

St Thomas Aquinas on the "Scientific" Nature of Theology

Geoffrey Turner

Reflecting on the practice of theology to say what theology is and the kind of knowledge it might lead to is one of the most difficult things about doing theology. St Thomas Aquinas famously did this in the first question of the *Summa Theologiae*. It is a brief statement that is the culmination of a line of development from the time theology was taken up by the cathedral schools in the twelfth century. It is brilliantly conceived and, in some respects, wrong.

The development of theology into something like its modern sense as a rational procedure and an academic discipline owes a huge debt to Peter Abailard (1079-1142). Of course, Christian theology had been practised for a thousand years before Abailard and, in a quite different sense, can be traced back to pre-Socratic Greek poets. But it was Abailard who introduced the use of dialectic (or what we would now call logic) so that truth in *sacra doctrina* was to be established by rational procedures and not simply by appealing to traditional authorities. It also took theology teaching beyond being little more than a literary analysis of scripture (as it had been with Anselm of Laon, for example) to being once more a speculation about the nature of God, but a speculation no longer limited to the opinions of the Church Fathers, opinions which Abailard had shown in *Sic et Non* were sometimes contradictory.

Abailard's dialectical theology first appeared in his *Tractatus de unitate et trinitate divina* and led to his condemnation at Soissons in 1121, mainly because of the machinations of Bernard of Clairvaux. Abailard defended himself in his *Theologia Christiana* (1123-4) and *Introductio ad theologiam* (1125) and it is from this point that "theology" became widely used for the discipline with which we are familiar, though St Thomas still called it *sacra doctrina* a century and a half later. At that time, however, St Bernard called Abailard derisively an "old master turned new theologian".¹ Abailard's move was to take theology beyond the reading of scripture (*lectio divina*) towards the disputations which became a standard part of the teaching of theology in

the first universities of the thirteenth century and to the written *Summae* of theology. This realignment of theology in the twelfth century was part of a larger social movement whereby influence shifted away from the monasteries towards the Canons Regular of the cathedral schools and eventually to the mendicant friars in the universities of the following century.

In view of the discussions which took place later, it might seem surprising to learn that Abailard did not think of theology as a science (*scientia*, in the sense of any academic discipline that leads to truth and knowledge—in German *Wissenschaft*, in French *science*). He used the word, however, in something like its English sense of "natural science". *Scientia*, for Abailard, was to do with objects (*de apparentibus*) about which one has knowledge (*cognitio*). On matters which are not experienced by the senses, he thought we do not have knowledge so much as opinions or convictions (*existimatio*). In religious matters we have *fides*, the equivalent of *existimatio*. It seems likely that Abailard was here trying to preserve the mystery of what is believed against what he took to be the false accusations made against him by Bernard. Nonetheless, what is believed (*credere*) can also be understood (*intelligere*) and in Abailard there is a true *intellectus fidei* which is theology.² He established theology as an academic discipline, a *disciplina*, but not a *scientia*. The question of whether theology could be regarded as a *scientia* became the preoccupation of thinkers more than a hundred years later and St Thomas seems to have been the first to have given prominence to the view that it is—in some sense—a science.

William of Auxerre was the first to raise the question of the scientific status of theology in his *Summa* of about 1220. He came to the conclusion that a science dealt with objects of nature and as God transcended these natural objects to an infinite degree, it would be demeaning to call theology a science. William accepted that theology was "argumentative", that it produces dialectical arguments that move from premise to conclusion, but whereas philosophy and the sciences move from reason towards faith (that is, the acceptance of probable conclusions), theology begins with faith and moves towards rational understanding (*intellectus*). For William of Auxerre, faith had supremacy in theology. This led to a perception which later had enormous influence on St Thomas. William defined faith as follows: "Faith is above all things the acquisition of first truths in themselves" and the truth of faith is embodied in statements which are to be regarded as self-evident axioms for theology, just as Aristotle's first principles of reason are the self-evident foundations of philosophy. William wrote,

Just as other sciences have their principles and conclusions, so it is with theology; but the principles of theology are the articles of faith, for an article of faith is a principle not a conclusion.³

That articles of faith are the self-evident principles of *sacra doctrina* is the position adopted by St Thomas in his *Summa Theologiae* of 1267–73.⁴

Alexander of Hales agreed with William of Auxerre that theology is not a science when he raised it as the first question of his *Summa*. Sciences deal with causes and effects, he thought, so philosophical theology is a science, but Christian theology, which for him was concerned with *sacra scriptura* (the Bible but also some of the writings of the Fathers), was a form of wisdom.⁵

Although he was a master at Paris, Alexander is in this respect a typical representative of the English Augustinian tradition found at Oxford in the thirteenth century. Under the influence of Roger Bacon and Roger Grosseteste, the rational-scientific procedures common at Paris were not applied to the scriptures for fear of debasing their status as the revealed word of God. Aristotle might be read freely but he was not applied to theology on the banks of the Thames and this might explain why Oxford put so much energy into developing the natural sciences, while Paris was the place to study theology.

We get the same idea— theology as wisdom not science— with Richard Fishacre, who held the chair of theology at Oxford from 1236 to 1248, and his successor until 1261, Robert Kilwardby. Theology does not deal with arguments, it is concerned with the practical matter of salvation and man's emotional union with God. The sciences for Fishacre might be propaedeutic to theology, but theology is not one of them; it is practical wisdom. Kilwardby accepted that theology was a science but he tried to effect a middle position between Fishacre and the later view of St Thomas by distinguishing two types of science, "one of divine inspiration, one of human construction". One kind of science is adopted by theologians and the saints, the other by Aristotle; so theology still stands aside from other rational disciplines in the university!⁶

Undoubtedly the most perspicacious and systematic reflection on the nature of theology came from St Thomas Aquinas. There has been some debate between those who hold that there was a development in his understanding and those who maintain that his view is basically unchanged from his earliest writings to his most mature. The latter position seems to be nearer the truth, but it is not a matter of great importance and all agree on the *loci* of Thomas's thought: the opening of his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (1254–6), the first

two questions of his Commentary on the *De Trinitate of Boethius*,⁷ of less importance the *Questiones de Veritate* (1256–9), and his last major work the *Summa Theologiae* (1267–73). Thomas drew on the ideas of earlier writers but formed his own distinctive position by describing how theology could be a science in the strictly Aristotelian sense. He completed, then, the transition of theology from a dialectical discipline to a science. He accepted the primacy of faith that one finds in Augustine, Anselm, William of Auxerre and Bonaventure, but was able to clarify the place of reason in theology in a unique way by drawing on the logical works of Aristotle. It was precisely the introduction of Aristotle into theological methodology that allowed the breakthrough.

When St Thomas asked whether theology was a science there already existed a thirty year long tradition of enquiry into this question, though the prevailing view had been that the idea of a "theological science" was dangerous. When Thomas asked the question he did so in the context of the five ways in which the human mind can attain truth which Aristotle had outlined in the Nicomachean Ethics, namely: understanding, science, wisdom, prudence and art.⁸ Thomas Gilby has described these five forms of knowledge as follows:

The first group begins with the virtue of *intellectus, nous*, variously translated as the habit of understanding, intelligence, intuitive reason, scientific insight, which grasps the first principles which are the ground of rational argument. The conclusions that are drawn by demonstration are held by the virtue of *scientia, episteme*, proved or scientific knowledge; this is called the virtue of *sapientia, sophia*, wisdom, when the judgment is combined with insight into the highest and widest principles at work. These three are virtues of the theoretical reason. The second group, of virtues of the practical reason, consists of *prudentia, phronesis*, moral prudence or practical wisdom, which directs our doings so that the ends of human life may be secured, and *ars, techne*, art, which ensures that the things which we produce are well-made.⁹

In Thomas's time there was no real problem that theology or *sacra doctrina* was all but the second of these five forms of knowledge—though the relevance of the last, *ars*, is remote but not of much consequence. For example, Augustine had long before established that theology was a form of *intellectus, intellectus fidei* in fact, a theme developed by Anselm and accepted by all medieval theologians. From at least the time of Augustine theology had also been accepted as a form of wisdom and he often spoke of theology as *sacra sapientia*. Thomas discussed this last point in article six of the first question of the *Summa* (1a. 1.6), "Utrum haec doctrina sit sapientia?" and he concluded that it is

the highest form of wisdom. At that time the Franciscans understood theology to be a practical science because its 'practical interest', to use Habermas's term, was the salvation of humanity and the attainment of unending happiness with God. Thomas discussed this in article four, "Utrum sacra doctrina sit scientia practica?". He accepted that in a sense it is a practical science, that it includes *prudentia*, though maybe not *ars*, but it is more a speculative or theoretical science because it is primarily concerned with knowledge of God rather than human actions.

So theology is *intellectus*, *sapientia*, *prudentia* and maybe *ars*, but the problem for Thomas and his contemporaries was whether theology was also a science in the Aristotelian sense of producing conclusive knowledge from self-evident first principles. In arguing that theology is a science, as he does in article two, he must show that theology follows the pattern of what Aristotle called *apodeixis* that it uses syllogistic arguments leading to scientific knowledge.¹⁰ This is what Thomas was referring to when he asked in article eight, "Utrum haec doctrina sit argumentiva?" Elsewhere he asked whether theology is *demonstrativa*, which comes to the same thing. Abailard had involved theology with dialectical reasoning, but Thomas wanted to use demonstrative syllogisms which lead to certain knowledge, so that theology could rightly be called probative.

The model Thomas adopted, which must now seem very strange, was that of theology as a **deductive** science. For theology to be deductive according to Aristotle's standard it must begin with what is known and move towards what is less known. In so far as a science deals with the knowledge of causes, an idea Thomas considered in his *Summa contra Gentes* and his commentaries on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and *Metaphysics*, philosophical theology can be seen to be such a science dealing with, for example, God as first cause of all that exists. Thomas accepted this branch of theology as a *praeambula fidei* but, to be a science in a more serious Aristotelian sense, theology must also be probative and must begin with self-evident first principles as does philosophy. But how can theology, the *intellectus fidei*, have self-evident (*per se nota*) first principles?

Here St Thomas introduced the idea of *subalternatio*, an idea he got from his Franciscan contemporary St Bonaventure and which was in turn derived from Aristotle.¹¹ Thomas conceived of theology as a subalternated or subordinated or derived science. He argued that a science is not obliged to demonstrate the truth of its own first principles, for it can derive its principles from some other established science. Mathematics seems to constitute the basis of a number of other sciences such as physics and, certainly in the medieval understanding, music and

architecture.¹² Each of these subordinated sciences accepts what the mathematician decrees, so to say, and it is up to the mathematician to demonstrate the truth of the principles on which physics and the others are based.¹³

The "docility" with which the theologian accepts his first principles is not, then, a major problem for Thomas. The theologian's job as a scientist is to draw valid inferences from first principles which have been taken over from another validating source. But what are these principles, where do they come from, and how are they to be verified?

Theology's first principles are taken to be 'the articles of faith' as William of Auxerre had suggested. It is never entirely clear in St Thomas what these are—he never provides a full list—but they seem to be statements which constitute the essential teaching of the church, scripture which he believed to be divinely inspired in a very direct way, and perhaps credal statements.

Formally the object of faith is the first truth as it is manifested in scripture and the teaching of the church.¹⁴

The theologian has to draw out the logical implications of these primary statements.

In article seven of the *Summa's* first question Thomas asked what is the subject of this science, "Utrum Deus sit subjectum huius scientia?". The formal objects of theological enquiry can be any number of appropriate theological topics or sources, but the subject which unites them all is God.¹⁵ The problem here is that we can know virtually nothing about God by ourselves. Only God himself and the blessed in heaven have that immediate knowledge of God and, for us to know anything substantial about God, God's own knowledge of himself must be communicated to us. Thomas argued that such knowledge is available, for it has been revealed by God in scripture. Thomas was, like all medievals, uncritical in his acceptance of the truth of scripture, though he was fairly sophisticated in his understanding of the need for non-literal interpretations of the Bible which he hints at in articles nine and ten.

The first principles of theology as a science, then, are the articles of faith found in or derived from scripture; these principles are derived from another superior *scientia* which is God's knowledge of himself, *scientia Dei et beatorum* (article two). One can see here that there is a shift of meaning in the use of *scientia* which St Thomas must undoubtedly have been aware of. Theology is described as a subordinated science in the strict Aristotelian sense of "science", but the superior science on which theology depends is not an academic science

but the knowledge (*scientia*) which is God's. Hence M-D.Chenu says it is a case of 'quasi-subalternation'.¹⁶

What is essential to theology or any other subordinated discipline being a science is not that it depends on *demonstrated* knowledge but that it has access to demonstrated *knowledge*. And because it is here *God's* knowledge that is the foundation of theology, theology is absolutely trustworthy, most certain, most deserving of acceptance (article five), reflecting Fishacre's position that theology is *perfectissima, ordinatissima, certissima*.

The articles of faith are self-evidently true *for God* and in this sense the principles of theology are *per se nota*. Thomas explained in his *Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate* that we derive this knowledge from God through his "messengers", just as a doctor trusts that there are four elements because of what he is told by the higher science of physics.¹⁷ Who were St Thomas's "messengers"? Presumably the prophets, historians, evangelists and letter writers of the Old and New Testaments. Perhaps also the Fathers of the Church.

In the *Summa* Thomas summarised his position rather too succinctly, I think, but it should now be clear what he is getting at.

I reply that theology is a science. But sciences are of two kinds. One kind proceeds from the natural light of understanding, such as arithmetic, geometry and so on. But the other kind proceeds from principles known by the light of superior sciences, just as "perspectiva" proceeds from the principles provided by geometry, and music from the principles known by arithmetic. And it is in this way that sacred doctrine is a science, for it proceeds from principles known by the light of a superior science which is evidently the science/knowledge of God and the saints (*scientia Dei et beatorum*). So just as music trusts principles handed on to it by arithmetic, so sacred doctrine trusts (*credit*) principles revealed to it by God.¹⁸

Theology seems to have three additional functions: to confirm truths which can be established by reason alone, to illuminate revealed truth with natural knowledge, and to resist attacks on the faith by showing them to be false or not about essentials.¹⁹

Although theology is a subordinated science, this does not mean, according to Thomas, that its knowledge is less certain than other sciences. Its first principles are, as it were, gifts from God and because the subject of theology is God himself it is therefore more worthy of respect (*dignior*) than other sciences (article five). One might call it the "queen of sciences" although I am not aware that St Thomas ever used that expression. In so far as it is a practical science assisting people to salvation, it is a necessary science rather than an optional or desirable science (article one) because without the revealed knowledge that

theology extrapolates we would not be saved. Thomas maintained an equilibrium between human rationality and revealed knowledge; the latter does not destroy or invalidate the former. Nor is it subject to an alternative "sacred" rationality as Siger of Brabant proposed with his Averroist "principle of double truth". He was aware of the limitations of human knowledge and for the need of a revelation about God from God. He grounded rationality within theology; a theologian is one who *thinks*, not an automaton passive before the Holy Spirit. At the same time Thomas did suggest that in some sense thinking theologically should be distinguished from thinking philosophically: philosophical thinking is *rationaliter*, theology is *intellectualiter*.²⁰

On this question St Thomas's is undoubtedly the most notable achievement of the thirteenth century. By using elements of a tradition he had inherited from Augustine, Anselm, Abailard, William of Auxerre and Bonaventure, by participating in the teaching of theology as it was being practised in the theology faculty in Paris, and by having the courage to commit the "new" Aristotelian thought to *sacra doctrina*, he provided a theoretical model for theology as a scientific discipline which has been enormously influential. It was, however, a model which had its critics even at that time. The Franciscans stuck with the Augustinian idea that theology was "wisdom" and not a science. And because the epistemological relation of the theologian to God is radically different from that of, say, the doctor to the physicist some followers of St Thomas in the next generation, like Hervé de Nedellec, would only accept it as an imperfect sort of science.

St Thomas, however, is clear that theology is a science and the most perfect science because its knowledge comes from God,

it gets its certitude from the light of divine knowledge (*scientia*) which cannot deceive.²¹

He presents us with a model of theology as a deductive science. It begins with self-evident first principles—self evident (*per se nota*) to God but not necessarily to us—and proceeds syllogistically to certain conclusions. This is a model of theology like maths or logic that leads to *certain* knowledge! The difference is that, while maths and logic live within their own symbolic world and are tautological, theology claims to tell us something about how reality is. It is, to use Kant's language, a synthetic a priori science.

Would anyone today still want to maintain that theology is a deductive science? Well, the recent papal document *Veritatis Splendor* seems to be proposing such a model, but a rather debased version of the model. In Thomas's version theology produces new knowledge by

drawing the logical implications of the *articuli fidei* that come from God. In the Vatican version the origin of the truths of theology is now the *magisterium*, the membership of which is not strictly defined but it does not seem to include theologians because the job of the theologian is, first, to construct supporting arguments to justify magisterial statements and, second, to communicate the truth of magisterial statements to the faithful.²² This, I say, is a debased version of theology as a deductive science because (a) the first principles of theology are now said to come from a human authority rather than God, (b) the speculative function of theology is not evident, and (c) *Veritatis Splendor* makes no mention of the critical function of theology though the *Instruction of the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian* does. The theologian has always to defer to the *magisterium* and this has been backed with warnings not to go public when one has conscientious disagreements with the *magisterium*²³ and an oath was proposed but not much used which demanded that one agree with the Pope even on matters on which he has not yet pronounced.

The difficulty with Thomas's a priori model of theology is that it embodies a "positivism of revelation" just as much as Dietrich Bonhoeffer thought Karl Barth's theology did.²⁴ That is, the revealed content of theology is something we just have to accept; take it or leave it, it cannot be argued for. Theology (and Christianity) rests on an authoritarian claim that can never be justified rationally. That theology depends on revelation for our knowledge of God and that we cannot give birth to this rationally is not quite the problem. Every discipline, no matter what, has to begin with some first principles which we just have to accept to get started. The difficulty is that since the Enlightenment we can no longer assume the "articles of faith" as Thomas seems to have understood them, as propositions derived from scripture and the Church's teaching. We no longer interpret the bible as though it were a mine of doctrinal nuggets for use in syllogisms and this is largely because we have a better sense of the historical and social circumstances in which the Bible was produced. We also now hear a multiplicity of voices in scripture. We read it as a different kind of text. In some respects the methods of theology have changed since the thirteenth century.

If St Thomas's view of theology is wrong (theology does not begin with knowledge which is self-evident to us and it does not lead to certain rather than probable knowledge) it leaves us with the question of what theology is. Let us be content here with a few suggestions of the gains that have been made historically in answering this question. It was Peter Abailard who was largely responsible for theology becoming a

dialectical or rational discipline in the twelfth century where standard methods of teaching can be identified for the first time (the *lectio*, the *questio* and *disputatio*) using textbooks (primarily the Bible and Peter Lombard's *Sentences*) and leading to specific qualifications (the Magisterium or Doctorate at the highest level) in the universities of the thirteenth century. We must also acknowledge the role of Anselm in promoting the sheer rationality of Christian belief, though he may be alone in thinking that even the trinity can be proved rationally.²⁵

Thomas's idea that theology is a speculative science was always a minority view in the middle ages. William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure thought it was only a practical science dealing with the knowledge which leads us to love God and attain salvation, and this was the view later expounded by Duns Scotus. Wolfhart Pannenberg tells that,

Duns Scotus went further with this criticism [of theology as a deductive science] by distinguishing between what can be proved by one particular science and what is evident to the mind as the subject of all sciences. If we speak of a relationship between a prior and a subordinate science, we must not overlook the relationship of both these sciences to our own intellect. When we pursue a subordinate science, its principles must be present and evident to our intellect even though these principles may derive from another science. Because the superior or prior science is at a higher level of universality, its principles must be known to the intellect before those of the subordinate science and be the cause of the discoveries we make in it. Duns Scotus did not think such proof was attainable in the case of *theologia viatorum*.²⁶

Duns Scotus thought that theology is concerned with knowledge that leads to human action. In the light of Jürgen Habermas's analysis of practical social interests which motivate discovery and provide a heuristic framework for the presentation of scientific knowledge,²⁷ we may claim that there is a practical interest in theology which is related to the attainment of salvation-liberation both as a limited human, historical achievement and in its final form as a gift from God. It is obvious, however, that theology is not limited to a discourse about strategies and practical outcomes.

While theology in the middle ages was, or at least incorporated, a disinterested pursuit of truth, Gerhard Ebeling has detected a tendency in the tradition of theology as an Aristotelian science to pass over the historical and social content of Christianity especially in its understanding of the New Testament. The historical basis of Christianity and its historical needs were replaced by a "systematisch-spekulative Interesse" which also presupposed, he says, a natural knowledge that acted as a starting-point for revealed knowledge.²⁸ This weakening of the historicity of theological meaning reminds one of the criticism that

Cornelius Ernst made of Thomas's theory of meaning,

But in the last resort it is an archaic theory of meaning and of language which supports both the theory of probative arguments and the theory of theological structure as an Aristotelian science: the theory that meaning is accessible and manipulable only in the form of essentialist concepts. In spite of the considerable sophistication of medieval logical grammar, in spite of St Thomas's own developments of this grammar in an ontological sense in his theory of analogy, the theory of meaning implicit in all scholastic theology is dominantly 'ontic', tied to the specific natures of the cosmic world. Concepts, in St Thomas's epistemological theory, are still 'similitudes' of natures; historical meaning is not genuinely meaning at all, for it is only in the generality of the concept and of 'science' that meaning can be authentically realised.²⁹

At first sight it might look as though deductive reasoning is something the early fathers did go in for. Is it perhaps possible to see the credal statements of Nicea and Constantinople on the Trinity and Chalcedon on the nature of Christ and the theological extrapolations that surround these creeds as necessary conclusions drawn from revealed truths (*articuli fidei*) found in scripture? I think not. The creeds are literally 'Symbols', not necessary truths arrived at syllogistically. Part of the problem with, for example, the Marian doctrines of the immaculate conception and the assumption is that they are seen as events or states of affairs which had to have happened because they have been seen as necessarily true implications of statements in the New Testament. In reality a creed is at best a poor attempt to summarize orthodox theology's grasp of some aspect of the transcendental truth about the mystery of God.

Fortunately, as Cornelius Ernst points out, St Thomas's own practice was always less rigid than his epistemological theory. And we should remember that Thomas was not moulding theology to be no more than a deductive science, for he argued that theology was a *scientia* as well as being *sapientia*, *intellectus* and *prudentia*.

At the heart of our problem with St Thomas's understanding of theology is his lack of a genuinely critical method, particularly as it concerns the principles of theology. Again we must acknowledge that his practice is freer than his theory. According to Thomas, scripture is our principle source of the *scientia dei* on which theology is based but at that time he had no way of dealing critically with the substance of the Bible. He had no *Sachkritik*. It would be anachronistic to expect anything else of the thirteenth century but theology has now to justify its foundation in some other way and can no longer make assumptions about first principles that were commonplace in the middle ages. It may have been possible to see theology as a deductive science based on self-evident first principles in the thirteenth century, but not now. We no

longer begin with the same principles and the method has changed. It may be better to see the principle character of theology as *intellectus*, understanding, *Verstehen*; as part of a hermeneutical tradition in which theology is at its most illuminating, not in testing particular statements, but in enlarging human understanding and conjuring a glimpse of unified meaning in relation to one's own historical experience. When theology works it enables us to place our contingency within a graceful divine transcendence. Where we certainly can agree with Thomas is that the subject of theology is God. At a time when there has been a migration in many British faculties to the tempting pasture of religions, it is important to maintain that theology involves talking about God (or 'God') and divine things.

- 1 G.R.Evans, *Old Arts and New Theology*, Oxford 1980, p.31.
- 2 G.Paré, A.Brunet and P.Tremblay, *La Renaissance du XIIIe Siècle: Les Écoles et L'Enseignement*, Paris 1933, p.296.
- 3 William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea*, Book 3, De baptismo, referred to by M-D.Chenu, *La Théologie comme Science au Treizième Siècle*, Paris 1943, p.36.
- 4 St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 1, 7 & 8.
- 5 Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologiae*, Introduction, article 1 quoted by M-D.Chenu, op. cit., p.40.
- 6 M-D.Chenu, op. cit., p.50ff.
- 7 Dated variously as an early work (1256) by Glorieux and Gilby (1257-8), a fairly early work (1258-9) by Weisheipl and a very mature work (1269-72) by Grabmann.
- 8 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 3-8.1139b15-1142a30.
- 9 T.Gilby, "Theology as Science", Appendix 6 in St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Vol 1 Christian Theology (1a.1), Blackfriars Edition, London 1964, p.68f. This passage is a presentation of St Thomas's discussion in the *Summa* 1a2ae. 57 rather than Aristotle's *Ethics*.
- 10 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 1, 2.71b16-72b4.
- 11 M-D.Chenu, op. cit., p.57; and see Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, 1, 2.72a14-20 and 1, 13.78b35-39.
- 12 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 1, 2 and on music see J.James, *The Music of the Spheres*, London 1995.
- 13 In *Boethius de Trinitate*, q.2, art.2, ad5. Etiam in scientiis humanitus traditis sunt quaedam principia in quibusdam earum quae non sunt omnibus nota, sed oportet ea supponere a superioribus scientiis; sicut in scientiis subalternatis supponuntur et creduntur aliqua a superioribus scientiis subalternantibus, et hujusmodi non sunt per se nota nisi superioribus scientiis.
- 14 *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae. 5, 3.
- 15 This was by no means a commonplace view. St Thomas held this view (1a. 1, 7) against Peter Lombard who said that "reality and its symbols" was the object of theology; Hugh of St Victor who said that it is "the works of restoration"; Robert of Melun, Gilbert of Poitiers, Robert Grosseteste and Robert Kilwardby who said it is "the whole Christ". See J.Weisheipl, "The Meaning of 'Sacra Doctrina' in *Sum. Theol.* 1 q.1, *The Thomist*, 38, 1934, p.75.
- 16 M-D.Chenu, op. cit., p.90.
- 17 See the end of the paragraph referred to in note 13. Et hoc modo se habent articuli fidei, qui sunt principia hujus scientiae, ad cognitionem divinam, quia ea quae sunt per se nota in scientia quam Deus habet in seipso, supponuntur in scientia nostra, et

creditor ei nobis hoc indicanti per suos nuntios, sicut medicus credit physico quatuor esse elementa.

- 18 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 1, 2.
- 19 *In Boethium de Trinitate*, q.2, art.13.
- 20 M-D.Chenu, *op. cit.*, p.99f.
- 21 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 1, 5.
- 22 *Veritatis Splendor*, London 1993, p.165. *The Instruction of the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian* by Cardinal Ratzinger of 24 May 1990 makes it clear that he thinks theologians are no part of the magisterium.
- 23 *Veritatis Splendor*, CTS London 1993, p.163.
- 24 D.Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, London 1971, pp.280 & 286, 30 April and 5 May 1944.
- 25 See F.S.Schmitt, "Die wissenschaftliche Methode bei Anselm von Canterbury und Thomas von Aquin", *Annalecta Anselmiana*, 4.2, 1975, p.35.
- 26 W.Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, London 1976, p.230.
- 27 J.Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, London 1972.
- 28 G.Ebeling, "Theologie", in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd edition, Tübingen 1961, vol 6, col 763.
- 29 C.Ernst, *Multiple Echo*, London 1979, p.83.

A Medieval Welsh Dominican Treatise on Mysticism

R. Iestyn Daniel

The aim of this paper¹ is to draw to the attention of readers not conversant with Welsh the significance and importance of a work little known at present outside Wales but deserving of a far wider readership. This is the anonymous medieval Welsh prose treatise on mysticism called *Ymborth yr Enaid* (Sustenance of the Soul),² the third and sole surviving book of a larger work called *Cysegrian Fuchedd* (Holy Living). *Ymborth yr Enaid* has several claims to distinction. First, it is the only example of a medieval Welsh treatise on mysticism, and for that reason, as well as its intrinsic merits, it is important in the context of medieval vernacular mystical writings. Second, it is the work of a man who was not only a considerable theologian and philosopher but also a very gifted artist. Third, the work represents a unique fusion of native Welsh bardic learning and mainstream scholastic theology, a fact which is not only remarkable in itself but also, in this case, far-reaching in its

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