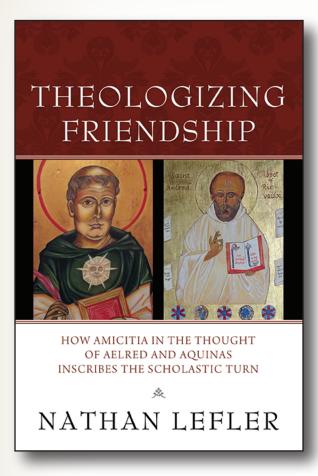# THEOLOGIZING FRIENDSHIP

HOW AMICITIA IN THE THOUGHT OF AELRED AND AQUINAS INSCRIBES THE SCHOLASTIC TURN

NATHAN LEFLER

In *Theologizing Friendship*, the author aims to revitalize Jean Leclercq's defense of monastic theology, while expanding and qualifying some of the central theses expounded in Leclercq's magisterial *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*. The current work contributes to a revised and updated *status quaestionis* concerning the theological relationship between classical monasticism and scholasticism, construed in more systematic and speculative terms than those of Leclercq, rendered here through the lens of friendship as a theological topos. The work shares with Ivan Illich's *In the Vineyard of the Text* the conviction that the rise of the Schools (Paris, Oxford, etc.) constitutes one of the greatest intellectual watersheds in the history of Western civilization: where Illich's ruminations are largely philosophical and particularly epistemological, the author's are theological and metaphysical.

In his novel proposal that within the monastic and scholastic milieux there obtain parallel threefold analogies among friendship, reading, and theology, the author not only offers an original contribution to current scholarship, but gestures towards avenues for institutional self-examination much needed by the contemporary—modern and post-modern—Academy.

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"This book is breathtaking in its scope but incisive in its precise formulation of a new starting point for anyone looking for a way to integrate monastic wisdom into his or her own theological method."

—PETER CASARELLA
Associate Professor of Systematic Theology
Notre Dame University, Indiana

"In this important work, Nathan Lefler contributes significantly to the traditional debate about the setting of theology: the monastery or the university? Without opposing the irreplaceable contributions of scholastic theology, and of Aquinas in particular, the author evokes the centrality for theology of liturgical worship and a community of religious observances. His thesis has implications for our broader understanding of university education in general, and of the crisis of identity in contemporary academic theology."

—THOMAS JOSEPH WHITE
Associate Professor of Systematic Theology
Thomistic Institute, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C.

Theologizing Friendship

How Amicitia in the Thought of Aelred and Aquinas Inscribes the Scholastic Turn

Nathan Lefler

With a Foreword by Austin G. Murphy, OSB

To three friends,
Aelred, Thomas, and Annie,
Who have helped me in their various ways
out of a dark wood.

Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum, habitare fratres in unum.

Ps. 132:1

Contents

Preface

The following work constitutes a lightly edited version of my dissertation, originally defended in 2008. As the project is anchored in a comparison of the writings of two men whose floruits were many centuries ago, I have not deemed it necessary to update the essentially speculative argument derived from my original analysis: though there has been a good deal of work done on each author over the past several years and some work drawing Aelred and Aquinas into the same ambit under one rubric or another, no one that I know of has placed their thinking on friendship head to head in an extended discussion, much less as an entrée into the comparative evaluation of monastic and scholastic theology. There is a further, positive reason for leaving my original argument essentially as-is, namely, that, as the reader shall see in my introduction, I deliberately draw attention to the genre of the dissertation, noting some of the implications of that form for academic discourse and proposing to engage that form in my own case in what may be deemed somewhat problematic ways, at any rate according to the canons of modern scientific discourse. Whether the outcome is beneficial or deleterious to the common good is for the reader to decide.

The dissertation investigates the theological accounts of friendship offered by Aelred of Rievaulx and Thomas Aquinas, compares these accounts, and applies this localized comparison as an index of the relationship between monastic and scholastic theology in general.

Through close reading of the key texts in which the subject of friendship is treated, Aelred's *Speculum caritatis* and *De spiritali amicitia* and Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*, the two authors are found to epitomize their different theological milieux, the monastic and the scholastic respectively. This judgment pertains as much to the content of the two accounts as it does to the form. Thus, not only each author's theological approach, but his distinctive understanding of friendship itself, proves to be profoundly

congruent with his spiritual-theological matrix, whether twelfth-century monasticism on the one hand, or thirteenth-century scholasticism on the other.

In fact, a loose, tripartite analogy may be seen to obtain among friendship, reading and theology in the monastic milieu, while a parallel analogy is to be found, *mutatis mutandis*, in the scholastic realm. Taking due care to demonstrate this relationship according to the rigors of comparative textual analysis, the earnest effort is made at the same time not to minimize the heterogeneity of the texts and theological perspectives in question. Granting Jean Leclercq's wise dictum that the Church has but "one theology," we recognize as well the risk of misconstruing that theological unity as monolithic.

In short, monastic theology, like monastic friendship according to the exemplary account of Aelred of Rievaulx, is ideally a balanced activity of reason and will, profoundly Christ-centered, existentially grounded in both sensible and spiritual experience, and quintessentially expressed in the perfect union of will and ideas between the persons involved. Scholastic theology, on the other hand, seeks to elucidate as clearly as possible both nature and supernature and the relation between them, in the bright light of natural reason, yet simultaneously elevated by the brighter light of supernatural grace. In doing so, the enterprise strongly resembles Thomas's notion of friendship as the ideal relation between God and man.

Abbreviations

DDN	*In Librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus*
De am.	*De amicitia*
Eth.	*Sententia Libri Ethicorum*
Iesu puero	*De Iesu puero duodenni*
Ioannis	*Super evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*
NE	*Nichomachean Ethics*
O. past.	*Oratio pastoralis*
RB	*The Rule of St. Benedict*
SA	*De spiritali amicitia*
SC	*Speculum caritatis*
SCG	*Summa contra Gentiles*
Sent.	*Scriptum Super libros Sententiarum*
ST	*Summa Theologiae*

Introduction

*A*mare et amari: these lapidary words of St. Augustine's haunted the high Middle Ages and its theologians, both in the monasteries and in the Schools.[1] The phrase not only captured Augustine's romantic pre-Christian notion of friendship, thereby bearing importantly on humanistic questions of an anthropological or psychological cast; since "God is love," according to St. John, "to love and to be loved" must in some way pertain to the heart of theology as well.[2] But if *amor* describes in the most general terms an action or disposition that could be further specified as one of either *amicitia* or *caritas*, what, in turn, is the relationship between these latter two notions? In one way or another, both monks and schoolmen came to be exercised by these questions, and the revival of the Roman rhetorical tradition in the twelfth century, including crucially Cicero's *De Amicitia*, along with the translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in the following century, only added fuel to the flame. Among those who became keenly interested in the issue were the Cistercian abbot, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Dominican friar, Thomas Aquinas.

Not surprisingly, the theological treatments of friendship produced by these two authors—the twelfth-century monk on the one hand, the thirteenth-century scholastic theologian on the other—differ in many significant ways. It is precisely the central thesis of the following dissertation that the differences between these two accounts of friendship exhibit a certain congruence with fundamental differences between monastic and scholastic theology *tout court.* However, this thesis may be further subdivided, inasmuch as we will argue that the correspondence asserted is not merely

1. Augustine, *Confessions*, II, 2. For allusions by our own two authors, see Aelred of Rievaulx, *SC* I.25.71, *SA* Prologus.1, and Thomas Aquinas, *Sent.* distinction 27, question 2, article 1.

2. Deus caritas est. 1 Jn. 4:8 (Vulgate).

formal, limited, for example, to ways in which each of our two authors' accounts of friendship respectively instantiates monastic or scholastic theological method *per se*. Rather, we contend that the discovered correspondence touches also the particular subject matter in question, namely, *friendship* under its Christian theological aspect. What is true, therefore, about the monastic notion of friendship can be seen to characterize the monastic theological project as well, and the same reasoning applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the scholastic notion and enterprise. In order, then, to facilitate the reader's progress through the dissertation, we will now briefly outline the procedure whereby we arrive at these conclusions.

In chapter 1, we undertake a preliminary survey of the distinguishing features of monastic and scholastic theology in the period spanned by the lives of our two authors. The aim of this preparatory chapter is twofold: first, to provide ourselves with a general sense of the very different cultural and theological milieux within which Aelred and Thomas lived and wrote;[3] second, to delineate a number of more particular criteria, drawn from our assessment of these milieux, by which we may gauge the theological projects of Aelred and Thomas in the ensuing chapters.[4] It is here that we find reasons for our expectations of significantly different approaches on the parts of our two authors. The chapter also contains a brief survey of the typical sources employed by the two milieux in their theological endeavors, noting both the commonalities and some significant differences.[5] On all of these points, our principal guidance comes from the lifework of Dom Jean Leclercq, whose defense of monastic theology provides one of the seminal impulses behind our own inquiry. In the final major section of the chapter the choice of Aelred and Thomas, as both typical and at the same time outstanding representatives of their respective milieux, is defended.[6] A brief

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3. The monastic and scholastic milieux are, however, carved out of the much larger common culture of high medieval educated Western Europe, in consequence of which it is possible to overdraw the differences between these two sub-cultural units. On this point, see the sections entitled: "Common Culture" and "Cautionary Paragraph " from chapter 1 and "Conclusions, Challenges, Possible Avenues for Further Exploration" from chapter 4.

4. See especially the conclusion of the section entitled: "Differences between Monastic and Scholastic Theology" in chapter 1, below.

5. See the section on "Sources" in chapter 1, below.

6. See sections "Aelred: How Typical; How Understanding" and "Thomas: How Typical; How Understanding" in chapter 1, below.

argument is also made for the choice of friendship as the theological *topos* for investigation.[7]

Chapters 2 and 3 comprise the bulk of our investigation of primary sources, namely, the writings of Aelred of Rievaulx and Thomas Aquinas. We begin each of these chapters with a summary of contemporary scholarship,[8] followed by a sketch of the author's own major sources.[9] Having surveyed each author's corpus as a whole, we train our attention on those works in which are to be found their most trenchant and comprehensive theological treatments of friendship: Aelred's *Speculum caritatis* (hereafter referred to as *SC*) and *De spiritali amicitia* (hereafter referred to as *SA*), on the one hand, and the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter referred to as *ST*) of Thomas on the other.

The principal task of chapter 2 is to provide a close analysis of the two major works by Aelred that bear significantly on the subject of friendship.[10] In addition to elucidating the content of each work in detail, the chapter gives careful consideration to the relationship between them, with respect not only to their theological content, but also to the formal and historical relations between the texts themselves. In the course of the textual analysis of these works, the distinctive features of Aelred's theological account of friendship are delineated. A brief treatment of Aelred's approach to Scriptural exegesis is appended to the main discussion, in consequence of our conviction of the impact of one's mode of *reading*—especially the Bible— on the way one does theology.[11] In conclusion of the investigation of our first major author, we argue that Aelred presents a splendid spiritual vision of holy friendship and its eschatological telos, in the idiom of medieval monastic theology.[12] Neither argumentative nor systematic, Aelred's account bespeaks his own innocence and purity of heart. Thus, his theology of friendship proves to be an integral and harmonious expression of his monastic life, a life defined by prayer, both in solitude and in choir, and by the virtually unceasing practice of *lectio divina*.

7. See the section "Why Their Accounts of Friendship" in chapter 1, below.

8. See the sections in chapter 2 and 3 on "Contemporary Scholarship," below.

9. See section "Aelred's Sources" in chapter 2 and "Thomas's Sources" in chapter 3, below.

10. See the section entitled "Aelred's 'Synthesis' and Original Position" in chapter 2, below.

11. See the section "Aelred's Friendly Exegesis" in chapter 2, below.

12. See the section "Conclusion: Aelred's Monastic Theology of Friendship" in chapter 2, below.

Theologizing Friendship

In chapter 3 an analysis of Thomas Aquinas's theological account of friendship is carried out, in deliberate parallel with the analysis of Aelred's account in chapter 2.[13] Thomas's most mature and thorough treatment of friendship is discovered to transpire wholly within the bounds of what is technically a single work, the *Summa theologiae*.[14] Nevertheless, we find that this treatment is readily parsed out between two subsections of that work, namely, the *Prima Secundae*, where Thomas first deals with love and friendship in the natural realm, and the *Secunda Secundae*, in which he brings his previous explanation of friendship to bear on the subject of supernatural charity.[15] Thus, we find an immediate parallel with Aelred, in terms of both the structure and the constitutive elements of the two authors' accounts: on the one hand, each of the accounts spans two major textual loci; on the other hand, each of these loci, in turn, is preoccupied with one of the two key theological terms, *amicitia* or *caritas*. As with Aelred, we proceed through a close analysis of Thomas's texts to enumerate the signal features of his theological account of friendship,[16] again ending with a brief look at his exegetical practice.[17] In conclusion of our inquiry into his work, we contend that Thomas's finely wrought definition of charity as man's friendship for God embodies *in nuce* one of scholasticism's most remarkable achievements: the harmonization of Christian revelation with Aristotelian philosophy.[18] In anticipation of chapter 4, we also observe that Thomas's theological account of friendship exhibits the major characteristics of scholastic theology in general, described in chapter 1.

The fourth and final chapter of the dissertation draws together the key findings from the three preceding chapters. More specifically, here our assessments of the two theological accounts of friendship are directly juxtaposed and compared point by point, with respect both to their material characteristics, and also to their form. That is to say, first, the distinctive features of the content of each of the two accounts, to which we have drawn attention in the two preceding chapters, are set side by side

13. See the section "Thomas's Synthesis and Original Position" in chapter 3, below.

14. See the section "Rousselot's 'Problem of Love' and Vansteenberghe's 'Amitié'" in chapter 3, below.

15. See the section "Thomas's Sources" in chapter 3.

16. See the section "Thomas's Synthesis and Original Position" in chapter 3, below.

17. See the section "Thomas's Exegesis: *Lectio utilis?*" in chapter 3, below.

18. See the section ""Conclusion: Thomas's Scholastic Theology of Friendship" in chapter 3, below.

and each characteristic is evaluated relative to the parallel characteristic of the alternative account.[19] The outcome of this comparative analysis is then supplemented by a formal comparison between the accounts, again based on the findings of chapters 2 and 3, only this time with further reference to the formal comparative framework established in chapter 1.[20] Finally, the results of this stereoscopic analysis are distilled into a single formulation, articulated in terms of an analogy of friendship.[21] This pithy conclusion is in turn elaborated in terms of an Aelredian and monastic expression on one side and a Thomistic and scholastic version on the other.[22] In both cases it is asserted that the analogy spans three elements treated in the dissertation: the author's notion of friendship itself, his way of reading, and ultimately the way he does theology. So, too, *mutatis mutandis*, with the two authors' respective milieux. In light of this general conclusion, several challenges are proposed to each of our two authors' accounts, either from the perspective of the alternative account, or independently.[23] The dissertation ends with four brief speculative suggestions for further inquiry.[24]

Two further points are in order, which will prove in the final analysis to be complementary aspects of the same underlying reality. One point concerns the dissertation's principal subject matter, the other the intellectual approach entertained by the author of the dissertation towards the dissertation itself. First, there is a mild degree of intellectual embarrassment, never adverted to explicitly in the dissertation, resulting from a profound asymmetry between the two notions of friendship treated by Aelred of Rievaulx and Thomas Aquinas, respectively. This is not to say that the two perspectives share no common ground, much less that they cannot be placed in counterpoint and conversation with each other. Nevertheless, such a project presents a dilemma likely to appear initially rather daunting, particularly—and precisely—when such a project is undertaken according to the constraints of the peculiarly modern genre called the doctoral dissertation. The dilemma is, in the words of the old but durable cliché,

19. See the section "Content of the Two Accounts Compared" in chapter 4, below.

20. See the section "Form of the Two Accounts Compared" in chapter 4, below.

21. See the section "The Analogy of Friendship" in chapter 4, below.

22. See the sections "Aelred and Monastic Friendship" and "Thomas and Scholastic Friendship" in chapter 4, below.

23. See the section "Challenges: Evaluations of the Two Analogies and Beyond" in chapter 4, below.

24. See the section "Speculative Suggestion for Further Inquiry" in chapter 4, below.

how to compare an apple with an orange. Furthermore, the fathers of the Enlightenment generated a ratiocinative apparatus that has often tempted its users, when faced with such a comparison, to begin by trying to turn the orange into an apple, or vice versa, in order to carry out the much easier comparison between two specimens of the same fruit. Originally erected in service of the so-called hard sciences, this apparatus gradually made its way into humanistic intellectual endeavors as well,[25] influencing in the process all genres of academic writing—preeminent among them, the dissertation. And with the seductive tool came the besetting temptation noted. The effort by the current dissertation's author to employ the tool judiciously while resisting the temptation brings us to the second point.

So far as was deemed compatible with the conventional scholarly requirements of the genre, we have attempted *not* to succumb to the occasional academic weakness for prestidigitation, touching either fruit or friendship. Consequently, the reader will find rather drastic disparities between the lengths of sections treating the same or parallel themes in our respective authors. Yet to have forced these sections into the same-sized outfits, as it were, would have falsified both positions, and thereby also necessarily undermined our comparison between them, ultimately rendering our conclusions and the whole enterprise intellectually suspect. Similarly, while the reader will find in the following pages a great deal of careful, logical argumentation, shored up by regular appeal to both primary and secondary sources, he will not find the presumption that the conclusions arrived at are to be received as indisputable, scientifically watertight propositions: quite the contrary. Moreover, we insist that this state of things, however unsatisfactory it may be to some, is no decoy for desultoriness on our part: rather, we believe we wander closer to the truth (often in spite of ourselves) when we allow it a certain amount of room to play. Consider, for example, such relatively recent oddities as Goedel's Incompleteness Theorem, chaos theory, or fuzzy mathematics: all essentially post-modern responses—now each more or less well-respected—to modern rationalism and its totalizing agenda. We engage our topic, then, deliberately in somewhat the mode of a juggler, or particle physicist, keeping elements of the discussion alive and in the air, knowing full-well that they are liable to change in bumping into one another. This is not sloppy science in a modern register: it is more like the highly rational yet non-restrictive activity of

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25. Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer's classical treatment of this complex process in *Truth and Method*, especially 171–379.

dancing, and dancing in a post-modern key. Indeed, if it is conceded that the dissertation is a thoroughly modern genre, we predict that the genre will eventually implode, if it cannot expand to allow the self-confrontation invited by the post-modern challenge to a rationalism ultimately imperiling the very search for truth it claims to champion.

In brief, the following dissertation seeks, as its title indicates, to shed further light on the relationship between monastic and scholastic theology, both historically and *in se*, through the high-filter lens of friendship, construed as a theological *topos* or category, focused narrowly on two personal subjects, Aelred and Thomas, both of whom had important things to say about the topic. As suggested above, we are also concerned to guard against the superficial and false homogenizing of the two accounts that would result if we reduced our analysis to questions of method. This would be, in our opinion, to cede the field of debate to one side, namely, that of scholasticism, before the discussion had even been joined. In this connection too, we may construe our own project as one that, loosely, employs both more monastic approaches—the existential and historical—and more scholastic approaches—the speculative and systematic—in order to elucidate the differences between Aelred and Thomas on friendship. More than this, we have sought to draw attention to some elements of a genuine monastic theology that have indeed been muted, if not even altogether lost, in the wake of the ascendancy of scholasticism and its continuous dominance of the Church's professional theological enterprise until the present. Without, then, we trust, giving short shrift to the genuine benefits of the basic formalities of the academic dissertation, we have aimed at the same time for a modest transcendence of those long established boundaries. It is for the reader to judge whether, and to what extent, we have succeeded in our endeavor.

Differences between the More Experiential Approach of Monastic Theology and the More Conceptual Approach of Scholastic Theology

Contemporary Scholarship

In service of our comparison between the particular theological accounts of friendship given by St. Aelred of Rievaulx and St. Thomas Aquinas, a preliminary description of the relationship between monastic and scholastic theological approaches *per se* will provide the most helpful point of departure. In this preparatory chapter, our preeminent guide will be the great twentieth-century Benedictine scholar, Jean Leclercq. The conclusions of Leclercq's extensive and profound researches will be supplemented principally by the work of R. W. Southern, Beryl Smalley, David Knowles and Ivan Illich.

Common Culture

Between the birth of Aelred of Rievaulx in 1110 and the death of Thomas Aquinas in 1274, a substantial homogeneity of culture obtained throughout Western Europe. David Knowles comments that "For three hundred years,

from 1050 to 1350, and above all in the century between 1070 and 1170, the whole of educated Western Europe formed a single undifferentiated cultural unit."[1] Jean Leclercq, who tends to insist on the non-monolithic character of medieval life and culture, nevertheless confirms Knowles's assertion in a somewhat peculiar way when he argues that, "jusqu'alors [xiie siècle], toute la culture médiévale porte l'empreinte monastique, et qu'en ce sens et dans cette mesure elle est une culture monastique."[2] To the extent, then, that medieval culture, at least up until the twelfth century, can be said to be monastic, it necessarily maintains a certain uniformity of character. Moreover, as Knowles's chronologically broader claim suggests, such a deeply ingrained uniformity of Christian worldview and practice was by no means easily shed, even through Aquinas's lifetime and well beyond. In *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, Leclercq is furthermore earnestly concerned to stress the fundamental unicity of the Church's theology, however divergent or even disparate may appear its sundry expressions from one era, or nation, or school, to another:

> Fundamentally, as there is but one Church, one faith, one Scripture, one tradition, and one authority, there is but one theology. Theology cannot be the specialty of any one milieu, where it would be, as it were, imprisoned. Like every great personality, every culture, and even more, necessarily, every reflection on the Catholic faith, every theology is, by its essence, universal and overflows the confines of specialization. It is only within the great cultural entities which have succeeded one another in the life of the Church that different currents can be observed; but they cannot be separated.[3]

In this dissertation, we will be very much concerned with a number of significant *differences* between monastic and scholastic theology. Precisely for this reason, we must heed attentively Leclercq's salutary reminder concerning theology, along with the generally acknowledged evidence of broad cultural homogeneity spanning the lifetimes of Aelred and Thomas and the years in between.

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1. Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, 80.
2. Leclercq, *Aux Sources de la Spiritualité Occidentale*, 283.
3. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 193.

Differences between Monastic and Scholastic Theology

Midway through his project of delineating a true "monastic theology," Leclercq affirms "real continuity between the patristic age and the medieval monastic centuries, and between patristic culture and medieval culture." He continues:

> And it is this continuity which gives medieval monastic culture its specific character: it is a patristic culture, the prolongation of patristic culture in another age and in another civilization. From this point of view, it seems possible to distinguish, from the eighth to the twelfth centuries in the West, something like two Middle Ages. The monastic Middle Ages, while profoundly Western and profoundly Latin, seems closer to the East than to the other, the scholastic Middle Ages which flourished at the same time and on the same soil. Our intention here is by no means to deny that scholasticism represents a legitimate evolution and a real progress in Christian thought, but rather to point out this coexistence of two Middle Ages. To be sure, the culture developed in the monastic Middle Ages differs from that developed in scholastic circles. The monastic Middle Ages is essentially patristic because it is thoroughly penetrated by ancient sources and, under their influence, centered on the great realities which are at the very heart of Christianity and give it its life. It is not dispersed in the occasionally secondary problems discussed in the schools. Above all, it is based on biblical interpretation similar to the Fathers' and, like theirs, founded on reminiscence, the spontaneous recall of texts taken from Scripture itself with all the consequences which follow from this procedure, notably the use of allegory.[4]

Bearing in mind Leclercq's provocative notion of "two Middle Ages," let us proceed to consider more carefully some of the significant ways in which monastic and scholastic theology diverge, in keeping with the differences between their respective milieux.[5]

If we begin at the most generic level, already we discover a striking contrast between the metaphors employed by monks and schoolmen to

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4. Ibid., 106–7.

5. In *The Monastic Order in England*, David Knowles observes that "from 1150 onwards an ever-increasing number of monks, and those the intellectual *elite*, owed their training to the schools, not to the cloister" (502). Notwithstanding the usefulness of Leclercq's schema, we are continually, and rightly, reminded of the semi-permeability of the boundary between the medieval monastery and the non-monastic clerical world of the day.

describe their respective theological activities. Thus, R. W. Southern says of the monks that "they liked to think of themselves as bees gathering nectar far and wide, and storing it in the secret cells of the mind."[6] Leclercq recalls St. Bernard's description of himself and his fellow-monks as "lowly gleaners," in comparison with those great reapers, Sts. Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory, not to mention the other Fathers.[7] And Ivan Illich highlights the medieval characterizations of monks, by themselves and others, as "mumblers and munchers," ruminating, or chewing, on the divine words of Scripture.[8] The scholastics, on the other hand, when compared with the great thinkers of antiquity in the memorable description of Bernard of Chartres, were like "dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants," able to see a little farther, however much lesser their stature, than those by whose accomplishments they hoisted themselves up.[9] Even more significantly, it was the schoolmen for whom the most compelling image of Heaven came to be the Beatific Vision. We find, then, that whereas the theological enterprise of the monks is depicted by various metaphors of eating, the work of the schools is chiefly conceived under the metaphorical rubric of sight, or vision. The evident privileging of different senses here—the highly concrete sense of taste, and by extension, touch and smell, on the one hand; the most spiritual of the senses, sight, on the other—is not arbitrary. Rather, it proves to be congruent with the contrast between the fundamentally more experiential, tactile, aesthetic mode of being and thinking embraced by the monks, and the more strictly conceptual, abstract mode of thought cultivated in the scholastic milieu.

Ways of Reading

These metaphorical differences are expressive in imaginative terms of a whole range of more empirically verifiable differences embodied in the practices of reading, writing and theological inquiry typically employed by monks and schoolmen respectively. The most foundational of all such activities, the one without which would-be practitioners of the others cannot venture the first step, is reading. Though an authentically secular meaning

6. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 190.

7. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 202.

8. Illich, *In the Vineyard*, 54–57; citation at 54.

9. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 202; cf. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 203.

of the word is inevitably promoted by the pursuit of the strictly non-ecclesial disciplines of medicine and secular law, *lectio*, for the medieval churchman, whether monk, friar, or secular cleric, means above all else the reading of Scripture. Leclercq explains the profound divergence between monastic and scholastic *lectio* in the following illuminating passage:

> Since Scripture is a book, one must know how to read it, and learn how to read it just as one learns how to read any other book. . . . However, this application of grammar to Scripture has been practiced in monasticism in a way which is entirely its own because it is linked with the fundamental observances of monastic life. The basic method is different from that of non-monastic circles where Scripture is read—namely, the schools. Originally, *lectio divina* and *sacra pagina* are equivalent expressions. For St. Jerome as for St. Benedict, the *lectio divina* is the text itself which is being read, a selected passage or a 'lesson' taken from Scripture. During the Middle Ages, this expression was to be reserved more and more for the act of reading, 'the reading of Holy Scripture.' In the school it refers most often to the page itself, the text which is under study, taken objectively. Scripture is studied for its own sake. In the cloister, however, it is rather the reader and the benefit that he derives from Holy Scripture which are given consideration. In both instances an activity is meant which is 'holy,' *sacra*, *divina*; but in the two milieux, the accent is put on two different aspects of the same activity. The orientation differs, and, consequently, so does the procedure. The scholastic *lectio* takes the direction of the *quaestio* and the *disputatio*. The reader puts questions to the text and then questions himself on the subject matter: *quaeri solet*. The monastic *lectio* is oriented toward the *meditatio* and the *oratio*. The objective of the first is science and knowledge; of the second, wisdom and appreciation. In the monastery, the *lectio divina*, which begins with grammar, terminates in compunction, in desire of heaven.[10]

The monastic emphasis on compunction, with its correlative spiritual desire,[11] ultimately has important eschatological implications, which will be taken up below. It also tends inevitably to entail a certain privileging of the will. The particular point at stake here is that the relative weights

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10. Ibid., 72.

11. The most important literary roots of the monastic notion of *compunctio* are in the writings of St. Gregory the Great and receive a new infusion from St. Bernard. See ibid., 25–34, 67–68, passim.

accorded intellect and will have implications even for the ways in which readers engage texts.

Ivan Illich, in his treatment of Hugh of St. Victor's great work, the *Didascalicon*, articulates the distinction between monastic and scholastic reading in equally stark terms, though he arrives at his conclusions via an entirely different mode of inquiry from that of Leclercq. Illich advances the thesis that "By emphasizing *exemplum* as the task of the teacher, and *aedificatio* as its result in the town community at large, Hugh recognizes that the new Canons Regular, and not just he as a person, stand on a watershed between monastic and scholastic reading."[12] He goes on to argue that this exemplary and edifying role does not persist in the schools: rather, the Canons occupy what proves shortly to have been an anomalous position, atop the watershed, as it were, where reading has not yet lost

> its analogy to the bell which is heard and remembered by all the townsfolk, though it principally regulates the hours of canonical prayer for the cloister. Scholastic reading then becomes a professional task for scholars—and scholars who, by their definition as clerical professionals, are not an edifying example for the man in the street. They define themselves as people who do something special that excludes the layman.[13]

Illich's haunting image of remembered tintinnabulation points to another characteristic difference between monastic and scholastic modes of reading, one which leads to a watershed in exegetical technique between the two milieux. This is the way memory functions in the two environments. Reminiscences, according to Leclercq, "are not quotations, elements of phrases borrowed from another. They are the words of the person using them; they belong to him."[14] So highly developed, in fact, was the monks' aptitude for graphic recollection of texts that

> The monastic Middle Ages made little use of the written concordance; the spontaneous play of associations, similarities, and comparisons are sufficient for exegesis. In scholasticism, on the contrary, much use is made of these *Distinctiones*, where, in alphabetical order, each word is placed opposite references to all the

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12. Illich, *In the Vineyard*, 79. For a recent, lucid distillation of the work of Illich, Leclecq and others on the transition from monastic to scholastic reading, see Studzinski, *Reading to Live*, 12–17 and 140–76, especially 141–46, 149, 161–66, 172–76.

13. Ibid., 81.

14. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 75.

> texts in which it is used; these written concordances can be used to replace, but only in a bookish and artificial manner, the spontaneous phenomenon of reminiscence.[15]

With reminiscence, in contrast with the *Distinctiones*, "one becomes a sort of living concordance."[16]

Ways and Kinds of Writing

STYLE

In their writing, too, the monks and the schoolmen differ significantly, both in style and in preferred genres, as well as in the uses they make of those genres they have in common. Leclercq identifies three distinct humanisms, those of monasticism and scholasticism, and a third "neo-classic" humanism represented by such "worldly clerics" as Peter of Blois and John of Salisbury, who belong neither to the university nor to the cloister. Comparing the writing styles that emerge from these three humanisms, Leclercq observes that

> Monastic style keeps equally distant from the clear but graceless style of the scholastic *quaestiones* and the neo-classic style of these humanists. . . . In this sense, one can rightly speak, with regard to the most representative types of monastic culture . . . of a 'monastic style.' The literary heritage of all of antiquity, secular and patristic, can be found in it, yet less under the form of imitation or reminiscences of ancient authors than in a certain resonance which discloses a familiarity, acquired by long association, with their literary practices. . . . This was both a way of thinking and a way of expressing oneself. Thus the *lectio divina* complemented harmoniously the grammar that was learned in school.[17]

Leaving aside the neo-classic category, the monastic and scholastic styles tend to express their respective cultural biases, the one more literary, the other more speculative. Where the monks embrace grammar, music and rhetoric, the schoolmen prefer dialectics, to the detriment of the rest of the

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15. Ibid., 77.

16. Ibid. The distinction between the living and the written concordance corresponds as well with Illich's fascinating theory of the place of "alphabetic technologies" in the transition in medieval Europe from an essentially monastic to an essentially scholastic way of reading. Cf. especially the sixth chapter of Illich, *In the Vineyard*, 93–114.

17. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 143.

seven liberal arts; they forfeit "artistry of expression," in favor of "clarity of thought" at all costs. For the monks' genuine concern for beauty of expression, the schoolmen substitute "words originating in a sort of unaesthetic jargon, provided only that they be specific." Consequently, "the language of orators and poets gives place to that of metaphysicians and logicians."[18] Simply put, "the modes of expression and the processes of thought [of monastic theology] are linked with a style and with literary genres which conform to the classical and patristic tradition."[19] With the masters of the urban schools, on the other hand,

> the accent is no longer placed on grammar, the *littera*, but on logic. Just as they are no longer satisfied with the *auctoritas* of Holy Scripture and the Fathers and invoke that of the philosophers, so clarity is what is sought in everything. Hence the fundamental difference between scholastic style and monastic style. The monks speak in images and comparisons borrowed from the Bible and possessing both a richness and an obscurity in keeping with the mystery to be expressed.[20]

Leclercq proceeds with a revealing contrast between St. Bernard's understanding of "biblical language," as the essential mode appropriate for theological activity, and the burgeoning new scholastic terminology:

> St. Bernard sees in the biblical tongue a certain modesty which respects God's mysteries; he admires the tact and discretion God used in speaking to men. Hence, he says: *Geramus morem Scripturae*. The scholastics are concerned with achieving clarity; consequently they readily make use of abstract terms, and they never hesitate to forge new words. . . . For [Bernard], this terminology is never more than a vocabulary for emergency use and it does not supplant the biblical vocabulary. The one he customarily uses remains, like the Bible's, essentially poetic; his language is consistently more literary than that of the School. . . . In answering doctrinal questions put to him by Hugh of St. Victor . . . he transposes into the biblical mode what his correspondent had said to him in the school language.[21]

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18. Hubert, "Aspects du latin philosophique," 227–31, cited by Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 142 n. 130. The previous brief citations are from the same passage in Leclercq.

19. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 199.

20. Ibid., 200.

21. Ibid., 200–201.

In general, then, the monastic style tends to be biblical, literary, aesthetically self-aware, even poetic, whereas the scholastic style is dialectical, logical, technical and abstract.

Apropos of Leclercq's observation of the fundamental dichotomy between rhetoric in the monasteries and logic in the schools, R. W. Southern describes the basic distinction between rhetoric and logic and the gradual shift in emphasis from the one to the other in the period spanning the late tenth to the early thirteenth century. He begins his historical account of this transition with a discussion of the revolutionary teaching career of Gerbert of Rheims, later to become Pope Silvester II. Southern writes:

> it is a striking thing that though this impulse to the study of logic was probably Gerbert's most important contribution to medieval learning, he did not allow it that pride of place among the arts which it later attained. Gerbert aimed at restoring the classical past, and nowhere was he more faithful to this aim than in the pre-eminence which he gave to the art of rhetoric. He had no room for the forward-reaching spirit of enquiry which animated the study of logic in the twelfth century. His energies were concentrated on the task of conservation, and on the worthy presentation of long-acquired, and sometimes long-lost, truths. Hence he was drawn to the art of rhetoric by a double chain: first because it was the chief literary science of the ancient world; secondly because it was congenial to his own spirit of conservatism. Rhetoric is static; logic dynamic. The one aims at making old truths palatable, the other at searching out new, even unpalatable truths—like the *invidiosi veri*, syllogized, in Dante's phrase, by Siger of Brabant [*Paradiso*, x, 138]. Rhetoric is persuasive, logic compulsive. The former smooths away divisions, the latter brings them into the open. The one is a healing art, an art of government; the other is surgical, and challenges the foundations of conduct and belief. To persuade, to preserve, to heal the divisions between past and present—these were Gerbert's aims, and in this work rhetoric and statesmanship went hand in hand, with logic as their servant. . . . Hence for Gerbert rhetoric, not logic, was the queen of the arts.[22]

Though Southern's point in this particular context is not to distinguish monasticism from scholasticism—Gerbert was not even a monk, but one of the itinerant masters that became such a common phenomenon in the tenth and eleventh centuries—nevertheless, the fundamental distinction between rhetoric and logic provides an important lens for appreciating

22. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 176.

the gap, ever-widening from Gerbert's day onward, between monastic and scholastic formation and sensibilities. Indeed, the above characterizations of Gerbert's outlook could virtually be applied wholesale to the monastic point of view, possibly excepting the specifically political orientation noted in the penultimate sentence of the passage cited.

Genre

In addition to stylistic differences in their approaches to writing in general, the two milieux vary in their preferences for particular forms, or genres, of writing, as well as in the ways they use genres they have in common. Thus, "the monks prefer the genres which might be called concrete,"[23] including especially history and hagiography. Whereas the interest of the schoolmen

> goes chiefly to the *quaestio*, the *disputatio*, or the *lectio* taken as a basis for formulating *quaestiones*, the monks prefer writings dealing with actual happenings and experiences rather than with ideas, and which, instead of being a teacher's instruction for a universal and anonymous public, are addressed to a specific audience, to a public chosen by and known to the author.[24]

Furthermore, the monastic genres, like the cloisters themselves, remain essentially stable over centuries, while the basic scholastic genres multiply rapidly, keeping pace with their ever-changing *Sitze im Leben*: from schools in small towns, to the cathedrals of cities, to the classrooms of academic consortia that then become universities. Soon, "the *quaestio* will give birth to the *quaestio disputata*, the *quaestiuncula*, the *articulus*, and the *quodlibet*; to the *lectio* will be added a *reportatio*, and each of these genres, as well as the sermon itself, will obey a more and more precise plan and a more and more complicated technique."[25] Over against these distinctively scholastic genres, we must now look briefly at the genres of *history*, *sermon*, and *florilegium* and their respective relations to the monastic and scholastic milieux.

Leclercq says that "The monks loved history very much. More than any other writers, they concentrated on it, and sometimes they were almost the only ones to do so."[26] In contrast, "not one of the masters of the schools

23. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 153.
24. Ibid., 153.
25. Ibid., 155.
26. Ibid.

of Chartres, Poitiers, Tours, Rheims, Laon, or Paris, in spite of the renown of their teaching, had any concern for historical work." In England also, the historians are almost always monks."[27] Accordingly, Aelred of Rievaulx himself produced an impressive corpus of historical and hagiographical works, following in the footsteps of his great English monastic forebear, Bede the Venerable. In tentative explanation of the monastic interest in history, Leclercq ventures only to point out the genre's antiquity and its inherent conservatism, both characteristics perennially appealing to the traditionalist tendencies of the monastic enterprise *per se*. Commenting further on the monks' use of the genre, he observes that

> The manner of presentation is determined by the end in view; to incite to the practice of virtue and promote praise of God, the events once recorded must, to a certain extent, be interpreted. Above all they must be situated in a vast context; the individual story is always inserted in the history of salvation. Events are directed by God who desires the salvation of the elect. The monks devote to the interests of this conviction a comprehension of the Church which was developed in them by the reading of the Fathers and the observance of the liturgy. They feel they are members of a universal communion. The saints, whose cult they celebrate, are, for them, intimate friends and living examples. In similar fashion, thinking about the angels comes naturally to them. Liturgical themes permeate their entire conception of what takes place in time.[28]

Here, Leclercq verges on an insight that he only makes explicit much later in *The Love of Learning*, namely, the link between history and eschatology and the corresponding monastic concern with both. In his climactic chapter on "Monastic Theology" he argues that

> the importance the monks attribute to history also explains the great weight they give to considerations of eschatology: for the work of salvation, begun in the Old Testament and realized in the New, is brought to completion only in the next world. Christian knowledge here below is only the first step toward the knowledge that belongs to the life of beatitude. Theology, here below, demands that we be detached from it, that we remain oriented

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27. Ibid. For Leclercq's citation (J. de Ghellinck) see 185 n. 10.

28. Ibid., 158. As we shall see, the theme of the universality of friendship, with men and angels, in the glorified communion of saints, is one of the hallmarks of Aelred's theological enterprise.

> toward something else beyond it, toward a fulfillment of which it is merely the beginning. This is yet another of the differences which distinguish the monks' intellectual attitude from that of the scholastics. As has been correctly observed, eschatology occupies practically no place in the teaching of Abailard.[29]

On the other hand, Leclercq offers no corresponding explanation for the *lack* of interest in history—or, for that matter, the relative lack of interest in eschatology—on the part of the schoolmen. In the first instance, the best explanation is probably to be found precisely by inverting the argument Leclercq offers for the monks' striking propensity for the genre. In their relentless search for clarity and scientific knowledge, the schools accord no special authority to *any* literary form, however ancient. The same motives militate against traditionalism and conservatism, whenever authority is perceived as a tool, willful or not, of obfuscation. There are also important philosophical issues to be considered here, namely, the matters of time, contingency and particularity. In their increasingly programmatic concern to reduce the bewildering complexity of the universe to a series of demonstrable propositions, the schoolmen inevitably attempted to abstract from time and the particularity and contingency of individual historical persons and events, whenever possible. In the case of eschatology, we must be even more cautious in our speculations. Nevertheless, it is quite reasonable, given the homogenizing tendencies of scholastic method with respect to the multiplicity of disciplines, to expect a certain indisposition in the realm of theology analogous to the one just described in the anthropological order, given the intrinsic relationship between history and eschatology. The reasons for such a disinclination to eschatological inquiry, like the disinclination itself, are analogous to the prior indisposition to the genre of history, whether or not these reasons were ever sufficiently examined.

Unlike the genre of history, the genre of the sermon was necessarily employed by all clerics who had pastoral responsibilities, whether in the cloister, the cathedral, or the academic hall. The differences, however, between style, method, and even content of the preaching done in the monasteries and that done elsewhere, were great, and only increased as the Middle Ages progressed. The monastic sermon is fundamentally patristic in tone and style, and pastoral in intention. It takes place within the context of a "rite" which was both "solemn" and "intimate," sometimes in the cloister, sometimes, after the day's work was over, "at the very spot where the

29. Ibid., 220.

work was being done, for example under a tree or some other spot where all could sit around the superior."[30] In stark contrast, the preaching of the schools

> came to be governed as much by dialectics as by rhetoric. Sermons were composed which were rigidly logical, but which bear a much closer resemblance to *quaestiones disputatae* than they do to homilies, and the laws which govern them are codified in the vast literature of the *artes praedicandi*. In scholasticism, the technique of the sermon becomes more and more subtle and complicated: one manual on the art of preaching teaches, for example, eighteen ways to 'lengthen a sermon.' The end result is a very clear, very logical oration which may be doctrinal and occasionally not devoid of stylistic or theological merit; but from this category, there is not in existence today one work of genius still worth reading.[31]

Here Leclercq records the telling comment of M. D. Chenu, that "The scholastics are professors. . . . Their sermons, like St. Thomas's, will themselves be scholastic. And the Church will consider the greatest of them as 'doctors,' no longer as its 'Fathers.'"[32] That the schoolmen took seriously their roles as teachers does not necessarily entail that they denigrated their pastoral responsibilities to their students and religious communities. Nonetheless, it is fair to affirm Leclercq's assertion that "to say the least, it was not in their sermons that they gave the best they had to offer."[33] In brief, then, the two ways of preaching correspond to their respective milieux: where the monastic sermon tends to be pastoral and biblical, the scholastic sermon is professorial and dialectical.

Another important genre employed in both the monasteries and the urban schools, though like the sermon, in remarkably different ways, was the *florilegium*. According to Leclercq, the fundamental distinction between the two uses amounts to that between a spiritual and an intellectual tool. Thus:

> The grammar schools had collections of examples taken from the authors. These collections of excerpts, either from the classics or, more frequently, from the Fathers and the councils, were used by the urban schools in particular as a veritable arsenal of

30. Ibid., 167.

31. Ibid., 173.

32. Chenu, *Introduction à l'étude*, cited in Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 173.

33. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 173.

> *auctoritates.* They were seeking important, concise, and interesting extracts for doctrinal studies, something of value for the *quaestio* and the *disputatio. . . .* Always conveniently ready for use . . . , these collections facilitated research; they eliminated the necessity of handling numbers of manuscripts. Consequently, they were primarily working tools for the intellectuals.[34]

Pressing the point a step further, Southern contends that scholastic method *per se* was in fact

> a development of the *florilegium.* In its simplest form, it was an attempt to solve by infinitely patient criticism and subtlety of distinction the problems posed by the juxtaposition of related but often divergent passages in the works of the great Christian writers. It was, one might say, the attempt of the intellect to discover and articulate the whole range of truth discoverable in, or hinted at in, the seminal works of Christianity.[35]

In the monasteries, on the other hand, the notion and its application are entirely different. There, the *florilegium* was the organic fruit of spiritual reading:

> The monk would copy out texts he had enjoyed so as to savor them at leisure and use them anew as subjects for private meditation. The monastic *florilegium* not only originated in the monk's spiritual reading but always remained closely associated with it. For this reason the texts selected were different from those required in the schools. . . .[36]

The monastic is almost certainly the older of the two forms of *florilegia.* Moreover, it did not cease to exist, nor was its spiritual function forgotten, with the ingenious recasting of the genre by the schools. Rather, it persisted alongside the scholastic version, at least into the thirteenth century.[37]

Though admittedly not so much itself a genre as an interpretive activity or tool, nevertheless exegesis is a specialized mode of writing, often embedded within wider contexts, though sometimes characterizing the whole of a particular work (most especially the commentary, but sometimes sermons

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34. Ibid., 182.

35. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 191.

36. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 182.

37. Cf. ibid., where Leclercq cites a work of Helinand of Froidmont as an example from the early thirteenth century.

as well). Differing significantly in style and application from the monastic to the scholastic milieu, it demands brief attention here.

In her great work, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Beryl Smalley writes:

> Gradually in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries exegesis as a separate subject emerges. It had its own technical aids to study, and its auxiliary sciences of textual criticism and biblical languages. Even though the personnel of its teachers was still undifferentiated, a scholar distinguished between his work as a theologian and his work as an exegete.[38]

By contrast, "in the early part of our period [the whole of which is the eighth to the fourteenth century] sacred doctrine resembled secular government in being undifferentiated and unspecialized."[39] Though Smalley does not at this point advert to Leclercq's fundamental distinction, it is clear that specialization in biblical studies, for better or for worse, is strongly associated with the rise of the schools. Moreover, says Smalley, "we are invited"—by the early medieval commentators, as by the Fathers themselves—"to look not at the text, but through it."[40] This somewhat obscure description Smalley intends as an aphorism for allegorical interpretation, the predominant ancient mode of "spiritual exposition" and the form of interpretation overwhelmingly favored in the monastic milieu. To "literal exposition," on the other hand, belongs "what we should now call exegesis, which is based on the study of the text and of biblical history, in its widest sense."[41] In her juxtaposition of the monastic and cathedral schools, Smalley observes:

> The innumerable problems arising from the reception of Aristotelian logic and the study of canon and civil law, the new possibilities of reasoning, the urgent need for speculation and discussion, all these produced an atmosphere of haste and excitement which was unfavourable to biblical scholarship. The masters of the cathedral schools had neither the time nor the training to specialize in a very technical branch of Bible study.[42]

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38. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, xv.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 2.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., 54.

Theologizing Friendship

All in all, Smalley's appraisal of both monastic and scholastic exegesis is fairly negative.[43] Leclercq's estimation of monastic exegesis, on the other hand, is predictably far more positive. In addition to taking the letter of the Bible with the utmost seriousness, the monks read Scripture as

> not primarily a source of knowledge, of scientific information; it is a means for salvation, its gift is the 'science of salvation': *salutaris scientia*. This is true of Scripture in its entirety. Each word it contains is thought of as a word addressed by God to each reader for his salvation. Everything then has a personal, immediate value for present life and for the obtaining of eternal life.[44]

Furthermore, the monastic theme of *desire* finds its biblical correlates first in the prophetic character of the Old Testament, in "desire for the Promised Land or desire for the Messiah," then in the anticipation of eschatological fulfillment, as these desires get "interpreted spontaneously by the medieval monks as desire for Heaven and for Jesus contemplated in His glory." As already noted, there is no comparable eschatological emphasis in the exegesis of the schools. Concerning scholastic exegesis generally, we cannot finally bypass Smalley's authoritative censure:

> the main tendency of the cathedral schools is clear; it leads away from old-fashioned Bible studies. St. Gregory had identified theology with exegesis. The eleventh- and early twelfth-century masters were inclined to identify exegesis with theology. Their work appears to be brilliant but one-sided, if we remember the promise of the eighth and ninth centuries. We find the theological questioning but not the biblical scholarship.[45]

43. In fact, it is Smalley's thesis that only the Victorines, particularly in the person of Hugh, conceived of a comprehensive program of biblical scholarship *informed* by *lectio divina*, a program that might have realized a kind of *via media* between monasticism and scholasticism—precisely congruent with their hybridized form of religious life. We have already noted a similar conviction on the part of Ivan Illich. For all its grandeur, the program was ultimately destined for failure, as Smalley recounts in her trenchant chapter, "The Victorines" (58–85; see especially, 80).

44. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 79–80.

45. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 54.