.²⁸

1.4) The Limitations of Historical Theology as an Obstacle to a Bonaventurian Ressourcement.

For the most part, however, the origins of the modern failure to “go to Bonaventure” are intertwined with the persistent inability of contemporary historical theology to resolve the longstanding debate over his views on *fides* and *ratio* and his estimation of *philosophia* and its place, or perhaps lack thereof, within the economy of Christian wisdom. Whilst, on the whole, a general – though by no means undisputed – consensus has emerged as to what constitutes an authentically “Thomistic” reading of the relationship between faith and reason, no such agreement has been achieved in relation to Bonaventure’s thought.²⁹ Despite the huge effort which several scholars have invested in resolving the debate concerning Bonaventure’s views on faith and reason, no single theory has achieved universal acceptance. There exists, as such, a plethora of conflicting interpretations; each of which portray Bonaventure’s thought in a radically different light. Not surprisingly, this ambiguity makes it difficult for any distinctly “Bonaventurian” school to emerge within modern theology.

²⁶ *Augustine.*, pp. viii-ix.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ For an overview of the development of the different interpretations of Thomism see Fergus Kerr’s, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002).

The need to resolve this tension surrounding Bonaventure's thought, and its relevance for contemporary systematic theology, is made all the more pressing by the fact that there has emerged within modern Catholicism, as well as in other denominations, a strong, albeit varied, desire to articulate a vision of faith and reason that extends beyond the limits offered by Thomism, and which, in turn, engages with the broader scholastic tradition. In particular, figures like Ratzinger and Rahner have looked to Bonaventure as a potential source of inspiration in this regard.³⁰ Neither of them, however, have succeeded in producing what may be described as a fully coherent and distinctly contemporary Bonaventurian vision. Nor, it has to be admitted, was such a task ever their primary goal or animating spirit. An example of a Protestant thinker who has sought to engage systematically with Bonaventure's thought, and indeed that of the Franciscan tradition in general, is Paul Tillich.³¹

1.5) *Bonaventure and Aristotle: A Complex Relationship.*

Although receiving relatively little attention in recent years,³² the question of Bonaventure's attitude towards Aristotelianism has generated much disagreement in the past. Indeed, no other subject has produced as much extended research in Bonaventurian studies. For some, Bonaventure is the architect of a distinctly anti-Aristotelian movement; one which, continuing the tradition attributed to St. Augustine, rejected Aristotelianism's claim that philosophy is an independent academic science by denying it any autonomy beyond the limits of theology. Perhaps the primary proponent of this school of thought is Étienne Gilson for whom Bonaventure was 'the most clear-sighted witness to the opposition between the peripatetic philosophy and Christianity'.³³ For others, by contrast, Bonaventure is a respectful student of

³⁰ *Supra*.

³¹ Cf. J. P. Dourley, *Paul Tillich and Bonaventure: An Evaluation of Tillich's Claim to Stand in the Augustinian-Franciscan Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

³² A notable exceptions to this trend is Goff's *Caritas in Primo*.

³³ *Aquinas*, p. 14.

Aristotle who, recognizing the autonomy of reason, sought to reinterpret Aristotelianism within a Christian framework in a manner similar to that adopted by Aquinas and Albert the Great; namely, by positing the existence of an independent “Christianized” Aristotelian philosophy. This school of thought is represented most clearly by Fernand Van Steenberghen.³⁴

As Anton Pegis notes, this confusion surrounding Bonaventure’s views on Aristotle’s philosophy is underscored by the fact that, unlike Albert the Great and Aquinas, as well as several of his Franciscan colleagues, such as Richard Rufus of Cornwall and Roger Bacon, Bonaventure has left us no commentaries on Aristotle’s works; nor, indeed, do we have any concrete evidence of his having produced any lectures on Aristotle’s works during his time in the Paris Arts Faculty, even though it seems likely that, just like other masters within the Arts Faculty during the 1230’s and 40’s, Bonaventure would have done so. Thus, as Pegis remarks: ‘I am...trying to understand a fact that is (to me at least) entirely puzzling...why is St. Bonaventure so uninvolved in the problem of the internal meaning of Aristotle’s system?’³⁵ ‘It is entirely curious’ he continues ‘that, at this very time of Aristotelian ferment, St. Bonaventure should keep his distance from the problem of interpreting Aristotle’.³⁶

The absence of any Aristotelian commentaries within the known Bonaventurian corpus certainly raises many questions.³⁷ For example: why did Bonaventure not expound Aristotle like Albert, Thomas, and indeed many of his Franciscan colleagues? Was it because he was ignorant of Aristotle’s works? Did he perhaps lack access to them? Or does Bonaventure’s failure to leave us with any Aristotelian commentaries communicate a deeper truth about his attitude towards Aristotelianism? Does Bonaventure’s lack of Aristotelian exegesis reveal that

³⁴ Cf. *Aristotle in the West*.

³⁵ Pegis, ‘St. Bonaventure Revisited’ in *S. Bonaventura*, tom. II, p. 41.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Several Aristotelian commentaries have been attributed to Bonaventure over the years. These include the unedited *Quaestiones Super Librum de Generatione* and *Quaestiones Super Librum Quatuor Libros Meteororum* contained in Rome Collegio S. Isodoro, MS. 1/10. It is generally agreed, however, that these are most probably by Roger Bacon and not Bonaventure.

he saw such an exercise as being opposed to his vocation as a theologian? Or does it perhaps reflect something of a reserve on Bonaventure's behalf about Aristotle's philosophy itself?

In recent years, the debate concerning Bonaventure's attitude towards Aristotelianism has shifted towards the somewhat subtler, though equally important, question as to whether his thought contains a "philosophy" as understood in the Aristotelian sense of the word – i.e., an autonomous description of creation grounded "solely" on human intelligence; and, if so, whether it can be studied independently of his theology? Where for some – i.e., Van Steenberghen – there is no coherent philosophical system at work in Bonaventure's thought; for others, by contrast, like Cullen³⁸, Speer³⁹, and Quinn⁴⁰, the saint's writings do indeed contain a philosophical synthesis which can be considered independent of his theological vision. Thus, Cullen remarks: 'Bonaventure's thought presents us with a genuine philosophy whose content and spirit can be studied without entering formally into theology, in part because he carefully distinguishes between arguments from reason and those from authority'.⁴¹

1.6) The Difficulties Which Have Prohibited an Acceptable Interpretation of Bonaventure's Thought on Faith and Reason from Emerging.

Before we proceed an important question needs to be addressed. Why is Bonaventure's attitude towards Aristotelianism – and by extension his thought on faith and reason – so difficult to ascertain? Why, in other words, has the debate over his thought on the relationship between faith and reason not been resolved but instead turned into something resembling an intellectual quagmire or academic "no-mans-land"? This question, alongside several others which we

³⁸ Cf. *Bon.*

³⁹ Andreas Speer, 'Bonaventure and the Question of a Medieval Philosophy' *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997), pp. 25-46.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Historical Constitution*.

⁴¹ *Bon.*, p. 35.

cannot touch upon here, is worthy of extended study in itself. A few provisional remarks can, however, be offered. Broadly speaking, to this author's mind three factors have hindered scholarly consensus concerning Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason from emerging:

First, the modern debate surrounding Bonaventure's stance on natural reason and philosophy has been shaped – and in many respects frustrated – by continued disagreement over the content of the Bonaventurian corpus itself. Where some scholars are willing to attribute a number of unedited texts to Bonaventure – many of which contain highly pertinent reflections on the relationship between faith and reason, and which we will have recourse to discuss shortly; others, by contrast, deny their authenticity and thus reject their value for understanding Bonaventure's theological vision. Further complicating matters is the fact that the vast majority of these texts, especially those dating from Bonaventure's early academic period, remain unedited and therefore beyond the general reach of most scholars. Indeed, for the most part students of Bonaventure are largely unaware of the existence of these unedited texts and thus proceed to evaluate his thought solely upon the basis of the critical edition of his *Opera Omnia* offered by the Quaracchi fathers. Unsurprisingly, the decision to include or exclude these texts, be it intentional or unintentional, has significant implications for how we evaluate Bonaventure's thought on *fides* and *ratio* and his understanding of philosophy.

Second: there is the unavoidable, and seemingly unfathomable, problem that Bonaventure's thought contains what appears, on first inspection at least, to be a contradictory, undecided attitude towards Aristotelianism. On the one hand, in his early theological works – the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the various *quaestiones disputatae*, particularly the *Quaestiones de Mystério Trinitatis* – Bonaventure repeatedly quotes Aristotle as an authority on numerous philosophical issues; indeed, on one notable occasion he even goes beyond praising Aristotle as a philosopher by pronouncing his own personal inability to judge such a

learned man.⁴² Whilst on the other hand, in his later works, particularly the various sets of *Collationes* which Bonaventure composed shortly before his death, the saint expresses no reserve about judging Aristotle; instead, he condemns his philosophy in the harshest possible terms. Further confusing matters, is the fact even in these mature, anti-Aristotelian works Bonaventure still occasionally quotes Aristotle as an authority.⁴³ Not surprisingly, this paradoxical quality of Bonaventure's thought – particularly that of his mature writings – has made it difficult to ascertain the true nature of his attitude towards peripatetic philosophy.

What this willingness to condemn Aristotle whilst still respecting him as a thinker reveals is that far from rejecting Aristotelianism out of hand, or merely attempting to sidestep it as several of his Franciscan contemporaries appear to have done, Bonaventure's attitude towards peripatetic philosophy is a complex and highly subtle one – one which defies both simplistic explanation and sweeping generalizations. If Bonaventure does seek to articulate a distinctly anti-Aristotelian theological vision – particularly within his mature works – then it cannot be one which simply dismisses Aristotle by ignoring him, as is sometimes claimed. Nor, indeed, can it be one that rests upon a biased, second-hand understanding of his philosophy. Rather, as all of his major works demonstrate, Bonaventure possessed both an extensive knowledge of Aristotle's thought as well as the intellectual skills needed to engage with it critically. Indeed, as Bougerol shows, in his edited works Bonaventure quotes Aristotle some 930 times, and quotes from every known work of the Philosopher, save the *Politics*.⁴⁴

Third, perhaps the most obvious reason why confusion has arisen concerning Bonaventure's views on faith and reason is that scholarship has failed to identify and properly understand the driving force which underpins his critique of natural reason and philosophy. As will be touched upon as this study progresses, for the most part scholarship has tried to

⁴² Cf. *2 Sent.*, dist. 1, pars. 1, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 15).

⁴³ Cf. *Delorme*, principium, coll. 1-3; and vis. 1, coll. 1-2, pp. 1-90.

⁴⁴ *Intro.*, p. 27.

understand Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason by attempting to fit him into one of a number of pre-existing, often mutually exclusive, philosophical schools of thought – most notably “Augustinianism” or “Christian Aristotelianism”. As noted above, for some Bonaventure's views on natural reason are essentially driven by his desire to remain faithful to the philosophy of St. Augustine. Whilst others, viewing Bonaventure as a proponent of Christian Aristotelianism, see in his thought the same positive estimation of natural reason which is at work in Thomas and Albert. This study argues, however, that rather than stemming from any pre-existing school of thought, the true origin and guiding principle of Bonaventure's critique of natural reason and philosophy arises from *within* his own synthesis and, more importantly, is entirely of his own making; namely, his doctrine of Christ's knowledge and his conviction that the *mens Christi* is the universal exemplar and *causa finalis* of all finite noetic.

Section 2

1.7) *The Historical Background to Bonaventure's Theological Vision: The Advent of Aristotelianism in the Latin West 1150-1277.*

To engage properly with Bonaventure's thought on Aristotelianism it is necessary first to consider how the latter established itself as the dominant philosophical influence within the thirteenth-century; and how, in turn, it came to challenge the existing scholastic interpretation of faith and reason to the extent that it polarized opinion between those who sympathized with Aristotle and those who sought to hold him at a distance.

1.7.0) *Aristotle in the West: The Arrival of a New World View.*

Although born many centuries before Christ, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (c. 384–322 BCE) – also known more commonly by his medieval students as the ‘Philosopher’ (*Philosophus*) or the ‘Stagirite’ – was one of the most important, yet divisive, influences upon the intellectual development of the Middle Ages.⁴⁵ The illustrious pupil of Plato (c. 428/7–348/347 BCE), with whom he famously disagreed over the nature and scope of human knowledge, Aristotle’s writings not only covered a huge range of topics – from biology to poetry – but introduced into the Latin West an unparalleled level of new learning, particularly with regards to the natural sciences and philosophy. Whilst most of Aristotle’s works on logic – the *Organon* – had been known to Christian Europe since the sixth-century, through the translations of Boethius (c. 480–524), it was not until the mid-twelfth-century that Christian thinkers – principally through the conquest of Islamic intellectual centers such as Toledo in Spain and Jerusalem in the Middle East – came to be reacquainted with Aristotle’s major philosophical works: the *libri naturales*, i.e., his *De Metaphysica*, *De Anima*, *De Physica*, etc.

Heavily framed within the context of Islamic philosophy, Aristotle’s arrival within the Latin West was not, however, a direct nor indeed immediately successful one. As recent research has shown, particularly that of Dag Nicholas Hasse, for the most part during the early thirteenth-century it was Aristotle’s Islamic commentators, principally Avicenna (c. 980–1037) and to a lesser extent Averroes (c. 1126–1198) – known as the ‘Commentator’ because of his extensive commentaries on Aristotle’s thought – who were the philosophers of choice. Aristotle was often merely read in light of his Islamic disciples, especially concerning issues pertaining to psychology and the nature and scope of human learning.⁴⁶ Thus, as Hasse has shown, prior

⁴⁵ Recent literature on the reintroduction of Aristotle into the Latin West includes: *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600*, Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg (eds.) (Cambridge: CUP, 1982); see esp. Bernard Dod’s ‘Aristotle Latinus’ in the latter, pp 45–80. See also Sander Wopke de Boer, *The Science of the Soul: The Commentary Tradition on Aristotle’s De Anima C. 1260 – 1360* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013).

⁴⁶ Cf. *ADALW.*, pp. 224–33.

to 1230 it was primarily Avicenna's *De Anima* which was the primary philosophical text on the soul, and not Aristotle's own *De Anima*.⁴⁷ Indeed, Dominicus Gundissalinus's (c. 1115–1190) important translation of Avicenna's *De Anima* reveals that Aristotle's *De Anima* was used as something akin to a *glossa* or companion piece for Avicenna's own text.⁴⁸

From the 1230's onwards, however, the production of more reliable translations of Aristotle's works from the original Greek, such as those of Robert Grosseteste (c. 1168–1253), and William of Moerbeke (c. 1215/35–1286), generated a new wave of interest in the Stagirite's thought; one which saw his writings eclipse those of his Arabic commentators and establish themselves as the dominant philosophical influence in the West. To modern eyes, this growth of Aristotelianism – be it in the form of Aristotle's own thought or that of his Islamicate disciples – during the thirteenth-century is surprising, if not perplexing, given that it articulated an account of creation – in particular human noetic – so radically different, and in places diametrically opposed, to the one taught by the church. Yet as Gilson observes, to the medieval mind the superior nature of Aristotelian philosophy over what the West itself possessed was 'so crushing that in the eyes of clear-sighted minds it could not fail to obtain the ascent of reason and to secure the ultimate triumph of the doctrine'.⁴⁹

Rejecting the claim that the mind possesses either an *a priori* awareness of the 'divine ideas' or has access to the superior knowledge of divine revelation – as Plato and later Christian thinkers, such as St. Augustine (c. 354–430) and St. Anselm (c. 1033–1109) asserted – Aristotle argued that the soul's only source of knowledge is that which it can discover through the senses.⁵⁰ Born without any innate knowledge of either God or creation, the mind is a *tabula rasa* – a "blank slate" – upon which nothing is written prior to the act of empirical

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Post. An.*, bk. 2, n. 19 100^a4–8.

investigation.⁵¹ To achieve knowledge, the soul must therefore use what in the later Aristotelian tradition is labelled the “active intellect” (*agens intellectus*): an active power of the soul which allows it to abstract ‘intelligible species’ from creation by means of the senses.⁵² However, as Herbert Davidson notes, whether this ‘active’ quality of the mind is really an internal faculty of the soul itself or rather a separate eternal intelligence Aristotle himself does not make clear.⁵³

Through the mediation of sensory organs, the active intellect encounters physical objects and abstracts intelligible species from them – i.e. it constructs an internal psychological “image” of the object distinct from the object itself. It then bestows this acquired “image” or “form” upon the receptive element of the soul – the “passive intellect” – which upon receiving these abstracted species is moved from potency to act, thereby allowing the mind to comprehend the object perceived by the senses. Through this process Aristotle claims that the mind becomes radically identified with that which it knows.⁵⁴ However, since the senses can only engage with tangible things, it is clear that the mind can only become “one” with material objects or the rational conclusions they communicate.⁵⁵ Thus, according to Aristotle, whatever the mind cannot grasp through empirical investigation and the inductive reasoning must lie beyond its reach and is therefore utterly unintelligible to it. The possibility of spiritual illumination or divine revelation is therefore not entertained by Aristotelian psychology.

Based upon this purely naturalistic, empirical-based epistemology, Aristotelianism’s interpretation of human noetic was thus radically different to the one offered by medieval Christianity. Devoid of any sense of the supernatural or the transcendent, Aristotle’s

⁵¹ *De Ani.*, book 3, n. 4, 429^b1-430^a1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, book 3, n. 5, 430^a10-25.

⁵³ Cf. Herbert Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* (Oxford: OUP, 1992), p. 3.

⁵⁴ Cf. Fred D. Miller, ‘Aristotle on the Separability of Mind’ in Christopher Shields (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 306-39, esp. p. 315; cf. *De An.*, bk. 3, n. 4, 429^a13-18; n. 5, 433^a10-25.

⁵⁵ Cf. John A. Vella, *Aristotle: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London-New-York: Continuum, 2008), pp. 23-5.

philosophy not only prioritized the truths of reason and sense experience over those of revelation, but it denied the possibility of the mind's illumination through grace, scripture, and revelation – the sources of knowledge which are so central to the Christian understanding of human cognition, particularly that of the saints, prophets, mystics, and of course of Christ himself. In its most basic form, there thus appeared to be a fundamental – and in the eyes of some irreconcilable – divide between the Christian and Aristotelian theories of knowledge.

This, by and large, stemmed from their divergent understandings of the ontological nature and goal of human cognition. Where medieval Christianity posited the final end and object of the human mind – *beatitudo* – within God, and thus the realm of the supernatural; Aristotelianism, by contrast, placed it solely at the level of the natural and finite world. Not surprisingly, this naturalistic focus, and Aristotelianism's rejection of the supernatural dimension of human noetic, provoked strong reaction from both the church and many theologians. To see this, one need only consider the caustic remarks of Robert Grosseteste, theologian and Bishop of Lincoln, who in the 1230's warned against those who 'deceive themselves and toil away at making Aristotle into a Catholic' (*se decipiant et frustra desudent ut Aristotilem faciant catholicum*) but in the process of doing so 'make heretics of themselves' (*se ipsos hereticos faciant*).⁵⁶ Such an endeavor, Grosseteste remarks, is a 'fruitless' waste of time.⁵⁷

1.7.1) Aristotelianism and the Church: Aristotle Condemned?

That scholastic thinkers were not blind nor indeed passive to the challenge posed by Aristotelianism and its Islamicate commentators is seen by the various condemnations of peripatetic philosophy which were issued throughout the thirteenth-century. As early as 1210

⁵⁶ Cf. *OSDC.*, p. 59; cf. *Gr. Hex.*, p. 61.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

an ecclesiastical council held in Paris prohibited Aristotle's works from being read in public or private by students of the University on pain of excommunication.⁵⁸ This censor was repeated again in 1215⁵⁹ and 1231, ultimately culminating in the famous condemnations of 1270 and 1277. Not surprisingly, however, given the local and often sporadic, nature with which these condemnations were enforced, they proved largely ineffective in stemming the tide of Aristotelianism, particularly within the Paris Arts Faculty. Another equally important factor in explaining why the church's condemnations of Aristotelianism failed to win support is to be found in the famous condemnation issued by Pope Gregory IX in 1231.

In his bull, *Parens Scientiarum* and a series of letters, Gregory IX took the unprecedented step of establishing a commission of theologians, led by William of Auxerre (d. 1231), to purge Aristotle's writings of their errors – '*quousque examinati fuerint et ab omni errorum suspicione purgati*' – in order that they could be read 'without delay and without offense'.⁶⁰ Gregory IX hoped that where the editors found 'error' or cause for 'scandal' in Aristotle's writings – '*que ibi erronea seu scandali vel offendiculi*' – they would expunge these so that they no longer posed a threat to Christian doctrine or encouraged heresy.⁶¹ Although this commission never actually redacted any of Aristotle's works – Auvergne died before the commission could meet and thus it was disbanded – many scholastics, particularly within the Arts Faculty, took the Pope's intervention as a sign that it was at least permissible to begin reading Aristotle's works without fear of censure. That this is so, is seen by the fact that in 1267 Roger Bacon (c. 1219/20–1292) could freely admit that as early as 1245 he had been openly lecturing on Aristotle's *libri naturales* at Paris unhindered.⁶²

⁵⁸ Cf. *Chart. Uni. Par.*, p. 70.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Cf. *Op. Mai.*, n. 246, pp. 277-9.

Similarly, in 1255 the Faculty of Arts chose to defy openly church teaching by making the study of Aristotle's works a prerequisite for obtaining the degree of Master of Arts.⁶³ As Robert Pasnau notes, the result of this controversial action was that from 1255 onwards, 'the full Aristotelian corpus was not only permitted to be taught in Paris but was positively required'.⁶⁴ 'The genie of Aristotelian metaphysics', he continues was 'out of the bottle'.⁶⁵ Moreover, as John Wippel remarks, the result of this controversial decision is that from 1255 onwards the Faculty of Arts had in effect 'now become a philosophy faculty'.⁶⁶ Thus, although none of the various condemnations of Aristotelianism were ever revoked, what this disregard for church pronouncements demonstrates is that from the mid-thirteenth-century onwards the ban on Aristotle was, at an institutional level at least, all but a "dead letter", both at Paris and indeed at other leading universities, particularly in Oxford.⁶⁷ As such, it fell to the discretion of individual theologians, should they so wish, to combat the tide of Aristotelianism and uphold the church's prohibitions against peripatetic philosophy.

1.7.2) Aristotle and the Paris Theology Faculty: The Theological Disagreement over Aristotelianism.

Not surprisingly, in contrast to the enthusiastic reception which it received within the Paris Arts Faculty, Aristotelianism provoked strong, often hostile, disagreement amongst members of the Theology Faculty. According to the traditional scholarly narrative, advocated by figures like

⁶³ Cf. *Aristotle in the West*, p. 109.

⁶⁴ Robert Pasnau, 'The Latin Aristotle' in Christopher Shields (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, pp. 665-90, at p. 667.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ John F. Wippel, 'The Parisian Condemnations of 1270 and 1277' in J. E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (eds.) *A Companion to the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 65-72, at p. 66.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Gilson, the emergence of Aristotelianism at Paris divided opinion between those who adopted a sympathetic – albeit critical – attitude towards Aristotelianism, such as Aquinas and Albert the Great; and those who favored a more cautious, often hostile, attitude towards peripatetic thought, for example, Robert Kilwardby (c. 1215–1279) and John Peckham (c. 1230–1292). Where the former are often regarded as pioneers of a new, distinctly “Christian Aristotelianism”, the latter, by contrast, are seen as adherents of the traditional “Augustinian” philosophy which it is often claimed had dominated so much of the early scholastic tradition.⁶⁸

Whilst there are both merits and limitations to the use of the traditional labels of “Aristotelian” and “Augustinian” – as will be seen, both schools of thought possessed a complex mixture of “Augustinian” and “Aristotelian” elements – it is evident there is a notable divide between those who sought to reconcile Aristotle with Christian theology, and those who wished to hold him at a distance. Where for Aquinas and Albert, Aristotle’s thought offered a wealth of philosophical insight which could be placed at the service of theology, for others like Kilwardby and Peckham, it contained a great many errors – e.g. his denial of universal hylomorphism and a plurality of forms within the soul – and was, as such, to be viewed with suspicion. One need only compare the enthusiastic remarks of Albert the Great at the beginning of his commentary on Aristotle’s *De Physica*, declaring that he wished to make all of Aristotle’s teachings intelligible to the West (*‘nostra intentio est omnes dictas partes facere Latinus intelligibiles’*) with the derogatory and inflammatory remarks made by Peckham about those who favour ‘philosophical novelties’ – i.e. the Aristotelian principles embraced by the likes of Aquinas and Albert – over the sound doctrines of St. Augustine.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Cf. Caleb Colley, ‘John Peckham on Life and Mind’ (PhD Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2014).

⁶⁹ Cf. *De Phys.*, lib. 1, tract. 1, p. 1.

Which doctrine is more solid and more sound, the doctrine of the sons of St. Francis, that is of Brother Alexander of Hales of sainted memory, of Brother Bonaventure and others like him, who rely on the Fathers and the philosophers in treatises secure against any reproach, or else that very recent and almost entirely contradictory doctrine which fills the entire world with worldly quarrels weakening and destroying with all its strength what Augustine teaches concerning the eternal rules and the unchangeable light, the faculties of the soul, the seminal reasons included in matter and innumerable questions of the same kind, let the ancients be the judges, since in them is wisdom, let the God of heaven judge, and may he remedy it.⁷⁰

Furthermore, as Gilson reminds us, the opposition which the Christian Aristotelian movement provoked does not mean that there was a unified Christian Aristotelianism at work within the thirteenth-century; and the same, it has to be said, is true of the traditional “Augustinian” philosophy defended by Kilwardby and Peckham. Rather, as Albert the Great himself was to observe in his *De Anima* commentary, the Latin disciples of Aristotle all recognized that he had taught the truth (*‘dixit verum’*), but just exactly what it was that Aristotle had taught was not agreed upon in any substantial way by those who sought to follow him.⁷¹ Of particular importance here is the school of thought known as “Radical Aristotelianism”.

1.7.3) *Aristotle and the Paris Arts Faculty: The Rise of Radical Aristotelianism.*

⁷⁰ Quote from John Peckham found in Gilson’s *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Toronto: PIMS, 1955), p. 359.

⁷¹ *De An.*, p. 335.

Shortly after the decision of the Faculty of Arts to make the study of Aristotle's works a prerequisite for the degree of Master of Arts, a new, "heterodox" strand of Aristotelianism began to emerge at Paris during the mid-1260's.⁷² Often labelled "Radical Aristotelianism" – or "Latin Averroism" because of its reliance upon the Aristotelian commentaries of Averroes – this highly controversial form of Aristotelianism departed significantly from existing interpretations of peripatetic thought. It did so by positing the existence of an autonomous, decidedly "non-Christian"⁷³ philosophy, which could challenge, even disprove the conclusions of theology.⁷⁴ Based upon the conviction that reason is entirely separate from faith – in the sense that it is neither intrinsically oriented towards faith, nor indeed dependent upon it to achieve certainty – this new strand of peripatetic philosophy argued that it was possible for the human mind to offer a complete description of reality through reason alone without the assistance of divine revelation. *Philosophia* was the equal sister of *theologia* not its handmaid.

Accepting Averroes's so-called "two-truths" theory – i.e. that something can be both true and false at the same time – adherents of this new school of thought argued it was possible for something to be true at the level of faith and yet be disproved at the level of reason. Often misunderstood and misconstrued – both by modern authors as well as the medievals – the basic principle of Averroes's "two-truths" theory, at least as it is contained in his famous *Decisive Treatise (Kitâb Fasî al-Maqâl)*, is that 'truth does not oppose truth but accords with it and bears witness to it'.⁷⁵ As such, whatever is true in philosophy need not necessarily be discounted as false if it contradicts the teachings of faith. Rather, it can be considered as true, but solely from

⁷² *Aristotle in the West*, pp. 198-229.

⁷³ 'Non-Christian' in the sense that it failed to place Christ at its centre and thus submit to the truths of revelation.

⁷⁴ Alain de Libera's recent work claims that the separation between faith and reason articulated by Radical Aristotelianism has its origins with the thought of Albert the Great. Cf. *Métaphysique et Noétique: Albert Le Grand* (Paris: Vrin, 2005).

⁷⁵ *Dec. Tr.*

a philosophical perspective. Thus, for example, Averroes remarks, that whilst the Law may confirm God created the world in time, reason disproves this by showing that it is eternal.⁷⁶

From Averroes's perspective, faith and reason are thus two separate, non-overlapping spheres of human noetic. As such, philosophy – or so it would seem – is not only totally separate from theology, and thereby able to exercise its tools of intellectual enquiry without fear of contradicting the truths of faith or being curtailed by the latter. But, more importantly, it is in no way dependent upon theology, or indeed the *lumen revelationis* in general, to achieve its immediate end. Philosophy, in effect, is an entirely independent science. By using its own axioms, it can describe creation, and indeed God, with accuracy and without deference to the “higher science” of faith. As we shall see, such a vision of philosophy is not only diametrically opposed to the one propounded by Bonaventure – and Aquinas – but it is one which Bonaventure spends so much of his energy, particularly in his later works combatting.

Primarily associated with Siger of Brabant (c. 1240–1284) and Boethius of Dacia (c. 1240–1280/90), adherents of this new strand of Aristotelianism also diverged from existing interpretations of Aristotelianism in that they openly followed Averroes in advocating some of the more controversial interpretations of Aristotle's thought: namely, the doctrines of the eternity of the world,⁷⁷ the unity of the human intellect⁷⁸ – i.e., the famous doctrine of “monopsychism” – and the controversial claim that the soul was not immortal. Thus, besides challenging the established interpretation of faith and reason, Radical Aristotelianism also denied, at least at the level of philosophical speculation, several of the most important aspects

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Siger of Brabant, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, in Pierre Mandonnet, *Siger De Brabant et L'Averroïsme: Texts Inédits Latin II^{me} ad XIII^{me} Siècle*, Les Philosophes Belges, (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie de L'Université, 1908), pp. 129-42.

⁷⁸ Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones de Anima Intellectiva. Ibid.*, pp. 143-71; cf. Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones de Anima* in Fernand Van Steenberghe, *Siger de Brabant D'Après Ses Oeuvres Inédites* (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie de L'Université, 1931).

of Christian thought; namely, the doctrines of creation, the immortality and individuality of the human soul, and, finally, the possibility of eternal salvation.

Contained within the agenda of Radical Aristotelianism was thus, as some have argued, ‘the most radical expression of a programme of the natural life, the purest rationalism, and a total denial of the Christian order’.⁷⁹ For its adherents, philosophy, not theology, promised the highest *beatitudo in via*. As Boethius of Dacia was to put it: ‘it is the philosopher who lives as man was born to live’.⁸⁰ Moreover, it is philosophers ‘who enjoy the highest state possible for man’.⁸¹

Not surprisingly, Radical Aristotelianism was condemned by both theologians who sympathized with Aristotle and those who rejected him. Where for the former, the new movement represented a serious perversion of the Aristotle’s teaching; for the latter, by contrast, it merely confirmed the heresy latent within his thought.⁸² Thus, in noted contrast to the blanket condemnations issued by figures like Peckham, which condemned both Aristotle and his Islamic disciples, Aquinas in his *De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas* seeks to defend Aristotle by claiming that the doctrine of “monopsychism” ‘originates in the writings of Averroes’ (*Averrois sumens originem*) and not Aristotle himself.⁸³ Indeed, he tells us, that monopsychism is ‘in every way repugnant to his [*i.e. Aristotle’s*] words and judgements: ‘*ostendemus primo positionem praedictam eius verbis et sententiae repugnare omnio*’.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Quote taken from Anthony J. Celano, ‘Boethius of Dacia: On the Highest Good’ *Traditio* 43 (1987), pp. 199-124, at p. 199.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Supreme Good*, p. 32.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁸² According to Thomas, Aristotle did not posit the eternity of the world; cf. *Aet. Muni.* Similarly, Albert attributes the error to Averroes and not Aristotle; cf. *2 Sent.*, dist. 1, art. 10, resp., p. 29.

⁸³ *De Unitate*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Very much the dominant force within the Paris Arts Faculty between the years 1260–1277, the crisis provoked by Radical Aristotelianism formed the background to much of Bonaventure’s mature theological writings.

1.7.4) *Aristotle: The “Wisest Man Who Ever Lived”.*

Although largely overlooked, at the heart of Radical Aristotelianism and its attempt to establish the autonomy of philosophy was the seemingly innocuous claim – first made by Averroes himself – that Aristotle’s thought represented the culmination and perfection of all human learning. Following Averroes, adherents of this new school, or so it seems, taught that Aristotle – as a unique gift of divine providence – was not only the ‘norm of nature’ (*regula in natura*) and the exemplar against which all human knowledge is to be viewed, measured, and judged; but the ‘very perfection’ and ‘consummation’ of all that which the human mind can achieve in this world.⁸⁵ To quote the title given to the Stagirite by the fourteenth-century poet Dante Alighieri, Aristotle was the ‘master of those who know’.⁸⁶ He was gifted with the totality of all created knowledge – that is to say, all that can be learned through sense experience and “scientific” investigation. Moreover, given by God to humanity as the “teacher” of perfect knowledge, Aristotle came into the world ‘*ad demonstrandum ultimam perfectionem humanum*’.⁸⁷ As such, he was the “model” or “exemplar” to which all intelligent men, and all

⁸⁵ ‘*Credo enim quod iste homo fuerit regula in natura, et exemplar, quod natura invenit ad demonstrandum ultimam perfectionem humanam in materiis*’. Averroes, *De Anima*, lib. III, cap. II, *Opera Omnia*, (Venice: 1550) tom. VII. Quote taken from Pierre Mandonnet, ‘Siger de Brabant et l’Averroisme Latin au XIIIe Siecle’, *Les Philosophes Belges*, VII (1911), p. 154, n. 2.

⁸⁶ In his *Divine Comedy* Dante remarks concerning Aristotle ‘when I had lifted up my brows a little, The master I beheld of those who know, Sit with his philosophic family. All gaze upon him, and do him honour’. *Inferno* canto IV.

⁸⁷ Averroes, *Meteorologica*, lib. III, summa secunda, cap. II, ad. finam, *Opera Omnia*, tom. VII, f. 195v. Quote from *Man. Sig.*, pp. 153-4, n. 4.

those who desire wisdom, should aspire to conform themselves, since no other human being, past or present, has ever attained or surpassed the height of his learning.⁸⁸ As Averroes himself put it:

The teaching of Aristotle is the highest truth, because his intellect was the culminating point of the human intellect. Hence, we may say, quite appropriately, that he was created and given to us by divine providence in order that we might learn all that could be learned.⁸⁹

Aristotle, in other words, was the wisest man who ever lived. As the *'regula in natura'* his teachings provided the basis for all sound learning and philosophical enquiry.

As will be seen, although seemingly insignificant on first inspection, it was this belief that Aristotle represented the perfection of human learning which Bonaventure, like many of his contemporaries, found so objectionable. Indeed, late in life, Bonaventure was to confess himself shocked at the fact many of his contemporaries were so enamored with the perfection of Aristotle's knowledge that they refused to accept he was capable of error: *'et alii videntes, quod tantus fuit Aristoteles in aliis et ita dixit veritatem, credere non possunt, quin in istis dixerit verum'*.⁹⁰

1.7.5) Bonaventure's Terminology: "Aristotle" and "Aristotelianism".

⁸⁸See Averroes, *De Generatione Animalium*, lib. I, cap. XX, *Opera Omnia* tom. VII, f.195v, in *Man. Sig.*, p. 154. See also Averroes, *Meteorologica*, lib. III, summa secunda, cap. II, ad. finam, *Opera Omnia*, tom. VII, f. 195v in *Man. Sig.*, pp. 153-4, n. 4.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Man. Sig.*, p. 154, n. 3.

⁹⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 6, n. 5. (V, p. 361).

In light of the above, it is important to note is that whilst Bonaventure may have had a strong knowledge of Aristotle's teachings and those of his disciples, for the most part he – like many of his Parisian Franciscan contemporaries – shows a notable passivity, even disinterest, when it comes to appreciating the various hues at work within the Aristotelian tradition itself. For him the terms “Aristotelian”, “peripatetic” and “*philosophi*” function as broad umbrella labels. Under them can be grouped not only Aristotle himself, but also his Ancient, Islamicate, and Radical Latin disciples. To appreciate how this is so we need only compare Bonaventure's account of the active intellect in his *Sentences* with that Thomas's. Where in his *Sentences* Aquinas, in a manner building upon Albert's *De Homine*, carefully attempts to tease out the various divergences between the various *philosophi*, noting – though not always correctly – the opinions of Aristotle, Themistius, Avempace, Avicenna, and Averroes⁹¹, Bonaventure, by contrast, makes a much less historically sensitive effort. He sticks to outlining what he sees as the Aristotelian position and alludes in passing, though without naming names, to the Islamicate claim that Aristotle taught that the *agens intellectus* is a separate intelligence.⁹² For him what matters is not so much what each of the peripatetic thinkers said – and nor in this particular case at least whether Aristotle's disciples correctly interpreted him – but rather the general contours of their doctrine. In essence, all dogs bark irrespective of their specific breed.

Whilst alien to our own historically sensitive approach, this tendency to view Aristotle and his disciples, both Islamicate or Latinate, through the same lens has important implications for how we explore Bonaventure's attitude towards Aristotle and peripatetic philosophy as a whole. Given that this study seeks to assess Bonaventure's thought according to its own standards, it will, for the most part, use the terms ‘Aristotelian’ and ‘peripatetic’ in the manner in which Bonaventure himself does. The result, of course, is that when we talk about

⁹¹ Cf. 2 *Sent.*, dist. 17, q. 2, art. 1, resp. (II, pp. 422-28).

⁹² 2 *Sent.*, dist. 24, pars. 1, art. 2, q. 4, resp. (II, pp. 586-89).

Bonaventure's critique of Aristotle in the following chapters, we must be mindful that although *prima facie* the Seraphic Doctor may be critiquing the 'Philosopher' he nonetheless sees the Islamicate and Radical Latinate peripatetic positions as essentially being hidden and brooded under Aristotle's wings. For Bonaventure, Aristotle was not an isolated ancient thinker, but rather the father of a living philosophical tradition; one which had persisted to his own day and which had successfully made its nest within the Paris Arts Faculty. Nonetheless, in chapter six we will attempt to tease out Bonaventure's views on the historical Aristotle himself. The purpose of doing so is to show how, despite his typically medieval practice of reading the peripatetic tradition a-historically, there is some implicit effort on Bonaventure's behalf, in some of his early works at least, to distance Aristotle from some of the most heterodox opinions attributed to him by his Islamicate and Latinate disciples.

Section 3

1.8) *Taking a New Perspective: Aristotelianism and the Doctrine of Christ's Noetic.*

What this enthusiasm for Aristotelianism within the Paris Arts Faculty reveals, is that peripatetic philosophy, specifically its belief in the autonomy of reason, presented itself as one of the most pressing issues – perhaps *the* most pressing issue – facing thirteenth-century theologians. That Bonaventure, like most of his contemporaries, devoted much of his attention to responding to the challenge posed by Aristotelianism – particularly the heterodox thought of Radical Aristotelianism – is illustrated by the fact throughout his works there is an overriding preoccupation – perhaps more so than is found in Aquinas and Albert the Great in certain respects – with the relationship between faith and reason, specifically how the “Aristotelian” notion of philosophy as an academic science is to be viewed from the Christian perspective. To understand how this study offers the basis for a new interpretation of Bonaventure's attitude

towards Aristotelianism it is necessary to consider the importance which he and his contemporaries attributed to the doctrine of Christ's knowledge and how the latter was seen as both opposed to, and threatened by, peripatetic thought.

1.8.0) The Importance of Christ's Noetic for the Scholastics.

Despite the fact that relatively little has been produced on the medieval doctrine of Christ's noetic in recent years – both within Anglo-American and continental theology – the subject was one of the most widely discussed and contested topics within thirteenth-century Christology.⁹³ To a large degree, this is explained by the fact that it is one of the key areas addressed in Peter Lombard's (c. 1096–1160) *Sentences*, which aspiring theology masters were expected to comment upon in order to obtain the degree of Doctor of Theology. Subsequently, most, if not all, of those who “commented” on Lombard's *Sentences* discussed, in one form or another, the subject of Christ's noetic. It was thus very much a prerequisite subject. As is less well recognized, however, the doctrine also formed the basis of many of the *quaestiones disputatae* and *quaestiones quodlibetales*⁹⁴ which theology masters completed on a regular basis as part of their teaching duties. Both Bonaventure and Aquinas, as well as less well-

⁹³ The list of contemporary systematic literature on the doctrine of Christ's knowledge includes: Michael Bird & Preston Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009); Bertrand de Margerie, *The Human Knowledge of Christ: The Knowledge, Foreknowledge and Consciousness, Even in the Pre-Paschal Period, of Christ the Redeemer* (Boston MA: St Paul's Press, 1980); John McDermott, ‘How Did Jesus Know He Was God? The Ontological Psychology of Mark 10: 17–22’ *Irish Theological Quarterly* 74 (2009), pp. 272–97; William G. Most, *The Consciousness of Christ* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom, 1980); Randalf Rosenberg, ‘Christ's Human Knowledge: A Conversation with Lonergan and Balthasar’ *Theological Studies* 71 (2010), pp. 817–45.

⁹⁴ Besides Aquinas's *quodlibetal* question on Christ's knowledge (cf. Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae et Duodecim Quodlibetales*, vol. V (Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1931), *Quodlibet* 3, q. 3, art. 1, pp. 40–41) another example of a set of *quaestiones quodlibetales* discussing Christ's knowledge are those of Peter of Sutton; cf. Ferdinand Etzkorn, ‘Petrus Sutton (?) O.F.M. Quodlibeta’, *Franciscan Studies* 23 (1963), pp. 68–139, at pp. 78–9.

known figures, such as Alexander of Hales and Peter of Sutton, produced extensive sets of *quaestiones* discussing Christ's knowledge during their time as university masters.⁹⁵

1.8.1) The Impact of Aristotelianism upon the Scholastic Doctrine of Christ's Noetic.

For the most part the early scholastic debate on Christ's knowledge had, under the influence of Lombard and Hugh of Saint-Victor (c. 1096–1141), focused upon the subject of whether Christ possessed a created habit of wisdom; and if so, how this impacted upon his ability to cognize the infinity of the Word?⁹⁶ By contrast, during the thirteenth-century the advent of Aristotelianism changed the dynamics of the medieval debate. It did so by shifting it towards the more pointed, and ultimately more controversial, question of whether Christ could progress in wisdom by abstracting intelligible species like the rest of humanity. If Christ was truly human – as Christian tradition insisted – then, from an Aristotelian perspective, he must have possessed an active intellect and thereby have been able to learn by abstracting intelligible species from creation. Thus, according Aristotelian psychology, Christ was not, indeed could not be, any different to any other human being. Not only did he not have had access to a superior super-infused knowledge of grace and revelation; but, more importantly, he must have

⁹⁵ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 20, pp. 100-14; *De Scientia Christi*. (V, pp. 3-43). Another scholastic to conduct extended disputed questions on Christ's knowledge is Alexander of Hales; cf. *QDAEF.*, pp. 714-29. Several anonymous *quaestiones* on Christ's knowledge are to be found in MS. 434 Douai edited by Walter Principe; cf. Principe, 'Quaestiones Concerning Christ from the First Half of the Thirteenth Century: V. Quaestiones from Douai MS. 434: Christ's Knowledge' in *Medieval Studies* 50 (1988), pp. 1-45. Several *quaestiones* on Christ's knowledge are also found in Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 138, ff. 275ra–276ra. The latter have been attributed to Richard Rufus of Cornwall. However, Ricardian authorship seems doubtful, cf. Peter Raedts, *Richard Rufus of Cornwall and the Tradition of Oxford Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

⁹⁶*De Sapientia*. Cf. *Sum. Sent.*

possessed the capacity to learn and progress in wisdom. As such, from this perspective, Christ's mind was said to be as flawed and as imperfect as that of any other human being.

Although seemingly innocuous at first – why, the contemporary reader may wonder, is it problematic to attribute genuine acquired knowledge to Christ? – the claim that Christ progressed in noetic by abstracting intelligible species through sense experience nonetheless sat deeply uneasy with the medieval interpretation of Christ's noetic. This is so because it contradicted the key belief at work within the scholastic doctrine of Christ's knowledge; namely, that the mind of the Incarnate Word was omniscient and therefore perfect. As chapter two will reveal, for thirteenth-century thinkers, Bonaventure included, Christ's soul stood apart from the rest of humanity. Even whilst *in via* it was blessed with the fullness of the beatific vision, thereby meaning it continually gazed upon the divine ideas. As such, from the moment of its creation it was infused with both a perfect knowledge of God (insofar as He can be grasped by the finite intellect) and a complete, albeit latent, knowledge of all created species.

To this extent, or so it was claimed, Christ not only knew all creatures prior to any contact with them, but, more importantly, his knowledge could not be augmented or undergo any substantial change, either through the abstraction of intelligible species or through empirical investigation. Christ, in short, could not learn through sense experience. In this respect, Christ's mind was radically different to that of ordinary human beings. Moreover, it employed a noetic method completely alien to the model of cognition Aristotle propounds. Whilst according to Aristotle, the mind acquires truth and certainty about the world from observing the world itself, according to Christian theology, this is not the case in Christ. Unlike ordinary humans, Christ's knowledge of the world – like that of our proto-parents – came from an infused, albeit latent, supernatural *habitus*. As we will see, central to understanding why this divergence between Christ and ordinary human beings has arisen is the importance which the medievals – Bonaventure in particular – attribute to the fall's effects upon human noetic.

In their original state, our proto-parents, or so the medieval argument goes, were like Christ. They were endowed with a perfect innate knowledge of all created species, and thus could not learn through sense experience. After the fall, however, the soul lost its innate knowledge of creation and was rendered a *tabula rasa*. As such, punished with ignorance, and thereby the capacity for genuine noetic progression, it was forced to discover the world through sense experience and the abstraction of intelligible species. Ignorance, intellectual imperfection, and the capacity to learn through the agency of the active intellect are thus in the eyes of most medievals – and as we will see, this is especially true for Bonaventure – a product of the fall. As such, they are identified solely with fallen man (*homo lapsus*) and the breaking of God’s original commandment (Gen 3: 17). Given that Christ was untainted by sin, and was gifted with intellectual perfection on account of his beatific vision of the Word, it is clear that ignorance and the capacity to learn by abstracting species cannot be attributed to him. Yet it is also clear from the evidence of our everyday experience that the capacity for noetic progression by abstracting species *ab extra* is an inalienable feature of ordinary human cognition *in istu statu*. It is, for want of a better word, “co-natural” with our *post lapsum* humanity.

Aristotle’s doctrine of the active intellect thus placed scholastic scholars in a serious theological quandary. On the one hand, if they sought to protect Christ’s omniscience by claiming that his active intellect did not have to abstract intelligible species *ab extra* from material reality like the rest of humanity then they risked bringing the genuine nature of his *humanitas* into question, or making him appear lesser than other human beings. After all, if human noetic *in istu statu* involves genuine noetic progression through abstraction, then *homo lapsus* seems to be capable of doing something which Christ himself was not able to do. On the other hand, if they accepted that Christ abstracted intelligible species using his active intellect then they had to attribute genuine acquired knowledge, and thereby ignorance, to him and were thus forced to deny his omniscience. Moreover, if the latter position is adopted then

it is necessary to attribute to Christ a mode of cognition that is associated solely with *homo lapsus* – a position that has significant broader consequences for the claim Christ was sinless.

1.8.2) *The Scholastic Response to Aristotle's Challenge to Christ's Noetic.*

As will be seen, for the most part – with the notable exception of the mature Thomas Aquinas and the little-known Johannes Teutonicus – thirteenth-century theologians, both sympathizers and opponents of Aristotle alike, responded to this challenge by emphatically denying and explicitly condemning the suggestion that Christ progressed in wisdom by abstracting intelligible species. As such, they openly accepted that Christ's noetic was radically different to that of other human beings, both in terms of its content and its cognitive processes.⁹⁷

For most scholastics, Bonaventure included, to claim that Christ progressed in knowledge through sense experience or human instruction was not only wrong, but totally illogical. Why would Christ, gifted as he was with the vision of the divine ideas, have needed to abstract intelligible species from creation? After all, on account of his perfect *beatitudo*, his intellect was infused with a complete knowledge of all creation. Moreover, to suggest that the Incarnate Word could grow in noetic in the same way fallen humanity does is to attribute ignorance to him and thereby to deny the perfection of his intellect and his humanity as a whole.⁹⁸ Thus, according to the majority of scholastics, in no way did Christ learn in the way Aristotle describes. Nonetheless, as the next chapter shows, despite this almost universal rejection of the idea that Christ progressed in noetic by abstracting intelligible species, there is

⁹⁷ Cf. Johannes Theutonicus, *Scriptum Super Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* (Vat. City, Ap. Vat., Vat. Lat., MS. 1092, f. 55ra- 55vb).

⁹⁸ As Barnes has recently put it: 'Ignorance follows from sin. Bonaventure's task is to exclude ignorance while preserving the harmonious functioning of Christ's human nature'. Cf. Corey L. Barnes 'On the Incarnation of the Word' in Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (eds.) *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium* (New York: Franciscan Institute Press, 2017), pp. 195-214, at p. 207.

some variation in how the medievals resisted the threat posed by Aristotelianism. As we will see, Bonaventure stands very much at the center of this variation and disagreement.

1.8.3) Grasping the Importance of Aristotelianism's Challenge to the Scholastic Doctrine of Christ's Noetic.

Despite this profound, albeit traumatic, influence which Aristotelianism exerted upon the thirteenth-century interpretation of Christ's knowledge, relatively little has been done to research how scholastic thinkers responded to it.⁹⁹ To a large degree, this is due to the fact that modern scholarship has failed to appreciate the extent to which Aristotelianism challenged, and in many respects directly undermined, key aspects of the medieval interpretation of Christ's noetic. As scholastic thinkers were quick to recognize, the threat posed by peripatetic philosophy extended far beyond merely attributing ignorance to Christ; in it is to be found the seeds of many heretical positions and Christological falsities. For instance, the Aristotelian belief in the unity of the human intellect and its essentially material nature, not only denies the immortality of Christ's soul – thus bringing into question the doctrines of the resurrection and ascension – but, more pointedly, it undermines the uniqueness and perfection of his mind. The problem, put simply, is this: if all people share the same intellect, as Aristotle claims, then Christ's wisdom could be no greater than that of any other human being.

According to peripatetic philosophy, all people are therefore as wise as the Incarnate Word himself. More worryingly, however, under the guise of Radical Aristotelianism,

⁹⁹ It is notable that the most authoritative studies on the scholastic interpretation of Christ's knowledge – i.e., those of Ernst, Murray, Forster, and Vaughan – fail to discuss the impact which Aristotelianism had upon the debate concerning Christ's noetic. Cf. Ernst, *Die Lehre*; Laurence Vaughan, *The Acquired Knowledge of Christ According to the Theologians of the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Rome: Schola Typographia Missionaria Dominicana, 1957); J. Murray, *The Infused Knowledge of Christ in the Theology of the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Toronto: Windsor, 1963); Forster, *Beatific*.

peripatetic philosophy had come to challenge the Christian belief in the primacy of Christ's knowledge by suggesting that it is Aristotle, and not Christ, who represented the perfect expression – the '*regula in natura*' – of all human learning. As will be seen, this challenge was felt particularly keenly by Bonaventure. If, as Averroes claims, Aristotle was endowed – as a unique 'gift' of providence – with the totality of knowledge, then surely, he – and not the Incarnate Word – was the wisest man who ever lived? Surely, the Philosopher, whose writings cover the whole breadth of philosophy, and not Jesus of Nazareth – who possessed no academic training and wrote nothing – is the model to which all men should aspire to conform themselves on an intellectual level? Surely, if we seek to be wise and possessed of the greatest intellectual rectitude and wisdom we should aspire to be *imago Aristotelis* rather than *imago Christi*?

To the scholastic mind, as such, there appeared to be a fundamental, if not irreconcilable, divide between Aristotelianism and the doctrine of Christ's knowledge. Moreover, as seen, no thirteenth-century theologian could avoid confronting this challenge at some point. Thus, despite its apparently insignificant nature, the doctrine of Christ's knowledge is one of the key areas in which the scholastic reaction towards Aristotelianism can be judged with some accuracy; in particular, it highlights – as we will see in the next chapter – the divide between those who were willing to offer some form of concession to Aristotle and those who sought to hold him formally at a distance. It provides us, in short, with a unique window through which the medieval attitude towards Aristotelianism can be seen in all its complexity and sharpness. For this reason, coupled with the fact that Bonaventure – perhaps more so than any other scholastic thinker – shows a particular preoccupation with the question of Christ's knowledge, it provides a credible basis upon which his attitude towards peripatetic philosophy can be assessed.

1.9) *Christ the “Exemplar” of All Knowledge: The Key to Understanding Bonaventure’s Interpretation of Human Noetic.*

As I alluded to earlier, this study takes as its point of departure the methodological principle that Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s noetic ought to be used as an interpretative tool for his critique of Aristotelianism and natural philosophy.

1.9.0) *Christ’s Soul as the Formal and Final Cause of All Human Noetic.*

Key to understanding how this is so – and thereby key to understanding the argument of this thesis as a whole – is the causal relationship which Bonaventure posits between Christ’s mind and ordinary creaturely cognition. Endowed with the perfect expression of all finite noetic, Christ’s mind, Bonaventure tells us, is the “exemplary” or “archetypal” cause of all human knowledge, both speculative and affective.¹⁰⁰ It is, in other words, the *causa formalis* of all human noetic. Like a divinely given blue print, it dictates the pattern and scope of each aspect of human knowing and loving, ranging from sense experience to beatitude.¹⁰¹ Thus, in the same way every creature is a likeness of its original idea in the divine mind – which of course is Christ’s divine consciousness – so all human cognition and affection is, in Bonaventure’s judgement, a participation in, and reflection of, Christ’s own perfect human noetic. To this extent, what the Incarnate Word knew and loved, prescribes the very nature and limits of the knowledge and love which we ourselves ought to possess, as well as the knowledge and love which ought not to possess.¹⁰² Thus, Bonaventure writes in his *Apologia Pauperum*:

¹⁰⁰*Christus Unus*, n. 1 (V, p. 567); cf. *Magister*. (IX, p. 441).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Magister*. (IX, p. 441).

We should understand that since Christ is the Word both Uncreated and Incarnate, there is in Him a twofold principle of exemplarity, the one eternal and the other temporal. By the eternal I mean the principle according to which He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the image of His substance, and also the refulgence of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God. In this mirror all things shine forth in their exemplarity... It is in this sense that Christ is the Uncreated Word, the intellectual mirror and the eternal Exemplar of the whole fabric of creation. But insofar as He is the Incarnate Word, in the actuality of His assumed humanity, He is also the mirror of all graces, virtues, and merits; and therefore the dwelling of the Church Militant should be set up at this example, the dwelling of which Moses mysteriously says: "See that you make... [it] according to the pattern shown you on the mountain".¹⁰³

However, as the last lines of the quote just given indicate, for Bonaventure Christ's exemplary relationship with human noetic is not restricted to the level of formal causality; it also operates at the level of final causality or teleology.¹⁰⁴ The noetic horizon of all graced acts of cognition, Christ's soul, Bonaventure tells us, is the model of perfection – the *causa finalis* – to which all other forms of human noetic, sacred and profane, must strive to conform themselves.¹⁰⁵ Christ is the '*exemplar excitativi*' calling us to sapiential perfection.¹⁰⁶ All true cognition is thus a movement towards, and indeed recapitulation of, Christ's own perfect noetic. Through his perfect contemplation, Christ 'directs and aids our understanding' by showing us the path to intellectual rectitude.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, as he himself explicitly teaches us, it is by modelling ourselves upon his perfect wisdom and humility, that is to say by striving to

¹⁰³ *Defence*, chap. 2. pp. 29-30.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *3 Sent.*, dist. 35, art. un., q. 2, resp. (III, p. 781).

¹⁰⁵ *Christus Unus*, nn. 24-6 (V, pp. 573-4).

¹⁰⁶ *3 Sent.*, dist. 35, art. un., q. 2, resp. (III, p. 781).

¹⁰⁷ *Christ*, p. 160; cf. *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, pp. 22-4).

be made his *similitudo*, that we ourselves become wise and find intellectual fruition: ‘*et discite a me, quia mitis sum, et humilis corde; et invenientis requiem animabus vestris*’ (Mt. 11:29). Thus, as Jay Hammond has recently put it, for Bonaventure ‘all become wise by simulation of Christ’s wisdom’.¹⁰⁸ The natural end of human noetic is a state of Christ-likeness.

1.9.1) Egressus and Regressus: Christ’s Soul as the Axis of all Finite Noetic.

Reflecting his broader metaphysic of emanation, exemplarism, and consummation – something to be discussed in chapter four – Bonaventure thus tells us that the exemplary authority which Christ’s mind enjoys over creaturely noetic follows an *egressus* and *regressus* pattern.¹⁰⁹ As the formal cause of all finite cognition, all right reason flows from Christ’s perfect noetic and derives its legitimacy and certainty from him; whilst at the level of final causality, all human knowing and loving is ordered to “return” – or rather to be “conformed” – to his perfect wisdom through a process of cognitive recapitulation and assimilation.¹¹⁰ Christ’s perfect noetic is thus something akin to the universal axis around which all finite cognition revolves and looks to as its perfecting and illuminating center. As we will see in chapter four, the archetypal authority which Christ’s mind enjoys over creaturely cognition is such that even the angelic intelligence is to be viewed against the horizon of Christ’s perfect noetic and derives its certainty from it.¹¹¹

1.9.2) The Soul as Imago Christi.

¹⁰⁸Cf. *Collationes on the Hexaemeron*, trans. Jay Hammond (New York: Franciscan Institute Press: 2018), p. 58.

¹⁰⁹ *Christus Unus*, nn. 12-13 (V, p. 570).

¹¹⁰ Cf. *3 Sent.*, dist. 35, art. un., q. 2, resp. (III, p. 781).

¹¹¹ *Infra*.

At the heart of this cyclic process, however, is the human soul. Unique amongst rational creatures, it bears the *imago Christi*. Like a wax seal, it is stamped with the image of the formal cause from which it proceeds – i.e., Christ’s own soul. Moreover, it is called to “return” to Christ by continually striving to conform its noetic to his. Crucially, however, the soul’s likeness to Christ, and thereby its own integral identity, has been defaced by sin, specifically the ignorance bestowed upon it as punishment for the fall. *In istu statu* – i.e. *post lapsum* – the soul is thus no longer a perfect *similitudo* of Christ but rather a *vestigium* or shadow of his noetic excellence. The *exemplar* and the *exemplaria*, in other words, are no longer perfectly conformed to one another. As we will see, it is the restoration of the soul’s identity as *imago Christi* which forms the background to Bonaventure’s thinking on salvation, and in turn, the narrative between faith and reason which runs throughout his intellectual synthesis. Indeed, for Bonaventure, the entire purpose and direction of human knowing and loving, both at a natural and supernatural level, is oriented towards the soul’s recovery of the *imago Christi*. Moreover, the place or lack thereof of *ratio* and *philosophia* in this process is dictated by the extent to which they aid or hinder the soul’s regressus back to a state of Christ-likeness.

Bonaventure’s pattern of noetic *egressus* and *regressus* from Christ’s mind and the place of the human soul as *imago Christi* within it can be visualized as follows:

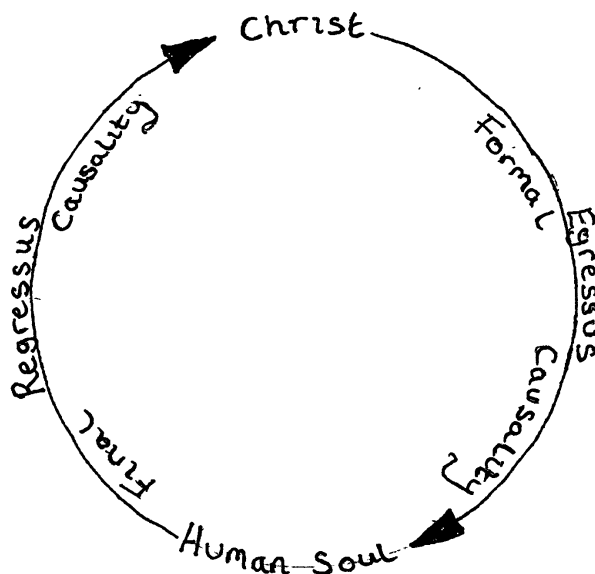


Figure 1

1.9.3) Christ's Soul and the Three Pillars of Human Noetic.

Bonaventure tells us that whilst the causal relationship between Christ's mind and human noetic touches all aspects of human cognition, there are nonetheless three areas in which this exemplary relationship is particularly clear. These are the foundational pillars of human noetic itself; namely, the nature and orientation of human soul and its faculties; the hierarchy of knowledge; and, finally, the narrative of God's self-revelation history. Serving to underpin the entire narrative of creaturely cognition, each of these three areas in Bonaventure's opinion represents a concrete, albeit partial, manifestation of the divinely organized schema of human learning as found in Christ's mind. Each finds its origin, explanation, and final cause within his mind; and each, in turn, serves to help frame the nature and limits of ordinary human cognition. It is thus to these three areas that we must look to understand how Bonaventure's doctrine of Christ's knowledge serves to underpin his thinking on the relationship between *fides* and *ratio*

and the status of philosophy as an academic science; as such, they shall form the basis of the chapters making up the main body of this thesis.

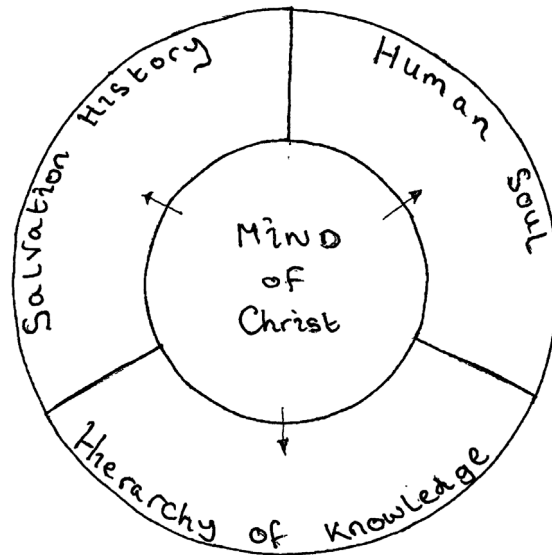


Figure 2

Image representing the exemplary relationship between Christ's mind, the human soul, the hierarchy of knowledge, and the narrative of God's self-revelation in history.

1.9.4) Illegitimate Modes of Cognition: Christ's Soul and The Limits of Human Noetic.

Critical to understanding how Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic relates to his critique of Aristotelianism is his conviction that any form of cognition which fails to find expression within Christ's mind – no matter how highly prized or celebrated it may be – must by the logic of exemplary causality fall outside the legitimate scope of creaturely noetic. This is so, he tells us, because, alien to Christ, and thus unable to claim him as its exemplar, it exists outside the schema of human learning which God has authored in his mind. As we will see, this is true chiefly of Aristotelianism and all unaided philosophy, be it pagan or only nominally Christian. This is so, because unlike the truths of theology, grace, and beatitude which, on account of their

being founded upon revelation, can claim to find their origin within Christ's intellect through his infused and innate cognition, the empirically-based reason upon which these sciences rest, derived as it is from the abstraction of intelligible species from creation, is an intellectual anomaly: it is the only sphere of human noetic which falls outside Christ's mind and is thus foreign to him. For this reason it is an illegitimate and therefore dangerous *scientia*.

As we will see, part of the reason why Bonaventure regards these illegitimate modes of reasoning – in particular the unaided reasoning of Aristotle and the *philosophi* – as dangerous is that they stand not only in direct opposition to Christ's perfect noetic, undermining the schema of human noetic which it defines, but just as troubling is the fact that they actively threaten to weaken further the already damaged nature of the *imago Christi* and thereby thwart its *regressus* back to a state of Christ-likeness. They do so by turning the soul away from its true vocation of modelling itself on the 'constructive and restoring' reasoning of Christ, in favor of the false logic that the devil authored through Original Sin:

For there is a reasoning (*argumentum*) of Christ and a reasoning of the devil. The reasoning of the devil leads to hell (*argumentum diaboli ducit ad infernum*); it is a fallacy a sophistic and destructive reasoning; the reasoning of Christ is constructive and restoring (*constructivum et reparativum*).¹¹²

We will say much more on this in the coming chapters.

1.10) Between History and Systematics: The Modus Operandi of This Study.

¹¹² *Collations*, coll 1, n. 26, pp. 13-14; cf. *Hex.* (V, p. 333).

Given this study seeks to offer a fresh perspective on Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason in order that it may be more fully appropriated by contemporary systematic theology, it is important to note that it is an exercise in both historical *and* systematic research. As such, although utilizing the tools, method, and skills of historical theology the current dissertation ought not to be viewed as an exercise in pure historical research. Nor, in turn, it should be added, is it an attempt to articulate a piece of pure systematic speculation. Rather, it seeks to marry the skills of both disciplines in a *via media*. Thus, on the one hand, this study seeks to cast fresh light on one of the most topical debates within contemporary medieval studies, namely Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason. Whilst on the other hand, it attempts to highlight the relevance of Bonaventure's thought for contemporary systematic theology. In short this study puts historical theology at the service of systematic theology.

1.11) The Guiding Questions of This Study.

As noted earlier, there has arisen over the past century a wide and complex variety of questions concerning Bonaventure's views on faith and reason. This study confines itself to considering the four most disputed and divisive of these questions. **(1)** First, does Bonaventure's thought contain a coherent philosophical synthesis and, if so, can this be considered independently of his theology? **(2)** Second, to what extent is it possible to speak of a development within Bonaventure's Christology and his attitude towards Aristotelianism and if there is a development in these two areas, are they related? **(3)** Third, to what extent does Bonaventure condemn the historical Aristotle? Are, for example, his condemnations of Aristotelianism a rejection of Aristotle himself or rather his radical Latin disciples? **(4)** Fourth, how do Bonaventure's views on faith and reason differ from those of Aquinas? Through approaching each of these questions in the light of the decisive role which Bonaventure's thought on Christ's

knowledge plays in shaping his theological vision, this study seeks to offer a coherent and revisionist response to them; one which points towards a new reading of Bonaventure's views on faith and reason.

1.12) Taking Advantage of New Sources.

Part of the reason why this study is able to offer fresh insight into these important questions is that it takes advantage of a significant number of works attributed to Bonaventure – principally *quaestiones disputatae* – that are not included in the Quaracchi *Opera Omnia*. Many of these were unknown to Gilson, Ratzinger, and Van Steenberghen and have been largely ignored.¹¹³ As noted earlier, the reason for this is that the vast majority of these texts are still unedited and thus available only in manuscript format. Those which this study draws upon include – but are not limited to – the numerous texts contained in an important notebook which belonged to Bonaventure and was written in his own hand whilst he was a student in Paris, i.e., Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186.¹¹⁴ Especially pertinent are the *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei, de Anima, de Divinatione, de Materia Rerum Creaturarum*, and *de Colore* – the latter is the only known example of a distinct “scientific” work by Bonaventure, and is thus particularly instructive in terms of assessing his views on the capabilities of natural reason.¹¹⁵ Also of importance is a collection of extensive *quaestiones disputatae* contained Bibl. Vat. City., Palat.

¹¹³ On the question of Bonaventurian works not contained in the Quaracchi edition see Baldinus Distelbrink, *Bonaventurae Scripta Authentica Dubia vel Spuria Critice Recensita*; Pietro Marenese's 'L'edizione critica bonaventuriana di Quaracchi', *Doctor Seraphicus* 49 (2002), pp. 13 -67 and 'The Opera Omnia of St. Bonaventure: History and Present Situation' in *Companion to Bonaventure*, Jay M. Hammond; J. A. Wayne Hellmann and Jared Goff (eds.) (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 61-80.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Henquinet, 'Un Brouillon Autographe de Saint Bonaventure sur le Commentaire des Sentences' *Études Franciscaines* 44 (1932), pp. 633-55; 45 (1933), pp. 59-85.

¹¹⁵ On the importance of the *Quaestiones de Colore* see William Crozier 'Of Light and Colour – Some Reflections on a set of *Quaestiones* on Colour attributed to St. Bonaventure and their Grossetestian Undertones. Forthcoming.

Lat. MS. 612 – the *Quaestiones de Ieiunio, de Mendicate, de Oratione, and de Eleemosyna*¹¹⁶ – as well as a recently discovered set of *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*.¹¹⁷ Whilst these unedited texts – along with various others¹¹⁸ – do not provide the primary basis upon which this study seeks to understand Bonaventure’s views on Aristotelianism and philosophy, they do nonetheless offer a useful ancillary tool when seeking to address this issue.

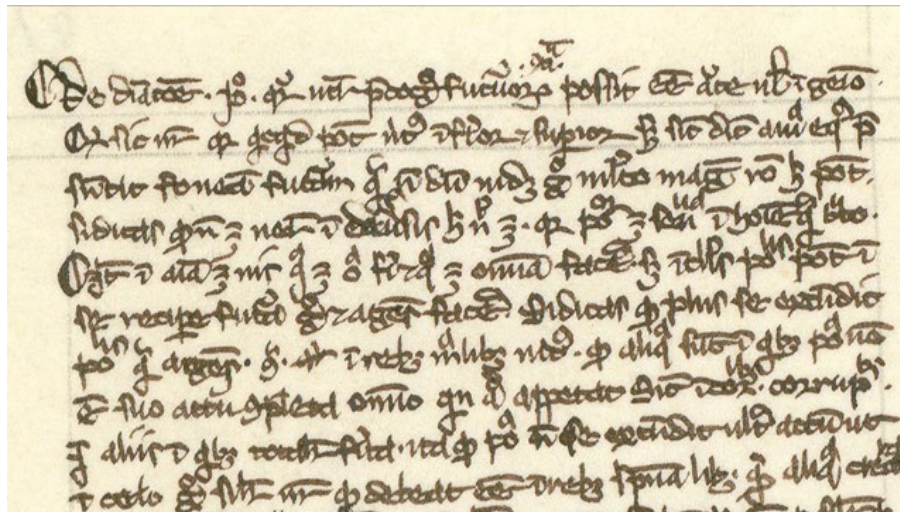


Figure 3

Image of the *Quaestiones de Divinatione* written in Bonaventure’s own hand.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Vat. City. Palat. Lat., MS. 612 ff. 40vb-43va; 43va-46va; 126ra-130rb; 137rb-148rb, respectively. Limited extracts from these questions are to be found in Victorine Doucet, ‘Quaestiones Centum ad Scholam Franciscanum saec XIII ut Plurimum Spectantes in Cod. Florentio Bibl. Laur. 17 sin. 7 – Appendix De Questionibus S. Bonaventurae adscriptis in Cod. Vat. Palat. Lat. 612’ *Archivium Franciscanum Historicum* (1933) pp. 183-202, 474-496.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Clair Angotti and Sophie Delmas; ‘Protégées Par les Gardes: Des Questions inédites de G. de Tournai et de Bonaventure’ in *Études D’Exégèse Médiévale A’ Gilbert Dahan Par Ses Élèves* (New York: Brepols, 2012). pp. 161-84. The relevant manuscript is Paris BNF., Lat. MS. 15322, f. 2ra-rb.

¹¹⁸ Numerous other *quaestiones disputatae* have been attributed to Bonaventure over the years and are considered by this study. Some of these have been edited, including the: *Quaestiones de Caritate et de Novissimis* (cf. Palemon Glorieux, *Questions Disputées “De Caritate, De Novissimis”* Edition Critique *La France Franciscaine*, 1950 Document II.); *Quaestiones de Theologia* edited by Tavard (cf. George Tavard ‘St. Bonaventure’s Disputed Questions ‘De Theologia’ *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* (1950) 17, 187-236.); and more recently, the *Quaestiones de Productione Rerum, de Imagine et de Anima* (cf. Mikolaj Olszewski, *Quaestiones Disputatae “De Productione Rerum” “De Imagine” et “De Anima” e Schola Bonaventuriana (Codex Con. Sopp. D. 4. 27. Bibliotheca Nationalis Centralis Florentiae*” (Rome, Instituto Storico Dei Cappuccini, 2014).

Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 31va.

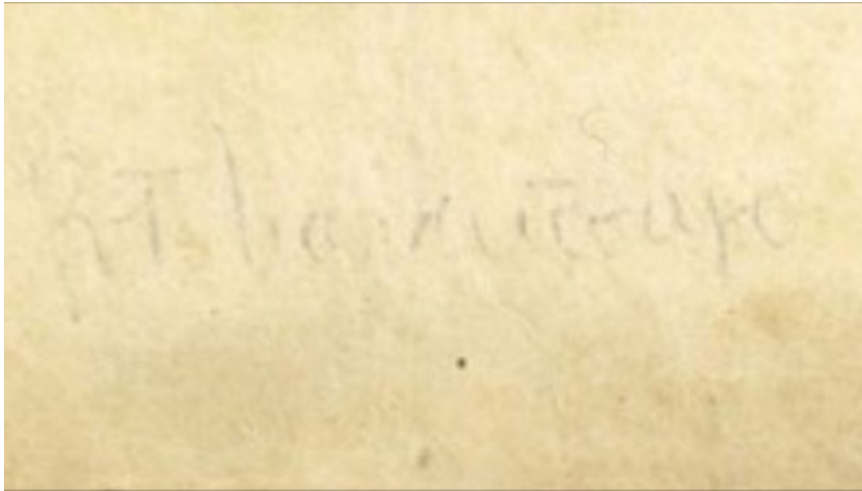


Figure 4

“Frater Bonaventure”: Bonaventure’s signature in Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 138, f. 232v. The signature and copious pencil notes in the margins of Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 138 match the script in which the various unedited *questiones* contained in Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 186 are written. This is one of the key arguments advanced in favor of Bonaventurian authorship of them. Another example of Bonaventure’s signature from Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 138 – as well as an example of the pencil marginalia notes – is offered in the appendix.

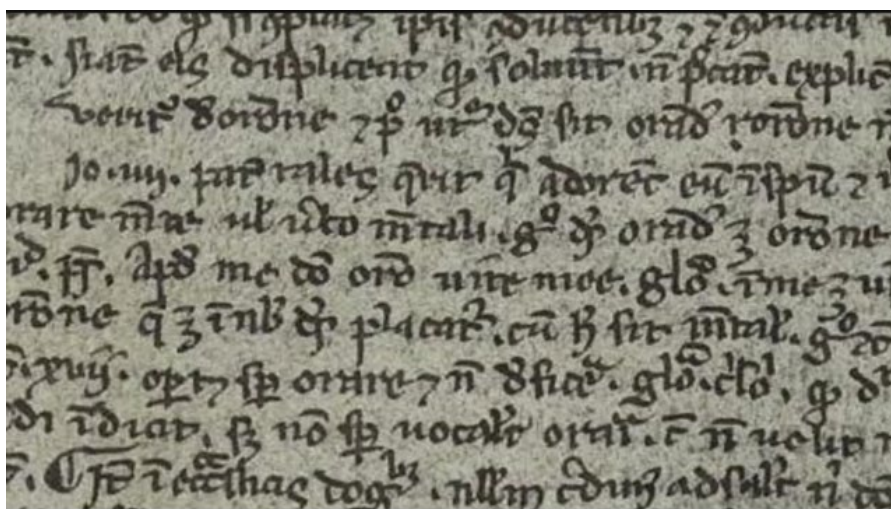


Figure 5

Image of the opening *quaestio* of the *Quaestiones de Oratione*.

Rome Bibl. Vat., MS. Palat. Lat. 612, f. 43va.
Transcription of a *reportatio* written c. 1255-60.

1.13) *Quo Vadis? The Structure of This Study.*

Reflecting its aims, methodology, and argument, following this introductory first chapter, the dissertation divides into five chapters; each of which represent a distinct phase in the unfolding of its argument.

First, Bonaventure's three main texts on Christ's knowledge are explored and compared with those of his most influential mendicant contemporaries; namely, the Franciscan masters: Alexander of Hales, Odo Rigaldus, and John of La Rochelle; and their Dominican counterparts, Albert the Great, Richard Fishacre, and Thomas Aquinas. As the most source-driven element of this study, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how Bonaventure's writings on Christ's knowledge represent the culmination of a wider – primarily Franciscan – reaction against peripatetic philosophy's influence on doctrine of Christ's knowledge. As part of this effort, it shows how – stemming from his belief that Christ's mind is endowed with the fullness of all created wisdom and is thus the exemplar of human cognition – Bonaventure's speculative analysis of Christ's knowledge forms the basis of the anti-Aristotelian narrative which can be traced throughout his thought. Given little has been done to explore Bonaventure's works on Christ's knowledge, part of the objective of this first chapter is to offer a detailed analysis of the distinctive and highly original interpretation of Christ's noetic which they contain.

Second, Bonaventure's Christocentric theology of the soul is outlined. By demonstrating how for Bonaventure Christ's mind is the primordial archetype of the human

soul, the study reveals how the Seraphic Doctor's psychology functions as an outworking and continuation of his speculative analysis of Christ's knowledge and the strongly anti-Aristotelian narrative which it contains. As will be seen, Bonaventure's theology of the soul rejects Aristotelianism, and indeed all unaided natural reason, for the same reason that his texts on Christ's knowledge do – i.e., because they fail to find any expression within Christ's mind and thus cannot claim to be an integral part of human knowledge. A product of the fall, and a remnant of Adam's innate knowledge, philosophy is merely a distorted reflection of the innate wisdom which humanity once possessed in innocence as *imago Christi*. Thus, at its most basic level it is utterly alien to Christ and the original dignity of the human soul. As such, it has no place within the human mind. Furthermore, Aristotelianism compounds its sinfulness by distorting what remains of the soul's likeness to Christ by making it pursue that which is alien to him: the acquired, empirical knowledge of sensory experience.

Third, attention shifts to Bonaventure's hierarchical organization of human knowledge – i.e., the different 'sciences' – and how, as a close reflection of his psychology, it also finds its explanation within his belief that Christ's mind is the universal exemplar of human learning. Here, through a careful study of Bonaventure's "circular" hierarchy of knowledge, the study demonstrates how for him the divinely organized schema of human learning is a direct outworking of the various levels of cognition found within Christ's intellect. Each of the different spheres of learning within the hierarchy of knowledge – from the lowest: sensory experience; to the highest: the beatific vision – is, in other words, a manifestation of a specific level of Christ's own noetic and is therefore to be retraced back to him. The notable exceptions, however, are Aristotelianism and philosophy which, because they fail to find any expression within Christ's mind, cannot claim to be an integral part of the hierarchy of knowledge. Particular attention will be paid to Bonaventure's distinction between Aristotelianism and

“Christian” philosophy and how he regards the latter as reconcilable – albeit temporarily – with Christ’s mind and thereby the hierarchy of knowledge.

Fourth, having demonstrated the central role Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s noetic plays in shaping his psychology and his hierarchical division of the human sciences, the dissertation considers his much-disputed interpretation of salvation history and how this also finds its explanation within his doctrine of Christ’s knowledge. To achieve this goal, the study offers a detailed exegesis of Bonaventure’s final and most anti-Aristotelian work: the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. Through critically appropriating the work of Ratzinger, it demonstrates how for the mature Bonaventure salvation history culminates in a titanic battle between the church and the Anti-Christ; one in which the latter shall overthrow the primacy of Christ’s mind as the universal exemplar of human noetic by holding his own distorted reasoning up as the true model of human learning. This will be achieved through Radical Aristotelianism and its attempt to establish an “autonomous” philosophy. As alluded to earlier after this period of tribulation a final age of peace will be established here on earth during which Christ will restore the soul’s exemplary likeness to him and thereby re-create the correct order of human learning. In this final age, natural reason – and thereby Aristotelianism and philosophy as a whole – will be destroyed and regarded as a thing of the past.

Finally, the dissertation concludes by considering how its use of Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge to interpret his views on Aristotelianism and philosophy allows it to offer the basis for a new response of the four most pointed questions concerning Bonaventure’s thought on faith and reason which we noted earlier.

Chapter 2

The Knowledge of Christ.

'Liber Sapientiae est Christus, qui scriptus est intus apud Patrem, cum sit ars omnipotentis Dei'.

- Bonaventure, *Fer. VI, in parasc., serm. II, I.*

2.0) Introduction.

Having outlined this study's aims, context, and objectives in the previous section, attention turns now to Bonaventure's writings on Christ's knowledge.¹¹⁹ As stated in the last chapter, the goal of this dissertation is to use Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge as an interpretative tool for his views on Aristotelianism and philosophy. In this chapter, we will lay the foundations for this project by sketching out the parameters of Bonaventure's teaching on Christ's knowledge itself. It is hoped that by doing so this will help us to clarify his understanding of how Christ's mind functions as the "exemplar" of all creaturely noetic.

¹¹⁹ Existing literature on Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic includes: Sepinski's *La Psychologie du Christ chez St. Bonaventure*; Forster's *The Beatific Knowledge of Christ in the Theology of the 12th and 13th Centuries*; Vaughan's *The Acquired Knowledge of Christ According to the Theologians of the 12th and 13th Centuries*; Murray's *The Infused Knowledge of Christ in the Theology of the 12th and 13th Centuries*; Bougerol's *Introduction to the Works of St. Bonaventure*; Ernst's *Die Lehre der hochmittelalterlichen Theologen von der vollkommenen Erkenntnis Christi: Ein Versuch zur Auslegung der Klassischen Dreiteilung – Visio Beata, Scientia Infusa, und Scientia Acquisita*; Paul Vignaux's 'Note sur la Consideration De L'Infini dans les *Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi*' in Jacques Bougerol (ed.) *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*, tom. III, (Grottaferrata: Colligio S. Bonaventura, 1974), pp. 107-30; Zachary Hayes' *Hidden Centre and his Works of St. Bonaventure: Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* (New York: Franciscan Institute Press, 1992). Also notable are: Andreas Speer's 'The Certainty and Scope of Knowledge: Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ' *Medieval Theology and Philosophy* 3 (1993), pp. 35-61. More recent studies include: Joshua Benson's 'Structure and Meaning in St. Bonaventure's *Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi*' *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004), pp. 67-90; Therese Scarpelli's 'Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology: Christ's Knowledge as the Epitome of illumination in *De Scientia Christi*', *Franciscan Studies* 65 (2007), pp. 63-86; Peter Dillard's 'Burning Love and the Problem of Christ's Earthly Beatitude', *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 77 (2012), pp. 385-97; and Alexis Bugnolo's 'The Beatific Vision of Christ According to the Doctrine of St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio handed down in his *Commentaria in Quatour Libros Sententiarum*', *De Medio Aevo* 6 (2014), pp. 151-74.

To support this objective, the present chapter offers a detailed analysis of Bonaventure's three main discussions of the subject. Namely, those found in his *Sentences Commentary*, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi*, and *Breviloquium*. Its aim is to show that far from being random, mutually exclusive interpretations of Christ's noetic,¹²⁰ these three texts are in fact possessed of an integral, albeit hidden, unity. This unity only becomes apparent when Bonaventure's thought is viewed in relation to that of his Franciscan and Dominican counterparts. Here it is seen to be part of a larger Franciscan movement aimed at demonstrating the decidedly "un-Aristotelian" character of Christ's noetic. The unity of Bonaventure's thought, in other words, lies in its distinctly anti-Aristotelian basis and the concerted effort which it invests in resisting Aristotelianism's attempt to influence the doctrine of Christ's noetic. Furthermore, as we will also see, once viewed from this perspective, it becomes clear that, representing different sides of the same coin, the variations within Bonaventure's thought are not signs of inconsistency; still less intellectual weakness. Instead, they are witness to its fundamental coherence as a concerted reaction against Aristotelianism.

To support this view, the present chapter demonstrates how there is a significant divide between the early Franciscan and Dominican interpretations of Christ's knowledge; with the former, by and large, though not exclusively, adopting a much more cautious, critical approach towards Aristotelianism than the latter. In particular, it will show how this early Franciscan opposition towards Aristotle and his influence on the doctrine of Christ's knowledge found its fullest expression within Bonaventure's writings.¹²¹ To illustrate how this is so, Bonaventure's thought will be compared with that of his most influential mendicant contemporaries, namely, the early Franciscan masters: Alexander of Hales, John of la Rochelle, and Odo Rigaldus; and their Dominican counterparts: Albert the Great, Richard Fishacre, and Thomas Aquinas. As

¹²⁰ Cf. *Intro.*, p. 115; *Beatific*, pp. 73-4.

¹²¹ *Infra*.

we will see, for the Dominicans the empirical-based epistemology of peripatetic philosophy, in particular Aristotle's doctrine of the active intellect, provides a useful tool for exploring Christ's knowledge, especially the question of his ability to progress in wisdom. For Bonaventure and his Franciscan colleagues, by contrast, the direct opposite is the case: there can be no question of allowing Aristotle, or indeed any philosophical concerns, to dictate the doctrine of Christ's knowledge.

It is important to note that this aversion towards Aristotelianism – which, as we will see, is the underlying reason for Bonaventure's preference for a distinctly mystical, Dionysian interpretation of Christ's cognition – is not to say that there are no Aristotelian elements within Bonaventure's thought, or indeed that of his Franciscan mentors; there are several. But merely that he, like his Minorite associates, systematically refuses to allow peripatetic psychology decisive say in explaining Christ's noetic. Aristotle, in effect, cannot dictate the doctrine of Christ's knowledge. Or to put it another way: pagan psychology has nothing to say on Christology.

2.1) *Methodology.*

Within the broader narrative of this dissertation, the purpose of the present chapter is to reveal the integral link between Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge and his critical assessment of Aristotelianism and philosophy. By demonstrating how each of Bonaventure's three texts on Christ's knowledge possesses a strongly anti-Aristotelian basis, the current chapter offers a revisionist interpretation of these much-neglected works. It demonstrates that far from being an abstract, incoherent aspect of Bonaventure's thought which is possessed of no inherent philosophical or broader theological significance, his writings on Christ's knowledge are in fact the origin and guiding principle of his entire critique of Aristotelianism and natural philosophy, as well as *the* framing element of his broader theological synthesis on

faith and reason. To this extent, the present chapter helps to realize this thesis's ambition to resituate the question of Bonaventure's views on Aristotelianism and philosophy within a distinctly Christological, as opposed to philosophical, context.

2.2) *Structure.*

The chapter divides as follows. **(1)** First, a discussion of the primary elements upon which Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge rests is offered. **(2)** Next, Bonaventure's treatment of Christ's knowledge in the *Sentences Commentary*, *De Scientia Christi*, and *Breviloquium* is outlined. **(3)** Attention then turns to the differing scholarly interpretations of Bonaventure's doctrine of Christ's cognition, focusing particularly upon the controversial question of whether there exists a unified Bonaventurian theory of Christ's noetic. **(4)** Consideration is then given to the divide between the early Franciscan and Dominican interpretations of Christ's knowledge. Here the thought of Bonaventure's most influential mendicant contemporaries is outlined. **(5)** Finally, the chapter concludes by considering the place which Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge occupies within the narrative of the early Franciscan resistance towards Aristotelianism and what this reveals about its own integral unity and decidedly anti-Aristotelian basis.

Section 1

2.3) *Prolegomena: The Foundations of Bonaventure's Doctrine of Christ's Knowledge.*

Before we can examine Bonaventure's writings on Christ's knowledge, it is first necessary to touch upon a number of the foundational principles which run throughout them. Although complex and seemingly peripheral at first, as will become clear these will help us to understand the complexities of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic – of which there are many – as

well as its fundamental unity and systematic rigour. As we will see, each of the following areas is critical to grasping not only Bonaventure's thinking on Christ's noetic itself, but also – and perhaps more importantly with regards to the thesis's overall argument – how it shapes and critically determines his critique of Aristotelianism, as well as his broader views on the relationship between faith and reason and philosophy's status as an academic *scientia*.

2.3.0) *The Circles of the Mind - Bonaventure's Distinctly Circular Model of Christ's Noetic.*

Perhaps the most important aspect of Bonaventure's thinking on Christ's noetic which we need to grasp is his distinctly “circular” model of Christ's different levels of cognition. Departing from the majority of his contemporaries, Bonaventure implies that Christ's intellect, like those of other human beings, does not function according to a vertical hierarchy of noetic – i.e., one in which each level of knowledge stands above another. Rather, he tells us, it operates on a horizontal plane, resembling something like a series of concentric circles. Each of the different spheres of knowledge within Christ's mind contains the next and superior form of wisdom at its centre (see figure 1 below). Thus, the “deeper” one travels into the circular hierarchy of Christ's knowledge, the greater the degree of wisdom one encounters.

As will be seen, although a novel, somewhat untested, interpretation of Bonaventure's thought this circular model of Christ's noetic finds repeated expression in his writings and proves critical to understanding both his broader views on human knowledge, and how in turn the latter derives from his speculative analysis of Christ's cognition.

At its most basic level, Bonaventure's circular hierarchy of Christ's noetic follows the following pattern:

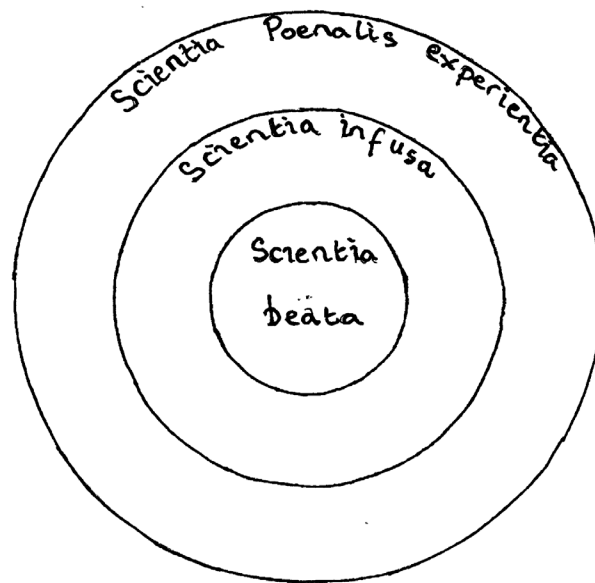


Figure 6

Critical to understanding Bonaventure's circular interpretation of Christ's noetic is his hierarchical division of Christ's cognitive faculties and his distinction between habitual and actual knowledge. Underpinning both these areas, however, is his emphasis upon the perfection of Christ's intellect – i.e., its being endowed with the totality of all the different forms of created noetic – and the salvific importance which he attributes to it.

2.3.1) *Christ, the Fullness, Perfection, and Consummation of the Three Levels of Human Noetic: Beatific, Infused, and Experiential.*

As touched upon in the previous chapter, written many centuries prior to the advent of the historical-critical method, Bonaventure's interpretation of Christ's human knowledge, like those of his associates, differs significantly from contemporary thought. Where moderns such

as Rahner,¹²² Lonergan,¹²³ and Balthasar,¹²⁴ stress the similarity between Christ's mind and that of the ordinary human being, and thus attribute to him both ignorance, faith, and the capacity to progress in wisdom through sense experience, the central belief underpinning Bonaventure's thought, and indeed the scholastic tradition in general, is that Christ's intellect was set apart from the rest of humanity. Un-touched by sin, it was endowed with the totality of created noetic; namely, beatific, infused, and experiential.¹²⁵ According to Bonaventure, there were thus three distinct "spheres" of created knowledge within Christ's intellect, each of which was prioritized according to the dignity of noetic which it bestowed, and each of which, in turn, was possessed of its own unique object of cognition.

As his innermost, and thereby most important "circle" of noetic, Christ's beatific knowledge bestowed upon him a direct, uninterrupted vision of the Word, whereby like the angels and the blessed, albeit to a much fuller degree, he gazed upon the divine essence and the eternal reasons (*rationes aeternae*) and all that they represent.¹²⁶ To this extent, even whilst on earth, Christ possessed the beatific vision. Standing immediately adjacent to, or rather "around" his beatific knowledge, was Christ's infused knowledge. This endowed him with a complete knowledge of creation and all that pertains to the truths of salvation. To this extent, Christ enjoyed the fullness of the noetic possessed by the saints, prophets, and mystics. Finally, Christ's outermost sphere of cognition, his sensory reason, allowed him to engage with creation through empirical experience. However, illuminated by his beatific and infused knowledge, his sensory reason had no need to abstract intelligible species from creation and thus bestowed no

¹²² Cf. 'Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ' in *Theological Investigations*, vol 5, trans. Karl Kruger (London: Dartmann, Longmann and Todd, 1970), pp. 193-215.

¹²³ Cf., *De Verbo Incarnato*, (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964), pp. 332-416.

¹²⁴ Cf. 'Fides Christi: An Essay on the Consciousness of Christ' in *Spouse of the Word* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), pp. 43-79.

¹²⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 14 (V, p. 345).

¹²⁶ *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, resp. (II, pp. 296-7).

new knowledge upon him. Very much the lens through which Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge is to be viewed, it is the belief that Christ possessed the totality of the three different spheres of created wisdom which underpins his conviction that Christ is the primordial archetype and redeemer of all human learning.

2.3.2) *Redemption and Hierarchy – The Necessity of Christ's Perfect Wisdom.*

Easily overlooked, for Bonaventure the necessity of Christ's intellectual perfection is that in order for him to be the saviour of humanity – and, as we will see in the following chapters, the exemplar of the three constituent elements underpinning human knowledge – he must, by necessity, have been the unsurpassed measure of each of the different spheres of noetic offered to the human soul. Central here is Bonaventure's understanding of how Christ's perfect knowledge allowed him to be the 'hierarch' of creation and its *salvator*.¹²⁷ Only by possessing the fullness of creaturely noetic, Bonaventure argues, can Christ, as the *auctor scientiae*, hierarchically organize creation and thereby author its perfection. Similarly, it is only through such omniscience that Christ, as the universal physician (*medicus*), can redeem the world and restore the hierarchy of noetic, which as we will see has been severely disrupted by the fall.¹²⁸ Thus, as Jay Hammond notes, for Bonaventure, Christ is able to 'restore the world, because he knows the world's conditions'.¹²⁹

2.3.3) *The Absence of Nescience in Christ.*

¹²⁷ *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 14, p. 49.

¹²⁸ *Delorme*, principium, coll. 3, n. 16. p. 40.

¹²⁹ Hammond, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, p. 58.

Given that Christ is the exemplar and final cause of all created noetic, it is clear why Bonaventure should reject the attribution of any ignorance to him. After all, if Christ is the primal and definitive archetype of all creaturely cognition, then it is impossible, so Bonaventure reasons, for him to be ignorant of any aspect of finite reality. The first exemplary and final cause of creaturely noetic must exceed in perfection all that which imitates and participates in his knowledge. Crucially, however, as we shall see, for Bonaventure another reason for rejecting the attribution of nescience to Christ is that ignorance – more specifically, the capacity to learn by abstracting intelligible species *ab extra* from material reality is associated solely with humanity's fallen condition. As such, it cannot in anyway be attributed to Christ, whose soul was free from any stain of original sin. As we will come to see, it is this conviction, coupled in turn with his desire to protect the dignity of Christ's soul as the universal noetic exemplar, which is fundamental to understanding Bonaventure's concerted reaction against Aristotelian psychology from the perspective of his doctrine of Christ's knowledge.

2.3.4) Christ's Threefold Vision of Cognition: Intellectual, Spiritual and Corporeal Knowledge.

Corresponding to his beatific, infused, and experiential knowledge, Bonaventure maintains that Christ was endowed with three distinct levels or "visions" of cognitive perception. Namely, intellectual, spiritual, and bodily.¹³⁰ These three visions were the means by which Christ cognized his beatific, infused, and experiential noetic.

Pertaining to his beatific knowledge – what Bonaventure terms his 'knowledge of daylight' – Christ's intellectual vision (*visio intellectualis*) was the means whereby he, like all the blessed, perceived the divine essence without the mediation of any created object, sacred

¹³⁰ Cf. *2 Sent.*, dist. 10, art. 3, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 273); *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 23 (V, p. 347); *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6, (Vol. V, p. 260).

or profane. For this reason, Christ's *visio intellectualis* not only exceeds his lower modes of cognitive vision, but is their fulfilment, grounding, and perfection. Without it the latter are 'worthless'.¹³¹ Corresponding to his infused knowledge, was Christ's spiritual vision (*visio spiritualis*) – his 'knowledge of dawn' – by virtue of which he knew God through the created species impressed upon his intellect.¹³² These species were both innate (such as was the case with the species possessed by Adam *ante lapsum*) and infused (such as the species divinely revealed to the saints, prophets, and mystics).¹³³ Least significant, however, was Christ's outermost vision of cognition: his bodily vision – *visio corporalis* – by virtue of which he perceived God within creation by means of sense experience. As his lowest level of cognitive perception, Christ's corporeal vision corresponds to his experiential noetic and is said to be his 'knowledge of dusk' because it offers the least illumination.

Endowed with the totality of ways in which the soul can know both God and creation, Christ's threefold cognitive vision, and the three distinct spheres of noetic which he possessed through these visions, thus allowed him to participate fully in the four states of humanity; namely, beatified, innocent, reformed, and wayfaring. As we will see in the following chapters, there is thus an integral link between Christ's intellect and the different stages of intellectual illumination possessed by the soul as it ascends to God. (See figures 7 and 8 below).

2.3.5) *Actual and Habitual Knowledge.*

¹³¹ *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 23. (V, p. 347).

¹³² Whilst Bonaventure uses the term *visio spiritualis* in unedited works such as the *quaestiones de divinatione, de prophetia, de visio intellectuali et corporali*, he also uses the term *visio imaginaria* in texts such as the *Hexaameron* and *Sentences Commentary*. Thus, he writes in the *quaestiones de prophetia*: '*Dicendum quod cum sit triplex visio: corporalis, spiritualis et intellectualis...*' (Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 10vb). For the most part Bonaventure seems to regard the *visio spiritualis* and *visio imaginaria* as being essentially of the same order: '*et visio spiritualis idem quod visio imaginativa...*'. Cf. *quaestiones de prophetia*, Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 186, f. 10vb.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Closely related to his circular structuring of Christ's cognitive faculties is Bonaventure's distinction between "actual" and "habitual" knowledge. Recurrent throughout his thought, as well as that of his contemporaries, this distinction is a way of separating that which was known immediately, that is to say "consciously", to Christ's mind from that which it knew only indirectly – i.e. at a "pre-thematic" or "latent" level. Standing midway between pure act and potency, habitual knowledge is essentially a form of latent knowledge whereby Christ – like any other human being – possessed a complete understanding of an object, but did not continually reflect upon this knowledge at an actual – or "conscious" – level; as such, he knew it only "habitually". Habitual knowledge, in effect, is knowledge retained in the memory. Actual knowledge, by contrast, is this latent habit of noetic reduced to act – i.e. brought to "consciousness" through the stimulation of sense experience and inductive reasoning. Reflecting his multi-layered division of Christ's cognitive vision, for Bonaventure it is thus possible for Christ to know something at one level of cognition and yet be unaware of it at another level until it is brought to actuality. It is this conviction that Christ could "progress" in knowledge by discovering for the first time that which he already knew at the level of latent habit, and thus failing to learn anything new *ab extra*, that is critical to understanding Bonaventure's repeated denial of any genuine acquired knowledge within Christ's intellect.

2.3.6) *Christ's Circular Hierarchy of Knowledge.*

From the above, it becomes clear how Bonaventure's distinctly circular interpretation of Christ's cognition is to be imagined:

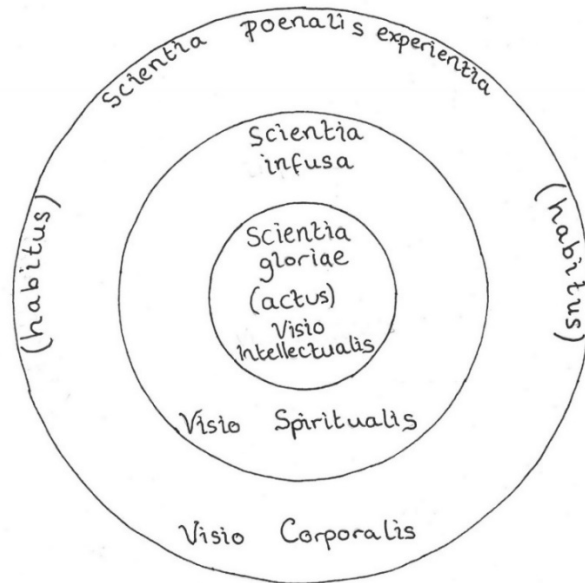


Figure 7

This shows the three spheres of Christ's human knowledge and the various forms of cognitive vision which correspond to them.

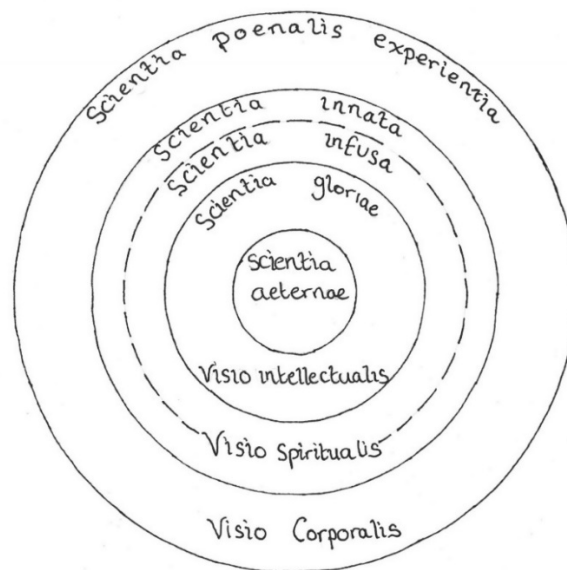


Figure 8

This shows the overall hierarchy of Christ's noetic, human and divine, including the division between innate and infused knowledge which Bonaventure develops in his later discussions of Christ's noetic.

As noted, this circular model recurs in varying formats throughout Bonaventure's writings on Christ's human knowledge. At its most basic level, however, it follows the threefold pattern of logic found in figures 6-7.

Section 2

2.4) *The Knowledge of Christ According to Bonaventure.*

Let us now turn to Bonaventure's writings on Christ's knowledge themselves; namely, the *Sentences Commentary* (c. 1250–1252), *Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi* (c. 1254–1255), and *Breviloquium* (c. 1257).

2.4.0) *Change and Continuity: Bonaventure's Three Texts on Christ's Knowledge.*

Written whilst Bonaventure was a student, and subsequently master of theology, at Paris, the significance of these works is that despite being composed over a relatively short period of time, each offers a seemingly different interpretation of Christ's noetic.¹³⁴ A subject which has puzzled scholars for nearly a century, Bonaventure, in short, does not seem to offer an obviously "coherent" interpretation of Christ's knowledge. Instead, he appears to oscillate between two very different positions – as we will see these are the "habit-actuality" theory and the "ecstatic-experiential" model – until finally in the *Breviloquium* he places the two theories next to one another without suggesting which one is correct.

On the surface this is deeply problematic, especially for this thesis and its claim that Bonaventure's interpretation of Christ's noetic is the guiding principle for his views on faith and reason. How can one of the greatest medieval thinkers, famed for the unity of his

¹³⁴ Most recent estimates date the composition of the Christological material within all three texts between the years 1252-1257.

Christological vision, be said to have failed to produce a unified theory of Christ's knowledge? To reflect this apparent variation within Bonaventure's thought, the current chapter discusses each of his writings according to their chronological order.

Given the significant dearth of research into Bonaventure's doctrine of Christ's knowledge – a subject which we touched on in the previous chapter – in what follows I propose to offer a detailed and systematic exegesis of each of Bonaventure's three texts on the subject. The purpose of doing so is twofold. First, to lay the basis upon which our broader investigation into how Bonaventure's interpretation of Christ's noetic lies at the heart of his theology of faith and reason can rest. Second, to address a significant gap in contemporary Bonaventure studies.

2.4.0.0) *The Knowledge of Christ According to the Sentences Commentary.*

Largely overlooked within English speaking theology, Bonaventure's *Commentary* on Lombard's *Sentences* is his first and most extensive treatment of Christ's knowledge. As such, it forms the basis and general outline for his later discussions of the subject. Written at Paris between c. 1250–1252, his treatment of Christ's knowledge is to be found within the third volume of his *Sentences Commentary*, which most scholars date towards the end of his time as a bachelor of the *Sentences* on account of its stylistic maturity.¹³⁵ Found in distinction fourteen, the *Commentary's* discussion of Christ's knowledge consists of nine questions which are divided into three separate articles: Christ's knowledge of the Word (*scientia de Verbo*); Christ's knowledge in the Word (*scientia in Verbo*); and, finally, Christ's knowledge by the Word (*scientia a Verbo*). The first corresponds to Christ's beatific knowledge of the Word itself; the second, to his infused knowledge of all created species; and the third, to his experiential knowledge as shaped by his direct vision of the Word.¹³⁶ To this extent, hierarchically organised according to their significance, these three modes of knowledge reflect

¹³⁵ Cf. *Intro.*, p. 10.

¹³⁶ 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 313).

Christ's threefold cognitive vision: intellectual, spiritual, and bodily. Moreover, they reflect the three states of humanity: glorified, innocent, and fallen.¹³⁷ Crucially, however, as noted above, Christ does not participate in humanity's fallen cognition; rather, the latter is merely an imperfect vestige of his own perfect sensory reason.

The hierarchical division of Christ's noetic within the *Sentences Commentary* can thus be imagined as follows:

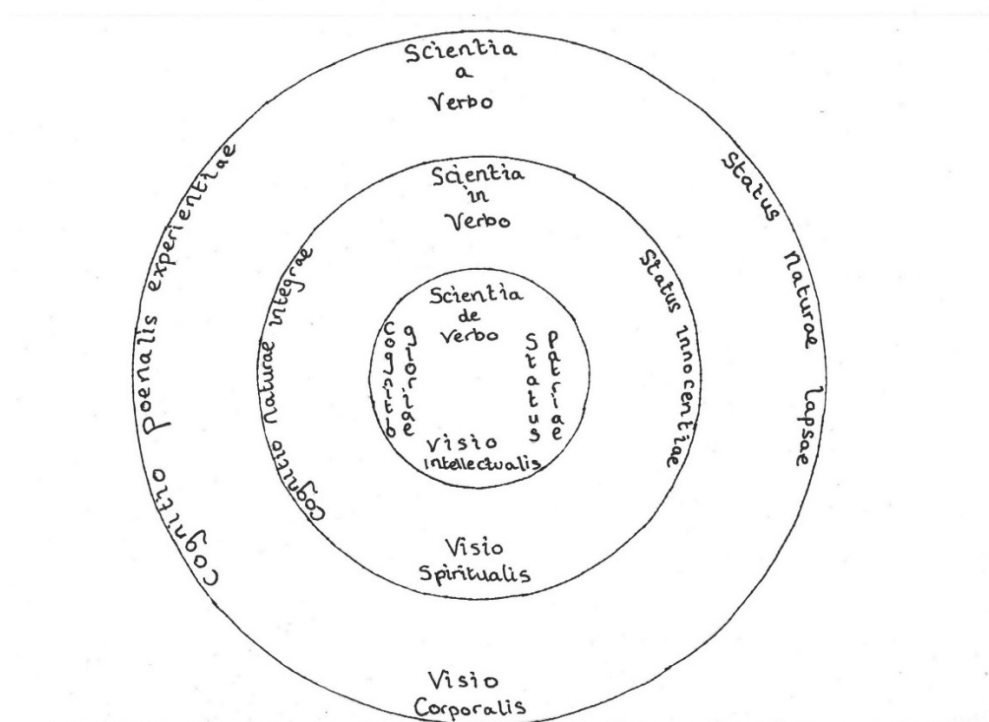


Figure 9

The text of the *Sentences Commentary* divides as follows¹³⁸:

Article 1) Christ's knowledge of the Word (*scientia de Verbo*).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Whilst each of the nine questions are numbered 1-3 within their respective articles, for purposes of clarity I have numbered them 1-9.

- 1) Whether the soul of Christ knew the Word with a different knowledge than that which pertains to the Word itself?
- 2) Whether the soul of Christ comprehended the Word to which it was united?
- 3) Whether the soul of Christ in cognizing God sees Him in the eternal light or through some other light below Him?

Article 2) Christ's knowledge in the Word (*scientia in Verbo*).

- 4) Whether the soul of Christ with the same knowledge whereby it knows the Word knows other things in the Word?
- 5) Whether the soul of Christ knows in act all that which it knows in the Word at the level of habit?
- 6) Whether the soul of Christ knows in the Word all that which the Word knows?

Article 3) Christ's knowledge by the Word (*scientia a Verbo*).

- 7) Whether the soul of Christ has any other knowledge beyond that which it had in the Word?
- 8) Whether the soul of Christ progressed in the genus of cognition?
- 9) Whether God communicated omnipotence to the soul of Christ as he communicated omniscience?

Given little, if any, critical attention has been paid to the *Commentary*'s discussion of Christ's knowledge this chapter will follow this threefold division of Christ's different levels of noetic and will address each of the nine questions in turn.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Another thinker who employs Bonaventure's distinction between knowledge 'of', 'in,' and 'by' the Word is his disciple William de la Mare; cf. *Bibl. Nat. Cent. Florent. Conv.*, MS. *Soppr. F. 4.728*, ff. 48rb-53rb.

Article 1: Christ's Knowledge of the Word (*scientia de Verbo*).

Based upon the conviction that the Word is the primary object of Christ's intellect, both at the level of his beatific knowledge and his lower levels of cognition, Bonaventure begins his discussion of Christ's 'knowledge of the Word' by considering whether Christ possessed any other knowledge beyond that of the Word itself, i.e. whether he possessed a genuinely human intellect.

Q 1) Whether the soul of Christ knew the Word with a different knowledge than that which pertains to the Word itself?

Following Alexander of Hales, John of la Rochelle, and Odo Rigaldus, Bonaventure rejects the claim made by earlier scholastics – most notably Hugh of St. Victor – that there existed only divine knowledge within Christ's soul.¹⁴⁰ He does so by insisting that Christ, like all human beings, was endowed with a separate habit of created noetic – i.e. a finite intellect – which allowed him to cognize the Word from a genuinely human perspective.¹⁴¹ Reflecting his dual nature, Christ thus possessed two distinct sources of cognition: one human, the other divine. Ontologically distinct from his divine knowledge, which as infinite was unable to dwell within his soul, or indeed within that of any other human being, Christ's 'knowledge of the Word' – like his knowledge 'in' and 'by' the Word – was thus a genuine part of his human nature and therefore contained a created, rather than uncreated, habit of noetic. Bonaventure insists, however, that in order to understand the Word, this created habit of cognition needed to be made perfect (*deiforma*) through an infused gift of created wisdom (*sapientia creata*). This is so, because possessing nothing of the uncreated wisdom of the Word itself, it is only through

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *De Sapientia*.

¹⁴¹ *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (III, pp. 288-90).

the elevation of a created habit of wisdom – which as finite was capable of dwelling within Christ’s soul – that Christ’s intellect was able to be assimilated to the Word and thereby capable of understanding it. The product of the grace which is freely given (*gratia gratis data*), the created wisdom of Christ’s soul is thus not a medium; still less a mixture of his soul and the Word. Instead, it was the perfection of the former in order that it may comprehend the latter.¹⁴²

Q 2) Whether the soul of Christ comprehended the Word to which it was united?

Given that Christ possessed a created habit of wisdom, Bonaventure considers whether this habit allowed him to comprehend the Word in its entirety, or see it only in part.

Based upon his conviction that the finite can never encapsulate the infinite, he insists that whilst Christ’s soul may have been directly united to the Word, its created, and therefore limited, nature – both at the level of actual and habitual cognition – meant that it could not comprehend the Word in its entirety, even though the whole of it was revealed to him at the level of infused habit.¹⁴³ Even the most perfect human mind, Bonaventure argues, is finite and thus unable to comprehend the infinity of the Word. To this extent, Christ’s mind is like a weak eye exposed to a brilliant light. It sees the Word in its entirety at the level of latent habit but fails to comprehend it totally at the level of actual intelligence.¹⁴⁴ Thus, positing a distinction between knowledge and vision – a theme repeated in later writings – Bonaventure concludes that Christ, like the blessed in heaven, saw the Word ‘*totum sed non totaliter*’. That is, he continually gazed upon the totality of the Word’s infinity but failed to comprehend the whole of it.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² *Ibid.* (III, p. 289). Cf. Rigaldus *3 Sent.*, dist. 13, p. 2, q. 1, resp. Bruges, Ville, MS. 208, f. 387vb; *SH.*, tom. 4, pars. 1, inq. 1, tract. 3, q. 2, cap. 1, pp. 163-4; *Glossa III*, dist. 13 (AE), n. 10, p. 131; Rufus *3 Lect. Par.*, dist. 14, resp. q. 1, Assisi. Bibl. Comm., MS. 176, f. 34va and *3 Lect. Ox.*, dist. 14, Oxford, Balliol College, MS. 62, f. 213rb.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, q. 2, resp. (III, p. 293).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Q 3) Whether the soul of Christ in knowing God sees him in the eternal light or through some other light below him?

Given that Christ saw the Word in its entirety, but like the blessed and the angels failed to fully comprehend it, Bonaventure then turns to consider whether his intellect possessed a direct vision of the Word; or whether – as some heretical ‘modern’ authors¹⁴⁶ claim – he saw it only indirectly by means of a created intermediary, or some celestial theophany – as is the case with the saints, prophets, and mystics.¹⁴⁷ Possessed of perfect beatitude, Bonaventure insists that from the moment of his soul’s creation, Christ’s intellect saw the Word immediately, face-to-face (*facie ad faciem*), and without the mediation of any created object.¹⁴⁸

And therefore...it is said there is a third mode which is true and catholic (*vere et catholice*); namely that the most blessed (*beatissima*) soul of Christ, like all the other blessed souls, sees the very fount of the divine light itself in which they are refreshed, rested and delighted. Furthermore, in a certain manner they themselves are absorbed (*absorbentur*) by the clarity of that light so that God is seen on all sides (*undique*) by them; and God is seen in them, and this is most chiefly true in the case of Christ’s soul (*et hoc potissime verum est in anima Christi*).¹⁴⁹

Given this transformative, illuminating effect which gazing upon the Word had on Christ’s soul, Bonaventure concludes that it is more appropriate to say that his intellect knew

¹⁴⁶ Presumably Bonaventure has in mind those rebuked by the condemnations of 1241 and those influenced by the Arabic notion of a hierarchy of celestial intelligences standing between the soul and God.

¹⁴⁷ See *Quaestiones de Prophetia*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 12rb.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Scotus *Rep. III-A.*, dist. 14, q. 1, resp., pp. 344-5.

¹⁴⁹ *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (III, p. 297). Translation my own. Latin text supplied in Appendix 2.

the Word ‘immediately’ not because it was taken up into the Word – a claim found in the *De Scientia Christi*. But rather because its influence – i.e. its created grace – was made present within Christ’s mind so as to illuminate it with the superior light of the Word’s uncreated wisdom. Subsequently, the grace – like the noetic found in Christ’s soul (cf. q. 1) – is not a part of the uncreated being of the Word itself; since, as infinite, this continually exceeds the limits of Christ’s soul. Instead, it is a created ‘participation’ of the Word’s uncreated knowledge whereby the eye of Christ’s mind was illuminated so as to see God *facie ad faciem*.

Article 2: Christ’s Knowledge in the Word (*Scientia in Verbo*).

Having outlined Christ’s beatific ‘knowledge of the Word’, Bonaventure then turns to his lower ‘knowledge in the Word’; namely, the infused knowledge of Christ’s *visio spiritualis* and what knowledge this bestowed upon his intellect with respect to creation. He begins by considering whether Christ’s direct vision of the Word allowed him to comprehend all created reality; and, if so, whether this knowledge was distinct from the cognition which he had of the Word itself.

Q.4) Whether the soul of Christ with the same knowledge whereby it knows the Word knows other things in the Word?

Central to grasping Bonaventure’s response to this question is his doctrine of exemplarism and its underlying distinction between the infinite and finite nature of the Word. As the Father’s eternal *Logos*, the Word, he tells us, is both the “archetype” or “exemplar” of finite creation – i.e. the repository of the divine ideas from which all creation proceeds as a vestige, image, and similitude – and the expressive likeness of the divine infinity itself. The Word, as such, possesses a twofold dimension – one finite, the other infinite. Insofar as it is the exemplar

of creation, the Word is both the primordial archetype of all created objects – past, present, and future – as well as their underlying principle of intelligibility. This is so because it expresses the totality of all created reality. Thus, to ‘know the Word’, as Bonaventure remarks later in life, is to know ‘all understandable things’.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, to the extent the Word is the exemplar of creation it is capable of total comprehension by the beatified human mind, since although immense, and beyond the reach of ordinary human cognition, it is nonetheless a finite reality and therefore capable of dwelling within the blessed human soul in its entirety.

Possessed of a complete knowledge of the Word insofar as it is expressive of the created universe, Christ was endowed with a perfect knowledge of all creatures prior to any act of sense experience since he knew them from the perspective of their original archetype.¹⁵¹ As such, there was not a twofold cognition of the Word within Christ’s soul, i.e. one mode of vision relating to the Word itself and another to all that it expresses. Instead, there was a single noetic vision through which Christ simultaneously comprehended both the Word and all it expresses. Christ, in effect, cognized creation from the perspective of its exemplary cause.¹⁵² Unlike us, Christ thus reasoned from cause to effect, and not vice-versa.¹⁵³

A fact critical in determining the place of empirical knowledge within Christ’s intellect, his beatific knowledge of the Word, even when his mind was turned towards creation, is thus seen to have been the sole illuminating cause of all his lower levels of cognition. In other words, the knowledge bestowed upon Christ’s intellect through his lower knowledge ‘in’ and ‘by’ the Word was derived from his superior knowledge ‘of’ the Word. As such, Bonaventure tells us, there was nothing within Christ’s intellect – beatific, infused, or innate – which did not stem from the Word.

¹⁵⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 4 (V, p. 344).

¹⁵¹ *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (III, pp. 296-7).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, art. 2, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 301).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* Cf. Rufus *3 Lect. Par.*, dist. 14, q. 4, resp. Assisi. Bibl. Comm., MS. 176, f. 36ra.

Q 5) Whether the soul of Christ knows in act all that it knows in the Word at the level of habit?

Moving to consider whether Christ knew in act all of that which he knew at the level of habit, Bonaventure distinguishes between two types of knowledge within Christ's soul; namely, that which pertains to the things which are essential to the vision of glory – i.e., that which is specific to the beatific vision of God in his essence; and that which does not: the infused knowledge of all created species.¹⁵⁴ Because of its perfection, only those things relating to the vision of glory, Bonaventure argues, were known continually in act by Christ's mind; that is to say, fully present to it at all times, since '*gloria est habitus in actu*'.¹⁵⁵ Whereas those things which do not pertain to the vision of glory were known only habitually.

To this extent, rejecting the notion that habitual knowledge is incompatible with the perfection of Christ's mind, or the beatific state in general,¹⁵⁶ Bonaventure maintains that whilst Christ may have been continually aware of all that which pertains to the vision of glory, his habitual knowledge of creation was only known to him successively – that is to say, gradually 'actualized', through distinct acts of reasoning: '*anima Christi non omnia cognoscit in actu quae cognoscit in habitu*'.¹⁵⁷ At the level of his *visio intellectualis*, Christ is thus said to have continually experienced the beatific vision, at least with regards to the truths which pertain to the divine glory itself.¹⁵⁸ By contrast, his lower infused knowledge of creation, found within his *visio spiritualis* and *visio corporis*, he grasped only gradually over time by means of discursive reasoning and sensory experience. Thus, as alluded to earlier, for Bonaventure the mechanics of Christ's cognition are such that it is possible for him to progress in wisdom without actually learning anything new *ab extra*.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, q. 2, resp. (III, p. 304). Cf. Scotus *Rep. III-A.*, dist. 14, q. 2, resp. (XXIII, p. 351).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Cf. *Glossa III*, dist. 14 (AE), n. 11, p. 145.

¹⁵⁷ *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 2, q. 2, sed contra f. (III, p. 304).

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, ad. 2 (III, p. 305).

Q 6) Whether the soul of Christ knows in the Word all that which the Word knows?

Given Christ's infused knowledge was known to him only successively, Bonaventure turns to consider whether Christ was able to comprehend all that which the Word itself knows. His response, closely related to his exemplarist doctrine of the Word, is based upon his distinction between the Word's knowledge of vision (*scientia visionis*) and its knowledge of intelligence (*scientia intelligentiae*). The first is finite because it contains all those created species which the Word was disposed to make within time and space. Whilst the second is infinite because it expresses the limitless depths of the divine mystery itself and all that which it could potentially create.¹⁵⁹ Because Christ's intellect, both at the level of actual and habitual cognition, is a created, and therefore limited, reality, Bonaventure insists that it was unable to comprehend all that which the Word knew at the level of *scientia intelligentiae*. This is so because, relating to the divine nature, this knowledge 'extends to the infinite and the soul of Christ is not able to understand that which is above the finite'.¹⁶⁰ With respect to the Word's knowledge of vision, however, Bonaventure believes that Christ's soul did indeed possess a full and actual comprehension of all that which the Word knows. The reason for this is that although immense, it is nonetheless a finite, quantifiable reality capable of total comprehension by the beatified human mind. Christ, in short, with respect to creation was thus omniscient.¹⁶¹ Respecting the distinction between the human and the divine, Bonaventure therefore concludes that at one level Christ's knowledge was equal to that of the Word's, whilst on another it was not.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 3, resp. (III, p. 309).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Bonaventure's thinking here is rejected by Aquinas; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 20, art. 4, ad. 1, p. 109.

Article 3: Christ's Knowledge by the Word (*Scientia a Verbo*).

Having established Christ's direct vision of the Word and his infused knowledge of all created species, Bonaventure then considers Christ's 'knowledge by the Word'; namely, his lowest level of cognition – his experiential knowledge – and what impact his superior modes of cognition had upon his sensory reason. He begins by asking whether there was any other knowledge within Christ's soul besides that imparted by the Word.

Q 7) Whether the soul of Christ has any other knowledge beyond that which it has in the Word?

Based upon the division of Christ's different levels of cognition into intellectual, spiritual, and corporeal knowledge, Bonaventure insists that beyond Christ's beatific knowledge of glory which he enjoyed at the level of his *visio intellectualis*, there existed two further, albeit inferior, modes of cognition; namely, the knowledge of grace and the knowledge of sense experience. The first, corresponding to his *visio spiritualis*, was an infused habit of noetic, whereby Christ, like Adam, possessed a complete knowledge of all creation and like the saints knew all the truths pertaining to salvation. The second, associated with his lower *visio corporalis*, and his natural reason as a wayfarer (*viator*), was an innate habit of knowledge which formed the basis of his ability to perceive creation by means of his senses. Thus, endowed with three distinct levels of cognition – glorified, infused-integral, and experiential – there existed two other "sources" of knowledge within Christ's soul besides that of his beatific knowledge: the knowledge which he derived from divine revelation and that which he experienced through sense perception. Both of these, however, as noted, he enjoyed through the illumination of his higher beatific knowledge.¹⁶²

¹⁶² 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 313). Cf. Rufus 3 *Lect. Par.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 1, resp. ad ob., Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 176, f. 37ra-rb.

By no means superfluous, the presence of these two further modes of cognition within Christ's soul Bonaventure tells us is necessary to ensure not just its full humanity, but also its perfection. For although Christ's vision of glory bestowed upon him a direct, uninterrupted vision of the Word, and therefore a complete knowledge of all finite reality, nonetheless in order for him to experience the fullness of God's self-revelation – since God reveals himself through physical objects as well as the beatific vision – Christ must also have possessed the ability to perceive, or rather experience, divine 'revelation' within creation itself.¹⁶³ Were he to lack the knowledge of grace and sense experience he would have not enjoyed the totality of ways in which God communicates himself to the human mind. More importantly, however – as we shall see shortly – without the capacity for sensory experience Christ would have lacked the ability to experience the pain of the cross – what Bonaventure and his Franciscan mentors describe as his knowledge of suffering (*scientia poenalis*)¹⁶⁴ – and thereby make satisfaction for sin.¹⁶⁵ We will discuss the significance of this shortly.

Q 8) Whether the soul of Christ progressed in the genus of cognition?

As alluded to earlier, in moving to consider whether Christ progressed in wisdom, Bonaventure follows his Franciscan masters in denying the presence of any acquired knowledge, real or apparent, within Christ's soul.¹⁶⁶ Possessed of an infused knowledge of all created objects prior to any physical experience of them, Christ like Adam, Bonaventure tells us, was incapable of learning anything new through his senses. As such, through engaging with creation, he did not acquire any new knowledge by using his active intellect – like fallen humanity. Instead, he merely 'experienced' at the level of empirical knowledge that which he

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Glossa III*, dist. 13 (AE), n. 10, p. 132.

¹⁶⁵ *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 313).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 2, resp. (III, pp. 315-16).

already knew at the level of innate habit.¹⁶⁷ Thus, as Christ failed to progress in his simple knowledge of the Word, so he also lacked any development within his empirical wisdom.¹⁶⁸ Christ did, however, progress in his sensitive knowledge in terms of *cognitive experience*. This is so, because his senses encountered new objects through engaging with creation prior to which they possessed no physical experience. More importantly, through doing so they allowed his intellect to become consciously aware for the first time of that which he already knew at the level of latent habit. Thus, it was Christ's experiential knowledge which acted as the catalyst that facilitated the transition between his habitual and actual knowledge.

It is noted that beyond the knowledge which the soul of Christ had in the Word, he had two further modes of cognition, just as has been said above: for Christ's soul had the cognition of simple knowledge in the intellect and the cognition of experience in the senses. The simple knowledge consisted in the habit and species which were infused into Christ's soul from its very beginning out of the benevolence of the Creator (*ex beneficio Conditoris*). Whereas, the knowledge of experience consists in the use of his exterior senses. Because, therefore, the habit and species pertaining to simple knowledge were impressed upon Christ's soul in [the fullest] plenitude (*in omnimoda plenitudine*), Christ was not able to progress in the cognition of his simple knowledge. Moreover, because, in truth, it is the exterior senses which convert a new thing into that which it was not before, [*i.e. by making known at a conscious level that which was only known previously at the level of latent habit*] this is that cognition of experience in which he progressed.... And thus, although, the soul of Christ, was not able to progress according to the cognition of simple knowledge, nevertheless, it was able to progress according to

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

experiential knowledge (*proficiebat tamen secundum cognitionem experimentalem*). However, the progress of experiential knowledge in Christ differs from that of ours in two ways: clearly, in one way, since Christ did not progress [in wisdom] by arriving at the knowledge of a thing which was previously unknown to him, but [rather] that which he knew in one mode (*uno modo*), namely through simple knowledge, he cognized afterwards in another mode, namely, by experience.¹⁶⁹

Demonstrating a clear knowledge of Aristotle's understanding of acquired knowledge and the active intellect, Bonaventure thus draws a sharp distinction between two types of intellectual progress. Namely, that whereby the mind genuinely learns through abstracting intelligible species; such as Aristotle describes and is found in fallen humanity (*homo lapsus*). And that whereby the mind progresses in wisdom, without ever learning anything new, by merely experiencing at a thematic level for the first time that which it already knows at the level of latent habit; such as is found within the angels and the first man (*homo creatus*). The first mode is imperfect since, associated with the lapsed soul, it involves the movement from ignorance to knowledge; and thereby the bestowal of a perfection upon the mind which it did not previously possess. For this reason, it cannot be attributed to Christ. Whereas, the second is "perfect" since it does not involve a "genuine" progress in noetic, but merely a "fuller grasp" of the knowledge which the soul already possesses at the level of infused habit. As such, it is appropriate to attribute this mode of "progression" to Christ. Thus, by stressing the perfection of Christ's soul, Bonaventure emphatically denies the presence of any acquired learning within his intellect.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.* Translation my own. Latin text supplied in Appendix 2. Cf. Rufus 3 *Lect. Par.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, resp. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 176, f. 37va; *SH.*, tom. 4, inq. 1, tract. 3, q. 2, cap. 2, ad. 8, p. 167; *Glossa III*, dist. 13 (AE), n. 10, p. 132; Scotus *Rep. III-A.*, q. 3, resp., pp. 355-60, esp. 355-6; Aquinas 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 5, sol. 5, p. 461.

To that which is objected, that this is natural, namely, that out of many sensible experiences is made one memory (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, bk 1, chap 1), it is to be said there are two modes of knowing by experience: one, which is by means of the way of acquiring knowledge (*via acquisitionem scientiae*), the other which is through the excitement (*excitium*) of knowledge, whereby that which is known in theory is known afterwards through practice. And where the first mode of experience is to be found in the discovery of new knowledge (*scientiae inventione*), the second consists in the application (*usu*) of knowledge at which the mind is already adept. In the first, the movement is from unknowing to knowledge (*ab incognitio ad cognitium*); whilst in the second it is by a way of progress whereby something is known in one way and then cognized in another mode (*a cognitio uno modo ut cognoscatur alio modo*). And whereas the first mode is with respect to the imperfection of lapsed nature, to which is annexed ignorance (*ignorantiam annexam*); the second way is with respect to the state of innocence, in which the habit of knowledge progresses according to application whereby that which is already known at the level of simple knowledge is later known through the knowledge of experience. And this mode of cognition was in Christ and in not any other, because Christ did not assume any defect of ignorance. Thus, as was said before, the progress of knowledge described by the Philosopher and which is associated with the fallen state was not necessary within Christ and was thus not found within him.¹⁷⁰

Given the significance which Bonaventure's thought on the active intellect plays in determining his attitude towards Aristotelianism, it is worth quoting in full his remarks on the

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, ad. 1-2 (III, p. 316). Translation my own. Latin text supplied in Appendix 2.

inability of Christ's active intellect to abstract intelligible species and how this prevents him from progressing in knowledge. As we will see, Bonaventure's views on the place of the active intellect in Christ's soul will prove central when it comes to exploring how his views differ from the thinking on Christ's knowledge offered by his Dominican counterparts, and indeed his Franciscan mentors. As such, they ought to be carefully noted.

To that which is objected, that the active intellect (*intellectus agens*) in Christ was able to abstract intelligible species, it is to be said that the abstraction of species from their material condition is directed towards either the production of a certain habit [of reasoning]; or it consists in the judgement of those things which are apprehended by the senses, a judgement, I say, which is made by the intellect. And the first was not in Christ (*non fuit in Christo*), for his intellect possessed the habit and species of all things, though the ability to abstract intelligible species in order to acquire knowledge he was not adept at (*nondum adeptae*), for to this is associated with the defect of ignorance (*annexum defectum ignorantiae*). The second mode, however, was in Christ, but from this it does not follow that he learned anything new or indeed progressed in knowledge, but only that when his intellect considered something [*i.e., the species impressed upon his soul through its union with the Word*] it did so through the stimulus of an inferior power.¹⁷¹

Whilst within the context of this particular question Bonaventure does not identify Christ's ability to "progress" in knowledge through sense experience with his ability to suffer the pain of the cross and thereby make satisfaction for sin, he does make this link later on in the *Sentences Commentary*, namely distinction sixteen. Here he makes it clear that Christ's ability to learn through the physical experience of the cross – i.e. to come to know at the level

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, ad. 5. Translation my own. Latin text supplied in Appendix 2.

of actuality that which he knew at the level of latent habit – was integral to his identity as *salvator mundi*. Only by discovering for the first time at the level of actuality the pain and despair which he already knew at the level of latent habit could Christ genuinely undergo the crucifixion and offer satisfaction: ‘*necessitas patiendi fuit in Christo, videlicet propter nostrum redemptionem*’.¹⁷² Moreover, this pain and suffering was not restricted to Christ’s body; it reached the very heart of his intellect itself, and thereby the very perfection of his noetic. ‘*Non dubium*’ Bonaventure writes ‘*Christus fuerit passus secundum rationem*’.¹⁷³ Crucially, however Bonaventure reminds us that this suffering, both physical, affective, and intellectual was undertaken out of love for humanity, and a desire to restore it to rectitude. We thus see that for Bonaventure, it is Christ’s love for us, and not the pain he endured on the cross, which is the primary instrumental cause of his satisfactory act. In this respect, Bonaventure is at one with the interpretation of satisfaction offered by Aquinas and indeed his Franciscan mentors.¹⁷⁴

Q 9) Whether God communicated to the soul of Christ omnipotence, just as he has communicated omniscience to it?

Finally, having demonstrated that Christ possessed a perfect knowledge of both God and creation, Bonaventure considers whether having the gift of omniscience meant that Christ was also endowed with omnipotence. Based upon the conviction that the human soul, including Christ’s, is neither the sufficient cause of itself nor of any other creature – i.e. it lacks the capacity to create or sustain itself in being without God’s assistance¹⁷⁵ – he concludes that Christ’s soul, like all other creatures, was incapable of possessing omnipotence. Thus, whilst Christ’s intellect may have been equal to God in some ways with respect to knowledge it was

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, dist. 16, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (III, p. 344).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, dist. 16, art. 2, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 348).

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *IMT.*, pp. 203-6.

¹⁷⁵ See chapter 2, *infra*.

not equal to him in terms of power. God alone is omnipotent. Hence, Bonaventure remarks, Christ's soul, as omniscient, would have known how to create both itself and the universe, but it would have lacked the power to do so.¹⁷⁶

2.4.0.1) *The Knowledge of Christ According to the De Scientia Christi.*

Attention now turns to Bonaventure's discussion of Christ's knowledge in his *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi*.

a) *The Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi: Bonaventure's Second Interpretation of Christ's Knowledge.*

Dated to 1254-1255, the *Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi*, as Bonaventure's second major treatment of Christ's knowledge, and his earliest known set of *quaestiones disputatae*, contains one of his longest and most detailed discussions of Christ's noetic.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, written only a few years after the *Sentences Commentary*, the *De Scientia Christi* does not, as would be expected, restate the conclusions or address the same questions as the former. Instead, much to the puzzlement of many scholars, it introduces what appears to be an entirely new interpretation of Christ's noetic; one unique to Bonaventure's writings within the scholastic literature. Where the *Sentences Commentary* primarily speaks of Christ's cognition of the

¹⁷⁶ 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 3, resp. (III, p. 318).

¹⁷⁷ The precise dating of the *De Scientia Christi* remains disputed. Cf. John F. Quinn, 'Chronology of St. Bonaventure, 1217-1274' pp. 168-86, at pp. 180-81; Bougerol 'Saint Bonaventure et Saint Anselme' in *Antonianum* 47 (1972), pp. 333-61, at pp. 339 and 348. A slightly later dating is offered by Ignatius Brady who posits 1256 as the *De Scientia Christi*'s time of composition; see Brady, 'The Writings of Saint Bonaventure Regarding the Franciscan Order' in *San Bonaventura Maestro Di Vita Francescana E Di Sapiencia Christiana*, vol. 1, Alfonso Pompei (ed.) (Rome: Pontifica Facult Teologica San Bonaventura, 1976), pp. 92-3.

Word, and indeed creation, using the distinction between actual and habitual cognition, and thus offers a decidedly “intellectual” model of Christ’s cognition, the *De Scientia Christi*, by contrast, moves in a notably different direction, favoring a much more mystical, Dionysian outlook. Moreover, it does so in a way that seems to preclude any effort to explain Christ’s cognition in ratiocinative ways.

Here Christ does not engage with the Word through intellectual vision (*per modum comprehensionis*) – though as will be seen elements of this form of cognition are still present at the level of latent habit – but rather through spiritual ecstasy and mystical experience (*per modum excessivum*).¹⁷⁸ Elevated through an indwelling of *sapientia creata*, his mind is ‘absorbed’ and taken ‘captive’ (*feretur*) by the Word, being drawn into it through a process of ecstatic rapture and spiritual delight.¹⁷⁹ The result, as we will see, is that Bonaventure resituates the doctrine of Christ’s knowledge in a context that is as decidedly “un-Aristotelian” in its model of human noetic as it is immune to – or at the very least insulated from – the peripatetic principle that all knowledge is derived from the senses. It is an epistemology in which ‘silence is more helpful than external speech’ and ‘negations are more appropriate than affirmations, and superlatives are more appropriate than positive predications’.¹⁸⁰ It is important to note, however, that this apophatic, affective description of human noetic is still to be found in the *Sentence Commentary*, but crucially not within the context of Christ’s knowledge.¹⁸¹

b) The Structure of the De Scientia Christi.

Although following the *Sentences Commentary* in offering a systematic exegesis of Christ’s human noetic, the *De Scientia Christi* does not use its threefold division of Christ’s knowledge

¹⁷⁸ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 7, resp. (V, p. 40).

¹⁷⁹ *Infra*.

¹⁸⁰ *DQKC.*, epilogue, p. 196.

¹⁸¹ Cf. *3 Sent.*, dist.14, art. 1, q. 2, resp. (III, p. 293).

into *scientia de Verbo*, *scientia in Verbo*, and *scientia a Verbo*. Nor, as such, does it employ its threefold division of intellectual, spiritual, and bodily vision. Instead, it focuses purely upon Christ's beatific knowledge. Somewhat tellingly, therefore, the thorny question of whether Christ progressed in knowledge by abstracting intelligible species like the rest of humanity is not addressed by the *De Scientia Christi*; indeed, it is passed over in complete silence.

The text itself consists of seven questions which divide into two groups. The first three concern Christ's divine knowledge as the eternal Word. Whilst the last four focus upon his human noetic. Within this latter group, as Benson¹⁸² notes, a further distinction arises between those questions which specifically address Christ's own knowledge (qq. 5–7) and a transitional question (q. 4) which, as Hayes observes, is a 'classical statement' of Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination designed to introduce the topic of Christ's human knowledge.¹⁸³ The structure of the *De Scientia Christi* thus possesses a distinct 3–1–3 pattern.¹⁸⁴ The questions are as follows:¹⁸⁵

(Section 1: Christ's divine knowledge).

- 1) Whether the knowledge of Christ, in so far as He is the Word, actually extends to an infinite number of objects?
- 2) Whether God knows things by means of their likeness or by means of their proper essence?
- 3) Whether God knows creatures by means of likenesses that are really distinct?

¹⁸² Benson, 'Structure and Meaning in St. Bonaventure's *Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi*', p. 71.

¹⁸³ *DQKC.*, p. 46.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-1; Benson, 'Structure and Meaning in St. Bonaventure's *Quaestiones Disputatae De Scientia Christi*', p. 71.

¹⁸⁵ *Opera Omnia*, tom. V, pp. 3, 6, 10, 17, 27, 32, and 37, respectively; cf. *DQKC.*, pp. 71, 83, 96, 115, 145, 161, 178.

(Section 2: Human cognition in general).

- 4) Whether that which is known by us with certitude is known in the eternal reasons themselves?

(Section 3: Christ's human knowledge).

- 5) Whether the soul of Christ possessed only uncreated wisdom, or whether it possessed also a created wisdom together with the uncreated wisdom?
- 6) Whether the soul of Christ comprehends the uncreated wisdom itself?
- 7) Whether the soul of Christ comprehends all those things which the uncreated wisdom comprehends?

Given our attention is directed towards Christ's human, rather than divine, noetic, and that Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination is addressed in the next chapter with particular reference to question 4 of the *De Scientia Christi*, the present investigation focuses its attention upon questions 5–7.

c) The human knowledge of Christ according to the De Scientia Christi.

Echoing the *Sentences Commentary*,¹⁸⁶ the *De Scientia Christi* begins its discussion of Christ's human noetic by considering whether his soul possessed any other knowledge beyond that of the uncreated wisdom of the Word itself – i.e. whether it possessed a created habit of noetic; and, if so, how this allowed him to cognize the Word from a creaturely perspective.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 1, q. 1 (III, pp. 287-90).

Q 5) Whether the soul of Christ possessed only uncreated wisdom, or whether it possessed also a created wisdom together with the uncreated wisdom?

Based upon the conviction that Christ possessed a human soul, and therefore a finite human intellect, the *De Scientia Christi* asserts that Christ must also have possessed a genuinely created habit of noetic and therefore cognized the Word from an authentically human perspective.¹⁸⁷ Framed against the backdrop of Bonaventure's illuminationist epistemology, however, the *De Scientia Christi*'s interpretation of how Christ's created noetic cognized the Word differs from the *Sentences Commentary*. In keeping with its mystical outlook, it places more emphasis upon the illuminating and assimilating, as opposed to informing, role which Christ's created noetic played in allowing him to perceive the uncreated wisdom of the Word. Since the eternal light of uncreated wisdom is limitless and therefore beyond the natural grasp of any human soul, including that of Christ's, it is necessary, or so Bonaventure argues, that there must be an intervening medium – a 'created light' – which is capable of illuminating Christ's soul with the light of uncreated wisdom; namely, created wisdom.¹⁸⁸

However, as an 'influence' emanating from the Word, rather than the Word itself, this created wisdom, Bonaventure tells us, is not the eternal light *per se*; and nor as such, is it a true part of the divine essence itself, as is the case with uncreated wisdom.¹⁸⁹ Rather, it is a created reflection, a participation if you will, of the eternal light, which, as proportionate to Christ's soul, is capable of dwelling within it in its entirety. Its purpose is to render Christ's soul receptive to the magnitude of the divine infinity by strengthening it and rendering it 'conformed to God'.¹⁹⁰ Thus, as the animating force of Christ's intellect, the created wisdom infused into his soul exists not for itself but in order to illumine his mind with the capacity to see, or rather

¹⁸⁷ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 5, resp. (V, pp. 29-30).

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* (V, p. 29).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid. DQKC.*, q. 5., resp., p. 153.

receive, the eternal light of the Word's own uncreated wisdom.¹⁹¹ It is the *medium* which disposes Christ's soul to drink 'perfectly and immediately from the divine wisdom'.¹⁹²

Q 6) Whether the soul of Christ comprehends the uncreated wisdom itself?

Having established the presence of a created light of wisdom within Christ's soul, the *De Scientia Christi* then turns to consider whether this light allowed Christ to comprehend the uncreated wisdom of the Word itself.¹⁹³ Based upon the conviction that as a created, and therefore finite, reality Christ's intellect could never comprehend the Word's infinity, the *De Scientia Christi* – drawing upon Bonaventure's doctrine of exemplarism – repeats his earlier insistence of the *Sentences Commentary* that Christ saw the Word in its totality but failed fully to comprehend it.¹⁹⁴ However, unlike in the *Commentary*, it distinguishes between Christ's knowledge of 'comprehension', whereby his mind 'grasped' the Word 'fully and completely in itself' insofar as it is the exemplar of finite creation, and Christ's knowledge of 'apprehension' by virtue of which he saw the Word's infinity but never fully understood it.¹⁹⁵

For as it does not attain to the infinite by comprehension, but by apprehension and ecstasy (*sed apprehendendo et excedendo*) so it attains to the uncreated and supremely simple in the same way.¹⁹⁶

It is at this point that a new, seemingly unexpected development takes place in Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge, one in which Bonaventure moves towards a

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *DQKC.*, q. 5, ad. 13, p. 158.

¹⁹³ Cf. 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 1, q. 2 (III, pp. 290-5).

¹⁹⁴ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 6, resp. (V, p. 34); cf. *Supra*.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* (V, pp. 34-5).

¹⁹⁶ *DQKC.*, Q. 6, ad. 19-20, p. 177.

decidedly mystical and apophatic interpretation of Christ's cognition. In a move that strongly prefigures the apophatic undertones of the later *Itinerarium* and its emphasis on sapid wisdom, the *De Scientia Christi* argues that whilst Christ's soul may have never fully comprehended the uncreated wisdom of the Word, it was nonetheless capable of experiencing it through a process of ecstatic self-transcendence and love. Here, through an ascent of the heart brought about through an indwelling of charity and an inflaming of the spiritual senses, Christ's mind was taken out of itself and carried into the Word where it was 'totally intoxicated' (*omnio inebriati*).¹⁹⁷ By renouncing all intellectual enquiry and succumbing to the enkindling of its *affectus* through charity and the inebriation of grace, it came to perceive the infinity of the divine essence through silent adoration and appetitive desire:

And since that soul which is united with the Word is made more God-like (*deiform*) and is more intoxicated (*magis inebriata*) because of a grace that is not only sufficient but super-excellent, therefore it beholds the divine wisdom, and in this beholding, it is drawn to that wisdom in ecstasy even though it does not comprehend that wisdom. For this reason, wonder (*admiratio*) has a place not only in historical existence but in heaven as well, and not only in the case of angels but in that soul which was assumed by God (*assumpta a Deo*).¹⁹⁸

Thus, according to Bonaventure in the *De Scientia Christi* where Christ's cognitive faculties failed to lead him to the uncreated wisdom of the Word, the affective power of his heart – enflamed as it was through charity, desire, and wonder – succeeded.¹⁹⁹ The epistemology of the *De Scientia Christi* thus maintains that whilst the rational faculty may be

¹⁹⁷ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 6, resp. (V, p. 35); *DQKC.*, q. 6, resp. p. 171.

¹⁹⁸ *DQKC.*, q. 6, resp. pp. 171-2.

¹⁹⁹ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 5, resp. (V, p. 35).

finite, and therefore incapable of grasping anything of the divine infinity, our capacity to know God through the affective adhesion of *caritas* and the assistance of grace – and, in turn, our capacity to be loved by God through mystical rapture – is much greater.²⁰⁰ As the next chapter reveals, this emphasis on the primacy of *caritas* over *ratio*, and more broadly speaking *admiratio* over *comprehensio*, is fundamental to understanding Bonaventure's broader description of human noetic and how it is that the fallen soul, through the stimulation of charity and the spiritual senses, is able to recover its original exemplary likeness to Christ.

Q 7) Whether the soul of Christ comprehends all those things which the Uncreated Wisdom comprehends?

Distinguishing between the Word's knowledge of creation and its knowledge of the divine infinity – what the *Sentence Commentary* termed the Word's knowledge of 'vision' and 'intelligence' – Bonaventure maintains that whilst radically oriented towards both modes of knowledge, Christ's soul experienced them in different ways.²⁰¹ On the one hand, since the Word's knowledge of creation is finite because creation itself is finite, Christ's mind was drawn to it by intellectual cognition. This is so, because as a limited reality it was capable of dwelling within Christ's soul in its entirety. On the other hand, as expressive of the divine being itself, and all that which it could potentially create, the Word's knowledge is infinite and therefore beyond the reach of any created intellect, including that of Christ's.²⁰² As such, exceeding all intellectual reasoning, it was only through the elevation of mystical *excessus* – that is to say the darkening of his intellect and the enkindling of his affective potency – that Christ's soul was able to experience all that which the Word knows with respect to the divine infinity.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, ad. 16, 19-20 (V, pp. 36-7).

²⁰¹ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 7, resp. (V, pp. 39-40).

²⁰² *Ibid.* (V, p. 40).

But in as far the exemplar is expressive and representative (*expressivum seu representativum*), the soul [*of Christ*] is drawn to it not by comprehension but by ecstasy, since in this exemplar an infinite number of things are represented...and therefore, the soul does not grasp these things in their totality. Rather, the soul is taken captive (*feretur*) by them, and thus is drawn not by comprehensive knowledge but rather by an ecstatic (*excessus*) knowledge.²⁰³

Here, through a process of ecstatic self-transcendence Christ's soul was 'absorbed' by the Word in such a way that, falling ever deeper into the divine infinity, it came to understand all that which Word knows through silent adoration.²⁰⁴ Thus, at this level, it is more appropriate to say – in noted contrast to the *Sentences Commentary* – that it is the uncreated wisdom of the Word which takes possession of Christ's soul, rather than his mind which attempts to grasp the Word.²⁰⁵ Thus quoting Pseudo-Dionysius Bonaventure remarks: 'knowing divine things in this way, not according to our own capacity (*non secundum nos*) but in as far as we are entirely drawn beyond ourselves, we are totally deified' (*sed nos totos a nobis totis extra factos et totos deificato*).²⁰⁶

2.4.0.2) *The Knowledge of Christ According to the Breviloquium.*

Attention now turns to Bonaventure's third text to discuss Christ's knowledge: The *Breviloquium*.

²⁰³ *DQKC.*, q. 7, resp., p. 187.

²⁰⁴ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 7, resp. (V, pp. 39-40).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *DQKC.*, q. 7, resp., p. 187.

a) *The Breviloquium: The Final Treatment of Christ's Knowledge.*

Composed around the time of Bonaventure's election as Minister General in 1257, the *Breviloquium*, as his final major academic work, and his last treatment of Christ's knowledge as a university *magister*, offers yet another variation on the subject. By far the shortest and most enigmatic of Bonaventure's texts to treat Christ's knowledge, the *Breviloquium* reiterates much of the *Sentences Commentary* and *De Scientia Christi* in that it offers a concise argument for attributing to Christ the perfection of all created wisdom. Written only a few years after the *De Scientia Christi*, the *Breviloquium* does not, however, align itself exclusively with the latter's "ecstatic-experiential" interpretation of Christ's knowledge. Rather, it reintroduces – somewhat surprisingly – elements of the apparently redundant "habit-actuality" theory found in the *Sentences Commentary*. To many, this suggests a further, albeit retrograde, development within Bonaventure's thought. As we will see, the subject of debate, scholarship has primarily focused upon whether this return to the "habit-actuality" theory of the *Sentences Commentary* and its placement alongside the "ecstatic-experiential" model of the *De Scientia Christi* means that to Bonaventure's mind, the two theories are either essentially the same; or, by contrast, two mutually exclusive interpretations from which he was unable to choose. To appreciate the apparent paradox, it is necessary to consider how the *Breviloquium* rearticulates the relationship between the various levels of Christ's noetic.

b) *The Hierarchy of Christ's Knowledge.*

Whilst following the *Sentences Commentary* and *De Scientia Christi* in placing Christ's divine wisdom above that of his human knowledge, the *Breviloquium* departs from them in that it posits a fourfold hierarchy of human noetic within Christ's soul instead of the earlier threefold

model of beatific, infused, and experiential knowledge.²⁰⁷ The first, and most important level of knowledge the *Breviloquium* tells us, was Christ's knowledge of glory by virtue of which, Christ, like the angels and the blessed, albeit to a much fuller degree, directly perceived the Word's uncreated wisdom itself. Next, there was Christ's knowledge of grace, through which he, like the saints, prophets, and mystics, 'knew all things related to the salvation of the human race'.²⁰⁸ Standing immediately beneath this was Christ's 'innate knowledge' whereby, like Adam, he was endowed with a complete knowledge of all created species and thus knew all creation prior to any act of sense experience. Finally, there was Christ's 'experiential knowledge' through which he engaged with the world at the level of sense perception and, most importantly, experienced the pain of the cross.²⁰⁹ Crucially, however, this experiential knowledge did not bestow upon Christ any new knowledge but merely allowed him to know at the level of actuality that which he already knew at the level of latent habit.

In total, Christ thus possessed five distinct levels of noetic: divine, beatific, infused, innate, and experiential. As such, although retaining the threefold division of Christ's human cognition into intellectual, spiritual and corporeal vision, the *Breviloquium* clarifies the precise nature of Christ's *visio spiritualis*, revealing it to consist of two distinct modes of cognition: innate and infused. The circular hierarchy of Christ's human noetic is thus reimagined by the *Breviloquium* as follows:

²⁰⁷ *Breviloquium*, (V, p. 246).

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

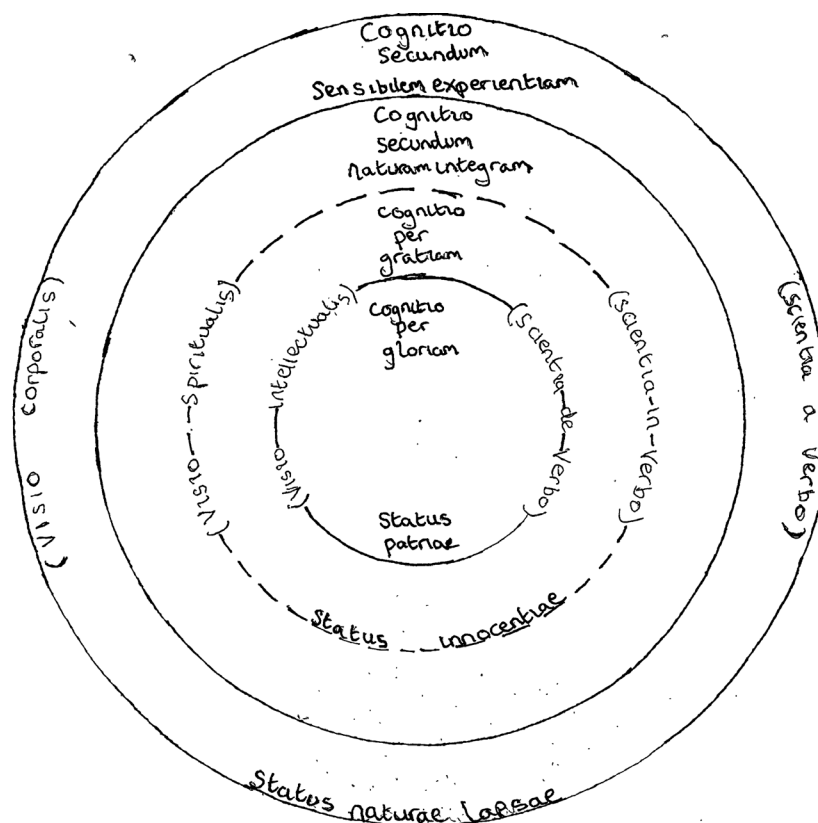


Figure 10

c) *Christ's Sensory Reason and Satisfaction.*

Like the *Sentence Commentary*, the *Breviloquium* makes clear that Christ's capacity to "progress" in knowledge by experience was integral to his identity as the saviour of humanity. Through his sense experience, Christ, we are told, 'learned obedience through what he suffered' and thus made satisfaction for sin by sacrificing himself on behalf of others.²¹⁰ Christ's passion thus allowed himself to "progress" in knowledge by undergoing physical torments 'insofar as these were opportune for him to achieve the redemption of humanity'.²¹¹ Bonaventure further underscores this salvific quality of Christ's experiential knowledge by explaining that it was necessary for Christ to possess all the different levels of noetic appropriate to human beings – including physical pain – in order that as the *novus homo creatus*

²¹⁰ *Brev.*, pars. 6, chap. 6, n. 1, p. 151.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, n. 8, p. 153.

he might participate as fully as he could in the state of *homo lapsus* without incurring the stain of sin.

d) *The Two Variations on Christ's Cognition.*

Pertaining to Christ's ability to cognize the Word, the area of apparent tension and confusion within the *Breviloquium* is found in its description of Christ's knowledge of glory; to this extent, it is a relatively localized point of tension within Bonaventure's thought. Whilst insisting that Christ possessed a complete knowledge of the Word insofar as it is the exemplar of finite creation – something which both the *Sentence Commentary* and *De Scientia Christi* agree upon – the *Breviloquium* states that there are two possible ways of interpreting Christ's ability to engage with the infinite knowledge of the Word. The first, is through an infused *habit* of cognition, by virtue of which Christ beheld the entire Word at a latent, pre-thematic level, but perceived it only in part at the level of *act*, i.e. at a conscious level. Such is the theory of the *Sentence Commentary*. The second mode, by contrast, is by means of an ascent of “affective” or “ecstatic” self-transcendence, whereby Christ's mind was mystically absorbed into the Word – i.e., the theory of the *De Scientia Christi*. The *Breviloquium* thus places side-by-side Bonaventure's two earlier interpretations of Christ's cognition of the Word's infinity; the first of which he had appeared to reject in favour of the second. The question thus arises: does Bonaventure mean to show that the two theories are essentially the same? Or, in contrast, does he present them as alternate theories from which he was unable to choose?

Section 3

2.5) *A Unified “Bonaventurian” Theory of Christ's Knowledge?*

To answer this question, it is necessary to consider how modern scholarship has understood the relationship between these two theories.

2.5.0) The Implications of the Debate Surrounding Bonaventure's Three Texts.

Although having received little attention in recent years, the debate concerning the *Breviloquium's* juxtaposition of the intellectual “habit-actuality” theory with the affective “ecstatic-experiential” model of Christ’s knowledge has primarily focused upon whether or not, on account of this apparent area of tension, it is possible to speak of a unified Bonaventurian theory of Christ’s knowledge? If the two theories are mutually exclusive then Bonaventure, seemingly having struggled with the complexities of Christ’s knowledge, can be said to have failed to articulate a coherent interpretation of the subject. By contrast, if the two theories are the same, or at least reconcilable, then an entirely different, by and large, unexplored conclusion opens up; one in which the juxtaposition of the two theories, and the wider variations within Bonaventure’s writings on Christ’s knowledge, are not signs of inconsistency, still less of intellectual weakness, but rather are varying expressions of a coherent, distinctly Bonaventurian, doctrine of Christ’s knowledge.

2.5.1) The First Interpretation: Bonaventure and His Failure to Articulate a Unified Interpretation of Christ's Knowledge.

Studied by Bougerol,²¹² Forster,²¹³ Hayes,²¹⁴ Sepinski²¹⁵ and Ernst,²¹⁶ the majority of scholars – most notably Bougerol, Forster, and Hayes – tend to favour the first position. They argue the intellectual “habit-actuality” theory and the affective “ecstatic-excessive” model represent two

²¹² *Intro.*, p. 115.

²¹³ *Beatific*, pp. 72-4.

²¹⁴ *Hidden Centre*, pp. 115-16.

²¹⁵ *La Psychologie*, pp. 80-8.

²¹⁶ *Die Lehre*, pp. 165-7.

very different interpretations of Christ's knowledge. As Bougerol asserts, failing to make any attempt to reconcile the two theories, the *Breviloquium* merely 'presents both solutions without allowing the reader to guess in which direction his [*Bonaventure's*] own preference lies'.²¹⁷ A similar position is advanced by Hayes, who views the ecstatic-expressive model of the *De Scientia Christi* as moving not only in 'an entirely different direction' from that of the "habit-actuality" theory but as offering 'no clear parallel in the [medieval] literature up to this point'.²¹⁸ As such, to Hayes' mind the *Breviloquium's* contrasting of the two theories – given that it fails to clarify the relationship between them – communicates Bonaventure's inability to arrive at a final, unified theory of Christ's knowledge. It reveals, in short, his failure to discover a solution 'with which he himself was fully satisfied'.²¹⁹ Thus, as Forster notes, 'singularly difficult and trying, the problem has so taxed the intellectual capacity of the Seraphic Doctor as to leave him a bit unsure as to the acceptable solution'.²²⁰

2.5.2) *The Second Interpretation: Bonaventure and the Unity of the "Habit-Actuality" Theory and the "Ecstatic-Experiential" Model.*

Few and far between, arguments for the unity of the two theories have been offered by the Quaracchi editors²²¹ and more recently by Ernst, Sepiniski, and Murray. According to the latter, despite differing in language and formula, the views of the *Sentences Commentary* and *De Scientia Christi* are essentially the same. They share a common theme; namely, the ability of Christ's mind to behold the Word's infinity in its entirety whilst failing to fully comprehend it, and it is this which grounds their unity.

²¹⁷ *Intro.*, p. 115.

²¹⁸ *DQKC.*, p. 43.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²²⁰ *Beatific*, pp. 73-4.

²²¹ (V, p. 43).

From this perspective, the differences between the *Sentences Commentary* and the *De Scientia Christi* are not ones of substance, but rather language and formula. The *Breviloquium* does not place side-by-side two mutually exclusive positions. Still less does it attempt to force the reader to choose between these two theories. Instead, it represents a concerted effort, subtle in language, to show how, despite formulaic differences, the two theories are essentially the same and of equal in value. Both seek to communicate – albeit in differently – a fundamental truth: that as finite, Christ’s soul could not comprehend the infinity of the divine essence.

As Sepinski notes, central to resolving this debate is the original Latin wording of the *Breviloquium* itself.²²² Translated into English, both of Bonaventure’s references to the relationship between the “habit-actuality” theory and the “ecstatic-experiential” model within the *Breviloquium* are phrased using the word ‘or’.

However, the infinite, he did not comprehend, except perhaps through an infused *or* ecstatic knowledge.²²³

Hence, the intellect of Christ knows the finite by actually comprehending it; but the infinite it does not know except perhaps through a knowledge that it is due to an infused habit *or* even ecstatic.²²⁴

Far from neutral, the English translation of the *Breviloquium* is thus seen to lend itself to the view that the two theories are indeed mutually exclusive. The word ‘or’ suggests the reader must choose between them: either the “habit-actuality” theory *or* the “ecstatic-experiential”. Once, viewed in its original Latin, however, a more nuanced picture of the text emerges.

²²² *La Psychologie*, pp. 80-8.

²²³ *Brev.*, pars. 4, chap. 6, n. 1, p. 150.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pars. 4, chap. 6, n. 5, p. 152.

*Infinita vero non nisi forte cognitione habituali, vel excessiva.*²²⁵

*Ac per hoc ad finita se extendit actualiter comprehendo, ad infinita vero nisi forte habitualiter, vel etiam excedendo.*²²⁶

The word translated as ‘or’ in English is a rendition of the Latin particle ‘*vel*’ which in common usage has two interpretations. The first, as expressing a sense of deliberate choice: ‘the one *or* the other’. The second as offering an alternate, albeit equivalent choice: ‘take what you will’. Thus, as Sepinski notes, Bonaventure’s use of the particle ‘*vel*’ to describe the relationship between the “habit-actuality” theory and the “ecstatic-excessive” model does not – contrary to Bougerol and Forster – necessarily mean that he viewed them as mutually exclusive. Rather, they could be taken as two different ways of expressing the same thing.

2.5.3) *A Potential Solution?*

Based upon this more nuanced interpretation the present chapter advances its own argument in favour of the unity of Bonaventure’s thought. The unity of Bonaventure’s thought, it is argued, lies not so much in any underlying thematic or linguistic resemblance between the two theories – though these are undoubtedly still present. Instead, it is to be found in their distinctly anti-Aristotelian nature. Each of the two theories, despite their notable differences, represents a concerted reaction – albeit utilizing different lines of attack – against Aristotelianism and the growing influence which it was beginning to exert upon the doctrine of Christ’s knowledge.

Section 4

²²⁵ *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6 (V, p. 246).

²²⁶ *Ibid.* (V, p. 247).

2.6) *The Knowledge of Christ in the Thirteenth Century: Bonaventure's Thought on Christ's Knowledge in Relation to That of His Franciscan and Dominican Contemporaries.*

In order to understand how this is so, it is necessary to consider how Bonaventure's interpretation of Christ's noetic relates to that of his Franciscan and Dominican counterparts and their respective attitudes towards Aristotelianism. As will be seen, once viewed from this perspective it becomes clear that Bonaventure's thought is part of a wider Franciscan reaction against the use of Aristotle's psychology – primarily pioneered by the early Dominicans – to interpret the doctrine of Christ's knowledge. Moreover, as will also become clear, it is the fulfilment of this anti-Aristotelian movement. Through them Bonaventure constructs something akin to an intellectual pincer movement against Aristotelianism and its threat to Christ's noetic.

2.6.0) *The Franciscan and Dominican Schools – The Disagreement over Aristotle.*

Given the dearth of research into Bonaventure's writings on Christ's knowledge, it should come as no surprise that a similar situation also exists in relation to his early Dominican and Franciscan colleagues. Over the last few decades very little has been written on the early mendicant interpretations of Christ's knowledge. The most recent studies are those of Ernst, Murray, and Foster; all of which were published prior to 1970 and are as such relatively dated. It is notable that even Aquinas's famous contribution to the medieval debate on Christ's knowledge has failed to receive much attention in recent years, with only a handful of studies having been devoted to it. The most recent being Gaines's *Did the Saviour See the Father?*²²⁷

²²⁷ Gaines, *Did the Saviour See the Father?: Christ, Salvation and the Vision of God* (London-New York: T & T Clark, 2015).

However, as the following pages will make clear, the early mendicant interpretation of Christ's knowledge is very much a subject which deserves serious attention, particularly by those interested in Aristotelianism's reception into the West.

As we noted in the last chapter, Aristotelianism is central to understanding the narrative of the early- to mid-thirteenth-century debate on Christ's knowledge. Not only did Aristotle's epistemology sit uncomfortably with the scholastic belief in Christ's omniscience, but it divided theologians as to how they should respond to this challenge. Particularly pertinent here is the divide it engendered between the Franciscan and Dominican schools. The traditional – by and large Neo-Scholastic – narrative maintains that the early Franciscans and Dominicans shared the common goal of reconciling Aristotelianism with the doctrine of Christ's knowledge. Careful consideration reveals, however, that this interpretation is highly inaccurate. Far from offering a unified interpretation of Christ's knowledge centred on a rapprochement with peripatetic philosophy, there is in fact a significant divide between the early Franciscan and Dominican interpretations of Christ's knowledge. Moreover, this divide revolves around Aristotelianism and its compatibility with Christ's noetic perfection.

Where the Franciscans, by and large, adopted a much more cautious, critical attitude towards Aristotelian psychology when discussing Christ's noetic; the Dominicans, by contrast, favoured a more positive approach. They allowed peripatetic philosophy, particularly Aristotle's doctrine of the active intellect, to openly contribute to the debate on Christ's knowledge and the thorny question of whether he progressed in wisdom. In noted contrast, the Franciscans sought to resist Aristotelianism's incursion into this debate. They did so by employing a two-fold strategy. On the one hand, they steadfastly refused to attribute an active intellect to Christ, fearing that to do so would risk attributing genuine acquired knowledge to him and thereby call into question his noetic perfection. Whilst, on the other hand, they

maintained that the primary purpose of Christ's experiential reason was not to allow him to "progress" in knowledge, but rather to allow him to genuinely undergo the pain of the cross and thereby make satisfaction for sin.

To illustrate this divide, it is proposed that we consider the thought of several of Bonaventure's immediate Franciscan and Dominican contemporaries; namely, his Franciscan masters – i.e., Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle, and Odo Rigaldus; and his Dominican counterparts: Albert the Great, Richard Fishacre, and Thomas Aquinas. As direct contemporaries of Bonaventure, who – with the exception of Fishacre – lectured at the same academic institution as him, i.e. the University of Paris, each of these authors serves to illustrate something of the divide that exists between the two early mendicant schools on Christ's knowledge and their differing attitudes towards Aristotelianism. By viewing Bonaventure's thought in relation to these authors we see how his writings not only stand very much in line with those of his Franciscan mentors, but serve as the culmination of the anti-Aristotelian logic which they contain. In turn, it is hoped that this will help us to see the fundamental unity that is at work within Bonaventure's three texts on Christ's knowledge.

Before we proceed, it is important to note that the divide between the Franciscan and Dominican schools of thought ought not to be viewed in terms of a simple opposition between "anti-Aristotelians" and "pro-Aristotelians". As will be seen, both schools possess "Aristotelian" traces; both, for example, employ the Aristotelian language of 'actual' and 'latent' habits of cognition. Instead, the divide between the Franciscans and Dominicans is to be understood in terms of the more nuanced, ultimately more complex issue of how much influence is to be attributed to Aristotle. Where the Dominicans, on account of their attribution of high importance to the question of whether Christ possessed acquired knowledge, are willing to allow Aristotelianism a relatively prominent role in the debate concerning Christ's experiential knowledge; the Franciscans, by contrast, are much more cautious, preferring

instead to focus on the salvific and penal qualities of Christ's experiential reason. At its most basic level, therefore, the relationship between the two mendicant schools is thus to be understood as a spectrum of opinion, rather than a simple polarity.

2.6.1) The Franciscan School – Holding Aristotle at a Distance.

Although less well known than Bonaventure, the early Franciscan masters Alexander of Hales, Odo Rigaldus, and John of La Rochelle, exerted a strong, arguably decisive influence upon later thirteenth-century Franciscan interpretations of Christ's noetic. The earliest Franciscans to teach at Paris, they – along with Bonaventure – represent most clearly the early Minorite opposition towards allowing Aristotelianism any decisive say on the question of Christ's knowledge. Writing within a relatively short period of one another – most recent estimates date the composition of their works on Christ's knowledge to the period c. 1220–1245 – it is proposed that we consider each of these Franciscan masters according to the chronology of their writings. As will be seen, whilst there are notable convergences between Alexander, Odo, and John – enough to justify the possibility of speaking of a distinctly “Franciscan” approach towards Christ's knowledge – there is no single “Franciscan” doctrine on the subject. Rather, there exists a variation of similar outlooks grounded within a shared “anti-Aristotelian” basis. The unity of the Franciscan interpretation of Christ's knowledge, in other words, lies as much in its rejection of Aristotelianism as it does in any internal or thematic resemblance. As we will see, grasping this truth is critical to discovering the true unity of Bonaventure's own texts on Christ's knowledge.

2.6.1.0) Alexander of Hales OFM (c. 1186-1245).

A native of Shropshire, England, and the first Franciscan to hold a chair of theology at Paris, Alexander of Hales – the ‘Irrefutable Doctor’ – was the earliest Minorite to discuss Christ's

knowledge in any systematic depth. Instigating the practice of “commenting” on Lombard’s *Sentences* as the primary tool of scholastic theological education, Alexander’s thought on Christ’s knowledge – although traces of it are undoubtedly contained within the famous *Summa Fratris Alexandri* (c. 1240–1252) – is primarily to be found within his *quaestiones disputatae* (c. 1220–1236) and *Glossa* on Lombard’s *Sentences* (c. 1222–1229), both of which date prior to his entrance into the Franciscan Order around 1236–7, aged fifty. Exercising a strong influence upon both his Franciscans and Dominican colleagues, Alexander’s writings mark a significant turning point within the scholastic debate concerning Christ’s knowledge. Indeed, in terms of importance, it seems fair to say that they rank alongside those Bonaventure and Aquinas; as such, they are deserving of careful attention.

Whilst Alexander follows Lombard in rejecting the early scholastic denial of any created wisdom within Christ’s soul, and thus specifically endorses the notion of a finite *habitus* of knowledge at work in Christ’s mind, he nonetheless moves significantly beyond the Lombard’s influential belief that Christ only appeared to progress in noetic. He does so by considering the place of empirical knowledge (*scientia experientialis*) within Christ’s intellect. For Alexander, it is Christ’s empirical knowledge, in particular how it relates to the intelligible species already impressed upon his soul at the level of latent habit through his beatific vision, which lies at the heart of whether Christ progressed in knowledge. As we will see, highly influential, this approach is adopted by all of Alexander’s successors, both Franciscan and Dominican alike. Alexander was thus amongst the first scholastics to give serious attention to the possibility of a real growth within Christ’s noetic *via* sensory experience. Crucially, however, he does so without making any use of the active intellect.

Pre-figuring Bonaventure's multi-layered division of Christ's knowledge, Alexander posits a five-fold hierarchy of noetic within Christ.²²⁸ Endowed with all knowledge, Christ possessed the knowledge of divinity, union, comprehension, integral nature, and finally experiential knowledge.²²⁹ Through the latter, he tells us, Christ suffered the pain of the cross and 'came to know through experience that which he did not know prior to experience'.²³⁰ A subtle, yet significant manoeuvre, by placing the discussion of Christ's experiential knowledge within the context of his ability to suffer the crucifixion and make satisfaction, as opposed to the question of his ability to acquire knowledge by abstracting intelligible species, Alexander frames the question of Christ's noetic progression within a distinctly theological-soteriological context, as opposed to philosophical, one. Through doing so, he succeeds in side-lining the Aristotelian question of whether Christ possessed any acquired knowledge in favour of soteriological concerns. Moreover, by doing so he sets the tone of the early Franciscan interpretation of Christ's cognition.²³¹

Having said this, Alexander does not deny the possibility of some form of real "growth" within Christ's experiential knowledge. He tells us that whilst, at the level of his infused knowledge, Christ may have foreseen, and therefore understood, the pain which he must endure upon the cross – albeit at a latent level – it was necessary that this habitual knowledge be reduced to "act" – i.e., brought to "consciousness" – by experiencing it for the first time through sensory reason. As such, according to Alexander, during the crucifixion there was a genuine development within Christ's noetic, whereby he experienced for the first time through his senses, and thereby at the level of actual knowledge, what he already "knew" through infused

²²⁸ *Glossa III*, dist. 13, n. 10 (AE), p. 131. In his later *quaestiones de scientia Christi*, Alexander posits a sixth dimension, formally separating Christ's ordinary experiential knowledge from that of his penal knowledge. cf. *quaestio* 42, mem. 1, n. 16, in *QDAEF.*, p. 718.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*, (L), n. 35, p. 139.

habit.²³² The full horror of the cross, in other words, only became known to Christ during the crucifixion itself. This, however, is not to say that Christ moved from ignorance to knowledge. Instead, he came to “know” at one level of cognition that which he already knew at a different level.²³³ The similarities here to Bonaventure’s *Sentences* are unmistakable.

Of particular importance for Alexander is how Christ’s experience of the cross allowed him to increase in his comprehension of his knowledge of union (*scientia unionis*). Unique to Christ on account of his hypostatic union with the Word, this ‘secret’ knowledge bestowed upon his soul, from the very moments of its creation, all the truths pertaining to salvation and the mystery of redemption: ‘*secundum hanc habuit omnium cognitionem, scilicet illorum quae pertinebant ad mysterium incarnationis, passionis et redemptionis*’.²³⁴ Impressed upon his intellect at the level of latent habit, during the crucifixion the stimulation of Christ’s senses reduced this *scientia unionis* to act, thereby allowing Christ to become aware of it for the first time. Thus, according to Alexander, at the time of the crucifixion there was a genuine increase on Christ’s behalf not only in terms of his sensory reason, but also his own self-understanding as *salvator mundi*. On the cross, Christ grasped more clearly than ever before the need for his sacrifice and the role which the cross was to play in securing the redemption of humanity.

As already noted, despite this emphasis upon the soteriological dimensions of Christ’s empirical knowledge, Alexander does not deny the legitimacy of asking whether in his everyday life Christ possessed genuine acquired knowledge – i.e. whether he abstracted species in the way Aristotle describes. When pushed, he tells us – without referencing the active intellect – that since Christ’s soul was infused with a complete knowledge of all created species prior to any act of sense experience, he was unable – and indeed had no need – to abstract intelligible species *ab extra*. Instead, the species he required to comprehend creation were

²³² *Ibid.*, dist. 14 (AE), n. 2, p. 142.

²³³ *QDAEF.*, q. 42, mem. 5, resp. p. 726.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, mem. 1, resp., p. 717.

already imparted to his intellect through his vision of the Word. Thus, through engaging with creation, Christ progressed neither in terms of acquiring new knowledge nor in perfecting the habits of cognition he already possessed²³⁵ Like a circle, his noetic could not be augmented since endowed with the highest perfection it had no beginning and no end.²³⁶

To Alexander's mind, as such, through engaging with creation, Christ did not learn anything new in the way ordinary human beings do; nor, as such, did he abstract intelligible species *ab extra*. Instead, he merely "experienced" by means of empirical investigation that which he already knew through latent habit: '*per experientiam scivit quae prius non per experientiam scivit*'.²³⁷ At this level, at least it can be said that Christ's knowledge had a discursive character; he moved from knowing one truth to another.²³⁸ The only exception to this rule, Alexander remarks, was Christ's beatific knowledge which was continually in act. Alexander thus concludes that whilst Christ was incapable of acquiring any new knowledge, he did nonetheless genuinely "progress" in his noetic. He "progressed" in terms of appearance, as Lombard taught; but also, at the level of sensory reason. Each day his senses increased in the number of things they experienced and the degree to which they allowed him cognize his latent knowledge. He did not however abstract species as Aristotle describes.

Whilst Alexander may not explicitly condemn or challenge the belief that Aristotelian logic dictates that Christ possessed an active intellect and must thereby also have been able to abstract intelligible species, his refusal to attribute such a faculty to Christ is particularly instructive. By side-lining this key element of Aristotelian psychology, he makes clear his disapproval of any attempt to allow Aristotle to dictate the terms of Christ's noetic, as well as his aversion towards attributing any genuine acquired knowledge to Christ. As we

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Glossa III*, (AE), dist. 13, n .6, p. 130.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 10.

²³⁸ *QDAEF.*, q. 42, mem. 5, resp., p. 726.

have seen, for him Christ possessed experiential knowledge in order to make satisfaction for sin and to increase in his comprehension of his role as the saviour of humanity. He did not possess sensory reason in order to “learn” in the way Aristotle describes. By adopting this approach Alexander sets a trend which his immediate Franciscan successors – Odo Rigaldus, John of La Rochelle, and eventually Bonaventure – were to follow.

2.6.1.1) *Odo Rigaldus OFM (c. 1200–1275).*

Born c. 1200, Odo Rigaldus succeeded John of La Rochelle as Franciscan *magister* at Paris in 1245. One of Alexander of Hales’s closest disciples, Odo occupies an important, though largely overlooked, place within the narrative of the Franciscan interpretation of Christ’s noetic. This is principally due to the fact although several of his writings have been studied in some depth – most notably, his *quaestiones disputatae* – his *Sentences Commentary*, and thereby the material it contains on Christ’s knowledge, have remained unedited.²³⁹ Written c. 1240–1245, whilst Odo was a student under Alexander – and therefore commonly dated prior to John of La Rochelle’s Christological material of the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* – Odo’s thought on Christ’s knowledge demonstrates a close knowledge of Alexander’s writings, especially the *Glossa*.

Extant in several manuscripts,²⁴⁰ Odo’s *Sentences Commentary* follows Alexander in positing a fivefold hierarchy of noetic within Christ.²⁴¹ For him, Christ – as the ‘*comprehensor*

²³⁹ Short extracts of Odo’s treatment of Christ’s knowledge are offered in Francisco Martinez Fresneda’s *La Gracia y La Ciencia De Jesu Christo: Historia de la Cuestion en Alejandro de Hales, Odón Rigaldo, Summa Halensis y Bonaventura*, pp. 206-7.

²⁴⁰ The most reliable transcription of book three of Odo’s *Sentences* is found in Bruges Ville MS. 208. For this reason, this study confines its attention to the latter. I have, however, also consulted the transcription found in Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 182 ff. 10ra-74vb.

²⁴¹ 3 *Sent.* dist. 13, Bruges Ville MS. 208, f. 387vb; cf. Fresneda, pp. 206-7.

*perfectus*²⁴² – possessed the knowledge of divinity,²⁴³ union,²⁴⁴ beatitude,²⁴⁵ integral nature,²⁴⁶ and, finally, sense experience: ‘the fifth mode of knowledge, however, in Christ was according to the way of experience’ (*secundum viam experientiae*).²⁴⁷ As a distinct level of noetic, Christ’s experiential knowledge, Odo tells us, allowed him to experience for the first time in his senses, and thereby at the level of “actual” knowledge, the pain of the cross which he already knew at the level of latent habit. It was thus through his experiential reason, Odo claims that Christ ‘learned obedience’ unto death (Heb 5:8) and, in turn, made satisfaction for sin. Thus, like his master, Rigaldus believes there was a genuine development within Christ’s knowledge at the time of the crucifixion, whereby he moved from one mode of knowledge to another. Moreover, for Odo, as for Alexander, it was this capacity to “progress” in knowledge by experiencing the torture of the cross which defines the proper context within which the question of whether Christ progressed in knowledge is to be pursued.

Echoing his master, Odo also believes that the pain which Christ endured upon the cross also stimulated an increased awareness on his behalf of his own role as the saviour of humanity. Central here is Christ’s ‘secret’ knowledge of union. Through the suffering of his senses, Odo tells us that Christ’s latent ‘knowledge of union’ – *quae pertinant ad incarnationem passionem et redemptionem* – was reduced from potentiality to actuality.²⁴⁸ As a result of this, Christ became “aware” at a “conscious” level for the first time of this ‘secret knowledge’ and thereby increased in his understanding of the mystery of salvation. As for Alexander, in Odo’s opinion, therefore, there was a genuine and historically quantifiably development in Christ’s own self-awareness and self-understanding during the crucifixion.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, f. 388rb.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, f. 388va; cf. Fresneda, p. 207.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

It is important to note that Rigaldus – like Alexander – does not ignore the question of whether Christ progressed in knowledge by abstracting intelligible species. Significantly, however, despite paraphrasing Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* and his *Metaphysics*, he also remains silent upon whether Christ possessed an active intellect. At no point does Odo mention the doctrine when discussing Christ’s noetic. Instead, drawing upon Alexander’s distinction between actual and habitual knowledge, he insists there are two types of experiential knowledge; namely, that whereby the mind genuinely acquires new information through the senses; such as described by Aristotle in his *De Anima* and is found in *homo lapsus*. And that by virtue of which the mind experiences at a different level of knowledge that which it already knows at the level of latent habit; such as was found in Adam’s pre-lapsurian soul. Given that Christ was endowed with a complete knowledge of creation prior to any act of sensory experience, Odo maintains that through engaging with the world Christ’s senses did not acquire any new knowledge, but merely allowed his soul to experience at the lower level of sensory reason that which it already knew through innate habit.

Thus, for Rigaldus, like Alexander, although there was no genuine acquired knowledge within Christ’s intellect, there was nonetheless a real historical development within his learning each time he engaged with creation. Without ever acquiring any new knowledge, Christ progressed in wisdom, Odo tells us, in the same way a theologian knows through practical application that which he already knows through theoretical speculation:

It is to be understood, however, that there are two modes of experience. One mode of experience is that which gives rise to knowledge, of which it is said: ‘out of many senses is made one memory, and out of many memories is made one experience’. Or as is also said ‘experience makes the art’. (Aristotle, *De Metaphysica*, bk 1, chap 1)

1) The other mode of experience is that according to which something is held in

cognition in one way and then cognized in another, just as is the case when a theologian wishes to know at the level of practical experience that which he already knows through meditation. And whereas, the first mode was not in Christ, the second mode, however, was in him, for that which he previously knew at the level of simple knowledge he cognized afterwards through the support of experience and according to this mode is to be understood that which says he ‘learned obedience through suffering’. And thus, by this it is said that he did not arrive at knowledge of which he was previously ignorant, but that he came to understand at one level of consciousness that which he already knew at another.²⁴⁹

2.6.1.2) *John of La Rochelle OFM (c. 1190/1200-1245)/ Summa Fratris Alexandri (c. 1240–1245).*

Although a collegial effort by Alexander of Hales, Odo Rigaldus, William of Middleton, and perhaps even Bonaventure himself, the authorship of the third volume of the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* – and thereby the material it contains concerning Christ’s knowledge – is generally attributed to John of La Rochelle. A native of the Franciscan province of Aquitaine, and the second Minorite scholar to hold a chair of theology at Paris, John, as a close associate of Alexander and Odo, is believed to have composed his contribution to the early Franciscan *Summa* c. 1240–1245. The author of several major texts concerning the soul and its cognitive faculties – most notably, the *Tractatus de Divisione Potentiarum de Anima* (c. 1233–1235) and the *Summa de Anima* (c. 1235–1236), both of which reveal a considerable knowledge of Aristotelian psychology as interpreted by Avicenna – John not only demonstrates a close, often verbatim, knowledge of Alexander’s and Odo’s writings, in particular their arguments against

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 388va-vb. Translation my own. Latin text supplied in Appendix 2.

the presence of any acquired knowledge within Christ's intellect; but like them he refuses to attribute an active intellect to Christ and chooses instead to emphasize the soteriological dimensions of Christ's ability to "progress" in knowledge.²⁵⁰

Writing only a few years after Alexander and Odo, whilst La Rochelle accepts a hierarchical interpretation of Christ's knowledge, attributing both created and uncreated noetic to him, he departs from their thought in that he posits a six-fold hierarchy of knowledge within Christ, rather than a fivefold one.²⁵¹ He does so by formally separating Christ's knowledge of suffering – i.e., his capacity to experience the pain of the cross – from that of his ordinary human experience.²⁵² Endowed with the perfection of all knowledge, Christ possessed the knowledge of: divinity, union, beatitude, integral nature, suffering, and, finally, sensory experience. Thus, whilst following Alexander and Odo in classifying Christ's knowledge of suffering as a form of experiential noetic – specifically that associated with his affective potency – John not only awards it a higher degree of significance than their fivefold hierarchy allows; but, through doing so, he lays even greater emphasis upon the soteriological, rather than epistemological, dimension of Christ's experiential cognition.²⁵³

Like his Franciscan colleagues, John tells us that from the moment of its creation, Christ's soul was infused with a full – albeit latent – knowledge of the horrors which he must endure upon the cross.²⁵⁴ However, Christ was not "aware" of this knowledge – i.e., it was not brought to the level of actuality – until he physically experienced the torture of the cross itself.²⁵⁵ Thus, for John, like Alexander and Odo, during the crucifixion there was a real

²⁵⁰ *SH.*, tom. 4, pars. 1, inq. 1, tract. 3, q. 2, chap. 2, sol., p. 166.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.*, chap. 1, sed contra c and ad. 3, p.164. Here John explicitly identifies Christ's experiential reason with his capacity to undergo suffering (though without the stain of guilt): '*sed non experientiae culpae, sed tantum poenae*'.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.* chap. 2, sol., p. 166; cf. ad. 8, p. 167.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

development within Christ's noetic at the level of his knowledge of suffering and his "actual" knowledge. For John, however, this capacity to experience the pain of the cross – as a separate level of noetic – takes precedence over his ability to undergo ordinary physical experience. Moreover, echoing Alexander and Odo he tells us that it is through his knowledge of suffering that Christ increased in his awareness of the knowledge of union he possessed which pertained to our salvation.²⁵⁶ To John's mind – more so than Alexander's and Odo's – the place of acquired knowledge within Christ's intellect is overshadowed by the more pressing question of his ability to make satisfaction for sin and his ability to understand his role as *salvator*.

Like Alexander and Odo, Rochelle does not reject the legitimacy of asking whether Christ progressed in his everyday knowledge; nor, as such, does he pass over the topical issue of whether the Aristotelian doctrine of acquired knowledge is to be attributed to him. Significantly, however, despite specifically mentioning Aristotle – something both Alexander and Odo fail to do – he, like his Franciscan colleagues, also resolutely avoids attributing an active intellect to Christ, and thus at no point mentions the doctrine in his writings on Christ's noetic. Based upon the conviction that the ability to progress in wisdom is imperfect since it involves a transition from ignorance to knowledge, and thereby the bestowal of a perfection upon the soul which it previously did not have, John follows Odo, and Alexander, in maintaining that through engaging with creation Christ did not "abstract" intelligible species *ab extra*, but merely experienced for the first time at an actual level that which he already knew through infused habit.²⁵⁷ Ignorance thus cannot be attributed to Christ.²⁵⁸ Instead, his senses merely 'elicited' – that is to say, brought to the level of actual knowledge – the habitual

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, sol., p. 170.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap 2, ad. 1., p. 166-7.

knowledge which was latent within him.²⁵⁹ Thus, any “growth” within Christ’s intellect was purely at the level of “experience” rather than “knowledge”.²⁶⁰

2.6.2) *The Dominican School – Christ’s Knowledge in Light of Aristotle’s Teaching.*

Direct contemporaries of Alexander, Odo, and John, the early Dominican masters, Albert the Great, Richard Fishacre, and Thomas Aquinas, offer the clearest witness to the Dominican school’s willingness to utilize Aristotelian psychology as an interpretative tool for Christ’s noetic. As will be seen, in noted contrast to the Franciscans, each of these authors adopts a sympathetic attitude towards Aristotle’s doctrine of the active intellect and its relevance for the question of whether Christ possessed acquired knowledge. Moreover, through doing so, each systematically rejects the anti-Aristotelian attitude fostered by the Franciscans. Writing within a relatively short period of one another – with the exception of Aquinas’s final works which date to the early 1270’s – the majority of their works date from the years 1240-1256. As with the Franciscan masters, it is proposed that we consider each of these authors according to the chronology of their works so as to reflect how the doctrine of Christ’s knowledge developed within the Dominican school. It is important to note that very much like the Franciscans, there is no one set Dominican interpretation of Christ’s knowledge. Instead, there are a variety of similar outlooks which – in sharp contrast to the Franciscan school – find their unity in a broadly sympathetic outlook towards Aristotelianism.

2.6.2.0) *Albert the Great OP (c. 1193–1280).*

A native of Bavaria, Albert the Great – the ‘Universal Doctor’ – was one of the first Dominicans systematically to reflect upon the newly translated works of Aristotle and to apply them to the

²⁵⁹ *Infra.*

²⁶⁰ *SH.*, tom. 4, pars. 1, inq. 1, tract. 3, chap. 2, ad. 8, p. 167.

question of Christ's knowledge.²⁶¹ Writing a few years before Bonaventure, Albert occupies a central, though largely unexplored, place within the thirteenth-century debate concerning Christ's noetic. Often perceived, somewhat unfairly, as merely a commentator and synthesiser, rather than as an original thinker and systematician in his own right, Albert's most significant treatment of Christ's knowledge is to be found in his *Sentences Commentary* and early *De Incarnatione*; which, as Ernst notes, mark a subtle, though nonetheless important, turning point within the scholastic debate on Christ's knowledge.²⁶² Written c. 1240–1245, whilst Albert was studying and lecturing in Paris, these texts depart significantly from the decidedly un-Aristotelian outlook of his Franciscan contemporaries. They do so in that they openly, and repeatedly, apply Aristotle's doctrine of the active intellect and his notion of acquired knowledge to the question of Christ's ability to progress in wisdom.

Positing a fourfold hierarchy of noetic within Christ's soul – beatific, infused, innate, and experiential²⁶³ – Albert argues that the presence of an active intellect within Christ's soul is dictated by the demands of his humanity. If Christ was fully human, as the Christian tradition affirms, then he must by necessity have possessed an active intellect like the rest of humanity. *Prima facie* at least, he must also have had the capacity to abstract intelligible species from material reality. Thus, as Albert remarks in his *De Incarnatione*: '*de veritate nostrae naturae est habere intellectum agentum et possibilem et phantasiam. Ergo haec omnia fuerunt in Christo*'.²⁶⁴ If Christ lacked an active intellect – and indeed a passive intellect – then it is clear that '*ipse non fuit verus homo*'.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ For recent literature on Albert's role in the assimilation of Aristotelianism see Irven M. Resnick (ed.) *A Companion to Albert the Great: Theology, Metaphysics and the Sciences*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013). See esp. David Twetten and Stephen Balder 'Introduction to Albert's Philosophical Works', pp. 165-172; David Twetten, Stephen Baldner and Stephen C. Snyder, 'Albert's Physics', pp. 173-220.

²⁶² *Die Lehre*, pp.131-8, esp. p. 131.

²⁶³ 3 *Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 10, sol., p. 249.

²⁶⁴ *De Inc.*, tract. 4, q. 1, art. 1, arg. pro., p. 204.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

In accordance with Aristotle's description of the human intellect, we are thus led to conclude, or so Albert reasons, that Christ must not only have been endowed with the cognitive faculties which Aristotle claims are necessary to abstract intelligible species *ab extra*, but that he must also, as a result of this, have had the potential to possess genuine acquired knowledge. This is so, because, as Aristotle teaches in his *De Anima*, the natural disposition of the active intellect is to abstract intelligible species from material objects and to bestow these upon the passive intellect, thereby reducing it to actuality: '*dicit Philosophus, quod phantasia, obiectem possibili intellectui, movet ipsum, et luce intellectus agentis possibilis perficitur ex phantasmata, et talis modus in profectum scientiae*'.²⁶⁶

Albert tells us that crucial in deciding whether Christ actually abstracted intelligible species using his active intellect is his beatific and infused knowledge. Like Alexander and the Franciscans, Albert believes that on account of his direct vision of the Word, Christ's soul was infused with a complete – albeit latent – knowledge of all created species.²⁶⁷ For Albert, therefore, the central issue in deciding whether Christ progressed in noetic, is not whether he possessed an active intellect *per se* – as is the case with the later Aquinas; but rather whether he needed to use this faculty to abstract intelligible species. If so, Albert tells us, then Christ did genuinely progress in knowledge since his intellect received species *ab extra*. If not, however, then his active intellect – like that of the first man – was essentially 'impotent' since it had no need to abstract species from creation.²⁶⁸ One of the first scholastics to explicitly state the tension which the introduction of Aristotle's active intellect into the question of Christ's experiential knowledge produced, Albert succinctly defines the problem thus:

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, art. 2, arg. pro., p. 205.

²⁶⁸ *Infra.*

Alternatively, it is asked, whether the active intellect in Christ was able to abstract from other forms anterior knowledge. If not, it was therefore impotent (*ergo impotens*). If so, however, then his active intellect was therefore able to abstract species (*ergo abstraxit*). However, what is abstracted by the active intellect is then imparted to the passive intellect. Therefore, the passive intellect in Christ received new species (*recept novam speciem*), and what is more, it received many such new species. And therefore, it seems that Christ received new knowledge (*novam scientiam*), and so his human senses increased, just as Ambrose says.²⁶⁹

Contrary to the fears of the Franciscans, Albert maintains that the attribution of an active intellect to Christ does not necessarily entail attributing genuine acquired knowledge to him. Christ can possess an active intellect and yet fail to genuinely progress in wisdom. The truth of this is seen in Albert's own response to the question of whether Christ possessed acquired knowledge. Circumnavigating Aristotle's claim that the ability to abstract intelligible species is integral to, and therefore inseparable from, the nature of the active intellect – a position he fully accepts is the case in *homo lapsus* – Albert argues that since Christ was already possessed of an infused knowledge of all created reality his active intellect had no need to abstract intelligible species from material objects, even though it was naturally oriented towards such a task. Christ's active intellect was thus an essential, yet ultimately 'impotent', feature of his humanity. As fully human, Christ must have possessed an active intellect; however, on account of his infused knowledge, it was rendered both mute and redundant.²⁷⁰

Thus, despite his respect for Aristotelian psychology, Albert falls short of attributing genuine acquired knowledge to Christ, and arrives – albeit by an “Aristotelian” route – at a similar conclusion to the one offered by his Franciscan contemporaries; namely, that Christ did

²⁶⁹ 3 *Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 10, arg. pro., p. 249. Translation my own. Latin text in Appendix 2.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*; cf. sol.

not genuinely progress in knowledge by learning new things, but merely experienced at an actual level that which he already knew at the level of latent habit. For Albert – in words closely resembling those of John of La Rochelle – sense experience merely ‘elicited’ the habitual knowledge latent within Christ’s intellect.

The fourth [*mode of knowledge within Christ*] however, is the cognition of the wayfarer, which is the cognition of experience. But the origin of experience is twofold: one mode which produces knowledge; and this is the knowledge, whereby the memory, in ignorance, acquires knowledge by experience, and out of the memory and this experience a new universal reason is generated within the intellect which it previously did not have. The other, is the experience which is not a habit which makes, but elicits, such is the experience which Adam had.....and this is [*the type of knowledge*] which Christ had and in which he progressed, and this is what Ambrose intends to say.²⁷¹

Thus, despite his enthusiasm for Aristotelianism, Albert cannot bring himself to follow Aristotle’s thinking on the active intellect to its logical conclusion and attribute genuine acquired knowledge to Christ. In his attempt to demonstrate the possibility of a reconciliation between Aristotelian psychology and Christ’s intellectual perfection, Albert is forced to purge the doctrine of its offensive elements and thereby radically alter its purpose. Many of Albert’s Dominican colleagues and successors follow his example on this point, including Richard Fishacre and the young Thomas Aquinas.

²⁷¹ 3 *Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 10, resp., p. 249. Translation my own. Latin text in Appendix 2.

2.6.2.1) *Richard Fishacre OP (c. 1200–1247).*

A direct contemporary of Albert, Richard Fishacre was one of the earliest Dominicans to teach theology at Oxford and the first to compose a *Sentences Commentary* at that university.²⁷² Largely overlooked, Richard's *Sentences* occupies an important place within the thirteenth-century debate concerning Christ's knowledge. Written c. 1241–1245, whilst Fishacre was regent master at Oxford, his treatment of Christ's knowledge demonstrates a considerable degree of originality, as well as a strong, though by no means complete grasp, of Aristotelian psychology. Interestingly, in his discussion of Christ's noetic he quotes a much broader range of peripatetic sources than either Albert or Aquinas, including Averroes and even Alhazen.²⁷³

Like Albert and Aquinas – and in sharp contrast to the Franciscans – Richard frames the question of Christ's ability to progress in wisdom using the doctrine of the *agens intellectus*. Echoing Albert, he tells us that it is clear that, on account of the fullness of his humanity, Christ must have possessed an active intellect: '*quod in eo intellectus agens patet*'.²⁷⁴ Moreover, he continues, like that of any other human being, Christ's active intellect was naturally disposed, or at the very least oriented, towards the abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra* and the bestowal of these on his passive intellect: '*credo quippe, tunc intellectus agens educit possibilem de potentia de actu*'.²⁷⁵ Such is the natural order of the *agens intellectus*.

From this it is thus clear that although it is unlikely Richard had ever read Albert's *Sentences Commentary* – or indeed that Albert had any direct knowledge of his writings – his thought demonstrates a notable degree of similarity to that of his Parisian counterpart. He not

²⁷² For a contemporary study on Richard see R. James Long and Maura O'Carroll, *The Life and Works of Richard Fishacre: Prologomena to the Edition of his Commentary on the Sentences* (Munich: Bayerische Akademie Der Wissenschaften, 1999). See also Long's *Hagar's Vocation: Philosophy's Role in the Theology of Richard Fishacre* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2015).

²⁷³ *ITLS.*, dist., 13, p. 227.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

only follows Albert in departing from the decidedly un-Aristotelian outlook of the Franciscans, but he seeks to show the legitimacy of applying Aristotelian psychology to the doctrine of Christ's noetic. For him, like Albert, Aristotle was not to be feared when discussing Christ's knowledge. Indeed, in a notably bold move given Aristotelianism's challenge to the omniscience and intellectual perfection of Christ's soul, Richard even uses Aristotle's famous dictum from his *De Metaphysica* – '*omnis homo natura scire desiderat*' – as a witness to the claim that Christ possessed all created wisdom: "*omnis homo natura scire desiderat*". *Sed desiderium suum iustis dabitur, ergo cum Christus iustissimus habuit omnium scientiam*'.²⁷⁶

According to Fishacre, since Christ was possessed of an active intellect, he was therefore capable, in theory at least, of abstracting intelligible species like the rest of humanity. As such, we must take seriously the possibility that Christ could progress in noetic. Crucially, however, like Albert, Fishacre qualifies this claim by maintaining that whilst Christ's active intellect was capable of functioning in the way Aristotle describes – i.e., that it was naturally oriented towards the study of the phantasms revealed by the senses – it nonetheless had no need to abstract intelligible species from them. Instead, all the knowledge which Christ required to cognize creation was already present in him – albeit at a latent level – through his innate and infused knowledge. Through these pre-thematic habits of cognition, Christ '*scivit omnem veritatem*'.²⁷⁷

For Fishacre, like Albert, Christ's active intellect was thus essentially impotent and rendered mute on account of his superior infused knowledge of creation. Turned towards the study of his lower sensitive powers, it had no functional role to play within his intellect. Through engaging with the world, Christ did not learn anything new, but merely experienced that which he already knew at a latent level. To this extent, whilst Fishacre fosters a

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

reconciliation between Aristotelianism and the omniscience of Christ's soul, he, like Albert, fails to take the Greek philosopher's thought to its logical conclusion. To achieve his goal, Fishacre has to follow Albert's example of denying any real noetic agency – at least according to Aristotle's standards – to Christ's active intellect.

2.6.2.2) *Thomas Aquinas OP (c. 1225–1274).*

The pupil of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas occupies a central, well-documented place within the thirteenth-century debate concerning Christ's knowledge. Like his master and the early Franciscans, Aquinas revisited the subject of Christ's noetic several times during his career, most notably in his *Sentences Commentary* (c. 1254–1256), *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate* (c. 1256–1259), *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* (c. 1252–1256; 1268–1272), *Compendium Theologiae* (c. 1273), and famous *Summa Theologiae* (c. 1267–1273). Following Albert and Richard, Aquinas, from his earliest writings, openly rejects the anti-Aristotelian outlook of the Franciscans by repeatedly using the active intellect to frame the question of Christ's ability to progress in noetic. Nonetheless, whilst Aquinas may share his Dominican colleagues' preference for Aristotelian psychology, his use of it is far more thoroughgoing than theirs. More importantly, however, he demonstrates a much greater understanding of the active intellect's implications for Christ's knowledge. Ultimately, it is this greater comprehension of the active intellect and its role within Aristotelian psychology, which culminates in Aquinas's decision to depart from Albert and Richard, and the thirteenth-century tradition thus far, by attributing genuine acquired knowledge to Christ. Thus, in Aquinas, the shift towards Aristotelianism, begun by Albert and Richard, reaches its natural conclusion. By no means obvious in Aquinas's earlier works, the conviction that Christ possessed genuine acquired knowledge only becomes apparent in his final work, the *Summa Theologiae*.

In his *Sentences Commentary*, and to a lesser extent *De Veritate*, Aquinas follows Albert and Richard in making repeated use of the active intellect. Moreover, like them he arrives, albeit by means of a different route, at a similar conclusion to the early Franciscans; namely, through engaging with creation Christ did not abstract any new intelligible species, but merely experienced at the level of sensory perception that which he already knew through latent habit. Possessed of perfect rectitude, Christ's active intellect, even though naturally oriented towards the study of phantasms revealed by his lower sensitive soul, did not need to turn to his senses in order to bestow species upon his passive intellect – as is the case in fallen humanity. Instead, like the active intellect of the first man, it merely derived all the information which it required by “abstracting” species from the plenitude of created phantasms directly infused into his intellect by the Word. (For the young Aquinas, therefore, unlike Albert and Richard, Christ's intellect was not entirely impotent: at one level, it remained “active” because it worked in co-operation with his superior infused knowledge). To this extent, whilst adopting a decidedly Aristotelian approach towards Christ's noetic, the early Aquinas, like Albert and Richard, closely echoes the Franciscan position concluding that through engaging with creation Christ increased only in terms of experience, not in the actual number of things known to him.²⁷⁸ Regarding this inability of Christ's active intellect to abstract intelligible species *ab extra*, Aquinas's *Sentences Commentary* succinctly states:

It is said that by the light of his agent intellect, Christ's possible intellect received no new species, but he [*Christ*] turned toward the species which reside in his phantasia, just as is the case with somebody who has the habit of knowledge of things imagined or seen.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 5, sol. 5, p. 461.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 462. Translation my own. Latin text supplied in Appendix 2.

This insistence that Christ failed to abstract species in the way Aristotle describes is reiterated by Aquinas up until his composition of the *Compendium Theologiae* in 1273. By the time Aquinas composed his final discussion of Christ's knowledge within the *Summa Theologiae*, only a few months later, however, he openly admits – seemingly as the result of a greater understanding of Aristotle's thought – that his views on Christ's ability to acquire knowledge had undergone a radical change. Based upon the conviction that the mind's ability to abstract intelligible species is not, as Bonaventure claims, a product of the fall, but is instead an integral part of human nature²⁸⁰ – as Aristotle asserts – Aquinas concludes that since Christ's mind was the perfect expression of human noetic, his active intellect must also have been able to abstract species from creation. Had Christ not possessed the capacity to abstract intelligible species, and thereby progress in knowledge, he would have lacked a perfection shared by the rest of humanity and thus have reasoned in a manner alien to natural human cognition. Thus, for the mature Aquinas, there was not only genuine acquired knowledge within Christ's intellect, but a gradual historical growth, whereby he learned something new each day.²⁸¹

In contrast to his Franciscan and Dominican contemporaries, for the mature Aquinas, Christ thus possessed two distinct modes of cognizing creation. The first, by means of his innate and infused habits of knowledge; whereby, at a latent level, he knew all creation prior to any contact with it. The second, through sense experience, whereby, like the rest of humanity, he genuinely acquired new knowledge by abstracting intelligible species from created objects.²⁸²

Section 5

²⁸⁰ *Infra.*

²⁸¹ *ST.*, 3, q. 12, art. 2, resp.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, ad. 1.

2.7) *Conclusion: Aristotelianism and the Knowledge of Christ – Discovering the Unity of Bonaventure’s Thought on Christ’s Knowledge.*

Having outlined the early Franciscan and Dominican interpretations of Christ’s knowledge let us now turn to the question of how Bonaventure’s thought relates to that of his mendicant contemporaries. The reason for doing so, it will be recalled, is to see what light this casts upon the relationship between his three texts on Christ’s knowledge, in particular whether they contain a unified interpretation of Christ’s noetic. The response to this question is a long one; as such, I propose to break my comments down into small sub-sections.

a) General Remarks.

Considered in relation to the divide between the early Franciscan and Dominican interpretations of Christ’s knowledge, it is clear from our earlier discussions that Bonaventure’s thought aligns very much with that of his Franciscan mentors. As we saw in our investigation into the *Sentences Commentary*, *De Scientia Christi*, and *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure repeatedly seeks to hold Aristotelianism at a distance, and does so in various ways. The most obvious one being that he follows his masters’ example of focusing upon the penal and salvific qualities of Christ’s experiential reason, as opposed to its epistemological significance. Thus, in the *Sentences Commentary* and *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure repeatedly follows Alexander, Odo, and John in maintaining that Christ’s ability to “progress” in knowledge is associated with his ability to experience the pain of the cross and thereby make satisfaction for sin.²⁸³

For Bonaventure, therefore, Christ’s sensory reason is very much to be viewed from a soteriological perspective. It exists primarily for the redemption of the human race ‘*iuxta quod opportunum erat ad reparationem humani generis faciendam*’.²⁸⁴ As such, any

²⁸³ Cf. 3 *Sent.*, dist. 16, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (III, p. 344); dist. 16, art. 2, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 348); *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6, (V, p. 247).

²⁸⁴ *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6, (V, p. 247).

consideration of whether Christ progressed in knowledge by abstracting intelligible species, or by learning from other human beings, is of secondary importance. However, as we also saw, like his Franciscan mentors, Bonaventure does not ignore nor sideline the question of whether Christ possessed genuine acquired knowledge. Rather, he merely regards it as secondary or posterior to the soteriological dimensions of Christ's experiential reason.

As both *Sentences Commentary* and *Breviloquium* demonstrate, Bonaventure repeatedly argues for a negative response to the question of whether Christ progressed in knowledge by abstracting intelligible species.²⁸⁵ Christ, he tells us, was *comprehensor perfectus*. As such, in no way can Aristotle's claim that the mind is a *tabula rasa* be applied to Christ; and nor, in turn, he adds, can the notion of acquired knowledge be legitimately ascribed to him. One need only recall the forceful remarks from the *Sentences Commentary* mentioned earlier:

And this mode of cognition [*i.e., an infused knowledge of creation*] was in Christ and not any in other, because Christ did not assume any defect of ignorance. Thus, as was said before, the progress of knowledge described by the Philosopher and which is associated with the fallen state was not necessary within Christ and was thus not found within him.²⁸⁶

For Bonaventure, therefore, like his mentors, the presence of any acquired knowledge within Christ's soul is thus to be dismissed as contrary to both the dignity and the perfection of Christ's intellect. To suggest that Christ possessed acquired knowledge and that he thus passed from a state of "un-knowing" to one of "knowing" like any other human being is to attribute

²⁸⁵ *Supra.*

²⁸⁶ 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, ad. 1-2 (III, p. 316).

ignorance to him, and thereby to call into question the perfection of both his intellect and his humanity as a whole.

b) Bonaventure's Re-reading of the Doctrine of the Active Intellect.

However, as will be explored in subsequent chapters – Bonaventure's decision to avoid attributing acquired knowledge to Christ is also motivated, in part at least, by another reason; namely, that for him the active intellect's capacity to bestow knowledge upon the soul by abstracting intelligible species *ab extra*, is an essentially flawed, imperfect, even "un-natural" mode of cognition. It is, as Bonaventure repeatedly tells us, one that is intrinsically associated with humanity's fallen state and the loss of the innate knowledge which we once possessed in innocence. As such, to say that Christ possessed an active intellect and that he used it to abstract species *ab extra* – or to suggest that Christ's active intellect was even disposed towards such a task – is, in Bonaventure's opinion, to attribute, or to come dangerously close to attributing, a fallen mode of cognition to Christ. It is, in short, to risk tainting that which is supremely perfect.

Such is the error, Bonaventure tells us, of the Dominicans who, in their willingness to listen too much to Aristotle, compromise Christ's omniscience by attributing an active intellect to him that is modelled upon Aristotle's belief that the *agens intellectus*'s natural disposition is to abstract intelligible species from material reality. Through doing so, the Dominicans inevitably open the door to attributing genuine acquired knowledge to Christ, as the later Aquinas serves to confirm. Having said this, as the reader will no doubt have observed, there appears to be something of a contradiction at work in Bonaventure's thought at this point. As we saw earlier, at one point in the *Sentences Commentary*, and indeed on a handful of occasions in the *De Scientia Christi* which we have not had cause to mention until now²⁸⁷,

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ad. 5 (III, p. 316).

Bonaventure does concede that Christ did indeed possess an active intellect.²⁸⁸ Moreover, he tells us, that Christ's intellect was involved in his ability to "progress" in his noetic.²⁸⁹

On the surface, at least, it thus appears that Bonaventure accepts that Christ possessed the faculty which Aristotle claims is both necessary for, and indeed inseparable from, the abstraction of intelligible species. This, as we have seen, is something which neither Alexander, Odo, nor John can bring themselves to do. Indeed, on this point, Bonaventure – at least *prima facie* – seems to move in a direction notably different to the one pioneered by his mentors. He appears to do something which they explicitly regard as dangerous. Does this perhaps suggest that in his earliest works Bonaventure's anti-Aristotelianism was somehow less rigid than that of his Franciscan masters? Indeed, could it even suggest that at the beginning of his studies into Christ's noetic, Bonaventure stood in sympathy with the Aristotelian approach fostered by Albert, Richard, and Aquinas? The answer to these questions I would like to suggest is no.

Crucial to understanding why this is so is recognizing that Bonaventure offers an interpretation of Christ's active intellect which rests upon a notably different interpretation of the nature, status, and role of the active intellect to the one offered by his Dominican colleagues; indeed, as we will see, Bonaventure even goes so far as to suggest that Aristotle himself has fundamentally misinterpreted the nature and orientation of the faculty, despite the fact that he is the one who originally described it.

Key to understanding how this is so is Bonaventure's conviction that Christ's active intellect is not to be understood in relation to his lower sensory reason – i.e., as possessing the capacity to abstract intelligible species from material reality – as both Albert and Richard believe, despite not attributing genuine acquired knowledge to Christ. Instead – and this is crucial – it is to be viewed solely in relation to his superior infused knowledge of creation.

²⁸⁸ *Supra.*

²⁸⁹ *Supra.*

Christ's active intellect, in other words, was primarily oriented towards "processing" the latent species that were already impressed upon his soul through his innate and infused noetic. This is something which Albert, Richard, and to a lesser extent the young Thomas, failed to grasp.

For Bonaventure, therefore, the natural *telos* and causal agency of Christ's active intellect was thus not to abstract species from the phantasms revealed by his senses; rather, it was to "abstract" – i.e. to bring to "actuality" – the infused and innate species which his mind already possessed at a latent level. Through the stimulation of his senses, Christ's active intellect turned towards the species already imprinted upon his mind, "abstracted" these, and thereby brought them to actuality. To this extent, for Bonaventure Christ's active intellect was indeed the principal agent of his capacity for noetic progression. However, this "progress" occurred through the "abstraction" of latent infused and innate species, rather than the external ones from material reality. As we shall see in the next chapter, a similar situation existed in Adam's pre-lapsarian soul. To Bonaventure's mind, as such, Christ's active intellect was not simply 'impotent' in relation to his experiential reason – as his Dominican colleagues claim; but utterly redundant. Properly understood, it had nothing to do with his experiential reason. Its sole object of study was not the sensory data communicated by his senses, but rather the species already imprinted upon his mind through his beatific knowledge of the Word.

In this respect it is thus clear that for Bonaventure there is a by no means insignificant divergence, on the one hand, between the nature and orientation of the active intellect in its immaculate and pre-lapsarian states – i.e., as it is found in the souls of Christ and Adam, respectively; and, on the other hand, the nature and orientation of the active intellect as it is found in its post-lapsarian state. In *homo creatus*, Christ and Adam, the active intellect merely processed the species already impressed upon the mind. In *homo lapsus*, however, this is not the case. For lacking access to the infused and innate knowledge possessed by Adam and Christ, the active intellect of the fallen soul is forced to abstract species from outside the soul

in order to know the world. As will be explained in the next chapter, the effects of the fall upon the human intellect have been such that it has been rendered a *tabula rasa* – a blank canvas – and thus possesses nothing of the plenitude of infused species enjoyed by Christ and Adam. To this extent, it is clear that in Bonaventure's judgement there is a fundamental link between the ability to abstract intelligible species *ab extra* and the fallen state of the soul.

c) *How Bonaventure's Description of Christ's Active Intellect differs from that of Dominican Counterparts.*

From this it becomes clear how Bonaventure's attribution of an active intellect to Christ differs from that of Albert, Richard and the mature Aquinas. In his opinion, they are guilty of confusing the proper function of Christ's active intellect by attributing to it an orientation that is suitable only to the active intellect as it exists in *homo lapsus*. Having listened too much to Aristotle, they mistakenly believe that Christ's active intellect existed primarily in relation to his lower sensory reason and not the superior immense wealth of species already imparted to his intellect. The result of this is that it fundamentally colours their approach towards the question of whether Christ progressed in knowledge.

Only the young Aquinas – at least according to Bonaventure's standards – comes close to realizing that Christ's active intellect existed in relation to his innate and infused knowledge, and was thus geared towards the reduction of these latent modes of cognition to actuality. Crucially, however, prior to his change of heart in the *Summa*, Aquinas still believes that whilst Christ's active intellect processed the species infused into his soul through his vision of the Word, it was still naturally oriented towards – and therefore capable of – the abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra*. Thus, despite his important insight, the young Aquinas in

Bonaventure's thinking still attributes an orientation to Christ's active intellect that is proper only to the active intellect as it exists within fallen humanity.

d) How Bonaventure's Anti-Aristotelianism relates to that of his Franciscan Masters.

It is thus clear that in the *Sentences Commentary*, Bonaventure adopts a line of attack against Aristotelianism that is very different to the one pioneered by his Franciscan mentors. Instead of avoiding the active intellect as Alexander, Odo, and John had done, he tackles it head-on, seeking to render mute the threat which it poses to Christ's perfect wisdom. He shows that it is possible to "rework", or "pull the teeth" from the doctrine so that it can be safely applied to Christ without any fear of risking attributing genuine acquired knowledge to him.

In this respect, Bonaventure refutes Aristotelianism by showing that Aristotle – preempting the error of his Dominican disciples – has misunderstood the nature of the active intellect itself. Knowing nothing of Christ, nor indeed the fall, the Philosopher mistakenly believed that the current disposition of the active intellect towards the abstraction of species *ab extra* is both natural to, and thereby co-substantial with, the active intellect. Considered from the perspective of the active intellect as it is found in Christ – the "*comprehensor perfectus*" – this interpretation is clearly false. As the souls of Christ and Adam clearly reveal, originally construed the active intellect was designed to not to abstract species from material reality, but rather to abstract the species that are co-natural to the immaculate mind itself.

Based upon this conviction, Bonaventure's place within the broader Franciscan resistance towards Aristotelianism's influence upon Christ's knowledge begins to take shape. His thought does not merely continue or simply re-articulate the anti-Aristotelian logic fostered by his mentors; rather, it develops it in a new, far more combative form. Instead of simply sidelining Aristotelianism, or passing over in silence the challenge which it poses, as Alexander,

Odo, and John had done, Bonaventure calls out Aristotle and uses the very doctrine with which he threatens the perfection of Christ's intellect against him. Re-affirming the Franciscan principle that Christology is not to be dictated by pagan psychology, Bonaventure's response to Aristotle is that it is Christ – and not Aristotle himself – who teaches us the proper orientation of the active intellect.

In this respect, Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic represents the fulfilment and perfection of the anti-Aristotelianism pioneered by his masters in their own writings on Christ's knowledge.

e) *The Anti-Aristotelianism of the De Scientia Christi and the Breviloquium and how it relates to that of the Sentences Commentary.*

To fully appreciate this aggressive anti-Aristotelian stance, it is necessary to recognize how it developed in Bonaventure's slightly later *De Scientia Christi* and *Breviloquium*. Here, as we noted earlier, Bonaventure adopts a very different anti-Aristotelian strategy to the one he developed in the *Sentences Commentary*. Aristotelianism is refuted neither by simply denying the presence of acquired knowledge within Christ's intellect, nor by seeking to show how Aristotle and his sympathizers had misunderstood the active intellect. Instead, Bonaventure situates the discussions of Christ's knowledge within a radically "un-Aristotelian" context – i.e., a distinctly apophatic, affective, and Dionysian framework. Here Christ's knowledge is discussed using terms which Aristotelianism can neither understand nor indeed critically engage with, namely the language of love, rapture, and mystical ascent.

The result is a subtle, though nonetheless profound, transformation of the debate concerning Christ's knowledge. Through adopting a distinctly apophatic vocabulary, Bonaventure shifts the entire focus of our attention concerning Christ's noetic away from the

pointed question of whether Christ progressed in wisdom by abstracting intelligible species – as had been the case in the *Sentences Commentary* – towards the less problematic, and perhaps more strictly theological issue, of his beatific enjoyment – i.e., how Christ knew the Word *sine medio*. By employing the language of ecstasy and rapture, Bonaventure thus introduces a new framework to the scholastic discussion of Christ’s knowledge; one which is totally alien, if not radically irreconcilable, with peripatetic psychology and epistemology. Moreover, by doing so he effectively insulates Christ’s noetic from the challenge posed by peripatetic psychology and its emphasis upon empirical data as the sole basis of human understanding.

At its most basic level, therefore, it is clear that despite its notably different approach, the “ecstatic-experiential” interpretation of Christ’s knowledge offered in the *De Scientia Christi* represents a continuation, albeit in a new form, of the anti-Aristotelian spirit found in the *Sentences Commentary*. There are thus two different levels of anti-Aristotelian polemic at work within Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge. First, the *Sentences Commentary* attempts to rebuff the threat posed to the perfection of Christ’s knowledge by showing how Aristotle and his Dominican disciples misunderstand the nature of the active intellect. Whilst the second in the *De Scientia Christi* attempts to insulate the doctrine of Christ’s knowledge from any further threat by framing it within a distinctly apophatic, mystical context – a move of course which is as fundamentally unacceptable to Aristotelianism, as it is incomprehensible.

In the *Sentences Commentary* and *De Scientia Christi*, Bonaventure can thus be said to construct something akin to an intellectual pincer movement against Aristotelianism: he attacks it on two fronts. On the one hand, he actively combats it on its own intellectual territory, whilst on the other, he outflanks it by confronting it with an epistemology which it cannot accept. Such is the motivation of the *Breviloquium* and its decision to place the “habit-actuality” and the “ecstatic-experiential” models next to one another. As we have seen, these two approaches towards Christ’s knowledge are very different. Crucially, however, they share

a common theme and purpose; namely, the defense of Christ's knowledge against Aristotelianism.

f) Coalition and Pragmatism: The Unity of Bonaventure's Thought.

Once viewed from this perspective, it thus becomes clear that there is indeed a unity to Bonaventure's thought. However, this unity lies not so much within any internal linguistic or thematic similarities between his different works; though, as seen, these are still present. Rather, it is to be found in their decidedly anti-Aristotelian basis. Put simply: it is their opposition towards Aristotelianism which gives cohesion to Bonaventure's works on Christ's knowledge and allows them to hang together as a collective whole. Each starts from the premise that Aristotle is not to be allowed to dictate the doctrine of Christ's knowledge; and each ends – albeit by means of a different, though not necessarily incompatible, route – with a forceful rebuttal of those who concede too much influence to peripatetic thought.

To this extent, it is clear that the unity at work in Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic is as much a pragmatic and reactionary unity as it is a systematic and thematic one. It is one of coalition and resistance towards a mutual opponent, rather than synthetic integration. Such a unity, despite its lack of any real attempt at systematic or inner thematic integration, is nonetheless a real unity. Indeed, it has precedence in several other areas of Bonaventure's thought. One need only think, for instance, of the type of unity displayed by Bonaventure's arguments for God's existence. Here, as Gilson notes, when seeking to prove the existence of a First Principle Bonaventure does not weave his arguments into a systematic whole; instead, he marshals numerous different arguments into a broad coalition which prove his point, but which pays little, if any, attention to the discrepancies and points of tension between the

arguments.²⁹⁰ What matters most for Bonaventure when seeking to prove a point is not the systematic coherence of the arguments which he advances, but rather that they argue for the same position – his texts on Christ’s noetic provide a clear example of this style.

Bearing this in mind, we should also note that there are two other – complementary – strands of unity at work within Bonaventure’s doctrine of Christ’s noetic; both of which we have already touched upon, and both of which serve to animate the anti-Aristotelian spirit which runs throughout Bonaventure’s works. These are: first, his conviction that Christ’s mind is the universal exemplar and final cause of all creaturely noetic; and, second, his emphasis on how Christ’s noetic perfection allowed him to function as the universal hierarch and *salvator* of the world, setting it free from sin and on a path towards its *regressus* back to God. Exploring these two strands of unity is the work of the following chapters, as such we need only be mindful of them here.

In light of this unity at work within Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge we are now in a situation where we can begin to explore how it serves to underpin his understanding of the three key areas which underpin the schema of human learning, namely: the nature of the soul; the hierarchy of knowledge, and, finally, the narrative of God’s self-revelation in history. This is the work of the following three chapters.

²⁹⁰ *Philosophy*, pp. 124-5.

Chapter 3

Christ the Center and Exemplar of the Human Soul

‘Unde omnes alii sapientes non fuerunt nisi quedam figura et simultara istius sapientis’.

Hex., coll. 3, n. 6. (V, p. 344).

3.0) Introduction.

Having discussed Bonaventure’s three texts on Christ’s noetic in the previous chapter, attention turns now to exploring the relationship between his thought on the knowledge of Christ and his theology of the soul.²⁹¹ As stated in the introduction, the goal of this dissertation is to use Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge as an interpretative tool for his views on Aristotelianism and philosophy. The purpose of doing so, it will be recalled, is to help clarify his much-neglected thinking on the relationship between faith and reason. To support this objective, the present chapter focuses upon, and draws out the implications of, the central claim at work within Bonaventure’s theology of the soul; namely, that Christ’s mind is the primordial

²⁹¹ Whilst numerous studies exist on Bonaventure’s theology of the soul, few discuss it in relation to his thought on Christ’s knowledge. Notable in this respect are Bernard Gendreau’s ‘The Quest for Certainty in Bonaventure’ *Franciscan Studies* 21 (1961), pp. 104-227; Conrad O’Leary’s, *The Substantial Composition of Man According to St. Bonaventure* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1931); Robert Prentice’s, *The Psychology of Love According to St. Bonaventure* (New York: Franciscan Institute, 1957). More recent studies include: Stephen Marrone’s, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, 2 vols (Boston: Brill, 2001) and Lydia Schumacher’s, *Divine Illumination in Augustinian and Franciscan Thought* (PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, 2009). Several studies do consider Bonaventure’s psychology within the context of his broader Christology, most notable in this respect is Hayes’s *Hidden Centre*. and, perhaps less so Sepinski’s *La Psychologie*. These, however, place little emphasis on using Bonaventure’s doctrine of Christ’s noetic as an interpretative tool for his theology of the soul. Notable exceptions to this trend include: Andreas Speer’s ‘The Certainty and Scope of Knowledge: Bonaventure’s Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ’, *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 3 (1993), pp. 35-61; Therese Scarpelli’s ‘Bonaventure’s Christocentric Epistemology: Christ’s Human Knowledge as the Epitome of Illumination In *De Scientia Christi*’, *Franciscan Studies* 65 (2007), pp. 63-86; and Peter Dillard’s ‘Burning Love: St Bonaventure and the Problem of Christ’s Earthly Beatitude’, *Irish Theological Quarterly* 77 (2012), pp. 385-97.

archetype – i.e., the “exemplar” – of the human soul and, as a result of this, *the* deciding factor in determining the place and value of philosophical reasoning within it.

As we will see, for Bonaventure Christ’s mind, blessed as it is with the fullness of all creaturely cognition – beatific, infused, and innate – is the noetic horizon and defining principle of the human intellect itself. In Christ, God has authored the first and unsurpassed word of all human knowing and loving. As such, it is by looking to his intellect – and not unaided philosophical analysis of human learning, i.e. Aristotelian psychology – that we find the clearest expression of the purpose, scope, and proper objects of the soul and its various cognitive faculties. For Bonaventure, therefore, or so this chapter will argue, the hierarchical structuring of the soul and its different cognitive potencies (which as we will see also possesses a “circular” quality just like Christ’s) is not accidental, nor, indeed, peripheral to its original nature. Instead, it is divinely inscribed into the soul through its *causa formalis* – i.e., the mind of the Incarnate Word. Moreover, as we will also see, it is by modelling itself upon Christ’s intellect at the level of final causality, and by seeking to realize the fullness of its exemplary likeness to him, that the soul, through the gifts of the Spirit, achieves noetic perfection.

Based upon this conviction, the present chapter shows how Bonaventure’s estimation of Aristotelianism’s empirical mode of enquiry is critically determined by its relationship, or rather lack therefore, to Christ’s knowledge, specifically his own sensory experience. Of particular importance is the fact that since Christ neither possessed acquired knowledge, nor the capacity to progress in wisdom through the abstraction of intelligible species via sense experience, the empirical-based reasoning associated with Aristotelianism – and indeed philosophy in general – cannot claim to find its exemplar in Christ’s mind. As such, it is to be judged as a fundamentally illegitimate mode of enquiry; one which is alien to the original natural order of the soul and its cognitive processes. As we will see, fundamental to understanding how this is so, is how Bonaventure identifies the capacity to progress in

knowledge through the abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra* with the fall and the distortion of the mind's identity as *imago Christi*.

3.1) *Methodology.*

At a methodological level, this chapter's purpose is to show how the anti-Aristotelian polemic of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge finds expression within, and is significantly developed by, his theology of the soul; indeed, as just indicated, the latter area is very much an extension of Bonaventure's speculative analysis of Christ's noetic. As we shall see, far from abstract, purely epistemological statements which seek to prejudice philosophical speculation by simply associating it with the mind's inferior modes of reasoning, the critical remarks on Aristotelianism and philosophy within Bonaventure's theology of the soul are in fact a direct product and outworking of his Christology; namely, his conviction that Aristotelianism and philosophy are alien to Christ's mind and thereby cannot claim him as their exemplar. As such, by demonstrating how Christ's intellect is the primordial archetype of the human soul, the present chapter casts new light upon both Bonaventure's speculative psychology and the critique of Aristotelianism which runs throughout it. It shows how both these areas are grounded within, and serve as an extension of, his speculative analysis of Christ's knowledge.

3.2) *Structure.*

The chapter is divided into four sections. **(1)** First, the foundational elements of Bonaventure's broader psychology are outlined with a view to revealing their decidedly 'un-Aristotelian' character. **(2)** Next, Bonaventure's hierarchical organization of the soul's cognitive faculties is explored, focusing particularly upon how his theory of sense perception, the role of the active and passive intellects, and the mind's *a priori* illumination by the divine ideas possess Christ as their intelligible center and are thus to be 'retraced' back to him. **(3)** Attention then shifts to

Bonaventure's thought on Adam's innate knowledge and the impact which the fall had upon the soul's cognitive abilities. Here we will see how for Bonaventure, the acquired knowledge so prized by Aristotelianism is in fact a product of the fall and thereby alien to Christ's perfect wisdom. (4) Finally, the chapter concludes by demonstrating how Christ's mind is the primordial archetype of the soul and the exemplar which it is called to model itself upon in its attempt to recover its original intellectual rectitude. Particular attention is paid to how Aristotelianism in particular, and unaided philosophy in general, cannot claim to find any expression within Christ's mind and ought therefore to be condemned as an illegitimate mode of cognition.

Section 1

3.3) *The Foundations of Bonaventure's Theology of the Soul.*

Before we discuss Bonaventure's thought on the soul's cognitive faculties, and how, in turn, these are to be retraced back to Christ, it is necessary to first consider the foundational elements upon which his theology of the soul rests. As we shall see, these are of a highly metaphysical and abstract quality. More often than not they pertain as much to Bonaventure's "physics" as much as they do to his "psychology". Yet despite their seemingly peripheral nature, these areas nonetheless provide the basis needed to understand his psychology and its underlying conviction that the soul is called to recover its original identity as *imago Christi*. Broadly speaking, three areas need to be considered. These are: Bonaventure's speculative analysis of the soul's composition; its internal structure; and, finally, its relationship to the body. As we will also see, each of these three areas is key to understanding the resistance towards Aristotelianism which runs throughout Bonaventure's psychology and how it serves to set his thought apart from the Aristotelian innovations favoured by some of his contemporaries.

3.3.0) *Bonaventure and Aquinas – “Augustinianism” and “Christian Aristotelianism”*.

So as to aid our understanding of Bonaventure’s critique of Aristotelianism from the perspective of his theology of the soul, it is proposed that throughout this chapter we contrast his views with those of Thomas Aquinas. The purpose of doing so is to highlight how in his psychology, and in particular its foundational principles, Bonaventure seeks to distance himself from many of the Aristotelian innovations pioneered by the Christian Aristotelian movement. As is well known, embracing many of the key insights and principles at work within peripatetic psychology, Thomas Aquinas offers a much more rigorously “Aristotelian” theology of the soul than either Bonaventure, or indeed many of his own Dominican contemporaries, including Albert the Great, can allow.²⁹² For Aquinas, Aristotle’s psychology, despite its naturalistic tendencies, provides a useful interpretative framework for Christian psychology, in particular the question of the soul’s noetic.²⁹³ As we saw in the last chapter, the same is true in Aquinas’s opinion for the doctrine of Christ’s knowledge.

This enthusiastic appropriation of Aristotelian psychology is something which sets Aquinas’s thinking at odds with Bonaventure’s, as well as that of many of the latter’s Franciscan colleagues and disciples. As Anton Pegis has shown, Bonaventure’s theology of the soul not only adopts a far more cautious, critical approach towards Aristotle’s psychology than either Aquinas or Albert the Great, but he explicitly condemns many of the Aristotelian principles which they seek to promote.²⁹⁴ For Bonaventure, Aristotelian psychology poses as much a threat to the Christian understanding of the soul, as it does to the doctrine of Christ’s noetic. Knowing nothing of revelation, Aristotle offers a purely naturalistic description of the

²⁹² Cf. *Prob.*, esp. pp. 26-76.

²⁹³ Cf. *Aquinas*, pp. 221-56.

²⁹⁴ Cf. *Prob.*, esp. pp. 26-76.

human mind; one which renders it ignorant of supernatural truths by confining it to the level of unaided sensory reason, and thereby jeopardizes its dignity and immortality.²⁹⁵

Traditionally, the tension between Bonaventure's and Aquinas's psychologies, like that of their philosophies in general, is characterized as one of an opposition between a conservative anti-Aristotelian "Augustinianism" and a progressive "Christian Aristotelianism", respectively.²⁹⁶ Where Aquinas pioneered a decidedly "Aristotelian" theory of the soul and human noetic; Bonaventure, by contrast, adhered to the traditional "Augustinian" epistemology of earlier scholasticism. As chapter six reveals, such was the position fostered by Étienne Gilson and, to a lesser extent, by figures such as Pegis and Ratzinger. Although useful in some respects, I shall attempt to show, both in this chapter and in the following ones, that the tension between Bonaventure and Aquinas, both with regards to their psychologies and their broader systems, ought not to be viewed solely, or indeed primarily, as one of an opposition between "Augustinianism" and "Christian Aristotelianism". Instead, it stems from their divergent understandings of Christ's noetic, in particular their evaluations of his sensory reason.

Having said this, it is important to note that Bonaventure's theology of the soul, like that of his Franciscan associates, does possess many noticeably "Augustinian" elements. These, as we will see, serve to set it apart from the "Aristotelian" principles favored by Aquinas, and are in turn used by him as a bulwark against Aquinas's many "Aristotelian" innovations. Nonetheless, as will be made clear, we should avoid falling into any simplistic duality concerning Bonaventure's "Augustinianism" and Aquinas's "Christian Aristotelianism", both with respects to their psychologies and their broader theologies. Bonaventure's description of

²⁹⁵ Cf. *De Septem Donis*, coll. 2, n. 25 (V, p. 514).

²⁹⁶ Cf. *Philosophy*, p. 485; see also, 'Introduction' to republication of Gilson's latter study by William Crozier and Rik Van Nieuwenhove. Forthcoming.

the soul may adhere to many of the elements of the “Augustinian” tradition. However, it also contains a number of important “Aristotelian”, often “Avicennianized”, elements.²⁹⁷

Likewise, it is also important to note that Aquinas’s willingness to embrace a number of key Aristotelian doctrines does not mean that his thought is devoid of “Augustinian” elements; nor, in turn, can it be described by any stretch of the imagination as offering a purely or exclusively Aristotelian theory of the soul.²⁹⁸ Indeed, as John O’Callaghan, and more recently Bernhard Blankenhorn have shown, despite its overtly “Aristotelian” nature, Aquinas’s psychology, like that of Albert the Great’s, is very much imbued not only with key Augustinian insights, but also many important Dionysian, Victorine, and Neoplatonic ideas as well.²⁹⁹ Thus, it is not without cause that Dominic Marie Chenu in his *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* counselled that Augustine’s thinking, particularly with regards to the nature of the soul, was the paradigm ‘outside of which it is impossible to conceive of St. Thomas’.³⁰⁰

In light of this, we can now address some of the foundational elements underpinning Bonaventure’s Christocentric theology of the soul.

3.3.1) *The Hierarchically-Ordered Soul.*

²⁹⁷ Cf. *Aquinas*, pp. 19-20.

²⁹⁸ See esp. Michael Dauphinas, Barry David, and Matthew Levy (eds.) *Aquinas the Augustinian* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), pp. 100-44. See also Joseph Owen’s ‘Aristotle and Aquinas’ and David Burrell’s ‘Aquinas and Islamic and Jewish Thinkers’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (eds.) Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), pp. 38-59 and 60-84, respectively.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Bernhard Blankenhorn, *The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015); John O’Callaghan ‘*Imago Dei*: A Test Case for St. Thomas’s Augustinianism’ in Michael Dauphinas, Barry David, and Matthew Levy (eds.) *Aquinas the Augustinian* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), pp. 100-44.

³⁰⁰ Marie Dominic Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, trans. A. M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1950), p. 54.

Central to understanding how Bonaventure's speculative psychology critiques Aristotelianism is his hierarchical interpretation of the soul, in particular his belief that the soul's cognitive faculties are hierarchically ordered according to the dignity of the knowledge which they bestow.

3.3.1.0) *Spirit and Soul.*

Like his Franciscan mentors, Bonaventure follows the twelfth-century pseudo-Augustinian text *De Spiritu et Anima*,³⁰¹ in positing two hierarchical poles within the soul: the higher spirit and the lower soul. Representing two distinct faces of the intellect, each is oriented towards a particular type of knowledge.³⁰² The spirit, as the faculty most properly referred to as *imago Christi*, is turned towards the superior reason of divine wisdom and studies the higher truths of grace, revelation, and the eternal art.³⁰³ The soul, by contrast, standing "beneath" the spirit, and thus shaded from the immediate illumination of the divine ideas, is ordered towards the lower knowledge of creation which it studies through the inferior reason of sense experience.³⁰⁴

Closest to the body, it is the soul, therefore, which in Bonaventure's opinion, is most properly associated with "empirical" or "scientific" investigation. The spirit is superior to the soul, he tells us, because it considers the higher truths of divine wisdom, which, as the next chapter reveals, includes the knowledge of theology and the gifts of the Spirit. However, it is also superior because it controls the soul and determines what it studies. Thus, although the soul is closer to the body, it is the spirit which is primarily responsible for governing it. To Bonaventure's mind, as such, whilst the spirit and the soul may operate at two distinct levels,

³⁰¹ The text is in fact by Alcher of Clairvaux. Cf. *PL.* 40, pp. 779-832.

³⁰² *2 Sent.*, dist. 24, pars. 1, art. 2, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 582).

³⁰³ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, p. 24).

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

they do not constitute separate faculties; rather, they represent mutually complementary expressions of the one intellectual soul, each possessed of its own proper objects.³⁰⁵

3.3.1.1) *The Masculine Spirit and the Feminine Soul.*

Possessed of an innate awareness of itself, the lower soul, and the material body, the rational spirit as imagined by Bonaventure is thus a living, conscious reality endowed with the freedom of choice to explore either the inferior truths of sense experience or the superior wisdom of grace. In so far as it is turned towards superior reason, the spirit is consolidated as an image of Christ since by looking upon the divine light it is cleansed, fortified, and made upright. However, to the extent that it favours the knowledge of sense experience, the spirit turns away from its Christic exemplar and source of certainty, thus making itself weak and prone to error. ‘As the body loses its strength, beauty and health in the absence of food, so the soul without the understanding of truth becomes dark and weak, distorted and unsettled in all things’.³⁰⁶

Based upon this conviction, Bonaventure employs the imagery of the masculine and feminine to describe the superior and inferior modes of reason.³⁰⁷ Where the superior reason is masculine because as strong, immutable, and infallible, it empowers the male spirit to govern the lower female soul; the inferior reason, by contrast, is feminine, since lacking access to the higher knowledge of divine wisdom, it studies the lower truths of sense experience and looks to the superior reason for guidance.³⁰⁸ As we will see, this distinction between the ‘masculine’ spirit and the lower ‘feminine’ soul is integral to Bonaventure’s critique of Aristotelianism.

3.3.1.2) *The Rational Spirit: Deformed by Sin, Reformed through Grace.*

³⁰⁵ *2 Sent.*, dist. 24, pars. 1, art. 2, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 582).

³⁰⁶ *Collations*, p. 254.

³⁰⁷ *2 Sent.*, dist. 16, art. 2, q. 2, ad. 1-2 (II, p. 416).

³⁰⁸ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, p. 24).

Properly ordered, the masculine and feminine modes of reasoning communicate the soul's original rectitude. Prior to the fall, the masculine spirit, strengthened by an innate awareness of superior reason, ruled over the lower feminine soul and did not have any inappropriate curiosity about sense knowledge. In this respect, the masculine spirit resembled the natural order established by God in Eden where Adam ruled over Eve.³⁰⁹ Corrupted by sin, however, the spirit has lost the higher wisdom of superior reason and has become sick, preferring instead to study the lower truths of scientific investigation. Seduced by the inferior knowledge offered to it by the soul, the spirit thus no longer operates at the level of dignity appropriate to it and has thereby destroyed the mind's natural rectitude.³¹⁰ It 'wanders about and is unstable'.³¹¹

As we shall see, however, illuminated by faith and the healing effects of the theological virtues and gifts of the Spirit the rational spirit can nonetheless recover something of its original rectitude by cleansing itself of all inappropriate desire for sense knowledge. It does so by modelling itself on Christ and the example offered by the saints and mystics. Reformed by grace, it takes charge of the senses, discerning what they encounter and preventing the feminine soul from introducing temptation into the mind. Moreover, by doing so it consolidates its own dignity as *imago Christi*, and thereby stands in a healthy relationship to the divine light which illumines it from without.³¹² As we will see, this restoration of the rational spirit's dignity and its primacy over the lower feminine soul is achieved through the infusion of charity and the gifts of understanding and wisdom. Moreover, as chapter five reveals, the recovery of the *imago Christi* also has a strongly eschatological dimension to it; one which serves to bring both the soul and indeed the created order itself to a final climactic end.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *2 Sent.*, dist. 21, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (II, pp. 511-12).

³¹¹ *Collations*, p. 254.

³¹² *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, p. 24).

3.3.2) *Physics and the Soul: Bonaventure's Speculative Analysis of the Soul's Composition.*

In light of this hierarchical distinction between the soul's higher and lower cognitive faculties, let us now consider the nature of the soul itself – i.e., its composition and how this affects its cognitive processes. To do so, however, we must side track a little and engage with Bonaventure's broader theory of creaturely composition – i.e., his "physics". As we will see, this is an area of Bonaventure's thought which possesses strong "Augustinian" tendencies, though also a number of important Aristotelian elements. Three areas stand out as worthy of special attention: Bonaventure's allegiance to universalhylomorphism – i.e., his understanding of the relationship between form and matter; his theory of the plurality of forms; and, finally, his interpretation of the soul's relationship to its faculties and orientation towards the divine. Let us begin with Bonaventure's doctrine of universalhylomorphism.

3.3.2.0) *Form and Matter.*

Unlike God who, as absolute spirit, is utterly simple, pure act, and the perfect coincidence of His own properties and essence, all created beings, Bonaventure argues, consist of a hylomorphic composition of matter and form.³¹³ The lowest creaturely reality, matter can be considered either as abstract from form, i.e. according to its own nature – '*secundum suam essentiam*' – or as it exists within particular beings – '*secundum esse*'.³¹⁴ Considered independent of form, matter is a pure passivity devoid of self-determination, distinction, and actuality. Standing half-way between being and non-being, this 'prime matter' is an inherently

³¹³ *Hex.*, coll. 4, nn. 12-13 (V, p. 331); *2 Sent.*, dist. 12, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (II, pp. 303-4). Cf. *Quaestiones de Materia Rerum Creaturarum*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 105rb.

³¹⁴ *2 Sent.*, dist. 12, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (II, pp. 296-7).

unstable reality, which, even when united with form so as to constitute a particular individual, is prone to lapsing into its indeterminate state.³¹⁵

Despite this instability – what Bonaventure terms ‘*veritabilitas*’ – which matter introduces into creation it is nevertheless the unique grounding of all creaturely existence and the principle of its malleability.³¹⁶ Like a blank canvas possessed of limitless potentiality, matter was created before the first day not for itself, but in order to sustain form. As pure potency, however, even when united to form, matter retains its univocal identity. As Bonaventure puts it, considered *secundum suam essentiam*, matter is ‘one in number’ because as purely indeterminate ‘it is one without number’.³¹⁷ Moreover, it is matter which provides the univocal basis upon which change within creatures, both substantial and accidental, occurs. Thus, in the unedited *Quaestiones de Materia Rerum Creaturarum* we find Bonaventure making the following remarks ‘*nam suppositione est per se nota quod in omni transmutatione necesse ponere aliquid fixum circa quod fit transmutatio. Hoc quicquid supra dico materia*’.³¹⁸

Form, by contrast, is the active, determining force of creation, which entering into union with matter, imposes upon it a fixed, specific mode of being. Thus, where matter, as indeterminate potency, is the *possible* principle of a creature’s *existence*, form is that which gives it its *actual* mode of *being*. Like several of his Franciscan mentors, Bonaventure follows Robert Grosseteste at this point in claiming that it is light (*lux*) which is the first and most elementary form contained within matter. ‘Light’, Grosseteste asserts in his *De Luce*, ‘is not a form subsequent to corporeity (*consequens ipsam corporeitatem*) but is corporeity itself’ (*sed est ipsa corporeitas*).³¹⁹ Infused into matter at the moment of creation, and thus intrinsic to its

³¹⁵ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, ad. 23-6. (V, p. 26).

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ Cf. *Historical Constitution*, p. 148; *2 Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (II, pp. 89-90).

³¹⁸ *Quaestiones de Materia Rerum Creaturarum*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 105ra.

³¹⁹ *On Light*, p. 10. Cf. *2 Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 2, q. 1-2 (II, pp. 320-5). See also Cecilia Panti ‘The Evolution of the Idea of Corporeity in Robert Grosseteste’s Writings’ in Jack Cunningham (ed.) *Robert Grosseteste: His Thought and Its Impact* (Toronto: PIMS, 2012), pp. 111-39.

identity, it serves as the basis upon which all other forms are added to matter and secures their presence.³²⁰ Moreover, it serves to bring these forms to completion.³²¹

At this level, therefore, although Bonaventure can speak of “prime matter” he does so in a way different to Aquinas, and indeed later Franciscan scholars such as Scotus.³²² Matter for Bonaventure is never devoid of form, nor as such is it pure potentiality as Aquinas claims; instead, it is always “formed” even at its most basic level. This takes place through the first ‘corporeal form’ of light.³²³ Thus, according to Bonaventure, although it is possible to conceive of matter devoid of form, in reality, the two never exist apart.³²⁴ Co-created and co-determinate, form cannot subsist without matter, since it relies upon matter for its existence. Likewise, matter is incomplete without form because the latter provides it with being. Thus, although prior to form in the order of generation, matter is posterior to it in the order of being.³²⁵

3.3.2.1) *The Plurality of Forms and Seminal Reasons.*

Characterized by Gilson as one of the more decidedly “Augustinian” elements of Bonaventure’s psychology, his assertion that there exists a plurality of forms within the human soul, and indeed all created objects, rests upon his allegiance to the doctrine of seminal reasons (*rationes seminales*). Here, as we shall see, Bonaventure moves in a direction that is notably different from the “Aristotelian” position favoured by Aquinas.

According to Augustine all natural forms are contained virtually within matter – i.e. they are present in it in potency, but are dependent upon the action of an external efficient cause

³²⁰ *2 Sent.*, dist. 14, pars. 2, art. 2, q. 1, ad. 4. (II, p. 364).

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² Cf. Efreem Bettoni, *Duns Scotus: The Basic Principles of His Philosophy*, trans. Bernadine Bonansea (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1961), pp. 48-53; *Philosophy*, pp. 275-80.

³²³ *2 Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 2, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 323).

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, dist. 12, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 297).

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 2, ad. 1-3. (II, p. 297).

to reduce them to act.³²⁶ Far from the mindless, inert substance imagined by the philosophers, or the pure receptacle of form posited by Thomism, matter, for Bonaventure, thus possesses a degree of self-determination, albeit one which is in potency.³²⁷ Working with a view towards the acquisition of the final, substantial form which will perfect it, each deposit of matter actively seeks union with those forms which will impose upon it a higher mode of being: ‘and so, over and above “living” the seminal reason or potency adds “sensible” and so forth until the level of the individual man is attained’ (*et sic usque ad hominem*).³²⁸

Bonaventure thus envisages the generation of the individual as the result of a process of successive transformations. As each new form is realized within matter, bringing a particular seminal reason from potency to act, its creative activity is replaced by that of another seminal reason which disposes the individual towards the reception of yet another form. Not until all the seminal reasons latent within an individual have been exhausted and it possesses no potential for further development, does the process of acquiring new forms cease.³²⁹ Only when this potentiality to receive new forms has been exhausted does matter achieve perfection.³³⁰

Intricately related to the action of the seminal reasons, it is thus clear how Bonaventure’s theory of the plurality of forms operates. No individual is produced in its perfect state, but instead is generated through the successive infusion of forms, each superior to the last and anticipating the arrival of the next. Received into matter through the seminal reasons, each new form imposes upon a creature a higher mode of being, changing it from one state to another.³³¹ This process continues until the final substantial form is infused and the creature is

³²⁶Cf. *2 Sent.*, dist. 18, art. 1, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 449); *Hex.*, coll. 4, n. 10 (V, p. 350-1).

³²⁷ Cf. Peckham, *Summa de Esse et Essentia*, in Fernand Delorme “‘La Summa de esse et essentia’ de Jean Peckham, archevêque de Cantorbéry” *Studi Franciscani*, vol. 4, (1928), pp. 1-18.

³²⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 4, n. 10 (V, pp. 350-1).

³²⁹ Cf. *2 Sent.*, dist. 12, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (II, pp. 303-4).

³³⁰ *2 Sent.*, dist. 19, art. 2, q. 1, sed contra 3 (II, p. 478). Cf. *Prob.*, pp. 40-1.

³³¹ *2 Sent.*, dist. 12, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (II, pp. 303-4).

brought to perfection – in the case of the human being, this final substantial form is the immortal rational soul. The previous forms contained within an individual are thus not destroyed by the arrival of the final substantial form, but absorbed and held in place by it.

Thus, for Bonaventure, the true form of an individual represents the apex of a hierarchy of forms, containing within itself all the forms that preceded it; the truth of this is seen clearly at death, where, as the substantial form departs – i.e. the soul – and decomposition takes place, an individual's more elementary forms are gradually revealed. Based upon this hierarchical interpretation, Bonaventure insists – in contra-distinction to Aquinas – that the final substantial form is not united immediately to the matter which it informs: 'hence it is unsound (*unde insanum est*) to propose that the final form is added to prime matter without something that is a disposition or potency towards it, or without any other intermediary form'.³³²

Let us now turn to consider how Bonaventure's theology of the soul finds its metaphysical grounding in his understanding of the relationship between form and matter.

3.3.2.2) *The Hylomorphic Soul.*

Following his Franciscan mentors, and in opposition to Aquinas and Albert the Great, Bonaventure maintains that the soul is a hylomorphic compound; one which is created directly by God *ex nihilo*.³³³ Underpinning his thought on human knowledge, the mind's relationship to God and the operation of its various faculties, it is this conviction that the soul consists of matter and form which is the determining characteristic of Bonaventure's speculative psychology. Although not a person in itself because of its capacity to communicate existence to the body, the soul is nevertheless individuated prior to its union with the flesh through the

³³² *Hex.*, coll. 4, n. 10 (V, p. 354); *Collations*, p. 64.

³³³ *2 Sent.*, dist. 17, art. 1, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 426). Cf. *Quaestiones de Natura et Potentiis Animae*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 96ra-vb.

coincidence of its own matter and form. Possessed of a particular identity, therefore, the soul ‘as an existing, living intelligent form having freedom of choice’³³⁴ is not just a constituent element of the human being, but a particular reality – a ‘this something’ (*hoc aliquid*) – in its own right: ‘hence it is not only a perfecting form but an individual substance’.³³⁵

Consisting of a plurality of forms with the rational spirit at its apex, the soul, Bonaventure tells us, is a unified reality which is intrinsically oriented towards the body as its final substantial form.³³⁶ Capable of subsisting independently, it is the presence of matter within the soul, which, as the universal principle of creaturely existence, is the created basis of its ability to survive death.³³⁷ Bonaventure thus remarks: ‘we must follow a mean, and say that it [*the soul*] contains within itself (*habet intra se*) the foundation of its own existence, a material principle through which it exists and a formal principle through which it has being’.³³⁸ Thus, as Cullen notes, ‘Bonaventure’s argument for [*the soul*’s] immortality is... not based upon the simplicity of the soul, but its substantiality’.³³⁹

3.3.2.3) *The Hylomorphic Soul and Spiritual Matter.*

Although essentially the same as that found in physical objects, Bonaventure insists that the soul’s matter is not material, but spiritual and incorporeal. To understand how this is so, it is necessary to clarify his hylomorphism.

Whilst matter may be one in essence both prior to and after the reception of form, Bonaventure tells us that the substantial mode of its being actively changes according to the

³³⁴ *Breviloquium*, pars. 2, chap. 9, nn. 1, 5. (V, p. 227); *Brev.*, p. 86.

³³⁵ *Brev.*, pars. 2, chap. 9, n. 5, pp. 86-7. Cf. *Quaestiones de Natura et Potentiis Animae*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 96ra-vb.

³³⁶ *2 Sent.*, dist. 1, pars. 2, art. 3, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 43).

³³⁷ Cf. *Philosophy*, p. 338.

³³⁸ *2 Sent.*, dist. 17, art. 1, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 426).

³³⁹ *Bon.*, p. 53. Italics added.

form to which it is united. Thus, where a corporeal form, such as ‘tree’ or ‘rock’ will impose upon matter a corporeal mode of being and produce a tangible reality, i.e. wood or stone; a spiritual form, by contrast, such as that found in the soul or the angels, will produce a spiritual matter.³⁴⁰ Contrary to Aquinas, therefore, matter is not exclusively corporeal; nor is its univocity destroyed by positing substantial variation in its mode of being. Metaphysically prior to either spiritual or corporeal forms *secundum suam essentiam*, matter, as pure potentiality and the common fabric of creation, is able to retain its unity whilst allowing the definite mode of its existence to change *secundum esse* according to the substantial form imposed upon it.³⁴¹ Possessed of a spiritual form, the soul’s matter is thus purely incorporeal.

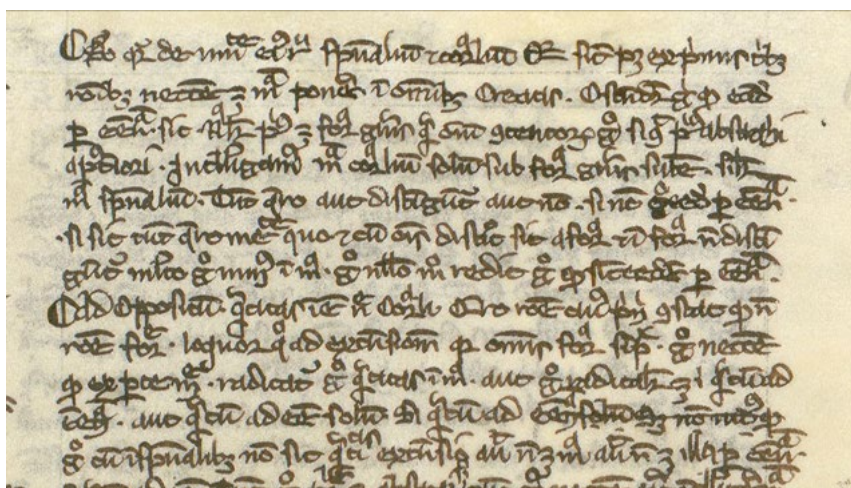


Figure 11

Image from the *Quaestiones de Materia Rerum Creaturarum* discussing universal hylomorphism

Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 186, f. 105rb.

³⁴⁰ 2 *Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, art. 1, q. 2, ad. 3. (II, p. 87). Cf. 2 *Sent.*, dist. 12, art. 2, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 306); *Quaestiones de Natura et Potentiis Animae*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 96vb.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, q. 3, resp. (II, pp. 89-90).

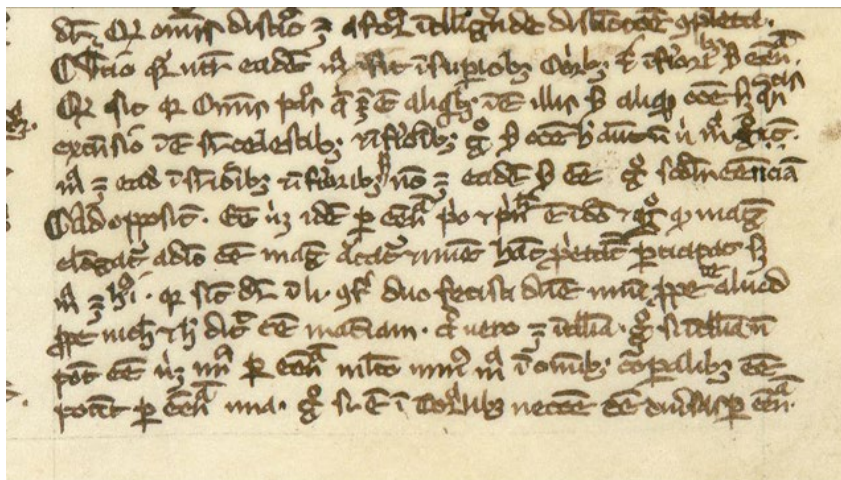


Figure 12

Image from the *Quaestiones de Materia Rerum Creaturarum* discussing spiritual matter.

Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 186, f. 105rb.

3.3.2.4) *The Soul and Its Faculties.*

As a self-subsisting *hoc aliquid*, Bonaventure maintains that the soul's three main faculties, memory, intelligence, and will – as the basis of its nature as *imago Dei* – are neither totally separate from its essence nor fully identical with it.³⁴² In contrast to Aquinas who, in seeking to be more faithful to Aristotle's logic, posits a real distinction between the soul and its faculties, thus reducing them to the level of accidents or 'propers' attached to the soul, Bonaventure maintains that the soul's powers are consubstantial with it.³⁴³ Memory, intelligence, and will, as well as the sensitive and vegetative potencies, are thus capable of being only virtually distinct from the soul, since as the medium whereby it acts, both internally and externally, they can possess no essence other than that of the soul itself.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, dist. 24, pars. 1, art. 2, q. 1, resp. (II, pp. 576-8).

³⁴³ *I Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 2, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (I, p. 64).

This refusal to draw a real distinction between the soul and its powers is repeated in Bonaventure's thought on the internal distinction between the faculties themselves.³⁴⁴ Rejecting the suggestion that the soul's powers constitute a single potency, Bonaventure maintains that since they are unable to exist separately from the soul, they cannot be really distinct from one another.³⁴⁵ This belief is grounded in the conviction that the faculties are distinguished by their actions, and not their objects, as Aquinas claims. Thus, whilst the will and the intellect both seek the same object – i.e., the good – they do so in different ways: one through cognition the other through love.³⁴⁶ Moreover, it is this distinction which grounds the operational independence of each: the intellect is not merely an extension of the will; nor, in turn, is the will merely a function of the intellect.³⁴⁷

As we will see, the distinction between the will – or the appetitive power – and the intellect is of central importance to understanding Bonaventure's epistemology, and how, in turn, he maintains that it is through the appetitive action of the will that the intellect, under the instruction of charity, is able to read nature correctly.

3.3.2.5) *The Soul's A Priori Awareness of God.*

Characterized as one of the most "Augustinian" aspects of Bonaventure's psychology, his allegiance to the doctrine of the soul's *a priori* awareness of God stands in direct opposition to the Aristotelian-Thomistic conviction that the soul's only source of knowledge is empirical investigation. Following the *Summa Halensis*, Bonaventure maintains that the soul possesses an internal, albeit latent, awareness of the divine which is rooted within an immediate, *a priori*

³⁴⁴ Cf. *Philosophy*, p. 347.

³⁴⁵ *Itinerarium*, chap. 5, n. 5 (V, p. 305).

³⁴⁶ *2 Sent.*, dist. 24, pars. 1, art. 2, q. 1, resp. (II, pp. 576-8).

³⁴⁷ *1 Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 2, art. 1, q. 1, ad. 2 (I, p. 64).

contact with God.³⁴⁸ Contained within the memory, this “divine consciousness” as it is sometimes referred to, is imprinted upon the soul at the moment of its creation and serves as the grounding of its spiritual identity and desire to know God. ‘There is innate to the mind’, Bonaventure tells us, ‘a natural desire for, together with a knowledge and memory of that reality in whose image it is made, and to which it tends for its beatitude’.³⁴⁹ At each moment, the mind, albeit at a pre-thematic – and thus latent – level, is intrinsically aware of God to the extent that the affirmation of His existence is the first object of the intellect.³⁵⁰

Fundamentally turned towards the transcendent, the mind, according to Bonaventure, is thus at its most basic level naturally oriented towards the infinite and the divine: it knows God before it knows itself.³⁵¹ Moreover, the integral unity between the soul and its faculties means that under the guidance of grace it is able to freely access the *a priori* image of God so firmly impressed upon it.³⁵² As such, possessed of all the basic principles needed to reason transcendently, even if the soul lacked any knowledge of creation it would – or so Gilson argues – still know itself and of God’s existence.³⁵³ That this is so, is seen through Bonaventure’s distinctive appropriation of Anselm’s ontological argument in his *Sentences Commentary* and *Quaestiones de Mystero Trinitatis* and his use of Damascene’s claim that ‘*cognitio essendi Deum nobis naturaliter est impressa*’.³⁵⁴ Were the soul’s faculties really distinct from its essence it would lack this capacity.³⁵⁵

³⁴⁸ *Itinerarium*, chap. 3, n. 2 (V, p. 303-4).

³⁴⁹ *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 1, resp. (V, p. 49); *DQMT.*, p. 116; *I Sent.*, dist. 8, pars. 1, art. 1, q. 2 b (I, p. 118).

³⁵⁰ *Itinerarium*, chap. 3, n. 2, (V, pp. 303-4). Cf. Scotus, *Ord. I.*, dist. 3, q. 2, resp., pp. 48-62; Ockham, *Ord.* dist. 3, q. 4, pp. 432-42.

³⁵¹ Cf. Augustinus Daniels, *Geschichte der Gottesbeweis in Dreizehnten Jahrhundert* (Munster: Verlag-Aschendorf, 1909), pp. 41-50; 51-63. It is interesting to compare Bonaventure’s thought here with Karl Rahner’s notion of the mind’s pre-thematic *vorgiff*. Cf. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, trans. William Dych, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968).

³⁵² *Quaestiones de Natura et Potentiis Animae*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 99vb.

³⁵³ *Philosophy.*, p. 347.

³⁵⁴ Cf. *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 1, resp. and various ad obiecta. (V, pp. 49-51).

³⁵⁵ Cf. *Philosophy*, p. 347.

Bonaventure tells us that this “pre-thematic” awareness of God is reduced to actuality through sensory experience. As the soul reasons its way to God, moving from effect to cause by studying the natural order, so it comes to discover something of the latent awareness of Him which is impressed upon it at its deepest levels. A clear example of this line of reasoning is to be found in the unedited *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*.³⁵⁶ Here Bonaventure asserts that a pre-conceptual awareness of God is inserted into the soul at its most basic cognitive level. As such it is a universal feature of humanity; one possessed by Christian and non-Christian alike.³⁵⁷ However, this latent *a priori* knowledge is only reduced to actuality through sensory experience, and ultimately the infusion of grace and the gift of faith.³⁵⁸ In this respect, there is some parallel, albeit vague, to Christ’s sensory reason and how it allowed him to increase in his cognition of his infused and innate knowledge; however, at no point, does Bonaventure explicitly make this connection.

3.4) *Aquinas on the Soul.*

The decidedly “un-Aristotelian” nature of these foundational elements of Bonaventure’s theology of the soul is brought into relief when we compare them with Aquinas’s thinking.

3.4.0) *The Soul as Form.*

Based upon the belief that matter is a purely corporeal reality, Aquinas rejects Bonaventure’s hylomorphic interpretation of the soul, insisting that the soul is a pure form.³⁵⁹ This, he argues,

³⁵⁶ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 40 vb.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ *ST.*, pars. 1, q. 75, art. 5, resp. Note the explicit attack on this position by Bonaventure’s disciple William de la Mare; cf. 2 *Sent.*, dist. 17, q. 2, (ed.) Hans Kraml (Munich: Verlag, 1995), p. 218.

is the authentic interpretation of Aristotle's teaching. A composite of essence – *essentia* – and existence – *esse*, the soul, like the angels is an essentially simple substance, which although capable of change, is devoid of any internal distinction.³⁶⁰ As pure form, the soul is nevertheless a self-subsisting *hoc aliquid* possessed of its own being and is thus capable of existing independently of the body. Matter, as such, for Aquinas, is not the universal principle of creaturely existence; nor, as such, is it the defining aspect of created being. Rather, the act of existence found within any creature, regardless of whether it possesses matter or not, is a separate, totally independent metaphysical quality given to it at the moment of its creation.

Even though purely incorporeal, the soul in Aquinas's thinking is still able to possess its own *esse*. The realization of its existence is nonetheless different from that of material objects. Where corporeal objects stand in potency to both form and existence prior to their creation, since it is through the imposition of form that their matter achieves a particular mode of being, the soul, by contrast, is the immediate subject of its own existence. Prior to its creation it stands in potency to existence alone.³⁶¹ The soul is therefore said to possess a more perfect *esse* than any corporeal object. Moreover, it is this proximity to its act of existence which guarantees the soul's incorruptibility and internal consistency. In stark contrast to Bonaventure, therefore, for Aquinas it is thus the soul's simplicity – i.e. its purely intellectual nature unmixed with matter – not its substantiality, which grounds its immortality.

3.4.1) *The Soul as Forma Corporis.*

Having established the soul's immortality, Aquinas adopts a more positive, though still qualified, acceptance of the Aristotelian definition of the soul as *forma corporis* than either Bonaventure or indeed Albert the Great can allow. Contrary to the fears of the hylomorphists

³⁶⁰ *Qu. Anima*, q. un., art. 6, resp. (II, pp. 391-2).

³⁶¹ Cf. *De Ente*.

and his mentor, Aquinas insists that it is possible to define the soul as *forma corporis* and deny the presence of matter within it, whilst, at the same time, avoiding the mistake of making its existence dependent upon that of the material body. The soul, he tells us, can be both the form of the body and an independent spiritual creature.³⁶² Naturally oriented towards the body as its motor and perfection, the soul is its substantial form – ‘*actus primus*’ – giving it life, sensation, and intellection. Thus, although a *hoc aliquid* in its own right, the soul is united with the body in such a way that the two converge so as to constitute a new, single act of being.

Properly speaking, therefore, the person produced through the coincidence of soul and body possesses a superior *esse* than that found in the soul alone – thus, it is clear why for Aquinas the soul is incomplete without the body and can no longer be called fully human after death. Only the composite of body and soul, Aquinas insists, constitutes the individual human person – hence his famous remarks in his *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*: ‘*anima autem cum sit pars corporis hominis, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego*’.³⁶³ Stressing the soul’s integral unity, Aquinas likewise rejects Bonaventure’s doctrine of a plurality of forms, maintaining that the soul, containing within itself all the potencies needed to act as *forma corporis*, is united directly to the body without the aid of any intermediary forms.³⁶⁴ All other forms found within the body – i.e. height, colour, etc. – he tells us are accidental forms.³⁶⁵ Here we thus see that Aquinas not only rejects, but sets himself at odds with Bonaventure’s decidedly “Augustinian” thinking by openly favouring Aristotle over Augustine.

3.4.2) *The Soul as Tabula Rasa.*

³⁶² *Qu. Anima*, q. un., art. 1, resp. (II, p. 369).

³⁶³ *Comm. 1 Cor.*, 15:19.

³⁶⁴ *ST.*, pars. 1, q. 76, art. 4, resp.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 77, art. 1, ad. 1.

Following Aristotle, Aquinas insists that the soul, unlike the angelic intellect, possesses no innate, *a priori* awareness of itself, the divine ideas, or creation; but is, instead, wholly reliant upon sense experience to provide it with knowledge. As he remarks in his *De Veritate*: ‘*nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu*’.³⁶⁶ Standing in potency to all that is intelligible, the mind is thus created a *tabula rasa* upon which nothing is written; and which, if left to itself, would remain in total ignorance.³⁶⁷ Using the body, the soul must therefore acquire knowledge through empirical study. Moreover, as we will see, in contrast to Bonaventure, for Aquinas this ability to abstract intelligible species from creation is a licit feature of human learning.

In Aquinas’s thinking, therefore, the mind’s first objects, at least at the level of natural reason, are not innate or transcendental, but experiential: ‘*principium nostrae cognitionis est a sensu*’.³⁶⁸ As such, rejecting Bonaventure’s conviction that the intellect achieves certainty by means of an extrinsic act of divine illumination, something which we will discuss shortly, Aquinas maintains that the soul possesses its own intellectual light in the form of the active intellect which, as a participated resemblance of the uncreated divine light (‘*enim lumen intellectuale quod est in nobis, nihil est aliud quam quaedam participata similitudo luminis increati*’), is sufficient to allow it to acquire truth through its own effort.³⁶⁹ The active intellect – as a coherent reflection of Christ’s own active intellect – is able to abstract intelligible species from material reality and to bestow these upon the soul through its own unaided agency.

Central to this process Aquinas tells us, are the ‘first principles’. Immediately realized by the mind through its engagement with sense experience, these self-evident or ‘*per se notum*’ truths cannot not be true and thus allow the intellect to establish certainty by means of necessary deduction, e.g. the ‘whole is greater than any of its parts’. To this extent, they provide the basis

³⁶⁶ *De Veritate*, q. 2, art. 3, arg. 19 (III, p. 36).

³⁶⁷ *Qu. Anima*, q. un, art. 8, (II, p. 401).

³⁶⁸ *ST.* 1a, q. 84, art. 6 sed contra.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, art. 5, resp.

upon which the soul is able to reason with accuracy, and to do so without supernatural illumination.³⁷⁰ Although no more innate to the intellect than the conclusions of deductive arguments, Aquinas grants that given the inevitability of their discovery, and their continued presence within the mind once it has acquired them, the first principles can be said to exist within the soul in germinal form.³⁷¹ Similarly, he concedes that on account of the fact that the light of the agent intellect comes from God, it can be said in a certain sense that all natural knowledge is implanted in us, for God has given to us the innate ability – that is to say the intellectual “tools” – needed to discover creation through our own rational enquiry.³⁷²

3.5) *Bonaventure on Body and Soul.*

In light of this, let us return briefly to Bonaventure’s thought on the soul’s relationship to the body.

3.5.0) *The Hylomorphic Soul as Forma Corporis.*

Although to an extent Bonaventure can be said to concur with Thomas in offering a qualified acceptance of the Aristotelian definition of the soul as *forma corporis*, his interpretation of the soul’s union with the body differs significantly from that of Aquinas. Where for Thomas – like Aristotle – the soul is united to the body through a simple relationship of form to matter, for Bonaventure, by contrast, the soul, composed as it is of its own form and matter, is already a self-subsisting hylomorphic compound prior to its union with the body. As *forma corporis*, the soul thus enters into a second hylomorphic composition. The form of the rational spirit is both the *forma substantialis* of the body as well as the form of its own incorporeal matter.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ *De Veritate*, q. 11, art. 1, resp. (III, p. 265).

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² *Ibid.*, q. 10, art. 6, resp. (III, p. 237).

³⁷³ *2 Sent.*, dist. 17, art. 1, q. 2, ad. 6 (II, p. 427).

Rejected by Aquinas as illogical,³⁷⁴ Bonaventure's belief that the soul can fulfil this twofold function is rooted within his theory of seminal reasons. Although through the conjunction of its matter and form the soul is constituted as an independent *hoc aliquid*, it nonetheless lacks complete actuation, since containing unrealized *rationes seminales*, it still possesses the capacity to fulfil a higher function; namely, acting as the form of the body.³⁷⁵ Not until the soul has exhausted its capacity for union with corporeal matter does it become fully actualized. Thus, for Bonaventure union with the body is not peripheral, but essential to the soul's perfection. It is this belief which grounds his claim that after death the soul cannot be called fully human until it is reunited with the body at the resurrection.

3.5.1) *The Hylomorphic Soul as Tabula Rasa.*

Finally, Bonaventure tells us that an integral reason for the soul's union with the body *post lapsum* is that, lacking any infused or innate knowledge of the natural world, it is wholly dependent upon the body to acquire knowledge of creation. Thus, whilst the soul may possess an *a priori* awareness of God's existence, in its fallen state it possesses no such *a priori* knowledge of creation.³⁷⁶ Thus, in the unedited *Quaestio de Lege Naturae*, Bonaventure remarks: '*dicit Philosophus in secundo Posteriorum quod non habemus cognitionem priorem innatum*'.³⁷⁷ To this extent, Bonaventure concurs – albeit in a qualified way – with the Aristotelian definition of the soul as *tabula rasa*, maintaining that it must discover the world through scientific enquiry: '*sicut dicit Philosophus anima creata est sicut tabula rasa*'.³⁷⁸ '*Ideo*

³⁷⁴ *ST.*, pars. 1, q. 76, art. 1, resp.

³⁷⁵ *Quaestiones de Natura et Potentiis Animae*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 96ra-rb.

³⁷⁶ *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 41va.

³⁷⁷ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 122vb. Bonaventure remarks here that any form of innate knowledge of creation within the soul is contrary to both the teaching of Aristotle and Augustine: '*sed hoc est expresse contra Philosophus in secundo Posteriorum et contra Augustinus*'.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 22, n. 35 (V, p. 442).

anima non cognoscit rem nisi speciem eius et formam sibi imprimat; et hoc non potest esse nisi illa abstrahatur a materia.³⁷⁹

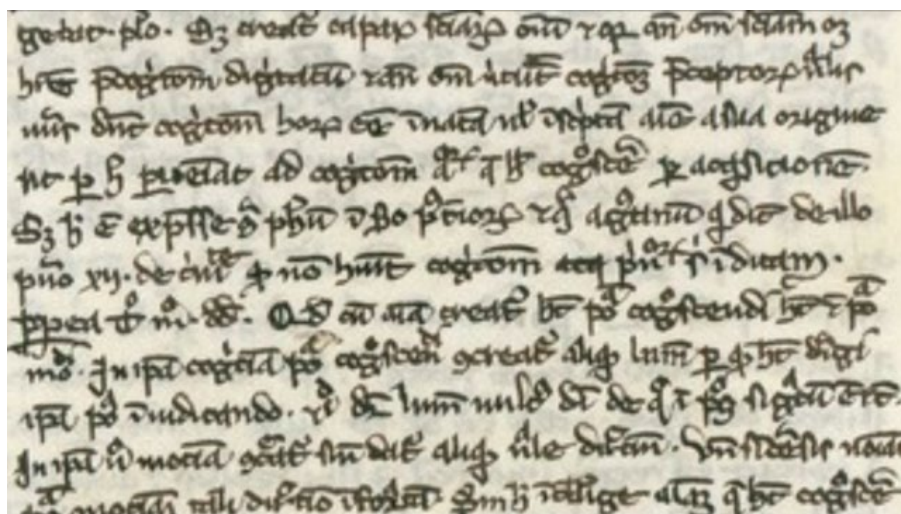


Figure 13

Image from the *Quaestio de Lege Naturae* stating that *post lapsum* the soul is a *tabula rasa* (lines 5-6).

Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 186, f. 122ra.

Recalling what was said in the previous chapter, it is thus clear that at the level of sense knowledge, therefore, the soul in *homo lapsus* is radically different from that of Christ. Where through sense perception Christ simply experienced that which he already knew at the level of latent habit, and thus made no progress in understanding, the fallen soul, by contrast, having lost its innate knowledge of creation, genuinely does learn through empirical investigation.³⁸⁰ Prior to its illumination by faith, its only source of knowledge (at an actual level at least) is to abstract intelligible species from material reality in the way Aristotle describes: ‘*substantia intellectiva nihil cognoscit nisi abstrahatur a materia*’.³⁸¹ Moreover, as Aristotle teaches, through this process of abstraction, the soul, so Bonaventure judges, becomes radically

³⁷⁹ 2 *Sent.*, dist. 17, art. 1, q. 2, ad. 4 (II, p. 427).

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, dist. 27, art. 1, q. 2, arg. 4 (II, p. 425).

identified with that which it knows: *'sed in actu cognoscendi fit assimilatio cognoscendis ad cognoscibile et e converso'*.³⁸² Why this exemplary likeness to Christ has been lost, and the implications it has for the soul's standing in relation to Christ, is to be discussed shortly.

Section 2

3.6) *Bonaventure's Theology of the Soul's Cognition: Christ the Centre of the Circular Hierarchy of the Soul's Cognitive Faculties.*

Having outlined some of the underlying metaphysical principles of Bonaventure's psychology, attention now turns to his hierarchical division of the soul's various cognitive faculties, and how each, as an outworking of his thought on Christ's noetic, possesses the Incarnate Word as its center and source of certainty. As even a cursory glance at texts like the *Sentences Commentary* and *Itinerarium* reveal, Bonaventure posits three basic stages of unaided human noetic. Namely, sensory perception; the abstraction of intelligible species by the active and passive intellects; and, finally, the soul's *a priori* illumination by the divine ideas. Each of these stages is hierarchically ordered according to the dignity of knowledge which they bestow; and each, in turn, possesses Christ at its center and is as such to be 'retraced' back to him.

To understand how this is so, it is necessary to recognize that, as with his thought on Christ's own knowledge, Bonaventure envisages the hierarchy of the soul's cognitive faculties according to a series of concentric circles, whereby each sphere of cognition contains its superior counterpart at its center. As the least significant, and therefore outermost sphere of cognition, sensory perception, he tells us, is associated with the lower feminine soul because it studies the inferior truths of empirical investigation. Next, is the acquired knowledge of the active and passive intellects, whereby the soul abstracts species from the phantasms revealed

³⁸² *Ibid.*

by the senses and discovers something new about creation. Finally, at the center of the hierarchy of the soul's cognitive faculties, is the mind's *a priori* illumination by the divine ideas whereby it is illuminated *ab extra* so as to allow it to judge the species which it has abstracted with certainty.

This circular hierarchy of noetic, and its correspondence to Bonaventure's hierarchical structuring of the soul, can be imagined as follows:

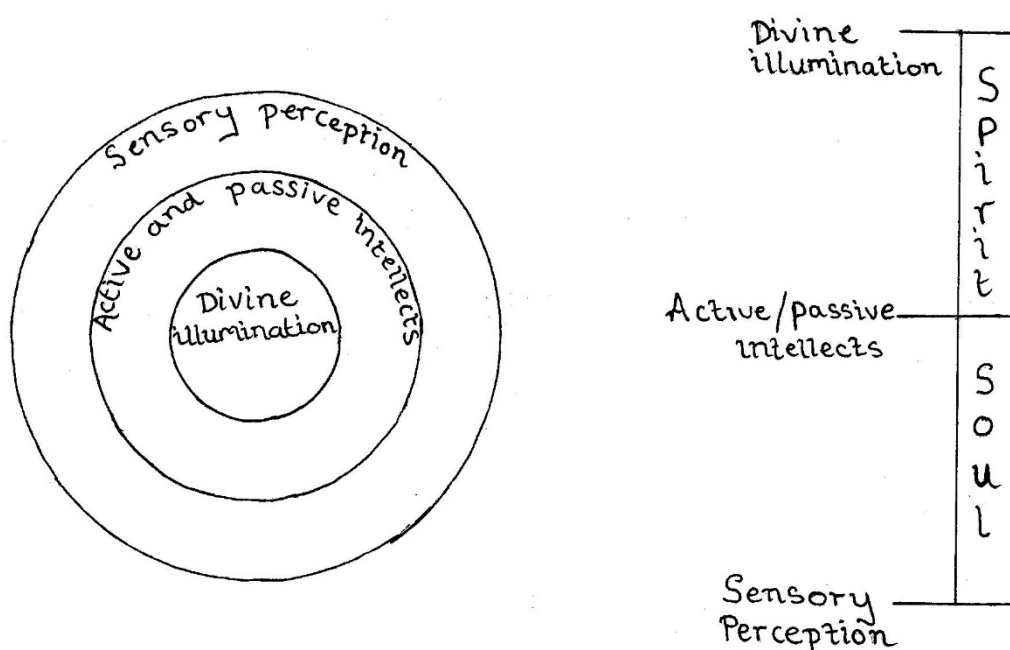


Figure 14

Whilst Bonaventure's notion of Christ's mind as the exemplary cause of the human soul will be discussed later, it is nonetheless worth noting at this stage that there is a notable degree of similarity between the soul's cognitive faculties and the three basic spheres of wisdom found within Christ's intellect – i.e., *scientia beata*, *scientia infusa*, and *scientia experientiae*. As we shall see later, recognizing this convergence is of central importance to understanding Bonaventure's belief that Christ's intellect is both the formal and final cause of the soul's different levels of cognitive activity.

3.6.0) *Retracing the Soul's Cognitive Faculties Back to Christ.*

So as to reveal how Christ's mind lies hidden at the center of the soul's circular hierarchy of cognitive faculties it is proposed that we consider each of them in turn.

3.6.1) *Sense Knowledge – The Outermost Circle of Human Cognition.*

Proper to the lower sensitive soul, the acquisition of inferior sense knowledge in Bonaventure's thinking is a threefold process. The first stage is the detection of tangible objects by the sense organs. Shaped by the conviction that the senses are disposed towards union with that which they find agreeable, wholesome, and beautiful, Bonaventure's understanding of sense experience, like that of so many of his contemporaries, is rooted within the notion of proportionality.³⁸³ Depending upon the extent to which an object makes itself present to the sense organs by means of the radiation of *species in medio*, it can be perceived as either desirable or undesirable. Too strong, as is the case with a luminous object possessed of an excess of light, and the object overpowers the sense organs causing pain. Too weak, such as in a luminous substance which fails to emit enough light, and the object is perceived as feeble and disagreeable. The same is true of colours and sounds, etc.

Naturally oriented towards one another, contact between the body and sense objects, Bonaventure tells us, is rooted within the sense organs' desire to be united with that which will satisfy their appetites.³⁸⁴ Such at least was the case in *homo creatus*. Corrupted by sin, however, the senses, now driven by the rational spirit's unhealthy curiosity about effeminate empirical knowledge, are no longer governed by a strict sense of proportion; instead, they seek union with that which they desire to excess – such is the case with gluttony, avarice, lust, etc. To this

³⁸³ *Itinerarium*, chap. 2, nn. 5-6 (V, pp. 300-1).

³⁸⁴ *De Reductione*, n. 10. (V, p. 322).

extent, in the present fallen state the senses, and the knowledge they provide, dispose the soul towards that which is harmful. It is thus clear that they no longer resemble Christ's sensory organs because they have forgotten how to properly engage with creation.

Once present to the body's organs, the second stage of sense perception, Bonaventure continues, is the communication of the impressed species to the soul proper. As the unedited *Quaestiones de Colore* reveal, these species replicate themselves through the relevant nervous passageways to the brain, where they come to reside in the imagination, still seemingly in some quasi corporeal form.³⁸⁵ The rational spirit, as *forma corporis*, then descends through its various powers to the level of its sensitive faculty and allows itself, in Gilson's words, to 'spiritually undergo' the influence of sensible species at the level of form.³⁸⁶ Since the individual senses are capable of detecting only a specific part of an object, Bonaventure posits the existence of a superior 'common sense' which possessing the ability to see an object in its entirety, gathers together the information the senses produce and passes judgement upon it.³⁸⁷

Once the common sense has judged a sensible species, this information is then taken up by the imagination, which standing midway between the senses and the rational spirit, acts as a storehouse in which species are retained until they are required by the intellect.³⁸⁸ The final stage of sense experience is the abstraction of sensible species by the imagination. This forms the basis of the activity of the higher rational spirit since, lacking the ability to form an image of anything which it does not have sense experience of, the capacity of the higher rational spirit as *tabula rasa* to acquire knowledge is dependent upon the extent to which the lower imagination has been filled with species by the sensitive soul. In this respect, it is clear that the

³⁸⁵ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 44ra. See also Bacon's *De. Mult. Spec.*

³⁸⁶ Cf. Gilson's *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1955), p. 335.

³⁸⁷ *Itinerarium*, chap. 2, n. 3 (V, p. 300). On the identification of the common sense with the phantasia see *Historical Constitution*, pp. 331-2.

³⁸⁸ On the 'abstractive' role of the imagination see *Historical Constitution*, p. 332.

superior rational spirit of the fallen soul is radically different to that of Christ's, which, as we have seen, is infused with a complete knowledge of all created species.

Yet, despite this, Bonaventure still sees something of a Christic analogy at work within the process of sense perception. The radiation of *species in medio* and their impression upon the sensory organs and their eventual translation into *species intelligibilis*, he tells us mirrors something of the Son's eternal generation from the Father:

If, therefore, it is in the nature of all knowable things to generate a likeness (*speciem generare*) of themselves, they clearly proclaim that in them, as in mirrors (*quod in illis tanquam in speculis*), we can see the eternal generation of the Word, the Image, and the Son eternally emanating from God the Father.³⁸⁹

3.6.2) *The Active and Passive Intellects – The Second Circle of Natural Cognition.*

Like Aquinas, Bonaventure posits both an active and a passive intellect within each human soul.³⁹⁰ Shaped by his denial of any real distinction between the soul's faculties, he does not, however, posit so firm a distinction between them as Aquinas does. Maintaining that the two faculties are distinguished by their actions rather than their objects, for Bonaventure the active and passive intellects are not two separate cognitive faculties – as Aquinas claims – but rather mutually reliant activities of the one intellect.³⁹¹ Neither self-sufficient nor self-determining, each consists of a mixture of potency and act.³⁹² The active intellect 'abstracts' intelligible species from the data of sense experience provided by the lower sensitive soul. However,

³⁸⁹ *SJIG.*, pp. 70-1.

³⁹⁰ *2 Sent.*, dist. 24, pars. 1, art. 2, q. 4, resp. (II, pp. 586-9); cf. *ST.*, pars. 1, q. 79, art. 4, resp., pp. 279-80.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² *Ibid.*

because it lacks the larger store of species already contained in the passive intellect from previous acts of cognition, it is unable to properly judge the species which it has abstracted and must therefore appeal to the passive intellect for assistance in this respect.³⁹³

Markedly different from the purely passive faculty imagined by Aquinas, it is thus the passive intellect for Bonaventure which is the original agent of ‘abstraction’.³⁹⁴ The passive intellect, he remarks, ‘*non est pure passivus*’.³⁹⁵ Actively turning towards the ‘phantasms’ isolated by the active intellect, it judges – and thereby formally ‘abstracts’ – the species they contain so as to make them intelligible to the mind. Nonetheless, the passive intellect is unable to fulfil this task without its active counterpart since, by itself, it lacks the capacity to directly abstract species from sense experience.³⁹⁶ The two intellects are, therefore, mutually dependent to such an extent that they are unable to exercise their activity without the aid of the other.³⁹⁷

3.6.3) *Divine Illumination – The Innermost Circle of Unaided Human Cognition.*

Perhaps the most well-known, but most misunderstood aspect of Bonaventure’s theory of cognition is his doctrine of divine illumination – i.e., the mind’s illumination by the divine ideas. At the heart of Bonaventure’s thinking on illumination is the question of how the mind, having lost the light of superior reason and bent double by *sin post lapsum*, can achieve certainty.³⁹⁸ Truth, for Bonaventure, unlike Aquinas and later Franciscans such as Duns Scotus

³⁹³ Cf. *Quaestiones de Natura et Potentiis Animae*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 99va-vb.

³⁹⁴ *2 Sent.*, dist. 24, pars. 1, art. 2, q. 4, resp. (II, pp. 586-9). Cf. Aquinas *2 Sent.*, dist. XVII, q. 2, art 1, resp. (II, pp. 422-8).

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, ad. 5-6 (II. p. 590).

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, ad. 4. Cf. *Quaestiones de Natura et Potentiis Animae*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 99va-vb.

³⁹⁸ Cf. Stephen Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols; P. J. Doyle, ‘The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory in the Franciscan School: 1285-1300: Peter of Trabes, Richard of Middleton, William of Ware.’ (PhD. dissertation: Marquette University, 1984). See also Lydia Schumacher’s revisionist *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford:

and Ockham, is not simply necessary, logical, or even metaphysical; rather it is eternal and unchanging. ‘There can be no certain knowledge’ he tells us ‘except where there is immutability of the object known and infallibility on the part of the knower’.³⁹⁹ Unalterable and binding, truth, in short, is thus to be identified solely with the divine.

Based upon his exemplarist metaphysics, Bonaventure maintains that divine truth exists at three distinct levels: in creation, the mind, and, finally, the eternal art – i.e., the divine ideas.⁴⁰⁰ Mutable and lacking any internal stability, he tells us that neither creation nor the mind, although reflections, i.e., vestiges, of the divine wisdom are able to offer the soul certainty, since both having originated in a state of non-being are prone to change and thus possess nothing of the infallible. To this extent, all creatures are a ‘lie’: ‘*omnis creatura mendacium est*’.⁴⁰¹ They stand ready to lead us into error if, on account of the weakness of our intellects, we fall into the error of believing that they are the measure of truth and certainty. As we shall see, this is a belief central to Bonaventure’s critique of Aristotelianism and its denial of the divine ideas. Truth, he tells us, is to be found solely in the eternal reasons.⁴⁰²

Bonaventure reasons that given that it is self-evident that the mind does indeed possess certainty about some things (i.e., the first principles of any given natural science), it is also clear that the mind must therefore have some access to the eternal reasons.⁴⁰³ Seeking to avoid the Platonic doctrine of recollection whilst also attempting to justice to the role of sensory experience in natural reason, he maintains that the eternal reasons are never seen directly by the mind, nor, as such, are they the sole basis of human knowledge; such is the case solely in the blessed, and of course in Christ himself. Rather, they are the ‘regulative and motivating’

Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). For a critical assessment of Schumacher’s work see Kevin Hughes’s review of the latter work in *Modern Theology* 29.1 (2013), pp. 176-8.

³⁹⁹ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, p. 23); *DQKC.*, p. 135.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.* (V, pp. 22-4).

⁴⁰¹ *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 8 (V, p. 344).

⁴⁰² *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, p. 23); *DQKC.*, p. 135.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

principle of cognition.⁴⁰⁴ Simultaneously apprehended – ‘contuited’ – by the mind whenever it comes into contact with an external reality, they allow it to see the form of an object not simply as it stands in transient creation but also in the light of its original idea in the eternal, unchanging exemplar of the *mens Dei*.

The eternal reasons are thus the illuminating medium *sine qua non* through which the soul views, discerns, and finally, judges the world. ‘These rules are beyond error, doubt and judgement’ Bonaventure remarks ‘for judgement is by them, not of them (*quia per illas est iudicium, et non est de illis*)’.⁴⁰⁵ They provide the soul with certainty by allowing it to measure that which it acquires through sense experience against a fixed reference point: ‘filling the rational mind with splendid light’ the eternal reasons ‘are all the ways by which the mind knows and judges that which could not be otherwise (*id quod aliter esse non potest*)’.⁴⁰⁶ For Bonaventure, therefore, in our current fallen state, sense experience is not negated by the activity of the eternal reasons – as would be the case if Bonaventure were to endorse a version of the Platonic doctrine of ‘remembrance’ – but merely dependent upon it to be brought to certainty. Augustinian illumination, in effect, complements and completes the work of the Aristotelian active and passive intellects.

3.6.4) *Christ as the ‘Fontal Principle’ of All Cognitive Illumination.*

Central to understanding Bonaventure’s doctrine of divine illumination is its decidedly Christological basis. For Bonaventure, it is Christ – as the eternal Word – who is the ‘fontal principle’ (*fontale principium*) of all cognitive illumination.⁴⁰⁷ This is so, because, as the

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, (V, pp. 23-4).

⁴⁰⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 10 (V, p. 338); *Collations*, p. 27.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 9 (V, pp. 338).

⁴⁰⁷ *Magister*. (IX, p. 442).

second person of the Trinity, Christ is the repository of the divine ideas and thereby the fullest expression of the Father's perfect wisdom, both with respects to the infinite nature of the God-head itself and with regards to the finite scope of the whole of creation.⁴⁰⁸ 'Therefore, if the Son of God is the Word in whom all things are spoken' he remarks, 'it is necessary that the likeness of all things that are expressed be present in the Word'.⁴⁰⁹ The *Verbum Patris*, in Christ is thus to be found the measure of all finite and infinite knowledge. He is 'truly the eternal mirror which makes possible the knowledge of every intelligible being'.⁴¹⁰ To this extent, it is clear that as the divine Word Christ is not only the '*fontale principium*' of all cognitive illumination, but the very ground of *all* intellectual certainty itself. To know anything, even in a state of ungraced cognition, is to know in the light of Christ's wisdom as the eternal Word.⁴¹¹

However, as we will see later for Bonaventure the mind's illumination by the divine ideas in Christ insofar as he is the eternal Word has been tainted by sin and thus is fundamentally weakened. Where *ante lapsum*, the soul enjoyed the fullest possible illumination by the divine ideas *in via*, and thus judged creation with accuracy in conjunction with its infused knowledge of all created species; *post lapsum* it can judge only the most basic truths – i.e., the 'first principles' of a science – with certitude.⁴¹²

3.6.5) *The Hidden Centre – Christ's Mind as the Central Axis of the Circular Hierarchy of the Soul's Cognitive Faculties.*

Having outlined the three different stages of natural cognition within Bonaventure's circular hierarchy of the soul's cognitive faculties, it remains now to critically assess and actively

⁴⁰⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 1, nn. 13-17 (V, p. 332).

⁴⁰⁹ *DQKC.*, q. 2, arg. pro. 10, p. 86.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, arg. pro. 9, p. 85.

⁴¹¹ *Magister.* (IX, p. 442).

⁴¹² *DQKC.*, q. 4, resp., p. 136.

determine how each is to be retraced back to Christ's human intellect. Central here is Bonaventure's belief that Christ's own perfect noetic lies hidden at the center of the circular hierarchy of the human soul and is responsible for bestowing intellectual coherence upon it.⁴¹³ The central and immovable point of stability, Christ's noetic, Bonaventure tells us, is the locus around which all the different spheres of human thought revolve and look to for illumination. An appropriate analogy here would thus be how the sun stands at the center of the solar system and illumines the various celestial bodies which revolve around it.⁴¹⁴

This illuminating and stabilizing influence which Christ exercises upon the soul is realized, however, in varying degrees. The more central and superior a mode of cognition is – and thereby the closer it is to the illuminating center of the perfect knowledge of Christ – the greater the degree of its illumination by the Incarnate Word. Thus, standing at the innermost circle of the soul's cognitive faculties, the cognition which is achieved through divine illumination receives the greatest degree of illumination by Christ's mind. It then communicates this light to the inferior outer levels of the soul's cognition – i.e. the abstractive knowledge of the active intellect and the experiential knowledge of the senses. Only when the soul is fully conformed to Christ in beatitude, does the light radiating from his intellect fully illumine the soul's outermost spheres of noetic; until then these outer faculties are darkened by sin.

This illuminating effect which Christ's mind has upon the soul's circular hierarchy of cognitive faculties can be illustrated as follows:

⁴¹³ *Magister*. (IX, pp. 141-2).

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid*.

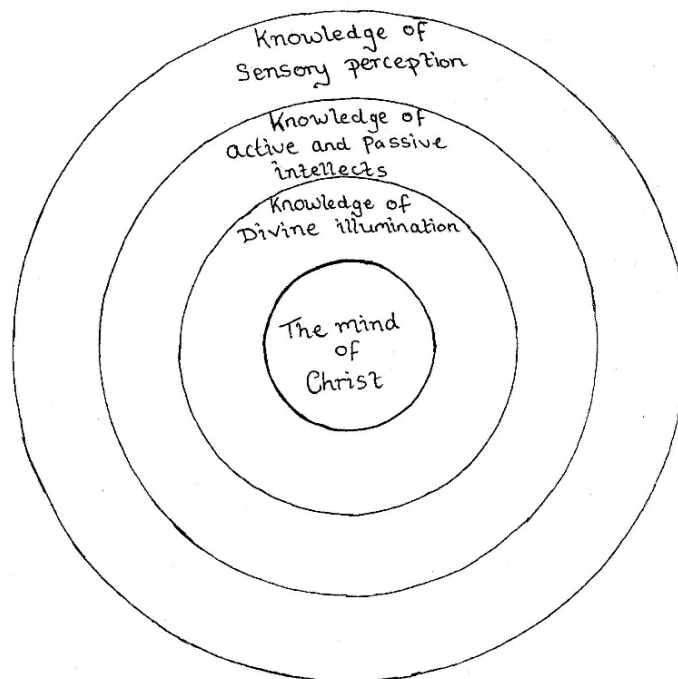


Figure 15

Section 3

3.7) *The Knowledge of Adam: The Soul and the Impact of the Fall upon the Soul.*

Before we discuss how each of the soul's different cognitive faculties are to be retraced back to Christ's mind as their *causa formalis*, it is necessary to discuss Bonaventure's thought on Adam's prelapsarian knowledge and the negative impact which the fall had upon the soul's cognitive abilities, in particular its exemplary likeness to Christ. The purpose of doing so is to illustrate how for Bonaventure – in noted contrast to Aquinas – the acquired, empirical knowledge of philosophy, and in turn the ability to learn through sense experience, is a product of the fall and the soul's loss of the original wisdom which it once possessed in innocence. As we will see, this conviction is central to understanding Bonaventure's critique of Aristotelianism, both from the perspective of his Christocentric theology of the soul and indeed his broader theological vision. Similarly, it is critical to understanding the differences between Bonaventure's and Aquinas's evaluations of the status of philosophy as a scientific discipline.

For Bonaventure, the whole narrative of human cognition *in via* is shot through with a sense of tragedy, and a desire to remedy the effects of the fall upon the soul. The latter, he tells us, have been so great that *post lapsum* not only has the soul lost the plenitude of wisdom which – as we alluded to earlier – it once possessed in innocence; but, as a result of this, it has come to embark upon a false and illegitimate path of “wisdom” – i.e., the naturalistic reasoning of unaided *philosophia*. The current state of humanity as *homo ignarius* is thus both un-natural to the soul and at odds with its original state and ultimate eschatological purpose. As such, it is something which must be rectified before humanity can enjoy its intended beatitude *in patria* – how the intellect can be restored to a state of noetic perfection will be discussed later in this chapter and in the next ones. By no means unique to Bonaventure, this identification of our intellectual imperfection with the fall, is nonetheless something which is seized upon by him and serves as a theme which runs throughout his entire narrative on the status of philosophy.

In many respects this aspect of Bonaventure’s thought, and his views on faith and reason in general, strongly echoes the Victorine school, in particular the thought of Hugh of Saint Victor. As Franklin T. Harkins has shown, for Hugh the fall decimated the human intellect, giving rise to both ignorance and a false mode of reasoning.⁴¹⁵ Moreover, like Bonaventure, Hugh believes that humanity’s eschatological vocation is to rectify this error by pursuing the study of divine wisdom, and in the process thereby leading creation back to God.⁴¹⁶ Such concerns are, as we will see, deeply coherent with Bonaventure’s own views, and in particular his belief that the fallen soul is called to recover the fullness of its identity as *imago Christi*. Echoing Hugh, for Bonaventure, satisfaction and the promised future beatitude of

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Franklin T. Harkins, *Reading and the Work of Restoration: History and Scripture in the Theology of Hugh of St. Victor* (Toronto: PIMS, 2009), pp. 100-12, esp. pp. 106-7. An excellent introduction to Hugh’s thought is to be found in Dominique Poirel’s *Hughes de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1998).

⁴¹⁶ Harkins, *Reading and the Work of Restoration*, pp. 112-36.

humanity demand that the soul make amends for its decision to break the original divine commandment (Gen. 2: 16-17) by pursuing a path of graced learning.

3.7.0) *Bonaventure on the Knowledge of Adam.*

Let us now examine Bonaventure's views on Adam's pre-lapsarian noetic and how it was corrupted by the fall.

3.7.0.0) *The Mind Which Could Not Learn.*

For Bonaventure, Adam was placed into Eden in a state of innocence, devoid of defect and, like Christ, possessed of an innate knowledge of all creation. One of four gifts given to him that he might persevere in rectitude, two of nature – conscience and synderesis – and two of grace, Adam's innate knowledge, although an integral part of his pre-lapsarian soul, was nonetheless an infused habit of created noetic freely given to him – *gratia gratis data* – at the moment of his creation. Alongside his other supernatural gift, the grace which makes pleasing (*gratia gratum faciens*), this innate habit of noetic oriented Adam's soul towards the study of superior reason.⁴¹⁷ Filled with a knowledge of all species, it bestowed upon him a complete knowledge of creation prior to any act of sense experience.⁴¹⁸ That this was so is proved by the fact that he was able to name all creatures without having encountered them before.⁴¹⁹

Operating at a noetic level superior to that of his senses, Adam's innate knowledge thus meant that he did not acquire any new understanding through empirical investigation. Instead, like Christ, he merely experienced at the level of sensory experience that which he already

⁴¹⁷ *Breviloquium*, pars. 2, chap. 11 (V, pp. 229-30).

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, (V, p. 229).

⁴¹⁹ *2 Sent.*, dist. 23, art. 2, q. 1 b. (II, p. 555).

knew at the level of innate habit.⁴²⁰ Thus, through engaging with creation, Adam increased only in terms of his experience, not his actual knowledge. To this extent, possessed of perfect rectitude, Adam was – excluding his lack of the *lumen gloriae*– truly *imago Christi*. Moreover, his active intellect, like that of Christ’s, was not oriented towards the abstraction of intelligible species from creation; nor, indeed, did it even possess the capacity to do so. Rather, it merely processed the plenitude of species already impressed upon his soul at the level of latent habit.

3.7.0.1) *Empirical Knowledge as a Punishment for Sin.*

Adam – like Christ – thus had no need for philosophy. His innate knowledge bestowed upon him a complete knowledge of creation and allowed him to perceive it from the perspective of superior reason as a vestige, image, and likeness of divine love.⁴²¹ ‘He was so wise (*sic sapiens esset*) that when he saw all things in themselves (*in se*), he also perceived them in their proper genus (*in proprio genere*) and with reference to God’s creating Art’ (*in arte*).⁴²² Having fallen into sin, however, Adam – and his future offspring – lost this innate knowledge and was condemned to total ignorance regarding creation, thus being forced to acquire knowledge of it through scientific investigation. The soul’s current status as a *tabula rasa* and, more importantly, its capacity to learn by abstracting species *ab extra*, are thus not only un-natural to it – i.e. a defective resemblance or “remnant” of the fullness of knowledge which it once possessed in innocence; but, more importantly, a direct product of the fall.⁴²³

Had Adam stood, neither science nor philosophy would have existed in Bonaventure’s opinion, since like him all humanity would have reasoned as Christ did.⁴²⁴ Bent double by sin,

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, resp. (II, p. 556).

⁴²¹ *Breviloquium*, pars. 2, chap. 12 (V, p. 230).

⁴²² *Brev.*, pars. 2, chap. 12, p. 97.

⁴²³ *2 Sent.*, dist. 23, art. 2, q. 1 d (II, p. 555).

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, resp. (II, p. 556-7).

however, the soul no longer fully resembles Christ, nor indeed its proto-parent. Where in Adam, the soul stood in close proximity to the Incarnate Word by knowing as he did and deriving no knowledge from sense experience; having erred through sin, it has lost its innate knowledge and thus turned away from Christ. The relationship between the soul and its exemplar has thus been disrupted. No longer a perfect *similitudo Christi*, the human mind has become a shadow, rather than a reflection, of its exemplar. As a result, unlike Christ, the soul of *homo lapsus* takes an unhealthy interest in sensory objects. It is infected with a concupiscence for creatures – an illness, Bonaventure remarks, which is ‘*mater omnium malorum*’.⁴²⁵ This concupiscence, as we will see, finds its fullest expression in Aristotelianism.

As we noted in the last chapter, in rendering the soul a *tabula rasa*, the fall in Bonaventure’s opinion had a significant impact on the nature and orientation of the active intellect and thereby the direction of the soul’s intellectual gaze itself. Where in his pre-lapsarian state Adam’s active intellect – like that of Christ’s – merely processed the latent species infused into his soul, *post-lapsus* Adam lost these infused species and thus his active intellect was forced to resort to abstracting intelligible species from material reality. For Bonaventure, therefore, the ability of the active intellect in *homo lapsus* to bestow new species upon the soul, and thereby endow it with genuine acquired knowledge, is thus at variance with its original purpose and design. Moreover, as we saw in the last chapter, it finds no prototype in the original exemplar of human noetic – i.e., the *mens Christi*.

Crucially, however, Bonaventure maintains that whilst philosophy and the capacity to learn through sense experience may be alien to the soul’s original noetic identity, now that it has been rendered a *tabula rasa* it has need of both in order to know the world. Philosophy and acquired knowledge, in other words, may be symptomatic of our current post-lapsarian malaise, yet, bitter as these fruits of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* may be, we have no choice – on

⁴²⁵ 2 *Sent.*, dist. 21, art. 2, q. 2, ad. 4 (II, p. 517).

account our current intellectual poverty – but to rely on them for knowledge. Only the light of faith and revelation sets us free from this noetic constraint. Moreover, as we will see – both in the next chapter and more fully in chapter six – Bonaventure maintains that, to the extent that philosophy and sensory reason recognize the exemplary authority of Christ’s mind and confess their noetic dependency upon his illuminating and stabilizing wisdom, they can be reconciled to Christ and even taken up as a temporarily licit *scientiae* by Christians. More on this later.

3.7.1) Aquinas on the Knowledge of Adam.

Aquinas offers a notably different estimation of Adam’s noetic pre-lapsarian noetic and how Adam’s cognitive processes were affected by the fall.

3.7.1.0) The Mind Which Could Learn.

In agreement with Bonaventure, Aquinas maintains that prior to the fall Adam possessed an infused knowledge of all created species, whereby, through perceiving the eternal art, he knew all creatures at the level of innate habit prior to any act of sense experience.⁴²⁶ Aquinas departs from Bonaventure, however, in one crucial respect; one which is central to understanding his significantly different evaluation of sensory experience and indeed natural philosophy as whole. In contrast to Bonaventure, he tells us that whilst Adam in his pre-lapsarian state could not learn through sense experience, his children – had he had any prior to the fall – would have been able to do so.⁴²⁷ ‘We must conclude’ he remarks ‘that, in the state of innocence, children would not have been born with perfect knowledge; but in the course of time they would have acquired knowledge without difficulty (*abseque difficultate*)’.⁴²⁸ Born without any innate or

⁴²⁶ *ST.*, pars. 1a, q. 94, art. 3, resp; 2 *Sent.*, dist. 23, q. 2, art. 2, resp. (II, pp. 576-7).

⁴²⁷ 2 *Sent.*, dist. 20, q. 2, art. 2, resp. (II, pp. 513-14).

⁴²⁸ *ST.*, pars. 1a, q. 101, art.1, resp.

infused knowledge of creation, they would have been like ordinary human beings in that they would have lacked any knowledge of creation prior to the act of sense experience.⁴²⁹

Thus, according to Aquinas – and in noted contrast to Bonaventure – even if Adam had not sinned, the human race would have still have had to learn through sensory perception. The gift of omniscience, and thereby the inability to learn through sense experience, was particular to Adam. He alone was infused with a complete knowledge of creation because he alone, as the father of the human race, was charged with teaching humanity with the fullness of created wisdom.⁴³⁰ To this extent, had Adam stood, he would have been the “model” or “exemplar” to which the human soul would have had to aspire to conform itself, both with regards to those things naturally knowable to the soul and truths which are supernatural. However, through sin, Adam lost this privileged position and Christ took it.⁴³¹

3.7.1.1) *Empirical Knowledge: An Integral Part of Human Cognition.*

For Aquinas, therefore, in contrast to Bonaventure, the ability to learn through empirical investigation, and thereby progress in wisdom by abstracting intelligible species, is not a product of sin, still less is it something alien to the mind’s original rectitude. Rather, it is an integral part of ordinary human cognition: ‘*est autem naturale homini ut scientiam per sensus acquirat*’.⁴³² All people are by nature able to learn through sense experience. What separates the fallen mind from the first man, and indeed Christ, is its lack of an infused knowledge of all created species. Possessed of only the lower reason of sense experience, and unable to appeal to Adam’s innate knowledge and teaching for guidance, the fallen soul is left utterly dependent upon sensory perception to provide it with knowledge of creation. Thus, for Aquinas it is the

⁴²⁹ 2 *Sent.*, dist. 23, q. 2, art. 2, resp. (II, pp. 576-7).

⁴³⁰ *ST.*, pars. 1a, q. 94, art. 3, resp.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

⁴³² *Ibid.*, q. 101, art. 1, resp.

mind's total reliance upon empirical investigation for knowledge, and not empirical investigation *per se*, which is a consequence of the fall.

In turn, this leads Aquinas to a very different estimation of the nature and orientation of the active intellect to the one articulated by Bonaventure. As in Christ – or at least the Christ in the thinking of the young Aquinas – Adam's pre-lapsarian active intellect merely processed the species already imprinted upon his soul at the level of latent habit, even though it was still naturally disposed towards the abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra*. By contrast, on account of their lack of infused knowledge, the active intellect in Adam's children was necessarily oriented towards the abstraction of intelligible species from the phantasms revealed by their senses. For Aquinas, therefore, in noted contrast to Bonaventure, the fall has not fundamentally distorted the natural orientation of the active intellect in the generations that have followed Adam; nor, as such, is the capability of the active intellect to abstract intelligible species from creation to be judged as a punishment for sin. Rather, quite the opposite is true. Both before and after the fall, the active intellect was naturally disposed towards bestowing new knowledge upon the soul by abstracting species *ab extra* from material reality.

As such, in Aquinas's estimation the capacity to progress genuinely in knowledge – and thereby by extension philosophy – are not products of sin, still less illegitimate modes of reasoning alien to the divinely organized schema of human cognition. Instead, they are a remainder of the soul's original knowledge and a manifestation of the intellect's natural capacity to learn by studying creation. Since God created the soul with the capacity to learn through empirical investigation, science and philosophy are, by consequence, an innate and indeed invaluable part of human learning. Both existed within Eden; and both, Aquinas tells us, bestow legitimate knowledge. 'The study of philosophy' he writes 'is in itself lawful and commendable' (*studium philosophiae secundum se est licitum et laudibile*).⁴³³

⁴³³ *ST.*, II-II, q. 167, art. 2, ad. 3.

Offering a more positive appraisal of philosophy's origins than Bonaventure, for Aquinas therefore even if Adam had stood his children would still have been able to reason like Aristotle. To this extent, it is clear that philosophy has always existed; and, more importantly, that it was always destined to do so: *Deus vult philosophiam*. Philosophy and the capacity to progress in knowledge using our active intellects are thus not accidents of sin, but gifts of God.

Section 4

3.8) *Christ the 'One Teacher of All' – Christ as the Exemplar of the Soul.*

Attention turns now to assessing how for Bonaventure Christ's intellect is the exemplar of the human soul.

3.8.0) *Egressus and Formal Causality: Christ the Model, Fullness, and Perfection of Human Cognition.*

As touched upon in the introductory chapter, in Bonaventure's judgement Christ's exemplary relationship with the soul operates at two distinct, yet complementary, levels. The first, and most fundamental, stems from the fact that, possessed of the most complete creaturely knowledge possible, Christ's mind is the model, fullness, and perfection of all human learning, ranging from sense experience to beatitude.⁴³⁴ Endowed with omniscience, Christ's intellect, Bonaventure tells us, is the paradigm and universal horizon which serves to encapsulate and define all that which the human soul can know, through either faith or reason. As such, possessed of noetic perfection, it is both the originating principle (*fons*) and unsurpassed

⁴³⁴ See next chapter. *Infra*.

measure of *all* human noetic.⁴³⁵ Whatever Adam, the saints, or indeed any other individual may know, Christ knew first and to a much fuller degree. The mirror of perfection (*speculum perfectionis*), every aspect of the soul's cognition is thus, in Bonaventure's judgement, a *similitudo* or *vestigium* of Christ's own knowledge; the only exception, as we shall see, is the acquired knowledge of fallen sensory experience; and, by extension, un-aided philosophy.

To this extent, Christ's mind functions at the level of archetypal blueprint or *causa formalis* in relation to the souls of all other human beings.⁴³⁶ All other manifestations of human learning, no matter how great or small they may be, Bonaventure tells us are an outworking – an *egressus* – of Christ's own perfect noetic. They must by necessity therefore look to him as their originating principle and model of perfection.⁴³⁷ For as Aristotle himself concedes, the logic of exemplary causality dictates that every creature must have a created formal cause from which it proceeds – human intelligence Bonaventure insists is no different. Thus, in the same way a circle's circumference defines its diameter, so Christ's mind – as the '*origo omnis sapientiae*' – dictates both the nature and scope of human cognition itself.⁴³⁸ As such, the truth of what we know – and indeed the very process of *how* we know – derives its ultimate validity and form from Christ's own perfect noetic. In each cognitive act, be it of faith, reason, or the perfect contemplation of the *visio Dei*, we thus "know" in light of Christ's own knowledge:

Christ himself is the fount of all true knowledge (*fons omnis cognitionis rectae*)... it appears that there are three ways of knowing. The first is through the faith of pious ascent; the second is through the approval of right reason; and the third is through the clarity of contemplation. The first is related to the habit of that virtue

⁴³⁵ *Christus Unus*, n. 1 (V, p. 567).

⁴³⁶ *Magister*. (IX, pp. 441-2).

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ *Christus Unus*, n. 1 (V, p. 567).

which is faith; the second, to that habit which is the virtue of understanding; and the third to that habit of blessedness which is purity of heart. Since there are three modes of knowledge, namely, that of faith, that of rational discourse, and that of contemplation, Christ is the principle and cause of all these (*omnium harum est Christus principium et causa*).⁴³⁹

To be wise in Bonaventure's judgement therefore entails not only conformity to Christ, but also some form of noetic participation in his own knowledge. Moreover, concurring with his illuminist epistemology, Bonaventure tells us that it also involves some form of illumination of our intellects by Christ's own perfect knowledge so as to bestow stability and coherence upon them:

From this we are given to understand that is impossible to arrive at...[*certainty*]... except through the coming of Christ into the mind (*per adventum Christi in mentem*)...it follows, therefore, that nothing can render things perfectly knowable (*perfecte scibiles*) unless Christ is present, the Son of God, and the Teacher.⁴⁴⁰

However, as we saw earlier, for Bonaventure this exemplary causality which Christ's intellect exerts over the human soul has been distorted by sin. Where prior to the fall, the human intellect was conformed to Christ and thus knew all creatures prior to any act of sense experience and could not learn; *post lapsum* this exemplary likeness has been defaced and darkened. The soul is no longer endowed with an infused and innate knowledge of creation; as such, it no longer fully resembles Christ or its proto-parents. Instead, having been rendered a

⁴³⁹ *Christ*, pp. 152-3; *Christus Unus*, n. 1 (V, p. 567-8).

⁴⁴⁰ *Christus Unus*, n. 3, 7 (V, p. 568-9).

tabula rasa it is forced to abstract species from material reality using its active intellect, which as we have just seen above now functions differently to its original purpose – i.e., the processing of infused species.⁴⁴¹ Yet despite this divergence from Christ, Bonaventure nonetheless insists that each human soul still retains some trace of its original likeness to its *causa formalis* in Christ's intellect. The soul may no longer be a clear reflection or *similitudo* of its original exemplar in Christ's mind, but it still retains the nature of a *vestigium*.

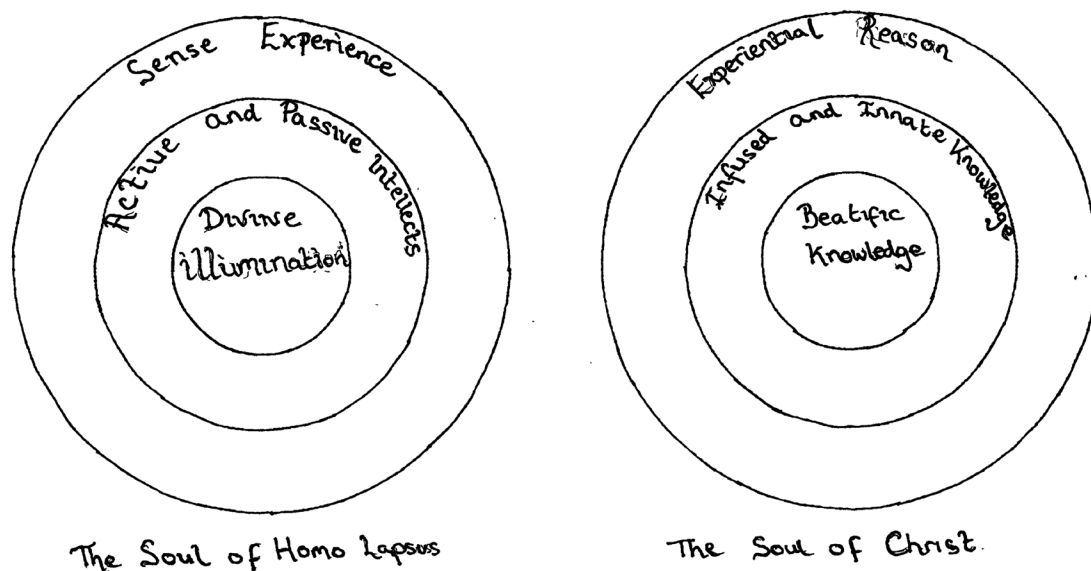


Figure 16

As we can see, there is still broad (albeit imperfect) agreement between the pattern of noetic in Christ's mind and that of the ordinary soul.

3.8.1) *Regressus and Final Causality: Christ the Directive Exemplar of the Soul.*

⁴⁴¹ *Supra.*

Closely related to the above, the second manner in which Christ's mind is the exemplar of the human soul is at the level of final causality. The eschatological vocation of the human soul, Bonaventure tells us, is to recover the perfect wisdom which it once possessed in innocence, and thereby restore the fullness of its identity as *imago Christi*; by doing so, it fulfils its *regressus* back to its primordial archetype. As the following chapters will reveal, this restoration of the soul's likeness to Christ is fundamental to Bonaventure's thinking on human redemption and the broader narrative of faith and reason. Indeed, as chapter five reveals it is the return of the soul back to Christ through a process of being re-conformed to him in both noetic and love which for Bonaventure is the final word of salvation history and indeed creation itself. However, Bonaventure tells us that the effects of the ignorance bestowed by sin – i.e., the mind's reliance upon the inferior reason of natural reason and its concupiscence for material objects – mean that the soul is unable to do anything on its own to restore its original Christic rectitude without supernatural assistance. As such, it needs a divinely given teacher – a perfect 'hierarchy' and 'exemplar' – who brings both the soul, and in turn, creation, back into balance.⁴⁴² This teacher is of course Christ, who alone possesses perfect wisdom:

It is clear who the model and teacher is (*auctor et doctor*). For Christ, who directs and aids our understanding (*director et auditor nostrae intelligentiae*), does so not only in a general sense, as is true with all the works of nature, and not only in a special sense, as in the works of grace and meritorious virtue....He alone, therefore, is the principle teacher (*ipse solus est principalis magister et doctor*).⁴⁴³

⁴⁴² *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 14 (V, p. 345).

⁴⁴³ *Christ*, pp. 160-1; *Christus Unus*, n. 16, 19 (V, p. 571-2).

Possessed of perfect rectitude, Christ's intellect, Bonaventure tells us, is thus the noetic horizon – the *causa finalis* – to which the ordinary soul, in its attempt to recover its original rectitude, must aspire to assimilate itself. The soul must constantly have before its eyes the perfect model of Christ, whose teachings are the 'book of light' we are called to take up, read, and imitate.⁴⁴⁴ To appropriate a phrase from his *Threefold Way*, Christ's intellect is 'the key, the gate, the path, and the guiding light of truth'.⁴⁴⁵ It presents the soul with a model of noetic excellence – one unsurpassed by any philosopher, scientist, or saint; and one which, in turn, reveals the soul's true calling to study the truths of grace, scripture, and charity, rather than science and philosophy. It is for this reason, Bonaventure tells us, that the Gospel reads '*unus est magister vester, Christo*' (Mt. 23:1). Through his perfect noetic and the purity of his love, Christ teaches us not only *sapientia perfecta* but also the concordance and holiness of life needed to be wise.⁴⁴⁶ He alone teaches perfect virtue, grace, and wisdom. As such, he alone is the 'directive exemplar' of the soul who leads it to beatitude and perfect rest.⁴⁴⁷

Christ says that he is our teacher, so that we might not be presumptuous about our knowledge. He says that our teacher is one with whom we might not fall into any disagreement. He says that he is our teacher, because he is ready to assist us (*paratus nobis assistare*) lest we give into despair. Above all he has the desire to help us. He has the knowledge necessary, and he can teach us by sending us the Spirit of wisdom of whom he speaks in John 16:13: When he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will teach you all truth.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴ *Christus Unus*, n. 8 (V, p. 569).

⁴⁴⁵ *Threefold*, chap. 3, n. 5, p. 122.

⁴⁴⁶ *Christ*, p. 163.

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. *Hidden Centre*, pp. 39-42.

⁴⁴⁸ *Christ*, p. 166; *Christus Unus*, n. 28 (V, p. 574).

3.8.2) *Restoring the Imago Christi: (1) The Theological Virtues and Gifts of the Spirit.*

As indicated in the quote just given, and the ones before it, for Bonaventure the process by which the soul is re-conformed to Christ is achieved through the agency of the Holy Spirit – specifically, the infusion of the theological virtues – faith, hope, and charity – and the gifts of the Spirit (*dona Spiritus*).⁴⁴⁹ ‘This then is the medicine: the grace of the Holy Spirit’.⁴⁵⁰ Grounded within the grace which makes pleasing, these supernatural habits of cognition act as a spiritual cure for the ignorance bestowed upon the soul through the fall. They do so by healing it of its unhealthy desire for sensory data and by bestowing upon it a predisposition towards the superior reason of grace rather than the lower truths of philosophy. To this extent, elevating the mind above the ignorance bestowed by sin, the theological virtues and the gifts of the Spirit are the foundation stone of the mind’s recovery of the *imago Christi* and its being re-conformed to its original exemplar: ‘*habitus enim gratuiti nobis dantur ut conformemur Christo*’.⁴⁵¹

3.8.3) *Restoring the Imago Christi: (2) Charity.*

Crucial here, Bonaventure tells us, is the virtue of charity (*caritas*) and the restorative effect which it has upon our rational faculties. More so than any other virtue, it is charity, on account of its enkindling of a fervent desire for God, which has the most radically transformative effect upon our intellectual horizons and makes us truly Christ-like. This is so, because it turns the soul away from a sinful preoccupation with creatures and towards the superior reason of grace and revelation embraced by Christ and his saints. Coupled with faith and hope, it ‘heals the

⁴⁴⁹ *3 Sent.*, dist. 34, pars. 1, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (III, pp. 736-8).

⁴⁵⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 11 (V, p. 367); *Collationes*, p. 115.

⁴⁵¹ *3 Sent.*, dist. 34, pars. 1, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 737); cf. *3 Sent.*, dist. 35, art. un., q. 2, resp. (III, p. 781).

soul by placing the root of merits in God who must be satisfied'.⁴⁵² Charity thus has the character of *medicina animae*. This is so, because it not only heals our rational faculties by removing ignorance; but, more importantly, it cures our affections. For it is our distorted affections, Bonaventure tells us, more so than our distorted reasoning, which serve to limit the horizon of the intelligence and thereby further the dissociation between the soul and its Christic exemplar.⁴⁵³ Moreover, it is charity alone which can perform this restorative role.⁴⁵⁴

Post lapsum, our affective potency, Bonaventure tells us, no longer values the creature properly – i.e., as window into the divine. Instead, like Adam and Eve, it is drawn by a perverse *curiositas* about the creature's materiality. It delights too much in the study of sensory reason convincing itself that the latter, along with philosophy, ought to be the sole object of its love and rational enquiry. As such, it no longer honors the Creator properly. Thus, unlike Christ and the *sancti*, the affective potency of *homo lapsus* is directed solely towards the literal word of creatures – the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* – and not their inner meaning: the *lignum vitae*. *Homo lapsus* is thus blind to creation's hidden depths.⁴⁵⁵ For having lost its original *caritas* for God, he has forgotten how to read the *liber naturae* correctly.⁴⁵⁶ We thus see that for Bonaventure it is the absence of charity, perhaps more so than anything else, which separates the fallen soul from the intellectual perfection enjoyed by Christ and the first human beings.

The consequences of reasoning without charity Bonaventure tells us are seen most clearly in the pagan philosophers. It is because Aristotle – like all his radical Christian disciples – lacked *caritas*, and thus pursued his rational enquiry with a disordered love for creatures, that his reasoning fell into darkness.⁴⁵⁷ Knowing nothing of *caritas*'s healing touch, and therefore

⁴⁵² *Collations*, coll. 7, n. 13, p. 116.

⁴⁵³ *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 12 (V, p. 367).

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 14 (V, p. 367).

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, nn. 8-9 (V, pp. 366-7).

⁴⁵⁶ *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 2, resp. (V, p. 55).

⁴⁵⁷ *Hex.*, coll. 7, nn. 11, 13 (V, p. 367).

ignorant of the *liber naturae*'s true meaning he loved the creature more than its Maker. As a result, he was guilty of the improper evaluation of the material order, meaning his metaphysics went astray and fell into error.⁴⁵⁸ By contrast, the Christian theologian or philosopher – to the extent that she embraces the sanitizing effects of grace and the indwelling of the Spirit – is guarded against such errors.⁴⁵⁹ For possessing the *ardor caritatis*, her affections are healed of any unwarranted *curiositas* about creatures and are instead oriented towards a holy desire for God. As such, like Christ, she can study creatures without falling into the sin of concupiscence.

The creature appears to her not simply as the subject of physics – i.e., as an object of philosophical study (*comprehensio*) to be defined solely in terms of its physical constitution of act and potency, matter and form, etc.; but rather as an opportunity for metaphysical, spiritual, and theological contemplation (*admiratio*). As we will see in the next chapter and in chapter six, for Bonaventure charity – or what he describes as the ‘fire of charity’ (*ignis caritatis*) – is thus very much a necessary pre-requisite, indeed *the* pre-requisite, for the science of metaphysics, as well as philosophy in general. To this extent, it is clear that Bonaventure concurs with Grosseteste that the study of nature is dependent upon possessing charity and the prioritizing of the cognition of *affectus* over that of *aspectus*.⁴⁶⁰ Infused according to measure of a person's piety, charity heals the intellect by turning it away from the letter of creation towards the supernatural spirit which stands “behind” it, thereby bestowing upon it a true *visio spiritualis*.

Central to this process, Bonaventure tells us, is the “experiential” or “appetitive” mode of cognition (*cognitio saporativa*) which charity bestows.⁴⁶¹ By healing the affections, and thereby allowing them to love both God and the creature properly, charity infuses the soul with

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 12.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 8, n. 2 (V, p. 369).

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. *Comm. Phy.*, p. 147; Brett Smith, “A Theme Song for His Life” *Aspectus* and *Affectus* in the Writings of Robert Grosseteste’ *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2018), pp. 1-22, esp. p. 3.

⁴⁶¹ *Quaestiones de Perfectione Evangelica.*, q .1, resp. (V, p. 120).

a decidedly un-intellectualist mode of cognition. ‘This knowledge’ Bonaventure writes ‘is acquired not only by means of the knowledge of speculation, but also through a knowledge of savoury experience’.⁴⁶² As such, it is a knowledge in which silence and desire are key, and words and intellectual effort are secondary.⁴⁶³ Here the soul “knows” God, and in turn his creatures, through a loving and “sapid” union. Through an *excessus* of the heart, the soul reaches out to God and achieves spiritual communion with Him. Moreover, through this process it transcends the material wisdom of the creature so as to perceive its inner hidden wisdom as vestige, image, and similitude of the Trinity. As we saw in the last chapter, such was the mode of cognition attributed to Christ in the *De Scientia Christi*.⁴⁶⁴ Representing a superior mode of cognition, this *cognitio saporativa* is the key to the superiority of Christian wisdom over unaided reason, and in turn the fruition of the *imago Christi*.

3.8.4) *Restoring the Imago Christi (3): The Spiritual Senses.*

This intellectual acuity, Bonaventure tells us, is brought about through charity’s awakening of the spiritual senses. Integral to the soul’s experiential wisdom, these endow it with a new clarity of vision.⁴⁶⁵ Sometimes labelled a “charismatic” mode of knowledge, here God is not “known” through intellectual speculation.⁴⁶⁶ Instead, He is “experienced” – i.e., ‘sensed’, ‘tasted’ and ‘touched’ through love: ‘*Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus*’ (Ps. 33: 9).⁴⁶⁷ In conjunction with charity, the spiritual senses thus allow for a more immediate cognition of God than the un-aided intellect can achieve. They allow the soul to be like Christ and exceed the

⁴⁶² *DQEP.*, q. 1, resp., p. 41.

⁴⁶³ *DQKC.*, epilogue, p. 196.

⁴⁶⁴ *Supra.*

⁴⁶⁵ *3 Sent.*, dist. 34, art. 2, q. 3, ad. 2 (III, p. 751).

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas on Contemplation* (Oxford: OUP, 2021) (Forthcoming).

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

limits of its rational faculty, permitting it to know that which the intelligence, and indeed unaided philosophy, can never grasp by themselves: ‘*amor enim plus se extendit quam visio*’.⁴⁶⁸ Echoing St. Bernard’s thinking, Bonaventure thus affirms that charity and the spiritual senses, rather than reason and sensory experience, are the prerequisites for true contemplative wisdom, which he reminds us is never purely intellectual, but always intellectual and affective.⁴⁶⁹

And here is an operation that transcends every intellect (*transcendens omnem intellectum*): a most secret action, which no one knows unless he experiences it. For in the soul there are several apprehensive powers: the sensitive, the imaginative, the estimative, the intellective; and all must be rejected, and at the summit, there is union of love which transcends them all (*et haec omnes transcendit*).⁴⁷⁰

At this level, as in the discussion of Christ’s knowledge in the *De Scientia Christi*, Bonaventure thus reveals his allegiance to the Dionysian and Victorine traditions, in particular that articulated by Gallus.⁴⁷¹ ‘For the most excellent way of knowing God’, he tells us, ‘is through the experience of love (*experimentum dulcedinis*)’ for God – and indeed His creatures – are known more ‘excellently, more nobly, and more sweetly’ through the union of love than ‘through inquisitive arguments (*per argumentum inquisitionis*)’.⁴⁷² It is thus the purity of our love – that is to say, the strength of our desire for God – which dictates the degree of wisdom, and in turn, the conformity to Christ, which we are able to achieve. The more we love God, and the more we come to experience Him through affective desire, the closer to Christ we will

⁴⁶⁸ 2 *Sent.*, dist. 27, art. 2, q. 3, ad. 4 (II, p. 565).

⁴⁶⁹ *Hex.*, coll. 2, nn. 29-30 (V, pp. 340-1).

⁴⁷⁰ *Collations*, coll. 2, n. 29, p. 36.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. James McEvoy, *Mystical Theology: The Glosses by Thomas Gallus and The Commentary of Robert Grosseteste on De Mystica Theologica* (Paris-Leuven-Dudley MA: Peeters, 2003), esp. pp. 15-52.

⁴⁷² 3 *Sent.*, dist. 35, q. 1, ad. 5 (III, p. 779).

be, and therefore the more profound and accurate our ability to estimate and judge the natural order will also be. In this present age, however, only those with the purest love – i.e., the *sancti* and *theologi*– can hope to penetrate the deepest mysteries of contemplation enjoyed by Christ and thereby recover something of their soul’s original Christic likeness. To this extent, Bonaventure remarks, ‘the man who chooses knowledge over holiness will never prosper’.⁴⁷³

As we will see in the next chapter, for Bonaventure the fullness of the sapid cognition which comes through desire and the spiritual senses, at least *in istu statu*, is to be found in the practice of theological wisdom and the theologian’s attempt to read the *liber naturae* and *liber scripturae*.

3.8.5) *Restoring the Imago Christi: (4) Trinity and Passion.*

So as to underscore the Christocentric nature of the soul’s illumination by charity, Bonaventure reminds us that, whilst as a virtue charity is most properly identified with the Spirit’s indwelling within the soul, it is nonetheless through Christ’s love for us, principally his desire that we be re-made in his *imago*, that we receive it. The Spirit, Bonaventure remarks, administers its gifts of grace on Christ’s behalf. Christ, in communion with the Father, breaths forth the Spirit.⁴⁷⁴ As such, all the theological virtues and the gifts bestowed by the Spirit are to be retraced back to Christ: ‘*unde licet diversi, distincti et multiplices rivuli a fonte egrediantur, tamen unus est fons*’.⁴⁷⁵ We thus see that for Bonaventure, the role of the Spirit in the soul’s intellectual pilgrimage is a radically Christocentric one. Nonetheless, we can also see that the soul’s recovery of its original identity as *imago Christi* possesses a distinctly Trinitarian as well as

⁴⁷³ *Collations*, coll. 19, n. 3, p. 285.

⁴⁷⁴ *I Sent.*, dist. 11, art. 1, qq. 1-2 (II, pp. 169-75).

⁴⁷⁵ *Magister*. (IX, p. 442).

pneumatic dimension.⁴⁷⁶ For it is through the Spirit, in conjunction with the Father as the fontal principle of all love and goodness, that we become *imago Christi*.

For Bonaventure, the primary path by which the *experientia affectualis* of charity leads us to a loving union with Christ, and thereby the conforming of our souls to his, is through meditating upon his passion and the affective desire for Christ which this enkindles within us. ‘Be fixed with unending devotion on Christ dying on the cross’, he advises us, for Christ ‘bore all this in order to set aflame his love in you, so that for all these things you might love him with all your heart, with all your soul, and will all your mind’.⁴⁷⁷ It is only by turning to Christ crucified, and thereby by abandoning our preoccupation with purely philosophical approaches to reality, that our hearts can be set ablaze with the fire of holy desire. This *ignis caritatis* burns away the stain of *curiositas* and concupiscence; crucially, however, it does not destroy nor negate human rationality itself. Instead, it illumines it with a new affective power; one which turns it from the *stultitia curiositatis* to *sapientia pietatis* and thereby allows it to reason coherently. There is no other path to wisdom, Bonaventure tells us, but ‘through the burning love of the crucified’: ‘*via autem non est nisi per ardentissimum amorem crucifixi*’.⁴⁷⁸

3.9) Conclusion: Christ, the Soul and Philosophy – Aristotle Condemned?

Finally, it remains for us to assess critically the various conclusions, which are to be drawn from the present chapter regarding Bonaventure’s attitude towards Aristotelianism from the perspective of his speculative psychology. As we have seen, Bonaventure’s theology of the soul is very much grounded within, and serves as an extension of, his doctrine of Christ’s knowledge. Unsurprisingly, therefore, it contains and expands upon many of the anti-Aristotelian principles which are to be found in the latter and which we touched on, albeit

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. *I Sent.*, dist. 15, pars. 2, art. un., q. 2, resp. (I, p. 222).

⁴⁷⁷ *Perfection*, chap. 6, nn. 1,9, pp. 175, 182.

⁴⁷⁸ *Itinerarium*, prol., n. 3 (V, p. 295).

briefly, in the last chapter. As the reader will have observed, articulating a clear, systematically coherent response to Aristotelianism, Bonaventure's belief that Christ's mind is the archetypal and final cause of the human soul leads him to offer a strong, often uncompromising, critique of Aristotelianism from the perspective of his theology of the soul. On account of limitations of space, however, we can only touch on a handful of the objections which his psychology raises against Aristotelianism. The following, however, are the most important ones.

3.9.0) Aristotelianism: A Science Alien to Christ.

The first and most fundamental concerns Aristotelianism's inability, like all philosophical learning, to claim Christ's mind as its exemplar. As we saw in the last chapter, possessed of perfect noetic, Christ neither progressed in knowledge nor abstracted any intelligible species from creation. As such, not only does the empirical reasoning so celebrated by Aristotelianism fail to find any expression within his intellect, but, as a result of this, it falls outside the legitimate scope of the ordinary human intellect. As the introductory chapter explained, that which is alien to the exemplar, must of necessity be alien to that which is made in its image. Since neither Christ nor Adam reasoned like Aristotle, the empirical-based model of noetic which he endorses cannot therefore claim to be an integral, nor indeed a natural, part of human learning as it was designed by God. By the logic of formal causality, it – like all intellectual systems which prioritize acquired knowledge as the sole foundation and guiding horizon of human noetic – thus possesses no internal consistency or “natural” right to exist. A pale imitation of Christ's knowledge, it is little more than a false mode of cognition. It mimics through sin and acquired knowledge, albeit in a highly distorted way, that which Christ and our proto-parents possessed through grace and intellectual rectitude.

3.9.1) Aristotle: The False Exemplar.

Closely related to this, a second, equally important, objection which Bonaventure's Christocentric psychology raises against Aristotelianism is that it distracts the soul from its true vocation of restoring its original exemplary likeness to Christ. If Christ's mind is the model of perfection, and the true *causa finalis* of the soul, offering it grace and intellectual rectitude, then Aristotle's philosophy, by contrast, represents the embodiment – the “exemplar” if you will – of all false knowledge. Promising to bestow perfect wisdom, it tempts the soul away from Christ by tricking it into compounding Adam's error of prioritizing scientific fact over the affective wisdom offered by *caritas* and the *dona Spiritus*, thereby further rupturing the already weakened exemplary likeness between Christ's mind and that of *homo lapsus*.⁴⁷⁹ Such is the error and tragedy of the Radical Aristotelians, who, blinded by sin, mistakenly believe that it is Aristotle, and not Christ, who is the perfect expression of human learning.⁴⁸⁰

To the extent that he is idolized by the Radical Aristotelians as the ‘*regula in natura*’ of human learning, Bonaventure tells us that Aristotle is not only a false exemplar (*exemplum falsus*), he is also a false prophet (*pseudopropheta*) and a source of noetic deception. He is, as we will see in the next chapters, a parody of Pharaoh's magician: for he promises miracles, but works sorcery instead. This is so, because in the hands of his disciples, his teachings blind the soul through naturalistic reason, leading it into the shadows of error, doubt, and endless curiosity. Thus, where the perfect wisdom of Christ, by means of the agency of *caritas* and the *dona Spiritus*, liberates the soul from the ignorance bestowed by the fall by leading it to the loving contemplation of God, the naturalistic reasoning of Aristotle, and indeed all unaided philosophy, condemns it to error and darkness.⁴⁸¹ It does so by means of feeding the soul the *potio curiositatis* and the disordered affections for creatures which it brings. Only by modelling itself upon the Incarnate Word, Bonaventure urges, and thus by side-lining the *errores*

⁴⁷⁹ *Hex.*, coll. 4, n. 1 (V, p. 349); cf. *Delorme*, vis. 1, coll. 1, n. 1, pp. 48-9.

⁴⁸⁰ *Supra*.

⁴⁸¹ *Hex.*, coll. 6, nn. 4-5 (V, p. 361).

Philosophi in favour of the perfect *doctrinae Christi*, can the soul escape the intellectual poverty of fallen reason and begin to recover its original rectitude as a Christic likeness.

3.9.2) *Aristotelianism and the Distortion of the Soul's Identity as Imago Christi.*

Echoing these concerns, a third objection is that Aristotelianism's scientific, empirical-based learning is intrinsically associated with the impoverished reason of the lower feminine soul.⁴⁸² As will be explained in the next chapter, where theology and spiritual contemplation, illuminated as they are by grace and revelation, study the superior reason of divine wisdom – and, therefore, are the proper objects of the higher masculine spirit; Aristotelianism, by contrast, like all philosophical speculation, concerns itself with the naturalistic truths of empirical investigation. To this extent, it glories in the inferior knowledge which so fascinates the lower feminine soul and which ultimately led to the fall and the loss of humanity's innate wisdom. 'Effeminate', 'weak', and 'disordered', Aristotelianism thus serves to emasculate further the already weakened rational spirit by turning it away from the source of intellectual certainty offered to it in scripture as well as the restorative medicine given to it by the Spirit. Instead, it encourages it to repeat the error of Eve: to fall foul of the sin of *curiositas* and *superbia* and to love the knowledge acquired through experimentation more than that given by the *lumen revelationis*. Moreover, each time it commits this error it further distorts its likeness to Christ and thus hinders its eschatological vocation of recovering of the *imago Christi*.

3.9.3) *Aristotelianism: A Product of Sin.*

Encapsulating the previous objections, the final and most explicit criticism Bonaventure's Christocentric psychology raises against Aristotelianism is that its empirical-based reasoning, like all acquired knowledge, is not only unnatural to the rational spirit – i.e., something which

⁴⁸² *Supra.*

it was not originally intended for; but, just as important, a direct product of the fall. As we have seen for Bonaventure, in direct opposition to Aquinas, had Adam stood, then neither Aristotelianism, nor philosophy in general – be it Christian or pagan – would have existed. This is so because illuminated by an innate source of wisdom, the soul would have been like Christ and had no recourse to sense experience in order to learn. Aristotelianism, and philosophy in general, are thus in Bonaventure’s judgement the true fruit of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali*. As such, each time we eat from this fruit by choosing to pursue Aristotle’s naturalistic logic instead of the superior truths offered through *caritas* and the *dona Spiritus*, we follow in Lucifer’s footsteps. Like Adam, we turn away from the *lignum vitae*, which is Christ, and embrace the false logic of the serpent.

He [Christ] is the Tree of Life, for by this means we return to the very fountain of life and are revived in it. But if we stoop (*declinamus*) to a knowledge of things acquired by experimenting with them, investigating beyond what is conceded to us (*investigantes amplius, quam conceditur*) we fall from true contemplation and taste of the forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as did Lucifer. For if Lucifer in contemplating this Truth had been led back from the knowledge of creatures to the unity of the Father, he would have turned dusk into dawn and would have enjoyed daylight. But because he fell for the love and desire of his own excellence, he lost the day. And Adam did the same.⁴⁸³

3.10) *Final Remarks.*

⁴⁸³ *Collations*, coll. 1, n. 17, pp. 9-10.

In light of the above, it is thus clear that from the perspective of Bonaventure's Christocentric psychology that Aristotelianism, like all pagan and unaided natural philosophy, is a doctrine condemned. As we have seen, for Bonaventure, peripatetic philosophy is irreconcilable both with Christ's own perfect knowledge, and therefore the very nature of the human soul of which it is the formal cause. Unaided as it is by divine wisdom, and thus devoid of grace, it is incompatible with the soul's true calling of restoring its exemplary likeness to Christ. Having said this, as we have seen, whilst Bonaventure may condemn Aristotelianism as a philosophical system, and whilst, in turn, he may align himself with the "Augustinian" tradition, he nonetheless accepts that, under certain provisions, it is possible to adopt an eclectic attitude towards it, accepting certain elements of it – such as the doctrine of hylomorphism and the active intellect – provided these have been purged through the *lumen fidei*. A point of great paradox, the question is thus raised – and is to be addressed more fully in the next chapter – can Aristotle be saved through faith? In short, does Bonaventure's understanding of the exemplary relationship between Christ's mind and the hierarchical division of the sciences offer Aristotelianism and natural philosophy some sort of redemption?

Chapter 4

Christ the Center and Exemplar of the Hierarchy of Knowledge.

‘Si igitur intelligis Verbum, intelligis omnia scibilia’.

Hex., coll. 3, n. 4 (V, p. 344).

4.0) Introduction.

Having outlined Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge and his theology of the soul in the previous chapters, attention turns now to assessing his thought on the relationship between Christ’s mind and the hierarchy of human knowledge – that is to say, the hierarchy of the “sciences”.⁴⁸⁴ As stated earlier, this dissertation’s goal is to use Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge as an interpretive tool for his views on Aristotelianism and philosophy so as to cast fresh light upon his thought on the relationship between faith and reason. To support this objective, the present chapter builds upon the previous ones by demonstrating how for Bonaventure Christ’s mind, as the perfect expression of all created wisdom, is both the primordial “exemplar” of the hierarchy of the sciences and, by consequence, *the* deciding factor determining the status of Aristotelianism and philosophy within it.

As we shall see, for Bonaventure Christ’s mind, as the repository of all human learning, is the divinely instituted *causa formalis* from which the hierarchy of knowledge, and the

⁴⁸⁴ Whilst numerous studies exist on Bonaventure’s hierarchical organization of human knowledge, few discuss it in relation to his thought on Christ’s noetic. Notable in this respect are: Bonaventure Hindwood’s ‘The Division of Human Knowledge in the Writings of St. Bonaventure’ and his ‘The Principle Underlying St. Bonaventure’s division of Human Knowledge’ in *S. Bonaventura*. tom. III, pp. 463-504; Andreas Speer’s ‘Bonaventure and the Question of Philosophy’; J. A. Wayne Hellman’s, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure’s Theology*, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2001); Gregory LaNave’s, ‘Knowing God Through and in All Things: A Proposal for Reading Bonaventure’s “Itinerarium mentis in Deum”’ *Franciscan Studies*, 67 (2009), pp. 267-99 and his *Through Holiness to Wisdom: The Nature of Theology according to St. Bonaventure* (Rome: Istituto storico dei cappuccini, 2005). Several studies do, however, consider Bonaventure’s hierarchical organization of knowledge in relation to his broader Christology, most notably: Zachary Hayes’s *The Hidden Centre* and his ‘Christology and Metaphysics in the Thought of Bonaventure’ *The Journal of Religion*, 58 (1978), pp. 82-96.

various levels of wisdom which it contains, proceed. As such, unsurpassed by any other created intelligence, it is the horizon against which each mode of reasoning, and thereby the hierarchy as a whole, is to be viewed, measured, and judged. For Bonaventure therefore the *ordo scientiarum*, and the respective positions of philosophy and theology within it, are not accidental or peripheral features of human noetic. Instead, quite the opposite is true: they are actively inscribed into it through a divinely instituted formal cause – i.e., the mind of the Word Incarnate. To this extent, the doctrine of Christ’s noetic is for Bonaventure the paradigm which encapsulates and defines the hierarchical relationship between the sciences. Epistemology, in effect, is a function of Christology. It is Christ, and Christ alone, who is the *auctor scientiarum*.

Based upon this conviction, the present chapter shows how Bonaventure’s understanding of Aristotelianism’s status within the hierarchy of knowledge – i.e., its status as an academic *scientia* – is critically determined by its relationship, or rather lack thereof, to the *mens Christi*. Of particular importance is the fact that since Christ possessed neither acquired knowledge nor the capacity to learn through sensory experience, the empirical-based reasoning of Aristotelianism – unlike the supernatural noetic associated with theology, mystical rapture, and beatitude – cannot claim to find its formal cause within Christ’s mind, and must therefore be classified as illegitimate mode of enquiry. Moreover, as we shall see, a pallid reflection of Christ’s innate knowledge, *all* the philosophical sciences are a product of the fall and thereby exist outside the *hierarchia scientiarum* which his intellect has authored. Philosophy, in effect, is an essentially illegitimate discipline. It is a science without an exemplar – a *scientia falsus*.

However, as we will also see, for Bonaventure a careful distinction must be made; one which is central to a proper evaluation of his attitude towards philosophy and its respective position within the hierarchy of knowledge. Whilst Christ may not have reasoned like the *philosophi*, he is nonetheless – as the eternal Word – the mystical center to which *all* philosophical learning must be reduced. Paradoxically, therefore, whilst philosophy may be

alien to Christ's intellect, he himself is nonetheless the *principium* of all philosophical wisdom. More shall be said on this later. Furthermore, as we will see, once illuminated by the *lumen fidei*, philosophy can, despite its origins within the fall, be reconciled with the *hierarchia scientiarum* and thus rendered a "legitimate" and even useful field of enquiry. This, however, can only take place to the extent that philosophy abandons the claim to absolute autonomy as espoused by Aristotelianism and places Christ as its center and source of certainty.

4.1) Methodology.

At a methodological level, the present chapter shows how the anti-Aristotelian logic found within Bonaventure's writings on Christ's knowledge finds expression within, and is significantly developed by, his understanding of the hierarchical division of human knowledge. Moreover, by doing so, it reveals how Bonaventure's views on the hierarchical relationship between theology and philosophy, in particular his critical remarks on philosophy's status as a science, have a decidedly Christological basis. If Christ's mind is the exemplar of the hierarchy of knowledge, then, by consequence, Bonaventure's anti-philosophical statements regarding Aristotelianism's status as an academic *scientia*, are necessarily seen in a new, specifically Christological light. Far from abstract, anti-scientific, anti-rationalist statements, which possess a purely epistemological basis, as some have claimed, Bonaventure's critical assertions about Aristotelianism as an academic science are in fact an outworking of his conviction that the mind of the Incarnate Word is the archetypal cause of the hierarchy of knowledge.

4.2) Structure.

The chapter divides as follows. **(1)** First, the foundational elements and basic principles of Bonaventure's understanding of the hierarchy of knowledge are discussed. **(2)** Next, attention turns to assessing his division of the innate light of natural reason into the seven mechanical

arts and the three sub-disciplines of rational, natural, and moral philosophy. (3) Then Bonaventure's understanding of how metaphysics marks the boundary between the innate light of reason and the infused one of faith is outlined. (4) Following this, his hierarchical division of theological knowledge into uniform, multiform, omniform, and nulliform wisdom is touched upon. (5) Attention then turns to the superior wisdom of grace associated with the saints, prophets, and mystics. (6) Next, the beatific knowledge of the angels and the blessed is outlined. Particular attention is paid to how for Bonaventure the beatific vision represents the culmination of human learning and its natural *telos*. (7) Finally, the chapter demonstrates how Christ's mind functions as the primordial archetype of each of the above modes of reasoning and the hierarchy of knowledge as a whole. A short summary then critically assesses the various conclusions which are to be drawn from Bonaventure's hierarchical organization of the sciences regarding his attitude towards philosophy and Aristotelianism.

Section 1

4.3) *The Foundations of Bonaventure's Division of Human Learning.*

Before discussing the various levels of knowledge within Bonaventure's hierarchical division of human learning, it is necessary for us to touch upon some of the foundational principles which underpin it. As will be seen, each of these is central to understanding Bonaventure's critique of Aristotelianism and his claim that Christ's mind is the exemplar of the hierarchy of knowledge.

4.3.0) *Re-reading Bonaventure's Hierarchical Division of Human Knowledge – The Circular Hierarchy of Knowledge.*

Echoing his circular model of Christ's different levels of wisdom (chapter two) and his division of the soul's cognitive faculties (chapter three), Bonaventure maintains that the hierarchical division of human knowledge – what he terms the 'sciences' (*scientiae*) – is not to be understood in the traditional sense of a hierarchy whereby one level of knowledge stands above another in a vertical manner. Instead, it is to be imagined as a series of concentric circles, each of which contains the next and superior mode of knowledge at its center. For Bonaventure the hierarchy of knowledge thus possesses a distinctly circular or horizontal nature. The superior truths of the hierarchy are to be found at its center, whilst the inferior ones stand at its outermost limits. (See figure 17 below). As we will see in chapter six, this circular model of the different sciences is crucial to understanding Bonaventure's views on *fides* and *ratio*, *theologia* and *philosophia* and how they diverge from those of Aquinas.

4.3.1) *Faith and Reason – The Internal Dynamic of Bonaventure's Circular Hierarchy of Knowledge.*

Recognizing the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders of human cognition, Bonaventure maintains that all knowledge is a product of one of two sources. Either the innate light of natural reason, whereby the mind acquires knowledge through its own effort. Or the superior, infused one of faith, through which the intellect, illuminated by revelation and the gifts of the Spirit, comes to understand divine wisdom.⁴⁸⁵ Although distinct, both are complementary, with the later completing and perfecting the former.⁴⁸⁶ A truth often neglected, Bonaventure's hierarchy of knowledge thus rests upon a firm distinction between *fides* and *ratio*; each of which possesses its own proper object and sphere of influence.

⁴⁸⁵ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 2 (V, p. 474).

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. *Quaestiones de Divinatione*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 31va.

Arising from the intellect's innate cognitive abilities, reason, when properly ordered, possesses the study of creation as its primary object and seeks to acquire knowledge of the First Principle through creation.⁴⁸⁷ Faith, by contrast, operating at a "higher level", knows God *per revelationem*; and, in turn, perceives his Trinitarian vestiges in creation.⁴⁸⁸ Thus, where reason proceeds by means of inductive investigation, moving from effect to cause; faith is based upon the authority of scripture and reasons deductively viewing creation in light of the authority of revelation.⁴⁸⁹ Knowledge of this distinction, Bonaventure tells us, eluded the pagan philosophers, since ignorant of Christ, they were confined to the level of pure *ratio* and thus mistook philosophy to be the perfection and measure of all human noetic.⁴⁹⁰

4.3.2) *The Fourfold Hierarchy of Knowledge – The Four Circles of Wisdom.*

Based upon this distinction, Bonaventure posits a four-fold circular hierarchy of knowledge: the knowledge of philosophy, theology, grace – 'gratuitous knowledge' or the 'science of the saints' – and, finally, beatific knowledge.⁴⁹¹ Corresponding to the inferior light of natural reason, philosophical knowledge, he tells us, although 'great in the opinion of worldly men', nonetheless represents the lowest form of cognition.⁴⁹² This is so, because lacking the certainty provided by the superior reason of theology, grace, and beatitude – all of which are the products of the infused *lumen gratiae* – it is incapable of providing a complete knowledge of the world. Superior to philosophy is theological wisdom which studies the higher truths of revelation

⁴⁸⁷ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 5 (V, p. 474).

⁴⁸⁸ Cf. *Quaestiones de Divinatione*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 31va.

⁴⁸⁹ *Breviloquium*, prol. (V, pp. 201-2).

⁴⁹⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 7, nn. 3, 11-12. (V, pp. 365-6; 367).

⁴⁹¹ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 3. (V, p. 474).

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, n. 12 (V, p. 475).

found within scripture. Thus, where philosophy's first principles are derived from nature, theology's are founded upon faith and the *lumen revelationis*.⁴⁹³

Standing behind theological wisdom is gratuitous knowledge, the sanctifying knowledge possessed by the *sancti*.⁴⁹⁴ As a special gift of grace, this knowledge illumines the minds of the saints, prophets, and mystics with a complete knowledge of all that pertains to creation, scripture, and salvation.⁴⁹⁵ A gift of the Spirit, this divinely revealed knowledge is bestowed upon only a few.⁴⁹⁶ Superior still, is the beatific knowledge of the angels and the blessed in heaven which allows them to gaze upon the divine essence immediately and without recourse to created phantasms. The final end of all created knowledge, each of the inferior modes of reasoning offers a foretaste of the *visio Dei* and is naturally oriented towards it. Moreover, each human soul intrinsically hungers for beatitude and thus desires to ascend through this hierarchy to achieve it: '*naturaliter omnis homo beatitudinem appetit*'.⁴⁹⁷

Bonaventure's fourfold circular hierarchy of knowledge can thus be imagined as follows:

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, n. 13 (V, p. 476).

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, nn. 22-4 (V, pp. 478-9).

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁶ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 30 (V, p. 341).

⁴⁹⁷ *2 Sent.*, dist. 22, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 532).

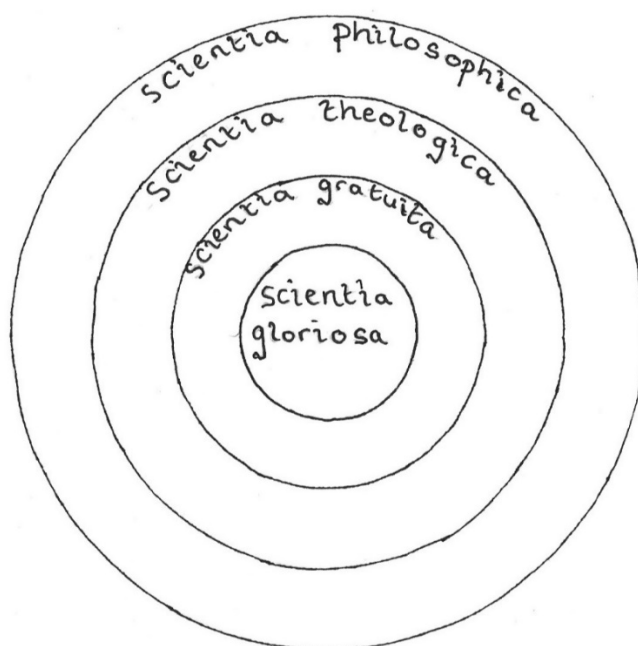


Figure 17

As will be seen, this distinctly circular interpretation of the hierarchy of knowledge is critical to understanding Bonaventure's belief that Christ's mind is the universal center and illuminating cause of the hierarchy itself.

4.3.3) *The Hierarchy of Knowledge as the Pathway to Recovering the Imago Christi.*

Representing something akin to a noetic ladder, the purpose of this four-fold hierarchy of sciences, Bonaventure tells us, is to act as vehicle whereby the soul, aided by the *dona Spiritus* and the *ignis caritatis*, can begin the process of recovering its identity as *imago Christi* and thus start to restore its proper place within economy of God's salvation and wisdom. Authored by Christ himself, the '*fructus*' of the *hierarchia scientiarum* Bonaventure writes is that we, like the blessed in heaven, become fully conformed to Christ and thus, like him, know and

worship the Trinity in the bond of perfect charity.⁴⁹⁸ Each sphere of noetic offers a unique step in the process, with the *visio Dei* marking the final consummation of our noetic *regressus* back to Christ. As we will come to see, the place and role of philosophy within this economy of noetic is a complex and highly nuanced one; one which only becomes clear when the hierarchy of knowledge is viewed from the perspective of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic.

4.3.4) *The Art of Reduction – Retracing All Knowledge Back to Christ the Universal Centre of the Hierarchy of Knowledge.*

Central to Bonaventure's circular division of human knowledge and its Christocentric origins, is his principle of reduction (*reductio*).⁴⁹⁹ This takes as its starting point the conviction – inspired by his belief that Christ is the 'fontal principle' of all cognitive illumination – that each of the different spheres of the hierarchy of knowledge, and thereby the different academic disciplines and modes of cognition which they contain, are to be retraced back to Christ as their primary source of inspiration and authority. A gift of divine *caritas*, all human comprehension, Bonaventure argues, regardless of whether it is innate or infused, possesses Christ as its center and origin.⁵⁰⁰ Christ is the one who stands in the middle (*in medio*) of the hierarchy of knowledge and illumines it from within (see figure 18 below). Thus, each sphere of knowledge not only shows forth Christ in some hidden or explicit way, but finds its origin and explanation

⁴⁹⁸ *ORATT*, n. 26, p. 61.

⁴⁹⁹ For a discussion of the contemporary relevance of Bonaventure's theory of reduction see Kevin Hughes' 'Reduction's Future: Theology, Technology, and the Order of Knowledge' *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009), pp. 227-42.

⁵⁰⁰ *Christus Unus*, n. 7 (V, p. 569).

within him.⁵⁰¹ As such, Christ is the center of every academic discipline, from mathematics to medicine.⁵⁰² He is the one true *magister scientiarum*.

Moreover, it is Christ, as the Eternal Word and thereby the light of all intellectual certainty, who illumines and makes each of the ‘sciences’ intelligible.⁵⁰³ This is particularly true of theology and philosophy, where each, although separate, seeks to cognize the divine Word. Dictating the relationship between the two disciplines, for Bonaventure, Christ is thus the *medius* of philosophy – within a Christian context at least – as much as he is the *medius* of theology. As will be seen, possessing a strongly poetic, symbolic nature, Bonaventure’s reduction of each of the sciences back to Christ primarily operates through the use of analogy. Through showing how all knowledge possesses a deeper, spiritual meaning, it reveals how Christ – the Word – is mystically prefigured at the center of each of the sciences.⁵⁰⁴

In the recently discovered sermon *Omnium Artifex Docuit Me Sapientia*, which Bonaventure gave at his inauguration as theology *magister* in 1254, and which Joshua Benson has shown is a prologue to the *De Reductione Artium Ad Theologiam*, Bonaventure explains his principle of reduction using the analogy of the sun. In the same way the sun illumines the earth and the heavenly bodies and thereby is the source to which their brightness, luminosity, and colour is to be reduced, so Christ illumines the various sciences and, in turn, acts as the originating principle of their intelligibility (see figure 18 below).⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, n. 1 (V, p. 567).

⁵⁰² *Hex.*, coll. 1 (V, pp. 329-35, esp. nn. 13-19, pp. 331-5).

⁵⁰³ *Christus Unus*, n. 7 (V, p. 569).

⁵⁰⁴ *Intro.*, p. 25.

⁵⁰⁵ Joshua C. Benson, ‘Bonaventure’s Inaugural Sermon at Paris: *Omnium Artifex Docuit Me Sapientia*, Text and Introduction’ *Collectanea Franciscana* 82 (2012), pp. 517-62.

4.3.5) *Re-reading Bonaventure's Doctrine of Reduction – Christ's Mind as the Centre of the Hierarchy of Knowledge.*

It is this principle of retracing all knowledge back to Christ which underpins the present chapter's attempt to demonstrate how Christ's mind is the primordial archetype of the hierarchy of knowledge. A subject explored by many scholars, part of this chapter's originality lies in its distinctive interpretation of Bonaventure's theory of *reductio*. Where the traditional scholarly narrative remains content with simply demonstrating how Bonaventure retraces all modes of cognition back to Christ – such is the approach of figures like Hayes, Bougerol, and Ratzinger – this chapter goes one step further.⁵⁰⁶ It argues that for Bonaventure the reduction of each of the sciences back to Christ does not simply end in demonstrating how he is their center and illuminating principle, but finds its fulfilment and explanation in the discovery of his perfect wisdom as the primordial exemplar and author of the hierarchy itself. Offering fresh insight into Bonaventure's theory of reduction, the present chapter thus resituates it within a new framework. It demonstrates that, for Bonaventure, the art of retracing all the sciences back to Christ finds its proper context within his doctrine of Christ's knowledge and not simply his broader Christology. Once again we thus see that it is his interpretation of Christ's noetic which is the determining influence behind Bonaventure's epistemology.

4.3.6) *Emanation and Reduction – Bonaventure's Circular Hierarchy of Knowledge.*

Counterbalancing Bonaventure's principle of retracing all knowledge back to Christ's mind, is his conviction that each of the different sciences represents an emanation, or noetic *egressus*,

⁵⁰⁶ Cf. *Hidden Centre*, esp. pp. 192-214; *Intro.*, esp. pp. 130-133, 163-68; *History*, see text throughout.

of Christ's own perfect noetic. As alluded to earlier – and as will be explained as this chapter progresses – for Bonaventure's Christ's mind is the *causa formalis* and intelligible principle which not only establishes each of the 'sciences', but serves to render them intelligible. How Bonaventure understands Christ's mind to be the illuminating center of the hierarchy of knowledge, as well as the primordial origin from which each of its different spheres proceed and are, in turn, to be retraced back to, can be provisionally illustrated as follows:

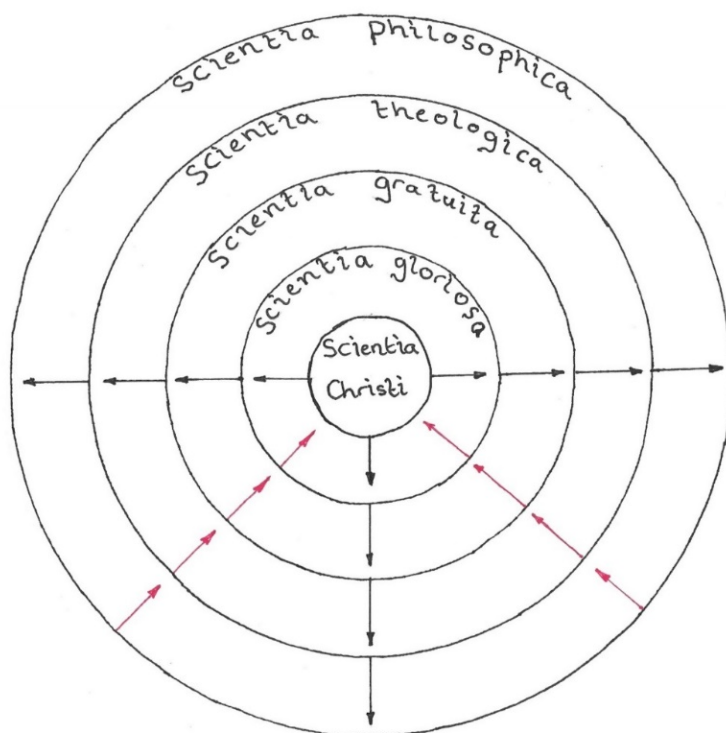


Figure 18

As the above diagram illustrates, each sphere of knowledge proceeds from Christ's mind, shows forth his wisdom, and is oriented to return to him as its final end. Moreover, each of the different sciences possess Christ at their center and thus look to him as their illuminating principle and noetic point of gravity.

Having outlined the foundational principles necessary to understanding Bonaventure's circular hierarchy of knowledge, it is now possible to discuss each of the spheres of wisdom which it contains and how they possess Christ's mind as their formal and final cause.

Section 2

4.4) *The Outermost Circle of Knowledge: Christ, Philosophy, and Natural Reason.*

It is important to recognize that for Bonaventure, *philosophia* is not the only, nor indeed most important, product of natural reason. The innate light of human reason, he argues, possesses a three-fold structure. The first and lowest light – the *lumen exterius* – is that of the mechanical arts (*artes mechanicae*) whereby humanity imposes order upon creation.⁵⁰⁷ Next, is the 'inferior light' – *lumen inferius* – of sense experience through which the intellect acquires knowledge of creation by means of empirical investigation. Reliant upon the medium of the body, sensory knowledge is labelled the inferior light because it originates from the transient nature of corporeal beings. Superior is the 'interior light' – *lumen interius* – of philosophical reason which divides into three sub-disciplines; namely, rational, natural, and moral philosophy.⁵⁰⁸ Philosophical investigation is the *lumen interius* because 'it enquires into inner and hidden causes through principles of learning and natural truth, which are co-natural to the human mind'.⁵⁰⁹ Finally, at its height, Bonaventure tells us, natural reason culminates in the science of metaphysics which – as a separate philosophical discipline – studies created being in relation to its efficient, final, and formal cause – i.e., the First Principle.⁵¹⁰ Bonaventure

⁵⁰⁷ *De Reductione*, n. 1 (V, p. 319).

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 4 (V, p. 320).

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid*; *ORATT.*, p. 41.

⁵¹⁰ It is because of this conviction that metaphysics is an independent science in its own right that this chapter discusses it separately from the lower philosophical disciplines. *Infra*.

notes, however, that whilst metaphysics may be the pinnacle of what human reason can achieve, it is also the rock upon which many great philosophers – Aristotle in particular – floundered and sunk into error. As such, it is the most dangerous of all the philosophical sciences. How this is so will become clear as this chapter progresses and in subsequent ones.

4.4.0) *Productive and Sensory Knowledge.*

The first level of the hierarchy of knowledge Bonaventure tells us is the mechanical arts which are the disciplines associated with productive and sensory knowledge.

4.4.0.0) *The Mechanical Arts.*

Placing productive knowledge at the bottom of the hierarchy of knowledge, Bonaventure follows Hugh of St Victor⁵¹¹ in positing a seven-fold distinction within the mechanical arts, classifying them as: weaving, farming, navigation, equipment making, hunting, medicine, and theatre.⁵¹² A product of the fall, the purpose of the productive arts is to satiate the body's needs by extracting from creation those things which it desires. Fundamental to human culture, the mechanical arts are not pure acts of physical labour, but, as Hindwood notes, presuppose both a systematic knowledge of creation and a high degree of intellectual ingenuity.⁵¹³ To this extent, productive activities such as farming and weaving are classified as '*scientiae*' like philosophy and theology.⁵¹⁴ Varying considerably, the *artes mechanicae* are sub-divided into two groups: those which further human comfort: equipment making, medicine, etc; and those which produce consolation: namely, theatre – the latter being the only sort of its kind.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹¹ Cf. Hugh of Saint Victor, *Didascalion*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

⁵¹² *De Reductione*, n. 2 (V, pp. 319-20).

⁵¹³ Bonaventure Hindwood, 'The Division of Human Knowledge in the Writings of Saint Bonaventure', p. 229; cf. *Hex.*, coll. 5, n. 13 (V, p. 356).

⁵¹⁴ *De Reductione*, n. 2 (V, p. 320).

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Complementing the mechanical arts is the higher light of sense perception which is the basis of the intellect's ability to acquire knowledge of creation. Since Bonaventure's theory of sense perception was outlined in the previous chapter it need not be discussed here.

4.4.0.1) *The Mechanical Arts as Christic Analogy.*

To the eyes of faith, Bonaventure tells us, it is clear that each of the mechanical arts offers something of a Christic analogy. Each, he asserts, proclaims Christ in some hidden way. Thus, for example, the objects which are created by an artisan – for example, a potter – mirror something of the world's production through Christ the eternal Word. As the pot made by the potter is a manifestation in concrete form of its originating, purely immaterial idea or *causa formalis* in the potter's mind, so creation reflects in time and space its ideal form within the eternal Word. The same is true of the medicine produced by a doctor or the clothing produced by the weaver. For the Christian, therefore, it is clear that each of the *artes mechanicae* is to be retraced back to Christ and is to be seen as a window into his noetic perfection.⁵¹⁶

4.4.1) *Rational, Natural and Moral Philosophy.*

Superior to the mechanical arts and sensory knowledge, philosophical enquiry possesses a three-fold structure: *lux magna*, the 'great light' of rational philosophy, which is concerned with the efficient causality of understanding and studies the truth of speech; *lux clara*, the 'clear light' of natural philosophy, which is principally concerned with the operation of created bodies and their originating, formal causes; and *lux bona*, the 'good light' of moral philosophy, which

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, nn. 11-14 (V, pp. 322-3).

concerns the practice of virtue and is thus ordered towards the final, terminative cause of all being.⁵¹⁷

4.4.1.0) *Rational Philosophy – Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric.*

Studying the proper use of speech, rational philosophy – like its natural and moral counterparts – is subdivided into its own specific three constituent disciplines: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The first is concerned with the apt use of language; the second, with teaching; the third, with the persuasive use of speech.⁵¹⁸

4.4.1.1) *Natural Philosophy – Physics, Mathematics and Metaphysics.*

Considering the formal principles of objects, natural philosophy is sub-divided into physics, mathematics, and metaphysics, which correspond to the threefold existence of forms within matter, the intellect, and the eternal art.⁵¹⁹ Studying the presence of forms within matter, physics considers the structured principles of material objects and ‘treats of the generation and corruption of things according to their natural powers and seminal principles’.⁵²⁰ In contrast, studying forms as they are found within the intellect, mathematics considers abstract forms in terms of their ‘intelligible causes’.⁵²¹ It incorporates those disciplines based upon numerical proportion: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, astrology, as well as aesthetic disciplines such as art and music.⁵²² Superior still is metaphysics which, as the height of all philosophical

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.* cf. *Hex.*, coll. 5, n. 1 (V, pp. 353-4).

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 4. (V, pp. 320-1).

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁰ *ORATT.*, n. 4, p. 43.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² *Hex.*, coll. 4, n. 15 (V, p. 352).

speculation, studies beings in relation to their ideal causes within the divine ideas. For this reason, it possesses the study of the eternal art as its proper object.⁵²³ More on this shortly.

4.4.1.2) *Moral Philosophy – Individual, Familial and Political.*

Consisting of individual, familial, and political dimensions, moral philosophy is principally concerned with justice, virtue, and the rectitude of the will. As considering the behaviour of the individual it is monastic; in terms of the family: domestic; and as regards the governance of the state: political. Consisting of the four cardinal virtues – prudence, temperance, courage, and justice – individual morality rests upon the exercise of conscience. Whilst concerning the relation between husband and wife, economic morality has the building of a harmonious family life as its proper object. Finally, intricately related to monastic and economic morality, political morality is appropriate to those who govern society through temporal and spiritual authority.⁵²⁴

4.4.1.3) *Rational, Natural, and Moral Philosophy as Christic Analogy.*

Like the mechanical arts, Bonaventure postulates that each of the different strands of the *lumen philosophiae* is to be retraced back to Christ and is to be seen as communicating something of his perfect wisdom.⁵²⁵ This is so, he tells us, because each offers to the eyes of faith a Christic analogy. Thus, for example, rational philosophy, through its study of speech as the externalization of mental concepts, offers an analogy of the Son's processession as the divine Word from the Father's infinite knowledge.⁵²⁶ Similarly, natural philosophy, through its study

⁵²³ *De Reductione*, n. 4. (V, p. 320).

⁵²⁴ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 10 (V, p. 375).

⁵²⁵ As will be explained shortly, this is only so for that philosophy carried out in a Christian context – i.e., Christian philosophy.

⁵²⁶ *ORATT.*, nn. 15-18, pp. 53-55.

of formal principles ‘in matter, in the soul, and in the divine wisdom’ offers a *vestigium* of how the Word lies hidden at the center of all levels of reality, creaturely, human, and divine.⁵²⁷ Finally, moral philosophy, through its concern for the ‘rectitude’ of all aspects of human life and its emphasis on the moral medium, mirrors the Son as the middle person of the Trinity and the *medius* between God and humanity.⁵²⁸

Section 3

4.4.2) *The Transition from Reason to Faith: Christ and Metaphysics.*

Standing above rational, natural, and moral philosophy is the science of metaphysics which, despite being classified as part of natural philosophy, represents the height of all philosophical speculation. Metaphysics, Bonaventure tells us, is that aspect of philosophy ‘concerned with the knowledge of all things according to their ideal causes (*rationes ideales*).’⁵²⁹ Its purpose, as the noblest manifestation of the *lumen rationis*, is to retrace all creatures back to the ‘one First Principle from which they proceed (*reducit ad unum primum principium*)’.⁵³⁰ Although formally distinct from the lower philosophical disciplines, metaphysics is still part of philosophical speculation and for this reason does not enjoy its own sphere within the hierarchy of knowledge.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, nn. 19-22, pp. 55-9.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 23, p. 59.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 4, pp. 42-3.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

4.4.2.0) Philosophical Metaphysics.

Possessing the study of the eternal reasons as its proper object, Bonaventure tells us that metaphysics, as the natural *telos* of all philosophical speculation, arises from the synthesis of rational, natural, and moral philosophy, so as to discern the underlying cause of all created being – i.e., the *mens Dei*. Ascending to the universal and uncreated by studying the particular and individual, metaphysics is thus said to transcend, and to complete, the work of the lower philosophical disciplines. Where the physicist, logician, and ethicist remain content within the limits of their own sphere of knowledge and thus study creation as an end in itself, the metaphysician, by contrast, seeks to discover its most basic act of being; and how, in turn, this is to be retraced back to the First Principle.⁵³¹ To this degree, metaphysics, and through it all philosophical speculation, is said to possess the knowledge of God as its final object.⁵³²

From each of the three philosophical sub-disciplines metaphysics discovers something different about God. From natural philosophy, that He is the first, originating cause of all being.⁵³³ From rational philosophy, that He is the universal principle of intelligibility.⁵³⁴ And from moral philosophy, that it is He who prescribes the moral law governing human behaviour.⁵³⁵ For the metaphysician, as such, God is the efficient, formal, and final cause of all created being. Thus, although one and the same, the God described by metaphysics and the God revealed by the *lumen fidei* nonetheless differ. Where the believer, through faith, knows God as Trinity, the metaphysician, by contrast, confined as she is within the limits of her reason prior to the acceptance of faith, only knows God as the creator, designer, and final end of

⁵³¹ *De Reductione*, n. 4 (V, p. 321).

⁵³² *Ibid.*

⁵³³ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

creation.⁵³⁶ Metaphysics can thus posit God's existence, but it cannot, by itself, at least, discover His true identity as Trinity. Faith alone reveals God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁵³⁷

Corresponding to its study of God as the efficient, formal, and final cause of created being, metaphysics possesses a threefold pattern of logic: emanation, exemplarism, and consummation; namely, how all things proceed from God; how all things reflect their exemplars within the divine mind; and, finally, how all things return to God as their perfecting end.⁵³⁸ The sum-total of metaphysical speculation, each of these doctrines is integral to metaphysics. 'For no one can have understanding unless he considers where things come from, how they are led back to their end, and how God shines forth in them (*in eis refulgent Deus*)'.⁵³⁹ It is 'how God shines forth' in all things, however, which is of special concern for metaphysics. Emanation and consummation may allow the metaphysician to posit God as creator and goal of creation, but it is exemplarism, Bonaventure tells us, which allows her to rise to the knowledge of the *rationes aeternae*. Exemplarism is thus the key to metaphysics.

This ability to contemplate the divine ideas, Bonaventure insists, is particular to metaphysics alone amongst the lower sciences. When the metaphysician views creation in terms of emanation and consummation, her work resembles that of the physicist and ethicist, respectively. But when she studies the exemplary cause of being she is unique. For 'when [s]he considers this being in light of that principle which is the exemplar of all things, [s]he meets no other science but is a true metaphysician (*verus est metaphysicus*)'.⁵⁴⁰ Metaphysics, according to Bonaventure, is thus the science of exemplarism proper. Any philosopher who denies exemplarism, and subsequently the mind's ability to ascend to God by contemplating Him as the *causa formalis* of created being, is thus not a *verus metaphysicus*. Instead, she is an

⁵³⁶ *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 39va.

⁵³⁷ *I Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, q. 4, resp. (I, p. 55).

⁵³⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 17 (V, p. 332).

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 2 (V, p. 343).

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, coll. 1, n. 13 (V, p. 331).

indoctus philosophus. As will be seen, it is this conviction – alongside his thought on the necessity of the *dona Spiritus* for metaphysical speculation – which is absolutely crucial to understanding Bonaventure’s critique of the metaphysics of Aristotelianism.

4.4.2.1) *Christian Metaphysics – The Paradigm Defining the Relationship between Philosophy and Theology.*

As the highest form of natural reason, Bonaventure tells us that metaphysics marks not only the boundary between the innate light of philosophy and the infused one of theology, but that it is itself – as the subject of both philosophical and theological speculation⁵⁴¹ – part of the transitory phase, whereby human reason, transfigured by grace, gives way to the superior light of faith and is, in turn, brought to completion by it. Through faith, and in turn the *cognitio saporitiva* brought about through *caritas*, metaphysics, whilst retaining its identity as a distinctive form of natural reason, is lifted from the limits imposed upon it by the fallen intellect and is thus rendered able to articulate a more accurate account of God and the divine ideas. Faith in effect, is the light which empowers the metaphysician to reason correctly.

According to Bonaventure, therefore, it is the *lumen revelationis* and the bestowal of the supernatural habits of cognition given by the Spirit, which turns the water of unaided metaphysical speculation into the wine of Christian metaphysics. Whereas the former only knows the divine Word implicitly – i.e., as the efficient, formal, and final cause of creation; the latter, by contrast, possesses an explicit knowledge of the Word as the second person of the Trinity. Guided by the superior light of theology and scripture, it knows the eternal art, not simply as the repository of the divine ideas, but as the Incarnate, Inspired, and Uncreated Word.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Hayes’s ‘Christology and Metaphysics in the Thought of Bonaventure’, pp. 82-96. As we will see, both later in this chapter and more fully in chapter six, this is an important point: for Bonaventure philosophy – in the form of metaphysics at least – can exist within a specifically theological context, and not just at a purely philosophical level.

Moreover, it is through the Incarnate, Inspired, and Uncreated Word that true metaphysical speculation and certainty is achieved.⁵⁴² At its most basic level, therefore, in Bonaventure's thinking metaphysics is only capable of reaching a coherent knowledge of its proper object – the *rationes aeternae in Verbo* – through the assistance of the *lumen fidei* and the *dona Spiritus*. As we will come to see in chapter six, this is an important truth when it comes to understanding Bonaventure's thought on *philosophia* and how it differs from Aquinas's.

For the Christian metaphysician, as such, the threefold metaphysic of emanation, exemplarism, and consummation, although an expression of her natural reasoning, and therefore part of her philosophical speculation, is thus resituated within a specifically Christological and theological context.⁵⁴³ For her creation does not just proceed from, and return to, an impersonal, eternal exemplar. Rather, it emanates from the second person of the Trinity, who as the consubstantial Word of the Father, became incarnate in order to lead creation back to God through his crucifixion and resurrection.⁵⁴⁴ For the Christian metaphysician, as such, her philosophical speculation, and thereby her natural reason as a whole, is radically Christ-centred.⁵⁴⁵ Guided by faith and strengthened by charity, she knows that all things come forth from Christ; that all things show forth Christ; and, finally, that all things will return to Christ. It is thus within the context of Christian, rather than unaided, metaphysics that Bonaventure's famous summary of his metaphysics is to be understood:

Such is the metaphysical Center that leads us back, and this is the sum total of our metaphysics (*et haec est tota nostra metaphysica*): concerned with emanation, exemplarity, and consummation, that is, illumination through spiritual radiations

⁵⁴² *Collations*, coll. 3, n. 2, p. 42.

⁵⁴³ *Hex.*, coll. 1, nn. 12-7 (V, pp. 331-2).

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

(*per radios spirituales*) and return to the Supreme Being. And in this will you be a true metaphysician (*verus metaphysicus*).⁵⁴⁶

4.4.2.2) *Theology and Philosophy: Preliminary Remarks.*

The fact that metaphysics can be the subject of both pagan and Christian speculation reveals a very important truth. For Bonaventure, whilst all philosophy may stem from the fall and the rendering of the soul a *tabula rasa* there are nonetheless two very distinct strands of philosophical reasoning. The first is that philosophy which takes place entirely apart from the illumination of Christian faith, either by historical accident – as is the case with the ancient pagan philosophers (the *philosophi*) – or because of deliberate choice; for example, the philosophies of the Islamicate scholars and the Radical Aristotelians. The second, by contrast, is that philosophy which takes place within a Christian context and is guided ‘*per radios spirituales*’ – i.e., what may be termed “Christian philosophy”.⁵⁴⁷ Given that the difference between these two strands of philosophy is integral to understanding Bonaventure’s evaluation of philosophy and its relationship to theology we ought to say a little about it.

4.4.2.3) *Christian Philosophy – Water Turned into Wine.*

Let us begin with Bonaventure’s thought on Christian philosophy and how he views its relationship to the economy of graced learning.

a) *Reasoning in Lumine Mentis Christi – True Christian Philosophy.*

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 17; cf. *Delorme*, principium, vis. 1, n. 17, p. 7; *Collations*, p. 10.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Properly speaking, Christian philosophy, Bonaventure tells us, is that strand of philosophy which not only submits to the teachings of the revealed light of faith, but which actively accepts and confesses Christ as its primary source of noetic certainty and cognitive illumination.⁵⁴⁸ It is that philosophy which, having been ‘taken captive’ by the *lumen revelationis*, has been ‘called out of darkness’ into Christ’s ‘marvelous light’ and placed at the service of his perfect wisdom.⁵⁴⁹ Thus, very much like the nobler spheres of noetic associated with theology, grace, and beatitude, Christian philosophy places Christ at its center and conducts its reasoning – be it at a rational, natural or moral level – *in lumine mentis Christi*. Crucially, however, this is not to say that it possesses Christ or scripture as its primary object of study – as we will see, the data of revelation is always most properly the object of theological, rather than philosophical, speculation.⁵⁵⁰ Rather, Bonaventure tells us, Christian philosophy possesses the study of nature – or in the case of metaphysics, being – as its immediate object of focus.⁵⁵¹

The most notable feature of Christian philosophy, Bonaventure insists, is that due to its being guided by the *lumen fidei* and the *dona Spiritus*, it avoids many of the errors into which pagan philosophy, in particular Aristotelianism, so easily falls and condemns itself – i.e., monopsychism, the mortality of the soul, and the eternity of the world. Instead, infused with the sapient wisdom of the *ignis caritatis* and the *dona* of understanding and wisdom, it offers a far superior, far more coherent account of the natural world than pagan philosophy can ever achieve. This is so, because these supernatural habits, through their healing of the soul’s affective dispositions, allow the Christian philosopher to read the *liber naturae* properly – i.e. as a window into the divine ideas. They allow her, in short, to enjoy an approximation – albeit

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. *Christus Unus* throughout.

⁵⁴⁹ *Collations*, coll. 7, n. 3, p. 111.

⁵⁵⁰ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, nn. 2-6 (V, p. 474). On this point Bonaventure is absolutely clear: philosophy, even within a thoroughly Christian context, deals with the truth insofar as it is knowable through reason, whereas theology studies truth insofar as it is believable. The *lumen revelationis*, in other words, is never to be confused with the *lumen rationis*.

⁵⁵¹ *ORATT.*, n. 4, p. 43.

only a partial one – of the *sapientia perfecta* enjoyed by Christ and his saints. Through the aid of the *lumen fidei*, Christian philosophy allows the mind of *homo lapsus* to discern the most basic philosophical principle necessary for the journey to metaphysical enlightenment – namely, that ‘the first principle created the world in order to make itself known, so that the world might serve as a footprint and a mirror to lead humankind to love and praise God’.⁵⁵²

b) *Nominally Christian Philosophy*

Whilst any philosophy carried out within a Christian context ought always to be superior to that offered by the pagan philosophers, Bonaventure laments that this is not always the case. If a Christian listens too much to Aristotle, or makes the mistake of believing that her philosophical speculation can function just as well without the *lumen fidei*, thereby rejecting Christ as the center of her reasoning, then her philosophy will end up not only falling into error, but it will produce results that are little better than those of the *philosophi*.⁵⁵³ That this is so is seen through the heterodox philosophies of the Radical Aristotelians, and perhaps even those of Aquinas and Albert.⁵⁵⁴ Having placed too much confidence in the un-aided mind, and having mistook the practice of philosophy to rest upon a universal and neutral sphere of reason separate from the teachings of faith and thus common to all peoples, these philosophers have made their reasoning opaque to Christ’s perfect and stabilizing wisdom. They have, in effect, turned from light to darkness. As such, they lack the *radii spirituales* bestowed by the Spirit and thus fail to reason correctly. For Bonaventure philosophers of this sort are therefore only nominally Christian. Succumbing to the *potio curiositatis*, they are like wasps: they build honey combs, but they do not produce honey, as do true Christian philosophers:

⁵⁵² *Brev.*, pars. 2, chap. 11, n. 2, p. 94.

⁵⁵³ *Hex.*, coll. 19, nn. 14, 18 (V, pp.422-23).

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. discussion of Bonaventure’s evaluation of Aquinas’s thought in chapter six.

There are many men of this kind (*multi sunt tales*), empty of praise and devotion, although filled with the “spendors” of knowledge (*habeant splendor scientiarum*). They build wasps nests (*casa vesparum*) without honeycomb, while the bees make honey (*sicut apes, quae mellificant*).⁵⁵⁵

These philosophers, in short, repeat the error of Adam. Turning their back on scripture, the *principium* of all true wisdom, they elect to eat from the poisoned fruit of the *lignum scientiae*: ‘*legitur, quod Adam comedans lignum prohibitum, expulsus est de paridiso. Hoc impletum est hodie in doctoribus nostris*’.⁵⁵⁶

c) *Christian Philosophy as a Provisionally Licit Scientia.*

As alluded to earlier – and as will be explained more fully shortly – one of the central claims at work within Bonaventure’s Christocentric division of the sciences is that philosophy cannot claim to be a licit part of the *ordo scientiarum* on account of the fact that it fails to find expression within Christ’s mind. However, as will be explained more fully as this study progresses, a unique feature of Christian philosophy is that, through its submission to the *lumen fidei*, it can be harmonized with the schema of knowledge defined by Christ’s mind and thus rendered a “licit” *scientia* for Christians to pursue. This is so, because through its confession of Christ as the fontal principle of all cognitive illumination, and its willingness to place him at its center, it seeks to reconcile itself with the *ordo scientiarum* which his mind has authored. Crucially, however, this reconciliation does not overcome the fact that Christian philosophy

⁵⁵⁵ *Collations*, coll. 1, n. 8, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁶ *Medius*, p. 63.

employs a noetic method – i.e., the abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra* – alien to the one which Christ himself embodied; nor, Bonaventure is clear, does it make this cognitive method a co-natural part of the human soul. The abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra* may be a necessary feature of human noetic *in istu statu* but Bonaventure reaffirms that it is never truly natural to the human mind. Thus even though Christian philosophy enjoys some *rapprochement* with the hierarchy of knowledge, it does so only in a partial and incomplete way. It is merely ‘grafted’ onto it. Moreover, as the next chapter reveals, this reconciliation is a highly transient affair; it is soon to be washed away by the advent of a new *aetas revelationis*.

d) *The Paradox of Christian Philosophy – Philosophia Christiana as an Aid for Restoring the Imago Christi.*

This provisionally “licit” nature of Christian philosophy also has significant implications for how it relates to the soul’s *regressus ad Christum*. As we will see, for Bonaventure when properly construed, Christian philosophy can, and indeed should, be used by the soul to ascend the hierarchy of sciences and thus aid its recovery of the *imago Christi*. A point of great paradox, this is so, because the speculative tools which it employs, purged of error as they are by the teachings of faith and the sanitizing effects of the *ignis caritatis*, offer several unique ways – distinct from those of theology and the superior spheres of noetic – whereby the soul can advance in wisdom. Thus, for example, aided by the *dona Spiritus*, Christian philosophy allows the soul to achieve an approximation – albeit a pallid one – of the perfect knowledge of creatures which it once enjoyed in Adam and which Christ so fully exemplifies. This is so, because possessed of a superior degree of metaphysical acuity than its pagan counterpart it allows the soul to see creatures as they were originally intended to function – i.e., as a window

into the *rationes aeternae*. Similarly, as we will also see Christian philosophy aids the soul's recovery of the *imago Christi* by supporting the higher truths of theological wisdom and by actively encouraging the soul to transition from the study of philosophy to that of the superior wisdom of scripture and faith. In short, it allows itself to be *ancillia theologiae*.

We shall say more on how Christian philosophy support's the soul's recovery of the *imago Christi* in chapter six.

e) *Christian Philosophy as Vestigium Dei.*

Perhaps the most surprising – and certainly by far the most paradoxical – way in which Christian philosophy can aid the soul's *regressus* back to Christ, is that it itself – through its placing of the *lumen revelationis* at its center – can actually function as a window into God's Trinitarian being. As alluded to earlier, through its three different sciences – rational, natural, and moral – Bonaventure believes that Christian philosophy offers a *vestigium* of the Trinity:

For all philosophy is either natural, rational, or moral. The first deals with the cause of being and therefore points to the power of the Father. The second, deals with the basis of understanding and therefore leads (*ducit*) to the wisdom of the Word. And the third deals with the order of living and therefore leads to the goodness of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁵⁷

The healing power of Christ's perfect wisdom and grace is so potent, in other words, that the product of sin – the fruit of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* – is turned from darkness to light, and thereby rendered a manifestation of the divine wisdom itself. Like the creatures

⁵⁵⁷ *SJIG.*, chap. 3, n. 6, p. 93.

which it studies, Christian philosophy itself thus offers the soul an opportunity for the sapid contemplation of the divine mystery. Pagan philosophy, however, offers no such opportunity.

4.4.2.4) *Pagan Philosophy – The Stone of Natural Reason.*

Knowing nothing of Christ, and thereby failing to place him at its center, this strand of philosophy, is derived entirely from the efforts of the fallen intellect. Represented most clearly by Plato and Aristotle, it has at its heart the mistaken assumption that the innate light of unaided reason is the sole basis of our noetic and thus the surest path to perfect wisdom and *beatitudo*.⁵⁵⁸ Thus, knowing nothing of the fall, the *philosophi* failed to grasp the impoverished state of the intellect. They mistook the knowledge acquired through sensory experience and reason as both natural to the human condition and as the measure of its noetic potential.⁵⁵⁹ Ignorant of both Christ, the soul's 'physician', and Adam, the source of its illness, they 'did not know the disease because they did not know they were ill'.⁵⁶⁰ As such, lacking illumination '*per radios spirituales*', neither Plato nor Aristotle possessed anything of the metaphysical and philosophical acuity enjoyed by Christian philosophy.⁵⁶¹ Instead, dwelling in sin, they 'philosophized without the Mediator' – Christ – and thus held back truth 'in wickedness'.⁵⁶²

However, Bonaventure tells us that the pagan philosophers – at least the 'most worthy among them' – were capable of using their reason to ascertain some of the most basic truths about creation, and in turn, God.⁵⁶³ They knew, for example, that God exists and that He is the efficient, formal, and final cause of creation. To this extent, their philosophies offered an an

⁵⁵⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 4, n. 1, (V, p. 349).

⁵⁵⁹ *Delorme*, vis. 1, coll. 4, n. 9, p. 102.

⁵⁶⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 9 (V, p. 370); *Collations*, pp. 114-15.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 9 (V, p. 345).

⁵⁶² *Collations*, coll. 7, n. 9, p. 115.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

approximation of the truth. Crucially, however, their reason could not take them further than this, even though it desired to do so.⁵⁶⁴ They could never achieve the metaphysical wisdom which comes from knowing that God is a Trinity and that Christ is the repository of the divine ideas. To this extent, they had the ‘wings of ostriches’ (*habuerunt penes struthionum*).⁵⁶⁵ Their lack of *caritas* and the avarice of their affections meant that instead of reasoning their way to a sustained and intellectually coherent knowledge of God and creatures, their *ratio* inevitably turned to ignorance and sin. Devoid of Christ’s illumination, it could not but help falling into shadow and confusion.⁵⁶⁶ It is within this context that Bonaventure’s famous maxim from the *Hexaemeron* finds its true meaning: ‘faith alone, then, divides the light from the darkness’.⁵⁶⁷

Nonetheless, Bonaventure discerns amongst the pagan philosophers varying degrees of insight. Some, he tells us, were more noble than others.⁵⁶⁸ Thus, positing the existence of the divine ideas, Plato and his disciples – including the ‘most noble Plotinus’ – retained something of the doctrine of exemplarism, since he recognized that all creatures reflect their exemplars within the eternal realm.⁵⁶⁹ From this, he reasoned correctly that creation had a beginning and that the soul, possessing immortality, is called to union with God, thus preserving something of the doctrines of emanation and consummation. These philosophers thus grasped something of the *lumen veritatis*. Moreover, even though they themselves did not know it, through their positing of an eternal *λογος* and divine *εἶδος* they offered an approximation, albeit vague, of what revelation was later to confirm; namely, that it is the Son, as the *Verbum Patris*, who is the repository of the *rationes aeternae*. Aristotle, by contrast, as ‘the principal assailant’ of the divine ideas, rejected any form of exemplarism and thereby possessed nothing of this light.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, coll. 6, nn. 1-2 (V, p. 360).

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, coll. 7, n. 12. (V, p. 367).

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 3 (V, pp. 365-6).

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 13.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 3 (V, pp. 365-6).

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 2 (V, p. 365).

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, coll. 6, n. 2 (V, p. 360).

For Aristotle creation possesses no exemplary cause, since, lacking any genesis in time, it is not dependent upon any external causality. Consequently, having denied the doctrines of the archetypal forms and creation *ex nihilo*, Aristotle rejects the claim that the mind can ascend to God by studying His created vestiges.⁵⁷¹ It is this conviction that the world possesses no divine exemplar, Bonaventure maintains, which leads Aristotle, like Averroes and his radical Latin disciples, to believe that creation is eternal and that the soul is mortal.⁵⁷² Thus, by denying exemplarism, the Stagirite simultaneously fell into error concerning the doctrines of emanation and consummation as well.⁵⁷³ Where Plato, through exemplarism, possessed something of divine wisdom, but, neglected the empirical significance of sense experience. Aristotle, by contrast, sought to master the ‘way of science’, but in so doing he abandoned the pursuit of wisdom.⁵⁷⁴ Nonetheless, lacking faith and the gifts of the Spirit neither reasoned correctly. They varied only in their degrees of ignorance.⁵⁷⁵ What is truly alarming, however, Bonaventure remarks, is that despite their manifold errors some Christians still choose to follow the *philosophi* and to view their teachings as the height of all true wisdom:

These men [*i.e.*, *the philosophi*], then fell into error and were not separated from darkness (*nec fuerunt divisi a tenebris*): and these are the worst of errors (*pessimi errores*). And they are not yet closed by the key of the bottomless pit. These are the obscurities (*tenebrae*) of Egypt; although a great light had been seen in these things through earlier forms of knowledge, yet all light was put out by these errors (*tamen omnis exstinguitur per errores praedictos*). And some men, seeing

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, n. 4 (V, 361).

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ Cf. *Christus Unus*, n. 18 (V, p. 572).

⁵⁷⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 3 (V, pp. 365-6).

that Aristotle had been so great in other matters and had expressed the truth so well, could not believe that in this he had not spoken the truth (*verum dixerit*).⁵⁷⁶

Given that the *philosophi* dwelled in such ignorance, Bonaventure judges that their philosophy – just like that of their Islamicate commentators – cannot, and indeed must not, be used by the soul as it tries to restore its identity as *imago Christi*. This is so, he tells us, because lacking the *lumen fidei*, and thus closed off to the stabilizing influence of Christ’s perfect noetic, their philosophy is ‘infected to the marrow’ with the taint of sin.⁵⁷⁷ In it not only are truth and falsity ‘mixed up’ (*permixta*), but the poison of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* is most fully alive.⁵⁷⁸ In it is to be found the ‘*argumentum diaboli*’ which is to be contrasted with the ‘*argumentum Christi*’.⁵⁷⁹ As such, for the Christian to eat of this noxious fruit, is for her to risk being re-infected with the spirit of *curiositas* which the *ignis caritatis* and *lumen fidei* have sought to dispel from her. It is to risk returning to the darkness of Egypt.⁵⁸⁰ Thus, far from serving the soul’s noetic *regressus* back to Christ, the teachings of the *Philosophi* – in particular those of Aristotle and his Averroist disciples – actively seek to thwart this process. They proffer false *hierarchia scientiarum*; one which renders the soul *imago philosophi* rather than *imago Christi*. To this extent, their philosophy, unlike its Christian counterpart, is the stone that cannot be turned into bread.⁵⁸¹

Section 4

4.5) *The Second Circle of Knowledge: Christ and the Infused Light of Theological Wisdom.*

⁵⁷⁶ *Collations*, coll. 6, n. 5, p. 98.

⁵⁷⁷ *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 8. (V, p. 367).

⁵⁷⁸ *Medius*. (IX, p. 63).

⁵⁷⁹ *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 26 (V, p. 333).

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, coll. 6, n. 5 (V, p. 361).

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, coll. 7, n. 12 (V, p. 367).

The next circle of wisdom within the hierarchy of knowledge, Bonaventure tells us, is that of theology (*theologia*).

4.5.0) Theology as ‘*Scientia Perfecta*’.

A product of faith and revelation, rather than human ingenuity or pure scientific endeavour, theology, both at its superior and inferior levels, is unique amongst the sciences. This is so because it is not just an academic science, but it is also – and more importantly – an exercise in holiness. At its heart, theology is designed to lead us to spiritual enlightenment and mystical union with God.⁵⁸² To this extent, theology, as a function of lived Christian practice rather than isolated study, is both a speculative science and a practical discipline.⁵⁸³ Properly speaking, however, it is of a more practical nature because it has as its goal that ‘we might become good’ (*ut boni fiamus*) and achieve salvation.⁵⁸⁴ As such, in contrast to philosophy, theology, Bonaventure insists, is best described as a ‘wisdom’ (*sapientia*) rather than a *scientia*, for it contains both speculative and appetitive dimensions.⁵⁸⁵ In stressing the decidedly practical and sapiential dimensions of theology, Bonaventure closely follows the teachings of his Franciscan mentors, and indeed draws close to the early Albert the Great.⁵⁸⁶ Moreover, like the latter, he offers a precursor of Scotus’s famous description of theology as a practical science.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸² See Rik Van Nieuwenhove and William Crozier ‘Trinity and Mystical Theology’ in Edward Howells and Mark McKintosh (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook to Mystical Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2020), pp. 484-506.

⁵⁸³ *I Sent.*, proe., q. 1, resp. (I, p. 11).

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. *SH.*, tom. 1, tract. 1, q. 1, resp., p. 2; Rigaldus *Quaestio de Scientia Theologia*, pars. 1, q. 6, resp. in Sileo, *Teoria Della Scienza Theologia*, p. 51; Albert *I Sent.*, dist. 1, q. 3, resp. and ad. 1, p. 14

⁵⁸⁷ *Ord 1.*, prol., pars. 5, q. 1, pp. 151-237.

4.5.1) *Theology as Subalternate Science.*

Nonetheless, Bonaventure is keen to stress that whilst theology may be most properly described as a *sapientia*, it does nonetheless fulfil the definition of an academic science. For like all true sciences, it is founded upon a set of incontrovertible first principles or axioms – i.e., the revealed truths of scripture – and proceeds from these according to the scholastic method of *apodeixis*, albeit, as we shall see, in a way driven by faith and love, rather than pure *ratio*. Taking its lead from revelation and the experiential wisdom gifted through charity, theology reasons deductively. It uses scholastic enquiry to elucidate, systematize, and defend the teachings of faith. It does so by drawing upon the services of “lower” sciences – i.e., metaphysics and the various sub-strands of philosophy.⁵⁸⁸ To this extent, theology is not only an architectonic science, in the traditional scholastic sense that it is the “queen” of the academic disciplines, and thus treats these ‘inferior’ sciences as *ancilliae*, but it is also itself a subalternate science.⁵⁸⁹ This is so because it derives its certainty from a higher science; namely, the infallible truths of scripture. *Theologia*, Bonaventure tells us, ‘*ad sacram scripturam reducitur per modum cuiusdam subalternationis*’.⁵⁹⁰ Bonaventure is thus seen to disagree with Thomas for whom theology is famously a subalternate science not of scripture, but rather of the divine *scientia* itself.⁵⁹¹

4.5.2) *Theology as Experiential Wisdom.*

Fundamental to understanding theology’s nature as *sapientia* and a practical discipline is its decidedly experiential basis. In contrast to the purely speculative knowledge of philosophy,

⁵⁸⁸ *De Reductione*, n. 26 (V, p. 325).

⁵⁸⁹ *I Sent.*, proe., q. 2, ad. 4 (II, p. 10).

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ Cf. *ST.*, 1a. q.1, art. 2, resp.

theological wisdom, Bonaventure tells us, has at its heart our direct personal relationship with God. As such, *theologia* is most properly described as being founded upon prayer and the indwelling of the *dona Spiritus* rather than the *lumen rationis*.⁵⁹² Key here is the role which *caritas* and the spiritual senses play. As noted in the previous chapter, through its stimulation of our *affectus*, charity radically enhances our noetic potential, allowing us to not simply to cognize God, but to actively “experience” Him through the indwelling of grace. Inflamed by *ignis caritatis*, the spiritual senses feed theological wisdom by allowing God not only to be “known”, but “sensed” and “tasted”.⁵⁹³ This knowledge is thus not a primarily speculative and inductive one, as is philosophy; but a decidedly *sapid* and experiential one. It is one in which love, and the dynamic of the soul’s life under grace, is regarded not simply as a source of knowledge for theological reflection, but rather as *the* key source of knowledge. Here we thus see a clear link to the Cistercian notion – associated with St. Bernard and William of Saint Thierry – that love itself is a form of cognition: ‘*amor ipse intellectus est*’.⁵⁹⁴

4.5.3) *Piety as the Foundation of Theology.*

In light of this, it is unsurprising therefore that for Bonaventure the passage from philosophical knowledge to theological wisdom is not achieved through intellectual effort, but rather through devotion.⁵⁹⁵ As such, sanctity and humility, not books and learning, are the key to theological wisdom: *sapientia est fructus pietatis*. ‘Without holiness’, Bonaventure remarks, ‘a man cannot be wise’.⁵⁹⁶ Moreover, this wisdom actively hides itself from the intellectually proud and inquisitive. Only the poor in spirit – i.e., those who divest themselves of *curiositas* by

⁵⁹² *De Reductione*, n. 26 (V, p. 325).

⁵⁹³ *DQEP.*, q. 1, resp. p. 41.

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. Van Nieuwenhove, *Aquinas on Contemplation*.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁶ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 6 (V, p. 337).

intellectually humbling themselves before Christ and who, in turn, accept his perfect teaching as the measure of all truth – are capable of receiving this wisdom.⁵⁹⁷ Piety and devotion to Christ are thus the foundation stone of theological wisdom. Moreover, as we shall see, this decidedly affective basis of theology means that at its height it involves a “closing down” of the intellect, rather than an opening up of it.⁵⁹⁸ Here, through the *excessus caritatis*, the intellect, like Christ’s own mind, is ‘abstracted’ out of itself and carried into the ‘super-essential radiance of the divine darkness’.⁵⁹⁹ In contradistinction to philosophy, *theologia* is thus at heart a fundamentally mystical exercise. It begins with prayer, not study.⁶⁰⁰

4.5.4) *Theology as an Exercise of Desire.*

Not surprisingly, therefore, Bonaventure draws deeply upon the Victorine and Bernardian notion of desire as the animating and illuminating force of theological wisdom, at least on the behalf of the believer. To progress in theology, our hearts must be given over to Christ and the *ignis caritatis*: ‘then enkindled by the fire of divine love, give your heart totally to the one who on the cross offered himself to God for us’.⁶⁰¹ Thus, echoing Hugh of Saint-Victor – as well as figures like Thomas Gallus and Grosseteste – Bonaventure counsels us that where intellectual effort fails in theological reasoning, love and desire supply that which is lacking.⁶⁰² Through love ‘*affectus vadit usque ad profundum Christi*’.⁶⁰³ It is thus the strength of our desire and not our reasoning which dictates the degree to which we progress in theological wisdom: ‘it is true that this [*wisdom*] is a gift of God. But if you want to love it (*sed si vis ipsum habere*), you

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 32 (V, p. 342).

⁵⁹⁹ *SJIG.*, chap. 7, n. 5, p. 139.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰¹ *Letter.*, p. 69.

⁶⁰² Cf. *Sol.*, lib. 2, cap. 3, n. 15, p. 112.

⁶⁰³ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 32 (V, p. 342).

must have a desire for it, since wisdom does not enter into a soul that is not carried by a strong affection for it (*nisi quae magno affectu fertur ad eam*). But it is not denied to a soul that desires to have it'.⁶⁰⁴

4.5.5) *The Fourfold Hierarchy of Theological Wisdom.*

Closely reflecting his four-fold hierarchical division of the sciences, Bonaventure posits a four-fold hierarchy of theological wisdom.

For it [*wisdom*] is seen as uniform (*uniformis*) in the rules of divine law, as manifold (*multiformis*) in the mysteries of divine Scriptures, as assuming every form (*omniformis*) in the traces of the divine works, and as without any form (*nulliformis*) in the elevations of divine raptures.⁶⁰⁵

Again, this hierarchy appears to possess a distinctly circular nature:

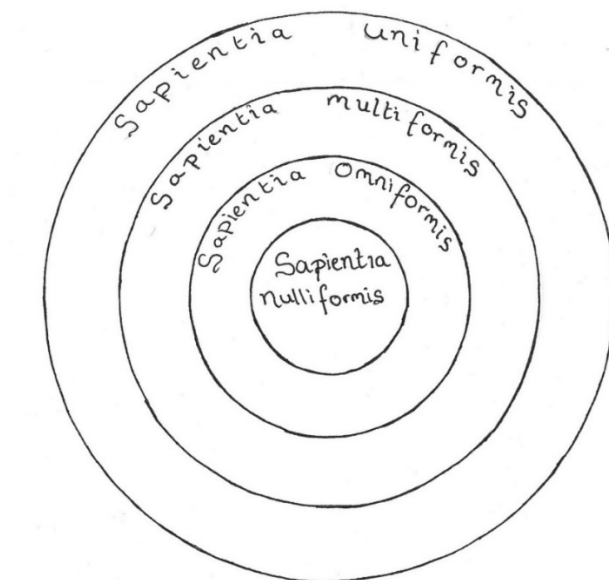


Figure 19

⁶⁰⁴ *SGHS.*, coll. 9, n. 1, pp. 181-2.

⁶⁰⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 8 (V, p. 337); *Delorme*, principium, coll. 2, n. 8, p. 23.

Hierarchically ordered according to the degree of wisdom which they bestow, each sphere of wisdom within this four-fold hierarchy is ordered towards, and has at its heart, the silent affective union which is achieved in *sapientia nulliformis*. Unsurprisingly given his emphasis on the necessity of piety for the progression in theological wisdom, Bonaventure maintains that the different spheres of theological noetic are given to an individual according to the measure of their faith and desire. To this extent, the four ascending levels of theological wisdom correspond to the varying degrees to which the soul can be sanctified through grace. Only the holiest reach the heights of *sapientia nulliformis*.

4.5.6) *Sapientia Uniformis – The Study of the Eternal Art.*

Experienced by all people, Christian and pagan alike, *sapientia uniformis* is that which remains in the human soul of the innate knowledge of the divine ideas which it once possessed in innocence. Essentially an extension of Bonaventure's Christocentric doctrine of illumination as described in the previous chapter, it need only be discussed briefly here.⁶⁰⁶

Although involving a "transcendental" *a priori* awareness of the light emanated by the divine ideas, uniform wisdom is not strictly speaking classified as part of the infused light of faith. This is so, because even though the mind reasons under the influence of the divine ideas, it receives no special revelation of grace. Prior to the fall, *sapientia uniformis* sufficed to allow the soul to ascend to the eternal art by studying creation alone; like Christ, Adam, it will be recalled, required neither scripture nor revelation to know God. In humanity's fallen state, however, uniform wisdom allows the mind to judge only the most basic truths with certainty. Requiring no ascent of faith, it is therefore strictly speaking classified as an expression of natural reason.⁶⁰⁷ However, Bonaventure describes it as a form of theological wisdom because

⁶⁰⁶ *Supra.*

⁶⁰⁷ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 9 (V, p. 338).

it is a remnant of the wisdom which theological insight seeks to restore. It is, in effect, the root upon which the certainty of the superior light of faith is grafted.

4.5.7) *Sapientia Multiformis: The Waters of Scripture.*

The beginning of the infused light of faith proper, the transition from the uniform wisdom of natural reason to the multiform one of scripture marks a significant step forward in human understanding. Where natural cognition is prone to error because of its dependence upon sense experience, the superior light of scripture, by contrast – as a product of divine revelation – is beyond error, doubt, and judgement.⁶⁰⁸ Scripture thus not only exceeds all that which can be achieved through natural reason, and, therefore, radically transcends everything taught by the philosophers; but it succeeds where they failed by restoring the mind’s ability to read creation aright.⁶⁰⁹ As a gift of grace, however, Bonaventure insists that the *sapientia multiformis* of scripture is not offered to all, but only to those whose intellects are inflamed by the *ardor pietatis*.⁶¹⁰ As such, the wisdom of scripture does not speak plainly, but reveals its truths through images and parables. These often appear impenetrable and ludicrous to the eyes of unaided reason, yet to the *oculii fidei* they communicate the manifold wisdom of God.⁶¹¹

Possessed of a seemingly limitless horizon, Bonaventure remarks that scripture is to be compared to the waters of the sea because of its immeasurable height, breadth, length, and depth.⁶¹² Like the sea, it started as a ‘little fountain’ in the time of the Law and grew into an immense river under the prophets and patriarchs until, finally, through the Gospels it became a great ocean overflowing with symbolic meaning.⁶¹³ Crucially, however, this inexhaustible

⁶⁰⁸ *Breviloquium*, proe. (V, p. 207).

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.* (V, p. 207).

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.* (V, p. 201).

⁶¹¹ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 12 (V, p. 338).

⁶¹² See *Breviloquium*, prol. (V, pp. 202-6).

⁶¹³ *Hex.*, coll. 13, n. 8 (V, pp. 388-9).

depth means that not only does each passage of scripture offer fresh insight into the divine wisdom, but it also contains a wealth of hidden spiritual meanings: ‘a mysterious and profound signification’ Bonaventure writes ‘is hidden (*occultatur*) under the shell (*corte*) of its obvious meaning’.⁶¹⁴ These ‘new interpretations’ and ‘new meanings’, he tells us, are thus part of God’s *ongoing* self-disclosure to humanity.⁶¹⁵ They offer the soul a *novum verbum revelationis*: ‘for as new seeds come forth from plants, so also from scripture come forth new interpretations and meanings’.⁶¹⁶ Crucially, however, it is only the Christian who walks *in simplicitate fidei* and who is gifted with the relevant *dona* who can hear and understand these hidden words.⁶¹⁷

It is this potentially inexhaustible depth of meaning which makes scripture so daunting to the unformed theological mind.⁶¹⁸ Far from a placid lake or stream, Bonaventure tells us that scripture often appears as a ‘confusing, disordered and unchartered’ torent; one in which it is easy to get lost and disoriented.⁶¹⁹ As such, only the theologian who takes the wood of the cross as her ship, and who clings to Christ in charity, is capable of navigating it. ‘For anyone who seeks to enter the sea of scripture without this wood is submerged, for [s]he sinks into the greatest of errors’.⁶²⁰ Washing away the errors of ignorance, scripture is thus like the waters of the Red Sea. It is that through which the eyes of faith can safely pass, but in which the idle *curiositas* of the *philosophi*, and indeed that of their heterodox Christian disciples, is lost and drowned. Scripture, in effect, is that which banishes error from the church by separating light from darkness. As such, its wisdom is to be loved and savored more than anything else.

⁶¹⁴ *Breviloquium*, prol. (V, p. 206).

⁶¹⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 13, n. 2 (V, p. 388).

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.* We shall say more about the ongoing and dynamic nature of God’s self-revelation in scripture in the next chapter.

⁶¹⁷ *Medius*. (IX, p. 63).

⁶¹⁸ *Breviloquium*, proe. (V, p. 208).

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 13, n. 5 (V, p. 388).

Not surprisingly, therefore, Bonaventure believes that the primary vocation of the theologian is to expound scripture to the faithful. Her role is to elucidate its revealed data in order that the ardor of piety may be increased within the church. The theologian does this by explaining scripture's literal, allegorical, anagogical, and moral meanings. These describe not only the divine mystery itself, but also how creation is hierarchically ordered; and how, in turn, it is to be retraced back to God. In expositing scripture, the theologian thus deals with the 'whole universe' for scripture describes the 'entire world machine' (*tota machina universi*).⁶²¹ She thus studies the 'the highest and the lowest, the first and the last, and everything that comes between'.⁶²² This, in turn, reveals why the theologian must study not only the scriptures themselves but also the natural order.⁶²³ It also explains why in her studies the theologian has recourse to the language of philosophy – in particular that of physics and metaphysics; for philosophy, after all, is the *scientia creaturarum*. More on this shortly.

4.5.8) *The Task of the Theologian: Scripture, Philosophy and the Correct Order of Theological Enquiry.*

Based upon the infallible light of revelation, Bonaventure tells us that scripture forms the pinnacle of a fourfold hierarchy of sources from which the theologian can seek inspiration; namely, the scriptures themselves, the teachings of the *sancti*, the *summas* of the theology masters, and finally the writings of the *philosophi*.⁶²⁴ The wellspring of all truth, scripture is to be preferred to the latter three, since the further a theologian strays from its teachings the greater her risk of falling into error.⁶²⁵ Next to scripture, however, the writings of the saints are to be

⁶²¹ *Brev.*, proe., p. 22.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

⁶²³ *Breviloquium*, pars. 1, chap. 2 (V, pp. 210-11).

⁶²⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 19, n. 6 (V, p. 421).

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 15 (V, p. 422).

preferred. Although wisdom is to be found in these texts, the study of the saints nonetheless involves some risk, for whilst they wrote under grace, their works are often more eloquent than scripture and thus risk distracting the theologian from her biblical studies.⁶²⁶

Greater danger, however, is to be found in the *summas* of the theology masters. For although these are based upon both scripture and the *doctrinae sancti*, they often use the writings of the *philosophi* to explain theological doctrines and through such inferior reasoning weaken, even contradict scripture.⁶²⁷ The greatest danger, however, is to be found in the philosophers themselves, since, knowing nothing of Christ, they reasoned solely under the influence of their fallen intellects and, as such, produced a great many errors. Mistaking scientific inquiry for divine wisdom, their “wisdom”, Bonaventure remarks, is like that of the magicians of Egypt. These promised Pharaoh miracles but instead worked sorcery.⁶²⁸

Guided by revelation, the theology master, Bonaventure urges, must therefore forsake the study of pagan philosophy in favour of that of scripture.⁶²⁹ Nonetheless, as part of her efforts to expound scripture the theologian may have recourse to the use of pagan philosophical language so as to explain certain passages. She must do so, however, with great caution. To mix too much of the *aqua philosophiae* with the *vinum theologiae* is to risk turning wine into water which is ‘the worst of miracles’ (*hoc pessimum miraculum est*).⁶³⁰ The *vinum theologiae* is too precious to be diluted with the muddy waters of pagan philosophy.⁶³¹ As such, when studying the *philosophi*, the theologian should not tarry and bend down upon her knees so as to drink deeply from their teachings, but should instead ‘lap’ at them, sipping but a little.⁶³²

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 10.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 11.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, coll. 2, n. 30 (V, p. 341).

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 19, n. 7 (V, p. 421).

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 14 (V, p. 422).

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*

⁶³² *Ibid.*, n. 12.

Once a theologian drinks too deeply from the writings of the *philosophi*, she becomes like the Radical Aristotelians who, intoxicated with a desire for *scientia* rather than *sapientia*, compound Adam's error by abandoning scripture, the 'bread from heaven' (*manna de caelo*), in favour of the 'vile food' of Egypt: the foul tasting 'leeks' and 'garlic' of unaided natural reason.⁶³³ Seduced by Pharaoh's magicians, such theologians warm 'the eggs of asps so that what has been warmed breaks out into a serpent'.⁶³⁴ They infect the church with the manifold errors of Aristotle's philosophy – i.e., the eternity of the world, the unity of the intellect and the denial of the resurrection and eternal beatitude.⁶³⁵ This Bonaventure tells us is the great abomination of his age.⁶³⁶ Aristotle should never be allowed to dictate the *revelatio Christi*. The wise theologian, as such, adheres so closely to scripture that she would rather abandon the entirety of Aristotle's teaching than be ignorant of a single theological truth.⁶³⁷

Nonetheless, Bonaventure is also clear that, whilst the theologian should avoid excessive mixing of the *doctrinae philosophorum* with her theological speculation, she can make legitimate recourse to Christian philosophy. Having confessed Christ as its center, this branch of philosophy lends itself more readily to the purposes of theology.⁶³⁸ This is so, because purged of error by faith, and possessing the *ignis caritatis* at its heart, this *philosophia* actively wills the fruition of Christian wisdom and thus readily offers its services to the soul as it strives to return to Christ. Moreover, it lacks the taint of heresy. To this extent, Christian philosophy – unlike its pagan counterpart – offers a healthy source of speculative assistance for the theologian. Thus, just as the Fathers did, she can use it to both elucidate scripture – providing

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, n. 18 (V, p. 423).

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 13 (V, p. 422); *Collations*, p. 291.

⁶³⁵ *Medius*. (IX, p. 63).

⁶³⁶ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 7 (V, p. 337).

⁶³⁷ *3 Sent.*, dist. 23, art. 1, q. 4, resp. (III, p. 472).

⁶³⁸ *De Reductione*, n. 26 (V, p. 325).

reasons in support of its claims – and to promote the growth of Christian wisdom and morals.⁶³⁹ As Bonaventure writes in his *Letter to an Unknown Master* (c. 1254-5).

Read Augustine’s *On Christian Doctrine*, where he shows that Sacred Scripture cannot be understood without familiarity with the other sciences (*sine aliarum scientiarum peritia*). He shows, moreover, that just as the children of Israel carried off the vessels of Egypt (*sicut filii Israel asportaverunt vasa Aegypti*), so the doctors of theology should make their own the teachings of philosophy (*sic doctores theologi doctrinam philosophicam*).⁶⁴⁰

Bonaventure tells us, however, that this appropriation of Christian philosophy to serve the promotion of theological wisdom finds its fullest expression in the theologian’s efforts to understand the divine wisdom found in the *liber naturae*. This is the next sphere of theological noetic: *sapientia omniformis*.

4.5.9) *Sapientia Omniformis: The Wisdom of Creation.*

Bonaventure’s doctrine of theological exemplarism proper, here all creation is revealed as a sacramental sign which bespeaks the hidden mystery of divine love. ‘And so it appears that the whole world is like a single mirror, full of luminaries that stand before divine wisdom, shedding light as would live coals’.⁶⁴¹ Creation, from this perspective, is thus like a book through which humanity can study the eternal art.⁶⁴² Of itself, however, nature is no longer sufficient to lead

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁰ *Letter*, p. 53.

⁶⁴¹ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 27 (V, p. 340); *Delorme*, principium, coll. 2, n. 27, p. 29. Cf. Leonard Bowman, ‘The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure’ *The Journal of Religion* 55 (1975), pp. 181-98.

⁶⁴² *Breviloquium*, pars. 2, chap. 11 (V, p. 229-30).

the mind back to God. Tainted by sin, human reason has become distorted and weak. Creation appears like a book in a foreign language.⁶⁴³ It is for this reason that God sent another book – scripture – which, hidden from the philosophers, restores the mind’s ability to read creation aright.⁶⁴⁴ Through scripture, the mind discovers how to perceive God’s hidden traces within creation; and how, in turn, through contemplation it can spiritually lead creation back to Him by retracing each creature to its exemplar within the divine mind.

Like scripture, the book of creation thus possesses a hidden spiritual depth which extends beyond its literal level. Each creature, Bonaventure tells us, appears as either a vestige, image, or likeness of the Trinity.⁶⁴⁵ However, to understand how this is so, the theologian must appropriate something of the philosophical language of Christian metaphysics and utilize it to contemplate the creature and its qualities. By doing so, she sees that each creature, regardless of its dignity and worth, possesses a threefold nature: weight, measure, and number.⁶⁴⁶ These three qualities, offer her a window (*fenestra*) into the different Trinitarian processions.⁶⁴⁷ For the theologian, therefore, creatures are most properly defined as ‘copies’ (*exemplaria*) and ‘divinely given signs’ (*signa divinitus data*) of the divine mystery.⁶⁴⁸ Like scripture, they appear as a *verbum revelationis*; one which only the ears of faith, enkindled as they are by the *ignis caritatis* and the spiritual senses, can hear, understand, and savour.⁶⁴⁹ Such was the knowledge of creatures enjoyed by Christ and our proto-parents *ante-lapsum*.

As hinted at in the last chapter, the reason why the pagan philosophers failed to see beyond the literal word of creation is that lacking the infused and sanitizing habits of cognition brought about through charity and the gifts of wisdom and understanding, their affective

⁶⁴³ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 20 (V, p. 340).

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, coll. 13, n. 11 (V, p. 389); *De Mystério Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 2, resp. (V, pp. 54-55).

⁶⁴⁵ *I Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, art. un., q. 2, resp. (I, p. 51).

⁶⁴⁶ Cf. *De Mystério Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 2, resp. (V, p. 54).

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. *SJIG.*, chap. 2, nn. 11-12, pp. 77-9.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁶⁴⁹ *Breviloquium*, pars. 2, chap. 11 (V, pp. 229-30).

dispositions were not healed, thereby meaning their sensory reason and, in turn, their intellectual capacities were fundamentally disordered. Loving the creature solely according to its material dimensions, they remained blind to its inner meaning. As with scripture, only the mind gifted with the *cognitio saporitiva* of faith can detect and communicate this secret wisdom to the soul. Thus, whilst educated at the level of physics, the *philosophi* were incapable of true metaphysical and spiritual enlightenment. As Bonaventure states forcefully in his *Itinerarium*, they were blind to the theophany of divine wisdom which creation offers.⁶⁵⁰

4.5.10) *Sapientia Nulliformis: The Finger of God.*

The fourth and final stage of theological wisdom, *sapientia nulliformis*, Bonaventure tells us, does not destroy the preceding phases of wisdom but is their perfection, goal, and consummation.⁶⁵¹ It is the *theologia mystica* of which Dionysius speaks.⁶⁵² Veiled in mystery, this ecstatic wisdom is the ineffable experience of the soul's self-transcendence into God. Through an infused foretaste of the *scientia gratiae* offered to the saints and mystics, silence is imposed upon the intellect as it is taken captive by the divine mystery. The 'finger of God' (*digitus Dei*) which writes upon the soul unspeakable truths, such wisdom thus quietens, yet gives life: '*soporat et quietat omnes potentias et silentium imponit*'.⁶⁵³ Here the soul sleeps, Bonaventure tells us, yet keeps constant vigil.⁶⁵⁴ It is as if it is dead to all but God: '*et sic est homo quasi mortuus*'.⁶⁵⁵ Neither the product of reason, nor academic debate, *sapientia nulliformis* is thus called darkness 'because it does not bear upon the intelligence' yet the soul

⁶⁵⁰ *SJIG.*, chap. 1, n. 15, p. 61.

⁶⁵¹ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 28 (V, p. 340).

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, n. 29.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, n. 31 (V, p. 341).

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid. Collations*, p. 37.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

is ‘supremely filled with light’.⁶⁵⁶ Beyond the reach of discursive reasoning, only the flame of *caritas* and the noetic longing of *cognitio saporativa* remains operative at this level.⁶⁵⁷ Thus, for Bonaventure the final end of theology is to be found in the silence of a decidedly non-rational ‘un-knowing’.⁶⁵⁸ As Cullen puts it, at this level of theological wisdom ‘the self is forgotten, and all curiosity and striving after knowledge are silenced: he [Bonaventure] therefore calls this wisdom a ‘certain learned ignorance’ (*quaedam ignorantia docta*)’.⁶⁵⁹

Section 5

4.6) *The Third Circle of Wisdom: The Knowledge of the Saints, Prophets and Mystics.*

Bonaventure begins his discussion of the next sphere of knowledge within the *hierarchia scientiarum* – the knowledge of grace or the ‘science of the saints’ – by emphasizing that it is not an acquired habit of cognition, but a special gift of revelation.⁶⁶⁰ Containing the fullness of the four different spheres of theological wisdom, the knowledge of grace, he tells us, elevates the minds of the saints, prophets, and mystics, so as to allow them to glimpse the eternal art.⁶⁶¹ To this extent, it stands “over and above” theological wisdom. It bestows upon those who receive it a foretaste of the fullness of revelation to be bestowed by the *lumen gloriae*. To this extent, founded upon the *affectus* of faith, rather than the *aspectus* of reason, the knowledge of

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 32 (V, p. 342).

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 30 (V, p. 341).

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, nn. 29-34 (V, pp. 341-2).

⁶⁵⁹ *Bon.*, p. 25. It is interesting to compare Bonaventure’s appetitive, non-intellectualist reading of mystical theology with the more “intellectualist” models offered by Albert the Great and Aquinas. Cf. Bernhard Blankenhorn, *The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas*.

⁶⁶⁰ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 20 (V, pp. 477-8).

⁶⁶¹ *Quaestiones de Prophetia*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 10vb; *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, p. 24).

grace is superior to philosophy, theology, and ordinary human learning, because, turning its back on empirical investigation, academic debate, and scholarly enquiry, it is devoted purely to the silent contemplation and loving adoration of the divine wisdom itself: *'ista scientia est veritatis ut credibilis et diligibilis notitia sancta'*.⁶⁶² Such silent adoration is the height of all wisdom *in istu statu*; and yet in the eyes of the *philosophi* and 'worldly men' who are infected with an unhealthy *curiositas* about creatures it appears foolish and stupid.⁶⁶³

Based upon the purest charity and love, and thus grounded in the sapid wisdom of the spiritual senses, the *sancti* thus possess nothing of the intellectual pride, curiosity, and restlessness which characterizes the philosophers.⁶⁶⁴ Indeed, in many cases they lack any academic learning at all – one need think only of the example of St. Francis; yet, like the simple *vetula*, the intensity of their *caritas* and their being gifted with the *dona* of *intellectus* and *sapientia* means that they know the world without need for academic pursuit or human instruction.⁶⁶⁵ Thus, whilst retaining the ability to acquire knowledge through sense experience, they resemble Christ more closely in their mode of reasoning than the rest of humanity.⁶⁶⁶ Possessing a similitude of the soul's original intellectual rectitude *ante lapsum*, they lack any unhealthy desire for scientific knowledge; and can, as such, like Adam, ascend to a mystical knowledge of God by perceiving His vestiges within creation. Furthermore, through glimpsing the eternal art, they are gifted with the *habitus* of prophecy since having beheld the *speculum aeternum* they understand not only the past and the present, but also the future as well.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶² *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 19 (V, p. 478).

⁶⁶³ *Hex.*, coll. 9, n. 29 (V, p. 29).

⁶⁶⁴ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 21 (V, p. 478).

⁶⁶⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 18, n. 26 (V, p. 418).

⁶⁶⁶ For Bonaventure the clearest example of the 'science of the saints' is St Francis. Cf. *Legenda Maior* in Ewert Cousins, trans. *Bonaventure: The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

⁶⁶⁷ *Quaestiones de Prophetia; Quaestiones de Divinatione*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 12rb; 31va, respectively.

Section 6

4.7) *The Fourth Circle of the Hierarchy of Knowledge: The Beatific Knowledge of the Angels and the Blessed.*

Let us now turn to those who enjoy the highest level of wisdom within the hierarchy of knowledge – i.e., the angels and the blessed in heaven who, gifted with the *lumen gloriae*, enjoy the beatific vision.

4.7.0) *The Knowledge of the Blessed.*

Given to the blessed, the beatific vision, as the innermost circle of created wisdom, and thus the center of the hierarchy of knowledge, consists of the removal of all created mediums, so that the soul, perfected through grace, and reunited with the body, can see God face-to-face.⁶⁶⁸

Through gazing upon the divine essence, the blessed, Bonaventure tells us, are infused with a level of knowledge which transcends all earthly forms of wisdom, including that possessed by the saints and mystics. Unlike the latter, however, they do not just glimpse the divine ideas, but instead are brought to perfect rest in God, where, through the deepest joy, they are united with Christ and behold the divine Word without the assistance of any medium.⁶⁶⁹ Moreover, like Christ, the blessed possess a two-fold beatific vision. They know the Word both as exemplar of finite creation and as expressive of God's infinite being. Insofar as the Word is the exemplar of creation, and thus limited, it is capable of total comprehension by the beatified

⁶⁶⁸ *Breviloquium*, pars. 7, chap. 7, n. 1. (V, pp. 288-9); *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 40rb-va.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

mind. As such, possessing an infused knowledge of all creatures, the blessed are reunited with the innate knowledge which they once possessed in Adam, albeit to a much fuller degree.

Filled with the complete knowledge of creation which the *lumen gloriae* brings, the beatified mind – once reunited with the flesh following the general resurrection – thus no longer acquires knowledge through empirical investigation, but like Christ merely experiences at the level of sensory perception that which it already knows to be true at the level of infused habit. Like all speculative knowledge, therefore, including theology, neither science nor philosophy will exist in heaven. The beatific vision is so perfect, Bonaventure tells us, that to glimpse it but once is to learn all things.⁶⁷⁰ Moreover, in comparison to it, the philosophy of Aristotle appears ‘pallid’ and ‘foolish’ (*stultitia*).⁶⁷¹

Nonetheless, whilst the blessed may possess a complete knowledge of the Word insofar as it is the exemplar of finite creation, they, like Christ, are unable to comprehend it as infinite, since even in beatitude the soul remains at the level of a limited creature. As a weak eye can perceive only part of a brilliant white light, so the beatified soul sees the infinity of the Word *totum sed non totaliter*.⁶⁷² To this extent, the soul’s interaction with the Word as infinite must be based upon love, not comprehension, since it is only through an ascent of the will that the soul can be united with the eternal and unlimited.⁶⁷³

4.7.1) *The Knowledge of the Angels.*

Sharing the *visio Dei* with the blessed are the angels, who, as pure spirits, Bonaventure tells us, resemble God more closely in their mode of being than any other creature. Composed of matter

⁶⁷⁰ *Sol.*, pars. 4, chap. 4, n. 24, p. 160.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷² *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 1, q. 2, resp. (III, p. 293).

⁶⁷³ In contrast to Aquinas, therefore, for Bonaventure the soul’s experience of beatitude is not primarily intellectual, but rather appetitive: ‘*unde patet, quod non est tota beatitudo in intellectiva*’. *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 29 (V, p. 341).

and form, the angels are organized into nine quires which subdivide into three groups corresponding to the different persons of the Trinity.

Regardless of their hierarchical status, each angel is endowed with a three-fold noetic vision: the knowledge of dusk, dawn, and daylight.⁶⁷⁴ Pertaining to creation, the innate reasoning of dawn and dusk bestow upon the angels a comprehensive knowledge of all created species.⁶⁷⁵ The knowledge of dawn, as the vision of the Word as the exemplar of finite creation, gifts the angels with a comprehensive understanding of all created beings as they stand within the eternal art. Whilst the inferior light of dusk allows the angels to perceive creatures within their particular species.⁶⁷⁶ The knowledge of dawn and dusk thus bestow upon the angelic mind a comprehensive understanding of all creation without ever having been subject to it.⁶⁷⁷

Operating purely at the level of the universal, the innate species possessed by the angels do not, however, confer upon them a direct knowledge of particulars. As such, to reach the knowledge of individual beings, the angels must combine the universal species which they possess, using their active and passive intellects, so as to arrive at the image of an individual, in the same way the human mind can combine what it knows about human beings in general to arrive at knowledge of a particular person.⁶⁷⁸ In this sense, resembling Christ's mind, whilst the angels are unable to acquire any new knowledge, they can, to a certain extent, "progress" in their cognition since they experience at a different level of consciousness that which they

⁶⁷⁴ *Breviloquium*, pars. 2, chap. 8, n. 2 (V, p. 225-6). For a comprehensive overview of Bonaventure's understanding of the angel's knowledge of dawn, daylight, and dusk, see Philip Lyndon Reynolds 'Threefold Existence and Illumination in Saint Bonaventure' *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1982), pp. 190-215, esp. 194-201.

⁶⁷⁵ *2 Sent.*, dist. 4, art. 3, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 132).

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, qq. 1-2 (II, pp. 130-5).

⁶⁷⁷ Through the eternal art, the angels not only understand the whole of creation but all that has existed in the past and all that will exist in the future.

⁶⁷⁸ *2 Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 2, art. 2, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 111).

already know to be true at the level of innate habit.⁶⁷⁹ In this respect the angels, like the blessed, are more conformed to Christ than the saints, prophets, and mystics are.

Superior to the knowledge of dawn and dusk, that of daylight is the infused knowledge of beatitude proper. Experienced by the angels confirmed in their goodness, this knowledge elevates the angelic mind through an ascent of love so as to behold God *facie ad faciem*. Apprehending the beatific vision through ecstatic self-transcendence, the angelic experience of beatitude is thus similar to that of the soul's in that it arises out of a movement of the will, that is to say, the affective potency, rather than the intellect. The angels, Bonaventure tells us, love God in Himself and do so above everything else.⁶⁸⁰ It is this unadulterated love for the God-head which aids the angels in achieving such a perfect vision of the divine essence.

Although resembling God in their mode of being more closely than any other creature, as created intelligences the angels are, like Christ and the beatified human soul, nonetheless unable to comprehend the beatific vision in its entirety, seeing it only *totum sed non totaliter*.⁶⁸¹ Nonetheless, Bonaventure maintains that at the level of their cognition of the Word as infinite, the angels – again like Christ – are able to make progress in terms of their wonder and love for God. For like the human soul, whilst the angelic intellect is finite its capacity to transcend itself through love, and, in turn, to be loved by God, is limitless.

Again, as with Christ's knowledge and his hierarchical division of the human soul's cognitive faculties, Bonaventure envisages the threefold hierarchy of the angelic intelligence as operating according to a series of concentric circles.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. *Philosophy*, p. 258.

⁶⁸⁰ *2 Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 2, art. 2, d. (II, p. 114).

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*

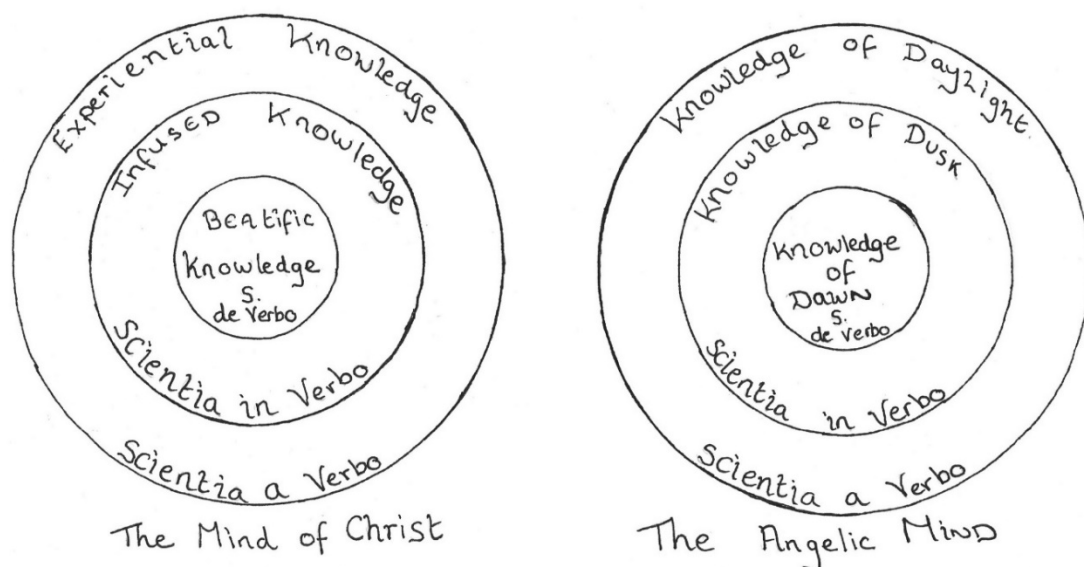


Figure 20

From this we can see that there is a notable degree of similarity between the circular hierarchy of the angelic intelligence and the various degrees of noetic found within Christ's soul.

Section 7

4.8) *Christ the Centre and Exemplar of the Hierarchy of Knowledge: Towards a New Reading of Bonaventure's Theory of Reduction and his Circular Hierarchical Organization of Created Wisdom.*

Having outlined Bonaventure's circular *hierarchia scientiarum*, it remains now to show how each aspect of it, and thereby the hierarchy as a whole, is to be retraced back to Christ's mind as its center and *causa formalis*. To understand Bonaventure's logic, it is necessary to recall his conviction that Christ's mind is endowed with the totality of created wisdom, ranging from sensory experience to beatitude; and that it is, as such, the measure of all human noetic. Christ,

Bonaventure repeatedly tells us, is the *magister scientiarum*.⁶⁸² It is he who gives certainty in each of the sciences and it is to him that the wise look to for their knowledge: ‘from him come forth documents of the greatest certainty and celebrity by which we need to be taught’.⁶⁸³

When we compare the four-fold hierarchy of Christ’s knowledge, particularly as described in the *Breviloquium*, with the four-fold hierarchy of knowledge which Bonaventure perceives to be at work within creation, we see, or so it would seem, a correspondence. Most of the different spheres of knowledge within the hierarchy of sciences find expression within, or at the very least find a point of parallel with, Christ’s mind. As the images below reveal, when placed next to one another the two circular hierarchies bear a notable resemblance in terms of their basic content and structure.

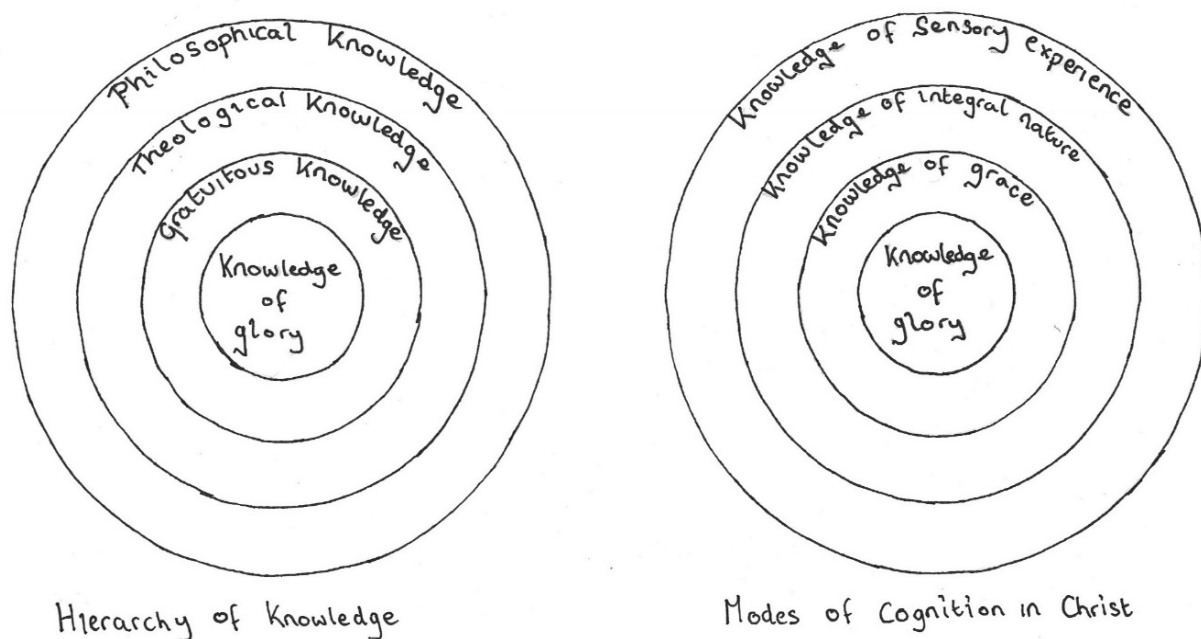


Figure 21

As will be made clear, whilst there is a parallel between Christ’s sensory reason and philosophy as an academic science, the latter cannot claim the former as its

⁶⁸² *Hex.*, coll. 1 (V, pp. 329-35).

⁶⁸³ *Collations*, coll. 3, n. 15, p. 50.

exemplar because Christ knew nothing of the acquired knowledge of fallen reason. Crucially, however, as we have already touched upon, Christian philosophy can find some reconciliation with the hierarchy of knowledge through its submission to the *lumen fidei*. As such, the sphere of philosophical knowledge in the diagram above pertains to Christian, rather than pagan, philosophy.

Viewed from this perspective, it begins to become clear how for Bonaventure each sphere of wisdom within the hierarchy of knowledge finds its origin and explanation within Christ's mind. The four ascending spheres of noetic are structured in terms of their significance according to the way they are prioritized within Christ's mind. As such, the primacy of certain sciences over others, such as the supremacy of theology over philosophy, finds its explanation within the fact that within Christ's mind revelation is favoured over sense experience.

From the above, it also becomes clear how Christ's mind functions as the exemplar of the hierarchy of knowledge as a whole and serves as its underlying principle of coherence and certainty. Each of the sciences within the hierarchy, ranging from the mechanical arts to the beatific vision, finds its formal cause within Christ's mind. Moreover, as the model of perfection, his noetic critically determines the scope and content of each, as well as their limits and objectives. To recall our earlier example, Christ is the intellectual sun around which the different sciences revolve and look to for cognitive illumination.⁶⁸⁴

To appreciate the significance of this, and how, in turn, it shapes Bonaventure's understanding of philosophy's status as an academic *scientia*, it is necessary to demonstrate how, and to what extent, each of the four different spheres of knowledge found in the *hierarchia scientiarum* find their fullest expression within Christ's noetic. Central to achieving this goal is Bonaventure's belief that Christ's mind was endowed with the fullness of each of the

⁶⁸⁴ *Magister*. (IX, pp. 441-2).

different spheres of wisdom within the *hierarchia* and is the axis from which they proceed: ‘*sic ab uno Magistro, Christo, sole spirituali, multiformes et diversae scientiae procedunt*’.⁶⁸⁵

However, as we will see, there is one sphere of noetic within the hierarchy of knowledge which fails to find expression within Christ’s mind, and thus cannot claim him as its exemplar – i.e., that of philosophy. Knowing nothing of the acquired, sensory reason which underpins philosophical speculation, Christ does not serve as the *causa formalis* of philosophy. *Philosophia* and acquired knowledge it will be recalled – identified as they are with *homo lapsus* – are alien to Christ; and cannot, as such, find authorship in his soul.

Let us now consider how the different spheres of knowledge within the hierarchy of sciences are to be retraced back to Christ as their formal cause. Recalling what was said in the first chapter, it seems appropriate to begin with Christ’s beatific knowledge, since, as his highest form of human learning, it was this which was responsible for illuminating his mind with the fullness of his lower modes of reasoning.

4.8.0) *Christ the Exemplar of Beatific Knowledge – Retracing the Fourth Circle of Wisdom Back to Christ.*

As will be recalled, Christ’s union with the Word meant that his mind enjoyed ‘the most intimate relationship possible with the eternal Word’ and, as such, possessed the fullest expression of both kinds of beatific knowledge.⁶⁸⁶ As we saw in the second chapter, Christ’s mind knew the Word both as the exemplar of finite creation and as expressive of God’s infinite being. Insofar as the Word is the archetype of creation, and thus finite and capable of total comprehension by the human mind, his intellect was endowed with a full and actual knowledge of it, superior that of any angel or beatified soul. This is so, it will be recalled, because the

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.* (IX, p. 442).

⁶⁸⁶ *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6, n. 1 (V, p. 246).

proximity of his mind to the Word meant that it perceived the Word more clearly than any other creature.⁶⁸⁷ Similarly, Christ's vision of the Word as infinite was also unsurpassed, since although as finite his mind – like that of any other human being – could not comprehend the infinity of the Word itself, his ability to apprehend it through ecstatic self-transcendence, or some infused habit of grace, is beyond measure.⁶⁸⁸ Christ, according to Bonaventure, was thus blessed with the fullness of both modes of the *visio Dei*.

As such his intellect is not just the measure all beatific knowledge – including that of the angels – but the model and horizon against which all other creaturely experiences of beatitude, human and angelic alike, are to be viewed.⁶⁸⁹ The beatitude enjoyed by the angels and the blessed, is thus merely a reflection of, and in some respects a noetic participation in, Christ's own beatific knowledge.⁶⁹⁰ Thus, each of the blessed, Bonaventure tells us, enjoys beatitude insofar as their own beatific knowledge is a *similitudo* of Christ's own perfect beatific vision. To this extent, the blessed and the angels are said to enjoy the *visio Dei* in light of Christ's beatific cognition. Moreover, their experience of the *lumen gloriae* is not only modelled on Christ's own experience of it, but actively enhanced by it. Thus, commenting on the nature of beatitude in his *Soliloquium*, Bonaventure remarks 'through the holy and perfect bond of love, everyone will possess in the other whatever happiness he may be lacking in himself'.⁶⁹¹ All, in effect, shall share in Christ's perfect beatitude.

⁶⁸⁷ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 7, resp. (V, pp. 39-40); *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 2, q. 3, resp. (III, pp. 308-9).

⁶⁸⁸ *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6, n. 5 (V, p. 247); cf. *De Scientia Christi*, q. 7, resp. (V, pp. 39-40).

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁰ *Sol.*, chap 4, n. 15, p. 148.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*

4.8.1) *Christ the Exemplar of the Knowledge of Grace – Retracing the Third Circle of Wisdom Back to Christ.*

As will also be recalled, on account of his beatific knowledge, Christ was also endowed with the fullness of the knowledge of grace, enjoyed by the saints, prophets, and mystics.⁶⁹² Comprehending the *speculum mentis Dei* more clearly than they, Christ not only understood the truths of scripture, salvation, and revelation to a much fuller degree, but he also possessed the fullness of the ability to ascend to God by means of ecstatic rapture and the study of His created vestiges.⁶⁹³ Thus, whatever the saints, prophets, and mystics may have glimpsed through divine revelation or prophetic insight, Christ saw first and far more clearly. Through his superior beatific knowledge, he beheld the eternal mirror to a far greater degree than they. As such, he knew ‘all things related to the salvation of the human race’ and he ‘knew everything that had to do with our redemption, and he knew it far better and more completely than did any prophet or even any angel’.⁶⁹⁴ Endowed with the fullness of the ‘science of the saints’ Christ’s mind is thus said to be the *principium* and formal cause of the knowledge of grace. The knowledge of the saints, prophets, and mystics, Bonaventure remarks, is thus little more than a reflection of, and noetic participation in, Christ’s own gratuitous knowledge.⁶⁹⁵ ‘For stars’ he tells us ‘are nothing when compared to the sun’.⁶⁹⁶

4.8.2) *Christ the Exemplar of Theological Wisdom – Retracing the Second Circle of Wisdom Back to Christ.*

⁶⁹² *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 2, q. 2, resp. (III, p. 304).

⁶⁹³ *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6, n. 6 (V, p. 247).

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 3, nn. 14-16 (V, pp. 345-6); cf. *Delorme*, principium, coll. 3, nn. 14-16, pp. 39-40.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, coll. 18, n. 9 (V, p. 416); *Collations*, p. 271.

Illuminated by his beatific and gratuitous knowledge, Christ was likewise endowed with the fullness of the four different levels of theological wisdom. Paradoxically, however, it is through his innate – rather than his infused – noetic that Christ’s mind functions as the exemplar of theological wisdom. Where in *homo lapsus* theological wisdom is an infused gift of grace designed to restore the mind’s original rectitude, in Christ this is not the case. On account of his innate knowledge of all created species, and his higher beatific *visio Verbi* Christ, or so it would seem, did not need the gift of faith for he could ascend to the knowledge of God through the cognition of the latent species impressed upon his intellect. Counterintuitive as this may be – how, it could be asked, can Christ’s innate noetic be the exemplar of fallen humanity’s infused light of faith? – it needs to be viewed in light of the latter’s fallen state and the disruptive effect which sin has had on the original schema of the hierarchy of knowledge. Where Christ, like Adam, could study the eternal art through reason alone, the soul of *homo lapsus* has lost this ability, since deformed by the fall, its innate light of cognition is no longer sufficient to lead it to God. As such, it is dependent upon the infused *lumen fidei* to restore something of the innate wisdom which it once possessed in innocence. Thus, what Christ and Adam knew through innate knowledge, the fallen mind perceives through the prompting of revelation.

4.8.3) Christ the Exemplar of Sense Experience – Philosophy the Discipline without an Exemplar.

By far the most significant exemplary relationship between Christ’s mind and the hierarchy of knowledge is Christ’s role as the exemplar of sense experience, more specifically the question of how he “progressed” in his knowledge by engaging with creation. Operative at two distinct levels, and thus more complex than the preceding phases of wisdom, Christ’s relationship with sensory reason is determined by his inability to acquire any new knowledge through empirical

investigation. Christ, it will be recalled, did not learn anything new through sensory perception and the abstraction of intelligible species; instead, he merely experienced at the level of actual knowledge and his sensitive soul that which he already knew at the level of latent habit.⁶⁹⁷

As such, whilst Christ is rightly called the exemplar of sensory knowledge this is true only insofar as sense cognition is understood in terms of that type of sense cognition which was experienced by Adam *ante lapsum*.⁶⁹⁸ Consequently, Christ cannot be the exemplar of the empirical knowledge experienced by humanity *post lapsum*.⁶⁹⁹ As the second chapter explained, possessed of an infused knowledge of all created species, the Incarnate Word knew nothing of the acquired knowledge of empirical investigation, since the latter ‘because of its imperfection (*propter imperfectionem*)’ is ‘improper’ for him.⁷⁰⁰ A product of the mind’s loss of innocence, the ability to learn through sense experience thus falls outside the scope of Christ’s knowledge and thus cannot claim him as its author.

Not surprisingly, this has significant implications for philosophy and its academic status as a science. As the science of acquired knowledge *par excellence*, philosophy – be it rational, natural or moral – is grounded in a noetic method and process of cognition which is diametrically opposed to the one perfected by Christ. This, of course also includes, metaphysics, the most noble of the philosophical *scientiae*, as well as the lower mechanical arts, which, as scripture makes clear, are also a product of the fall (Gen. 2: 17-19). As such, philosophy *tout court* in Bonaventure’s opinion falls outside the *hierarchia scientiarum* which the *mens Christi* has authored. To this extent it is not only a discipline without an exemplar, but a wholly false *scientia*. It represents an illegitimate form of academic enquiry; one which arose as a consequence of human disobedience and sin, rather than divine volition.

⁶⁹⁷ *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 6, n. 3 (V, p. 246); cf. *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, resp. (III, p. 316).

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (V, p. 247).

⁶⁹⁹ *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, ad. 3 (III, p. 316).

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

4.9) *Conclusion: Christ, Philosophy and the Hierarchy of Knowledge – Aristotle
Condemned?*

This of course poses a serious problem: If all philosophy is alien to Christ and the noetic hierarchy which his intellect defines, how then can Bonaventure claim that certain strands of it can be used within a Christian context? It seems highly counter-intuitive to say that an inherently illicit *scientia* – whose origins are to be found in the corruption of humanity – is to be incorporated within the economy of Christian wisdom and used to serve the soul's noetic *regressus* back to Christ. To understand this paradox we need to recall Bonaventure's distinction between Christian and non-Christian philosophy. The first it will be recalled is that philosophy which submits to the teachings of faith and, through its confessing of its intellectual poverty, willingly places Christ at its center and looks to him as its illuminative horizon and guiding principle. The second, by contrast, is that philosophy which rejects the *lumen Christi* and thus remains constrained within the limits of fallen reason. The first, to put it baldly, seeks reconciliation with Christ's noetic and confesses him as the exemplar of the *ordo scientiarum* and the *principium* of all true wisdom; the second, by contrast, ignores him. For Bonaventure, it is this difference in attitude towards Christ's exemplary authority which explains how some manifestations of philosophy can be licit whilst others remain entirely condemned.

a) *Christian Philosophy – The Penitent Sinner.*

On account of the fact that it actively acknowledges and confesses Christ as the sole illuminating exemplar of all creaturely noetic, Christian philosophy, Bonaventure tells us, actively seeks *reconciliatio* with the correct *ordo scientiarum*. Like a penitent sinner, it confesses its own

noetic poverty and thus openly recognizes that the pathway to certainty and contemplative rectitude lies not within itself; nor indeed in the *doctrinae philosophorum*; but rather in the noetic hierarchy authored by Christ's mind. As such, even though it cannot claim Christ as its exemplar, this version of *philosophia* nonetheless petitions Christ to be its master and looks to him for illumination. Renouncing the *lignum scientiae boni and mali*, it – resembling the Magdalene – casts itself at Christ's feet and resolves itself to serve the noetic economy which his intellect defines.⁷⁰¹ It does so, as we have seen, by offering to aid the soul as it ascends the hierarchy of knowledge and strives to recover its identity as *imago Christi*. As a result, Christian philosophy is gifted with the *ignis caritatis* and *dona Spiritus*; and is, in turn, as a sign of divine mercy, taken up into the economy of graced learning. It is, in effect, “baptized” by the *lumen fidei*. Thus, despite his assertions about *philosophia* being an essentially illicit discipline, we thus see that Bonaventure is nonetheless very clear that through its willingness to accept Christ's stabilizing noetic, Christian philosophy achieves some form of *rapprochement* with the *verus ordo scientiarum*. Moreover by doing so, it renders itself a provisionally “licit” *scientia*; one which can be legitimately appropriated by Christians.

b) *Pagan Philosophy – The Unrepentent Sinner.*

By contrast, pagan philosophy, Bonaventure tells us, attempts to foster no such reconciliation with Christ's mind; nor, as such, does it ever enjoy the supernatural assistance bestowed upon its Christian counterpart. Instead, ignorant of the *lumen revelationis* – and therefore unaware of Christ's archetypal authority and the soul's noetic poverty – it dwells entirely outside the legitimate *hierarchia scientiarum*. Moreover, it makes no apology for doing so.⁷⁰² Mistaking

⁷⁰¹ *Comm. Luc.*, chap. 7, nn. 65, 71 (VII, p. 183, 185).

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, nn. 9-11.

the soul's current status as a *tabula rasa* to be natural to its identity and indicative of its true noetic potential, it proffers the lie that the unaided intellect is capable of achieving infallible knowledge about God and creation *sine fide*. Indeed, it even goes so far as to claim that *philosophia* alone leads to *beatitudo*.⁷⁰³ To this extent, the pagan philosophers fell foul of the sin of idolatry.⁷⁰⁴ Their “science” breaks the first commandment.⁷⁰⁵ For it takes the “wisdom” of their own fallen minds rather than the perfect noetic of the *mens Christi* to be the archetype of the *ordo scientiarum*. As such, the hierarchy of sciences which the *philosophi* proffer not only exists outside the true *hierarchia*, but it offers a sinful alternative to it; one which leads the soul away from Christ rather than towards him. Akin to a noetic tower of Babel, their “science” is thus the product of their own sinful divising and not the divine volition.⁷⁰⁶ As such, it cannot be incorporated within the economy of graced noetic; and nor, therefore, can it be used to restore the *imago Christi*. Unrepentant of its sin, it is a wholly illicit *scientia*. Thus, like the Pharisees who mocked the Magdalene for her desire to reconcile herself to Christ, pagan philosophy is the unrepentant *peccatrix* who refuses to listen to the wisdom of Christ.⁷⁰⁷

c) *Aristotelianism – The Illegitimate Scientia Philosophiae Par Excellence.*

The fullest expression of this perversion, however, Bonaventure tells us, is to be found in the *scientia Aristotelis*. The philosophy of unaided reason *par excellence*, Aristotelianism, illustrates most clearly how pagan philosophy, through its illicit celebration of sensory reason, departs from the noetic hierarchy defined by Christ's mind. Moreover, it offers clearest witness as to how the “science” of the *philosophi* serves to lead the soul astray. Through its prioritizing

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, nn. 2-6.

⁷⁰⁴ *De Decem Praeceptis*, coll. 2, nn. 24-25. (V, p. 514).

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁷ *Comm. Luc.*, chap. 7, n. 71 (VII, p. 185).

of a purely naturalistic reading of the *liber naturae* and its promotion of the grave errors which arise from this false logic – i.e., the denial of exemplarism, the eternity of the world, and the doctrine of monopsychism – it compounds the error of Adam by idolizing *curiositas* at the expense of wisdom. Thus, it is in the *scientia Aristotelis* that the poison of the *lignum scientiae boni and mali* finds its true fruition. Whilst some of the *philosophi* possessed a degree of metaphysical acuity through their adherence to the doctrine of exemplarism, Aristotle – through his renunciation of this key feature of human noetic – nonetheless fell headlong into darkness. He thus constructed a thoroughly dangerous *philosophia*; one which encourages the soul to eat again of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* and thereby further distort its identity as *imago Christi*. The true deception of the ‘obscurities of Egypt’, Aristotle’s philosophy thus illustrates most clearly the folly of unaided *philosophia* and the noetic darkness which it bestows.⁷⁰⁸

4.10) *Final Remarks.*

By way of conclusion therefore it is clear that from the perspective of Bonaventure’s Christocentric hierarchy of knowledge, Aristotelianism, as a distinct, independent philosophical worldview is a doctrine condemned. Fundamentally irreconcilable with Christian thought on account of its assault upon the exemplary authority of Christ’s mind and its subsequent inversion of the *hierarchia scientiarum*, Aristotle’s philosophy cannot be saved through faith. As we have seen, it is a science inconsistent with both the truths of reason and those of revelation. Nonetheless, the present chapter has revealed a more positive, more nuanced attitude towards philosophy and natural reason in general than is found in Bonaventure’s theology of the soul. Bonaventure’s hierarchical organization of human knowledge, as we have seen, permits some form of *rapprochement* between philosophy and

⁷⁰⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 8. (V, p. 367).

the truths of faith. Thus, whilst Aristotelianism, like all, non-Christian philosophy, may be a doctrine condemned, to Bonaventure's mind, philosophy – in itself at least – is capable of being redeemed and claimed as part of Christian learning, provided, of course, that it accepts the *lumen fidei* and is purged of error through *caritas*. Thus, a truth central to the next two chapters, for Bonaventure the question of judging Aristotle is not about condemning philosophy itself, but rather distinguishing “good philosophy” from “bad philosophy”. As water can be turned into wine, so philosophy, or so it would seem, can be rendered “licit” through faith.

Chapter 5

Aristotle, Salvation History, and the Age of Earthly Beatitude – Christ the Exemplar of God’s Self-Revelation in History.

‘Propositum igitur nostrum est ostendere, quod in Christus sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae Dei absconditi, et ipse est medium omnium scientiarum’.

- Bonaventure, *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 11, (V, p. 331).

5.0) Introduction.

In light of the preceding discussions of Bonaventure’s writings on Christ’s knowledge, and his interpretation of how the Incarnate Word is the exemplar of both the human soul and the hierarchy of knowledge, it remains to critically assess, in this the penultimate chapter of this thesis, the extent to which Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s intellect can be used as an interpretative tool for specific examples of his anti-Aristotelianism. To achieve this goal, the current chapter offers a detailed analysis of Bonaventure’s final and most anti-Aristotelian work: the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. Through discussing this much neglected, much misunderstood work it demonstrates how far from a random, purely reactionary text which critiques Aristotelianism by simply dismissing it on a purely philosophical level or condemning it as an intellectual aberration – as many scholars have been minded to view it – the *Hexaemeron*, and thereby the scathing critique of Aristotelianism it contains, is in fact an outworking and product of Bonaventure’s theology of Christ’s noetic.

Largely overlooked, how this is so only becomes apparent when the *Hexaemeron* is viewed in relation to Bonaventure’s earlier writings on Christ’s knowledge; specifically, the primacy which they attribute to Christ’s mind as the universal exemplar of all human knowledge. As will be seen, once viewed from this perspective, the *Hexaemeron* appears

neither as a simple continuation of Bonaventure's earlier thought on Christ's knowledge; nor, indeed, as another attempt on his behalf to revisit the precise nature of Christ's cognition which had so vexed him in his youth. Rather it represents, or so I shall argue, the concrete realization and definitive expression of his longstanding belief that the mind of the Incarnate Word is the primordial archetype of the three constituent elements of human noetic; namely, the human soul, the hierarchy of knowledge, and, finally, the narrative of God's self-revelation in history. Marking the high point of Bonaventure's Christ-centred theological and philosophical vision, the *Hexaameron* is, in other words, his last, greatest, and most comprehensive treatment of Christ's knowledge. It is his lost text on the knowledge of Christ.

Based upon this conviction, the chapter considers four of the most polemical biblical images which the *Hexaameron* uses to critique Aristotelianism. Namely, those of philosophy as: Pharaoh's magician, the beast from the abyss, harlot, and, finally, the doomed vessels of gold and silver. Through considering these images in light of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge, its aim is to show how each of them – despite having relatively little in common on first inspection – are indicative of a subtle, yet important, change which has taken place within Bonaventure's mature thought. One whereby Aristotelianism is no longer seen as a mere threat to the primacy of Christ's mind as the universal archetype of all human learning – as was the case in Bonaventure's early works on Christ's noetic – but rather as an eschatological phenomenon heralding the Anti-Christ and the final destruction of the divinely organized schema of human knowledge. To demonstrate how this is so, the chapter reads the *Hexaameron's* distinctive interpretation of salvation history in light of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic. As far as I can see, no other scholar has adopted this approach.

Through critically appropriating the seminal work of Joseph Ratzinger, it demonstrates how, for the mature Bonaventure, history culminates in a titanic battle between the church and the Anti-Christ; one in which unaided reason (*philosophia*) will attempt to overthrow the

primacy of theology by maintaining that Aristotle, and not Christ, represents the perfect expression of all created wisdom. This, Bonaventure tells us, is the supreme crisis of history: when the fallen reason of the Anti-Christ – the distorted knowledge of peripatetic philosophy – will overthrow, albeit temporarily, the perfect wisdom of the Incarnate Word and establish itself as the “exemplar” or ‘*regula in natura*’ of all human learning. Following this period, however, the Anti-Christ, and indeed all natural reason and *philosophia*, will be destroyed and a new, final age of peace, revelation and *beatitudo* will begin here on earth.

It is at this point that a truly radical element emerges within Bonaventure’s thought; one that has been entirely overlooked and which serves to make his apocalyptic speculation far more innovative – and potentially far more dangerous – than anything that his contemporaries proffered. In short, Bonaventure speculates that during this final *aetas pacis* the current pact between *fides* and *ratio* will not only come to an end, but that the soul – even though still *in via* – will be gifted with the beatific vision itself. This is so because the soul’s exemplary likeness to Christ will be realized in full. Through a final super-abundant pouring forth of the Spirit, the soul will be gifted with a truly Christ-like mind. It will possess not only the innate knowledge of all creatures such as it once enjoyed in Adam – as well as the infused knowledge of all spiritual truths given to the saints, prophets, and mystics – but also the *lumen gloriae* itself. Thus, just as Christ himself did in the wayfaring state, the human beings of the last days will gaze directly upon the divine ideas *in Verbo* and thus know all things prior to any act of sense experience or deliberation. According to the *Hexaemeron*, the bestowal of the *visio Dei* is thus something which is to be realized prior to the general resurrection.

It is important to note that, despite its deeply polemical, eschatologically charged critique of Aristotelianism, the *Hexaemeron* does not – with regards to the current, penultimate age of history at least – reject all natural reason; nor, indeed, does it reject philosophy or Aristotle’s teachings *tout court*. Instead, like Bonaventure’s earlier works on Christ’s noetic, it

merely seeks to show how, prior to the restoration of the soul's exemplary likeness to Christ, the only form of natural reason acceptable to the Christian is that which submits itself to the tutelage of theology and allows itself to be reconciled with the divinely organized schema of human learning – this, of course, is “Christian philosophy”. Any philosophy which rejects the illumination of faith – i.e. Aristotelianism – stands outside the economy of salvation and is thus precluded from the narrative of redemption. Fundamental to understanding this distinction between “sacred” and “profane” philosophy, is the eschatological significance which the *Hexaemeron* attributes to Radical Aristotelianism and events within the Paris Arts Faculty.

As will be seen, for the mature Bonaventure peripatetic philosophy has – under the guise of the Faculty of Arts's attempt to establish the absolute autonomy of reason – revealed itself to be an apocalyptic event in the here and now. Through its belief in the autonomy of reason, it has begun the process whereby the Anti-Christ will overthrow the church and usher in the Last Days by establishing his own false reasoning as the *causa formalis* of all human learning. It is important to note, however, that the emergence of this eschatological consciousness within the *Hexaemeron* does not represent a radical departure from Bonaventure's earlier thought on Christ's knowledge. Nor, indeed, is it an unexpected development of his critique of Aristotelianism. Rather, as will be seen, it merely clarifies and brings to the fore an eschatological dimension already latent within Bonaventure's thought. Perfecting his earlier speculation on Christ's knowledge, the *Hexaemeron*, in effect, brings to completion the eschatological reading of Aristotelianism which was begun – at least at a seminal level – within the *Sentences Commentary*, *De Scientia Christi*, and *Breviloquium*.

5.1) Structure.

The chapter divides as follows. **(1)** First, a detailed discussion of the *Hexaemeron*'s structure and methodology is given, focusing particularly upon existing interpretations of the text. **(2)**

Next, a detailed discussion of the *Hexaemeron*'s introductory sermon is offered with the aim of demonstrating how – once viewed through the lens of Bonaventure's earlier thought on Christ's knowledge – it, and thereby the following collations, are seen to be an outworking of the Seraphic Doctor's belief that Christ's mind is the universal exemplar of human knowledge. (3) Then a detailed analysis of the *Hexaemeron*'s interpretation of salvation history is outlined, paying particular attention to the eschatological significance which it attributes to Aristotelianism and the concept of a final age of peace. Here the chapter builds upon, and rehabilitates, the work Ratzinger. (4) Finally, attention turns to considering some of the apocalyptic images the *Hexaemeron* employs in its anti-Aristotelian narrative and how these find their explanation within Bonaventure's doctrine of Christ's noetic.

5.2) *The Hexaemeron – Bonaventure's Final Work.*

Before any assessment of the *Hexaemeron*'s critique of Aristotelianism can be given, it is necessary to consider how the text stands apart, both in terms of logic and style, from Bonaventure's earlier academic works.

Section 1

5.2.0) *The Collationes in Hexaemeron – The Final Bonaventurian Synthesis.*

Often regarded as the fullest expression of Bonaventure's theological vision, the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* as his last work is a collection of extended sermons – 'collationes' – on the six days of creation. These were delivered in Paris between Easter and Pentecost 1273 in the presence of 'some one hundred and sixty friars'.⁷⁰⁹ Surviving in two extant manuscript traditions, "A" and "B", both of which are *reportatio*, the *Hexaemeron* was left incomplete on

⁷⁰⁹ Cf. *Delorme*, epilogue, p. 275.

account of Bonaventure's elevation to the Cardinalate in May 1273 and his sudden death the following year. Developing the already significantly expanded anti-Aristotelianism found in the earlier *Collations de Decem Praeceptis* (c. 1268) and *Collations de Septem Donis* (c. 1269), the *Hexaameron* differs greatly in its language, structure, and style from Bonaventure's earlier "scholastic" works.⁷¹⁰ Whilst possessing a rigorously systematic nature, it discards the close dialectic argumentation of the *Sentence Commentary* and *De Scientia Christi*, as well as the carefully structured language of the *Breviloquium*, in favour of the much more symbolic, poetic, and polemical style of reasoning typical of high medieval preaching. Here Bonaventure employs biblical imagery and mystical rhetoric, rather than close scholastic argument, to express his theological vision and critique his opponents.

Subsequently, the *Hexaameron* does not, for the most part, name those whom it critiques – the notable exception in this respect is Aristotle himself.⁷¹¹ Instead, it uses biblical imagery to typecast them as assailants of sound Christian doctrine.⁷¹² Decoding this biblical symbolism is thus not only fundamental to understanding the argument of the *Hexaameron* itself, and the important light which it has to shed on how Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason evolved during his final years, but it is the failure to do so which has fuelled – and in many respects frustrated – much of the debate as to the precise nature and meaning of the *Hexaameron*. The *Hexaameron*, in effect, remains one of the last great uncharted wildernesses of Bonaventure's thought. It is truly *terra nova*.

5.2.1) *The Structure of the Hexaameron: The Seven Days of Creation.*

⁷¹⁰ For examples of the anti-Aristotelianism of these earlier *collationes* see: *De Septem Donis*, coll. 8, nn. 16-20 (V, pp. 497-8); *De Decem Praeceptis*, coll. 2, n. 28 (V, p. 315).

⁷¹¹ Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 6, nn. 2-4 (V, pp. 360-1); *Delorme*, vis. 1, coll. 3, nn. 2-5, pp. 91-2.

⁷¹² *Infra*.

Although consisting of over twenty collations, the *Hexaemeron*, in the incomplete form in which it has been handed down to us, consists of five extended sermons; each of which – excluding the first sermon – correspond to one of the first four days of creation as narrated in Genesis.⁷¹³ The missing sermons, Bonaventure tells us, would have corresponded to the fifth, sixth, and seventh days of creation, respectively.⁷¹⁴ Following the first sermon (collations 1-3), which outlines the aims, methodology, and structure of the text, the *Hexaemeron* proceeds on the assumption that each of the seven days of creation represent a different level of knowledge possessed by the soul as it ascends to God. Thus, the first vision (collations 4-8) corresponds to the first day of creation – the separation of light from darkness – and discusses the most basic form of human knowledge: the ‘innate light’ of natural reason.⁷¹⁵ The second vision (collations 9-12) – the formation of the firmament and the separation of the waters on the second day – relates to the illumination of the intellect through the gift of faith.⁷¹⁶ The third vision (collations 13-19) – the creation of dry land on the third day – expounds the knowledge which is offered through scripture.⁷¹⁷ Whilst, the fourth vision (collations 20-23) – the creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day – discusses the knowledge which is achieved through the silence of contemplation; this marks the end of the text in its incomplete form.⁷¹⁸ The fifth, sixth, and seventh visions – the final three days of creation, i.e. the formation of the birds, man, and the day of rest – would have discussed the knowledge of prophecy, rapture, and glory, respectively.⁷¹⁹ Lastly, Bonaventure adds there is the final perfect knowledge of the eighth day⁷²⁰: the ‘knowledge of peace’.⁷²¹ This runs concurrent with, and permeates, the

⁷¹³ That is to say, each of the twenty-three collations make up five extended sermons.

⁷¹⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 3, nn. 29-31 (V, pp. 347-8).

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 25 (V, p. 347).

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 26.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 27.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 28.

⁷¹⁹ *Supra.*

⁷²⁰ Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 31 (V, p. 348).

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*

knowledge of glory found in the seventh stage of wisdom. However, it will only be realized in full when humanity passes into the eternal Kingdom of God.

The structure of the *Hexaemeron* can thus be expressed as follows:

DAY	COLLATION	ACT OF CREATION	VISION
FIRST DAY	4—8	CREATION OF LIGHT	NATURAL REASON
SECOND DAY	9—12	SEPARATION OF THE WATERS	FAITH
THIRD DAY	13—19	CREATION OF DRY LAND	SCRIPTURE
FOURTH DAY	20—23	CREATION OF THE SUN, MOON AND STARS	CONTEMPLATION
FIFTH DAY	NOT PRODUCED	CREATION OF THE BIRDS	PROPHECY
SIXTH DAY	NOT PRODUCED	CREATION OF MAN	RAPTURE
SEVENTH AND EIGHTH DAYS	NOT PRODUCED	DAY OF REST	GLORY ETERNAL BEATITUDE

Figure 22

5.2.2) *Existing Interpretations of the Hexaemeron – A Treatise on Eschatology or a Plea for Franciscan Unity?*

Whilst the majority of studies on Bonaventure's thought draw upon the *Hexaemeron*, few discuss the text as an independent whole. Besides its complex, unfinished nature, this is largely

due to its symbolic, often elusive style of reasoning.⁷²² As Hughes notes, ‘one of the principal challenges of reading Bonaventure’s *Collationes* is deciding exactly what one is reading’.⁷²³ Despite the early studies of Tavard which sought to explain Bonaventure’s thought, in particular the *Hexaemeron*, as an attempt to demonstrate the primacy of Christian Neo-Platonism over the naturalistic outlook of Aristotelianism, the majority of scholars have followed the distinctly “Joachite” interpretation of Bonaventure’s thought offered by Ratzinger in his influential study *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*.⁷²⁴ Here the *Hexaemeron* – although still understood as a work preoccupied with the challenge posed by Aristotelianism – is primarily viewed as an attempt to articulate an orthodox theology of history, in the face of the “heterodox” understanding of time outlined by Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202).

According to Ratzinger, the *Hexaemeron* represents a concerted effort to reinterpret a Joachite theory of history into a more orthodox Christian framework so as to explain the rise of Aristotelianism and reveal it to be an apocalyptic phenomenon. Thus, to Ratzinger’s mind, the *Hexaemeron* is pertinent to Bonaventure’s thought on Aristotelianism and philosophy, but *only* to the extent that the latter pertains to the more fundamental question of how he views salvation history. As will be seen, this is something which this study takes issue with. Echoes of Ratzinger’s position are to be found in Reeves,⁷²⁵ McGinn,⁷²⁶ Daniel,⁷²⁷ and Delio.⁷²⁸

⁷²² As C. Colt Anderson notes, ‘reading them is akin to entering another world drawn along entirely different premises than our own’. *A Call to Piety*, p. vi.

⁷²³ Kevin Hughes, ‘St. Bonaventure’s *Collationes* in *Hexaemeron*: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse’, *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005), pp. 107-29, esp. pp.107-9.

⁷²⁴ *Supra*.

⁷²⁵ *Influence*, pp. 179-81.

⁷²⁶ McGinn confesses himself in ‘substantial, if not total agreement’ with Ratzinger’s thesis; cf. *Calabrian Abbot*, p. 214.

⁷²⁷ Randolph Daniel, ‘St. Bonaventure: Defender of Franciscan Eschatology’ in *S. Bonaventura*, tom. IV, pp. 793–806.

⁷²⁸ Illia Delio, ‘From Prophecy to Mysticism: Bonaventure’s Eschatology in Light of Joachim of Fiore’, *Traditio* 52 (1997), pp. 153–77.

More recent studies on the *Hexaemeron* have shifted away from Ratzinger's emphasis upon salvation history and Aristotelianism, preferring instead to focus on the text's historical and ecclesiastical context, specifically the practical and pastoral motivations which Bonaventure may have had when he preached his *Collationes*. Most notable in this respect is Colt Anderson's *A Call to Piety: Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days*. Here the *Hexaemeron* is understood as an attempt to reconcile the radical Joachite and mainstream wings of the Franciscan Order so as to avoid scandal in the face of the impending Second Council of Lyon in 1274.⁷²⁹ A similar approach is adopted by Hughes who, studying the *Hexaemeron* in terms of its literary genera, emphasizes the 'protreptic'⁷³⁰ – i.e. moral and spiritual – nature of the text.⁷³¹ According to Hughes, the *Collationes* are not designed to condemn Aristotelianism, still less to reconcile orthodox and Joachite interpretations of history; rather, they function as a meditative text designed to persuade the radical elements of the Franciscan order – be they Joachite or Aristotelian – to abandon their extremist views in favour of the true vocation of the Franciscan: prayer, poverty, and contemplation.⁷³² From this perspective, the *Hexaemeron* is thus a call to piety, rather than abstract theological and philosophical debate.⁷³³

Section 2

5.3) *The Hexaemeron and Christ's Knowledge: Towards a New Reading of the Hexaemeron.*

⁷²⁹ *A Call to Piety*, p. xv.

⁷³⁰ Hughes, 'St. Bonaventure's Collationes in Hexaemeron: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse', pp. 107-29.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*

⁷³² *Ibid.*

⁷³³ *Ibid.*

This chapter offers a fresh perspective on the *Hexaemeron*. It does so by steering a *via media* between these two, seemingly opposed, schools of thought. It subscribes neither to the belief that the *Hexaemeron* is primarily an exercise in apocalyptic speculation or the theology of history, as Ratzinger claims. Nor does it view the *Hexaemeron* as merely a series of purely protreptic sermons, as Anderson and Hughes argue. Rather, it will argue that the *Collationes* are in fact an attempt both to refute Aristotelianism by revealing it to be an eschatological phenomenon *and* a work of protreptic discourse aimed at lifting the minds of its hearers towards the pursuit of spiritual renewal. As already alluded to, it pursues this “middle way” by reading the *Hexaemeron* and its distinctive theology of history in light of Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s noetic. As will be seen, once viewed from this perspective, it becomes clear that the apocalyptic and protreptic dimensions of the *Hexaemeron* are not two mutually exclusive areas; instead, they are fundamentally intertwined, with each finding its origin and purpose within Bonaventure’s broader thought on Christ’s knowledge.

At one level, the *Hexaemeron* is an attempt to condemn Aristotelianism as a forerunner of the Anti-Christ and the total destruction of the exemplary relationship between Christ’s mind, the human soul, and the hierarchy of knowledge. Whilst on another, it functions as a series of protreptic sermons aimed at encouraging its hearers to abandon the pursuit of philosophical learning in favour of conforming themselves to the true model of wisdom: the Incarnate Word. It is thus clear that the notion of Christ’s intellect as the *causa formalis* and *causa finalis* of human learning is central to the *Hexameron*. To this extent, therefore, this chapter offers a fresh perspective on both the *Hexaemeron* itself and the two leading interpretations of it. It reimagines and reformulates the key insights of Ratzinger, Hughes, and Anderson into one coherent whole by demonstrating how both schools of thought – the apocalyptic and protreptic – are in fact two sides of the same coin. Both find their origin and explanation within Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge.

5.3.0) *The Hexaameron: Bonaventure's Final Text on Christ's Knowledge.*

The fact scholars have failed to consider the *Hexaameron* in light of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge is hardly surprising given that the text says very little on the subject explicitly.⁷³⁴ However, as we will see, once viewed through the lens of Bonaventure's early works – in particular, the emphasis which they place on the notion of Christ's mind as the universal exemplar of all human noetic – it then becomes apparent that the *Hexaameron* and its scathing critique of Aristotelianism are in fact an outworking of Bonaventure's earlier speculative analysis of Christ's knowledge. As the following sections will make clear, the *Collationes* take to the logical conclusion what the *Sentence Commentary*, *De Scientia Christi*, and *Breviloquium* first postulated; namely, that Christ's mind, as the perfect expression of all human learning, is the primordial archetype to which each sphere of human knowledge must be reduced. The *Hexaameron* does this by demonstrating how each of the different levels of wisdom found within the soul as it seeks to conform itself to Christ find their origin and perfection within his intellect. Each of the *Hexaameron's* sermons, in effect, are an attempt to offer an exegesis of how a specific level of human knowledge is a reflection and participation of Christ's own perfect wisdom. To appreciate how this is so, it is necessary to consider the *Hexaameron's* introductory vision and how it lays the basis for the radically Christocentric and anti-Aristotelian logic which runs throughout the text as a whole.

5.3.1) *The First Vision – The Key to Understanding the Christocentric and Anti-Aristotelian Vision of the Hexaameron.*

⁷³⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 3, nn. 14-15 (V, pp. 345-6); *Delorme*, principium, vis. 3, nn. 14-16, pp. 39-40.

Consisting of three separate collations, the first sermon revolves around two opposing views of where the perfection of human learning is to be found.⁷³⁵ The first is in the perfect knowledge of the Incarnate Word; the second, in the distorted logic of the Anti-Christ typified by Aristotle. On the one hand, Christ's mind is the centre, source, and final end of all graced learning; the divinely instituted exemplar to which the soul must continually strive to conform itself. Whilst on the other hand, Aristotle is the embodiment – the “false exemplar” – of the fallen logic of the Anti-Christ. As will be seen, this polarity runs throughout the first vision (i.e. collations 1-3) and provides the basis for the *Hexaemeron* as a whole. Each of the *Hexaemeron*'s subsequent five sermons posit the existence of two mutually exclusive archetypes of knowledge from which the human mind must choose: Christ or Aristotle. This polarity, however, finds its fullest expression within the first sermon (though it also finds particularly clear expression in the second sermon, collations 4-7). To appreciate how this is so, it is necessary to consider its treatment of the exemplary significance of Christ's and Aristotle' minds separately. However, as will be seen, the two are very much intertwined. By holding Christ's intellect up as the model of all perfect knowledge, Bonaventure repeatedly seeks to show how Aristotle's teachings are little more than a distorted reflection of Christ own perfect wisdom.

5.3.2) *The First Sermon – Christ's Mind as the Centre, Source and Exemplar of All Human Learning.*

As the foundation stone of the *Hexaemeron*, the first sermon does not, as would be expected, offer an exegesis of the Genesis creation account. Instead, it chooses Ecclesiastes 15:5: ‘in the midst of the church the Lord shall open his mouth, and shall fill him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding and shall clothe him with a robe of glory’.⁷³⁶ The choice of this text seems

⁷³⁵ The first sermon (collations 1-3) is to be found in V pp. 329-48.

⁷³⁶ *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 1 (V, p. 329). Each of the collations found within the introductory sermon takes this scriptural quotation as its point of departure.

strange at first given that it has little, if anything, to do with the creation narrative. However, once viewed in light of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge its meaning becomes clear. Here scripture confirms what Bonaventure has known, and argued for, all along; namely, that the mind of the Incarnate Word, as the closest creaturely reflection of God's own infinite wisdom, is not only the most perfect expression of all human learning – past, present, and future – but also the measure and light of all created wisdom which stands at the centre of the church, and thereby the whole of reality, illuminating it with his own *sapientia perfecta*.⁷³⁷

From this perspective, the underlying logic of the first sermon is thus that each aspect of human noetic – from the beatific vision of the blessed to the lower levels of knowledge associated with the wayfaring state – finds its origin and perfection within Christ's intellect. Each radiates from his mind and looks to him as its exemplar and source.⁷³⁸ Moreover, each is a reflection of, and participation in, Christ's own perfect noetic: 'Hence all sages', Bonaventure writes, 'were nothing but figures and imitations of this wise one [*i.e., Christ*]'.⁷³⁹ At each level, therefore, Christ's mind is the light which goes before the soul and renders creation and revelation intelligible to it. It is the sun without which there is only darkness.⁷⁴⁰

From its very beginning, therefore, the *Hexaemeron* – like Bonaventure's earliest works on Christ's knowledge – is seen to be a text devoted to explaining how the mind of the Incarnate Word is the primordial exemplar and source of all human learning. 'Our intent', Bonaventure writes, 'is to show that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and that he is the central point of all understanding'.⁷⁴¹ The first sermon achieves this goal by expanding upon Bonaventure's belief that Christ's mind is the paradigm which defines the three constituent elements of human knowledge; namely, the human soul, the hierarchy of

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, coll. 1, nn. 11, 39 (V, pp. 331, 335); cf. *Delorme.*, principium, coll. 1, n. 10, p. 4.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 39 (V, p. 335).

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 15 (V, p. 346); *Collations*, p. 50.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; cf. coll. 18, n. 9 (V, p. 416).

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, coll. 1, n. 11 (V, p. 331); cf. *Delorme*, principium, coll. 1, n. 11, p. 5.

knowledge, and the narrative of God's self-revelation in history. Each of its three collations represents a distinct stage in the unfolding of this argument.

The first demonstrates how Christ's mind is the universal centre of all cognition and the exemplar which defines the human soul.⁷⁴² The second shows how his intellect is the model of all wisdom and the archetype of the hierarchy of knowledge.⁷⁴³ Whilst the third establishes how his intellect is the key to all knowledge and the paradigm which defines the narrative of God's self-revelation in history.⁷⁴⁴ Thus, taken as a whole, the first sermon demonstrates how each of the three key areas of human noetic find their origin, purpose, and final end within Christ's intellect. Each proceeds from Christ, shows forth Christ, and will return to him; such is the true meaning of the *Hexaemeron's* threefold metaphysic of emanation, exemplarism, and consummation outlined in *collatio* 1.⁷⁴⁵ Thus, at its most basic level, the Christocentric logic underpinning Bonaventure's thought on the human soul, the hierarchy of knowledge, and the narrative of salvation history – and thereby the first sermon as a whole – is seen to close in an intelligible circle around Christ based upon the principle of *egressus* and *regressus*.⁷⁴⁶ Each of the latter three areas looks to Christ's mind as its efficient, formal, and final cause.

The first sermon expounds upon this threefold logic by demonstrating how, as the perfect expression of human cognition, Christ's mind is the centre, model, and key to all graced learning. Building upon Bonaventure's doctrine of reduction,⁷⁴⁷ *collatio* 1 demonstrates how Christ's intellect lies hidden at the centre of each of the seven academic sciences: metaphysics, physics, mathematics, logic, ethics, politics, and theology.⁷⁴⁸ A reflection of Christ's own perfect noetic, each of these sciences, Bonaventure tells us, finds its origin and fulfilment

⁷⁴² *Ibid.* (V, pp. 329-35).

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.* (V, pp. 326-42).

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.* (V, pp. 342-348).

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, coll. 1, n. 17 (V, p. 332).

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; cf. coll. 14, n. 30 (V, p. 398).

⁷⁴⁷ *Supra.*

⁷⁴⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 11 (V, p. 331).

within Christ's intellect and is thus to be reduced back to him as its intelligible centre.⁷⁴⁹ Thus, to acquire knowledge in any of the seven disciplines, it is necessary to start with Christ; for he alone is the one who teaches where each begins, to whom each ought to be addressed, and finally where each should end.⁷⁵⁰ Without Christ a sure foundation in any of these sciences is not guaranteed.⁷⁵¹

The second collation develops this argument by demonstrating how each of the different levels of knowledge found within Christ's soul – experiential, innate, infused, and beatific – find expression within the church through the four ascending levels of theological wisdom discussed in the previous chapter; namely, *sapientia uniformis*, *multiformis*, *omniformis*, and *nulliformis*.⁷⁵² Offered to the soul as a means whereby it can conform itself to Christ, each looks to the Incarnate Word as its exemplar and origin. Finally, the third collation reveals how, as the Incarnate, Uncreated, and Inspired Word, Christ is the key (*clavis*) to all knowledge without which there is no certainty or comprehension.⁷⁵³ Christ, we are told, is the *a priori* foundation of all created noetic.⁷⁵⁴ His perfect intelligence radiates throughout the different levels of knowledge and renders them intelligible.⁷⁵⁵

5.3.3) *The First Sermon – Aristotle as the Centre, Model, and Key of All False Wisdom.*

In light of this centrality accorded to Christ's noetic, it is hardly surprising to find that the *Hexaemeron* also contains Bonaventure's most forceful critique of Aristotelianism and natural philosophy. As will be seen, written nearly twenty years after the *Sentence Commentary*, *De Scientia Christi*, and *Breviloquium*, the *Hexaemeron* marks a notable though, not entirely

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 39 (V, p. 335).

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 1 (V, p. 329).

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, n. 10 (V, pp. 330-1).

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, coll. 2, n. 8 (V, p. 337).

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 2 (V, p. 343).

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, coll. 1, n. 39 (V, p. 335).

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 32 (V, p. 348).

surprising, development within the anti-Aristotelian logic at work in Bonaventure's earlier texts on Christ's knowledge. Following the example of his other mature works, it develops Bonaventure's earlier critique of Aristotelianism by framing it along distinctly apocalyptic lines. Here, Aristotelianism is no longer seen as a doctrine merely opposed to the primacy of Christ's mind; nor, indeed, as a subversive influence on its exemplary relationship with the human soul and the hierarchy of knowledge. Instead, it is perceived as an apocalyptic phenomenon. Aristotelianism is the demonically inspired assailant of divine wisdom – the '*bestia ascendens de abyss*' (Rev. 17:8) – which threatens to destroy the exemplary relationship between Christ's mind, the human soul, hierarchy of knowledge, and the narrative of salvation history.⁷⁵⁶ Its disciples, Bonaventure remarks, have 'become the likes of Lucifer' (*luciferiani facti*).⁷⁵⁷

It is important to note, however, that despite introducing these strongly apocalyptic undertones, the *Hexaemeron* does not represent a significant departure from Bonaventure's earlier critique of Aristotelianism. Nor, indeed, is it indicative of a development within his thought on Christ's knowledge itself. Rather, as will be seen, it merely brings to completion Bonaventure's earlier critique of Aristotelianism. Like his early works on Christ's knowledge, the *Hexaemeron* rejects Aristotelianism because it fails to find expression within Christ's mind and thus cannot claim to be a legitimate part of human learning. Where it departs from these early works is that it frames this anti-Aristotelian polemic against the backdrop of an eschatologically charged theology of history. Through doing so, it imbues Bonaventure's Christocentric critique of Aristotelianism with an urgency and sharpness which is missing from – or perhaps present only in seminal form – his early works on Christ's knowledge.

⁷⁵⁶ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, nn. 18-20, p. 187; cf. *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 8 (V, p. 399).

⁷⁵⁷ *Collations*, coll. 4, n. 1, p. 59.

It is not unsurprising to find in light of the previous section that the origins of its anti-Aristotelianism are also to be found in its first sermon. Explicitly condemning Aristotle and those who allow metaphysics to ‘run riot’ (*luxuriata est metaphysica*) – a thinly veiled critique of both Radical Aristotelianism and those in the Paris Theology Faculty who permit Aristotle too much influence – the first sermon marks the beginning of a concerted effort to reject Aristotelianism as a doctrine opposed to Christ’s noetic and, thereby, the natural order of human learning.⁷⁵⁸ It does so by demonstrating how Aristotle’s teachings are the polar opposite of the perfect noetic found in Christ’s intellect. Where Christ is the efficient, formal, and final cause of all graced cognition, Aristotle – insofar as he is idolized by the Radical Aristotelians – is the demonically inspired assailant of human learning. He is the false exemplar who threatens to overshadow the primacy of Christ’s mind and thereby destroy the exemplary authority which it exerts over the human soul, the hierarchy of knowledge, and the narrative of salvation history. Each of the three collations found in the first sermon represent a distinct phase in the unfolding of this argument.

The first reveals how Aristotle’s teachings lie hidden at the centre of all philosophical errors and serve to corrupt the soul by turning it away from Christ towards the false logic of the Anti-Christ.⁷⁵⁹ The second develops this argument by showing how, in contrast to Christ, who is the model of all perfect wisdom, Aristotle is the “archetype” of all false knowledge and the supreme example of how fallen humanity has succumbed to the ‘darkness of Egypt’ – i.e., the lies of the Anti-Christ.⁷⁶⁰ He is the purveyor of a deformed and seditious hierarchy of knowledge. The third collation, in turn, demonstrates how Aristotle’s teachings – through denying the Uncreated, Incarnate, and Inspired Word – are the key to all error and false wisdom

⁷⁵⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 5, n. 21 (V, p. 357).

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 1, nn. 26-7 (V, pp. 333-4).

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, coll. 2, n. 7 (V, p. 337).

since they oppose God's self-revelation in history.⁷⁶¹ Here Aristotle is portrayed as the philosopher whose hand is 'cut off' and through whose teachings humanity has come to abandon Christ's teachings in favour of the manifold errors of peripatetic philosophy.⁷⁶²

At its most basic level, therefore, the first sermon introduces the reader to a threefold condemnation of Aristotle. As Christ is the efficient, formal, and final cause of all graced learning, so Aristotle's doctrine – again, insofar as it is idolized by the Radical Aristotelians – is the threefold cause of all error. His teaching bestows, exemplifies, and draws unto itself all false logic.⁷⁶³ Thus, whilst Christ may be the divinely instituted model of perfection given by God to lead the soul to noetic rectitude, Aristotle is the devil's archetype; his doctrine has been sent into the world by the Anti-Christ to lead humanity into the darkness of error and sin. The first gives life, but the second condemns.⁷⁶⁴

Bonaventure expands this anti-Aristotelian logic particularly clearly in the second sermon of the *Hexaemeron*. Here he develops his thesis that Aristotle is the false exemplar by identifying the three most dangerous philosophical errors at work in his thinking and explaining how they contradict Christian teaching. These are: his denial of exemplarism; his belief in the eternity of the world; and, finally, his doctrine of monopsychism.⁷⁶⁵ The first denies the Word and its role as the exemplar of creation; the second, denies the doctrine of creation; and the third, the immortality of the soul and the individuality of each human person.⁷⁶⁶ Through these errors Aristotle reveals his teaching to be 'contrary to the light of truth' and in the process reveals his philosophy to be indebted to the Anti-Christ.⁷⁶⁷ What is more worrying Bonaventure

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 3 (V, p. 343).

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, nn. 9, 26-7 (V, pp. 345, 347).

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, coll. 1, n. 17 (V, p. 332).

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 27 (V, p. 347). Here Aristotelianism is identified with the *lignum scientia boni et mali*.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, coll. 5, n. 29 (V, p. 358).

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, coll. 6, n. 4 (V, p. 361).

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid. Collations*, p. 97.

remarks is that Aristotle is so idolized by his disciples as the ‘*regula in natura*’ of human learning that they will not accept he erred on these points, even when it is so clear that they bear the mark of the “Beast” and arise from the ‘bottomless pit’.⁷⁶⁸

Section 3

5.4) *Christ, Aristotle, and History: The Eschatological Schema of the Hexaemeron and its Relevance for the Seraphic Doctor’s Anti-Aristotelianism.*

Let us now turn to consider how the *Hexaemeron* understands the narrative of salvation history.

5.4.0) *The Importance of the Eschatological Schema of the Hexaemeron for Understanding its Nature as a Text on Christ’s Knowledge.*

Ever since Ratzinger’s thesis, the central question facing Bonaventurian scholarship, with regards to the *Hexaemeron* at least, has been the place which it accords to eschatology and salvation history.⁷⁶⁹ Even those who reject Ratzinger’s approach by emphasizing the *Collationes*’ protreptic and pastoral concerns cannot avoid addressing, in one form or another, the eschatological narrative which underpins the text as a whole.⁷⁷⁰ Having said this, establishing how the *Hexaemeron* interprets salvation history is a complex task, as Ratzinger himself concedes.⁷⁷¹ For on the one hand, the text says relatively little on the theology of history (*Geschichtetheologie*), and the few remarks it does contain are scattered throughout its various

⁷⁶⁸ *Collations*, coll. 6, n. 5 p. 98.

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. Marianne Schlosser & Franz-Xaver Heible (eds.) *Gegenwart der Offenbarung zu den Bonaventura-Forschungen Joseph Ratzingers*, (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2011).

⁷⁷⁰ *A Call to Piety*, p. xviii.

⁷⁷¹ *History*, pp. v-vi.

collations. Whilst, on the other hand, that which it does have to say on the subject is buried deep within its mystical and symbolic imagery, thus making it difficult to discern.

Thankfully, however, the most relevant material pertaining to our purposes is presented coherently in collations fifteen and sixteen.⁷⁷² Here Bonaventure outlines his vision of how history unfolds according to a dynamic, gradually unfolding narrative of revelation which culminates in a final age of peace and the restoration of the soul's exemplary likeness to Christ's mind. As such, by discussing Bonaventure's division of history it will become apparent how there is an integral unity between his thought on Christ's noetic and the eschatological-protreptic narrative which can be traced throughout the *Hexaemeron* as a whole; to understand one is to understand the other.

5.4.1) *The Hexaemeron and the Biblical Narrative of History – The Division of History According to the Numbers Three, Five, and Seven.*

Apart from its radical suggestion that beatitude is to be realized here on earth prior to the general resurrection, the *Hexaemeron*'s interpretation of salvation history is worthy of study in itself for the simple reason that it diverges significantly, even decisively, from Bonaventure's earlier six-fold division of history as found in the *Breviloquium*.⁷⁷³ Unlike the former, it divides history into a series of overlapping patterns corresponding to the biblical numbers of three, five, and seven. At one level, Bonaventure argues, scripture reveals that history consists of three distinct ages. Namely, the time of the law of nature, the law of scripture, and the law of grace.⁷⁷⁴ At another level, however, it also reveals that history possesses a five-fold pattern corresponding to the five 'summonses' found in Christ's parable in Mt 20:1.⁷⁷⁵ The first

⁷⁷² Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 15-16. (V, pp. 398-408).

⁷⁷³ *Breviloquium*, pars. 4, chap. 4 (V, pp. 244-5).

⁷⁷⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 20 (V, p. 401).

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 19 (V, pp. 400-401).

summons, corresponds to the creation of man; the second, to the scourging of man until the time of Noah; the third, to the time between Abraham and Moses; the fourth, to the time of the law from Moses to Christ; whilst the fifth, lasts from Christ to the consummation of the world.⁷⁷⁶ At a more profound level, however, scripture reveals that history possesses a seven-fold pattern corresponding to the seven days of creation.⁷⁷⁷ The first age ran from Adam to Noah; the second, from Noah to Abraham; the third, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the Babylonian captivity; the fifth, from the Babylonian captivity to Christ; the sixth, from Christ to the end of the world; the seventh age, however, runs concurrent with the sixth. As will be seen, it is this seven-fold pattern of history which the *Hexaemeron* emphasizes most.

Bonaventure notes that once added together the biblical schemas of three, five, and seven reveal that in total history consists of fifteen separate ages.⁷⁷⁸ It is this belief that salvation history mirrors the number fifteen which acts as the guiding principle of his main overarching interpretation of the division of time.

5.4.2) *The Biblical Division of History According to the Old and New Testaments.*

Bonaventure argues that underpinning this multi-layered division of history according to the biblical patterns of three, five and seven, is a more fundamental distinction, based on the number two, between the time of the Old and New Testaments.⁷⁷⁹ Following scholastic consensus, he maintains that history consists of two epochs: one before Christ, the other after him. As such, each of the biblical divisions of history according to the numbers three, five, and seven are seen to be underpinned by this more elementary binary distinction. Moreover, this division of history into two epochs reveals a parallel between the Old and New Testaments;

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, nn. 12-18 (V, p. 400).

⁷⁷⁷ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, nn. 11-13, p. 183.

⁷⁷⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 21 (V, p. 401).

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 11 (V, p. 400).

each contains their own unique schema of history according to the numbers three, five, and seven.⁷⁸⁰ Thus, there are three distinct ages in the Old Testament – the origin, promotion, and fall of the synagogue – and three parallel epochs in the New: the beginning, expansion, and summation of the church.⁷⁸¹ Likewise, there are five ages in the Old Testament – the establishment of nature, the inspiration of the patriarchs, the institution of the law, the revelation of the prophets, and the ruination of the synagogue – and five in the New: the diffusion of charismatic gifts, the calling of the gentiles, the institution of the churches by law, the multiplication of religious orders, and the eventual ‘restoration of the ruins’, i.e. the church.⁷⁸² Finally, corresponding to the seven days of creation, there are seven ages in the Old Testament and seven in the New; each of which is, in turn, a reflection of the seven seals of the Book of the Apocalypse.⁷⁸³ To Bonaventure’s mind, it is this division of history according to the numbers seven and two which is the most important of the various historical schemas. It contains a ‘major mystery’ (*valde mysterialis*).⁷⁸⁴ The significance of the seven-two schema will be revealed shortly.

5.4.3) *The Hexaemeron – The Fundamental Link Between Eschatology and the Doctrine of Christ’s knowledge.*

As Ratzinger demonstrates, despite its relatively limited discussion of salvation history, once the *Hexaemeron*’s interpretation of the different ages of humanity is viewed in relation to its overall structure – i.e. its division of the seven levels of knowledge and the seven days of creation – it becomes apparent that the concept of salvation history permeates and underpins the entire narrative of the text as a whole. Each of the seven days of creation – and thereby the

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 22 (V, p. 401).

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, n. 26 (V, p. 402).

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, n. 28 (V, p. 402).

⁷⁸³ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, nn. 18-20, p. 187.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, nn. 10-11, p. 183.

seven different levels of cognition which they represent – correspond to a particular phase of human history within the Old and New Testaments.⁷⁸⁵ By its very nature, therefore, the *Hexaemeron* – and thereby its anti-Aristotelian narrative – are, to paraphrase Ratzinger, inextricably bound up with Bonaventure’s theology of history. However, given what has been revealed above about the central role which Christ’s noetic plays in shaping the *Hexaemeron*, it is nonetheless clear that this focus upon eschatology and salvation history will only make sense to the extent that it is read through the lens of Bonaventure’s Christology.

Thus, whilst Ratzinger may be right in claiming that the *Hexaemeron* is a text preoccupied with the question of salvation history, this can only be accepted insofar as its theology of history, and thereby its apocalyptic undertones, are seen as an outworking of Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge. The eschatological narrative of the *Hexaemeron*, in other words, possesses a distinctly Christological basis beyond which it cannot be understood.

5.5) *Augustine and Joachim of Fiore: The Background to Bonaventure’s Theology of History.*

To understand the *Hexaemeron*’s interpretation of salvation history, and its origins within Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s knowledge, it is necessary to consider how it relates to the two most important interpretations of history favoured during the thirteenth-century. Namely, those of St. Augustine (c. 334–430) and the “heterodox” interpretation of the twelfth-century Cistercian reformer Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202) – the “Calabrian Abbot”. Where the former was regarded as orthodox, the latter was repeatedly condemned because of its supposed

⁷⁸⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 35; coll. 3, n. 24; coll. 15, n. 11 (V, pp. 335, 347, 400, respectively).

“millennialist” tendencies and its association with radical elements of the Franciscan Order, in particular, Peter of John Olivi (c. 1248–1298) and the *fraticelli*.⁷⁸⁶

5.5.0) Augustine’s Theology of History – History as Possessing Six Ages.

Based upon the conviction that the seven days of creation mystically prefigure and determine the narrative of human history, most medievals followed Augustine in claiming that history consists of six ages culminating in a seventh celestial day of rest. Such is the interpretation favoured by Bonaventure in his early works.⁷⁸⁷ Corresponding to the first day of creation, the first age of humanity, Augustine claims, lasted from Adam to Noah; the second – the second day – from Noah to Abraham; the third age, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the Babylonian exile; the fifth from the Babylonian exile until the coming of Christ; and the sixth, in which humanity currently lives, began with the Incarnation of Christ and will last until the Day of Judgement.⁷⁸⁸ A seventh and final age – the day of rest – will be initiated when humanity enters into the Kingdom of God in the next life.

Thus, for Augustine the seventh age of history is not part of humanity’s earthly pilgrimage but belongs solely within the realm of the supernatural.⁷⁸⁹ The beatific vision and the ability to see God in his essence are, in other words, restricted to the heavenly state and the next life. Moreover, having placed the Incarnation at the dawn of the final age, Augustine maintains that the advent of Christ marks the end and perfection of history, for after him there is no development within the economy of salvation apart from the Day of Judgement.

⁷⁸⁶ *Influence*, pp. 69-70; 175-228.

⁷⁸⁷ *Civ. Dei.*, bk. 2, chap. 30, pp. 407-8.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Positing a unilateral line of history, Augustine's theology of history can be summarized thus:

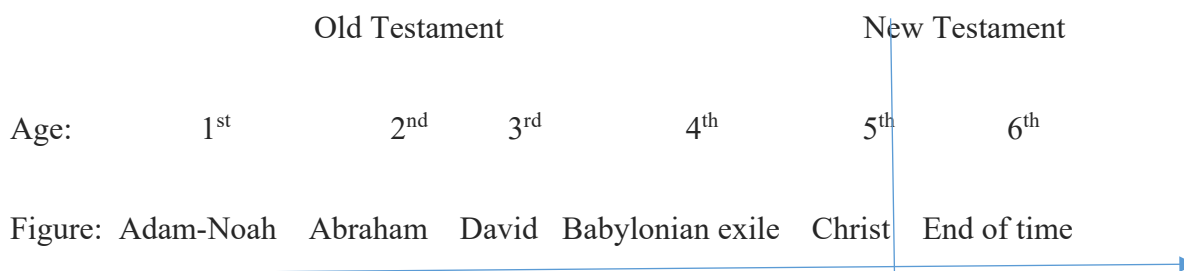


Figure 23

5.5.1) Joachim of Fiore's "Heterodox" Theology of History – History as Possessing Three Ages and Unfolding According to a Double Seven Pattern.

Radically different, the thought of Joachim of Fiore maintains that history possesses a distinctly Trinitarian structure in that it consists of three distinct, but overlapping, ages – or more accurately states of ‘being’⁷⁹⁰ – corresponding to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁷⁹¹ Each of these, in turn, is representative of the three common states of human life: married, clerical, and monastic, respectively.⁷⁹² The first age – that of the Father and the married laity – ran from the beginning of creation in Adam to the birth of Christ. The second age – that of the Son and the priests – began within the time of the Father with the birth of Ozias and lasts until the year 1260. Whilst the third age – that of the Spirit and the monks – began in the time of the Son

⁷⁹⁰ Cf. David Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom: A Reading of the Apocalypse Commentary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993). p. 2.

⁷⁹¹ *Liber Concordia*, lib. 2, tract. 1, chap. 3, f. 8rb. A precursor of this three-fold division of history is to be found in Rupert of Deutz's *De Sancte Trinitate et Operius Eius*, Hrabanus Haacke (ed.) *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis*, tom. 21 (Turnhold: Brepolis, 1971); see esp. prologus, p. 126.

⁷⁹² *Ibid*; cf. *Expos. Apoc.*, intro., chap. 5, f. 5rb-6ra.

with St. Benedict, and runs properly from the year 1260 until the end of history.⁷⁹³ Moreover, for Joachim the revelation given in these three ages corresponds to the qualities of the divine person whom they represent. Thus, the time of the Father corresponds to the age of Law and the Old Covenant; the time of the Son, with the New Testament and the New Covenant; and, finally, the time of the Spirit, with the fullness of spiritual wisdom in the forthcoming age of intellectual illumination. Each age is thus said to perfect and supplant the revelation given in its predecessor. For Joachim, revelation is thus not a static, one-dimensional affair. Instead, it is an ever-changing and ongoing process which only reaches its perfection in the final age of the Spirit.⁷⁹⁴ Thus to his mind, God's self-disclosure to humanity – although already given in full in Christ and scripture – has yet to be fully revealed to the church.⁷⁹⁵

Joachim's theory of the three ages of history, and the Trinitarian narrative of revelation underpinning it, can thus be represented by a series of three overlapping circles:

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, lib. 4, cap. 31, f. 56rb.

⁷⁹⁴ Whilst rejected by Bonaventure, Joachim's threefold interpretation of history is accepted by figures like Olivi. Cf. Olivi *Lectura Super Apocalypsim*, (ed.) Warren Lewis (New York: Franciscan Institute, 2015).

⁷⁹⁵ Cf. *Calabrian Abbot*, pp. 123-44.

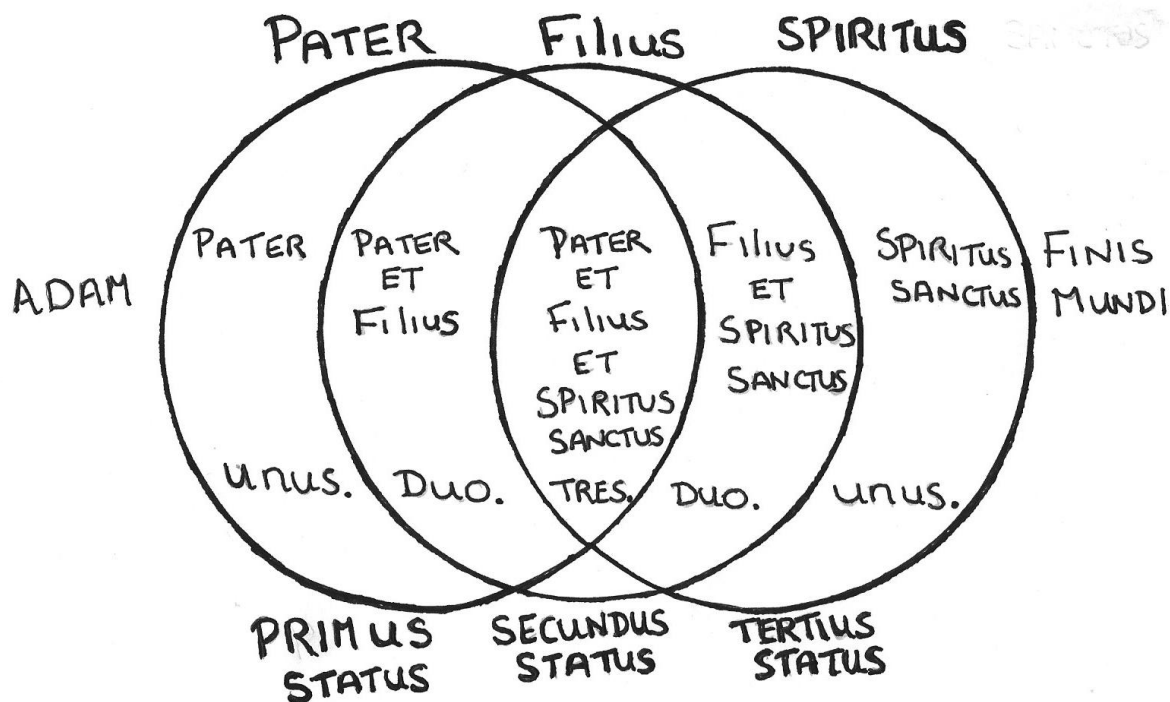


Figure 24

As the culmination of history, Joachim maintains that in the coming third age of the Spirit – and not until then – there will be an opening up of the scriptures as a new spiritual intelligence is given to the church.⁷⁹⁶ Here humanity will discover the hidden mystical meaning of scripture by being gifted with a true *visio spiritualis*. This new gift of revelation will perfect the soul and render it capable of receiving the totality of revelation. As such, Joachim predicts that in the third age, the church will – after a period of tribulation by the Anti-Christ – enter into a state of contemplative growth and holiness, whereby the primacy of the active life (i.e., the clerical and married statuses, symbolized by St. Peter), will be “replaced” or “superseded” by a new contemplative order of governance: those symbolized by St. John – the new spiritual men (*viri spirituales*), namely the monks. In this final age, these spiritual men will, under the guidance of an ‘Angelic Pope’, come to govern the church and initiate a period of radical

⁷⁹⁶ *Liber Concordia*, lib. 3, pars. 1, chap. 9, f. 29rb-vb.

renewal and reform; one in which the church will renounce the evils of the present age and be rendered a perfect image of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁷⁹⁷ In this third age, the monastic ideal of blessed poverty, ignorance, and chastity will be realized in full and humanity will live in a state of evangelical perfection. This, Joachim tells us, will be achieved through the arrival of two new monastic orders – that of the dove and the raven.⁷⁹⁸

As is less well recognized, however, alongside this threefold interpretation of history, Joachim also posits a distinctive double-seven schema of the different ages of humanity⁷⁹⁹ – something which few other medieval scholars had done before.⁸⁰⁰ Based upon his concept of *concordia*, and the eschatological significance of the seven seals of the sealed book of the Apocalypse (Rev: 5-8), Joachim maintains that there are seven distinct ages in the Old Testament and seven in the New; the latter of which not only correspond to, but reflect the former.⁸⁰¹ The events and characters of Old Testament, in effect, mystically prefigure and determine those of the New.⁸⁰²

We define *concordia* correctly as a similarity, equality, and proportion of the New and Old Testaments. I call it an equality of number not of dignity, when, by means of some likeness, one person and another person, one order and another order, one war and another war, seem to gaze into each other's faces.⁸⁰³

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, lib. 5, cap. 61, f. 92va-b; cf. *Influence*, pp. 395-400.

⁷⁹⁸ *Expos. Apoca.*, pars. 1, fol. 81va.

⁷⁹⁹ Reeves has shown that it was this double-seven schema of history, and not, as is commonly believed, the threefold Trinitarian model, which formed the primary basis by which Joachim interpreted history. Cf. Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *De Sept. Sig.*, pp. 211-47.

⁸⁰⁰ Such a double-seven schema corresponding to the Old and New Testaments was explicitly rejected by Augustine. Cf. *Civ. Dei*, bk. 22, chap. 30, pp. 407-8.

⁸⁰¹ *Enchri.*, pp. 32-3.

⁸⁰² Cf. *Influence*, p. 19.

⁸⁰³ *Liber Concordia*, bk. 2, part 1, chap. 2, translated in Bernard McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 120.

As such, Joachim argues that it is possible to predict the future based upon the events of the past and the present.⁸⁰⁴ ‘Expectation of future events’ he remarks ‘may be made certain by the unfolding of the present’.⁸⁰⁵ Through his study of the Old Testament, he concludes that humanity currently lives in the sixth and penultimate age of the New Testament and is awaiting the arrival of the final, seventh age of peace – the third age of the Spirit – which will be realized on earth.⁸⁰⁶ Thus Joachim remarks in his *Figurae* when commenting on the Seven headed Dragon: ‘after the destruction of this Anti-Christ there will be justice on earth and an abundance of peace, “and the Lord will rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth” (Ps. 71:8)’.⁸⁰⁷ ‘And all people’ he continues ‘will rejoice in the beauty of peace because the dragon’s head will be crushed and he will be imprisoned in the abyss’.⁸⁰⁸



Figure 25

Image of the seven headed dragon in Joachim’s apocalypse commentary.
Open source image.

⁸⁰⁴ *Influence*, p. 19; *Prophetic Future*, pp. 1-28.

⁸⁰⁵ *Liber Concordia.*, bk. 2, part 1, chap. 7, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p. 127.

⁸⁰⁶ *Expos. Apoca.*, intro., chap. 6, f. 6ra-rb; lib. 1, pars. 1, tract. 13, f. 39vb.

⁸⁰⁷ *Book of Figures*, in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p. 137.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

Joachim's prophetic calculations lead him to conclude that, before this final age of peace can be ushered in, the church must first undergo a period of extreme tribulation at the hands of the Anti-Christ.⁸⁰⁹ The forces of darkness must triumph over the church – albeit temporarily – only to then be overthrown by Christ.⁸¹⁰ Only when this is achieved, will humanity be gifted with the fullness of revelation and enter into the final age of the Spirit where it will await the Last Judgement and the arrival of the Great Anti-Christ: Gog.⁸¹¹ Thus, for Joachim – in contrast to Augustine – history does not culminate in a final age of blessedness to be realized in the next life, but first reaches its fulfilment here on earth. Salvation, in effect, is worked out in time before it is achieved in eternity.⁸¹² Only after this final *aetas pacis*, when the Great Anti-Christ has been destroyed, will humanity enter the celestial Kingdom of God.⁸¹³

Rejecting the linear understanding of history offered by Augustine, Joachim's double seven schema of history can be summarized as follows:

⁸⁰⁹ At one point, Joachim claims that the Anti-Christ has already been born. Cf. *Influence*, p. 7.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.* Cf. *Expos. Apoca.*, pars. 6, tract. 1. ff. 210vb–211ra.

⁸¹¹ Cf. *De Sept. Sig.*, pp. 245–46.

⁸¹² *Prophetic Future*, p. 8.

⁸¹³ *De Sept. Sig.*, pp. 245–46.

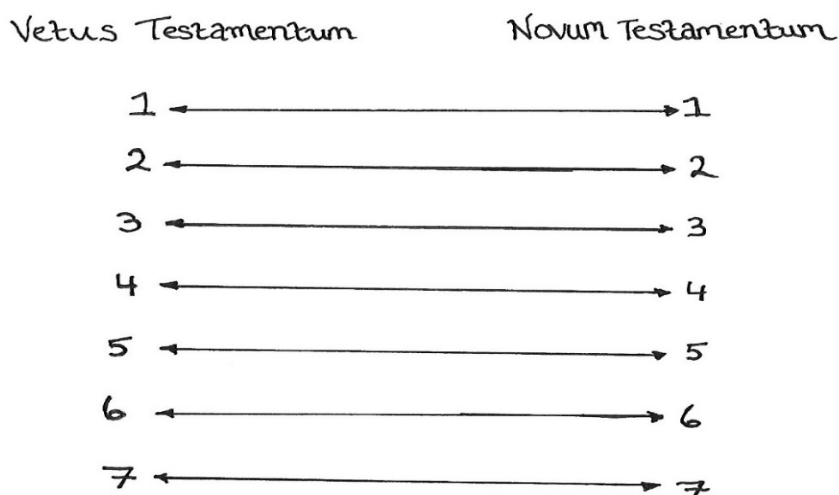


Figure 26

5.5.2) *Between Augustine and Joachim: The Hexaemeron's Double Seven Schema of Human History.*

Given Bonaventure's loyalty to Augustine's six-fold interpretation of history in his earlier works, and Augustinian theology in general, it is surprising to find that the *Hexaemeron* moves in a direction radically different to the thought of Augustine and is, seemingly, more in line with Joachim's speculation. As Ratzinger reveals, whilst rejecting Joachim's theory of three Trinitarian ages, and retaining the traditional Augustinian conviction that history consists of two distinct epochs corresponding to the Old and New Testaments – something which, as we have seen, Joachim himself accepts – Bonaventure, based upon his belief in the eschatological significance of the biblical numbers seven and two, rejects Augustine's six-fold model of history in favour of a double-seven schema which looks strikingly similar to Joachim's.⁸¹⁴ For him – like Joachim – history consists of fourteen distinct ages: seven in the Old Testament and seven in the New. The further addition of the day of eternal rest in the next life completes the

⁸¹⁴ *Delorme.*, vis. 3, coll. 4, nn. 17-20, p. 186.

quota of fifteen ages demanded by Bonaventure's preliminary division of history according to the biblical numbers of three, five, and seven.

Significantly, like Joachim, Bonaventure also maintains that the seven ages of the Old Testament, mystically prefigure, and in turn dictate, those of the New. The events and characters of the Old Testament are, in effect, the 'seminal reasons' from which the seven ages of the New Testament spring.⁸¹⁵ Most significant of all, however, is Bonaventure's decision to follow Joachim in maintaining that history culminates in a final age of earthly peace and blessedness,⁸¹⁶ which will be preceded by a period of extreme tribulation and suffering for the church at the hands of the Anti-Christ.⁸¹⁷ As will be seen, whilst important in its own right, this shift towards what may reasonably termed a 'Joachite' – in the loosest sense of the word – belief in a period of eschatological trauma and a final age of peace is fundamental to understanding the *Hexaemeron's* apocalyptic anti-Aristotelianism and its understanding of the eschatological significance of Christ's knowledge.

5.6) The Dynamic Quality of Revelation Underpinning the Hexaemeron's Double Seven Schema of History.

Central to Bonaventure's theology of history, is his decision to follow Joachim in maintaining that the seven ages of the New Testament are not restricted to the events of the New Testament canon itself. Instead, they extend from the time of Christ, throughout the history of the church, up until the present day and the eventual close of history in the final age of peace. Thus, the current age in which humanity lives is an integral part of the ongoing revelation of the New Testament. As will be seen, it is this understanding of revelation as a dynamic, gradually

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 12, p. 173.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, coll. 4, n. 16, p. 185.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*

unfolding affair yet to reach its conclusion which is key to understanding how, for Bonaventure, history culminates in the restoration of the soul's exemplary likeness to Christ. It is important to note, however, that unlike Joachim and his radical Franciscan disciples, Bonaventure explicitly rejects the suggestion that the revelation given in the New Testament canon itself will be supplanted in the final age of peace by a superior revelation of the Spirit. For him the New Testament is the 'eternal evangel'. No other Gospel is to be given in history.⁸¹⁸

5.7) *The Structure of History According to the Hexaemeron – Christ the Centre of the Ages.*

In light of this dynamic interpretation of revelation it is now possible to outline how Bonaventure imagines the double seven-schema of history. He presents it as follows.⁸¹⁹ Within the Old Testament, the first age – representing the 'founding of nature' – ran from Adam to Noah; the second age – the 'cleansing from sin' – lasted from Noah to Abraham; the third age – the selection of the 'chosen people of God' – from Abraham to Moses; the fourth age – establishment of the 'Law' – extended from Moses to Samuel; the fifth age – the time of the 'kings' – ran from David to Ezechiah; the sixth age – the time of the 'prophets' – lasted from Ezechiah to Zorobabel; finally, the seventh age of the Old Testament – the time of 'peace' – extended from Zorobabel to Christ.

Reflecting this seven-fold schema, the seven ages of the New Testament divide as follows: the first age – representing the 'conferring of grace' – ran from Christ and the Apostles to the pontificate of Clement I; the second age – the time of 'baptism' – from Clement I to Pope Sylvester I; the third age – the time of 'universal rule' – from Sylvester I to Pope Leo the Great;

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 6, p. 180; *Hex.*, coll. 16, n. 12 (V, p. 403).

⁸¹⁹ For an overview of what follows see *Hex.*, coll. 16, nn. 17-19. (V, pp. 405-6); cf. *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, nn. 17-20, pp. 186-7.

the fourth age – the time of the ‘law of justice’ – from Leo the Great to Pope Gregory the Great; the fifth age – the time of the ‘lofty throne’ – extended from Gregory the Great to Hadrian I; the sixth age, in which humanity currently lives began with the pontificate of Hadrian I and has yet to be fulfilled. Corresponding to this sixth age is the seventh age of peace which runs concurrent with it and which also began with Hadrian I. As of yet, however, this seventh age of peace has yet to break into history and be realized in full.⁸²⁰ No one knows when this will happen, and nor should they speculate on it.⁸²¹

Bonaventure’s Christocentric double seven schema of history can thus be visualized as follows:

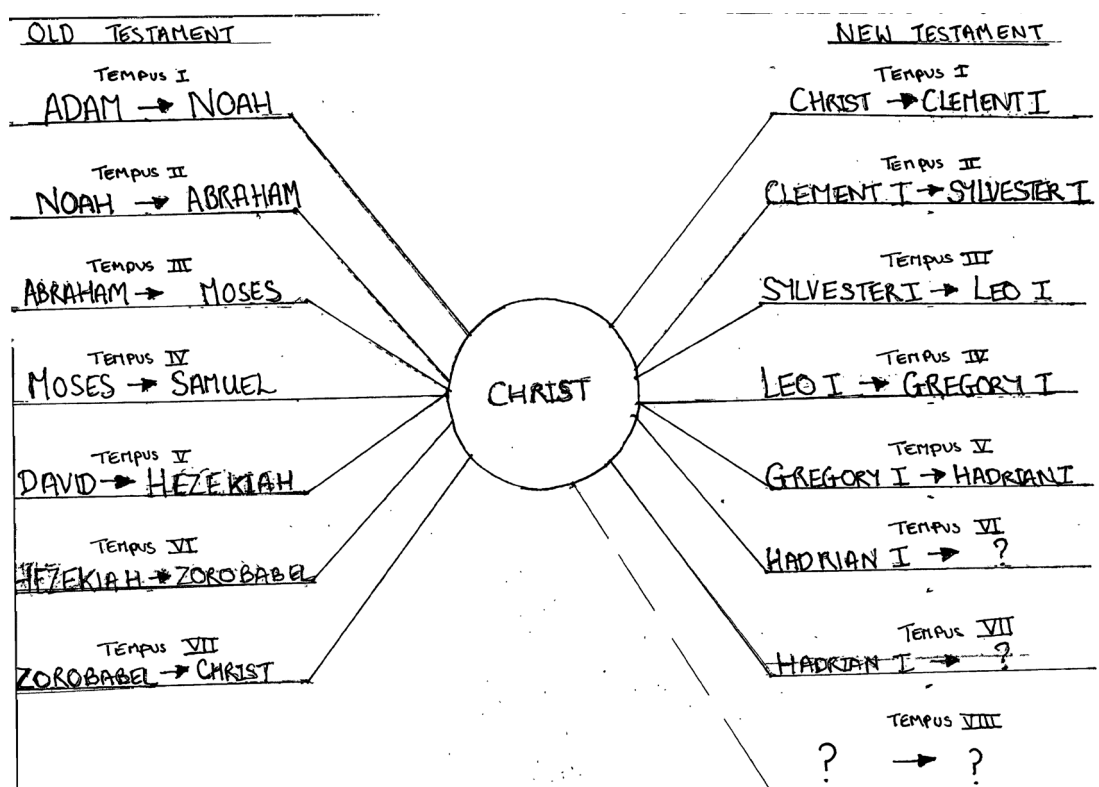


Figure 27

⁸²⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 16, n. 30 (V, p. 408).

⁸²¹ *Delorme.*, vis. 3, coll. 4, n. 20, p. 187.

From this double seven schema it becomes clear that in contrast to both Augustine's six-fold model of history, which views Christ as the culmination of the ages, and Joachim's "Trinitarian" model, which negates the significance of Christ by suggesting that history and revelation find a more perfect expression in the age of the Spirit, for Bonaventure – reflecting his metaphysic of *egressus* and *regressus* – Christ is the one who stands at the centre of history and acts as its central axis and focal point.⁸²² He is the "locus" around which all historical events, past, present, and future, revolve and bear witness. The seven ages before Christ foretell his Incarnation; whilst the seven ages after him look back to him as their origin and, in turn, predict his return at the Last Judgement.⁸²³

5.8) History as Prophecy: The Correspondence Between the Old and New Testaments and the Advent of the Anti-Christ and the Establishment of the Seventh Age of Peace.

Not surprisingly, the correlation between the seven ages of the Old and New Testaments, leads Bonaventure to accept Joachim's premise that it is possible to predict the future based upon the events of the past.⁸²⁴ 'For one who ignores the past', he argues, 'cannot know the future'.⁸²⁵ This is what Ratzinger terms Bonaventure's doctrine of 'historical prophecy'.⁸²⁶ Using his double-seven schema, Bonaventure follows Joachim in maintaining that humanity currently lives in the sixth and penultimate age of the New Testament – i.e. the thirteenth overall age of salvation history – and is awaiting the arrival of a final age of earthly peace.⁸²⁷ Based upon his study of contemporary events, he concludes that whilst there have been several important signs

⁸²² *Ibid.*

⁸²³ Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 16 (V, pp. 403-8).

⁸²⁴ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 3, n. 2, p. 172.

⁸²⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 11 (V, p. 406).

⁸²⁶ *History*, pp. 19-20.

⁸²⁷ *Hex.*, coll. 16, n. 19, (V, p. 406); *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, nn. 18-20, p. 187.

that the seventh age is close at hand – such as the coming of the angel marked with the ‘seal of the living God’, i.e. St. Francis – it is nonetheless still a thing of the future.⁸²⁸ The sixth seal is yet to be properly broken.⁸²⁹ As such, the last days of humanity are yet to arrive.⁸³⁰

Closer at hand, however, is the advent of the ‘beast from the abyss’ which proceeds the seventh *aetas pacis*. In the final age of peace, Bonaventure tells us that there will be – as Joachim predicted, albeit in an imperfect and distorted way – a renewal of humanity as it finally abandons traditional structures of living – i.e. wealth, property, power, etc. – and lives in a state of blessed simplicity and evangelical perfection like St. Francis. The poor and the ignorant, in effect, shall inherit the earth. Before this seventh age can be realized, however, the concordance of scripture reveals that the church must be assailed, and temporarily overthrown, by the Anti-Christ; this is the opening of the sixth seal.⁸³¹ Only after this period of suffering will the *aetas pacis* and a state of perfect contemplation be ushered in. ‘For then there shall be a mountain, that is the contemplative church; then there shall be no harm when the monsters of heresy shall flee on account of the proper use of wisdom’.⁸³²

In this last age, Bonaventure tells us, the church militant will be conformed to the church triumphant and all men will live in a state of blessedness awaiting the Day of Judgement.⁸³³

And thus at the end there will be a time of peace. For when Anti-Christ, after the great ruination of the church, is killed by Michael, and thus after the height of the tribulation of the Anti-Christ, there will come before the Day of Judgement (*ante diem iudicii*) a time of peace and tranquillity here on earth, the like of which has not been seen since the beginning of the world (*quale non fuit ab initio mundi*);

⁸²⁸ *Hex.*, coll. 20, n. 15 (V, p. 428).

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, coll. 16, n. 16, (V, p. 405).

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, n. 19 (V, p. 406).

⁸³² *Ibid.*, coll. 13, n. 7 (V, p. 389).

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, coll. 16, n. 30 (V, p. 408).

and men discovering holiness shall live just as they had done in the time of the apostles (*sicut fuit tempore Apostolorum*).⁸³⁴

5.9) *Reading Bonaventure's Theology of History in Light of His Thought on Christ's Knowledge – Towards a New Understanding of the Hexaemeron's Anti-Aristotelianism and Concept of a Final Age of Peace.*

Much neglected in recent years, the precise meaning of Bonaventure's thought on the final age of peace and the period of apocalyptic trauma which will immediately precede it, has perplexed scholars ever since Ratzinger's thesis. What, or who, is the tool of the Anti-Christ – 'the monster of heresy'⁸³⁵ – who will overthrow the church? Is it the Radical Aristotelians of the Arts Faculty? Or is it perhaps Bonaventure's other, less well known, opponents, such as the anti-mendicant party within the Theology Faculty? Similarly, what form shall the seventh age of peace take? Does it involve a simple renunciation of all wealth and intellectual enquiry – as Ratzinger implies – or does it entail a more significant reformation of human nature itself?

On both these questions, Ratzinger's thesis, has remained the definitive word. Following his interpretative framework, most scholars have accepted Ratzinger's conclusion that the *Hexaemeron's* apocalyptic language is directed towards Radical Aristotelianism and those who permit Aristotle too much influence. Similarly, the majority of scholars have accepted his claim that the final age of peace merely involves a renunciation of wealth and intellectual enquiry in favour of evangelical poverty. As far as this author can see few, if any, have disputed Ratzinger on this latter point.⁸³⁶ Whilst accepting the general outline of both these conclusions, and the logic which underpins them, this chapter seeks to move beyond

⁸³⁴ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, p. 185.

⁸³⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 13, n. 7 (V, p. 389).

⁸³⁶ I can find no literature contradicting Ratzinger on this point.

Ratzinger's thought by offering a new, distinctly Christological reading of these two somewhat obscure aspects of Bonaventure's theology of history. It does so by re-interpreting them in light of the central role which the doctrine of Christ's noetic plays within the *Hexaemeron*.

Through critically appropriating Ratzinger's thought, it demonstrates how the apocalyptic language of the *Hexaemeron* and its concept of a final *aetas pacis* each find their origin and explanation within Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge; specifically, his belief that Christ's mind is the universal exemplar of human learning. With regards to the former, it will be shown how each of the apocalyptic images which the *Hexaemeron* uses to critique Aristotelianism serve as an extension of Bonaventure's belief that peripatetic philosophy, like all unaided human reason, is a direct threat to the perfection of Christ's mind and the exemplary authority which it enjoys over the human soul, the hierarchy of knowledge, and the narrative of salvation history. Similarly, it will be shown how the *Hexaemeron*'s concept of a final age of peace also finds its explanation within Bonaventure's longstanding belief that the soul's eschatological vocation is to be formed in the image of the Incarnate Word.

Thus, on both these levels, the current chapter offers a fresh perspective on the eschatological narrative of the *Hexaemeron* and the truths highlighted by Ratzinger. It is important to note, however, that through advancing this novel approach, the present discussion does not seek to reject, undermine, or outflank the scholarly consensus formed under Ratzinger's influence. Rather, its aim is to merely augment and renew it by situating Ratzinger's thought within the broader context of Bonaventure's Christology and wider theology; a move which Ratzinger himself suggested, or at least intimated, was necessary.⁸³⁷ In short, the chapter offers a fresh insight into the truths which Ratzinger first brought to light over half a century ago and which have been so sorely neglected by English-speaking theology.

⁸³⁷ *History*, pp. 134-48.

5.10) *The Trials of the Anti-Christ – Aristotelianism’s Attempt to Overthrow the Exemplary Authority of Christ’s Mind.*

By far the most well-known, widely accepted aspect of Ratzinger’s thesis is his claim that Bonaventure’s belief in an impending period of apocalyptic trauma is to be identified with the advent of Radical Aristotelianism; in particular its attempt to overthrow the primacy of theology by establishing the existence of an autonomous, “non-Christian”⁸³⁸ philosophy. By and large this reading appears correct. As we have seen – and as will be made clearer in the following sections – the *Hexaemeron* repeatedly, often forcefully, rejects Radical Aristotelianism as an apocalyptic phenomenon and as a sign of eschatological stress.

a) *Re-Reading Bonaventure’s Age of Apocalyptic Trauma in Light of His Doctrine of Christ’s Noetic.*

However, as will also be seen, the *Hexaemeron*’s eschatological language goes far beyond merely rejecting Radical Aristotelianism on the grounds that it attempts to overthrow the primacy of theology. As the radically hostile, even violent, images which it applies to Radical Aristotelianism – i.e. the image of philosophy as pharaoh’s magician, harlot, beast from the abyss, etc., – reveal, something much deeper is at work within Bonaventure’s thought. Here peripatetic thought is no longer seen as a mere threat to theology’s primacy over philosophy but as an apocalyptic phenomenon; one threatening to usher in the *adventus Antichristi*. The question thus arises: what is it about Radical Aristotelianism that Bonaventure finds so abhorrent? What causes him to change from condemning peripatetic philosophy as an illogical, radically flawed discipline, to labelling it a tool of the Anti-Christ?

⁸³⁸ Non-Christian in the sense that it failed to place Christ at its centre and submit its claims to the truths of revelation.

Once viewed from the perspective of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic, and the central role which it plays in shaping the *Hexaemeron* and his theology in general, the answer to this question begins to take shape. For Bonaventure, Aristotelianism – more specifically Radical Aristotelianism – is a sign of eschatological trauma because it challenges and threatens to overthrow the primacy of Christ's mind as the primordial archetype of all human learning. It does so by claiming that Aristotle, and not Christ, is the fulfilment and perfection of all human learning. To this extent, it seeks to destroy the three key areas which Christ's mind defines: the hierarchy of knowledge, the human soul, and the narrative of God's self-revelation in history. Thus, at its most basic level, Radical Aristotelianism inverts the natural order of human noetic. It places Aristotle in the position which belongs to Christ alone.

From this perspective, the origins of the *Hexaemeron*'s apocalyptic interpretation of Aristotelianism are thus not to be found – primarily at least – in its assault upon the primacy of *fides* over *ratio*; nor, indeed, in its attempt to establish philosophy's autonomy as an academic science; these are merely symptomatic of a much greater, far more dangerous, malady. Instead, they stem from Aristotelianism's decision to challenge the very doctrine which, to Bonaventure's mind, underpins and determines the entire narrative of creaturely cognition: the perfect wisdom of the Incarnate Word. As will be seen, it is only when the violent apocalyptic images which the *Hexaemeron* uses to critique Radical Aristotelianism are viewed in this context – i.e. as a product of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic – that they, and indeed the *Hexaemeron*'s apocalyptic anti-Aristotelianism as a whole, make sense.

To this extent, it is clear that Ratzinger's thesis, despite its well-deserved position of authority, is successful in explaining only part of why Bonaventure associates Radical Aristotelianism with the Anti-Christ's impending arrival. It can be accepted as offering an accurate description of Bonaventure's apocalyptic interpretation of Radical Aristotelianism only insofar as it is read in light of what this chapter reveals about the central role which

Christ's knowledge plays in determining Bonaventure's attitude towards peripatetic philosophy. Bonaventure's decision to label Radical Aristotelianism an apocalyptic phenomenon is not – as Ratzinger claims – purely a product of his theology of history; nor, indeed, is it simply a result of his apparent indebtedness to Joachism. Rather, like the anti-Aristotelianism found in his psychology and hierarchical division of the human sciences, it is a direct outworking of his thought on Christ's noetic; specifically, his belief that Christ – and Christ alone – is the true *causa formalis* and *causa finalis* of human learning.

b) *The Triumph of the Anti-Christ and His Overthrowing of Christ's Exemplary Authority.*

What then does Bonaventure's concept of an impending age of apocalyptic trauma look like? And how, in turn, does it differ from the trauma imagined by Ratzinger? As noted, for Bonaventure, Radical Aristotelianism, and indeed peripatetic philosophy as a whole, is a sign of the Last Days because it subverts the natural order of human cognition. Like a false prophet, it turns the soul towards that which is alien to Christ – i.e. the acquired knowledge of empirical investigation. It tricks it into believing that all certainty and wisdom is to be derived from the senses and scientific *ratio* rather than spiritual illumination. As such, it proffers the lie that it is Aristotle, and not Christ, who is the *verus magister scientiarum*. The result is that it prepares the ground for the Anti-Christ to usurp the place which Christ's mind enjoys as the primordial archetype of all human learning and thus sets in motion a chain of events which will lead to the apocalypse and the total destruction of the natural order of human noetic. It is, in effect, the spark which will leave the world in flame and ashes: *solvet saeculum in favilla*.⁸³⁹

⁸³⁹ Cf. *Dies Irae*. Once attributed to Bonaventure, Thomas of Celano is now recognized as the author of the *Dies Irae*.

To this extent, Radical Aristotelianism is not only the purveyor of theological and philosophical error, but the ‘smoke from the abyss’ which obscures the true light of wisdom. It is the tree from which the serpent, dragon, and beast – the three demons fated to overthrow the church – shall be borne.⁸⁴⁰ It is truly *ancillia Antichristi*. For through its belief in the primacy of reason, the Anti-Christ is able to implant within the church the seed of intellectual covetousness; one whereby, theologians and philosophers alike, are tempted to abandon the pursuit of wisdom as contained in scripture in favour of the acquired knowledge of scientific reason. Such a phenomenon, Bonaventure laments, has already begun at Paris where theologians, as much as philosophers, have succumbed to the errors and false logic of Aristotle. Already, theology students prefer to read the notebooks of the philosophers rather than the revealed light of the Gospel.⁸⁴¹ Already they are being taught that it is Aristotle, and not Christ, who is (to give him the title Dante later awarded to him) the ‘master of those who know’.

At its most basic level, therefore, peripatetic philosophy – and natural reason as a whole – has revealed itself to be the vessel by which the Anti-Christ will eclipse, albeit temporarily, the archetypal authority of Christ’s mind and set himself up as the “true” exemplar of human learning.⁸⁴² Through the intellectual idolatry of the philosophy masters, and the foolishness of some theologians, the church is beginning to forget that its principal – indeed only – teacher is the Word Incarnate. This Bonaventure tells us is the final crisis of history.⁸⁴³ In but a little while, the *filius diaboli* will rend asunder the divinely organized hierarchy of knowledge, and thereby tear apart the very fabric of the church and creation itself, by setting up his own weak, ‘effeminate’⁸⁴⁴ noetic – i.e. the insatiable curiosity of Aristotelianism – as the “true” noetic

⁸⁴⁰ *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 9 (V, p. 399).

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, coll. 19, n. 15 (V, p. 422).

⁸⁴² *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 2 (V, pp. 398-9).

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁴ *Supra.*

horizon of human cognition.⁸⁴⁵ He will use man's greatest weakness – his lust for inappropriate scientific knowledge – to turn humanity away from the perfect wisdom of Christ as revealed in scripture in favour of the impoverished reason of un-aided philosophy. He thus promises heaven, but bestows hell: '*promittit bona et dat mala Antichristus, et promittit magna et sequentes se eiciet de paradiso*'.⁸⁴⁶ Anti-Christ is thus the killer of evangelical law and the destroyer of all intellectual perfection.⁸⁴⁷ '*In eo enim conflabantur omnes malitiae*'.⁸⁴⁸

To this extent, during these dark days the Anti-Christ's false logic will become the "model" and illuminating principle of human learning. Following Aristotle and his Latin disciples, humanity, including most of the church, will abandon the "bread of heaven" – the multiform wisdom of Christ's mind in which all truth is found – in favour of the inedible stone of unaided *philosophia*. The light of all perfect wisdom, Bonaventure prophecies, shall give way to the eternal night of peripatetic darkness; and all men, shrouded in ignorance, will seek to reason like Aristotle and the Anti-Christ.⁸⁴⁹ As such, this age of tribulation will be one of supreme idolatry, avarice, and corruption.⁸⁵⁰ It will be one in which *ratio* and *curiositas* will be preferred to *sapientia* and *auctoritas*; and the church – with the exception of a few 'spiritual men' – will abandon the Gospel in favour of the teachings of Aristotle.⁸⁵¹ '*Deinde tenebrae in universa terra*'.⁸⁵²

In this regard, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light. When the fight will be between Christ and Anti-Christ (*quam pugna erit inter Christum*

⁸⁴⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 6 (V, p. 399).

⁸⁴⁶ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 2, n. 9 p. 171.

⁸⁴⁷ *Hex.*, n. 7 (V, p. 399).

⁸⁴⁸ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 2, n. 8, p. 171.

⁸⁴⁹ *Hex.*, coll. 16, n. 22 (V, pp. 406-7).

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, coll. 15, n. 8, (V, p. 399).

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, n. 28 (V, p. 402).

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, coll. 17, nn. 27-8 (V, pp. 413-14).

et antichristum), between the teaching of truth and that of falsity, then the sun will become as black as sackcloth of hair, and a certain teacher of truth or superior in truth shall be obscured by errors (*obscurabitur per errores*), while others will stand firm, although they may seem to be darkened in their reputation.⁸⁵³

Having already arisen in Paris, such a calamity, Bonaventure laments, stands ready to infect the universal church.⁸⁵⁴ Soon the errors of a few deluded philosophers will become the norm within Christ's mystical body and the heresy of Athens will finally triumph over the sacred doctrine of Jerusalem. The inevitable conclusion, so Bonaventure tells us, is that the long, slow march of the Anti-Christ has begun. The beast has awoken and the sixth seal stands ready to be broken.⁸⁵⁵ The darkness of the Last Days is coming. What will soon come out from the gates of hell to assail the church, Bonaventure notes, dare not be uttered. What is certain, however, is that only the *ignis caritatis* and the *dona Spiritus* will protect the soul from the Anti-Christ; and given that these habits are in short supply because of the prevalence of *curiositas* fostered by Aristotelianism, only very few people will find refuge in them; the majority instead will be enslaved by philosophy and will thus be damned.⁸⁵⁶ A true vision of hell is thus soon to be realized here on earth and for a time darkness will prevail utterly.

5.11) The Dawn of the Seventh Age of Earthly Beatitude: The End of Natural Reasoning and the Restoration of the Soul's Exemplary Likeness to Christ's Mind.

⁸⁵³ *Collations*, coll. 13, n. 33, p. 198.

⁸⁵⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 9, (V, p. 330).

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, coll. 15, n. 8 (V, p. 399).

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, coll. 9, n. 29 (V, p. 376).

a) *Building on Ratzinger's thought: Christ's Noetic and the Final Age.*

Whilst correct to identify the final *renovatio* of humanity with Bonaventure's belief in the eschatological significance of absolute poverty and intellectual simplicity, Ratzinger's understanding of how the human condition will be renewed during the final *aetas pacis* also needs to be re-evaluated. Once viewed in light of the *Hexaemeron*'s status as Bonaventure's last text on Christ's noetic, and his belief that the soul's eschatological vocation is to recover its identity as *imago Christi*, it becomes clear that for Bonaventure the final *aetas pacis* does not, as Ratzinger implies, merely refer to a future state of evangelical perfection; nor indeed a simple renunciation of intellectual enquiry. Rather, it must center on a much more fundamental reformation of human noetic itself: namely, the restoration and final consummation of the soul's exemplary likeness to Christ.⁸⁵⁷ This, Bonaventure tells us, will be realized through a final superabundant *revelatio* and pouring forth of the Spirit – one in which the soul will not only recover its original noetic identity as *comprehensor perfectus*, but will – like the remnant church itself – be fully conformed to Christ as his *imago* and thus reason *sine philosophia*.⁸⁵⁸ It will be an age in which the *ecclesia militans* will be a perfect *similitudo* of the *ecclesia triumphans* and all Christians, both on earth and in heaven, shall reason just as the Incarnate Word himself does:

Likewise in the seventh time (*in tempore septimo*) to come, there will be a rebuilding of divine worship and a restoration of the city. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy of Ezechiel, when the city will come down from heaven (*descendet de caelo*), not indeed that city which is above, but the one below, that is the church

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, coll. 20, n. 19 (V, pp. 428-9).

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 19 (V, p. 346).

militant: when it will be conformed to the church triumphant, as far as is possible in the pilgrim way. Then there will be a building up of the city [*i.e., the soul*] and a restoration (*restitutio*) of it as it was in the beginning.⁸⁵⁹

b) *Reimagining the Visio Dei – The Recovery of the Imago Christi and the Coming Aetas Beatitudinis.*

It is at this point that a truly radical strand of thinking emerges in Bonaventure; one which reveals his understanding of the final *aetas pacis* to be far more innovative than anything which Joachim or his later, openly heterodox disciples postulated.⁸⁶⁰ If the soul is to be rendered fully *imago Christi* during this final *tempus*, then this implies, so Bonaventure's logic would seem to demand, that not only will it recover the innate wisdom which it once possessed in innocence, as well as the infused knowledge of grace enjoyed by the saints, prophets, and mystics; but, more importantly, that it will also be endowed with the *lumen gloriae* itself, just as was the case with Christ himself whilst he was in the pilgrim state. Thus, despite the fact that they live before the general resurrection and the breaking in of the *regnum Dei*, the human beings of this *tempus finalis* will be gifted with the vision of the divine essence itself, and thus like Christ – and indeed the blessed and angels in heaven – know God *sine medio* as well as the fullness of all reality in the divine ideas. Such a view of the timing of the *visio Dei* and the final consummation of human noetic is truly revolutionary and stands notably at odds with the teaching of both Joachim and Augustine, as well as the Catholic tradition in general.⁸⁶¹

⁸⁵⁹ *Collations*, coll. 16, n. 30, p. 249-50; for the identification of the soul with the celestial city cf. coll. 23, n. 4, p. 368.

⁸⁶⁰ Cf. *Influence*, pp. 17-27, 191-228.

⁸⁶¹ Cf. *Civ. Dei.*, bk. 20, chap.17, pp.292-3.

Strictly speaking, therefore, for Bonaventure the final age of humanity's earthly journey is not simply an *aetas pacis*, as Ratzinger tells us, but an *aetas beatitudinis*. It is an age in which the glory, joy, and noetic perfection of heaven will be realized *in terra*, at least as far as it can be in anticipation of the last judgment. During these last days, the *lumen gloriae* will be poured out upon each pilgrim soul and the veil between heaven and earth will begin to dissipate. This ability to see God face-to-face *in via* is something which, with the exception of Christ himself, Bonaventure tells us has never been realized within history. It is this, more so than anything else which sets the final *aetas beatitudinis* apart from the current age as well as the rest of salvation history. In it a truly new era of *revelatio* and noetic perfection will begin.⁸⁶² For all people, both in heaven and on earth, shall read from the *liber vitae* and thus reason like Christ himself.⁸⁶³ To this extent, Bonaventure reasons, it is only during these last days that the fullness of God's self-revelation, both in scripture and creation, will be given.⁸⁶⁴ Thus, it is only when the soul is truly *imago Christi* that *revelatio* will reach its climax.

c) *The Aetas Beatitudinis and the New Pentecost.*

Alongside the bestowal of the beatific vision, another noticeably radical element of Bonaventure's notion of a forthcoming *aetas beatitudinis* concerns the status of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁶⁵ During this final age, Bonaventure prophesizes that there will be a much deeper pouring forth, at least than is currently the case, of these key supernatural habits. That this is so is dictated by the requirements of the *imago Christi*. For if the soul is to be conformed fully to Christ then it must possess not only the *lumen gloriae*, but also the fullness of the

⁸⁶² *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, n. 29, p. 192.

⁸⁶³ *Hex.*, coll. 16, n. 30 (V, p. 408).

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, coll. 16, n. 29; coll. 17, n. 28 (V, pp. 408, 414).

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.* coll. 16, n. 29 (V, p. 408).

supernatural habits bestowed by the Spirit. Moreover, it must possess these to the same degree that Christ himself possessed them. To this extent, unlike the current age, the forthcoming *renovatio mundi* will witness something of a new Pentecost. In conjunction with its bestowal of the *lumen gloriae*, the Spirit will pour out the fullness of its gifts upon all members of the church and will do so in equal measure.⁸⁶⁶ The church of the final age, Bonaventure tells us, will thus consist purely of *viri spirituales*. It will be one in which the ardor of the *dona Spiritus* and the *excessus mentalis* brought about through gazing upon the divine essence *sine medio* are the sole guiding light of human intelligence.⁸⁶⁷

d) *The Aetas Beatitudinis and the Death of Reason and Philosophy.*

To Bonaventure's mind, as such, during the final age of beatitude the current pact between faith and reason, as well as the ability to learn through sense experience, will not only come to an end but will dissipate completely. This is so because reason itself, in all its forms, both sacred and profane, will cease to be necessary. Instead, through its gazing directly upon the *rationes aeternae* the soul will be infused with a perfect knowledge of creation. Thus, like Christ, it will have no need of acquired sensory knowledge – nor indeed the *speculum* of faith – in order to know God and creatures. Rather, it will see Him, and thereby His perfect ideas of all created beings, face-to-face: '*et videbimus eum sicuti est*' (1 Jn 3:2). Thus, with the advent of the *aetas beatitudinis*, natural philosophy, including Christian philosophy and that aspect of theology which incorporates reason – i.e. speculative, systematic theology – will die away and in its place shall stand a new, resplendant form of human noetic; one grounded in the *lumen gloriae* and the final consummation of the soul's identity as *imago Christi*. During these last

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, coll. 3, n. 13 (V, p. 345).

days *auctoritas* and *sapientia* will thus triumph over *ratio* and *scientia* and all people will be as wise as Christ.⁸⁶⁸ ‘And then’, Bonaventure tells us, ‘there shall be peace’ (*et tunc pax erit*).⁸⁶⁹

5.12) *Christ and the Anti-Christ: The Cosmic Quaestio Disputata.*

Just how Christ will overthrow the Anti-Christ and re-establish his own perfect wisdom as the exemplar of human noetic, Bonaventure does not explicitly state. However, a strong indication is to be found in the first *collatio* of the *Hexaemeron*.⁸⁷⁰ Here Bonaventure portrays Christ as entering into a great cosmic scholastic debate – a *quaestio disputata* – with the Devil; one which finds its fulfilment in the crucifixion, yet is still ongoing.⁸⁷¹ During this debate, Christ on account of his superior reasoning, outmanoeuvres the Devil by offering a perfect syllogism. He sacrifices himself upon the cross and thus confounds his opponent with his perfect humility; he produces an argument which the Devil can neither understand nor dispute.⁸⁷² However, on account of his ignorance, the Devil refuses to accept Christ’s perfect syllogism and thus persists in his false logic, turning his attention instead to attacking the church. Nonetheless, as the *comprehensor perfectus*, Christ continues to make a fool of the Devil – ‘*unde ipse illusit diabolo*’ – and continually ridicules him: ‘*sed Christus illusit ei*’.⁸⁷³

Bonaventure thus seems to envisage the final battle between Christ and the Anti-Christ – the Devil’s protégé – as being not only a participation in this cosmic scholastic *quaestio* but its final word and climax. Through the church’s striving with, and eventual triumph over, the Anti-Christ, Christ’s perfect wisdom, Bonaventure tells us, will finally silence the *argumentum*

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, coll. 17, n. 28 (V, p. 414).

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 16, n. 30 (V, p. 408).

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; cf. coll. 1, nn. 25-30 (V, pp. 233-4).

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*, cf. esp. nn. 25-7.

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*, nn. 27, 28 (V, p. 334).

diaboli. Christ will uproot the poisonous herb of the *lignum scientiae boni and mali* and cast it into the ‘bottomless pit’, thereby ushering in an age of peace and intellectual rectitude for the church. For Bonaventure, the great cosmic disputation between Christ and the Devil thus provides the backdrop to the church’s current struggles with the *argumentum antichristi* proffered by the *philosophi* and their disciples. As the church battles the Anti-Christ and the heresy of the Radical Aristotelians *in terra*, so Christ battles the Devil at a celestial level. In order to triumph over Aristotelianism, however, the true church – the *viri spirituales* – must hold fast to Christ’s *doctrinae* and retain its faith that it is he, and not any pagan philosopher, who is the *regula in natura* of human noetic. ‘This is our logic, this is our reasoning’ Bonaventure remarks, ‘which must be used against the devil who constantly argues with us’.⁸⁷⁴

Section 4

5.13) *Aristotle and the Anti-Christ – The Apocalyptic Anti-Aristotelian Imagery of the Hexaameron.*

Having outlined the *Hexaameron*’s eschatological schema and retraced its origins and purpose back to Bonaventure’s thought on Christ’s noetic, it is now possible to offer a fresh interpretation of several of the most important motifs – i.e. biblical images – which the text employs as part of its effort to reveal Aristotelianism as an apocalyptic phenomenon.

5.13.0) *The Individual Motifs of Apocalyptic Anti-Aristotelianism Employed by the Hexaameron Read in Light of Bonaventure’s Doctrine of Christ’s Knowledge.*

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 30, p. 16.

Whilst the *Hexaemeron* uses a seemingly inexhaustible number of biblical archetypes to critique Aristotelianism, the most notable of these, as we noted earlier, are the images of philosophy as: Pharaoh's magician, the beast from the abyss, harlot, and, finally, the doomed vessels of gold and silver. For the most part these are the images considered by Ratzinger in his influential study.⁸⁷⁵ Each forms an integral part of his attempt to show how Bonaventure's anti-Aristotelianism finds its origins and explanation within his "Joachite" interpretation of salvation history.⁸⁷⁶

Whilst accepting the general outline of Ratzinger's interpretation of these biblical motifs, this chapter moves beyond his thinking by reading these images in light of what has been revealed with regards to the central role Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic, and the eschatological significance which he attributes to it, plays in shaping the anti-Aristotelian narrative of the *Hexaemeron*. Through doing so it demonstrates how each of these images, as a distinct assault on Aristotelianism in their own right, function as a manifestation of the mature Bonaventure's conviction that Aristotelianism represents a demonically inspired attack upon the primacy of Christ's mind as the universal archetype of all human cognition. As will be seen, each is a concrete manifestation of Bonaventure's belief that Aristotelianism, like all unaided philosophy, is a sign of impending eschatological trauma and the destruction of the divinely organized schema of human wisdom authored through Christ's mind.

5.13.1) *Philosophy as Pharaoh's Magician.*

Whilst traditional medieval exegesis had seen in the failure of Pharaoh's magicians (*magi pharonis*) to combat the plagues of Egypt a symbol of the inability of the *philosophi* to arrive at a knowledge of the Trinity – such was the position of Peter Lombard – Bonaventure develops

⁸⁷⁵ Cf. *History*, pp. 149-59.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

this understanding so as to reveal Aristotelianism's opposition to the exemplary authority of Christ's mind.⁸⁷⁷ Like the sorcery of Pharaoh's magicians, Aristotelianism, he argues – be it the pagan reasoning of Aristotle himself or the nominally Christian philosophy of his Latin disciples – falls into the 'darkest of errors' because it tricks the soul into believing that it alone can lead it to beatitude.⁸⁷⁸ Aristotle and his disciplines are thus like the sorcerers of Egypt because they offer to bestow a wisdom which they themselves do not possess.⁸⁷⁹ They promise ten sciences, but deliver only nine.⁸⁸⁰ Moreover, in rejecting the exemplary authority of Christ's mind, they follow the Anti-Christ's example in setting their own false reasoning up as the perfection of human cognition. This is particularly true of the Radical Aristotelians who claim that it is Aristotle, and not Christ, who is the '*regula in natura*' all human learning.⁸⁸¹

Thus, as the magicians of Egypt led Pharaoh into blasphemy by claiming they could better the miracles of Moses, so Aristotle's Latin disciples – through their idolizing of the Stagirite's intellect – mislead the soul into believing that it was the Philosopher and not the Word Incarnate who possessed the totality of wisdom. At its most basic level, therefore, the image of philosophy as Pharaoh's magician is used by Bonaventure as a means of urging his associates to renounce the 'idolatry' and noetic 'sorcery' of Radical Aristotelianism and to place their trust in Christ, the true exemplar of human knowledge. 'This spirit [*i.e. Christ's perfect wisdom*] lifts up the soul and teaches unforeseen things. This is the finger of God which Pharaoh's magician cannot touch, that is, our mind'.⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁷ *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 30 (V, p. 341); cf. *Olivi quodlibeta*, 2, q. 5, f. 12va-vb. (Venice: Soardum, 1509).

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, coll. 7, n. 12 (V, p. 367).

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 5, n. 22 (V, p. 357).

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, coll. 4, n. 1 (V, p. 349).

⁸⁸¹ *Supra*.

⁸⁸² *Hex.*, coll. 2, n. 30 (V, p. 341); cf. *Delorme*, principium, coll. 2, n. 30, p. 31.

5.13.2) *Philosophy – The Beast from the Abyss.*

By far the most apocalyptic of the biblical archetypes Bonaventure uses to critique Aristotelianism is that of unaided natural reason as the ‘beast ascending from the abyss’ (*bestia ascendens de abyssso*).⁸⁸³ Here Aristotelianism, and all those who subscribe to it – i.e., the Radical Aristotelians – are condemned as the ‘smoke’ from the ‘bottomless pit’ (*putei abyssalis*).⁸⁸⁴ Boasting of the perfection of their own intellects, these philosophers ‘have become the likes of Lucifer’.⁸⁸⁵ Like the serpent in Eden, they seek to overshadow the true light of wisdom, the perfect knowledge of Christ, by leading others into the shadows of ignorance and *curiositas* – i.e. the threefold darkness of peripatetic philosophy: the doctrines of the eternity of the world, the unity of the human intellect, and the denial of exemplarism.⁸⁸⁶

Through these errors, the disciples of Aristotle follow the Anti-Christ in seeking to undermine the authority of Christ’s mind by exalting error over truth. For on the one hand, through rejecting the divine ideas and positing an eternal world, they deny that Christ mind’s – endowed with both created and divine knowledge – is the eternal exemplar from which all creation proceeds *ex nihilo*. Whilst on the other hand, in positing a common intellect for the whole of humanity, they negate the primacy of Christ’s noetic by suggesting that all people share the same intellect as him. After all, if there is only one intellect for the whole of humanity, then there is no distinction between Christ’s mind and that of the most ignorant of men, Aristotle. In this respect, Radical Aristotelianism reveals itself to be the ‘beast from the abyss’. Its disciples are the *vulpes* who have lain waste to mount Zion.⁸⁸⁷ They have set foot upon the

⁸⁸³ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 4, nn. 18-20, p. 187; cf. *Hex.*, coll. 15, n. 8 (V, p. 399); *Olivi Quaestiones de Perfectione Evangelica* (q. 16) in David Burr and David Flood ‘Peter Olivi: On Poverty and Revenue’, *Franciscan Studies*, 40 (1980), pp. 18-58, at p. 47.

⁸⁸⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 6, n. 5 (V, p. 361); cf. *Delorme*, vis. 1, coll. 3, n. 5, p. 92.

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, coll. 4, n. 1 (V, p. 349).

⁸⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, coll. 6, n. 5 (V, p. 361).

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, coll. 13, n. 7 (V, p. 389).

mountain of contemplation – i.e., the church – and ought therefore to be stoned as should all unclean things.⁸⁸⁸ Moreover, they drive away from the soul the medicine of *caritas* and the *dona Spiritus* by making it drink the *potius curiositatis*.

5.13.3) Reason as Harlot.

Perhaps the most well-known, if not infamous, image which the *Hexaemeron* employs in its apocalyptic anti-Aristotelianism is that of reason as the harlot from the Book of Revelation.⁸⁸⁹ Here philosophy, specifically the empirically driven speculation of Aristotelianism, is portrayed as the ultimate temptress – the whore of Babylon (Rev. 17: 3-6) – who seduces the soul away from ‘the beautiful bride’ given to it in the form of Christ’s perfect noetic in favour of being ‘coupled with the filthiest servant’: the unaided reason of peripatetic philosophy.

The Jews refused to listen to wisdom (*audire sapientiam*) from the mouth of Wisdom; and we who possess Christ within ourselves (*intra nos*) refuse to listen to His wisdom. This is the supreme abomination: that the most beautiful daughter of the king is offered to us as a bride, and we choose to be coupled (*volumus copulari*) with the filthiest servant and to deal with harlots.⁸⁹⁰

Offering to satisfy the soul’s basest desire – the acquisition of scientific knowledge – Aristotelianism is the temptress who seduces the mind away from Christ. It corrupts the soul by holding itself up as the true object and measure of human cognition and desire. To this extent, Aristotelianism prefigures the Anti-Christ’s forthcoming triumph when he will hold up his own distorted reason as the “true exemplar” of human knowledge. This, Bonaventure tells

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, coll. 5, n. 1 (V, pp. 354).

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 2, n. 7 (V, p. 337).

⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid. Collations*, p. 26.

us, is the supreme abomination at work within peripatetic thought: it prepares the way for the Anti-Christ by turning the soul away from Christ and towards that which is utterly alien to him: the fallen knowledge of sense experience. As such, it is to be shunned at all costs.

5.13.4) *Philosophy – The Doomed Vessels of Gold and Silver.*

Finally, Bonaventure's apocalyptic critique of Aristotelianism reaches its fullest expression in his image of philosophy as the doomed vessels of gold and silver.

Believe me, there shall come a time (*adhuc erit tempus*) when gold and silver vessels will be worthless, meaning arguments: nor shall there be any defence through reason (*nec erit defensio per rationem*), but only through authority.⁸⁹¹

Reflecting his belief in a coming final of *aetas beatitudinis*, Bonaventure predicts here not only the total destruction of all natural reason – and thereby Aristotelianism and all unaided, as well as aided, philosophical speculation – but also the eventual restoration of the *imago Christi*. The time is coming, he tells us, when the beast's ascendancy and his assault upon the soul and the *hierarchia scientiarum* will end and the true order of human learning will be restored. In this final age, the pact between *fides* and *ratio* will be dispensed with as the *lignum vitae* (i.e. the perfect noetic of Christ) will fully supplant the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* (the distorted reason of Aristotelianism) and all men, possessing the *imago Christi*, shall reason like the Word Incarnate. Soon will come a time of *novus revelatio et auctoritas*.

At its most basic level, what the image of the doomed vessels of gold and silver reveal is that for Bonaventure the marriage between theology and philosophy, faith and reason, is, to

⁸⁹¹ *Ibid.*, coll. 17, n. 28 (V, p. 414).

his mature mind at least, a temporary and unstable phenomenon; one which is soon to pass away. Thus, as Ratzinger notes, in the *Hexaemeron* Bonaventure predicts the end not only of philosophy – both Christian and pagan – but all speculative enquiry, including theology itself.⁸⁹² In the coming *aetas beatitudinis*, the soul will have no need for recourse to the natural sciences and subtle theological arguments. For like Christ and the blessed, it will live by the *lumen gloriae* and scripture alone. It will live by the ardor of *caritas* not *curiositas*. The stone which had once been turned into bread – Christian philosophy – will thus be discarded and humanity will feed unhindered, like Christ himself, from the true manner of all wisdom: the eternal Word. Gone will thus be the *summae* and *quaestiones disputatae* of the current age.

To this extent, it is clear that Bonaventure's apocalyptic anti-philosophical polemic is not directed purely at Aristotelianism, nor indeed at autonomous philosophical speculation *tout court* – though these are undisputedly its primary targets. Instead, it incorporates *all-natural reasoning*, including that which has been temporarily hallowed by faith. As such, to say that Bonaventure's prophecy of the end of all philosophical enquiry is directed solely at Aristotelianism is, as Ratzinger observes, to mistakenly reduce his eschatological polemic to an 'inner' philosophical question.⁸⁹³ In the end Bonaventure judges all natural reason, both Christian or pagan, as doomed to die since in the final age the soul will have no need for philosophical speculation. Ultimately reason cannot be saved through faith, but must pass away.

5. 14) Conclusion.

In light of all that has been said, it is clear that for Bonaventure salvation history and its relationship to his broader anti-Aristotelian narrative – just like his theology of the soul and his

⁸⁹² *History*, pp. 155-9.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

hierarchical ordering of the sciences – finds its grounding, explanation, and motivating principle within his doctrine of Christ's noetic. History and indeed the entire narrative of God's self-revelation, Bonaventure tells us, is directed towards a final cosmic *renovatio* – one in which the soul, being liberated from the ignorance of fallen reason and the *potio philosophiae*, will be conformed to the *mens Christi*. It will, even though still *in via*, be gifted with the *visio Dei* and the fullness of the *dona Spiritus*. This final *revelatio* will thus bring to fruition the noetic schema defined by Christ's mind as well as the return of the soul – and indeed the rest of creation – back to its original Christic exemplar and principle of illumination. Crucially, for our purposes, what this dynamic of history reveals is that for Bonaventure the pact between faith and reason, and thereby the status of philosophy – both Christian and pagan – *in istu statu*, is a highly fragile and transitory one. It is something which is soon to be replaced by a more perfect mode of cognitive illumination; one in which the soul, being elevated to a higher noetic plane, will be rendered truly *imago Christi* and thus know all finite truths in God *sine medio*.

Chapter 6

Christ the Light of All Wisdom:

Towards a New Reading of Bonaventure's Thought on Faith and Reason.

'Et haec est tota nostra metaphysica: de emanatione, de exemplaritate, de consumatione, scilicet illuminari per radios spirituales et reduci ad summum. Et sic eris verus metaphysicus'.

- Bonaventure, *Hex.*, coll. 1, n. 17 (V, p. 332).

6.0) Introduction.

Having demonstrated how Bonaventure's critique of Aristotelianism and natural philosophy is grounded within and critically determined by his thought on Christ's noetic, it remains to consider in this the last chapter what insights this study has to offer on the longstanding debate concerning his views on faith and reason.

6.1) Existing Interpretations of Bonaventure's Anti-Aristotelianism.

Before doing so, however, it is necessary to first consider some of the most influential interpretations which have been advanced on the subject. Namely, those of Étienne Gilson, Fernand Van Steenberghen, and Joseph Ratzinger.

6.1.0) Étienne Gilson – Bonaventure the "Anti-Aristotelian Augustinian".

As one of the most respected Bonaventurian scholars of the modern age, the French medievalist and philosopher Étienne Gilson, argued that – contrary to the claims of his Neo-Scholastic contemporaries – there was no one single philosophical school of thought during the thirteenth-century, but rather a duality of different philosophical movements – one "Augustinian", the

other “Aristotelian” – of which Bonaventure and Aquinas represent the clearest expressions, respectively.⁸⁹⁴ Where Aquinas – based upon a positive, though not uncritical, assessment of Aristotelianism – posited the existence of a distinct Christian philosophy which possesses its own integrity as an academic science and is thus capable of some consideration apart from his wider theological synthesis, Gilson argues that no such distinction can be found in Bonaventure.⁸⁹⁵ Instead, adopting a decidedly hostile attitude towards Aristotelianism, and emphasizing the poverty of unaided reason, the Seraphic Doctor, utterly rejects the suggestion that philosophy – within a Christian context at least – can exist independently of theology.

For him, like Augustine, theology is the “queen of the sciences”. As such, it is the architectonic discipline to which all other sciences must submit. Moreover, like theology, all other disciplines, philosophy included, possess the Word as their center and illuminating principle and are thus to be retraced back to Him. As such, in Gilson’s opinion whilst there is what he describes as a ‘coherent’ and ‘unified’ philosophical synthesis at work within Bonaventure’s thought, it is nonetheless a ‘heteronomous reality’.⁸⁹⁶ It places Christ at its center and thus cannot exist beyond the limits of his theology.⁸⁹⁷ Philosophy, for Bonaventure, is thus not only dependent upon the *lumen fidei* to achieve certainty, but it is, in the traditional Augustinian sense, the subservient tool of theology. Blind without faith, it derives its aims, objectives, and content from the sacred science.⁸⁹⁸ Gilson thus tells us that if by ‘philosophy’ we mean a distinct system of reason which possesses the capacity to study creation independent of the *lumen fidei* – such as is claimed to exist in Aquinas – then ‘there is no Bonaventurian philosophy, and from that point of view it is but just to treat it exactly as if it did not exist’.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁴ *Philosophy*, p. 485.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 112.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

For Gilson, Bonaventure – as the principal opponent of Aristotle – was the disciple of St. Augustine *par excellence*. He represents the last, greatest, and ‘most medieval’ expression of thirteenth-century ‘Augustinianism’.⁹⁰⁰ Upholding the Augustinian belief in the integral unity of ‘Christian wisdom’ which permits a formal distinction between *fides* and *ratio*, but denies the latter any autonomy beyond the limits defined by the former, Bonaventure – in sharp contrast to Aquinas’s ‘Christian Aristotelianism’ – engineered a new, highly systematized ‘anti-Aristotelian Augustinianism’; one centred around the doctrines of exemplarism and illumination.⁹⁰¹ The purpose of this ‘neo-Augustinianism’, Gilson tells us, was to act as a ‘bulwark’ against the naturalism of Aristotelianism – specifically its belief in the autonomy of reason and philosophy – and the incursion of the various philosophical novelties pioneered by Albert and Thomas.⁹⁰² Very much the product of a reactionary mindset, Bonaventure’s neo-Augustinianism sought, in effect, to offer a conservative alternative to Aquinas’s Christian Aristotelism; one which matched it in terms of systematic potency, yet looked to Augustine, rather than Aristotle, as its principle teacher. Under this revived Augustinianism, Bonaventure and his disciples ‘entrenched themselves more strongly than ever behind the Platonic-Augustinian philosophy that at that moment, was the only philosophy of the church’.⁹⁰³

According to Gilson, in Bonaventure’s opinion, Aristotle articulated a ‘dangerous’ and ‘false’ philosophical system.⁹⁰⁴ By rejecting illumination and exemplarism, he – unlike Plato and, in turn, Augustine – favoured the ‘knowledge of science’ over that of wisdom and was thus no ‘true metaphysician’.⁹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, Gilson is also clear that in Bonaventure’s view Plato also fell into serious error because, lacking the *lumen fidei*, he misinterprets the doctrine

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 481.

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 485-95.

⁹⁰² Cf. *Aquinas*, p. 16.

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁴ *Philosophy*, pp. 3-5.

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 96-104.

of exemplarism by neglecting the proper place of empirical reason in the fallen intellect; as such, his thought is by no means to be favoured over Aristotelianism.⁹⁰⁶ Instead, it is Augustine, and Augustine alone, who in Bonaventure's thinking is the *verus magister metaphysicae*; since he – unlike his pagan counterparts – possessed the light of faith and thus placed Christ at the center of his philosophy.⁹⁰⁷ To Bonaventure's mind, as such, all pagan philosophy is potentially toxic because lacking the *doctrinae revelationis* it knows nothing of Christ. Aristotelianism merely represents the worst of unaided natural reason. The only source of philosophical certainty is thus to be found in Augustine and those saints who reasoned in his wake.

Based upon this conclusion, Gilson argues that for Bonaventure any theological system which permits a distinct, non-Christ-centred philosophy – i.e. Thomism, Albertism, and Radical Aristotelianism – and grants it the autonomy to address the questions which theology alone is able to answer, concedes too much to reason at the expense of faith.⁹⁰⁸ For Gilson it is this refusal to permit reason any autonomy beyond the limits of faith, which distinguishes Bonaventure's thought from that of the Angelic Doctor.⁹⁰⁹ To Bonaventure's mind the inevitable result of Aquinas's interpretation of the distinction between *fides* and *ratio*, just like that of Albert's and the much more extreme position of the Radical Aristotelians, is that it mixes too much of the *aqua philosophiae* with the *vinum theologiae*. By abandoning Augustinian illumination in favour of pure Aristotelian abstraction, and entertaining the philosophical possibilities of the eternity of the world and the unity of the substantial form in man, Aquinas buys into the *stultitia Aristotelis* at the expense of the *sapientia Augustini*.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12; 474-5. Gilson is not overly clear about whether Bonaventure saw varying degrees of error in the positions of Aquinas, Albert, and the Radical Aristotelians. Rather, he appears to suggest that Bonaventure judges them as equally dangerous on account of their failure to place Christ at the centre of their respective philosophies.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

According to Gilson, Thomism thus errs in Bonaventure's opinion because – unlike his own thoroughgoing Augustinianism – it fails to place Christ at the center of its philosophy and thereby prioritize revelation over reason. For Bonaventure 'the philosophy of St. Albert and St. Thomas was of necessity in error because, while it situated Christ in the center of theology, it did not situate Him in the center of philosophy'.⁹¹⁰ Although great theologians and philosophers in themselves, St. Albert and St. Thomas thus "erred" in Bonaventure's opinion because in their enthusiasm to reconcile Aristotle with Christian faith they listened too much to the Stagirite. They placed too much trust in the *philosophia Aristotelis* and in the process forgot what exactly Christian philosophy is. The result is that they came too close for comfort to the Aristotelian definition of philosophy as an autonomous sphere of self-determined *ratio* and its erroneous assumption that the human intellect can describe reality, both at a physical and metaphysical level, without the guidance of the revealed data of faith.

Based upon this conclusion, Gilson detects in Bonaventure's thought from its earliest beginnings, an uncompromising, unchanging, and highly systematized anti-Aristotelianism. From the *Sentences Commentary* to the *Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure, he tells us, rejects Aristotelianism as a 'doctrine condemned'.⁹¹¹ Thus, the lack of comment on, or robust condemnation of, Aristotle within the *Sentences Commentary* and his other early works, is not, Gilson asserts, due to any theological and philosophical uncertainty. Still less is it because of an incomplete knowledge of Aristotle's writings. Rather, it is the product of an anti-Aristotelian mind-set which had already rejected peripatetic philosophy and moved beyond it. 'Aristotelianism', Gilson writes, 'was not a development of which he [Bonaventure] was unaware, but an error on which he had passed judgement'.⁹¹² As such, the increased level of anti-Aristotelian polemic found in Bonaventure's later works, most notably the *Hexaemeron*

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹¹² *Ibid.*

and the *Collationes de Septem Donis*, is not principally directed at the historical Aristotle.⁹¹³ Instead, it is a reaction against the growth of Radical Aristotelianism, which merely repeated, and by doing so confirmed, the heresy latent within the Stagirite's thought. Thus, for Gilson, there is no significant development within Bonaventure's attitude towards Aristotelianism, merely a clarification of it.⁹¹⁴ 'It was not St. Bonaventure who changed' he writes 'but the world that changed about him'.⁹¹⁵ From this perspective, the *Hexaemeron* is merely the fulfilment of the anti-Aristotelian narrative begun in the *Sentences Commentary*.

Crucially, however, Gilson notes that whilst Bonaventure may have been the champion of a deeply neo-Augustinian philosophy, he was not untouched by Aristotle himself. Thus – as we ourselves have seen – several key Aristotelian doctrines are to be found in Bonaventure's thought, albeit modified so as to cohere with his Augustinianism, and in some respects his indebtedness to Avicenna. Bonaventure, Gilson claims, adopted an eclectic attitude towards the Stagirite's philosophy. That which he found useful in Aristotle he gratefully received, provided it did not contradict the teachings of faith. More often than not, however, Bonaventure found himself indebted to Aristotle without even realizing this was the case. 'Thus, the attitude of St. Bonaventure' Gilson remarks 'remained in opposition to the doctrine of Aristotle, even though Aristotelianism had, at several points, coloured his own thought, unwittingly to himself'.⁹¹⁶

6.1.1) Fernand Van Steenberghen – Bonaventure the "Eclectic Aristotelian".

⁹¹³ Since he had already been condemned by Bonaventure in his early works.

⁹¹⁴ *Philosophy*, p. 35.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁹¹⁶ *Aquinas.*, p. 16.

Although questioned by several scholars, the first significant challenge to Gilson's thought came from the Belgian medievalist Fernand Van Steenberghen.⁹¹⁷ Approaching Bonaventure's writings from the perspective of his extensive research into the reception of Aristotelianism within the Latin West, Van Steenberghen questions the notion of a unified "Augustinianism" at work in Paris prior to the condemnation of 1277. For him, Gilson is wrong to portray the theological climate of the mid-thirteenth-century as a dialectic between "Augustinianism" and "Aristotelianism" which achieved their respective pinnacles in Bonaventure and Aquinas. By no means "Augustinian" or "anti-Aristotelian", as Gilson understands these terms, Bonaventure's interpretation of faith and reason, and thereby his thought on theology and philosophy, is – like that of his contemporaries – much more fluid than Gilson allows.

In part, he tells us, this was due to the fact Bonaventure had a far from complete knowledge of peripatetic thought. This was so because the Aristotelian corpus had yet to be fully assimilated within the Latin West at the time when he composed his major works. How, Van Steenberghen asks, could Bonaventure reject a system of which he did not know?⁹¹⁸ More importantly, at the time Bonaventure began to articulate his theological vision Aristotle's concept of philosophy as a distinct, independent academic science had yet to be fully grasped by scholastic thinkers. Prior to the "Thomist revolution", thirteenth-century theologians merely regarded philosophy as a subservient tool of theology, not as an autonomous discipline as Thomas later taught it to be. Subsequently, Van Steenberghen concludes there can be no grounds for accepting Gilson's claim that Bonaventure sought to offer a distinctly anti-Aristotelian or anti-philosophical "Augustinian" theological synthesis.

Based upon this conviction, Van Steenberghen also rejects Gilson's belief that there is a unified philosophical vision at work in Bonaventure's thought. Instead he argues that whilst

⁹¹⁷ Cf. *Aristotle in the West*, pp. 147-162.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

later in life Bonaventure accepted the existence of philosophy as an independent science as described by St. Thomas, he nonetheless failed to construct such a philosophy himself. As such, the unity of the Seraphic Doctor's thought is 'certainly not a philosophical unity' but a theological one.⁹¹⁹ What Gilson describes as Bonaventure's 'heteronomous philosophy' is 'nothing else than his theological speculation, that is to say, the use of philosophical themes in the interpretation of revealed doctrine'.⁹²⁰ Bonaventure, like the majority of his contemporaries – with the exception of Aquinas – was thus not a true philosopher, but a theologian who, at best, possessed an 'eclectic' attitude towards Aristotelianism and saw no firm, still less dialectical, distinction between faith and reason.⁹²¹ Thus, the 'Christian philosophy' which Gilson presents as Bonaventure's is nothing but a 'mutilated exposition of his theology'.⁹²² It is merely a misinterpretation of Bonaventure's 'theological speculation'.⁹²³

For Van Steenberghen, as such, whilst Bonaventure the theologian may be "Augustinian" in tone, at the level of 'eclectic philosopher' he is – like his contemporaries – a 'neo-Platonizing Aristotelian'.⁹²⁴ His fragmented, fundamentally *ad hoc* philosophy is an 'eclectic Aristotelianism with neo-Platonizing tendencies put at the service of an Augustinian theology'.⁹²⁵ At a philosophical level, as such, Bonaventure's most basic philosophical positions – his allegiance to universal hylomorphism, his doctrine of a personal active intellect, etc. – are 'genuinely Aristotelian', albeit imperfectly formed.⁹²⁶ In short, 'an exceedingly large

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹²¹ 'Dominated as he was by the point of view of faith and theology, he does not seem to have seen the necessity, even from this point of view, of guaranteeing the autonomy of philosophical research'. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁹²² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 157. Note also Van Steenberghen's comment at this point: 'and since St. Bonaventure never wrote any philosophical works, we are reduced to delving into his theological writings in search of his philosophical opinions'.

⁹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁹²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

part of the philosophy bequeathed to the world by Aristotle has been inherited by Bonaventure'.⁹²⁷ In this respect at least, Bonaventure was no different from other Christian Aristotelians. The only difference between them is that Bonaventure chose not to employ his Aristotelian inheritance in the service of constructing a philosophical vision.

Given his belief that there was no distinct anti-Aristotelian school of thought at work in Paris prior to 1277, Van Steenberghen thus sees in Bonaventure a more considerate, ultimately more nuanced, approach towards Aristotle and philosophy than Gilson allows. Far from the radical "Augustinian" who dismissed Aristotelianism and all unaided philosophy from his first contact with it, Bonaventure, like all scholastics during the 1250's, offered a limited but nonetheless positive, estimation of Aristotle's teachings. As such, "Aristotelianism" was not perceived by Bonaventure, nor any of his so-called "anti-Aristotelian" disciples, as the naturalistic enemy of Christian faith; but rather as a useful tool for theological reflection. At all times Bonaventure 'pushes the favourable interpretation of Aristotle to the utmost, and when his errors are undeniable, even tries to excuse them'.⁹²⁸

Bonaventure, according to Van Steenberghen, was thus an incipient Thomist. He offers a foretaste of the Christian Aristotelianism which was to be perfected by Aquinas. Consequently, the forceful anti-Aristotelian statements found in his later works, specifically the *Hexaameron*, are not directed at the historical Aristotle himself; instead, they are a condemnation of the heterodox thought of the Radical Aristotelians. For Bonaventure, it was Radical Aristotelianism, not Aristotelianism *per se*, which was in error. The former was merely a perversion of the latter. As such, commenting on Bonaventure's treatment of Aristotle in the *Sentences Commentary*, Van Steenberghen concludes: 'his attitude towards Aristotle shows neither mistrust nor hostility, nor condemnation, but only esteem, respect and sympathy'.⁹²⁹

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁹²⁹ *Ibid.*

6.1.2) *Joseph Ratzinger/ Pope Benedict XVI – Bonaventure the “Apocalyptic Anti-Aristotelian”.*

Given Ratzinger’s interpretation of Bonaventure’s attitude towards Aristotelianism has already been discussed in the previous chapter it need only be touched on briefly here. Published in 1959, Ratzinger’s *Habilitationsschrift* has, as Andreas Speer notes, gained almost canonical status within English-speaking theology, particularly as regards his views on Aristotle and philosophy in general.⁹³⁰ Although rejecting Gilson’s notion of Bonaventure as the founder of an anti-Aristotelian “neo-Augustinian” movement, Ratzinger nonetheless accepts Gilson’s premise that there is an essentially “Augustinian” hierarchical interpretation of theology and philosophy at work within Bonaventure’s thought. For him, the mature Bonaventure – like Augustine – permits reason no autonomy beyond the limits of faith. However, as seen, Bonaventure situates this belief within a distinctly ‘Joachite’ interpretation of history; one which, predicting the imminent arrival of an *aetas pacis*, rejects Aristotelianism and its incorporation within the Christian tradition, as the forerunner of the Anti-Christ.

Furthermore, contrary to Gilson, Ratzinger – in part influenced by his decision to consider a number of ‘Bonaventurian’ texts not included within the Quaracchi *Opera Omnia*, specifically the short extracts of the *Quaestiones de Prophetia* and *Quaestiones de Divinatione* contained in the work of Bruno Decker – maintains, in agreement with Van Steenberghen, that the early Bonaventure did not adopt a hostile attitude towards Aristotelianism and the notion of an independent philosophy. Instead, he moved in a direction that ‘shows a very close approximation to the doctrine of St. Thomas’.⁹³¹ The hostile rejection of Aristotelianism found

⁹³⁰ Andreas Speer, ‘Bonaventure and the Question of Medieval Philosophy’ in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997), pp. 25-46, esp. p. 30.

⁹³¹ Cf. *History*, n. 55, p. 350.

in the *Hexaemeron*, he tells us, is the product of a reactionary anti-Aristotelian mind-set which developed in the mature Bonaventure – under the influence of Joachism – only after his magisterial period. Later in life, Bonaventure, in effect, changed from an Aristotelian sympathiser, if not enthusiast, like Aquinas, to a hostile critique who rejected Aristotelianism, and all natural reason, as a dangerous eschatological phenomenon.

Echoing Gilson, Ratzinger thus notes that it would be wrong to regard Bonaventure's condemnation of unaided philosophy as restricted to Aristotelianism. Rather, it extends to all non-Christian philosophy. Contrary to Gilson, however, Ratzinger maintains that Bonaventure pursues a critique of natural reason not because he wished to reveal Augustine as the 'true metaphysician', but rather because he wanted to show that *all* philosophical speculation – Augustine's included – is a transient, ultimately doomed phenomenon; one which is soon to be replaced by a super-infused abundance of mystical illumination. For Bonaventure, it is thus the threat of philosophy as an independent academic science, and not simply Aristotelianism, which is the real enemy of Christian wisdom. The worst kind of philosophy, Aristotelianism merely confirms that which Bonaventure had come to realize in later life: all independent reason, regardless of whether it be Christian or Pagan, inevitably leads to error.

For the mature Bonaventure, as such, any philosophy which fails to recognize its true function as a servant of theology inevitably falls into idolatry and thus reveals itself to be an 'eschatological sign of perdition'.⁹³² The threat of Aristotelianism is not just a challenge to the authority of theology – as Gilson claimed – but a direct, demonically inspired attack upon Christ himself as the universal centre of all knowledge.⁹³³ Ratzinger is quick to insist, however, that this 'apocalyptic' anti-Aristotelianism does not imply that Bonaventure rejects philosophy all together, but merely that he regards it as a transient phenomenon – both in its Christian and

⁹³² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-9.

pagan forms – which along with speculative theology will eventually be dispensed with. The truth of revelation will endure forever, but the light of reason is soon to die.

6.2) Bonaventure, Christ's Knowledge, and Aristotle – Towards a New Interpretation of the Seraphic Doctor's Understanding of Faith and Reason.

Having outlined the three most influential interpretations of Bonaventure's thought on Aristotelianism and philosophy, it is now possible to critically assess what contributions this study has to make to the current debate concerning Bonaventure's views on faith and reason; and how, in turn, its interpretation of this issue varies from – and builds upon – the positions of Gilson, Van Steenberghen, and Ratzinger.

6.2.0) Seeing the Problem: The Most Divisive Questions Facing Bonaventurian Scholarship Concerning Bonaventure's Thought on Faith and Reason.

As noted in the introductory chapter, to achieve this goal, it is proposed that we consider four of the most divisive questions which have arisen concerning Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason and view these in light of the central role which Bonaventure's interpretation of Christ's noetic plays in shaping his views on Aristotelianism and philosophy.

It will be recalled from the first chapter that these questions are: Is there a coherent philosophical vision at work within Bonaventure's thought? And, if so, can it be considered independently of his theology? Second, to what extent is it possible to speak of a development within Bonaventure's Christology and his attitude towards Aristotelianism; and how are these two areas related? Third, to what extent does Bonaventure condemn the historical Aristotle? For example, are his condemnations of Aristotelianism a rejection of Aristotle himself or his Latin disciples? And fourth, how does Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason differ from Aquinas's? As the introductory chapter noted, continued disagreement over these questions, or

in some cases an explicit failure to address them, particularly by recent scholarship, is what has prohibited a unified interpretation of Bonaventure's thought from emerging.

Through considering each of these questions in light of Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge, we shall now attempt to sketch out the basic parameters of a series of new responses to them; ones which not only build upon the work of Gilson, Ratzinger, and Van Steenberghen, but points towards a notably different horizon against which the debate concerning Bonaventure's views on faith and reason ought to be addressed. Of course because of the confines of space what follows is limited and thus cannot claim to offer the definitive word to the questions addressed; it can merely offer the beginnings of a new response to them.

It is worth recalling that this study is in position to offer a fresh perspective on Bonaventure's thought because it has had the advantage of having access to a much broader range of edited and unedited works attributed to Bonaventure than were available to either Gilson, Van Steenberghen, or Ratzinger. These not only include works that have been edited since the publication of the Quaracchi *Opera Omnia*, but also a large selection of works which still remain unedited and therefore beyond the reach of general Bonaventurian scholarship. Of particular importance are those contained in the early Bonaventurian autograph Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, as well as several other works identified by this study. As will be seen, each of the neglected texts examined by this study proves instructive when seeking to understand the dynamics of the Bonaventurian vision of faith and reason.

6.2.1) The Four Most Divisive Questions Concerning Bonaventure's Thought on Faith and Reason Read in Light of his Doctrine of Christ's Knowledge.

Although very much interrelated and standing at the heart of the debate concerning Bonaventure's views on faith and reason, each of the four questions identified above is an area of debate in its own right; each, therefore, is worthy of independent consideration.

6.2.1.0) *Q 1) Is there a Coherent Philosophical System at Work in Bonaventure's Thought; and, if so, Can it be Considered Independently of His Theology?*

Perhaps the most fundamental of these four questions is whether there is a coherent philosophical system at work within Bonaventure's thought; and, if so, whether it can be considered independently of his theological speculation – i.e., as a separate intellectual synthesis? The answer to this question is a long one; as such, I shall break my response down into smaller sub-sections.

a) *The Importance of Entering into the "Spirit" of Bonaventure's Thought and Judging His Philosophy According to His Own Standards.*

As we have seen it is on this particular question that Gilson, Van Steenberghen, and Ratzinger disagree most. As suggested at the beginning of this study, in order to answer it, it is necessary for us to have not only a solid working knowledge of Bonaventure's writings – both edited and unedited – but also, and perhaps more importantly, a clear grasp of the unifying spirit which runs throughout these writings; and how, in turn, it serves to critically determine his thought on the status of philosophy and its relationship to theology. It is necessary, in short, for us to understand the "guiding principle" of Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason. What though is this principle? And how, in turn, does it unify Bonaventure's thinking? The answer to these questions, as we have seen, lies in Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic – specifically his belief that the mind of the Incarnate Word is the universal *causa formalis* and *causa finalis* of all licit creaturely cognition. As the previous chapters have indicated, it is this conviction, more

so than any other, which critically determines Bonaventure's interpretation of *fides* and *ratio* and the place – or perhaps lack thereof – which *philosophia* occupies within his intellectual synthesis. This is a truth which eluded Gilson, Van Steenberghen, and Ratzinger.

b) *Philosophia in Lumine Mentis Christi.*

In order to understand this study's response to this question it is necessary for us to recall the main insights of the previous chapters and to thread these together into one coherent whole.

To recap: for Bonaventure, philosophy is, at its most basic level, an essentially illegitimate, radically flawed discipline. It is one which fails to find any expression within Christ's mind and cannot, as such, claim to be an integral – or indeed natural – part of human noetic. As chapters three and four revealed, a distorted remnant of Adam's innate knowledge, philosophy – along with the capacity for noetic progress by abstracting intelligible species – is, in Bonaventure's thinking, little more than a pallid imitation of Christ's own perfect noetic.⁹³⁴ The fruit of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali*, it arose as a result of Adam's sin and the rendering of the soul a *tabula rasa*. As such, regardless of whatever form it takes, philosophy cannot claim to be an intrinsic or naturally licit part of human noetic. It must therefore be judged accordingly. This is so because whatever Christ himself – as the exemplar of all graced learning – did not plant within the garden of the soul, must be 'uprooted' and cast aside as a poisonous weed.⁹³⁵ Philosophy, as we have seen, is one such weed. It is the foul tasting leeks and garlic of Egypt; the distasteful fodder fit only for the lowest swine.⁹³⁶

Yet despite its overtly negative origins Bonaventure nonetheless takes the existence of philosophy *hic et nunc* seriously. As such, he strives to offer a careful elucidation of what

⁹³⁴ *Supra*.

⁹³⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 17, n. 5 (V, p. 410).

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*, coll. 19, n. 18 (V, p. 423).

exactly philosophy is and how, in turn, it functions. At its most basic level, philosophy, it will be recalled, is that knowledge which the human intellect can acquire about creation, and through it God, using the rational powers of the soul alone.⁹³⁷ In contrast to theology, therefore, philosophy – at the level of its immediate object of enquiry – thus deals with knowledge (*notitia*) as opposed to belief (*credibilis*): ‘*scientia philosophiae est veritas scrutabilis notitia certa*’.⁹³⁸ Sub-divided into rational, natural, and moral philosophy, the *lumen philosophiae* has at its height the science of metaphysics.⁹³⁹ This is that aspect of philosophy which inquires into the ‘higher substances’ and concerns itself with the study of being.⁹⁴⁰ In each of its different spheres, however, philosophy, be it practiced by Christians or non-Christians, is nonetheless grounded in the noetic which comes about through the abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra* using the *agens intellectus*. It is this, it will be recalled, which renders it *contra Christum*.

However, as we have also seen, based upon the conviction that no aspect of human intelligence is so irredeemably flawed that it cannot, through an ascent of faith, be healed by God’s grace, Bonaventure is also clear that there is a real distinction to be drawn between two very different types of philosophical speculation.⁹⁴¹ The first is that which is open to the tutelage of faith and allows itself to be reconciled with the hierarchy of knowledge which Christ’s mind defines – i.e. “Christian philosophy”.⁹⁴² The second, by contrast, is that philosophy which persistently abjures in error by rejecting the *lumen revelationis* and thus remains wholly outside the correct order of human enquiry; namely, the naturalistic reason of the *philosophi*, particularly that of Aristotle and the disciples of Averroes.⁹⁴³ Thus, despite his assertions about philosophy’s essentially “illicit” origins, Bonaventure is nonetheless clear that,

⁹³⁷ *De Reductione*, n. 4 (V, p. 320).

⁹³⁸ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 6 (V, p. 474).

⁹³⁹ *De Reductione*, n. 4 (V, p. 321).

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴¹ Cf. *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 2, ad. 3 (V, p. 57).

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*, ad. 10 (V, p. 58).

through the sanitizing effects of the *lumen fidei*, philosophy can find some reconciliation with the *verus ordo scientiarum*. It can, in short, be redeemed by grace and taken up by Christians as a provisionally licit *scientia*. As such, a careful distinction must always be made between “sacred” and “profane” reasoning – i.e., “Christian” and “non-Christian” philosophy.

For Bonaventure, the central difference between these two types of philosophy stems from their differing relationships with Christ and their opposing thrusts of enquiry. Non-Christian philosophy, he tells us, is that strand of philosophical enquiry, be it pagan or nominally Christian, which pursues its rational enquiry in a Christic vacuum. It reasons in such a way that it neither places Christ at its center; nor does it accept the *lumen fidei*. That is to say, it rejects Christ’s authority as the *fontale principium* of all right-reasoning and thus it does not encourage the soul to conform itself to Christ by transitioning to the superior noetic of theological contemplation. Instead, it encourages the soul to remain content with the study of creatures and to regard creation as a realm fully knowable independent of faith. To this extent, turning its back on the *argumentum Christi*, this non-Christian philosophy embraces the false logic of the *argumentum diaboli*.⁹⁴⁴ It drinks solely from the *potio curiositatis*. As such, it is not illuminated by the *radii spirituales* needed to achieve metaphysical and philosophical wisdom; and nor, as such, does it know the true source of all certainty: the *Verbum Dei*.

Christian philosophy, by contrast, moves in a very different direction. It is that strand of philosophy which, both respecting and confessing Christ’s perfect wisdom as the primary, and indeed only, source of noetic certainty, deliberately places Christ at its center and thus submits its natural reason to the guidance – and where necessary, correction – of his teaching. It is thus best described as the product of a mind which always conducts its natural reasoning in *lumine mentis Christi*. Furthermore, unlike the naturalistic reasoning of Aristotelianism, it

⁹⁴⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 1, nn. 25-30 (V, pp. 233-4).

actively wills and supports the soul's *regressus* back to its one, true teacher, Christ. It does so, it will be recalled, by revealing creation's inner metaphysical depths as a *vestigium Dei* and by allowing itself to act as a *transitus*, rather than a hinderance, to the study of the superior noetic associated with theology and the knowledge of grace. Confessing its own noetic limitations, Christian philosophy, in short, is a discipline, which actively wills its practitioners to move beyond its own sphere of knowledge into the nobler sciences of faith and theology. As such, when properly construed it never estimates itself to be more than 'the road to the other sciences'.⁹⁴⁵ Indeed, if it attempted to do otherwise it would fall into darkness.⁹⁴⁶

To this extent, so Bonaventure tells us, the key to understanding Christian philosophy and how it operates within the economy of Christian wisdom is *humilitas*. It is this virtue more so than any other which allows Christian philosophy to serve the nobler wisdom of theology and the *regressus* of all noetic back to Christ. Humility is that which allows Christian philosophy to value itself not as an end in itself but rather as a means to a higher noetic end: the soul's recovery of the *imago Christi*. Quoting Augustine's Letter to Discorus, Bonaventure thus remarks that humility is the '*principia pars philosophiae Christianae*'.⁹⁴⁷

Those who honour God give honour and glory to Him alone; but only the humble honour God. Therefore it is clear that only the humble glorify him... This is the first part of Christian philosophy. For Discorus asked St. Augustine: "what principally is Christian philosophy?". And Augustine responded to him saying: "if you ask what is the first thing in rhetoric, I will say to you: eloquence. And if you ask what is the second, or the third, or indeed even the hundredth thing in rhetoric, my response will always be the same: eloquence. And so I say to you

⁹⁴⁵ CSGHS., coll. 4, n. 12, p. 93.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁷ *Ecce.* (IX, p. 578).

in a similar manner, if you ask what is Christian philosophy and what is its primary part, I say to you, and always will do: humility”.⁹⁴⁸

Crucially, however, Bonaventure is clear that whilst Christian philosophy may place Christ at its ‘center’ this does not mean that the truths of belief – i.e., the data of revelation and thereby the truths of theology and scripture – are its primary objects of study.⁹⁴⁹ For Bonaventure even when it is placed within a Christian context, and called to serve the soul’s noetic *regressus* back to Christ, philosophy still concerns truths that are knowable through reason rather than faith.⁹⁵⁰ Theology alone concerns the object of belief.⁹⁵¹ Thus, when Bonaventure insists that Christ is the center of Christian philosophy he is not stating that Christ is the subject matter of this philosophy, but merely that he serves as its illuminating center and guiding principle. At all times Christian philosophy must reason *in lumine Christi*; however, it still functions *as philosophy* – i.e., it still possesses creatures, or in the case of metaphysics, being, as its primary object of study. In this respect, at least, it is no different to non-Christian philosophy. What separates it from the latter, is the spirit with which it pursues its rational enquiry. Instead, of ignoring Christ’s perfect wisdom or seeking to contradict it, it strives to promote the fruition of the noetic economy which Christ’s mind defines; and is, in turn, thus gifted with the supernatural habits of charity, understanding, and wisdom.

c) *The Purpose of Christian Philosophy: Philosophia and the Restoration of the Imago Christi.*

⁹⁴⁸ *Ecce.* (IX, pp. 578-9).

⁹⁴⁹ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, nn. 2-6 (V, p. 474).

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, nn. 5-6.

⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The primary factor which distinguishes Christian philosophy from its pagan counterpart, however, is how it relates to the soul's eschatological vocation of recovering its identity as *imago Christi*. Unlike pagan philosophy, which as we have seen throughout this study, is radically opposed to the soul's noetic *regressus ad Christum*, Christian philosophy, can under the tutelage of theology and the *affectus* of charity, actively support this process. As will be recalled from chapter four, it does so in several unique ways. Three, however, stand out as being of particular importance. First, and most elementary, Christian philosophy allows the soul to understand something of the natural order *secundum suam essentiam*. At this level, it allows the soul to recover a *vestigium* – albeit a pale and highly imperfect one – of the complete knowledge of creatures which Adam once enjoyed in innocence and which Christ so fully embodies. Second it allows the soul, through the support of the *dona Spiritus*, to pursue the science of exemplarism; that is to say, it allows the soul to see creatures not just as an object of material study, but as a window into the divine ideas and as an opportunity for sapid contemplation. In this respect, Christian philosophy allows the soul to begin to conform itself to the perfect metaphysical acuity possessed by Christ and the *sancti*. Finally, as we have seen, it actively promotes the soul's transition to the higher truths of theology and aids it in understanding the *lumen revelationis* by elucidating it and providing proofs in support of it.

Bonaventure tells us that, to the extent that Christian philosophy fulfils these roles, it allows itself take on a quasi-sacramental character. Aided by the sanitizing grace of the *ignis caritatis* and the *dona Spiritus*, it – like the more noble sphere of theological wisdom – serves as a noetic medium or vessel whereby the soul, upon hearing the call of its master, the Word Incarnate, can begin to participate in the economy of graced noetic which he has authored. Moreover, it offers the soul the ability to read the the *liber naturae* correctly and thus begin its first steps on the *hierarchia scientiarum* and the recovery of the *imago Christi*. Through the assistance of Christian philosophy, creation thus appears to the soul as it was intended to appear – as a means

of God's 'self-revelation' – which inspires us to 'love and praise God'.⁹⁵² Pagan philosophy, however, Bonaventure insists, fulfils none of these roles. Infected with *curiositas*, and lacking the affective rectitude brought about through *caritas* and the *dona Spiritus* it emphasizes the study of the creature's literal word – i.e., its physical qualities – and thus remains blind to its hidden metaphysical and spiritual depths. To this extent, pagan philosophy has the quality of a pseudo-sacrament: it promises to bestow *sapientia* and noetic rectitude but instead deforms the soul, thereby hindering its *regressus ad Christum*. It does so by feeding it the poisoned fruit of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* – i.e., the *argumentum diaboli*. More on this later.

d) *Christian philosophy: The Product of Sin used as a Medicine Against the Symptoms of Sin.*

Here we see something of the great paradox at the heart of Bonaventure's estimation of philosophy; one which Bonaventure himself no doubt was well aware of and must have found supremely ironic. Like the speculation of the *philosophi*, Christian philosophy can trace its origins back to the fall. It, just like pagan philosophy and the lower mechanical arts, arose as a result of Adam's sin and the loss of the mind's exemplary likeness to Christ. Moreover, on account of its reliance upon the *agens intellectus* and the abstraction of intelligible species *ab extra*, it employs a noetic method alien to the one which Christ himself perfected and which humanity was originally designed to possess. Yet, despite all this Bonaventure still believes that this product of sin can, through the healing touch of God's grace, be utilized to help restore something of that which it originally helped to destroy: namely, our original rectitude as *imago Christi*. Here lies the supreme irony at the heart of Bonaventure's thinking. That which precipitated the loss of our Christic likeness – our desire to know the material world – is

⁹⁵² *Brev.*, pars 2, chap. 11, p. 94.

actually called to serve our recovery of it. Through a wonderful paradox and fittingness the fruit of the *lignum scientiae*, Bonaventure tells us, can be turned into a medicine for sin. Thus, to borrow a quote from his remarks concerning the material elements of the sacraments, ‘in this way, as sensible objects had been the occasion of the fall of the soul (*fuertunt animae occasio labendi*), they ought also to be the occasion of its rising again (*occasio resurgendi*)’.⁹⁵³

e) *Christian Philosophy as a Tool of Theology.*

It is important to note that whilst Bonaventure is clear that Christian philosophy is always formally distinct from theology, he nonetheless believes that certain aspects of it, can, and indeed should, be appropriated by, and indeed used *within*, the sacred science itself.⁹⁵⁴ It is this conviction, perhaps more so than any other, which has caused confusion concerning the noetic object of Bonaventure’s philosophy and the accusation that he confuses *philosophia* with *theologia*. The utilization of philosophical speculation, in particular metaphysics, by theology, Bonaventure tells us, is required because it is only through the application of reason to faith – that is to say, theology’s constructive appropriation of philosophical language – that the ‘object of belief passes over into intelligibility’ (*credibile transit in rationem intelligibilis*).⁹⁵⁵ As the *Breviloquium* puts it, theology ‘subjects [*Christian*] philosophical knowledge to itself (*substernens sibi philosophicam cognitionem*)’ and borrows from it what it needs to ‘construct (*fabricandum*) a mirror for the representation of divine realities’.⁹⁵⁶ Thus, within the context of theological speculation, the use of philosophy can – and indeed does – serve a valuable role.

⁹⁵³ *Brev.*, pars. 6., chap. 1, n. 3, p. 212.

⁹⁵⁴ Cf. *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 44vb.

⁹⁵⁵ *I Sent.*, proe., q. 1, resp. (I, p. 7).

⁹⁵⁶ *Brev.*, prol., p. 12. Italics added.

It helps the theologian to elucidate the data of revelation; and, where appropriate, to construct proofs for the confirmation, promotion, and defense of the Christian faith.⁹⁵⁷

Crucially, however, Bonaventure is clear that the appropriation of Christian philosophy by theologians must not go too far. Philosophy, for example, can never lead the theologian to a perfect understanding of the divine mystery or any of the articles of faith. As such, the theologian must constantly be on guard against the error of believing that her philosophizing will render the data of faith fully comprehensible to her. Instead, like Christ's saints, she should remember that whilst philosophical reason has its place in theological speculation, the greatest illumination comes through the sapid wisdom of prayer and the ability to walk '*in simplicitate fidei*'.

Sacred scripture is indeed difficult to understand on account of its great profundity. For there are others who wish to determine the mystery of the Trinity (*determinare mysterium Trinitatis*) through philosophy, and they do not know what they are saying. For in order to be learned in these things, you ought to walk in the simplicity of faith (*in simplicitate fidei ambulare*).⁹⁵⁸

f) Christian philosophy as a Temporary Affair.

Despite his conviction that philosophy can, and indeed should, be reconciled with the economy of Christian wisdom – both in terms of its appropriation by theology and its more general use by the soul in its *regressus* back to Christ – as we saw in chapter five, Bonaventure is

⁹⁵⁷ *I Sent.*, proe., q. 2, resp. (I, pp. 9-10). Indeed, the incorporation of philosophical reasoning and language within theology is demanded by the fact that as the highest of the sciences theology has the right to utilize from the lower disciplines that which it finds useful and 'well-said'. Cf. *3 Sent.*, dist. 24, art. 3, q. 1, resp. (III, p.518).

⁹⁵⁸ *Medius*. (IX, p. 64).

nonetheless clear, at least within his mature writings, that this rehabilitation of philosophy within a Christian context is a fundamentally transient and temporary affair. It is one which his “Joachite” model of biblical exegesis predicts is soon to pass away. During the coming *aetas beatitudinis* the exemplary relationship between Christ’s mind and the soul will be realized in full and all people, being gifted with a direct vision of the divine ideas and thereby a complete knowledge of all created species, will reason like the Incarnate Word himself – i.e., *sine philosophia*. Thus, in the not so distant future, Christian philosophy, like so many other forms of noetic *in istu statu*, including the *speculum fidei*, will be abandoned as a relic of the past.

Therefore in the present life (*in vita ista*) there are six illuminations; and they have their evening (*habent vesperam*), for all knowledge will be destroyed (*quia omnia scientia destruetur*). And therefore they will be followed by a seventh day of rest, a day which knows no evening, namely the illumination of glory.⁹⁵⁹

At its most basic level, therefore, in Bonaventure’s thinking philosophy’s incorporation within the economy of Christian wisdom, and its use to promote the soul’s noetic *regressus* back to Christ, is a highly provisional one. It is something which occurs merely as an anticipation of the arrival of a superior, far more illuminative mode of noetic. As such, the current Christian appropriation of philosophy occurs not because of any intrinsic value of philosophical knowledge; nor indeed is it because philosophy itself is called to some supernatural end or mystical consummation – Bonaventure is clear: philosophy – unlike the sciences founded upon *revelatio* – can foster no hopes of its own *salus*. Rather, it occurs solely because philosophy can, prior to our final noetic consummation, aid the soul’s *regressus ad Christum*. For Bonaventure, the baptism of philosophy, and in turn that of our fallen natural

⁹⁵⁹ Cf. *ORATT.*, pp. 44-5.

reason in general, is thus a purely functionalist and pragmatic affair. It is designed merely to serve the grander scheme of Christian wisdom and the recovery of the *imago Christi*.

Ultimately, therefore, in Bonaventure's opinion philosophy's vocation within the economy of Christian wisdom is one of self-abandonment and self-disinterest, rather than redemption and eschatological fruition. For in the end – in a manner similar to all ratiocinative noetic, including that speculative aspect of theology itself – philosophy represents merely a transitional phase, a stepping stone in our noetic return to Christ. To this extent, very much like an intellectual crutch, it serves the grander scheme of Christian wisdom in the full knowledge that with each contribution which it makes to this process it brings its own final obliteration a little closer. Faith may lead reason out of the 'darkness of Egypt'; however, Bonaventure judges that it cannot deliver it into the Promised Land.⁹⁶⁰ Like Moses, Christian philosophy is the *perigrinus* who will never see the final end which it helps the soul achieve. Once it has served its purpose, it is called to die away so as to make room for a superior form of knowledge.⁹⁶¹ Nonetheless, to the extent that Christian philosophy serves to promote the soul's *regressus* back to Christ *hic et nunc* it has a genuine and indeed valuable role to play. Indeed, to the extent that it fulfils this role it can be legitimately called a '*donum Dei*'.⁹⁶²

g) *Bonaventure's Rejection of Pagan Philosophy – Pagan Philosophy as an Obstacle to the Soul's Recovery as its Identity as Imago Christi.*

⁹⁶⁰ Cf. *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 5, art. 2, ad. 11 (V, p. 96).

⁹⁶¹ As Ratzinger puts it: Bonaventure 'not only questions the justification of any "separate philosophy" but he predicts the end of all natural theology; that is the end of that speculative philosophical thought which recognizes its true function and is integrated into theology'. *History*, p. 156.

⁹⁶² *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 4 (V, p. 474).

A similar – albeit far worse and far more immediate – destruction awaits that strand of philosophy which obstinately refuses to be reconciled with Christ’s mind; namely, the unaided speculation of Aristotelianism and pagan philosophy. This philosophy, Bonaventure tells us, is the darkest and most devious of all philosophical speculation. It is the true deception of Pharaoh’s magicians. This is so, because not only does it possess no capacity to aid the soul’s salvation, but it actively seeks to thwart its *regressus* back to Christ. It does so by teaching that it is Aristotle and not Christ who is the true ‘*regula in natura*’ of human noetic. Sense experience and the study of creatures according to their material nature, its adherents argue – and not the *lumen revelationis* and *doctrinae Christi* – represent the highest, and indeed only, source of certainty open to the mind.⁹⁶³ Through doing so, it thus reveals itself to be an apocalyptic phenomenon. For in seeking to render the soul *imago Aristotelis* rather than *imago Christi* it heralds the *adventus Anti-Christi* and the Last Days. Properly speaking it is thus this strand of philosophy, rather than its Christian counterpart, which is to be identified as the fruit of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* and the serpent to be cast into the ‘fiery pit’.⁹⁶⁴

In Bonaventure’s opinion, therefore, extreme caution must be exercised by any Christian, either philosopher or theologian, who wishes to engage with this branch of philosophy.⁹⁶⁵ In particular, he warns against trying to use it to confirm Christian teaching. In no way can Aristotelianism, or indeed any non-Christian philosophy, be simply absorbed *tout court* into Christian thinking and claimed as reconcilable with, or supportive of, the teachings of Christ.⁹⁶⁶ This is so because not only are many falsities mixed up with truths in it, but these falsities, stemming from the *lignum scientiae boni et mali* are often direct attacks upon Christ himself, both at the level of his humanity and his divinity.⁹⁶⁷ Thus, as we will see in the next section,

⁹⁶³ *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 1, ad. 3 (V, p. 50).

⁹⁶⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 6, n. 5 (V, p. 361).

⁹⁶⁵ *Medius*. (IX, p. 63).

⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

whilst Bonaventure accepts – particularly in his early works – that certain aspects of Aristotle’s thought can be utilized by Christian thinkers, he is nonetheless very clear, especially in his mature thought, that the Stagirite’s synthesis as a *whole* cannot be taken up and claimed as Christian. Those who labour in the fields of peripatetic philosophy may find some pearls of truth, but they will also find many poisonous weeds; ones which risk intoxicating their souls with the sin of *curiositas* and a blatant disregard for scripture – both of which are vices that will destroy their noetic *regressus* back to Christ.⁹⁶⁸ Thus, in his relatively late sermon *Medius Vestrum Stedit* (c. 1265-74)⁹⁶⁹ Bonaventure caustically writes:

Let us be mindful of the danger (*attendamus periculum*)! For just as in the final age of the synagogue the Jews emptied out the doctrines of the divine law through false authority, so we empty out the doctrines of the divine law through false reasoning. For those who love sacred scripture also love philosophy (*qui diligunt sacram scripturam diligunt etiam philosophiam*), as through philosophy they [hope to] confirm the faith (*ut per eam conferment fidem*). But be warned for philosophy is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil because in it truth and falsity is mixed up (*quia veritati permixta est falsitas*). So if you are an emulator of the philosophers, you may ask: “how can Aristotle be mistaken?” This happens, I say, because if you do not truly love (*diligis*) sacred scripture, it is necessary that you fall away from the faith [and therefore enter into error]. For if you [follow Aristotle and] say that the world is eternal you know nothing of Christ (*nihil scis de Christo*). This same is also true if you say that there is only one intellect in all peoples, and that there is no happiness following this life, nor a resurrection of the dead. For if you eat of

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁹ Bougerol dates this sermon as early as 1250, however the tone and quality of it in my opinion point to a date sometime after 1265.

the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you will most assuredly fall from faith. Therefore, you ought to be very wary indeed of taking unto yourself all those things that are said by philosophy [*sic* Aristotle]. Flee therefore from all that which is contrary to the teachings of Christ (*contrarium doctrinae Christi*), just as you ought to flee from something infecting your souls! (*sicut interfectum animae*)⁹⁷⁰

h) Bonaventure's Rejection of Autonomous Philosophy.

Measured against this background, it is evident that if there is a coherent philosophical system at work within Bonaventure's thought then it must of necessity be a "rehabilitated" or "sacred" philosophy, rather than the condemned autonomous speculation so celebrated by Aristotelianism. Profane, totally unaided, philosophy, is – within a Christian context at least – utterly rejected by Bonaventure and thus has no place within his speculative synthesis at all. Once one believes in Christ, Bonaventure counsels, one cannot view creation again in the same light – that is to say, without some form of reference to, or mindfulness of, the *doctrinae Christi*. Thus, in the much-neglected *redactio brevior* of his *Collationes De Septem Donis* we find Bonaventure asserting that upon receiving the *habitus fidei* one cannot but accept – and therefore one can never deny – that philosophy is fundamentally Christ-centered and that it only possesses certainty insofar as it reasons in light of his perfect wisdom.⁹⁷¹ This is so, because faith reveals that it is Christ '*qui docet hominem scientiam, scilicet philosophiam*'.⁹⁷² It is in him, and in him alone, that rational, natural, and moral philosophy find their principle of intelligibility: Christ provides the '*causa essendi, ratio intelligendi, et ordo vivendi*'.⁹⁷³

⁹⁷⁰ *Medius*. (IX, p. 63).

⁹⁷¹ *De Septem Donis (redactio brevior)*, collums. 443-4.

⁹⁷² *Ibid.*

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*

It is thus clear that to search the Seraphic Doctor's thought for an autonomous, purely "rational" description of creation – i.e., an entirely autonomous system of philosophical speculation as imagined by Aristotle, and supposedly by Aquinas and Albert – is not only an illogical, but totally futile, even dangerous exercise. It is to fundamentally misinterpret the most basic premise of Bonaventure's definition of philosophy: that reason, within a Christian context, at least, cannot exist beyond the horizon defined by the *lumen mentis Christi*. More worryingly, it is to threaten violence to Bonaventure's careful distinction between "sacred" and "profane" *ratio* and how the former, unlike the latter, can be reconciled with the Christian intellectual vision. As Cousins notes, to attempt to extract a pure *philosophia Bonaventurae* and to treat it as a system entirely divorced from the *habitus fidei* 'would do violence...to Bonaventure who has worked philosophy and theology into one integral texture'.⁹⁷⁴ Thus, at the outset it is clear, that according to Bonaventure's own standards as to what form philosophy must take within a Christian context, his thought does not – *indeed cannot* – contain a philosophical system in the way in which philosophy is conceived by Aristotle, or indeed by modern philosophy. There is, in short, absolutely no autonomous philosophy in Bonaventure's synthesis.

i) *Bonaventure's Christian Philosophy – A Reality or an Illusion?*

To this extent, it is clear that if there is a philosophy at work within Bonaventure's thought then it must of necessity be one which complies fully to Bonaventure's own definition as to what form philosophical reasoning must take within a Christian context – i.e., it must, in short, be an overtly *Christian philosophy*; one which is both entirely derivative from – at least in spirit

⁹⁷⁴ Cousins, 'The Two Poles of St. Bonaventure's Theology' in *S. Bonaventura*, tom. III, pp. 153-174, at p. 153.

– his doctrine of Christ’s noetic and placed at the service of his belief that the soul’s primary vocation is to recover its identity *imago Christi*. That such a philosophy does indeed exist within Bonaventure’s thought has been indicated by several of the areas which we have touched upon in the previous chapters. As we have seen, be it with regard to his speculative analysis of the soul, his hierarchical division of the sciences, or his analysis of salvation history, throughout his writings Bonaventure not only presupposes, but actively affirms the existence of a genuine *philosophia* at work within his thinking; one which, according to his own Christocentric standards at least, is both fully formed and systematically rigorous and thereby renders him a *verus philosophus*. Crucially, however, this philosophy complies with Bonaventure’s own distinctive Christocentric model as to what exactly philosophy is and how it is called to function *in ecclesia*. As such, it makes absolutely no effort whatsoever to satisfy the definition of philosophy offered by other thinkers. Indeed, as we will see, Bonaventure does not appear accept these other definitions of philosophy as either legitimate or coherent.

This, in turn, leads us to a fundamental truth about Bonaventure’s philosophy: it has something of a decidedly all or nothing quality about it. Whether we accept or deny the existence of a genuine philosophical system at work within Bonaventure’s thought ultimately depends upon whether we accept or deny his unique interpretation as to what exactly *philosophia* is. If we accept Bonaventure’s description of philosophy as a legitimate and coherent one, then we can – and indeed must – say that his thought does indeed contain a genuine philosophy; one which – at least according to the standards which it seeks to fulfil – is both successful and highly developed. If, however, we reject his description of philosophy, or if we insist that his philosophy be measured against the standards laid down by other thinkers – for example, Aquinas and Albert – then it is clear that his thought will fall far short of constituting a genuine *philosophia* and will be judged as a pure *theologia* containing no true philosophical synthesis. To this extent, it is clear that the issue of whether Bonaventure offers

a genuine *philosophia* possesses a highly subjective nature; it depends largely, perhaps even entirely, on whether we accept or reject the description of philosophy which he offers us.

In a situation like this, what matters most I should like to suggest is the fact that Bonaventure *himself* believes that he offers us a real and systematically rigorous *philosophia*. He tells us on several occasions that he regards himself as a genuine philosopher ‘*loqui...sicut philosophus*’.⁹⁷⁵ This surely more than anything else should be the deciding factor in whether we accept or deny his description of philosophy, at least for those who seek to engage with his synthesis in a deep and meaningful way. For if we wish to enter into Bonaventure’s thinking, and to do so in a manner that is alert to its original design and is capable of understanding its various nuances, then surely we must be willing to believe Bonaventure when he tells us that his writings contain a genuine philosophy as well as a genuine theology. After all, if we do not assent to these claims how can we ever hope to enter fully into Bonaventure’s thinking and to understand its central thrust and animating spirit? Like good theological anthropologists, we must, therefore, be willing to step onto the ground upon which Bonaventure himself invites us to stand and to allow ourselves, without hindrance of any pre-existing convictions or philosophical prejudices, to view his synthesis in the way that he himself wishes us to see it, otherwise we will inevitably fail to understand it fully and thus judge it incorrectly.

j) *Philosophia as Formally Distinct from the Lumen Revelationis, Yet Captive to Christ – Bonaventure’s Philosophy in Action.*

When we turn consider how Bonaventure’s philosophy actually functions within his intellectual synthesis we see that he meticulously respects the careful distinction which he

⁹⁷⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 5, n. 14 (V, p. 356).

draws between theology and philosophy. As the recently edited *Quaestiones de Anima*⁹⁷⁶, as well as the *Sentences Commentary* and the unedited *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*⁹⁷⁷, *de Colore* and *de Materia Rerum Creaturarum* from Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186 all demonstrate, Bonaventure allows his philosophy space to exercise its own unique tools of enquiry without direct interference from his theology.⁹⁷⁸ Thus, for example, in the *Quaestiones de Materia Rerum Creaturarum*, we find Bonaventure entering into in-depth philosophical discussions of form, matter and privation without imposing theological dogma upon his philosophical speculation.⁹⁷⁹ A similar situation is to be found in the *Quaestiones de Colore* and at numerous points in the second book of his *Sentences Commentary*.⁹⁸⁰ Crucially, however, Bonaventure's insistence upon philosophy's dependence upon faith⁹⁸¹ – both directly and indirectly – means that for him his philosophical speculation cannot function beyond the boundaries defined by his theology. His philosophy can enquire into nature without directly appealing to the object of faith, but it can never move beyond the limits prescribed by it.

As such, in Bonaventure's thinking, when the faithful Christian seeks to understand natural phenomena, and does so through philosophical speculation rather than pure theological contemplation, she does so *as a Christian*; one who confesses that her noetic rectitude and philosophical acumen depends on her remaining faithful to the *lumen Christi*. Thus, she does not lay aside her faith – even though at this point she is viewing creation as the immediate object of her study rather than revealed data; nor does she step into a secular, non-graced sphere of reasoning. Rather her *ratio* is always exercised *in lumine mentis Christi*. Indeed, for the Christian who truly loves scripture, her reasoning cannot be anything else but 'captive' to

⁹⁷⁶ Olszewski, *Quaestiones de Anima*, pp. 73-90.

⁹⁷⁷ *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 39va-43ra.

⁹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁹ *Quaestiones de Materia Rerum Creaturarum*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 105ra-vb.

⁹⁸⁰ Cf. *Quaestiones de Colore*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 44ra-va; 2 *Sent.* throughout.

⁹⁸¹ To be discussed shortly.

Christ.⁹⁸² For once a Christian strives to reason outside the economy of graced noetic authored by Christ's mind, she falls into error and her philosophizing becomes little better than that of Aristotle and the other *philosophi*. Should it ever let go of Christ's hand, Bonaventure warns, Christian philosophy will thus fall into the 'bottomless pit' in which all error dwells.⁹⁸³ 'It can be easily deceived unless one is on guard against the head and tail of the dragon. If anything should come between it and the Sun of justice it falls into the darkness of folly'.⁹⁸⁴

In Bonaventure's thinking, therefore, there is no neutral sphere of philosophy nor any common ground of secular reason upon which the Christian and non-Christian philosopher can meet and exchange ideas as equals. Indeed, such a notion is self-contradictory according to Bonaventure's standards. For all true philosophical speculation, he tells us, takes place solely *in lumine mentis Christi*. The philosophies of non-Christians, or indeed those Christians who seek to understand creation apart from its Christic noetic center, are thus, in Bonaventure's opinion, not worthy of being called true philosophies. They are merely the saplings of the *lignum scientiae boni et mali*. Thus, as Gilson puts it: 'refusing to accept unaided reason as a common ground' Bonaventure's philosophy has effectively 'cut itself off from the communion of un-aided human minds'.⁹⁸⁵ It accepts no possibility of a neutral philosophical method common to all. All true reasoning is captive to Christ and takes place in light of his teachings. It is this, it is often claimed, which serves to separate the spirit of Bonaventure's philosophy from that of Aquinas and Albert, and indeed most modern descriptions of philosophy.⁹⁸⁶

To this extent, Bonaventure's Christian philosophy is rightly characterized – to paraphrase Gilson – as a "heteronomous reality". Although formally distinct from his theology, it is so tied up with the same noetic goal as it – namely, the soul's noetic *regressus* back to

⁹⁸² Cf. *De Septem Donis*, coll. 8, n. 5 (V, p. 494-5).

⁹⁸³ *Hex.*, coll. 18, n. 9 (V, p. 416).

⁹⁸⁴ *SGHS.*, coll. 4, p. 91.

⁹⁸⁵ *Philosophy*, p. 482.

⁹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Christ – that it cannot be isolated fully from it; nor, in turn, can it be understood beyond the limits dictated by his doctrine of Christ’s noetic. Christology, in effect, for Bonaventure frames and provides the intellectual horizon against which both theology and Christian philosophy function. That this is so, is made particularly clear by the first *collatio* of the *Hexaemeron*. Here we see that as the *comprehensor perfectus*, Christ is not only the illuminating *medius* of all the different philosophical *scientiae*, but their true *principium* and source of certainty.⁹⁸⁷ Each of these sciences, from mathematics to politics to metaphysics, begins with Christ and thus proceeds at an intelligible level only insofar as they reason *in lumine* of his perfect and stabilizing wisdom.⁹⁸⁸ Indeed, for the Christian none of these sciences can possess legitimacy or certainty without first being illuminated by Christ and retraced back to him through the medium of faith : ‘*in omni ergo scientia sine Christus evanescit sciens*’.⁹⁸⁹

Note that a beginning should be made from the center (*incipiendum est a medio*), that is, from Christ. For He Himself is the Mediator between God and men, holding the central position in all things (*tenens medium in omnibus*), as shall be seen, Hence it is necessary to start from Him if a man wants to reach Christian wisdom...Our intent, then, is to show that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (*in Christo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi Dei*), and that He Himself is the central point of all understanding (*et ipse est medium omnium scientiarum*). He is the central point in a sevenfold sense, in terms of essence, nature, distance, doctrine, moderation, justice, and concord. The first is in

⁹⁸⁷ Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 1 (V, pp. 329-35).

⁹⁸⁸ This of course is not to say that these sciences possess Christ as their object of study – medicine and mathematics do not study Christ directly – but rather that they only take place coherently in light of his perfect wisdom and are thus to be retraced back to him.

⁹⁸⁹ *Delorme*, *principium*, coll. 2, n. 39, p. 19.

the metaphysical order, the second is in the physical, the third in the mathematical, the fourth in the logical, the fifth in the ethical, the sixth in the political or juridical, and the seventh in the theological.⁹⁹⁰

k) *The Impossibility of an 'Autonomous' or 'Separate' Bonaventurian philosophy.*

In light of this, the answer to the second part of our original question – i.e., whether Bonaventure's philosophy can be considered independently of his theology – is all too clear. For Bonaventure, based upon his distinctive interpretation of what form natural reason must take within a Christian context, it is self-evident that his philosophy cannot exist beyond the limits defined by his broader theological vision. Nor, as such, can any attempt be made to abstract it from the latter. To Bonaventure's mind, once philosophy has been rehabilitated through faith, and thus set upon the path of wisdom, it is not only implicitly ordered towards Christ – i.e., in the sense that Christ lies hidden at its center as its principle of intelligibility; but, more importantly, it is explicitly ordered towards him as its final end.⁹⁹¹ Like his theology, Bonaventure's philosophy is thus endowed with a radically Christocentric thrust and center of gravity. Indeed, he explicitly tells us it cannot be anything else: '*homo quippe, qui non sequitur Christum, sed per se vult cognoscere, sequitur magni errores et credit veritatem sequi*'.⁹⁹²

It is this congruence between the final object of Bonaventure's philosophy and that of his theology which actively prohibits his philosophical speculation from existing independently of his theology. Both are oriented towards the same horizon and both cannot be understood apart from it. Crucially, however, theology stands closer to this noetic horizon and is therefore the superior of the two. It illumines philosophy with Christ's perfect wisdom and thus draws

⁹⁹⁰ *Collations*, coll. 1, nn. 10-11, pp. 5-6.

⁹⁹¹ *I Sent.*, proe., q. 3, resp. (I, p. 11).

⁹⁹² *De Septem Donis (redactio brevior)*, column 467.

upon it as a servant. To this extent, it is viable to concur with Ratzinger and Gilson that the basic dynamics of Bonaventure's thought, at least concerning the relationship between theology and philosophy *in istu statu*, are essentially "Augustinian" in tone. Like Augustine, Bonaventure regards philosophy as *ancillia theologiae*. It has no purpose other than to serve the glory of its superior counterpart as it strives to aid the soul in its *regressus* back to Christ.⁹⁹³ Whether Bonaventure's "Augustinianism" can be classified as an 'anti-Aristotelian', 'neo-Augustinianism' as Gilson imagines it to be is discussed later in the context of our investigation into the relationship between Bonaventure's and Aquinas's thought on faith and reason.

Given the integral unity between Bonaventure's theology and philosophy, it is clear that to follow Cullen and Quinn in attempting to extrapolate Bonaventure's philosophical synthesis from his theology – specifically his belief that all graced human noetic looks to the Incarnate Word as its guide – is a flawed, even illogical approach. It risks not only distorting Bonaventure's distinctive understanding as to what exactly philosophy is; but – more worryingly – it is to cut his philosophical speculation off at its roots and thus starve it of its true meaning. Gilson is thus surely right when he says that the 'totality' of Bonaventure's system means so much that to divorce his philosophy from his theology is to be left with 'meaningless fragments'.⁹⁹⁴ It is to shatter Bonaventure's synthesis beyond repair.

To this extent, it is appropriate to conclude with Gilson and Ratzinger – in opposition to Van Steenberghen, Bougerol, and Cullen – that it is impossible to enter into Bonaventure's philosophical system without an ascent of faith: *nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*. Only through the eyes of faith, does Bonaventure's philosophy make sense, since faith alone reveals its center: the Incarnate Word. However, as we will see, this radically Christocentric approach towards philosophy is not – contrary to the claims of Gilson – primarily due to a loyalty to a

⁹⁹³ *3 Sent.*, dist. 24, art. 3, q. 1, resp. (III, p. 513).

⁹⁹⁴ *Philosophy*, p. 480.

pre-existing (primarily Augustinian) philosophical school of thought; rather, it stems – or so the logic of this thesis implies – for the most part from Bonaventure’s doctrine of Christ’s noetic. It is Bonaventure’s doctrine of Christ’s knowledge, in other words, and not his apparent loyalty to a pre-existing “Augustinian” vision of faith and reason, which dictates the nature of his philosophical system. It is true that Augustine is the ‘*verus metaphysicus*’, but, as Bonaventure never ceases to remind us, it is Christ who is the primary teacher of wisdom.

It is important to note that this inability to consider Bonaventure’s philosophy as independent of his theology does not mean that specific points of his philosophical speculation – e.g., his doctrine of the seminal reasons, etc. – cannot be considered without direct reference to his theology or compared with the thought of his contemporaries on a “purely philosophical” level. Rather, what it means is that Bonaventure’s philosophical system *as a whole* cannot be understood without explicit reference to his Christocentric theology. Thus, as the *Sentences Commentary*, *Hexaameron*, and the various edited and unedited *quaestiones* make clear, it is perfectly possible for Bonaventure – as a Christian *philosopher* – to enter into direct dialogue with his contemporaries on various philosophical issues without drawing upon his wider theological speculation or without referring to Christ.⁹⁹⁵ Even as late as the *Hexaameron*, Bonaventure freely remarks that he is a philosopher and not just a theologian: ‘*hic non debeo loqui sicut theologus nec sicut iurista, sed sicut philosophus loquitur*’.⁹⁹⁶

Moreover, at no point does the early or late Bonaventure show himself unwilling or unable to engage with his contemporaries on a philosophical level.⁹⁹⁷ As the *Hexaameron* shows, Bonaventure in no way holds back from entering into some of the most pointed philosophical debates of his day.⁹⁹⁸ Here he openly critically engages with some of Aquinas’s

⁹⁹⁵ *Hex.*, coll. 5, n. 14 (V, p. 356); cf. *Quaestiones de Colore*, Assisi. Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 44ra-va.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, coll. 4 (V, pp. 348-53).

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, nn. 7-13 (V, pp. 350-1).

more controversial philosophical claims, as well as those associated with Radical Aristotelianism and peripatetic philosophy in general.⁹⁹⁹ However, as seen, the dynamics of Bonaventure's philosophical vision are such that for him philosophical reasoning can only go so far in proving a point. Subsequently, in philosophical debates, he is inclined to resolve an argument not through reason alone, but by appealing to the higher light of Christ's revelation. Thus, for example, on the question of the eternity of the world, and in sharp contrast to Aquinas, he argues that whilst reason can indeed prove the world's creation in time, the *revelatio* of scripture conclusively proves the point.¹⁰⁰⁰ Revelation is thus always to be given greater weighting than reason. *Auctoritas*, in effect, trumps – and occasionally silences – *ratio*.

l) *Fides and Ratio*.

Finally, given that Bonaventure refuses to posit an autonomous philosophy, it is appropriate to ask – albeit in a preliminary form – what then does the relationship between faith and reason look like from a Bonaventurian perspective? If within Bonaventure's thought, philosophy cannot exist beyond the parameters defined by theology and the broader narrative of the soul's noetic *regressus* back to Christ, does this then mean – as Gilson hints – that, at the more fundamental level of the relationship between *fides* and *ratio*, he posits a distinction between the two, only then to deny it as illegitimate when it suits him? Does Bonaventure, in effect, offer a false distinction between reason and revelation; one which, like the “miracles” of Pharaoh's magicians, is an optical illusion which disappears when we look directly at it?

As the previous chapters demonstrated, neither of these questions can be answered in the affirmative. As both Bonaventure's early and mature works reveal, he posits a real,

⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁰ *De Decem Praeceptis*, coll. 2, n. 28 (V, p. 515); *2 Sent.*, dist. 1, pars. 1, art. 1, q. 2, resp. (II, pp. 15-6).

systematically rigorous, and viable distinction between faith and reason; one which maintains that whilst, within a Christian context at least, reason can never exist entirely independent of faith, it can nevertheless be legitimately distinguished from it.¹⁰⁰¹ Where faith concerns belief and revelation, reason pertains to that which ‘our intelligence reaches by its own power’.¹⁰⁰² Bonaventure grounds this conviction in his belief that the mind is capable of ascertaining certain basic truths about God and creation without the direct instruction of faith or the gracing of the intellect by the *affectus* of charity.¹⁰⁰³ Thus, for example, in the unedited *Quaestiones de Colore* – more of which will be said later – Bonaventure provides reason with the space to address a purely philosophical topic, making no reference to theological authorities at all. Indeed, so comfortable with this is Bonaventure that he reveals himself to be just as at home in the field of colour science as are Grosseteste and Bacon.¹⁰⁰⁴

Furthermore, as the *Quaestiones de Mystério Trinitatis*,¹⁰⁰⁵ *de Productione Rerum*,¹⁰⁰⁶ *de Anima*,¹⁰⁰⁷ and the unedited *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitio Dei*¹⁰⁰⁸ and *Quaestiones de Deo et Anima*,¹⁰⁰⁹ as well as the *Quaestiones de Vero*¹⁰¹⁰ and *de Theologia*,¹⁰¹¹ clearly reveal, for Bonaventure there are numerous “transcendental” questions which reason can address

¹⁰⁰¹ Tavard, *Quaestiones de Theologia*, q. 1, resp. 1, p. 212; *I Sent.*, proe., qq. 1-2, resp. (I, pp. 6-10).

¹⁰⁰² *Hex.*, coll. 3, n. 25. (V, p. 347).

¹⁰⁰³ *I Sent.*, proe., qq. 1-2, resp. (I, pp. 6-10).; *Hex.*, coll. 2, nn. 9-10 (V, pp. 337-8); *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 40v. In the *Collationes de Septem Donis* he writes: ‘our soul is endowed with a certain natural light (*quoddam lumen naturae signum*) through which it is capable of knowing the first principles’. *CSGHS.*, coll. 8, n. 13, p. 172.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cf. Crozier, ‘Of Light and Colour: Some Reflections on an Unedited Set of *Quaestiones* on Colour Attributed to St. Bonaventure and their Relationship to Robert Grosseteste’. Forthcoming.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *De Mystério Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 1, resp. (V, pp. 49-50).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Olszewski, *Quaestiones de Productione Rerum*, q. 2, resp., pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Olszewski, *Quaestiones de Anima*, q. 2, resp., pp. 83-4; q. 5, resp., pp. 109-21.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 39.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Quaestiones de Deo et Anima*, Florent. Bibl. Laur., MS. Plut. 17 sin. 7, ff. 181-5.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Quaestiones de Vero*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 51va.

¹⁰¹¹ Tavard, *Quaestiones de Theologia*, pp. 210-36.

under theology's supervision but nonetheless without its direct instruction, or indeed without any recourse to revelation. This is also affirmed in the newly discovered *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*.¹⁰¹² Here, as in the other texts just mentioned, we read that philosophy can, for instance, prove the unity of God,¹⁰¹³ the immortality of the soul,¹⁰¹⁴ and the procession of all creation *ex-nihilo* from a single cause.¹⁰¹⁵ Moreover, as the *Quaestiones de Vero, de Bono*, and *de Pulchro*, as well as the *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei* reveal, reason can also posit the four most basic qualities of God: His perfect goodness, truthfulness, beauty, and unity.¹⁰¹⁶ It does so through a process of analogy and negative reasoning.¹⁰¹⁷

However, as we will see, for Bonaventure – particularly in his later writings – whilst reason can, at a certain level, function without the direct instruction of faith or any appeal to revealed data, both in terms of describing creation and God's basic attributes, it nonetheless does so in a limited way. This is especially so with that strand of reason associated with pagan or non-Christian philosophy. Of itself, Bonaventure tells us, reason is thus not sufficient to describe either the divine or created reality fully: '*sed illud [ratio] solum non sufficit*'.¹⁰¹⁸

Anyone who relies on philosophical knowledge and esteems himself highly because of it and believes himself to be better has become a fool (*stultus factus est*). This happens when he believes that he has grasped (*apprehendere*) the

¹⁰¹² Cf. *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, Paris BnF., MS. Lat. 15322, f. 2ra-rb.

¹⁰¹³ *Ibid.* Cf. *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 1, resp. (V, pp. 49-50).

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. Olszewski, *Quaestiones de Anima*, q. 2, resp., pp. 83-5; 2 *Sent.*, dist. 19, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 472).

¹⁰¹⁵ Olszewski, *Quaestiones de Productione Rerum*, q. 1, pp. 3-12.

¹⁰¹⁶ Cf. *Quaestiones de Uno, Vero, et Pulchro*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 49rb-53vb.

¹⁰¹⁷ 1 *Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, q. 2, ad. 1, 3 (I, p. 51); *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 39va.

¹⁰¹⁸ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 8, n. 13 (V, p. 496).

Creator through this knowledge without any further light. It is like a person who wishes to see the heavens or the sun by means of candles (*per candelas*).¹⁰¹⁹

To function properly – i.e., to offer an intellectually coherent account of God and creation – philosophy must thus first confess Christ and be gifted with the *ignis caritatis* and the relevant *dona* of the Holy Spirit – wisdom and understanding.¹⁰²⁰ As we will see when we come to discuss how Bonaventure’s thought relates to that of Aquinas’s, for Bonaventure the unaided human intellect may, insofar as it functions at the level of physics and the other lower philosophical sciences, be capable of describing creatures according to their materiality, and can at its pinnacle even dip its toe into the waters of metaphysics; but once it starts to move into metaphysics proper it inevitably falls into error and drowns. Only faith and charity, in conjunction with the *dona Spiritus*, can equip the rational faculty with the skills needed for metaphysical speculation and a knowledge of the ‘higher substances’:

Suppose that a person possesses natural and metaphysical science (*habeat scientiam naturalem et metaphysicam*) which reaches to the highest substances, and suppose that this person strives to reach that point and there come to rest (*ut ibi quiescat*). This is impossible without falling into error (*hoc est impossibile, quin cadat in errorem*) unless this person is aided by the light of faith...Therefore, this knowledge has darkened and debased the philosophers (*ista scientia praecipitavit et obscuravit philosophos*) because they did not have the light of faith.¹⁰²¹

¹⁰¹⁹ CSGHS., coll. 4, n. 12, p. 91.

¹⁰²⁰ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 8, n. 13 (V, p. 496).

¹⁰²¹ CSGHS., coll. 4, n. 12, p. 92.

Likewise, even in the various unedited early works where Bonaventure so clearly allows his own reason and *philosophia* space to operate, he is always on guard against those who would place too much confidence in the powers of human ingenuity. This is expressed particularly clearly in the *Quaestiones de Divinatione* and *de Sorte* from Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186. Here Bonaventure is keen to curb what reason can reveal. Human ingenuity and rationality, he tells us, ought not attempt to peer into that which God alone can reveal.¹⁰²²

6.2.1.1) Q 2) *To What Extent is it Possible to Speak of a Development Within Bonaventure's Christology and His Attitude towards Aristotelianism and How are these Two Areas Related?*

According to the traditional scholarly narrative associated with Ratzinger, Cousins,¹⁰²³ and Hayes¹⁰²⁴ there is – in contrast to Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology – a gradual, but nonetheless significant, process of development within his Christology. The radically Christocentric vision so characteristic of the *Hexaemeron* and Bonaventure's other mature writings, or so adherents of this position argue, is notably missing from his early works – i.e. the *Sentences Commentary* and the various *quaestiones* – and only begins to take shape after Bonaventure's departure from academic life in 1257.¹⁰²⁵ From this perspective there are thus two distinct phases to Bonaventure's Christology: a “mature” and an “immature” one.

According to Cousins, the first concrete expression of Bonaventure's belief that Christ is the centre of all knowledge is to be found in the *Itinerarium*, dated to 1259.¹⁰²⁶ Whilst, others

¹⁰²² Cf. *Quaestiones de Divinatione, Quaestiones de Sorte*. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 31vb-32ra.

¹⁰²³ *Coincidence*, p. 131.

¹⁰²⁴ *Hidden Centre*, p. 221.

¹⁰²⁵ Cf. *History*, pp. 109; 114; 160-2.

¹⁰²⁶ *Coincidence*, p. 131.

like Hayes, and more notably, Ratzinger, date it as late as the *Hexaemeron* itself in 1273.¹⁰²⁷ For these scholars, there is thus a process of significant change within Bonaventure's Christology; one whereby his speculative analysis of the theological, epistemological, and cosmic significance of Christ – and therefore presumably his thought on the significance of Christ's knowledge – shifted from a loose collection of incoherent Christological statements, to a radically systematized Christocentric synthesis. Thus, as Cousins puts it Bonaventure's Christology 'proceeded gradually – from the sketchy designs found in his early writings, through the erection of the base structure in the *Itinerarium*, to its mature elaboration in the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*'.¹⁰²⁸ Moreover, given this Christological development took place only after Bonaventure's departure from academic life, it is argued that this transformation arose as the result of a spiritual, rather than intellectual, shift on Bonaventure's behalf.¹⁰²⁹

On both these levels, however, the results of the current investigation point towards a different conclusion. As the previous chapters revealed, despite some initial variation in the way Bonaventure interprets Christ's ability to cognize the Word, there is an integral unity to his three earliest texts on Christ's noetic which reached its fulfilment in his final work on the subject written over twenty years later: the *Hexaemeron*. This unity it will be recalled centers around Bonaventure's resistance towards allowing Aristotelianism to dictate the terms of Christ's knowledge, specifically its claim that Christ must have progressed in knowledge by abstracting intelligible species like *homo lapsus*. Moreover, as chapters three, four, and five revealed, Bonaventure expands upon the unity of his doctrine of Christ's knowledge by using it to form the basis of his understanding of the nature of the human soul, the hierarchy of the sciences, and the narrative of God's self-revelation in history.

¹⁰²⁷ *History*, p. 3.

¹⁰²⁸ *Coincidence*, p. 131.

¹⁰²⁹ *Ibid.*

Thus, from this perspective, there is no major development within Bonaventure's Christology; still less any evidence of a distinction between a "mature" and "immature" Christological vision. Rather, what appears to be a process of "development" is merely the product of a process of clarification and codification of his earlier Christological thought. As we have seen, from the *Sentences Commentary* to the *Hexaemeron*, the guiding, unifying, and driving force behind Bonaventure's Christology is his twin belief that on the one hand Christ's mind is the universal archetype of all human learning, whilst on the other hand that the doctrine of Christ's knowledge prohibits any systematic rehabilitation of Aristotelian philosophy within Christianity. Given this integral unity to Bonaventure's thought, the question necessarily arises as to how it relates to, and what it reveals about, the increasingly hostile anti-Aristotelianism which can most definitely be traced throughout Bonaventure's thought.

As the reader will no doubt have observed, answering this question is fundamental to this dissertation given its assertion that Bonaventure's thought on Christ's noetic is the primary source of his anti-Aristotelianism. Some scholars, principally Hayes and Ratzinger, have posited a parallel "growth" between Bonaventure's Christocentrism and his anti-Aristotelianism. They argue that as Bonaventure's thought shifted towards a greater Christocentrism, so his hostility towards Aristotelianism increased. The insights of this study, however, prevent it from sharing this conclusion.

As we have seen, Bonaventure's radically Christocentric vision centered as it is around his doctrine of Christ's noetic was – by and large – fully formed from the very beginning of his thought. As chapter two showed, the *Sentences Commentary*, *De Scientia Christi* and *Breviloquium* all reveal a Christology that has an integral unity. As such, the conclusion necessarily arises that whilst Bonaventure's thought on Christ's knowledge may be the origin and sustaining force of his anti-Aristotelianism, it cannot – on its own at least – be the immediate or sole cause of the increasingly apocalyptic anti-Aristotelianism found in his later

works. The catalyst which transformed Bonaventure's seminal critique of peripatetic philosophy in his early works on Christ's noetic into the full-blown apocalyptic narrative of the *Hexaemeron*, must therefore lie *outside* the immediate scope of his thought on Christ's knowledge. To discover it we must therefore look at Bonaventure's wider intellectual context.

The evidence considered in the introductory chapter – i.e. the growing tension between the Theology and Arts Faculties at Paris during the latter years of Bonaventure's life – points towards only one conclusion as to what this external force can be: the emergence of Radical Aristotelianism. As the historical record bears witness, the rise of this overtly heterodox strand of peripatetic philosophy parallels exactly the marked increase of anti-Aristotelian polemic found within Bonaventure's later writings.¹⁰³⁰ Indeed, the climax of the Averroist controversy – at least in Bonaventure's lifetime – during the early 1270's, matches perfectly the date at which he composed the *Hexaemeron*, his most anti-Aristotelian text: 1273.

This suggests that the overt anti-Aristotelianism of Bonaventure's later works is the product of a reactionary mind-set against the advent of a more aggressive form of Aristotelianism, and an increased grasp of the challenge which peripatetic philosophy as a whole posed to his Christocentric synthesis. Thus, whilst Bonaventure may have rejected Aristotelianism from the very beginning, the true threat of peripatetism only appears to have dawned fully on him in his later works, and only then because Aristotelianism had revealed the true depths of its combative nature. That this is so, is revealed by a rare and telling personal comment which Bonaventure makes in his *Collationes de Decem Praeceptis*, dated to 1268:

When I was a student (*cum fui scholaris*), I heard that Aristotle taught that the world was eternal. And when I heard the reasons and arguments which were given to prove this, my heart began to be disturbed (*inceptit concuti cor meum*) and I

¹⁰³⁰ *Supra*.

began to think, how can this be? But now these things are so apparent that no one is able to doubt it.¹⁰³¹

That it is indeed Radical Aristotelianism which is responsible for the increased anti-Aristotelianism of Bonaventure's later years is brought into focus by the increased use of apocalyptic imagery which can be traced throughout his later works and how it parallels the rise of the Averroist school. In the *Sentences Commentary*, *De Scientia Christi*, and *Breviloquium* – written when Radical Aristotelianism had yet to emerge – Bonaventure critiques Aristotelianism in a way that shows little of the eschatological polemic of the *Hexaemeron*. Yet, by the time he composed this final work nearly twenty years later – by which time Radical Aristotelianism had fully emerged – he had come to regard peripatetic philosophy as not only a threat to the doctrine of Christ's knowledge, but as a portent of the Anti-Christ.¹⁰³²

It is important to note, however, that this increased use of apocalyptic imagery in Bonaventure's mature anti-Aristotelian thought, and its essentially reactionary character, does not represent a significant change in the character of his anti-Aristotelianism; nor indeed in his estimation of philosophy *per se*. Rather, it merely signifies a change in the form which his anti-Aristotelianism takes. As the previous chapters demonstrate, the seeds of the *Hexaemeron*'s apocalyptic logic are already to be found in in Bonaventure's early works.

In this respect, given the relative continuity of Bonaventure's critique of Aristotelianism, the interpretation offered here stands at variance with those of Ratzinger and Van Steenberghen, and is more in line with that of Gilson. Bonaventure does not start from a relatively positive attitude towards Aristotelianism – i.e. as an Aristotelian “disciple”, like Aquinas – and then shift towards a negative attitude towards Aristotle in his later works. Rather,

¹⁰³¹ *COTC.*, coll. 2, n. 28, p. 42.

¹⁰³² Cf. the discussion of the advent of Radical Aristotelianism in chapter 1.

he rejects Aristotelianism as a *philosophical system* from the very beginning of his thought. As we have seen, from his earliest writings on Christ's knowledge to the *Hexaemeron* itself, Bonaventure consistently and forcefully rejects the Aristotelian world view as one who had perceived it as a potential and ultimately real threat to both his own Christocentric theology and, in turn, the natural order of human noetic. In this respect, Bonaventure stands very much in line with his Franciscan mentors who as we saw in chapter two systematically refuse to recognize Aristotelianism's claim to define the nature, purpose and scope of human learning.

Having said this, a careful reading of Bonaventure's early works, particularly the *Sentences Commentary* and the various neglected and unedited *quaestiones disputatae*, reveals that Ratzinger and Van Steenberghen are right in detecting in the young Bonaventure a willingness – somewhat stronger than is the case with the mature Bonaventure – to utilize particular Aristotelian principles quite freely within his theological and philosophical speculation.¹⁰³³ Thus, the early *Quaestiones de Theologia*,¹⁰³⁴ *de Caritate*,¹⁰³⁵ *de Novissimus*,¹⁰³⁶ *de Nostra Cognitione Dei*,¹⁰³⁷ *de Productione Rerum*,¹⁰³⁸ *de Anima*,¹⁰³⁹ and *de Mysterio Trinitatis*¹⁰⁴⁰, as well as the unedited *Quaestiones de Colore* and to a lesser extent, *Quaestiones de Ideis et Oratione*¹⁰⁴¹ identified by Doucet¹⁰⁴², all demonstrate a willingness to

¹⁰³³ Cf. *History*, n. 55, p. 230; *Aristotle in the West*, pp. 148-52.

¹⁰³⁴ Tavard, pp. 210-236.

¹⁰³⁵ Glorieux, q. 2, resp., pp. 13-14.

¹⁰³⁶ With these questions the use of Aristotelianism is particularly pronounced, especially when they are compared to the corresponding questions found in the *Sentences Commentary*. Cf. Glorieux, pp. 29-39.

¹⁰³⁷ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 39va; 41vb.

¹⁰³⁸ Olszewski, q. 1, resp., pp. 8-9.

¹⁰³⁹ Olszewski, q. 4, resp., pp. 101-3.

¹⁰⁴⁰ See throughout. (V, pp. 45-115).

¹⁰⁴¹ Cf. Florent. Bibl. Laurent., MS. Plut. 17, sin. 7, ff. 186rb-188va. Note the strong parallels on the questions on prayer with the *Quaestiones de Oratione* identified in Rome Bibl. Vat. Palat., MS. Lat. 612, ff. 43va-46va.

¹⁰⁴² Victorin Doucet, 'Quaestiones Centum ad Scholam Franciscanum. Saec XIII ut Plurimum Spectantes in Cod. Florentio Bibl. Laur. 17 sin. 7 – Appendix: De Quaestionibus S. Bonaventurae adscriptis in Cod. Vat. Palat. Lat. 612', *Archivium Franciscanum Historicum* 26 (1933), pp. 183-202, 474-96. Doucet identifies several *quaestiones quodlibetales* in Florent.

engage with Aristotelianism¹⁰⁴³ that is somewhat stronger than that found in other early texts, particularly the *De Scientia Christi* and the unedited *Quaestiones de Ieiunio*,¹⁰⁴⁴ *de Oratione*,¹⁰⁴⁵ *de Restitutione*,¹⁰⁴⁶ and *de Elyemosyna et Mendicate*.¹⁰⁴⁷ The clearest example of this is to be found in the purely philosophical *Quaestiones de Colore*. Here Bonaventure not only embraces the basic principles of the Aristotelian colour theory, but repeatedly references Aristotle's *De Anima* and *De Sensu* as well as the works of other Peripatetics, including Avicenna and potentially Alexander of Aphrodisias.¹⁰⁴⁸

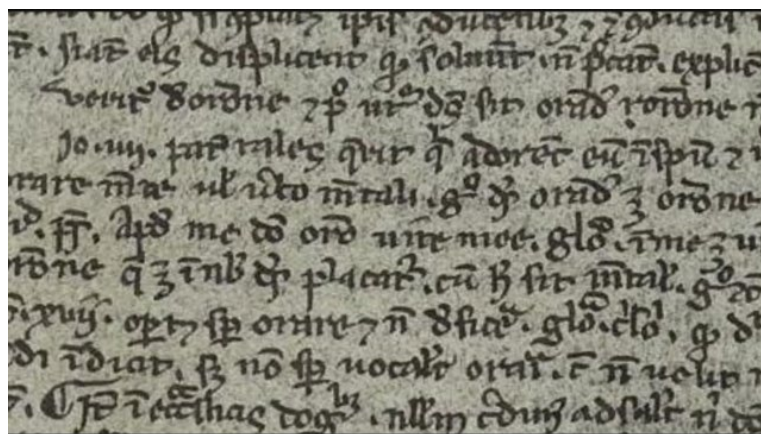


Figure 28

Image of part of the *Quaestiones de Oratione*.

Rome Bibl. Vat., MS. Palat. Lat. 612, f. 43va.

Bibl. Laurent., MS. Plut. 17, sin.7 which show a tantalizing affinity to aspects of Bonaventure's thought; significantly there is a fragmentary question on Christ's knowledge on f. 186rb. Cf. Florent. Bibl. Laur., MS. Plut. 17, sin. 7, ff. 185va-186rb.

¹⁰⁴³ I have chosen my words carefully here: whilst there is a stronger willingness to engage with Aristotelianism in these disputed questions, this does not necessarily communicate a stronger Aristotelianism on Bonaventure's behalf.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Cf. Rome Bibl. Palat., Lat. MS. 612, ff. 40vb-43va. Certain parts of this text do draw quite notably on Aristotle's *De Ethica*; cf. q. 1, f. 40vb

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 43va-46va.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 126ra-130rb.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 137rb-148rb.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186., ff. 44ra-va.

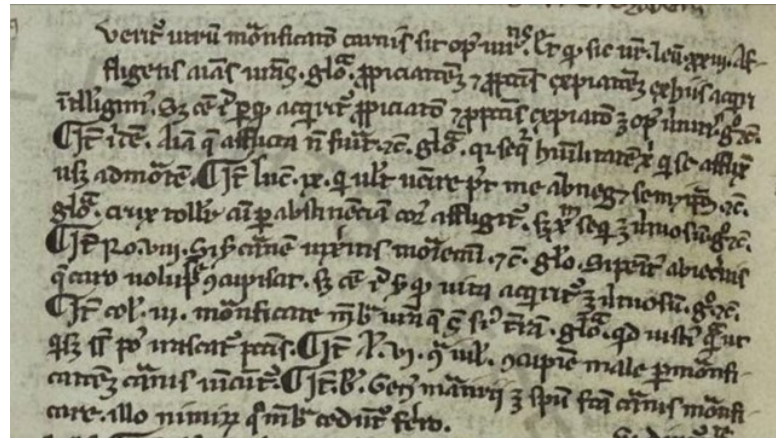


Figure 29

Image of opening question of the *Quaestiones de Ieiunio*.

Quaestio 1: 'Utrum mortificatio carnis est opus virtutis?'

Rome Bibl. Vat., MS. Palat. Lat. 612, f. 40vb.

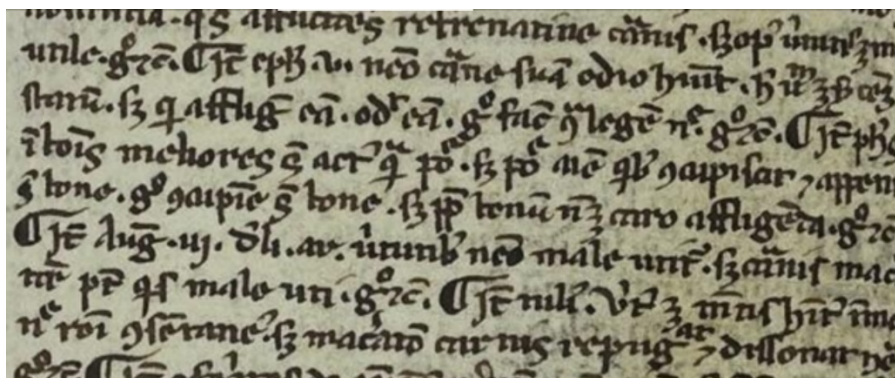


Figure 30

Extract of the *Quaestiones de Ieiunio*.

Rome Bibl. Vat., MS. Palat. Lat. 612, f. 40vb.

As above image reveals, despite a notable lack of Aristotelian engagement some referencing of Aristotle is still to be found (lines 3 and 4).

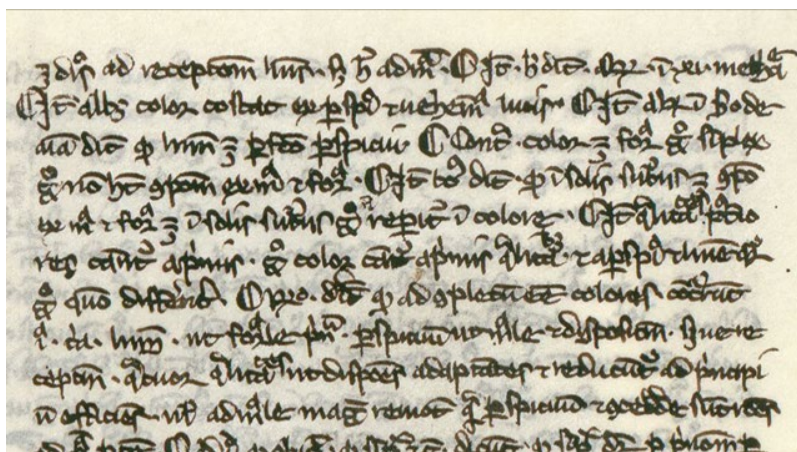


Figure 31

Image from the *Quaestiones de Colore* showing engagement with peripatetic sources.

Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 44rb.

Here Bonaventure quotes from Aristotle's *De Metaphysica* (first line) and the *De Anima* (lines 2-3): 'Item, Aristoteles in secundo De Anima dicit quod lumen est perfectio perspicui'.

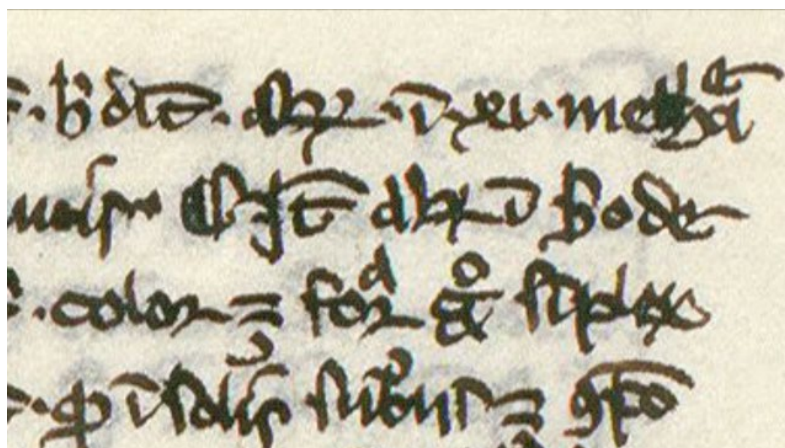


Figure 32

Image from the *Quaestiones de Colore* showing focus on the referencing of Aristotle.

Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 186, f. 44rb.

What these early texts reveal is that during his youth, Bonaventure – even though he rejected Aristotelianism as a *philosophical system* – saw no harm in adopting an eclectic

attitude towards it, tentatively selecting and adopting certain aspects of it, provided these were philosophically neutral and did not contradict the teachings of faith. Such is the true meaning of the repeated use of Aristotelianism within the careful distinction between faith and reason found in the *Quaestiones de Mysterio Trinitatis*.¹⁰⁴⁹ Here Bonaventure does not seek to endorse Aristotelianism, still less to demonstrate its compatibility as a philosophical system with Christian faith – as Jared Goff has recently claimed.¹⁰⁵⁰ Instead, he shows how, under the critical eye of revelation, certain aspects of Aristotelianism, albeit with the greatest of care, can be appropriated by Christian philosophy. As the young Bonaventure writes in his *Letter in Response to an Unknown Master* (c. 1254-5), he sees no harm in using elements of Aristotle’s teaching, and indeed that of the *philosophi* in general to defend, expand, and elucidate the Christian faith, provided of course these do not contradict scripture or jepodize the soul’s *regressus ad Christum*:

And so, if the writings of the philosophers are sometimes of much value in understanding truth and refuting errors (*intelligentiam veritatis et confutationem errorum*), we are not departing from the purity of faith if we at times study them, especially since there are many questions of faith (*quaestiones fidei*) which cannot be settled (*terminari*) without recourse to them.¹⁰⁵¹

Whilst Bonaventure never recinds this belief that certain aspects of the Aristotelian synthesis can be used to aid Christian reflection, nonetheless as we saw in the previous section he is notably far more cautious in his mature works than he is in his earlier writings about the degree to which Christians, be it as philosophers or as theologians, should draw upon

¹⁰⁴⁹ Cf. q. 1, art. 1-2 (V, pp. 45-58).

¹⁰⁵⁰ Cf. *Caritas in Primo*, esp. pp. 125-50.

¹⁰⁵¹ *Unknown Master*, p. 53.

peripatetic teaching.¹⁰⁵² One will recall the stern warning from his late sermon *Medius Vestrum Stedit* quoted earlier and its emphasis on the dangers associated with listening too much to Aristotle at the expense of the wisdom of scripture.

6.2.1.2) Q 3) *To What Extent does Bonaventure Condemn the Historical Aristotle – Are, For Example, His Condemnations of Aristotelianism a Rejection of Aristotle Himself or His Radical Latin Disciples, or Both?*

In light of the above, it is evident that to answer this question it is necessary to distinguish Bonaventure's remarks on Aristotle as a person from the reactionary, apocalyptic anti-Aristotelianism of his mature works, which as we have seen is primarily directed against Radical Aristotelianism rather than the Stagirite himself. It is, in other words, the contemporary heterodox Aristotelians and not the Philosopher himself, whom the mature Bonaventure perceives as the real, or at least, immediate threat to his Christocentric theological vision. Having said this, it is also clear that Bonaventure's later apocalyptic anti-Aristotelianism, particularly that which is found in the *Hexaameron* and the *Collationes de Septem Donis*, does contain a forceful, albeit often veiled, critique of the Stagirite as a thinker and person.¹⁰⁵³

As the last chapter showed, for the mature Bonaventure the historical Aristotle, insofar as he is idolized by his heretical disciples, is the *pseudopropheta* who, corrupted by the *lignum scientiae*, has – either intentionally or unintentionally Bonaventure does not say – laid the foundations for a philosophical system which will overthrow the natural order of human learning. Moreover, the poisonous nature of Aristotle's thought and his influence as a scholar is confirmed by the fact that it is to him whom the heretical Radical Aristotelians look as the

¹⁰⁵² *Supra.*

¹⁰⁵³ 'Veiled' in the sense that Bonaventure critiques the Stagirite sometimes by name, but also through the use of opaque biblical images.

true exemplar of human wisdom – the ‘*regula in natura*’ as Averroes put it.¹⁰⁵⁴ Likewise, it is under the influence of his belief that human rationality is sufficient to lead the mind to perfect contemplation, that Radical Aristotelians, such as Boethius of Dacia, attack the supremacy of theology as *sapientia perfecta* by claiming that philosophy alone offers ‘the best and ultimate end of human life’ and that whosoever is not a philosopher ‘does not live rightly’.¹⁰⁵⁵

With regards to Bonaventure’s attitude towards Aristotle in his earlier scholastic works, however, a more nuanced, less polemical picture emerges. As we saw in chapter two, in his three earliest texts on Christ’s knowledge, Bonaventure critiques Aristotle for his many errors concerning the true nature of empirical experience. Curiously, however, in these works, and various other early texts, he does so in a way that betrays little condemnation of, or indeed personal animosity towards, the Stagirite himself. Unlike the *Hexaemeron* and the *Collationes de Septem Donis*, the *Sentences Commentary*, and the various early *quaestiones*, particularly the recently edited *Quaestiones de Productione Rerum*, reveal little, if any, hostility towards Aristotle as a person, even on points on which he so manifestly contradicts Christian teaching.¹⁰⁵⁶ Indeed, at one point in the *Sentences Commentary* Bonaventure praises Aristotle as ‘*excellerior inter philosophos*’¹⁰⁵⁷ and, as noted in the first chapter, he even excuses several of Aristotle’s errors because of his ignorance about Christ and the fall.¹⁰⁵⁸ By contrast, in his mature works he condemns him for this very reason.¹⁰⁵⁹

From this, the conclusion necessarily arises that for the early Bonaventure it is Aristotle’s philosophy and not so much the historical Aristotle himself, who is the real opponent of Christian wisdom. Thus, as Ratzinger notes, there is within Bonaventure’s early

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Supra*.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Supreme Good*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Cf. Olszewski, q. 4, resp., pp. 41-3.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *2 Sent.*, dist. 1, pars. 1, q. 2, resp. (II, p. 15).

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, dist. 28, art. 1, q. 1, resp. (II, p. 696).

¹⁰⁵⁹ Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 9 (V, p. 367).

thought a certain degree of ‘ambivalence’ towards the historical Aristotle.¹⁰⁶⁰ Aristotle may have engineered a false, even dangerous, philosophical system, but he appears to have said little to condemn himself at a moral or personal level. Indeed, at some points, the young Bonaventure even appears to separate Aristotle from the errors attributed to him by assigning them to his Arabic disciples, a move of course which we noted in the introductory chapter Aquinas adopted.¹⁰⁶¹ Ultimately, however, both in his early and mature works, Bonaventure judges that, on account of his paganism, at no point is Aristotle himself incorporated within the economy of graced learning. Aristotle lacked the theological virtues of faith and charity; and, as such, his intellect was captive to, and seriously limited by, his disordered affections for creatures. Perverted by the *potio curiositatis*, his philosophy is ‘infected to the marrow’.¹⁰⁶²

Thus, as Charles Carpenter notes, for Bonaventure ‘Aristotle was doomed to fall into certain very serious errors since he did not have recourse to a reality that transcends what meets our senses’.¹⁰⁶³ Like Plato and all the other pagan philosophers, he knew nothing of Christ and thus could not receive the gift of salvation. His *ratio* could never take place *in lumine mentis Christi*; as such, it remained illicit and fundamentally flawed.

6.2.2.3) Q 4) *How Does Bonaventure’s Thought on Faith and Reason Differ from that of Aquinas’s?*

Finally, attention turns now to what is perhaps the most complicated, most pressing, and most contemporarily relevant, of the four questions identified earlier: how does Bonaventure’s

¹⁰⁶⁰ *History*, pp. 159-63.

¹⁰⁶¹ It is notable, for example, how in the early *Quaestiones de Anima*, Bonaventure explicitly associates the error of monopsychism with Averroes, rather than Aristotle himself. Cf. Olszewski, q. 4, resp., pp. 101-3.

¹⁰⁶² *Hex.*, coll. 7, n. 8 (V, p. 367).

¹⁰⁶³ *Road to Holiness*, p. 63.

thought on faith and reason relate to that of Aquinas's? The answer to this question is a long one; as such, I propose to make it more manageable by breaking it up into smaller subsections.

a) *General Remarks.*

As suggested at the beginning of this study, this question takes us to the very heart of the current misinterpretation and criticism of Bonaventure's theological-philosophical vision. As will be recalled, much of the current confusion surrounding Bonaventure's thought stems from the failure of modern scholarship to disentangle itself fully from the Neo-Scholastic tendency to read Bonaventure in light of St. Thomas, and, more importantly, the unjustified assumption that his thought is somehow inferior to that of Aquinas's. As a result of this, a situation has arisen, whereby – particularly within modern systematic theology – Bonaventure's thought remains largely hidden behind that of Aquinas's; and, more worryingly, is confused with it.¹⁰⁶⁴

As we noted in the introductory chapter, for many systematicians, Bonaventure remains little more than an “incipient Thomist”. Like so many of his lesser known Franciscan and Dominican contemporaries, he is perceived as offering an underdeveloped and undernourished form of Thomism. If only he had been allowed to continue in his academic work as a *magister*, so the argument often goes, then he would surely have produced an interpretation of faith and reason identical to, or at the very least the equal of, that offered by Aquinas. As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, such a view is as unsound as it is unsustainable. Not only is there very little evidence – excluding the simple fact that Aquinas wrote more than Bonaventure – to suggest that the Angelic Doctor was of a more excellent intellectual calibre than his Seraphic counterpart, but those who promote such a view often start from the position that there is a

¹⁰⁶⁴That this is so is reflected in some more recent church teachings on faith and reason. Cf. *Donum Veritatis: On the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian* www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19900524_theologian-vocation_en.html (Accessed: 1st August 2015).

common goal or spirit of collaboration between Bonaventure's and Aquinas's thinking, thereby meaning they are to be judged according to the same standards.

Closely related to this position is the somewhat dubious assumption that Aquinas's theology of faith and reason, as the one which modern thinkers are most familiar with, represents the ultimate or indeed the only coherent expression of the medieval synthesis of reason and revelation. As many systematicians are beginning to realize, Aquinas is merely one of a number of intellectual giants of the thirteenth-century, and it is something of an accident of history – principally, as we noted in chapter one, of Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* – that Thomas's thought has come to overshadow that of his contemporaries. With respects to Bonaventure, his overshadowing by Aquinas is – as we also alluded to earlier – very much fuelled by the continued difficulty in accessing his thought. Unlike Thomas, not only are many of Bonaventure's major works – principally the *Sentences Commentary* – still untranslated and therefore beyond the reach of many of those who wish to study them, but as more scholars are beginning to recognize we appear to have a very incomplete version of the Bonaventurian corpus itself, with many works seemingly still unedited and available only in manuscript format, or in some cases entirely lost or known only through various medieval catalogues.

Having said this, the tendency to compare Bonaventure's thought with that of Aquinas's, either intentionally or unintentionally, is understandable, even justifiable, on certain points at least. As we have seen, Bonaventure, particularly in his early works, shares many of the central themes and ideas at work in Aquinas's thought. Like Aquinas, he posits a distinction between faith and reason in which *ratio* is not only formally distinct from *fides*, but is capable of addressing certain aspects of human enquiry in a more appropriate manner than can be

achieved through faith.¹⁰⁶⁵ Thus, in the early unedited *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, we find that Bonaventure moves in what may be loosely termed a “Thomistic” vein in that he claims that faith alone does not suffice to know God *in via*, arguing instead that in some ways, within a theological context, reason offers the Christian something unique alongside what is already known through revealed data, particularly with regards to his created vestiges: ‘*dicendum quod aliis habitus cogitur Deus in presenti, et non solo habitu fidei*’.¹⁰⁶⁶ Here Bonaventure argues that in order for God to be fully known, His vestiges must first be discovered within creation by the senses and then through the revealed light of scripture.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Supra*. Cf. *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 1-2 (V, pp. 353-9); *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi. Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 41rb. Compare *Expositio*, q. 2, art. 3, resp., pp. 94-5.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 39va-43vb; specifically, f. 41vb.

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Thus, for the early Bonaventure, empirical knowledge not only augments, and can be used to communicate that which is known through faith;¹⁰⁶⁸ but, *post lapsum* all “natural” and “actual” knowledge of God comes from the senses.¹⁰⁶⁹ With the exclusion of the gift of rapture, the illumination of the intellect by grace thus does not remove the need for sense experience; only in the *aetas beatitudinis* and the eternal *regnum Dei* will the latter occur. Thus, in the current age the way we know God, either by reason or by revelation is mediated by phantasms: ‘*dicendum quod in praesenti non Deus sine medio fuit cognoscitur*’.¹⁰⁷⁰ Similar “Thomistic” traits are to be found in the *Quaestiones de Prophetia*,¹⁰⁷¹ *de Caritate*,¹⁰⁷² *de Novissimus*,¹⁰⁷³ *de Visione Intellectuali et Corporali*,¹⁰⁷⁴ *de Divinatione*,¹⁰⁷⁵ *de Veritate*,¹⁰⁷⁶ and *Quaestiones de Theologia* edited by Tavad.¹⁰⁷⁷ Indeed, as noted earlier, the latter, like Bonaventure’s discussion of theology in his *Sentences Commentary*, appears to have directly influenced Thomas’s thought, particularly with regards to theology’s nature as a subalternate science.¹⁰⁷⁸

To this extent, Van Steenberghen and Ratzinger are right in detecting in Bonaventure’s early works echoes of Thomas’s thought.¹⁰⁷⁹ The young Bonaventure does not, to quote Ratzinger, ‘break the line of development leading to Thomism’.¹⁰⁸⁰ But nor, it must be added – in opposition to Ratzinger and Van Steenberghen – does he develop it or indeed show any

¹⁰⁶⁸ Cf. *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi. Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 41vb.

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; cf. *Expositio*, q. 2, art. 2, p. 87.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Quaestiones de Nostra Cognitione Dei*, Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, f. 41ra; cf. *Expositio.*, q. 1, art. 2, resp; q. 1, art. 3, resp., pp. 64-7, 70-2, respectively.

¹⁰⁷¹ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 10va-13va.

¹⁰⁷² Cf. Glorieux, pp. 1-99.

¹⁰⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁴ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 30ra-31ra.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 31va-32ra.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Cf. Assisi Bibl. Comm., MS. 186, ff. 49rb-50vb.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Cf. Tavad, pp. 210-36; esp. q. 1, resp., p. 212.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Supra.*

¹⁰⁷⁹ *History*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

inclination to do so.¹⁰⁸¹ The young Bonaventure is by no means a herald of the key insights and arguments which St. Thomas was to advance. Indeed, the principles which Ratzinger and Van Steenberghen identify as “Thomist” could equally be classified as “Bonaventurian”. Thus, despite overlapping with Aquinas, in no way does the Seraphic Doctor show any wish to follow in the footsteps of his Angelic counterpart. Rather, he merely shares common ground with him.

Nonetheless, despite these similarities, the previous chapters have also revealed a number of subtle, as well as profound, divergences between Bonaventure and Aquinas on faith and reason. In light of the above, however, it is important to note that even though a significant number of these differences only come to the fore in Bonaventure’s later works, most, if not all, are still to be found in seminal form in his early thought; this is so even in those texts where he moves in a direction similar to that of Aquinas. These differences can only be sketched out here and ought to be the subject of a longer study than the current one.

b) The Doctrine of Christ’s Knowledge as Key to Understanding the Divisions Between Bonaventure and Aquinas.

As we have alluded to, to a large degree the cause of the differences between Bonaventure and Aquinas is to be found in the divergent ways they interpret Christ’s knowledge. Although limitations of space have prevented us from discussing this at any length in the previous chapters a brief sketch of how this is so can now be offered. Where for Aquinas, reason and philosophy are an integral part of human knowledge because they find some expression within Christ’s mind through his acquired knowledge, and can thus claim him as their author. For Bonaventure, by contrast, philosophy and the ability to learn through empirical investigation,

¹⁰⁸¹ Cf. *Scientia Christi*. (V, pp. 3-43); *Quaestiones de Ieiunio* and *Quaestiones de Oratione*; Rome Bibl. Vat. Palat. Lat. MS. 612, ff. 40vb-43va, 43va-46va.

are products of the fall which are utterly alien to Christ and thus cannot appeal to him as their originating *causa formalis*. As such, they are – insofar as they remain untouched by faith – neither an integral, nor indeed legitimate, part of human learning. As we have seen, both are alien to the soul’s original dignity. There is thus an important divide between the way Aquinas and Bonaventure evaluate the status of philosophy. Where for the former, it is an innate part of the original, divinely organized hierarchy of knowledge, and is therefore a natural and entirely justifiable form of human enquiry; for the latter, by contrast, prior to the illumination of faith, it is an illicit discipline, alien to Christ and the original natural order of human cognition.

Equally significant is the fact that Bonaventure’s and Aquinas’s divergent interpretations of Christ’s knowledge lead them to disagree on the role which the Word plays within natural reasoning. For Aquinas, or so it would seem, the mind’s capacity to acquire knowledge through sensory experience requires no external assistance – i.e. *a priori* “illumination” – from the divine ideas. This is so because, even though fallen, its active intellect still resembles that of Christ’s¹⁰⁸² and can thus discover and accurately describe creation through its own resources.¹⁰⁸³ It has a divinely instituted exemplar to guide it and guarantee its coherence and autonomy. For Bonaventure, by contrast, the direct opposite is the case. Having lost its innate knowledge, and thereby the innate light of certainty which it once possessed in Adam, the mind must constantly be illumined by the Word *ab extra* because its active intellect, now being turned towards the abstraction of intelligible species from material reality, no longer resembles that of Christ’s and thus lacks a divinely instituted model to impose order on it.¹⁰⁸⁴

To this extent, within the Bonaventurian synthesis, the mind, on account of its departure from its Christic exemplar, is utterly reliant upon the divine Word, rather than its own

¹⁰⁸² In the sense that it still possesses the capacity to abstract intelligible species.

¹⁰⁸³ *Expositio*, q. 1, art. 1, resp. and q. 1, art. 4, ad. 1, pp. 59-61, 76, respectively.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Hex.*, coll. 12, n. 5 (V, p. 385).

resources, to achieve certainty.¹⁰⁸⁵ Thus, for Bonaventure – in sharp contrast to Aquinas – not only is the Word the immediate, underlying, and foundational principle of all aided and unaided natural reason, but it is also the external and proactive guarantor of humanity’s capacity for certainty by means of intellectual enquiry. As we have seen, this is not the case for Aquinas.¹⁰⁸⁶ As Gilson notes, for Aquinas – in contrast to Bonaventure – the human intellect ‘possesses an adequate and sufficient light to enable it to acquire knowledge of intelligibles to which it can attain by means of sensible things. We find the germs of all knowledge in the intellect itself’.¹⁰⁸⁷ No direct *a priori* illumination by the Word is necessary for the soul to achieve certainty.

c) Charity and Christ: The Disagreement Between Bonaventure and Aquinas on How Reason is Oriented Towards Faith and Functions in a Faith-Based Context.

This difference between Bonaventure and Aquinas is made clearer by their divergent interpretations of how reason is oriented towards faith. Based upon the conviction that within a Christian context reason stands in a positive relation to faith – i.e. that it is complemented and completed by faith – both Doctors agree that natural reason is not only disposed towards the truths of revelation, in the sense that it possesses a radical openness to them;¹⁰⁸⁸ but, more importantly, that it is continually striving towards unity with them, even if it does so without realizing this. However, Bonaventure’s and Aquinas’s divergent attitudes towards the status of acquired knowledge within Christ’s soul lead them to disagree on the manner in which reason interacts with faith; and how, in turn, it is perfected by it. As noted, for Aquinas, reason – i.e.,

¹⁰⁸⁵ *De Scientia Christi*, q. 4, resp. (V, pp. 22-4).

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Expositio*, q. 1, resp., and ad. 5, pp. 59-60, 62, respectively.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Aquinas*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Expositio*, q. 2, art. 3, resp., pp. 94-5.

the ability to learn unaided by abstracting intelligible species *ab extra* – is a coherent, self-guiding sphere of human enquiry¹⁰⁸⁹ which, whilst sustained by the constant movement of God’s grace as the primary cause of created being, is nonetheless capable of arriving at an intellectually coherent description of creation without the direct assistance of the supernatural. It can, as such, lay the basis for the revealed truths of faith through its own strength.¹⁰⁹⁰

For Bonaventure, by contrast, reason – as it stands in humanity’s current state at least – possesses no such internal strength or consistency.¹⁰⁹¹ Prior to supernatural illumination, it lacks even the most basic tools needed to acquire intellectual certainty or lay the basis for faith.¹⁰⁹² As Bonaventure repeatedly tells us, those who seek to discover creation through unaided reason alone – be they pagan philosophers or Christians – condemn themselves to the darkness of ignorance. For whilst their reason may ascertain some truths in the field of physics, nonetheless without the stabilizing influence of faith and charity, when it seeks to move into the field of metaphysics, as all philosophy aspires to do so, it inevitably errs and ‘runs riot’.¹⁰⁹³ Often overlooked, this important distinction between physics and metaphysics is very much key to understanding the narrative at work within Bonaventure’s evaluation of philosophy and how it differs from Aquinas’s thinking. As will be recalled from chapter four, representing a lower sphere of philosophical wisdom, physics, for Bonaventure limits its attention to the study of creatures and material reality; whereas metaphysics – as the highest form of *philosophia* and that which most readily lends its services to theological wisdom – studies being, particularly exemplarism and how all creatures reveal something about the First Cause.

Whilst Bonaventure accepts that unaided reason – i.e., that reason which lacks charity and faith – can at a push function at the level of physics and thus describe creatures according

¹⁰⁸⁹ Both before and after the illumination of faith.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Expositio*, q. 2, art. 3, resp., p. 94.

¹⁰⁹¹ *I Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, q. 3, resp. (I, p. 53).

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*, q. 1, resp. (I, p. 49).

¹⁰⁹³ *Hex.*, coll. 5, n. 21 (V, p. 357).

to their material reality, he denies any possibility of serious metaphysical speculation without the supernatural habits of cognition bestowed by charity and faith – hence the manifold errors of Aristotle and the *philosophi*. Charity and faith for Bonaventure, as well as the *dona* of the Spirit, are thus *the* key factor determining how far a philosopher can succeed in his or her own discipline. Whilst the unaided philosopher may know something of the science of physics *sine gratia*, she cannot hope to reach the fullness of metaphysical knowledge without the Spirit's gifts. Indeed, it is the presence or absence of these gifts – the *radii spirituales* – which dictates whether metaphysics itself, at least insofar as it is rightly imagined, can actually take place.

As we saw in chapters three and four, for Bonaventure *post lapsum* reason is blind to the inner metaphysical and spiritual depths of creation prior to the touch of the *dona Spiritus* and *caritas*. This is so, because without these supernatural habits and their healing of the affections, reason all too easily gives itself over to a purely materialistic view of creation, and even then, it offers an extremely limited account of the world. As we have seen, it is only through the restorative effects which the theological virtues and gifts of the Spirit have on our intellects through their right ordering of our desires away from the creature to the Creator, and thereby from the shadow of truth to the source of truth, that we can reason correctly and avoid the pitfalls into which unaided reason inevitably falls when it wades into the waters of metaphysics. For Bonaventure, therefore, it is clear that the various graces bestowed by the Spirit are a necessary pre-requisite for philosophical-metaphysical speculation. It is these, and these alone, which make one *imago Christi* and therefore a *verus metaphysicus* and *verus philosophus*.

From this perspective, it thus becomes clear that although Bonaventure concurs with Aquinas that reason is radically orientated towards faith, his understanding of how and why it hungers for supernatural illumination is notably different. For him, prior to the advent of *fides*, *caritas*, and the *dona Spiritus*, reason lacks the strength needed to properly realize its own

suitability for a relationship with faith. Like all expressions of created noetic, it hungers for union with God in the sense that it is a product of the human soul which, although fallen, is still “naturally” oriented towards the vision of God in his essence. However, the impact of sin, and the distortive effects of the fall, specifically the soul’s loss of its original Christic identity, mean that reason’s desire for supernatural illumination and union with the divine has become an incoherent and unarticulated one. Like an unlearned child, it knows the tune, but it is ignorant of the words. For Bonaventure, therefore, reason must first be cleansed through the purifying *ignis caritatis* and the *dona Spiritus* before it can be coherently oriented towards the supernatural. Only after this supernatural illumination does reason become properly inclined towards *revelatio* and thereby capable of offering a full description of creation.¹⁰⁹⁴

Aquinas, by contrast, adopts a somewhat more positive estimation of the internal consistency, and innate compatibility, of reason in relation to faith prior to its illumination by the latter.¹⁰⁹⁵ For him, reason – guided by the innate light of certainty which it possesses as a fallen, but nonetheless coherent, reflection of Christ’s own acquired knowledge – is capable of offering an intellectually systematic description of creation prior to the advent of faith, charity, or indeed any of the gifts of the Spirit.¹⁰⁹⁶ Reason, he tells us, can describe both the natural reality of the creature – thereby fulfilling demands of physics – and, more importantly, it can lead us coherently to metaphysical speculation. Moreover, it can do so without the direct assistance of any supernaturally infused noetic habits. As Van Nieuwenhove shows, the gifts of the Spirit, are not for Aquinas – in stark contrast to Bonaventure – a necessary prerequisite for metaphysics.¹⁰⁹⁷ Reason can fulfil its own unique purpose of laying the groundwork for the supernatural gift of faith without any direct assistance from the supernatural itself. It does so

¹⁰⁹⁴ *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 2, ad. 5-6 (V, p. 53).

¹⁰⁹⁵ Cf. *Expositio*, q. 1, art. 1, resp., pp. 59-61.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Cf. Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation* (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

by leading the mind to a knowledge of God's existence and a correct estimation of created reality by studying the natural and metaphysical orders through its own internal strength.¹⁰⁹⁸

Thus Aquinas's writes in his *Expositio Super Librum Boethii De Trinitate*:

Thus there are some truths to which the efficacy of the agent intellect extends (*ad quas se extendit efficacia intellectus agentis*), like the principles we naturally know and the conclusions we deduce from them. In order to know them we do not need a new intellectual light; the light endowed by nature suffices (*sed sufficit lumen naturaliter inditum*).¹⁰⁹⁹

For Bonaventure, however, a more nuanced account is required. As we have seen, whilst in its unaided form – i.e., prior to the advent of *fides* and *caritas* – reason can, at a stretch, through the pursuit of *philosophia*, lead the mind to a knowledge of God's most basic attributes – i.e., His existence, unity, truth, and goodness; and can, in turn, offer a basic description of the materiality of creation, it nonetheless lacks the strength needed to offer a coherent interpretation of God and the world upon which the *lumen revelationis* can be securely grafted.¹¹⁰⁰ Indeed, as just seen, prior to the healing touch of *caritas* and the *dona Spiritus*, reason cannot even reach the heights of its own sphere of enquiry – i.e., metaphysics. Unaided reason, in Bonaventure's thinking, is thus capable of glimpsing only the shadows of that which it seeks to study, both with respect to God, and more importantly, with regards to creation and metaphysics; hence the manifold errors of Aristotelianism. As Cullen puts it, Bonaventure

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Expositio*, q. 1, art. 1, resp; q. 2, art 3, resp., pp. 59-61.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason, and Theology*, Questions I-IV of Commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: PIMS, 1987), p. 17; art. 1, q. 1, resp.

¹¹⁰⁰ *I Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, q. 3, resp. (I, p. 49).

believes that as a result of sin ‘man’s cognitional powers have been intrinsically wounded to such an extent that they can no longer fulfil their natural function’.¹¹⁰¹

Thus, in noted contrast to Aquinas, for Bonaventure reason and philosophy by themselves – i.e., insofar as they remain untouched by faith and charity – are insufficient to offer a complete account of creation even at a purely “natural” level. This, as Van Nieuwenhove’s logic indicates, is something which Aquinas – and, in turn, figures like Albert – can neither accept nor indeed recognize as coherent.¹¹⁰²

For Bonaventure, therefore, pagan physics and metaphysics are *de facto* inferior to Christian physics and metaphysics. Indeed, in Bonaventure’s judgement in order for reason to offer a solid framework upon which informed rational enquiry about God can take place, it is not enough for it to be simply illuminated by, or exposed to, the truths of faith, as Aquinas is said to suggest is the case.¹¹⁰³ Such a situation, if true, Bonaventure tells us, would imply that faith merely builds upon, or overlays, that which we know through our natural faculties without actually transfiguring or elevating them from their fallen state – i.e., without re-conforming them to Christ’s noetic faculties.¹¹⁰⁴ Instead, reason must be both actively reconfigured – i.e., ‘purged and elevated’ (*purgata et elevata*) by grace from its innermost roots and then realigned with the Christic hierarchy of knowledge in order for it to be harmonized with faith.¹¹⁰⁵ As Bonaventure writes in the recently edited *Quaestiones de Anima*: ‘*gratia autem supernaturaliter datur et elevat et ducit in id quod est supra naturam*’.¹¹⁰⁶ In the case of the human intellect, this takes place through purging of the soul through grace and its assimilation

¹¹⁰¹ Christopher Cullen ‘Bonaventure’s Philosophical Method’ in Wayne J. Helmann, et. al. (eds.) *A Companion to Bonaventure*, p. 156.

¹¹⁰² Cf. Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas on Contemplation*.

¹¹⁰³ Cf. *Expositio*, q. 2, art. 3, resp., pp. 94-5.

¹¹⁰⁴ Cf. *De Mystero Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 2, resp. (V, p. 63).

¹¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 6, n. 13 (V, p. 362).

¹¹⁰⁶ Olszewski, *Quaestiones de Anima*, q. 5, resp., p. 113.

to divine wisdom: ‘*perfectibile assimilaretur et conformaretur sua perfectioni*’, thereby transforming it in the process.¹¹⁰⁷

Bonaventure’s comments in the *Quaestiones de Mysterio Trinitatis* on how grace perfects nature by rectifying it from within are particularly illustrative on this point. He writes:

Grace is the perfection of nature (*gratia perfectio naturae*) not only in as far as it equips (*habilitans*) nature but also in as far as it both reforms (*reformans*) and elevates (*elevans*) it. But in the reforming and elevating it, grace does not destroy nature itself (*non destruit ipsam naturam*) nor any part thereof, but only the defects surrounding the nature (*sed defectum circa naturam*).¹¹⁰⁸

In Bonaventure’s judgement, therefore, it is insufficient to simply say that faith perfects and completes reason – this is only half the story. Permeating, illuminating, and consecrating reason to its innermost depths, faith actively purges un-aided natural speculation of its fragility and errors by illuminating and transforming it from within. By doing so, it makes it both receptive to, and thereby deliberately oriented towards, the perfecting *lumen revelationis*.¹¹⁰⁹ Thus, to put it crudely: if Aquinas believes reason must first be baptized and make confession of its limitations before it can be harmonized with faith, for Bonaventure it must undergo something akin to a purgative exorcism: ‘*et hoc etiam potest capere anima aliquatenus per fidem purgata et elevata*’.¹¹¹⁰ Only by reason’s being cleansed, fortified, and thoroughly healed by faith and charity– i.e., only through its being exercised *in lumine mentis Christi* – can reason stand on its own two feet and fulfil that which it desires to do. Not only is metaphysics

¹¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁸ *DQMT.*, q. 1, art. 2, ad. 5-6, p. 134.

¹¹⁰⁹ *Delorme*, vis. 1, coll. 4, nn. 13-14, pp. 104-5.

¹¹¹⁰ *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. 2, art. 2, resp., p. 65.

therefore impossible without the soul's recovery of an approximation of its original identity as *imago Christi* through the theological virtues and *dona Spiritus*, but it is these supernatural habits, and they alone, which utter the words needed to perform the miracle that is required to make the fallen mind reason correctly: '*surge, tolle grabatum tuum, et ambula*' (Jn 5:8).

There is thus something of a "double gracing" at work within Bonaventure's thought on how faith hallows reason. On the one hand, as a fallen, though nonetheless undeniably real, part of the current, albeit distorted natural order, reason is held in being, like all contingent reality, by the continuing gift of God's creative and sustaining grace (*gratia gratis data*). Yet on the other hand, this creative grace which holds reason in existence is insufficient to render it capable of receiving the truths of faith.¹¹¹¹ To receive the illumination of faith, reason must first be actively transfigured by a separate sanctifying gift of grace; one which renders it receptive to faith (*gratia gratum faciens*).¹¹¹² Thus, in the same way that sanctifying grace does not destroy or supplant the grace which is freely given, but instead augments it, so faith does the same to reason.¹¹¹³ To this extent, Bonaventure's thought on faith and reason strongly echoes his thinking on the sinner's justification.¹¹¹⁴ The soul can do nothing to merit salvation or even correctly desire it, unless it is first touched by the grace which makes pleasing.¹¹¹⁵ Only after this act of charity on God's behalf, can the soul, through the effects of co-operating grace, begin to progress in "merit" and function at a dignified level. No one can accept the truths of faith, unless God moves her to do so. Grace always proceeds reason's ascent to revelation.¹¹¹⁶

¹¹¹¹ *Delorme*, vis. 3, coll. 2, n. 8, p. 159.

¹¹¹² *Ibid.*, vis. 1, coll. 4, nn. 14-15, pp. 104-5; *De Mystério Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 2, ad. 5-6 (V, p. 53).

¹¹¹³ Cf. *3 Sent.*, dist. 23, art. 2, q. 4, ad. 5 (III, p. 487).

¹¹¹⁴ Cf. Sean Colberg's excellent study on Bonaventure's thought on grace and justification: *The Wayfarer's End: Bonaventure and Aquinas on Divine Rewards in Scripture and Sacred Doctrine* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2020), esp. pp. 29-76.

¹¹¹⁵ *2 Sent.*, dist. 28, art. 2, q. 1, sed contra c (II, p. 704).

¹¹¹⁶ *3 Sent.*, dist. 23, art. 2, q. 2, ad. 2 (III, p. 487).

d) *Bonaventure's and Thomas's Divergent "Geometries" of Faith and Reason.*

What the various differences highlighted above reveal is that whilst the language employed by Bonaventure and Aquinas to describe the relationship between faith and reason may be similar, the “geometry” of their thought – as hinted at in the previous chapters – is subtly, though really, distinct. For Aquinas, adopting what may be described as the traditional scholastic “vertical” approach towards the hierarchy of knowledge, in which faith stands above reason and, in turn, perfects it from “above” in the same way theology stands above and completes philosophy.¹¹¹⁷ For Bonaventure, by contrast, adopting his uniquely “horizontal” and “circular” approach towards the different spheres of human noetic, faith does not so much as stand above reason, still less fall outside of it; rather, it lies hidden within and behind it.¹¹¹⁸ For Bonaventure, in other words, faith is that which stands *in medio rationis* and illumines it from its interior by calling it to an ever-deeper grounding within the underlying principle of all intelligibility: the Incarnate, Inspired, and Uncreated Word. *Fides*, in short, is the *axis rationis*.

Thus, whilst retaining the notion of the superiority of the truths of faith, Bonaventure rejects Aquinas’s endorsement of the traditional scholastic “vertical” language of hierarchy, preferring instead to view reason as being related to faith in the same way Christ’s different spheres of noetic relate to one another, i.e. as a series of concentric circles. As Christ’s beatific knowledge stood at the heart of his knowledge of grace, and this, in turn, stood at the center of his “lower” levels of cognition and illumined them from within, so faith lies hidden within reason and illumines it from its innermost core. Moreover, it is only when reason, and thereby by extension philosophy, returns to its hidden center does it come to gain a sense of intellectual coherence for it discovers the supernatural truths which stand at its heart and which, if embraced, will bring it strength, life, and vitality. For Bonaventure, therefore, the supernatural

¹¹¹⁷ *SCG.*, lib. 2, cap. 4, n. 5; *Expositio*, q. 5, ad. 2, 5, pp. 196-7, 9.

¹¹¹⁸ Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 18, n. 32 (V, p. 419).

does not stand “above” creation; rather, it exists “within” and “behind” it. Such is the true meaning of Bonaventure’s concept of Christ as the center of all knowledge.

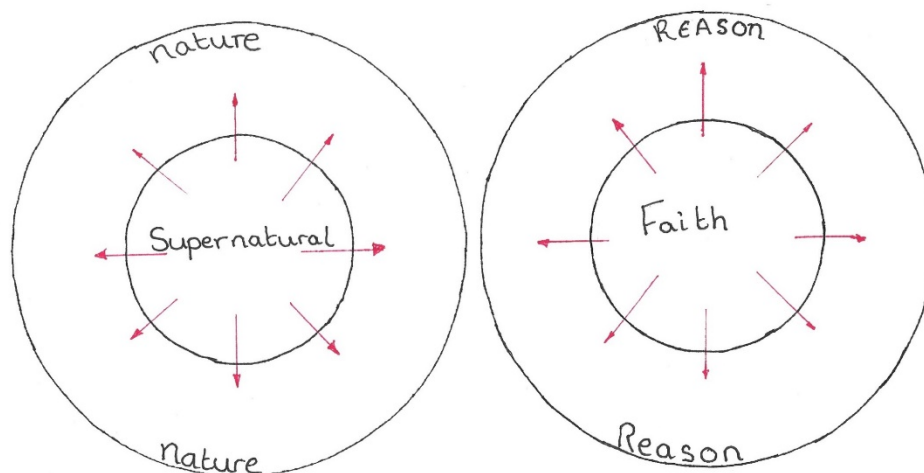


Figure 34

The validity of this circular, concentric interpretation of Bonaventure’s thought is illustrated by the way in which he repeatedly describes creation as a vestige of the Trinity; and distinguishes, in turn, between those who adopt a literal, materialistic understanding of the world – i.e. the naturalistic disciples of Aristotle – and those who, whilst mindful of the value of the scientific study of creation, choose to view it spiritually and as ‘true’ metaphysicians; namely, the theologians, saints, prophets, and mystics.¹¹¹⁹ As noted in chapters three and four, the practitioners of peripatetic philosophy fail to conform themselves to Christ’s mind and thus adopt a purely literal understanding of creation, viewing it as an object of study in its own right. As such, lacking the experiential wisdom of *caritas* and operating purely at the level of the distorted *visio corporalis* they fail to see the hidden spiritual meaning which stands “behind” creation’s literal word and serves as its hidden center.¹¹²⁰ By contrast, for those infused with

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 12, n. 15 (V, p. 386).

¹¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

grace and charity – the theologians, saints, etc. – and thus to some degree already conformed to Christ by being gifted with the *visio spiritualis*, the creature appears as a translucent reality (*‘ut fenestra’*) beyond which the mind is able to penetrate so as to glimpse the deeper reality of the divine wisdom and love which shines through it and lies at its heart.¹¹²¹

e) *Bonaventurian the “Augustinian”?*

In light of the above, it is clear Gilson is thus right, or at least justified, to characterize the thought of Aquinas and Bonaventure as representing the pinnacle of two similar, though distinct, theological traditions. As seen, they each offer what may be described as complementary, though nonetheless independent, interpretations of faith and reason. However, given that much of the variation between their thought stems from their divergent interpretations of Christ’s noetic, it is necessary to question Gilson’s assertion that the divide between Bonaventure and Aquinas is primarily one of a polarity between “Augustinianism” and “Aristotelianism”. The fact that their divergent understandings of faith and reason are an outworking of their differing interpretations of Christ’s knowledge means that the labels of “Augustinian” and “Aristotelian” are of secondary importance when attempting to describe their respective theological and philosophical visions. Thus, to follow Gilson in classifying their differences as being simply the result of their loyalty to either “Augustinianism” or “Aristotelianism” is to reduce their disagreement over faith and reason to an inner philosophical issue and thereby fail to appreciate the role their divergent Christologies play in their respective attitudes towards *fides* and *ratio*.¹¹²² Hence, although at some level it may be appropriate to apply the labels of “Augustinian” and “Aristotelian” to Bonaventure and Aquinas, it is nonetheless clear that this can be done only in so far as their respective “Augustinianism” and

¹¹²¹ *Ibid.*, n. 14.

¹¹²² Limits of space have prohibited a much fuller discussion of how Aquinas’s doctrine of Christ’s noetic shapes his views on faith and reason from being offered.

“Aristotelianism” is understood in light of their thought on Christ’s knowledge and the role it plays in shaping their views on faith and reason.

f) The Dangers of Viewing Bonaventure Through a Thomistic Lens – Bonaventure and the “Confusion” of Faith and Reason.

Taking this all into consideration, it is appropriate to address the persistent claim, much circulated in some contemporary theological circles, that Bonaventure – in contrast to Aquinas – confuses the light of faith with that of reason by collapsing the latter into the former.¹¹²³ In recent literature the argument has been advanced, and has gained much traction, that through his “attack” on natural reason, Bonaventure all but dissolved human rationality into faith.¹¹²⁴ As will be recalled from the first chapter, with regards to the Bonaventurian vision of faith and reason – particularly as it is expressed in the thought of some of Bonaventure’s disciples – figures like Van Nieuwenhove have argued that ‘if confidence in natural reason dissolves there will be a tendency to subsume reason in faith’.¹¹²⁵ Furthermore, ‘by not respecting the distinction between faith and reason’ there is within the Bonaventurian position a risk that ‘reason becomes subsumed into faith, and instead of elevating it (as Thomas proposes) we end up abolishing it’.¹¹²⁶ A similar position is advanced by Milbank and Pickstock.¹¹²⁷

¹¹²³ Cf. *IMT*, p. 228; see also Van Nieuwenhove’s ‘Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth-Century and the Origins of Secularism’, *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75 (2010), pp. 339-54.

¹¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

¹¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁷ Cf. John Milbank ‘The Franciscan Conundrum’, *Communio* 42 (2015), pp. 466-492; see esp. pp. 486, 488. Pickstock likewise alludes to Bonaventure as a precursor of the Scotist doctrine of the univocity of being and the theological lacunae she identifies with it. See her ‘Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance’, *Modern Theology* 21 (2005), pp. 545-73, esp. 545.

The findings of this thesis, however, point towards a different conclusion. As has been seen, Bonaventure consistently, indeed meticulously respects – *in his own unique way* – the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders of human cognition.¹¹²⁸ At all times, faith and reason are for him – to recall his circular hierarchy of knowledge – two distinct “spheres” of human knowing.¹¹²⁹ The two, he tells us, should never be confused, nor collapsed into one another.¹¹³⁰ Thus, whilst the light of faith may be more secure and more certain with regards to what it reveals about God and in some respects the natural order, it does not supplant reason nor does it reduce it to a mere vassal of fideism. Moreover, this distinction is repeated within, and serves to ground and protect, the distinction between theology and philosophy as academic sciences, even when philosophy is carried out *in lumine Christi*.¹¹³¹

Crucially, however, Bonaventure’s understanding of the relationship between faith and reason differs from that of Aquinas. It is this much neglected truth which lies at the heart of much of the modern misinterpretation of Bonaventure’s thought. All too often, Bonaventure’s “circular” model of faith and reason is forced into the mould of Aquinas’ “vertical” model which means that it looks suspiciously like a failure to respect the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders of cognition. Such is the error of certain Radical Orthodoxy scholars and their anti-Franciscan, latent anti-Bonaventurian polemic.

As we have seen, an appreciation of the distinctly circular “geometry” of Bonaventure’s thought reveals that he does not just respect the distinction between faith and reason, but actively celebrates it, albeit in a way that is very different to St. Thomas and does not meet the standards which Aquinas himself sets.¹¹³² At all times, for Bonaventure, even when used to discuss the immediate data of revelation, reason is distinct from faith and, within a Christian

¹¹²⁸ Cf. *1 Sent.*, dist. 3, pars. 1, q. 4, contra 1-3 (I, p. 55).

¹¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, resp.

¹¹³⁰ *De Septem Donis*, coll. 4, n. 2 (V, p. 474).

¹¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹³² *Hex.*, coll. 12, n. 14 (p. 386).

context, called to play an important role in the restoration of the *imago Christi*. To appreciate how this is so, however, one must be willing to judge Bonaventure as he himself wished to be judged – i.e. on his own terms – and not according to those of Thomism.

g) *Bonaventure and Thomas on the Relationship Between Theology and Philosophy and Bonaventure's verdict on the "philosophia Thomae"*.

Finally, based upon this distinction between Bonaventure's horizontal and Aquinas's vertical interpretations, it is possible to describe with greater accuracy the differences between their thought on the relationship between theology and philosophy as academic *scientiae*, albeit briefly. As seen, for Aquinas philosophy is an integral part of human noetic. This is so, because it can claim to find its intellectual origins within the mind of the Incarnate Word and our proto-parents. By contrast, for Bonaventure, philosophy has a very different origin. It is a product of the fall and is only worthy of pursuit to the extent that, sanitized by faith, it can be used to aid the soul's efforts to recover the fullness of its exemplary likeness to Christ.¹¹³³ However, as we have seen, because it fails to find any expression within Christ's mind, for Bonaventure this "rehabilitated" philosophy is only provisionally reconciled with hierarchy of knowledge. As such – in noted contrast to Aquinas's opinion – it cannot claim to be a naturally licit part of human learning; nor, as such – to the degree that it is appropriated by Christianity – can it claim to be a science independent of theology and the healing touch of grace and charity.

For Bonaventure, the notion of an independent philosophy at work within the Christian world-view is a contradiction in terms. For without theology philosophy would not be a proper *scientia*, but merely an archaic, illegitimate, and eschatologically dangerous phenomenon; such as is the case with Aristotelianism. This, in turn, raises another important question: would

¹¹³³ Cf. *I Sent.*, proe., q. 2, resp. (I, p. 9-10).

Bonaventure recognize Aquinas's philosophy as a legitimate *philosophia*? Bonaventure's answer is a decisive one. On the one hand, insofar as Aquinas seeks to bring philosophy under the tutelage of theology, and acknowledges its limitations, then yes Aquinas's philosophy can be commended as good and wise. However, on the other hand, Aquinas's refusal to place Christ at the center of his philosophy and his denial that knowledge of Christ and the reception of the theological virtues and *dona Spiritus* is a necessary prerequisite for the pursuit of metaphysics is entirely unacceptable. In Bonaventure's opinion it places Thomas's philosophy in peril of manifold errors; ones that are not so distant from those associated with the Radical Aristotelians and the heresy of their autonomous "*philosophia*".¹¹³⁴ Thus, to recall Gilson's comments noted earlier: for Bonaventure Thomism errs and condemns itself because whilst it places Christ at the center of its theology, 'it does not place him at the center of its philosophy'.¹¹³⁵

Viewed against this backdrop, it becomes clear that for Bonaventure – in a manner different to Aquinas's "vertical" schema of knowledge – philosophy, like theology itself, is a translucent reality through which the divine light shines.¹¹³⁶ Christian philosophy constitutes the outermost sphere of the Christocentric circular hierarchy of knowledge, and is thus illuminated from within by the divine light which stands at its center, and indeed that of the more noble spheres of knowledge within the circular hierarchy of knowledge. This is so, because once situated within a Christian context, it is said to share the same source of certainty and illumination – albeit less perfectly – as the sacred science itself and the knowledge of the grace and beatitude: the perfect wisdom of the Incarnate Word. The flame which burns at the heart of theology and renders it a coherent reflection of the divine wisdom, is, in other words,

¹¹³⁴ Cf. *Hex.*, coll. 4 which contains a strong critique of many of the philosophical positions Aquinas adheres to.

¹¹³⁵ *Philosophy*, p. 31.

¹¹³⁶ *De Mystério Trinitatis*, q. 1, art. 1, resp. (V, pp. 49-50).

the same one which shines through the darkened glass of philosophy, albeit to a lesser degree.¹¹³⁷ To this extent, all licit noetic is of a univocal character: it comes solely from Christ.

Bonaventure is thus also seen to disagree with Aquinas as to the immediate end of philosophy and natural reason as a whole. Where for Aquinas, philosophy, although sustained by God's creative action as the primary source of being, has the natural order as its principal object and seeks to grasp the divine ideas within the Word only secondly;¹¹³⁸ for Bonaventure the direct opposite is the case: philosophy possesses the cognition of the eternal reasons in the *Verbum* as its primary goal and regards the study of creation as merely a means to achieve this metaphysical object. Considered properly, Bonaventure tells us, creation is little more than a ladder by which the soul, when gifted with grace and the *donum Spiritus*, is able to ascend to God, both at a spiritual and a metaphysical level.¹¹³⁹ Moreover, as Bonaventure is quick to point out it is Christ, as the primary word of creation, who is the true ladder – '*qui est scala nostra*'.¹¹⁴⁰

Perhaps more than anything else, this encapsulates the divide between Aquinas's and Bonaventure's understanding of philosophy and its intellectual significance. For the former philosophy allows the mind to legitimately and accurately engage with creation and thereby reason its way to a knowledge of the divine Word. For the latter, by contrast, philosophy is merely a tool, an intellectual crutch, which whilst alien to Christ and thus lacking a divinely instituted exemplar, is directly dependent upon the Word to provide it with the basis of certainty needed to engage with creation accurately, and thereby aid the soul's efforts to restore its likeness to Christ.

¹¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁸ *SCG.*, lib. 2, cap. 4, n. 5.

¹¹³⁹ *Itinerarium*, cap. 1, n. 2 (V, p. 297).

¹¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

h) The Independence of the Bonaventurian Synthesis.

What the various differences highlighted by the above reveal, is that whilst Bonaventure shares many of the central principles of Aquinas's thought, it is necessary to recognize the existence of a separate, distinctly "Bonaventurian" vision of faith and reason; one which possesses its own unique qualities and can be legitimately said to stand apart from the interpretation offered by Aquinas. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, Bonaventure offers a vision of *fides* and *ratio* which, grounded in his unique interpretation of Christ's knowledge, forms the basis for a distinctly "Bonaventurian" theological and philosophical synthesis; one which is not only self-contained and self-sufficient, but possess no direct dependence upon, nor indeed indebtedness to, the thought of the Angelic Doctor and the broader Christian Aristotelian movement. To this extent, it is clear that Bonaventure's understanding of the relationship between faith and reason cannot be grasped properly if it is viewed through a Thomistic lens. To seek to impose Thomistic standards on it, is to fundamentally misinterpret the very nature of the Bonaventurian synthesis by forcing it into a framework which it is not only ill designed to fit, but one which it explicitly rejects. One cannot force a square peg into a round hole.

As such, contrary to Van Steenberghen and the assumptions of several contemporary systematic theologians, Bonaventure is no "incipient" or "proto-Thomist". He is no mere "shadow" of St. Thomas or "morning star" of the Thomist revolution, as is perhaps St. Albert. From his earliest works to his magisterial *Hexaemeron*, the Seraphic Doctor offers a vision of faith and reason which is uniquely his own and utterly un-reliant upon that offered by Aquinas. At its most basic level, therefore, what this study points towards is that Bonaventure and Aquinas offer two very distinct, but equally valid, interpretations of the relationship between faith and reason; each of which is deserving of respect and careful study within modern systematic thought. Each, in short, offers a viable, authentically "Catholic", vision of human knowledge and its supernatural end. As Bonaventure himself remarks in his *Sentences*

Commentary concerning the differences between theologians on the subtleties of doctrine:
'although judgments differ, desires converge, for all Catholic scholars wish to speak the truth'
(*Omnes enim Catholici tractatores veritatem dicere volunt*).¹¹⁴¹

¹¹⁴¹ 2 *Sent.*, dist. 15, dub. 3, resp. (II, p. 401).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

- Bonaventure: A Man for all Seasons

The Relevance of the Bonaventurian Vision of Faith and Reason for Modern Systematic Theology.

More than a century has elapsed since George Tyrell – the architect of the “Modernist” movement which traumatized so much of early twentieth-century Catholic theology – famously lamented the “stagnating” and “destructive” influence of scholastic theology upon modern Catholicism.¹¹⁴² Similarly, a century has passed since the Neo-Scholastic backlash against Modernism sparked by Pius X’s infamous *Pascendi Domini Gregis* (1907) began in earnest under Cardinal Merry de Val and his attempt to establish the primacy of scholastic theology within Catholic thought. Although an extreme, if not somewhat pointed example, what the Modernist crisis serves to highlight is that at the heart of so much of modern Catholic theology has been, and indeed continues to be, the question of how Catholicism should relate to its medieval heritage. For some, like Tyrell and his contemporary Alfred Loisy, scholasticism, more specifically Thomism, is a quaint, but redundant and ultimately irrelevant theological tradition which needs to be abandoned in favour of a more contemporary synthesis. By contrast, for others, like Reginald Garrigou-LaGrange, and contemporary writers like Lawrence Feingold, Edward Feser, and John Milbank it represents the culmination of the “Catholic” theological tradition which is to be embraced wholeheartedly and defended at all costs as a bulwark against the great “errors” of the modern world: relativism, secularism, and liberalism.

¹¹⁴² Cf. Tyrell, *Medievalism: A Reply to Cardinal Mercier* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1994).

Through the *Ressourcement* movement, however, during the first half of the twentieth-century, Catholic theology has undergone a radical, though not always smooth, transformation in terms of its attitude towards scholastic theology. Under the influence of figures like De Lubac, Ratzinger, and Von Balthasar, as well as Rahner, Maréchal, Blondel, and Congar, Catholic theology has neither blindly retreated into what Tyrell regarded as the ‘old certainties’ of thirteenth-century scholasticism as imagined by the ahistorical approach of Neo-Scholasticism; nor, in turn, has it rejected its medieval heritage. Instead, it has sought to steer a *via media* between the iconoclastic extremes of Modernism and the reactionary, unimaginative mindset of the Neo-Scholastic disciples of Garrigou-LaGrange. It has done so by simultaneously remaining loyal to the theological insights of the medieval tradition whilst remaining open to the concerns and needs of the modern world. As much of recent Catholic theology bears witness, the modern church has followed – and continues to do so – an agenda of both *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement*: simultaneously re-engaging with the theology of the past whilst using it to address the needs and challenges of the future and the modern world.

To the surprise of many, what this renewed interest in scholastic theology has revealed, is that far from an arid, dead tradition, which has nothing to say beyond the limits of abstract theological and philosophical debate, the theology – like the spirituality – of the Middle Ages is in fact a living, dynamic, and highly diverse reality; one which, contrary to the monolithic, ahistorical system imagined by Neo-Scholasticism, offers a wealth of diverse spiritual and theological insights, all of which are worthy of careful study and appreciation. As the ever-increasing number of studies on medieval theology reveals, despite being framed within the abstract, often difficult language of the *sic et non*, the scholastic tradition shows itself to be a force which speaks to, and in some cases even pre-empt, the concerns of the modern church, offering it a source of inspiration for further theological, philosophical, and spiritual renewal. Thus, for example, there is more than a passing resemblance between the threat posed to

theology during the 1270's by Radical Aristotelianism and its attempt to curtail theology's ability to address philosophical questions and the current efforts of the 'New Atheist' movement and its attempt to deny the legitimacy of theology to speak to pertinent philosophical, scientific, and moral issues.¹¹⁴³

As noted in the introductory chapter, Bonaventure's thought has proved central in generating several of the most important fruits which contemporary Catholicism has garnered from its scholastic heritage. For example, Bonaventure's influence can be seen particularly clearly in the conciliar documents of Vatican II, most notably *Dei Verbum*, as well as in the theologies of Von Balthasar, De Lubac, and Ratzinger.¹¹⁴⁴ More recent traces of Bonaventure's thought are to be found in Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* and several other teaching documents issued by the Vatican in recent decades.¹¹⁴⁵ Sadly, however, as was noted in the introductory chapter, despite these significant contributions, Bonaventure's theology and philosophy have not, on the whole, received the level of attention they deserve. For the most part, Bonaventure – like so many thirteenth-century thinkers – still remains hidden within the shadow of St. Thomas Aquinas and even amongst students of Franciscan theology is all too easily passed over in favour of his more well-known, seemingly more relevant and more theologically controversial, Franciscan counterparts Duns Scotus and Ockham.

Although limited in space, this study has attempted to challenge this situation by revealing new ground upon which a renewed, perhaps altogether fresh, engagement with Bonaventure's theology is possible. It has offered a new approach to the question which has divided so much of modern Bonaventurian scholarship: 'is there a theology of faith and reason

¹¹⁴³ Cf. Tina Beattie, *The New Atheists: The Twilight of Reason and the War on Religion* (London: Darton, Longmann & Todd, 2007).

¹¹⁴⁴ Cf. Gerard O'Collins, 'Ressourcement and Vatican II' in *Ressourcement*, Paul D. Murray & Gabriel Flynn (eds.), p. 279.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Laudato Si*, 24th May 2015. Sourced from: www.m.vatican.va/content/francescomobile/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco-20150524-enciclica-laudato-si.html. Accessed: 24th/10th/2016.

at work within Bonaventure's thought; and, if so, what does it look like?'. Through using Bonaventure's neglected writings on Christ's noetic, this study has revealed that there is most definitely a sound, systematically rigorous, and dynamic theology of faith and reason at work within Bonaventure's thought; one which is both radically Christ-centred, in the sense that it derives both its shape and content from the doctrine of Christ's knowledge; and one which offers a coherent explanation of the relationship between reason and revelation. Such a Christ-centred vision of the natural and supernatural orders of human cognition is not to be found in Aquinas nor indeed in any of Bonaventure's other thirteenth-century contemporaries, Franciscan or Dominican; nor, to this author's mind at least, has it been surpassed since.

Whilst some aspects of Bonaventure's thought, particularly the apocalypticism of his later works, may seem strange, even distasteful to some, his speculative analysis of Christ's noetic nonetheless serves to remind contemporary theology of the fundamental link between Christology and the dialogue on faith and reason. Similarly, pre-figuring certain tendencies within Bartian theology, Bonaventure's Christocentric interpretation of human knowledge as a reality lived *in time* according to the dynamic, gradually unfolding process of God's self-revelation, highlights the inseparable link between revelation and history, as well the eschatological significance of all human knowing and loving, both sacred and profane. Through demonstrating how beatitude consists in the realization of the soul's exemplary likeness to Christ, and how, in part, this is realized within history, Bonaventure offers a theological vision in which salvation – and indeed eschatological perdition – are not confined to the supernatural realm, but are in fact realized, albeit provisionally, here on earth.

Such a vision, if accepted, has far reaching implications – both positive and perhaps even dangerous depending on one's point of view – for theology, as well as the church and how it engages with the political, social, and economic issues which it faces. Salvation and *beatitudo*, as we have seen, are for Bonaventure something which, in the final *aetas pacis et*

beatitudinis at least, are to be realized *in time* before they are achieved in eternity. Such an understanding of humanity's eschatological vocation is truly radical, if not revolutionary, and finds no parallel within Bonaventure's mainstream contemporaries, or indeed even some of the more radical elements of the Joachite tradition.¹¹⁴⁶ Perhaps its closest affiliation – albeit faint it has to be admitted – is to be found in the contemporary liberationist theologies of Leonardo Boff,¹¹⁴⁷ Gustavo Gutierrez,¹¹⁴⁸ and John Sobrino.¹¹⁴⁹ Similar echoes of Bonaventure's thought on the eschatological nature of sin and oppression are also to be found in what Liberation Theology, and indeed more mainstream theological writers, label as “structures of social sin” and political and intellectual disenfranchisement.¹¹⁵⁰

What then are we to make of Bonaventure and his theology? One thing is clear: theologian, philosopher, and mystic, Bonaventure presents us with a vision of human noetic which is unique both in terms of its content and scope as well as its attempt to explain how the dynamic between *ratio* and *revelatio*, *scientia* and *auctoritas* is to be seen as a function of Christology. Like the mind of the Incarnate Word which so fascinated and inspired him, in his writings, both academic and spiritual, Bonaventure himself presents us with a model of graced learning and a clear description of how the human intellect can be perfected through its attempt to realize its exemplary likeness to Christ. By meditating upon the mind of the Incarnate Word, and by holding it up as the most perfect, most beautiful expression of creaturely noetic and affective wisdom, Bonaventure invites us to gaze upon an image of Christ like no other. He presents us with a picture of the Incarnate Word in which it is possible to discover both the

¹¹⁴⁶ Notable exceptions are of course Joachim of Fiore himself and his radical Franciscan disciples.

¹¹⁴⁷ Cf. Leonardo Boff, *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (London: SCM Press, 1985).

¹¹⁴⁸ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1973).

¹¹⁴⁹ Jon Sobrino and Juan Hernández Pico, *Theology of Christian Solidarity* (New York: Orbis Books, 1985).

¹¹⁵⁰ Cf. works by Gutierrez, Sobrino and Boff.

mind's seemingly limitless capacity for grace, wisdom, and sanctity, as well as the true significance of its ability to learn through sensory experience and scientific research.

To this extent, it is clear that for Bonaventure the doctrine of Christ's knowledge, and his own personal preoccupation with it, is not a purely academic, nor indeed purely theological or philosophical, one. Rather, it is a deeply spiritual and mystical issue. It is one grounded as much in love as it is in knowledge. For Bonaventure, the sole purpose of human learning – and indeed the sole purpose of his own personal vocation as a Franciscan theologian and philosopher – is to be made in the image of the Incarnate Word and his saints. In this respect, we can say that Bonaventure most certainly achieved his objective. In his writings, he presents us with an example of how, through the illumination of faith and the stimulation of charity, the human soul can be elevated to a state of prayerful contemplation; one in which it, like Christ's own intellect, can be – to paraphrase the *De Scientia Christi* – carried into the 'silent darkness' of God's eternity.¹¹⁵¹ Here Bonaventure tells us the final word of theology, and indeed the final word of all human knowing and loving, is to be found. The end is in silence. Such a vision of human noetic, intrinsically beautiful and theologically rich as it is, is surely the product of a mind which had already in some way achieved a high degree of conformity with the Incarnate Word. It is, in short, surely the product of a truly beautiful mind.

Recordare, Iesu pie,

Quod sum causa tuae viae:

Ne me perdas illa die.

Amen.

¹¹⁵¹ *De Scientia Christi*, Epilogue (V, pp. 42-3).

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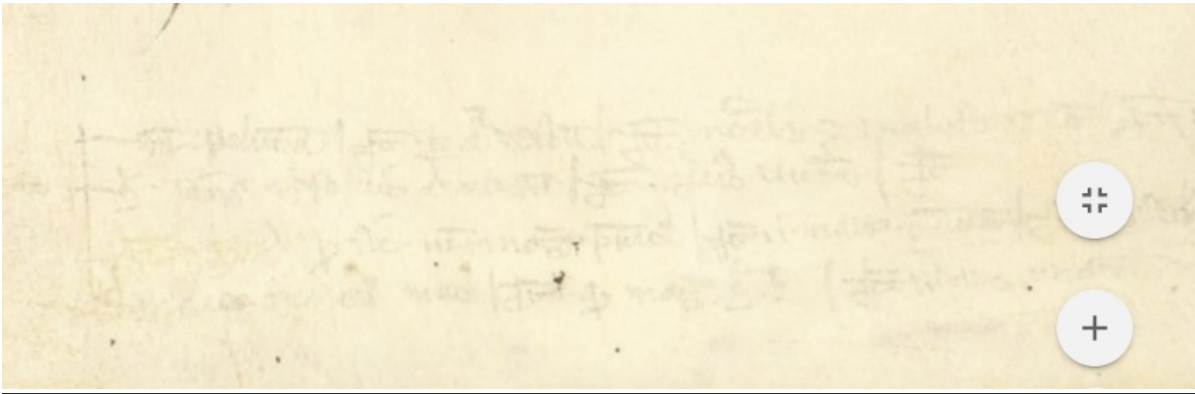
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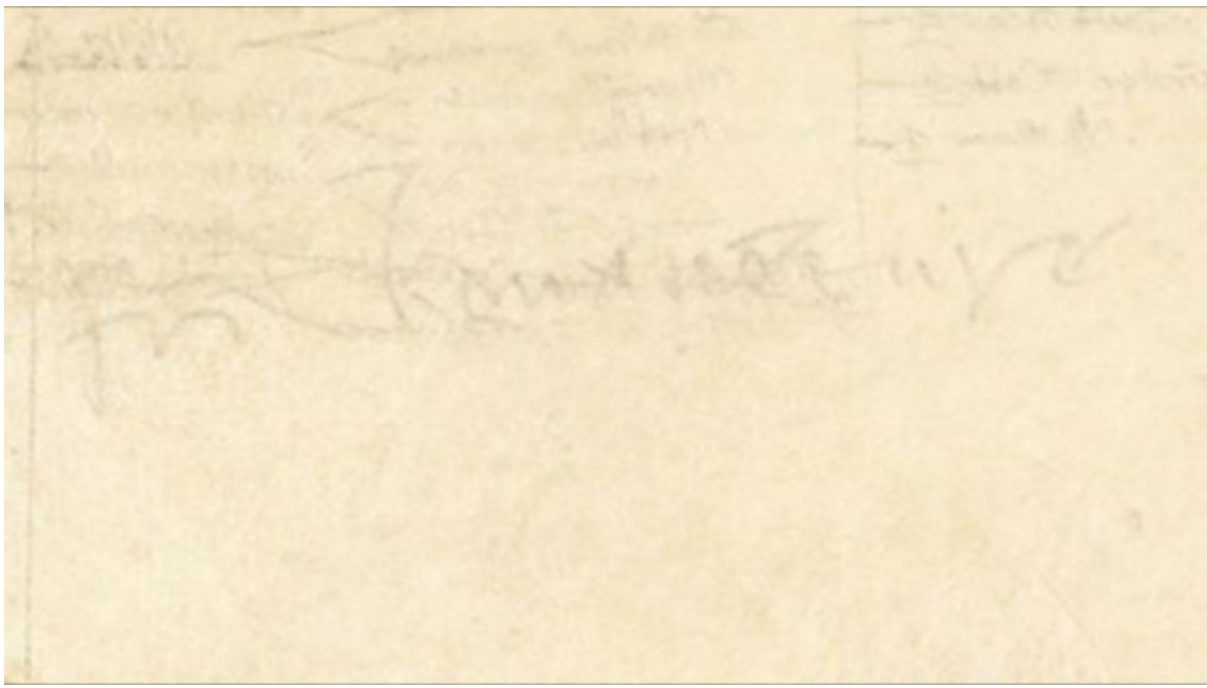
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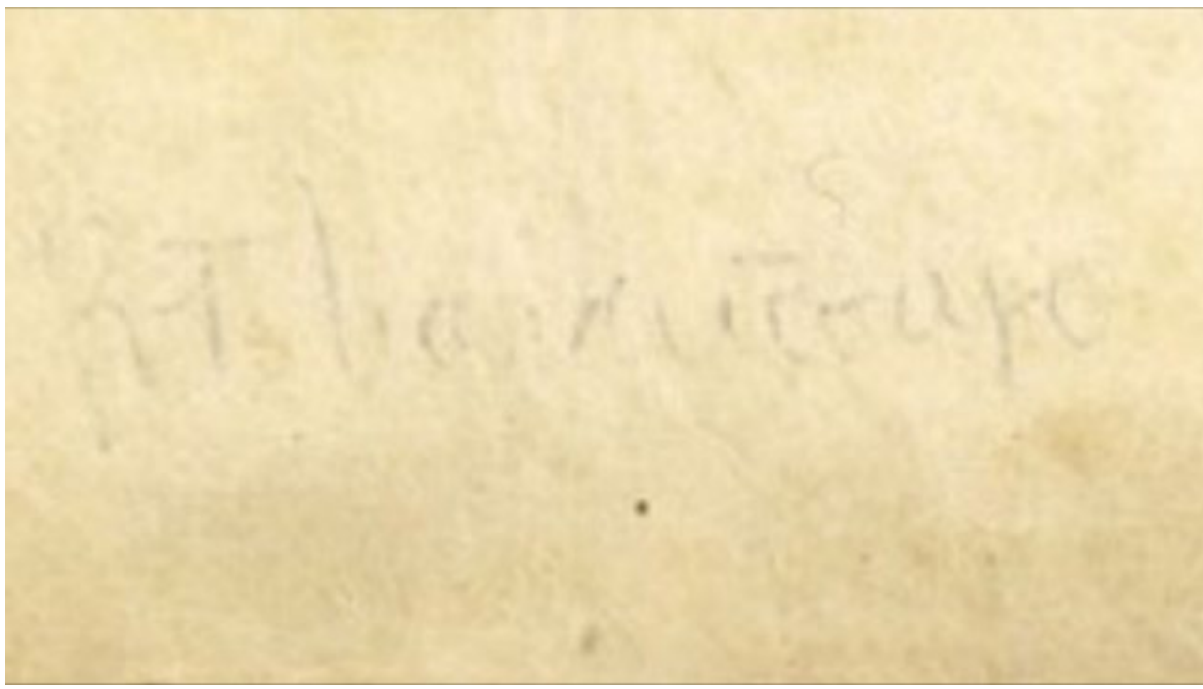
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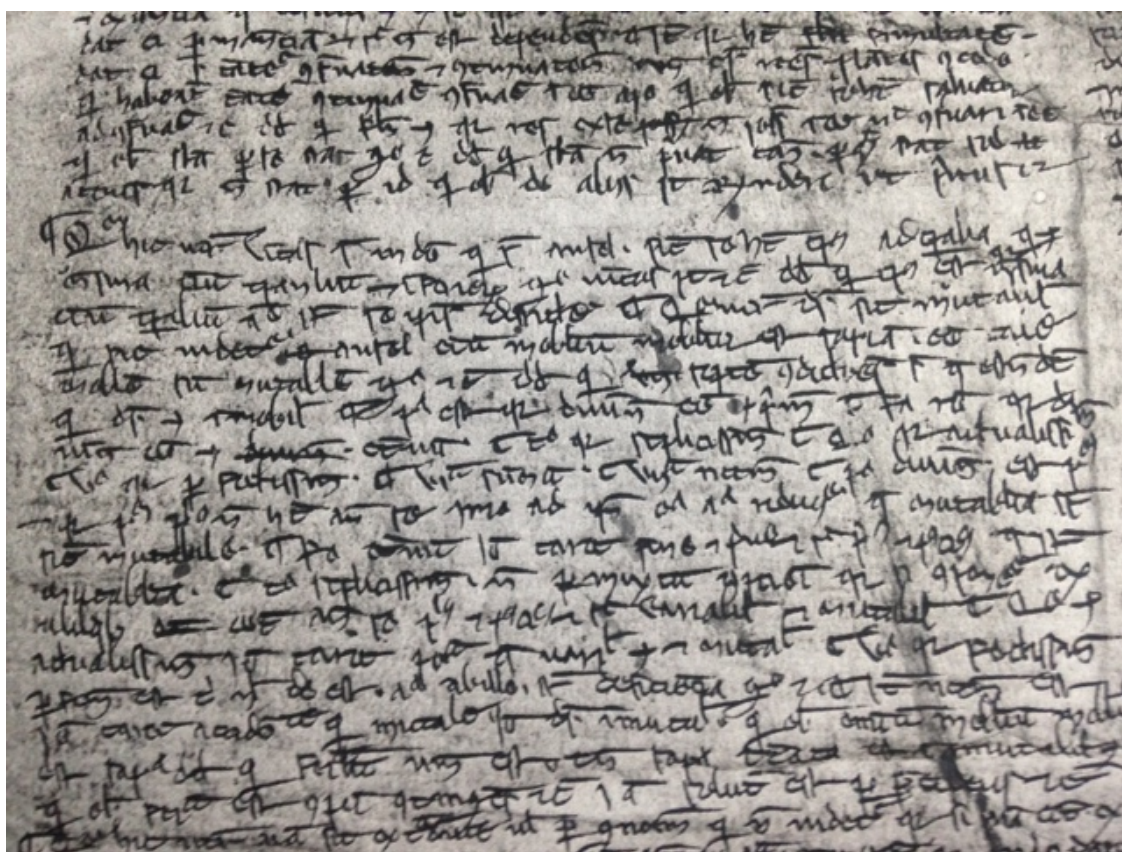
Pencil notes in Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 138 which match the handwriting of the texts found in Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 186.



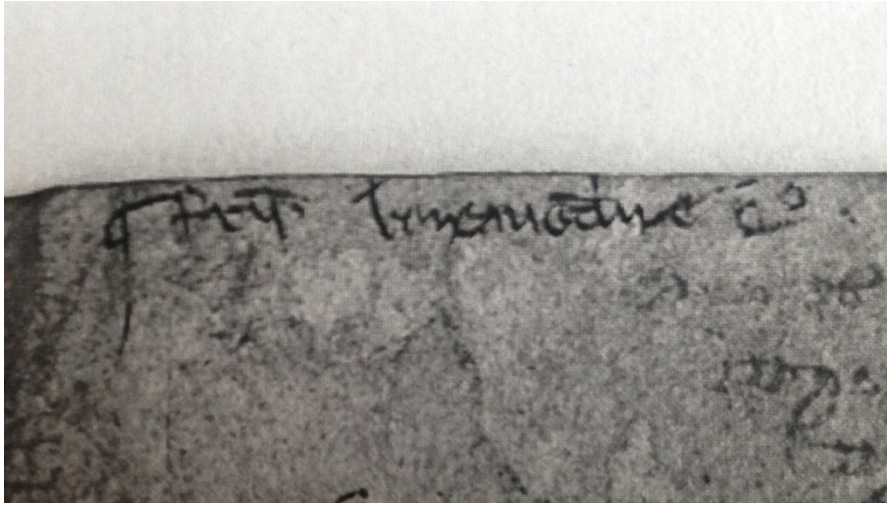
Bonaventure's signature in Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 138, f. 286r.



Another example of Bonaventure's signature in Assisi Bibl. Comm. MS. 138, f. 232v.



Extract of Bonaventure's recently discovered first know set of *quaestiones quodlibetales*.



Bonaventure's name written above the *reportatio* of his *quaestiones quodlibetales*.

Paris BnF. Lat. MS. 15322, f. 2ra.

Appendix 2

Chapter 1 Latin

‘Et ideo...dicendum est tertio modo vere et catholice quod anima Christi beatissima et aliae beatae anima vident ipsum luminis fontem, in quo reficiuntur, quiescunt, delectantur et quodam modo a claritate illius luminis absorbentur, ut Deus ab eis undique conspiciatur et videatur etiam in ipsis; et hoc potissime verum est in anima Christi’.

Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 1, q. 3, resp. (III, p. 297).

‘...est notandum quod praeter scientiam quam anima Christi habuit in Verbo, duplicem habuit cognoscendi modum, sicut, praedictum fuit: habuit enim cognitionem simplicis notitiae in intellectu et cognitionem experientiae in sensu. Cognitio simplicis notitiae consistebat in habitibus et speciebus ipsi animae Christi inditis a primordio suae conditionis ex beneficio Conditoris; cognitio vero experientiae consistebat in usibus sensuum exteriorum. –Quoniam ergo habitus et species impressae fuerunt ipsi in animae Christi in omnimoda plenitudine, hinc est quod Christus proficere non potuit cognitione simplicis notitiae. Quia vero sensus exterior ad aliquid vertebatur de novo ad quod prius conversus non fuerat, hinc est quod cognitione experientiae proficiebat.... Et sic anima Christi, quamvis non proficeret secundum cognitionem simplicis notitiae, proficiebat tamen secundum cognitionem experimentalem. Ille autem profectus scientiae experimentalis in Christo in duobis differebat a profectu cognitionis nostrae, in uno videlicet quod Christus non proficebat veniendo in notitiam rei prius incognitae, sed quod prius cognoscebat uno modo, scilicet per simplicem notitiam, cognoscebat alio modo, scilicet per experientiam. In alio etiam differebat, quia profectus noster est secundum existentiam, profectus vero Christi erat solum secundum apparentiam’.

Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, (III, pp. 315-16).

‘Ad illud quod obicitur, quod hoc est naturale, videlicet quod ex multis sensibilibus fiat una memoria, dicendum quod duplex est modus cognoscendi per experientiam: unus, qui est via in acquisitionem scientiae, alius vero, qui est via in exercitium scientiae, ut quod prius sciebatur theoretice postmodum sciatur practice. Et primus modus experientiae reperitur in scientiae inventione, secundus vero consistit in usu scientiae iam adeptae; et in primo est motus ab incognito ad cognitum, in secundo vero est via sive processus a cognito uno modo ut cognoscatur alio modo. –Et primus modus respicit imperfectionem naturae lapsae propter ignorantiam annexam, secundus vero respicit statum innocentiae, in quo habitus scientiae praecessisset usum et cognitio simplicis notitiae praecessisset cognitionem experientiae. Et iste modus fuit in Christo et non alius, quia, sicut infra patebit de naturae lapsae, Christus non debuit assumere defectum ignorantiae. Philosophus autem in praedicto progressu cognitionis procedit secundum statum naturae lapsae, quod in Christo non oportet reperiri.’

Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, ad. 1-2 (III, p. 316).

‘Ad illud obicitur, quod intellectus agens in Christo potuit abstrahere, dicendum quod abstractio specie a conditionibus materialibus quaedam ordinatur ad generandum habitum, quaedam vero consistit in iudicio eius quod apprehensum est per sensum, iudicio inquam, facto ab intellectu. Et prima non fuit in Christo, cum intellectus eius haberet habitus et species rerum, illa autem abstractio ordinaretur ad acquisitionem habitus et scientiae nondum adeptae, et ita haberet annexum defectum ignorantiae. Secunda vero in Christo fuit, sed ex hoc non sequitur quod aliquid didicerit de novo vel in scientia profecerit, sed solum quod aliquid consideravit intellectu excitato a potentia inferiori.’

Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 2, ad. 5 (III, p. 316).

‘Intelligendum autem quod experientia est duobus modis. Uno modo secundum quam quis exurgit ad cognitum de qua dicitur quod ‘ex sensibus multiplicatis fiat una memoria, ex multis memoriis unum experimentum’. Vel etiam de qua dicitur ‘experientia fecit artem’. Alio modo est experientia secundum quam quod quis cognovit una via tentat experiri in alia sicut cum qui scit theologiam meditatione vult experiri in operatione. Primo modo non fuit in Christo, secundo autem modo fuit quod enim prius cognovit simplici notitia postea cognovit per experientiam sustinendo et quantum ad hunc modum intelligitur quod didicit ex his, quae passus est, obedientiam [Hebr. 5. 8] ut discere dicatur non devenire in notitiam incogniti sed in notitiam incogniti una via ad cognoscendum alio modo. Nullo autem istorum dictorum modorum profecit nec didicit sed ultimo modo didicit, id est quod cognovit uno modo postea cognovit alio non tamen profecit quia proficere est cum quis assurgit ad incognitum simpliciter vel cum assurgit ad cognoscendum cognitum uno modo ut cognoscatur modo nobiliori. Quod ergo dicitur didicisse intelligendum quantum ad experientiam. Quod autem dicitur profecisse intelligendum quantum ad manifestationem et concedendae sunt rationes ad hanc partem.

Odo Rigaldus, 3 *Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 2, q. 2, resp. MS. Bruges 208, fol. 388va-vb.

‘Ulterius quero, utrum intellectus agens in Christo potuit abstrahere ab aliis formis rationes ulteriores, aut non? Si non: ergo impotens. Si sic ergo abstraxit quiquid autem abstrahit agens intellectus, imprimis in possibilem: ergo possibilis in Christo recepit novam speciem, et novas species multas: ergo videtur, quod novam scientiam: et ita profecit in eo sensus humanus, ut dicit Ambrosius’.

Albert the Great, 3 *Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 10, sol., p. 249.

‘Quarta autem cognitio est quae est viatoris quae est cognitio experimenti: sed origo experimenti est duplex: una quae est scientiam faciens, et sic est in ignorante in quo per experimentum acquiritur memoria, et ex memoria et experimenti una universalis ratio quae generat scientiam in intellectu non habente. Aliud est experimentum non habitum quidem faciens, sed excitans, sicut Adam habuit experimentum, ut probatum est in auctoritate Augustini: et hanc habuit Christus, et profecit in ea: et hoc intendit Ambrosius...’.

Albert the Great, *3 Sent.*, dist. 13, art. 10, sol., p. 249.

‘Ad tertium dicendum quod per lumen intellectus agentis in Christo non fuit aliqua species de novo recepta in intellectu possibili ejus, sed fuit facta conversio nova ad species quae erant in phantasia, sicut est in eo qui habet habitum scientiae eorum quae imaginatur vel videt’.

Aquinas, *3 Sent.*, dist. 14, art. 3, q. 5, ad. 2, p. 462.

