Theistic metaphysics and biblical exegesis: Francis Turretin on the concept of God

S E B A S T I A N R E H N M A N

Johannelund Theological Seminary, Heidenstamsgatan 75, 754 27 Uppsala, Sweden
Exeter College, University of Oxford, OX1 3DP

Abstract: **In this article I argue that the integration of biblical exegesis and metaphysical argumentation in Turretin's doctrine of God is due to his views in epistemology and semantics. Anyone reading Turretin's *Locus de Deo* will recognize that it is not limited to scriptural exegesis and exploration of biblical concepts. The biblical orientation is, of course, prominent, but in addition he combines it with logic and metaphysics. I argue that by adhering to an instrumental view of reason, and an analogical or partially univocal theory of theistic reference, he is able to construct a concept of God which draws first and foremost on the Christian canon and in addition on logic and metaphysics.**

'From about 10.30 at night until about 12.30. FIRE. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of the philosophers and of the learned. Certitude, certitude, feeling, joy, peace. God of Jesus Christ. … Let me never be separated from him.' Most people have an idea of what God is like and the inputs to that idea are investigated in the doctrine of God. Generally speaking, we arrive at the characteristics ascribed to God factually through religious traditions and logically through testing their purported conceptual coherence. According to the different strains of theism, the ultimate reality and highest being is necessarily ontologically independent, self-conscious, and transcendent. But according to the quotation above, in which Blaise Pascal formulated an experience he had in 1654, there is a radical difference between the god of philosophy and the God of the Christian religion. There is, according to Pascal, a God, and that God can be known through the Christian revelation, not through metaphysics.

My object in this article is to trace the method by which one of Pascal's contemporaries developed his concept of God. My aim is not to state Francis Turretin's (1623–1687) understanding of the several divine attributes but something which is logically prior to that, namely his views on the compatibility of scriptural exegesis and metaphysical argumentation. Turretin does not set out this explicitly and

167

formally so it will have to be derived from his doctrinal exposition. Whether philosophy is applicable to God is itself a philosophical issue which is beyond the limits of this article.[1] Instead Turretin's affirmative answer will be supposed, and perhaps his practice will say something to the applicability of metaphysics and epistemology to the divine being. I will preface this with a historical section and then develop the theoretical basis for the integration of scriptural exegesis and philosophical argumentation from Turretin's views on the rationality of religious belief and an analogical understanding of religious language.

Francis Turretin

Let me begin briefly with who Francis Turretin was, since he may be unknown to many readers of this journal.[2] Following studies at the leading centres of learning in Europe in the seventeenth century, Turretin became pastor in Geneva 1648, was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Geneva in 1650 (but declined), and professor of theology at the same university in 1653. He is generally considered to epitomize Reformed theology in that age, and an authoritative scholar writes that his name 'is virtually synonymous with the term ''Protestant Scholasticism'''.[3] Turretin's major work is the *Institutio Theologicae Elencticae* (1679–1685), a tightly argued three-volume folio work that interfoliates theological and philosophical argumentation.

Although this is not the place to characterize the movement of Reformed scholasticism (and I have tried to do that elsewhere), it is necessary to say a few words about it in the light of the present stage of scholarship.[4] Earlier, it was claimed that the doctrine of divine predestination assumed the role of central dogma and metaphysical principle in seventeenth-century Reformed theology, allegedly indicating a rationalistic and deductive Aristotelianism. Considerable research has, over the last few decades, shown that this understanding is unhistorical and inaccurate in its views on scholasticism, humanism, the Reformation, and their relationship. In my earlier research I argued that both Reformation and institutionalized Protestantism stand in continuity with the philosophical eclecticism and educational methods of the Christian tradition, and that Reformed scholasticism is a critical Thomist school, conscious of the developments in Scotism and Nominalism and its own Protestant emphases.

In this article I would like to trace the method by which Turretin developed his concept of God, by means of his supposition that scriptural exegesis and metaphysical argumentation are compatible. Anyone reading his *Locus de Deo* will recognize that it is not limited to scriptural exegesis and exploration of biblical concepts. The biblical orientation is, of course, prominent, but in addition Turretin combines it with logic and metaphysics. Such a procedure is, to some post-Enlightenment theologians, in itself incompatible with and a betrayal of (the Christian) religion, but was the standard conception (at least) from Augustine and

onwards in the Christian tradition, and still is among Christian analytic philosophers of religion.

Sources for theistic belief

Let us then turn to the question of sources for beliefs about God in Francis Turretin. The well-known answer of Reformed theology to the question of whether we can know God is *finitum non capax infiniti* – the finite is incapable of comprehending the infinite.[5] But the Reformed response to this fundamental question is not theological agnosticism but an incentive to investigate (purported) revelation.[6] In exploring Turretin's view of the interrelationship of scriptural exegesis and metaphysical argumentation in the doctrine of God, I intend first and in this section to lay out the basic ideas and then in the following section to present its practical implications.

It will be useful to begin with a look at Turretin's starting point. Where does he begin? Turretin explicitly asserts himself to be epistemically situated in the church through the work of the Holy Spirit, for there the self-authenticating authority of Scripture is known.

> **For the Bible with its own marks is the argument on account of which I believe. The Holy Spirit is the efficient cause and principle from which I am induced to believe. But the church is the instrument and means through which I believe. Hence if the question is why, or on account of what, do I believe the Bible to be divine, I will answer that I do so on account of the Scripture itself which by its marks proves itself to be such. If it is asked whence or from what I believe, I will answer from the Holy Spirit who produces this belief in me. Finally, if I am asked by what means or instrument I believe it, I will answer through the church which God uses in delivering the Scriptures to me.** (II.vi.6)

In this paragraph Turretin sets out the reason why he is a Christian and that is probably why the tone is exceptionally personal (compared to the overall impersonal language elsewhere). It is not from his independent use of reason that he has come to the knowledge of God in Christ, but through the work of God in history. So it is from within the community of God that he develops his doctrine of God.

The Bible is the primary source for the concept of God in Christian theism, and it is above all reflection on revelation that has formed Western theism into what it is. For the Scriptures provide accounts of specific and particular acts and speeches of God which make them (among other things) a unique source for beliefs about God.[7] Turretin's interest in interpretation and exposition of Scripture in the *Locus de Deo* is unmistakable, and cannot be easily summarized, but perhaps the general pattern is a definition or statement of the question, followed by biblical data, and then a consideration of further material. The scriptural interpretation is on the whole brief, though presupposes, as has been shown, the abundant work of commentaries and the results of exegesis.[8] Much fine work has

been done on scriptural authority in Reformed scholasticism, and this article is not aimed at adding anything to that research, but will rather concentrate on the subordinate use of metaphysics in a theology of revelation.

Although classical Protestant theology emphasized special revelation, it never claimed that revelation constituted a complete Christian theistic system. The slogan was *sola Scriptura*, not *nuda Scriptura*.[9] For the perfection of Scripture does not, according to Turretin, exclude all human tradition and is inclusive of inferences (I.xii.2, 8). He was well aware of the fact that if a purported divine revelation was to be intelligible, if the Christian revelation was to be intelligible, the essential nature of the divine revealer had to be known (at least rudimentarily) prior to special revelation if that revelation should be possible to relate or identify with God (cf. I.xiii.5). Turretin, therefore, talks of the presupposed object of the articles of saving faith which is known from natural theology and sound reason, and which teaches, among other things, the existence of a just, wise, and good God, and the immortality of the soul. Reason and natural theology are the media through which we come to believe in the presupposed articles and supernatural theology later further establishes this natural theology (I.viii.1, 4; I.ix.18; I.xiii.3). Supernatural theology is for this reason at least initially based on natural theology (I.iii.10, 12; I.iv.3). The concept of deity then cannot be exclusively derived from special or supernatural revelation, but the philosophical or metaphysical inquiry into our idea of God is vitally necessary to Turretin's theology of revelation. For this reason Turretin is not attempting to set out or organize his doctrine of God exclusively in terms of biblical theology; rather he is attempting to develop a comprehensive and coherent concept of God from all the sources at hand for beliefs about God.

What is then the relationship between the truths of God revealed in the Bible and those (if there are any) known in general? This is the classical question of faith and reason and a case can be made that the integration of biblical exegesis and philosophy of God is part of the tradition and project of *fides quaerens intellectum*.[10] This philosophical-theological programme affirms the positive relation reason has to faith in bringing greater understanding and plausibility by means of clarifying and articulating what is believed. Turretin adheres to this programme and conceives a harmonious relationship between faith and reason, nature and grace, and natural and supernatural revelation if the proper boundaries are preserved. For they all have their source in God (I.ix.11; I.xiii.3, 7, 10, 14) and thus supernatural and natural truths are compatible (I.ix.5, 16; I.viii.18, 19). Reason is, moreover, subordinate to faith and has an instrumental, procedural or functional role in bringing out the logic of Christian belief (e.g. I.xii.14, 15, 25, 33; I.ix.11). Furthermore, in thinking about God Turretin continually supposes that a propositional and conceptual exploration of the notion of divinity is neutrally and universally understandable and transmittable. The argumentation from logic and coherence makes it not only possible (ideally) for his opponents both to agree on

the statement of the question, and, he hopes, come to be convinced precisely by his logic and coherence.[11]

For example, in dealing with divine omnipotence, Turretin argues (against a Lutheran denial of the use of certain forms of logical argument in theology) how faith and reason work harmoniously and synthetically:

> **Although the judgement of contradiction is allowed to reason in matters of faith, it does not follow that the human intellect becomes the rule of divine power (as if God could not do more things than human reason can conceive). God's being able to do something above nature and human conception (which is said with truth in Eph. 3:20) is different from his being able to something contrary to nature and the principles of natural religion (which is most false). Nor is the power of God in this manner limited by the rule of our intellect, but our mind judges from the word what (according to the nature of a thing established by God) may be called possible or impossible.** (I.x.14; cf. III.xxi.14; I.viii.20)

Similarly, monotheism is taught foremost in Scripture and then confirmed only by metaphysics (III.ii.5–6).

Of particular interest then is how Turretin conceives natural theology. He maintains that there is 'a natural faculty implanted in man' that 'put[s] forth its strength of its own accord and spontaneously in all adults endowed with reason, which embraces not only the capability of understanding, but also the natural first principles from which conclusions both theoretical and practial are deduced' (I.iii.2; cf. III.i.4). The knowledge which it conveys is not saving, but leads to the belief that an adorable God exists (I.iii.3; I.iv.5). Furthermore, natural theology exists in two closely related forms. There is, first, the discussion of divine being apart from special revelation, which is the metaphysics of God or first philosophy practised by philosophers already in ancient Greece (I.i.8; I.ii.2). Then there are the proofs for the existence of this ultimate reality responsible for the existence of proximate reality, and the God of the proofs is the God of the Bible (III.i). It is noteworthy that Turretin does not place proofs for the existence of God before his *Institutio*; such are not even included in the prolegomenon. Rather they are located, as in Aquinas, within the exposition of the Christian doctrine of God serving a negative apologetic purpose (III.i).[12] So in the *quaestio* on natural theology, placed within the *Locus de Deo*, Turretin argues from causality, design, teleology, morality, ethnology, and pragmatics, together with a brief consideration of evil. This demonstration is undertaken from within Christianity, although it is clear that Turretin believes that natural theology is able to refute atheists as well. It is a *theologia naturalis regenitorum* where, in the context of the prior saving knowledge of God in Christ, the natural witness to the divine is formulated for the strengthening of believers and for the establishing of a point of contact with unbelievers (III.i.20). Here it is reason renewed and enlightened by the Holy Spirit through the Word that is at work (I.x.3, 5).

In the *fides quaerens intellectum*-programme there is a close connection between natural theology and metaphysics, but these are not autonomous. It seems that overall it is beyond doubt for Turretin that metaphysics applies to God, and the metaphysical tradition in Western thought obviously provided support for such a view but, as Pannenberg has pointed out, it was grounded in biblical revelation as well.[13] Traditional metaphysics is partly a doctrine of being as being and partly a doctrine of the highest being, and in the inquiry into the highest being the necessary or intrinsical properties of that reality is explored.[14] The concept of God is therefore one of the places at which philosophy and theology converge (cf. I.ix.10) and thus Turretin conceives a harmonious relation: 'Metaphysics is the highest of the sciences in the natural order, but acknowledges the superiority of theology in the supernatural order' (I.ii.4). It may be doubted whether logic and metaphysics apply exhaustively to God, yet this does not prevent humans, who naturally know some logic and metaphysics, applying these in understanding deity (I.xii.18; III.xxi.14). 'God wishes us to apply the truths of the lower sciences to theology and, after rescuing them from the pagans (as holders of bad faith), appropriate them to Christ who is the truth' (I.xiii.5). Moreover,

> **It is not repugnant that one and the same thing in a different relation should both be known by the light of nature and believed by the light of faith; as what is gathered from the one only obscurely, may be held more certainly from the other. Thus we know that God is, both from nature and from faith (Heb. 11:6); from the former obscurely, but from the latter more surely. The special knowledge of true faith (by which believers please God and have access to him, of which Paul speaks) does not exclude, but supposes the general knowledge from nature.** (I.iii.10; cf. I.iii.12; I.iv.3)

Supernatural theology is to some extent then based on natural theology (I.iv.3) and Turretin says that traditional divine attributes received by philosophers and theologians must not be rejected swiftly (III.ix.5; cf. III.vii.5; III.x.6). Therefore he is highly engaged in metaphysics, for example, on the relationship of the divine attributes and the divine essence (III.v).

Finally and specifically, then, what does the metaphysics of God contain? 'The acquired knowledge of God is usually obtained in the threefold way of causality, eminence, and negation' (III.ii.8). This knowledge of God is that part of natural theology which creatures gain discursively, but for corrupted humanity the *notitia Dei acquisita* is disordered and insufficient for salvation although sufficient to convey the existence of God (I.ii.7; I.iii.4; I.iv). However, this universal knowledge of the existence of God seems to be one of the reasons for the Reformed scholastics taking the metaphysics of divinity seriously. Even more so, as they believed themselves to have access to further knowledge of God that clarified the metaphysics of (Christian) theism. For a satisfactory natural theology can only be formally stated by the regenerate in the epistemic situation of having received the knowledge of God in Christ (I.iii).

The religious use of language

The problem of the relationship between 'the god of the philosophers' and 'the god of the theologians' is then partly a problem of the relationship between sources of theistic belief, and with a view to the positive, instrumental, and subordinate role that natural knowledge of God has to supernatural knowledge of God, it is possible and desirable that biblical exegesis and metaphysical argumentation interact.

But I believe also that the problem of the relationship between 'the god of the philosophers' and 'the god of the theologians' is partly a problem of the use of language in religious contexts, and in this section I will therefore seek to organize my presentation of Turretin's integration of biblical exegesis and metaphysical arguments in the *Locus de Deo* from his view of the religious use of language. For, as I think we shall see, it is a semantical theory that is the basis for the traditional way of giving priority to revelation while at the same time appropriating insights from other intellectual sources about the nature of God. Briefly, according to Turretin's theory of theistic reference, logic and metaphysics apply to God because there is a semantical relationship between language about the creator and the creation, and hence terms rooted in finite and contingent reality can be appropriately applied to ultimate reality. Let us begin by way of clarification to look at the opposite view, which does not regard scriptural exegesis and metaphysical argumentation as ideally co-referential.[15]

A claim that descriptions of God in revelation or religious traditions on the one hand, and descriptions of God in philosophy, on the other, do not refer to the same reality will probably have to rely on some (implicit or explicit) equivocity view of religious language, and some fideist view of the use of reason in religion. Such a view claims then that since the descriptions reached at by causal arguments and the conceptions produced by logic or metaphysics are taken from finite and contingent reality, properties like good cannot be applied to God. Hence God does not satisfy 'first cause' or 'perfect being' or, if so, does so in a wholly other sense. This means at the most that terms taken from finite and contingent reality have equivocal application *in divinis* and since natural theology and metaphysics are working with such terms they do not refer to God.

Furthermore, in someone the equivocity thesis could be united to a strong descriptivist theory of reference, perhaps by highlighting a claim of equivocity in Aquinas 'that it is impossible that anything should be predicated of God and creatures univocally'.[16] That only actually used descriptions in revelation apply to God is held by Turretin's contemporary, John Owen, in his *Theologoumena Pantodapa* (1661), for referential expressions are successful only if the referrer has or can supply correct definite descriptions.[17] So, for example, the correct definite description of the word 'God' for Hagar is 'the One who sees me', but the metaphysician uses terms not authorized by revelation and cannot therefore refer to

God. Even if a different view of definite descriptions were adopted, terms originating from natural theology would still not refer to God since they are equivocal.

But the assertion of equivocity taken from Aquinas in the last paragraph is out of tune with his overall argument. 'Such a view would be as discordant with the philosophers who demonstrate a number of things about God, as it would be with the apostle Paul who said: ''The invisible things of God are made known by the things that are made''.'[18] In the discussion which may have triggered the extensive medieval treatment of the use of language in theistic contexts, Aquinas distinguishes, according to twelfth-century grammarians, between the property signified by the predicate (*res significata*) and the way the predicate signifies the property (*modus significandi*), and when he distinguishes between *res significata* and *modus significandi* he presupposes that there are properties which are truly predicated of both God and human beings, and which are reducible to a common concept. For example 'good' signifies the same thing (*res significata*) in divine and human individuals, but in different ways (*modus significandi*). If $S, S_1, \ldots S_n$ all have the common property P, then the meaning of P is dependent upon what kind of thing $S, S_1, \ldots S_n$ are. When one and the same word is used for properties in radically different things the usage is analogous.[19]

But as William of Ockham pointed out, then 'analogous' stands for a concept that is neither strictly equivocal nor strictly univocal but widely or partially univocal, i.e. which refers to many kinds of things.[20] Perhaps this was what Scotus had in mind when he wrote: 'All masters and theologians seem to use a concept common to God and creature, although they deny this verbally when they apply it.'[21] Unless the theory of analogy is interpreted in this way it comes down to asserting irreducible concepts together with explicit equivocity theories. For if a theological term does not signify a common, univocal property, it will necessarily be equivocal. A word is used univocally if it denotes the same property, although the possession of that property may differ for different things. Hence, Aquinas and Scotus agree that properties ascribed to God and human beings are used with the same meaning, and therefore it is possible to speak about the Creator in terms taken from the creation.[22]

According to this partial univocity or analogical theory of theistic reference, descriptions produced by natural theology or metaphysics can successfully refer to God, and Turretin, together with other Reformed scholastics, endorsed such a view of religious language. In the Reformed distinction of divine attributes into 'communicable' and 'incommunicable'[23] both designations refer to resemblance and analogy, and exclude straight univocity.

> **In order to understand the distinction, note that communication is twofold: one essential and formal (through the intrinsic being of a thing) and the other by resemblance and analogy (with respect to the effects and works). As to the former, we say all the properties of God are equally incommunicable, no more capable of being communicated than the divine essence. Otherwise they would cease to be**

> **properties. But the latter we confess can be granted since God produces in creatures (especially in rational creatures) effects analogous to his own properties, such as goodness, justice, wisdom, etc.** (III.vi.2)

Reformed Thomism follows the differentiation between the order of being and the order of knowing so that human attributes can be ascribed by metaphysics and natural theology to God in an analogical sense. The idea seems to be something like, if monotheism is true and the Bible is a trustworthy testimony to this one God (cf. III.iii), then there is reason to believe that all truth about deity is God's truth wherever it is found, and according to monotheism there is only one being of whom the description 'omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent being' is necessarily true, and anyone therefore who uses such expressions successfully refers to God. The source of such a reference or the degree of certainty with which it is expressed is irrelevant to its truth or the truth of monotheistic beliefs. Moreover, that 'creaturely' terms applied to God have a unique and dissimilar sense is compatible with the fact thay they convey limited but true information about God.

Metaphysics and exegesis in interaction

In this section I would like to set out some of the practical implications of Turretin's taking both revelation and metaphysics seriously in his *locus de Deo*. I have sought to establish that the problem of the relationship between 'the god of the philosophers' and 'the god of the theologians' is partly a problem of the relationship between faith and reason, and partly a problem of the use of language in religious contexts. In this section we will look at how a view of the positive, instrumental, and subordinate role of natural knowledge of God to supernatural knowledge of God, and a particular theory of theistic reference, jointly provide a foundation for the traditional way of giving priority to revelation, while at the same time appropriating insights from other intellectual sources about the nature of God. Scriptural exegesis and metaphysical argumentation are ideally co-referential as special revelation, logic and metaphysics appropriately apply terms rooted in finite and contingent reality to ultimate reality because of the possibility of co-referentiallity between the Creator and the creation. Hence, it is possible and desirable that biblical exegesis and metaphysical argumentation interact.

Let us first continue where we ended our discussion of the incommunicable and the communicable attributes of God. Behind this division is the scholastic thesis that a concept of God was formed according to the *tria viae*, that is, it was reached at by ascribing excellence and causality to the divine being, on the one hand, and subtracting finite and contingent limitations, on the other. These were mentioned under the metaphysics of God above. The three ways developed in turn out of the classification of divine attributes into *positiva* and *negativa*, which is perhaps the oldest distinction in Christian theology. The division goes back to

Philo and Plotinus and was later adopted by some of the Church Fathers. In Pseudodionysius, John of Damascus, and Erigena there is the similar division into apophatic and cataphatic theology and in scholasticism the three ways are fully developed. This method always contained a recognition of its inadequacy and defectiveness in understanding the incomprehensible being of God, while at the same time affirming that something can be affirmed positively from divine revelation. This way of gaining knowledge of God was favoured until it was criticized by Spinoza, Kant, and Schleiermacher.[24]

It is with this historical background together with the conceptions of *fides quaerens intellectum* and the (at least) partially univocal meaning of religious language that the *viae causalitatis*, *eminentiae*, and *negativa* come into Turretin's theology.

> **[Incommunicable] are the negative attributes which remove from him whatever is imperfect in creatures (such as infinity, immensity, and eternity, which are such that every creature is either without them or has their contraries). But others are not badly termed communicable (of which there is some appearance or certain faint vestiges in creatures) and by simple analogy of name and effects. Such are the affirmative attributes which are attributed to God by way of eminence or causality.** (Turretin III.vi.3; cf. III.ii.8)

Here we see the semantics and epistemology of religious belief blending. These philosophical methods of identifying the divine attributes assume that God has produced analogous works and effects in the creation, so that by way of negation, eminence, and causality certain true propositions about God are formed.

The methods of causality, eminence, and negation have at least initially the status of what I would like to call metaphysical intuitions. 'Simply put, an intuitively formed belief seems to be a sort of naturally formed belief, a belief whose acceptance does not derive entirely from linguistic definition, evidence, testimony, memory, inference or sense experience.'[25] Emphasis needs to be placed on 'does not derive entirely from' since argument goes on in these methods and perhaps these insights should therefore be regarded prima facie. Still they would seem to start from a 'gut feeling', a direct and non-inferential insight, about deity which intuits certain truths about God. Such intuitive judgements are, of course, defeasible, i.e. their positive epistemic status is correctable and not comprehensive so that the metaphysical intuitions relevant to the concept of God are open for further investigations and to other sources such as supernatural revelation. Yet when proper, these intuitions are both philosophically adequate and religiously satisfactory.

To begin with, I think that the *via causalitatis* has this status of metaphysical intuition for Turretin. This method identifies divine attributes by way of causality, i.e. the relationship of effects to causes and of second causes to first causes and the knowledge of God which it conveys is of relative, communicable, and affirmative divine attributes (III.ii.8; III.vi.3; cf. III.i.6). (Relational attributes such as mercy

and justice presuppose the existence of something external to God to which they are related (IV.iii.18; III.v.3; III.xviii.5).) Echoing the Scriptures, Aquinas wrote: 'what is made is like the maker, because every agent makes its like'.[26] The way in which God most properly explains his effects is in respect of their existence or that those effects exist.[27] For this reason there is a resemblance between causes and effects. Turretin finds this way of thinking in the a fortiori statement of Psalm 94.9 'Does he who implanted the ear not hear?' (III.ii.8) By analogy of effects it is possible to ascend to the cause. The *via causalitatis* is obviously on its own in-adequate and incomplete, but together with the biblical witness to God it is useful. For example, in order to explain the existence and nature of the universe, we must assume a sufficient cause for the production of the universe and, according to the *via causalitatis*, our concept of God satisfies precisely this as God is the self-existent first cause with maximal power and knowledge (cf. V.iii.14; Vi.iv.14). It thus supports what Turretin considers the biblical doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* (cf. V.i). That God is the ultimate cause of the universe is an essential part of the concept of creation in biblical theology, but the *via causalitatis* on its own is inadequate and incomplete for a comprehensive Christian theism, as it leaves many of the religiously and philosophically significant questions about the nature of God unanswered. It is, though, open for augmentation.

The *via eminentiae* or *positiva* is the metaphysical intuition by which divine attributes are derived positively from finite and contingent being. In Aquinas's words: 'whatever good we attribute to creatures, pre-exists in God, and in a more excellent and higher way. … He causes goodness in things because He is good.'[28] For this reason the divine attributes are known by analogy and of particular importance are analogies between human mental capacities and divine proper-ties, by which the imperfect power and knowledge in creatures are ascribed by way of eminence as perfections in God (III.ii.8).

> **Among the communicable and positive attributes (which affirm some perfection to God), there are three principal ones by which his immortal and perfectly happy life is active: intellect, will, and power. The first belongs to the principle of direction, the second of enjoining, and the third of executing.** (III.xii.1)

The *via positiva* supposes then perfect-being theology (which starts from the idea of divine perfection) and then tries to show how all creaturely perfections have their *locus* in God in some way. The relation between these two strategies is, though, assymetric in the sense that perfect-being theology need not function by means of derivation of eminence. But Turretin's consideration of great-making properties on divine infinity would seem to imply the broader conception:

> **All perfections belong to God, either formally (as perfections simply such, i.e., which absolutely speaking it is better to have then not to have, and than which no greater perfection can be conceived); or eminently (as perfections relatively, which indeed in their kind indicate some perfection, but necessarily conjoined with some imperfection; and because it cannot have them properly and formally, yet is said to**

possess them virtually and eminently because it can produce that perfection or because it can perform without it whatever that can perform, all imperfection being excluded. (III.ix.14)

Such a concept of deity warrants belief in the ontological independence of God and *creatio ex nihilo*, but is also helpful in addressing omnipotence. For divine power is not mere maximal power, according to Turretin, rather the absolute power of God is co-dependent on His perfection so that divine perfection limits omnipotence in the promotion of divine eminence (III.xxi.1, 3). God's 'power and will form the law to himself from his nature' (III.xxi.26). Elsewhere, he asserts that the object of the will of God is only the good (III.xiv.1, 10), which is not an inference from Scripture, but is based on the ancient and medieval philosophical theory of agency, where intentionality is intelligible on the action being conceived worth pursuing. God is perfect or maximally excellent and therefore exercises His will in terms of mere goodness. This idea Turretin would at least have found implicitly in Anselm's *Proslogion*. A further instance of acknowledgement of the *via eminentiae* is on the question of whether the will of God is the primary rule of justice, where Turretin faces the Euthyphro dilemma, whether something is good because approved by the divine or whether the divine approves the good. He argues that God wills something since it is good, because the intrinsical obligation of God is to His essential perfection, whereas for man the extrinsical obligation is the will of God (III.xviii). This is clearly not an issue addressed by the Bible and cannot be inferred from it. Turretin does not pretend that it is addressed in the canon, but that does not make it the less important.

The last method, called *via negativa* or *negationis*, removes from the infinite that which is imperfect in the finite. The incommunicable attributes of God are also called negative attributes for they are derived by this method. 'Such are the negative attributes which remove from him whatever is imperfect in creatures (such as infinity, immensity, and eternity, which are such that every creature is either without them or has their contraries).' (III.vi.3) According to Turretin, measureability, visibility, mortality, and change are found in the creature and by way of negation the attributes immensity, immortality, and immutability are ascribed to God (III.ii.8). Plotinus and Maimonides strongly influenced this negative theology by the concept of divine simplicity, and although Turretin argues for simplicity from the *via negationis* and its conceptual coherence (III.vii.4–5; cf. III.v.7) the impetus from the concept of simplicity is less apparent. What Turretin is thinking of must clearly be distinguished from the reductive conceptual *via negativa* which originated with Plotinus and Maimonides and which nowadays goes with the same name, claiming that human concepts can only be applied to God negatively or cannot be applied at all.

So far we have glanced at Turretin's endorsement of the three classical ways of the philosophy of God. They contribute limited and supportive data for the doctrine of God. There are, moreover, some specially noteworthy passages which we

shall look at in Turretin on how he conceived that a coherent doctrine of God was developed.

In the beginning of the *quaestio* on divine infinity Turretin writes:

> **The infinity of God follows the simplicity and is equally diffused through the other attributes of God, and by it the divine nature is conceived as free from all limit in imperfection: as to essence by incomprehensibility, as to duration by eternity, and as to extension, in reference to place, by immensity.** (Turretin, III.viii.1)

The essential infinity of God is actual and absolute, that is, indeterminate and boundless (III.viii.3). On what ground is this asserted about ultimate reality? The twofold basis for this concept of essential divine infinity is the canonical writings and perfect-being theology. 'In the first place, Scripture clearly teaches' absolute essential infinity (III.viii.5). Here Turretin quotes Psalms 145.3; Job 11.7–9; Isaiah 40.12, 15, 17, but when he says that this concept of infinity is clearly taught in the Christian canon, I see no reason to think that he claims that the biblical authors formulated or held an elaborate or comprehensive doctrine of infinity. That would be a gross form of eisegesis, a most naive hermeneutic that would reveal ignorance of the original context, and an attempt to suppress the *status controversionis* with Socinianism. Turretin's *Institutio elencticae theologiae* does not reveal this and therefore what 'Scripture clearly teaches' should be understood in the sense that if these passages are not understood as teaching absolute essential infinity they are unintelligible. They cannot, for example, be taken in the sense of relative or potential infinity for God could then be greater (cf. III.viii.2). Rather reason can unfold and explain what may be understood from the words of Scripture (I.viii.7). It would therefore seem that Turretin held that the Scriptures were 'under-determined'[29] metaphysically (perhaps due to the accommodated character of revelation contained in them), and that the proper context of developing a full concept of deity was within the *theologia regenitorum* of the church of the living God, where reason unfolds that which is implicit the words of Scripture (I.viii.7; I.xii.35) and compares this with the results of philosophy of God (cf. III.vii.5).

Turretin's following argumentation reveals how this is developed. For the next line of argument for this concept of actual and absolute essential divine infinity is perfect-being theology, i.e. the idea of God as a being that has the greatest com-possible set of properties.

> **Second, from the pure perfection of God. For since he has every perfection which can be and be possessed, it is evident that nothing can be or be conceived better and more perfect. Thus he must necessarily be infinite because an infinite good is better than a finite. … Besides containing every perfection of every being, he has it in the most eminent manner, i.e. he embraces every degree of every perfection without any limitation.** (III.viii.6; cf. III.viii.14)

This argument from perfect-being theology is applied to divine power where, since it is granted that that is infinite, it is then inconceivable that God's essence is finite (III.viii.7).

Notice, furthermore, how Turretin deals with divine immensity. The immensity of God is, according to him, the essential boundlessness with respect to space by which God penetrates all things and is present with each and everything as the efficient and conserving cause (III.ix.1–4, 14). Now this concept of divine immensity,

> **… since it has been by long use received among philosophers and theologians (and can take appropriate sense according to the mind of the Holy Spirit himself, who testifies that 'God fills heaven and earth', Jer. 23:24), ought not to be rashly rejected (if skilfully explained and understood in a sound sense, especially since we have no proper and accurate terms for explaining the ubiquity of God and are compelled here to use phrases borrowed from the finite and corporeal things).** (III.ix.5)

From this two things are clear. First, traditional concepts about God, whether from extra-biblical or biblical sources, should be accepted if they can be formulated in a valid and coherent way. Second, in this work of conceiving God, humans are bound to use natural language and such language has meaning by analogical predication. A similar case can be made from divine sovereignty. 'That God is Lord of heaven and earth (if the Scriptures themselves did not so often testify) the nature of God (which is independent, most perfect, and the cause of all things) would prove' (III.xxii.2). From this sentence we notice that true beliefs about God are universally accessible and that divine sovereignty is entailed by the idea of an independent and perfect Creator.

Thus far we have seen the supportive function philosophy has to theology. But metaphysics also provides discernment, which is seen in Turretin's use of the concept of *accommodatio Dei.* Since the days of Alexandrian Judaism, philosophers and theologians have resolved the apparent paradox between divine transcendence and absoluteness, on the one hand, and accessibility to humanity, on the other, by means of this interpretative stratagem.[30] 'Divine accommodation/condescension alleges, most simply, that divine revelation is adjusted to the disparate intellectual and spiritual level of humanity at different times in history.'[31] This idea has a long career in Christian thought and Turretin continues in this tradition: 'The divine attributes are the essential properties by which he makes himself known to us who are weak and those by which he is distinguished from creatures; or they are those which are attritbuted to him according to the measure of our conception in order to explain his nature' (III.v.1; cf. II.ii.3; II.xix.8; III.iv.1; III.x.7, 13, 14; III.xi.11; III.xii.2, 28; III.xvi.17, 18).

How *accommodatio Dei* is used by Turretin can be seen from the context of divine knowledge, where he asserts: 'If God is sometimes set forth as inquiring or reasoning, this is not said properly, but humanly (the Scriptures lisping with us the perfect and certain knowledge of God)' (III.xii.2). Thus our conception must not be (too) anthropomorphic.

> **Concerning the intellect of God and the disquisition of his knowledge, two things above all others must be attended to: the mode and the object. The mode consists in his knowing all things perfectly, undividedly, distinctly, and immutably. … The object of the knowledge of God is both himself (who most perfectly knows himself in himself) and all things extrinsic to him whether possible or future (i.e., as to their various orders and states, as to quantity – great and small; as to quality – good and bad; as to predication – universals and singulars; as to time – past, present, and future; and as to state – necessary and free or contingent).** (III.xii.2–3)

This elaborate notion of omniscience can of course be said to be based on the many passages of Scripture Turretin quotes in this *quaestio*, but in order to arrive at such a definition, the metaphysical implication of their meaning would seem to have been developed by perfect-being theology. Knowledge, according to this philosophical source, is an intellectual perfection which the greatest conceivable being exemplifies and perfect knowledge is all-encompassing in mode and object. Therefore, when the Scriptures portray God as in some sense ignorant, this should be assumed to be divine accommodation to human capacity (cf. III.xii.28). A similar case is found in the anthropopathic language on divine eternity (III.x.7, 13, 14). According to the *accommodatio Dei*, then beliefs about God gained (perhaps) antecedently and independently of the Bible can serve as a correction, and this concept is thus an example of and a device for how revelation can be explained by metaphysics, as the latter is at least one of the means of identifying divine accommodation in revelation. The concept of accommodation thus integrates philosophical theism and the (perhaps) predominantly anthropomorphic biblical theology.

Thus far I have primarily been considering the extra-biblical sources for knowledge of God. This knowledge of God is equated with that of God in the Bible and therefore the former is allowed to explain or even put restraints (in a limited sense) on the latter. I did state above and would like to emphasize that the Bible is the primary source for Turretin's doctrine of God. I have, however, highlighted the subordinate use of metaphysics in order to show its function in a theology of revelation, so for a full account of the doctrine of Scripture in Protestant scholasticism the reader is directed to the works of other scholars. Yet, I shall conclude this section by pointing out how the integration also works in the opposite direction, that is, instances in which Turretin's biblical exegesis controls philosophical theism.

An example of this is the correction of the ancient Greek philosophical concept of immutability by the biblical notion. Turretin provides the following definition: 'Immutability is an incommunicable attribute of God by which is denied of him not only all change, but also all possibility of change, as much with respect to existence as to will' (III.xi.1). This is first established from the divine changelessness mentioned in Numbers 23.19; 1 Samuel 15.29; Psalms 33.11; 110.4; 102.26; Isaiah 46.10; Malachi 3.6; Hebrews 6.17; James. 1.17 (III.xi.3) and then confirmed by

reason from God being a necessary and independent being (III.xi.4). It is a mistake to think, as Muller has pointed out, that his notion implies that God is static or unable to relate to externals. For the scholastic concept of *immobile* indicates a being who is unmoved in the sense that it has not been brought into being by something else but is rather the being that imparts motion in all other beings. Therefore divine immutability means being eternally *in actu* and it teaches not only that God relates to externals but that He is constantly involved with the creation.[32] 'It is one thing to be indifferent to various objects; another to be mutable. The cause of indifference is not mutability, but liberty. The will of God could be indifferent before the decree, but after the decree it cannot be mutable' (III.xi.8; cf. V.ii.11, 12). This is clearly not the notion of divine remoteness in, say, Aristotle, and thus I do not agree with Pannenberg who asserts that the critical assimilation of philosophy by early Christian theologians was unsuccessful in transforming immutability to sovereign faithfulness and eternity into almighty omnipresence.[33] Rather, we find in Turretin a critical appropriation of the philosophy of God where the revelation contained in the Christian canon takes priority over non-Christian thought, and divine immutability is understood as continual and active faithfulness.

Conclusion

In this paper I hope to have shown that Turretin develops his concept of God by means of philosophical notions and scriptural concepts. These two sources for beliefs about God are integrated in order to formulate a coherent doctrine of God, where the semantics of religious language can serve both as a reason for successful reference to God by various sources and as explanation of our knowledge of the divine attributes, and the *fides quaerens intellectum* programme clarifies and articulates what is believed. Contrary to Pascal, Turretin believed that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob – the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – is the god of the philosophers.

The use of metaphysics in theology by Reformed scholasticism – and for that matter, by virtually all orthodox Christian theologians prior to the Enlightenment – caused uneasiness for old-school scholars on Protestant orthodoxy, since, according to the influential Troeltsch and Harnack, no metaphysics was tolerable in theology. This view has been passed on by Barthians or neo-orthodox for slightly different reasons. I hope to have established that it is unhistorical to assert that Reformed scholasticism was metaphysically determined, although there was a subordinate use of other disciplines in theology. If this is controverted, then it will have to be done on philosophical or theological grounds, for example, fideism. This is not the place to argue about this, but the practice of Turretin's views on religious epistemology and language commends itself to my mind as a coherent programme for natural theology.

However, it may be objected against my presentation that Turretin's doctrine of God has this particular character because it is instruction in polemical theology. However, a comparison with another Reformed Scholastic, Wilhelm Brakel (1635–1711), reveals that though Turretin is more extended, exact, and technical than the applicative or devotional Brakel, the content and integration is the same. The concise *Synopsis purioris theologiae* (1626), co-authored by members of the faculty at Leiden, also uses metaphysical reasoning and Scriptural exegesis for its doctrine of God.

It may further be objected that Turretin's doctrine of God is primarily biblical and that his idea of God follows from a specific priority given to certain texts over others, such as changelessness over those of repentance. Even if this is granted, it raises the question why those passages have priority. What is the reason for supposing priority to immutability over repentance? It is here that I think the relevance of metaphysics comes in: a satisfactory doctrine of God can only be developed on the cumulative epistemic resources about God to which the human mind (purportedly) has access. There is and must be a mutual interrelationship between biblical exegesis and philosophy of God, both if a special revelation is to be intelligible and identifiable with God and if a theoretically satisfactory concept of God shall be formulated. Moreover, the canonical writings answer questions about God that we do not ask, and do not answer questions that we do ask.[34]

Notes

1. For contemporary views on this see, for example, Stephen T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* (London: Macmillan, 1983); Paul Helm *Eternal God: A Study of God without Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Gerard J. Hughes *The Nature of God* (London: Routledge, 1995); Anthony Kenny *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Thomas V. Morris 'The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Anselm', *Faith and Philosophy*, **1** (1984), 177–187; *idem Our Idea of God: An Introduction to Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991); Richard Swinburne *The Coherence of Theism*, rev. edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Edward R. Wierenga *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1989). There are several shorter articles with bibliographies on the theistic conception of God in Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro (eds) *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997). Nowadays introductions to metaphysics often exclude the being of God, e.g. Michael J. Loux *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1998).
2. In this article I have chosen to follow the English custom of using the name 'Francis Turretin', but the reader should be aware that several variants are found in the literature. I have used the *Institutio Theologicae Elencticae* printed in Geneva 1679–1685 by Samuel de Tournes (found in the Bodleian Library). There is a rare nineteenth-century edition printed in New York and Edinburgh, the latter in addition containing a fourth volume of shorter writings. The sparse biographical material that is available has been collected in the third volume of James T. Dennison, Jr (ed.) *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, George Musgrave Giger (transl.) (Phillipsburg NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1992–1997). In this article I have used Giger's translation.
3. Richard A. Muller 'Scholasticism Protestant and Catholic: Francis Turretin on the object and principles of theology', *Church History*, **55** (1986), 195, cf. 204.
4. See further Sebastian Rehnman *Divine Discourse: The Prolegomena of John Owen*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids MI: Baker, forthcoming); Richard A. Muller 'Calvin and the ''Calvinists'': assessing the continuities and the discontinuities between the

Reformation and Orthodoxy', *Calvin Theological Journal*, **30** (1995), 345–375; *idem* 'Calvin and the ''Calvinists'': assessing the continuities and the discontinuities between the Reformation and Orthodoxy II', *Calvin Theological Journal*, **31** (1996); W. J. van Asselt 'De erfenis van de gereformeerde scholastiek', *Kerk en theologie*, **47** (1996), 126–136; W. J. van Asselt *et al. Inleiding in de gereformeerde scholastiek* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1998).

5. *Finitum non capax infiniti* is a recurring concept in the doctrine of God, sometimes epistemologically for the finite mind's inability to grasp God (e.g. Turretin, I.ix.6; III.viii.10; III.x.13) and sometimes metaphysically for the incapacity of the cosmos to contain the divine being (III.ix.6; III.vi.2). Other references to *locus, quaestio,* and *sectio* in Turretin will occur in the text. For more on this concept see Richard A. Muller *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1985); *idem Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 20; Heiko A. Oberman 'Some notes on the theology of nominalism with attention to its relation to the Renaissance', *Harvard Theological Review*, **53** (1960), 47–76; *idem* 'The ''extra'' dimension in Calvin's theology', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, **21** (1970), 43–64.

6. Cf. Wilhelmus à Brakel *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (1700), trans. Bartel Elshout, 3 vols (Ligionier: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992), vol. 1, 94.

7. Cf. *The Westminster Confession* (1646), I.i.

8. Richard A. Muller *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2: *Holy Scripture: The Cognitive Foundation of Theology* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1993).

9. This misunderstanding is, for example, found in Richard Swinburne *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 150, 177.

10. On this tradition, see, for example, Paul Helm *Faith and Understanding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997).

11. I have dealt more extensively with Turretin's view of faith and reason in Sebastian Rehnman 'Alleged rationalism: Francis Turretin on reason', in *Calvin Theological Journal* (forthcoming).

12. Cf. Richard A. Muller 'The dogmatic function of St Thomas' ''proofs'': a protestant appreciation', *Fides et Historia*, **24** (1992), 15–29.

13. Wolfhart Pannenberg 'The appropriation of the philosophical concept of God as a dogmatic problem of early Christian theology', in *idem Basic Questions in Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 134, 136, 177–180.

14. Aristotle *Metaphysics*, VI.i.10–11; XI.vii.8–9; cf. Turretin, I.i.8.

15. In this section I am indebted to Brian Leftow 'Can philosophy argue God's existence?', in Thomas Senor (ed.) *The Rationality of Belief and the Plurality of Faith: Essays in Honor of William P. Alston* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 42–46.

16. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* [hereafter *ST*], in R. Busa (ed.) *Thomae Aquinitatis Opera Omnia cum Hypertextibus in CD-ROM.* (Milan: Editoria Ellettronica Editel, 1992), 1.13.5.

17. John Owen *Theologoumena Pantodapa*, in W. H. Goold (ed.) *The Works of John Owen*, 24 vols (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850–1855), vol. 17, *passim.* It should, though, be noted that such a view is neither representative of Reformed scholasticism nor of Owen. I have in detail discussed Owen's views on faith and reason, and his temporary lapse in its early-1660s context in Rehnman *Divine Discourse*, ch. 4.

18. Aquinas *ST*, 1.13.5; cf. *idem Summa Contra Gentiles* [hereafter *SCG*], in Busa *Thomae Aquinitatis*, 1.32.1.

19. Aquinas *ST*, 1.13; *idem SCG*, 1.29–36.

20. See William of Ockham *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum*, in F. E. Kelley and G. I. Etzkorn (eds) *Opera Theologica* (New York NY: St. Bonaventure, 1982), vol. 6, 335–345.

21. Duns Scotus *Lectura*, in C. Balic *et al.* (eds) *Ioannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia* (The Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–), vol. 16, 1.3.29.

22. Aquinas: '*quod quia perfectiones procedentes a Deo in creaturas altiori modo sunt in Deo, ut supra dictum est* [6.4], *oportet quod quandocumque nomen sumptum a quacumque perfectione creaturae Deo attribuitur, secludatur ab eius significatione omne illud quod pertinet ad imperfectum modum qui competit creaturae.*' (*ST*, 1.14.1 (ad. obj. 1); cf. *idem SCG*, 1.28–34; *idem Quaestiones Disputatae*, 2.11 (on truth), in Busa *Thomae Aquinitatis*; Scotus: '*Exemplum de formali ratione sapientiae vel intellectus vel voluntatis. Consideratur enim in se et secundum se, et ex hoc quod ista ratio non concludit formaliter imperfectionem aliquam nec limitationem, removetur ab ipsa imperfectiones quae concomitantur eam*

in creaturis et reservata eadem ratione sapientiae et voluntatis attribuuntur ista Deo perfectissime, ergo omnis inquisitio de Deo supponit intellectum habere conceptum eundem univocem quem accepit ex creaturis.' (*Lectura*, 1.3.3)

There is of course a discussion as to the implications of Aquinas's doctrine of analogy, but this seems to have been its *Wirkungsgeschichte* in the fourteenth century and that which I consider possible to maintain coherently. See further the discussion in, e.g., William P. Alston 'Aquinas on theological predication: a look backward and a look forward', in E. Stump (ed.) *Reasoned Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honor of Norman Kretzmann* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), Alexander Broadie 'Maimonides and Aquinas on the names of God', *Religious Studies*, **23** (1987), 157–170; F. C. Copleston *Aquinas* (London: Pelican Books, 1955), 126–136; Brian Davies *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 58–79; Gerard J. Hughes 'Aquinas and the limits of agnosticism' in *idem* (ed.) *The Philosophical Assessment of Theology: Essays in Honour of Frederick C. Copleston* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1987), 35–64; James F. Ross *Portraying Analogy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Janice Thomas 'Univocity and understanding God's nature', in Hughes *Philosophical Assessment of Theology*, 87–100.

On Scotus see, for example, Richard Cross *Duns Scotus* (New York NY and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33–39; Stephen D. Dumont 'The univocity of being in the fourteenth century: John Duns Scotus and William of Alnwick', *Medieval Studies*, **49** (1987), 1–75; *idem* 'The univocity of the concept of being in the fourteenth century: 2 The *De Ente* of Peter Thomae', *Medieval Studies*, **50** (1988), 186–256; Stephen F. Brown and Stephen D. Dumont 'Univocity of the concept of being in the fourteenth century: 3 an early Scotist', *Medieval Studies*, **51** (1989), 1–29; Stephen D. Dumont 'Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus', in John Marenbon (ed.) *Routledge History of Philosophy: Volume 3: Medieval Philosophy* (London and New York NY: Routledge, 1998); Douglas C. Langston 'Scotus and Ockham on the univocal concept of being', *Franciscan Studies*, **39** (1979), 105–129.

23. Cf. '*Sunt autem illa attributa duorum generum, alia primi generis, seu akoinoueta, incommunicabilia; alia secundi seu koinoneta, communicabilia.* 'Johannes Polyander *et al. Synopsis purioris theologiae, disputationibus quinquaginta duabus comprehensa et conscripta* (1626), Herman Bavinck (ed.), 6th edn (Leiden: Donner, 1881), VI.23.

24. E.g. Anselm *Monologion*, 15; *idem Proslogion*, 5, 6, in F. S. Schmitt (ed.) *Anselmi Opera Omnia*, 6 vols (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1946–1961), vol. 1; and Aquinas *ST*, I.13.2, 3; Scotus *passim*; cf. Herman Bavinck *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 2nd edn, 4 vols (Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1906–1911), vol. 2, 113–116. Partial univocity is, of course, again defended by contemporary philosophers: William P. Alston *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press), 17–102, 197–222; Alvin Plantinga *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford and New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3–63; Janet Martin Soskice *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Richard Swinburne *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 39–51; *idem The Coherence of Theism*, rev. edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 51–87.

25. Morris *Our Idea of God*, 38–39.

26. Aquinas *ST*, 1.110.2; cf. 1.13.5.

27. *Ibid.*, 1.8.1.

28. *Ibid.*, 1.13.2.

29. Paul Helm *Divine Revelation: The Basic Issues* (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1982), 112–113; *idem Eternal God*, 7, 11.

30. For an historical overview, see Stephen D. Benin *The Footprints of God: Divine Accommodation in Jewish and Christian Thought* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1993). Because of the significance of *accommodatio Dei* in Calvin's thought, there is much helpful scholarship on him: Ford L. Battles 'God was accommodating himself to human capacity', in Robert Benedetto and Ford L. Battles (eds) *Interpreting John Calvin* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1997); Edward A. Dowey, Jr *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, exp. edn (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 3–17, 261–262; Paul Helm 'The impossibility of divine passibility', in Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed.) *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990); *idem* 'John Calvin on divine accommodation', *Baptist Review of Theology*, **4** (1994), 41–53; David F. Wright 'Calvin's pentateuchal criticism: equity, hardness of heart, and divine accommodation in the Mosaic harmony commentary', *Calvin Theological Journal*, **21** (1986), 33–50; *idem* 'Accommodation and barbarity in John Calvin's Old Testament commentaries', in Graeme Auld (ed.) *Understanding Poets*

and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 413–427; *idem* 'Calvin's accommodating God', in Wilhelm H. Neuser and Brian G. Armstrong (eds) *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex: Calvin as Protector of the Purer Religion* (Kirksville MO: Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, 1997), 3–19. On Turretin, see Martin I. Klauber 'Francis Turretin on biblical accommodation: loyal Calvinist or Reformed scholastic', *Westminster Theological Journal*, **55** (1993), 73–86. I have elaborated Calvin's use of this idea from the point of contemporary philosophy of language in '*Accommodatio Dei revelationis*. Om Gud som talar barnsligt med oss', in Tomas Nygren, Sebastian Rehnman, and LarsOlov Eriksson (eds) *Frälsning idag. Festskrift för Agne Nordlander* (Örebro: Libris, 2000), 201–227.

31. Benin *Footprints of God*, xiv.

32. Richard A. Muller 'Incarnation, immutability, and the case for classical theism', *Westminster Theological Journal*, **45** (1983), 27–28; cf. Aquinas *ST*, 1.9.1; 1.2.3; 1.3.1.

33. Pannenberg *Basic Questions of Theology*, 180.

34. Parts of an earlier version of this paper was presented to the Kerkhistorisch Gezelschap, Utrecht, in June 1999. I am grateful to the participants who commented on that version, and to Michael McClenahan and Paul Helm who later commented on other versions. I am also indebted to two anonymous referees for this journal for valuable comments on the penultimate version.