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***Fear, Love, and the Law:
The Spiritual Nature of Judaism and Christianity in Aquinas and Bonaventure***

In the middle of the 13th century, the University of Paris was home to an unprecedented flourishing in the study of theology. In part spurred by the development of Aristotelian learning, the period also witnessed the inclusion of thinkers from outside the realm of Christianity, most notably Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, and Maimonides. Yet while Christian theologians in this period seemed to feel little hesitation in using their writings, it is not clear that this resulted in a favorable attitude toward their religion. In this paper, I will take a closer look at the work of Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure and their perspective towards Judaism. To do this, I will focus on the question of the attributes of fear and love, specifically as they relate to the Old Law and the New Law.

Thomas and Bonaventure on the Old and New Law

In their formal theological treatises, Bonaventure and Thomas both treat of the difference between the new and old law. Their respective treatments follow many of the same distinctions as their collations, though there are some important differences. To highlight these differences, I will first provide a discussion of Thomas on the Old and New Law in relation to fear and love as found in his *Summa Theologiae*, and then compare this with Bonaventure's treatment in his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. For the most part, these two figures agree, a conclusion which is somewhat surprising given the differences found in their *Collations on the Ten Commandments*, works which will be discussed in the second half of this paper. For Bonaventure and Aquinas, the Old Law is a law of fear, generally speaking, while the New Law is a law of love. This simple distinction forms the key difference between Christianity and

Judaism, as it establishes Judaism as a fundamentally deficient religion, due to its primary spiritual motive being fear.

Thomas in the Summa and Commentaries

Thomas discussed the question of the Old and New Law repeatedly in the course of his writings. It is first treated in his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, approached again in his *Commentary on Romans*, and once more in his *Summa Theologiae*. In each of these texts, Thomas is consistent in his approach, which is largely traditional, and varies only slightly between each presentation. His perspective on the Old Law and its relation to the Gospel has been treated on several occasions;¹ it is the case, however, that the particular aspect of the role of fear and love in providing a fundamental difference has not been discussed in any detail. In this section, I will provide a discussion of fear and love as distinguishing characteristics of the Old and New Law.

Thomas' treatise on the Old Law (I-II qq. 98-105) falls in the middle of his treatise on law at the end of the Prima Secunda of the *Summa*. In this section, Thomas is tasked with providing an explanation as to how the Old Law is good and from God, and yet is not entirely applicable to Christians. His answer, in the most condensed way possible, is threefold: 1. The law is temporary, and was intended to serve as a pedagogue to prepare persons for the New Law 2. The judicial and ceremonial precepts are no longer valid, but the moral precepts are as they are based in natural law and are thereby always valid 3. The New Law supersedes and fulfills the Old Law, as the Old Law is imperfect whereas the New Law is perfect. "All the differences

¹ Beryl Smalley, "William of Auvergne, John of La Rochelle and St. Thomas Aquinas on the Old Law" in *St. Thomas Aquinas: 1274-1974: Commemorative Studies*. Steven C. Boguslawski in *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews*. Michael Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading of Thomas Aquinas on the Old Law" in *Understanding Scripture: Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation*. John Y.B. Hood in *Aquinas and the Jews*. Martens, Paul. "On the Superiority of the New Law: Stumbling through some difficulties with Thomas Aquinas." *Theology Today* 60 (2003): 170-85.

assigned between the Old and New Laws are gathered from their relative perfection and imperfection.”² The relative perfection and imperfection differ according to the specific means by which the laws operate. The Old Law, in Thomas’ mind, was given to a people who were imperfect, as they were still without the full grace of Christ to aid them in perfection. As an imperfect people, they were still directed towards material things, as Thomas writes:

Those who are yet imperfect desire temporal goods, albeit in subordination to God: whereas the perverse place their end in temporalities. It was therefore fitting that the Old Law should conduct men to God by means of temporal goods for which the imperfect have an affection.³

A key passage in this interpretation comes from Isaiah 1:19-20, a text which Thomas will use consistently throughout his work. It reads, “If you be willing, and will hearken to Me, you shall eat the good things of the land. But if you will not, and will provoke Me to wrath: the sword shall devour you.” Thomas interprets this passage as suggesting that as an incentive to following God, God promised to provide literal food, and threatened bodily harm and death. For Thomas, however, “the perfection of man consists in his despising temporal things and cleaving to things spiritual.” A spiritual person, therefore, is not motivated by temporal incentive or threat, as they have no interest in such things.

Thomas approaches this question again in I-II 107.1, where he explicitly references the distinction between fear and love. Responding to a distinction originally found in Augustine, he writes:

Hence the Old Law, which was given to men who were imperfect, that is, who had not yet received spiritual grace, was called the "law of fear," inasmuch as it induced men to

² I-II 107.1 ad 2 – citations from the *Summa Theologiae* are from the 1920 translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

³ I-II 99.6

observe its commandments by threatening them with penalties; and is spoken of as containing temporal promises. On the other hand, those who are possessed of virtue are inclined to do virtuous deeds through love of virtue, not on account of some extrinsic punishment or reward. Hence the New Law which derives its pre-eminence from the spiritual grace instilled into our hearts, is called the "Law of love": and it is described as containing spiritual and eternal promises, which are objects of the virtues, chiefly of charity. Accordingly such persons are inclined of themselves to those objects, not as to something foreign but as to something of their own.⁴

Hence, for Thomas, the New Law has several advantages, spiritually/morally speaking, over the Old Law. Not only is grace given through Christ as an aid to the observance of the Law,⁵ the Law also appeals to persons at a higher level than the Old Law as it is accomplished by persons of virtue (especially the theological virtues), who are not concerned with punishment or reward, instead being committed to the practice of virtue because it is virtue.

There are, however, limits to this division. As mentioned above, Thomas makes the distinction between Old and New Law in relation to fear love as a general statement, one which does not account for particular instances. Thus, whereas the Old Law is typically a spiritually deficient law, it is not always this way for all people. Thomas explains, "Nevertheless there were some in the state of the Old Testament who, having charity and the grace of the Holy Ghost, looked chiefly to spiritual and eternal promises: and in this respect they belonged to the New Law."⁶ This possibility extends to those who observe the New Law as well, as it is possible for the New Law to be observed out of desire for reward or fear of punishment:

⁴ I-II 107.1 ad 2

⁵ The New Law is in fact "chiefly the grace of the Holy Ghost itself" (I-II 106.1). Thomas will, however, still discuss the New Law as a code of law, and speak of its "observance."

⁶ I-II 107.1 ad 2

In like manner in the New Testament there are some carnal men who have not yet attained to the perfection of the New Law; and these it was necessary, even under the New Testament, to lead to virtuous action by the fear of punishment and by temporal promises.⁷

It seems, therefore, as if Thomas has left himself with an untidy distinction between the two laws by making this exception, given that followers of the Old Law can also be spiritually motivated. Yet, Thomas would insist that the way the Laws are presented and the incentives expressed are fundamentally different, as well as the crucial ingredient of the guarantee of the Grace of Christ as an aid to its observance, something not necessarily given by the Old Law. Thomas does, however, mark two further divisions, both of which relate to the persons who are observing the law. The first division is found in Thomas' *Commentary on Romans*. As John Y.B Hood has noted, Thomas suggests that there are three varieties of persons at all points in history: the obstinate, the ordinary, and the excellent. Thomas writes:

For the obstinate, the law was given as a whip. The moral precepts were enforced through fear of punishment, and the ritual commandments were multiplied to prevent them from worshipping idols. For the proficient who are called "ordinary," the Law was a pedagogue: from the ritual commandments they learned how to truly worship God, while the moral precepts encouraged them to be just. For the perfect, the ritual commandments functioned as mystical signs, while the moral precepts assured them that their actions were upright.⁸

As mentioned above, these three groups of persons can be found in observers of the New Law as well. Insofar as they apply to Judaism, however, they illustrate the clear hierarchy of followers

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Commentary on Romans 5:6*

Thomas saw present in the religion. The perfect in Judaism was a very small number of persons, limited mainly to the periods of the Patriarchs and the Prophets, who were able to see past the literal meaning of the commandments to the prefiguration of Christ. Thus, through a veil of sorts, these persons were able to be Christians.⁹

It does not appear, however, that Thomas believes this to be possible for Jews living in his own era, or he at the very least considers it unlikely. This brings us to the second division of persons Thomas makes, which is the division of the history of Judaism into three eras. Hood explains:

The era of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—was a golden age in which God's chosen offered him acceptable, spontaneous sacrifices. The law was given at a time when the people of Israel were prone to idolatry. Hence its ritual precepts were intended to discourage idol worship. The age of the Prophets—the period between the death of Moses and the birth of Christ—was one of increasing corruption; the people were generally sinful and their sacrifices were no longer pleasing to God. Finally, with Christ, animal sacrifice was abolished. In sum, Jewish history is a chronicle of decline. Patriarchal virtue yields to widespread idolatry and corruption; the Law is given as a corrective, but fails.¹⁰

The era that Judaism contemporary with Thomas finds itself in is still the period of corruption and disarray following the abolition of animal sacrifice and the destruction of the temple. For Thomas, this means that the likelihood of finding a spiritually capable Jewish person, with his understanding of spiritually capable meaning that the person is able to see Christ prefigured in the Hebrew Scriptures, is particularly unlikely.

⁹ This theme is developed and discussed in detail in Beryl Smalley's work referenced above.

¹⁰ Hood, John Y.B. *Aquinas and the Jews*. UPenn: Philadelphia, 1995. 60

Bonaventure in the Sentence Commentary and Commentary on Luke

In reading through Bonaventure's works on the subject, it becomes apparent that there were standard explanations present in the medieval period of the relationship of the new and old law. Bonaventure uses many of the same terms as Thomas and in large part agrees with his conclusions. For example, in Book III, Distinction 40, article 1, question 1 of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure asks the questions of whether the Old Law is rightly called a "law of fear" and the New Law a "law of love?" He answers affirmatively, much as Thomas did, though with slightly different reasoning. Further, in regards to the Old Law in general, Bonaventure will also make the distinction between the Liturgical, Judicial and Moral aspects of the Law, and in his *Commentary on Luke*, he describes how the young Jesus fulfills each aspect of the Law in his own way.

Although the conclusions and terms are largely consistent between these two authors, the specific reasoning for their conclusions is slightly different. As mentioned above, Bonaventure agrees that the Old Law is rightly called a law of fear, and like Thomas, this is a result of the difference between the relative perfection of the Old and New Law. The Old Law, Bonaventure writes, was "concentrated on a non-perfect way of life. For the law, according to what the Apostle said in the Letter to the Hebrews, led no one to the state of perfection."¹¹ As it is interested in leading imperfect persons, it follows that it would lead by means of fear, as:

It is characteristic of imperfect persons that they be led by the spirit of fear and of perfect persons that they be led by the spirit of love. Hence it is that in speaking of their

¹¹ *Commentary on the Sentences* III.40.1.1 – Translation is from the Latin of the Quaracchi Edition of the text, and was completed by Stephen F. Brown and myself.

general nature the difference between the two laws should be attributed according to those two motivations.¹²

At the same time, however, while Bonaventure will affirm this distinction generally speaking, he, like Thomas, will clarify that this distinction does not necessarily hold in the particular. He writes, “If we do the comparison by focusing on the way a particular person fulfills the law, there is not the difference set up in the above conclusion: many follow the new law out of fear and many have been led to follow the old law in the spirit of love.”¹³ Bonaventure recognizes, therefore, that the New Law does not necessarily lead to spiritually advanced people, and likewise that the Old Law does not necessarily result in spiritually deficient persons. Instead, the flourishing of a given person is dependent on that person and the role that God plays in aiding them in the living of a good life.

For Bonaventure, the distinction between Old and New Law is also based on a distinction in the type of person. He writes that different ways of teaching are employed depending on the audience receiving the teaching, and he cites the difference between the giving of the Old and New Law. The Old Law was given by Moses “with a great clamor and fear, as is evident in chapter 19 of Exodus,” whereas the New Law was given by Christ “with a great deal of kindness and sweetness, since the King of Kings himself, sitting in the midst of the Apostles, taught them by saying, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’” Bonaventure explains further:

The different ways in which the laws were given suggest to us that there is a difference in the basic motivations involved in observing the laws.... Wherefore, as we see in the different ways of teaching, if we are dealing with men motivated through reason, we use

¹² Ibid. Et imperfectorum est duci spiritu timoris, perfectorum vero spiritu amoris: hinc est, quod secundum statum communem penes haec duo habet harum duarum legum differentia assignari.

¹³ Ibid. Si habito respectu ad statum specialis personae, sic penes haec duo non est differentia. Nam multi in Lege evangelica ducuntur spiritu timoris, multi etiam in lege veteri ducebantur spiritu amoris.

an ostensive syllogism which leads people directly towards what is true. If we are dealing with men who are subject to strong emotions, we use a syllogism that shows consequences. This approach leads them to see that they are following a path toward a false goal and thus gets them to return to the path aiming at what is true.¹⁴

For Bonaventure, therefore, the New Law is a more “reasonable” or “rational” Law, one that appeals to men at a higher level than their emotions. Furthermore, persons at the time of Christ were more reasonable people, and thus were better prepared to hear and accept a more demanding code of law.

In the next distinction (III.40.1.2), Bonaventure explains in more detail the distinctions between the Old and New Law. He discusses whether it is rightly said that the Old Law kills and the New Law gives life, based on the passage from 2 Corinthians 3:6, “for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life,” where the “letter” refers to the Mosaic Law. For Bonaventure, both the Old and New Law have three principal elements in them. He explains:

In the old law there were three considerations, similar to the new law; one may see things motivating, and these are promises; things directing, and these are precepts; things helping, and these are sacraments; since according to what is said by Hugh of St. Victor, “Sacraments are aids, in order to come through precepts to promises.” Similarly these three are in the law of the Gospel, but differently; since in the new law all these are spiritual, since the promises are eternal, the precepts are spiritual, and the sacraments are sanctifying; and these promises excite men to eternal love, since this is

¹⁴ Ibid. Et hic diversus modus ferendi legem insinuat nobis diversitatem huius duplicis radicis in observando, quae his duabus legibus competebat propter diversam qualitatem personarum et status earum, ob quam oportebat diversimode manuduci. Unde sicut videmus in disciplinalibus, quod ad homines persuadibiles utendum est syllogismo ostensivo, qui ducit directe ad verum; ad homines vero contentioso utendum est syllogismo per impossibile, qui ducit ad manifeste falsum, ut per illud reducat ad verum:

the love of charity; the precepts direct sufficiently in the way of morals, teaching the way to live without sin; the sacraments clean the soul from the vulnerability of sin.¹⁵

The principal difference, therefore, is the distinction between the nature of the considerations. In the basic sense of the Old Law, according to the literal understanding, the promises are for temporal goods, the precepts are for external moral rectitude, but not concerned with internal spiritual virtue, and the sacraments do not confer grace, being “figurative.” As Bonaventure concludes, this means that, “the promises do not excite man to spiritual love, the precepts do not direct to interior justice, and the sacraments do not aid in order to make possible the implementation of the law itself: and thus it is not able to justify.”¹⁶ Since the Old Law is not able to justify, it is not able to give life in the proper sense, as Bonaventure has defined it.

It is still possible, however, for a person to observe the Old Law in a spiritual manner, and thereby to be justified. He writes, “The Old Law is able to be observed and understood in two ways, one way according to the spiritual understanding; and since this mode agrees with the law of the Gospel, those men also observe spiritually the law of the gospel, since the law is filled (praegnans) with the gospel.” In the text of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure does not provide any further information on how it is possible to fulfill the Old Law, though he does revisit the issue in his *Commentary on Luke*.

In his commentary on Luke 16:14-18 (a refutation of the Pharisees and an explanation of the Law), Bonaventure explains how exactly the Old Law passes away. He writes, “And since

¹⁵ His praesuppositis, intelligendum est, quod in Lege veteri tria erant consideranda, similiter et in lege nova, videlicet noventia (moventia?) et ista erant promiss: dirigentia, et ista erant praecepta; adiuvantia, et ista erant sacramenta: quia, secundum quod dicit Hugo “Sacramenta sunt adiutoria, ut per praecepta veniatur ad promissa.”—similiter haec tria sunt in lege evangelica, sed differenter: quia in lege nova secundum primam faciem ista omnia sunt spiritualia, quia promissa sunt aeterna, praecepta sunt spiritualia, et Sacramenta sanctificantia; et ita promissa excitant homine ad amore aeternorum, qui est amor caritatis; praecepta dirigunt sufficienter in via morum, docendo vitare omne peccatum; Sacramenta sanant animam a vulneribus peccatorum.

¹⁶ ...et sic ratione promissorum non excitabatur homo ad amorem spirituales, ratione praeceptorum non dirigebatur ad iustitiam interiorem, ratione sacramentorum non adiuwabatur, ut posset faciliter Legem ipsam implere: et ideo decrat sibi iustificatio.

the Mosaic Law was voided by Christ, so that what remained pertained to the spiritual understanding of the ceremonial law and the literal observance of the moral law.”¹⁷

II: Collations on the Commandments

In one of the many coincidences of their careers, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure both offered collations on the Ten Commandments. Continuing from the discussion above, one of the common features between these two works are the themes of fear and love, which are presented either as “aids” or “inducements” through which a person is drawn to observe the commandments. For each author, fear and love are representative of the Old Law and the New Law, as respectively given by the Mosaic Law and the Gospel. At the same time, however, Bonaventure will not make the same distinctions he makes in his other works concerning the Old and New Law. In fact Bonaventure does not appear to use the phrase “Old Law,” in any of his collations. While he acknowledges that certain interpretations of the Mosaic Law are deficient in his mind, writing “Furthermore, I say that we as Christians should see more than the Jewish people, to whom these commandments were given,”¹⁸ he does not suggest the Law is in need of reinterpretations, just proper interpretation. Bonaventure thus provides a literal and spiritual interpretation of each of the commandments as a means of providing a complete explanation of the precepts.

It is possible to argue, therefore, that despite the fact that Bonaventure and Thomas make similar arguments concerning the Old Law in their formal works, Bonaventure holds a different perspective towards the Old Law. For Bonaventure, the Old Law is not old when interpreted

¹⁷ Robert J. Karris, translator. *St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*. The Franciscan Institute: New York, 2001. 16.30

¹⁸ Saint Bonaventure. *Collations on the Ten Commandments*. Translated by Paul J. Spaeth. The Franciscan Institute: New York, 1995. All English citations of this work are from this text. 2.21. Latin citations are from the Quarracchi edition of Bonaventure - *Modo dico, quod nos Christiani ultra illum Iudaicum populum, cui haec mandata fuerunt data, videre debemus.*

correctly, whereas for Aquinas the law is imperfect and must be reinterpreted through the twofold commandment of charity in order to be relevant.

Context and Format

These sermon series were both given towards the end of each man's respective career. For Bonaventure, these were delivered during Lent at the University of Paris in 1267. For Thomas, they were delivered in 1273, the year before his death, in Naples. The settings are somewhat different, but the audience is likely to have included some educated persons. Thomas Gilby suggests that for Thomas, there were "students and townsfolk" present, though he in no way substantiates this suggestion,¹⁹ whereas, given Bonaventure's university setting, this appears to be a safer conclusion in his case.

Fear and Love

These two attributes are not new to the discussion of the religious life, and their inclusion in these collations is not remarkable for any innovation on either author's part. There are, however, significant distinctions in their presentation of each aspect in their *Collations*. One of these distinctions can be seen in the division of the commandments. Thomas divides the commandments according to the object of love given by each of them. He sees two groupings in the commandments, one for the love of God, one for the love of neighbor. Bonaventure, on the other hand, distinguishes the commandments according to whether they are affirmative (i.e. "do this") or negative ("don't do this"). Another distinction can be seen in the priority Thomas places on love in its relation to Fear. Thomas argues that the Law of Moses is a law predicated on fear, and it is only the Law of Christ that is the law of love. Bonaventure makes no such

¹⁹ Aquinas, Thomas. *The Commandments of God: Conferences on the Two Precepts of Charity and the Ten Commandments*. Translated by Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Burnes, Oates and Washbourne: London, 1937. All quotations from Thomas' Collations are from this text. v

distinction.²⁰ Finally, Bonaventure agrees with Thomas that the observation of the law of love, or of the commandments in general, has certain positive effects for the human. The fundamental distinction between these two texts is in Thomas' distinction of the old and new law, a distinction which Bonaventure does not here make. Whether or not this is indicative of Bonaventure's position on the matter, it does lead to some substantial differences in the presentation of the Ten Commandments. In fact, this distinction underlies the central variations in these works.

As mentioned above, Thomas approaches the text by splitting the Ten Commandments into two sets by virtue of their relation to the two-fold commandment given by Jesus. To provide a foundation for this distinction, Thomas first speaks in an expansive prologue on the "two precepts of charity," the commandments of Jesus given in Matthew, after which he begins his discussion of the Ten Commandments. Bonaventure will also make reference to the twofold commandment found in Matthew 22:36-40, but Bonaventure treats it within a paragraph, and does not return to its themes. In his discussion of this passage, Bonaventure quotes Augustine, "Lord who are you to me? And who am I to you, that you command me to love you, and if I do not love you, you would threaten me with great afflictions?"²¹ Though this is ostensibly a discussion of love, Bonaventure brings in the threat of punishment. The twofold commandment to love, therefore, still includes the incentive to observe via threat of punishment for failure to observe. Thus the law of love still includes an element of fear in it, and the threat of punishment becomes an important theme for Bonaventure.

Fear and Love: the types of commandments

²⁰ In this collation, at least. As mentioned above, this is precisely the distinction he makes in his *Commentary on the Sentences*.

²¹ Collation I. 19. Qt. from Augustine, *Confessions* I.5.

Bonaventure begins his Collation by explaining the reasons why persons should follow the commandments. He provides a fourfold reasoning:

1. “The authority or dignity of the one commanding.”
2. “The benefit to be derived from the observance.”
3. “The peril from transgressing.”
4. “The faultless character of the commands.”²²

At this point, there is no direct discussion of fear or love. Instead, the law is discussed primarily in legalistic terms. The law proceeds from a valid legal authority, provides incentive to those who follow it, punishments for those who transgress, and is of a sound legal nature due to the fact that it does not impose any undue burden and is possible to observe. In fact, Bonaventure’s legalistic stress will be maintained throughout his treatment of the commandments, particularly his interest in the incentive to avoid punishment. This third reason is particularly interested in the fear derived from threat of punishment, and this threat will be one of the crucial themes in the text.

In the second collation, Bonaventure explains another mode of dividing the commandments. This mode of division is predicated on the concept of fear and love explicitly. He writes:

And it should be noted here that all the commandments are either affirmative or negative. Some are indeed affirmative in that they tell people to do good. And others are negative in that they tell people to avoid evil. Only through fear is it possible for anyone to avoid evil, and only through love is it possible for anyone to do good.²³

²² Collation I.2

²³ Collation II.14 – Notandum autem hic, quod omnia mandata aut sunt affirmativa, aut negativa. Affirmativa quidem sunt, ut homo faciat bonum; negativa vero, ut homo vitet malum. Sed impossibile est, ut homo evitet malum nisi per timorem, et quod faciat bonum nisi per amorem.

It would seem that Bonaventure is dividing the commandments into two groups, one for the love of God, the other for the fear of God. And yet, Bonaventure will stress that a person needs a combination of fear and love present at all times within them for the observation of any of the commandments. Fear and love, therefore, are seen as playing complementary roles to each other, rather than a progressive system like the one Thomas will suggest. He writes, “A bird cannot fly without two wings; neither can a human being walk without two feet. Similarly, it is impossible to observe the commandments of God perfectly unless one is filled with fear and love.”²⁴ Thus a person must have both elements, fear and love, within them in order to fulfill the commandments due to the proper incentive and ease provided by each.

Bonaventure: Aids to the Observation of the Commandments

This perfect filling of the commandments is accomplished in Bonaventure by two forms of repeated thoughts. One repeated thought, intended to inspire fear in the thinker, is the remembrance of God as jealous and vengeful. As he writes, ““No one will be filled with fear except through the consideration of the divine sternness.”²⁵ This consideration is aided by the reading of certain passages of scripture which describe God’s vengeance and the punishment provided by God for those who disobey. Bonaventure focuses on two passages of scripture: first, Deuteronomy 5:9 “I am the Lord your God, strong and jealous, visiting the sins of the father on the sons, even to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me.” Bonaventure explains that God does not actually punish the sons for the sins of their fathers, instead he punishes them insofar as they continue in their sinful fathers’ example. Second, he cites from Ecclesiastes 12:13, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is humanity’s all,” a passage Bonaventure cites with some regularity. Bonaventure explains “humanity’s all” (*omnis homo*)

²⁴ Collation II.14 – Avis non potest volare sine duabus alis, nec homo potest ambulare sine duobus pedibus. Similiter non potest esse aliquis perfectus observator mandatorum Dei, nisi sit repletus timore et amore.

²⁵ II.14

by suggesting that this means it applies to all humans. Bonaventure argues, therefore, that the highest fulfillment of humans begins with the fear of God, something which is made possible through reflection on God's jealousy and vengeance.

The threat of punishment and the promise of reward act as chief incentives at this point. For those persons who are interested in achieving eternal reward, they should remind themselves of the punishment awaiting them for their failure. He writes, "Do you want to merit the highest fulfillment? Fear God! But how will I come to fear? Certainly by considering that the Lord is the most powerful jealous one."²⁶ This consideration inspires fear in the person because of the threat of punishment, and provides a powerful incentive to the observance of the commandments.

Given Bonaventure's interest in a person possessing both fear and love, it is intuitive that he would also suggest exercises intended to increase the love of God. These exercises are similarly structured to the exercises for fear. Bonaventure writes, "No one will be filled with love except by considering the divine goodness." (35) Again, this exercise is accomplished with reference to scriptural passages. Bonaventure explains:

Now, together with fear it is necessary also to love God who speaks of himself as "showing mercy to thousandth generation of those who love me." In this, God reveals to us that the divine mercy and kindness is greater than any punishment for sins. When the heart is enlarged by love, then a person easily keeps the commandments of God.²⁷

Again, through the repeated internalizing of passages of scripture related to God's mercy or vengefulness, a person can increase their fear or love of God. Through the development of fear,

²⁶ II.15 – Vis mereri, ut ad summum complementum pervenias? Deum time. Sed quomodo timebo? Certe considerando, quod Dominus est fortissimus zelator.

²⁷ II.16 – quotation from Exodus 20:6, 34:7, Deuteronomy 5:10 – Item, cum hoc etiam oportet amare ipsum, quia ipse dicit de se, ut sequitur: *Et faciens misericordiam in millia his qui diligunt me*; in quo ostendit nobis, quod Dei misericordia et benignitas transcendit ultionem iniquitatum. Quando cor dilatur per amorem, tunc homo faciliter servat mandata Dei.

a person is provided with the incentive to avoid eternal punishment. Through the development of love, however, a person is not provided with an incentive *per se*. Instead, a person will find that they are more easily able to keep the commandments because of the enlarging of their heart.

Fear and Love: the order of fear and love in Thomas

Fear and Love appear to play complementary roles in Bonaventure; a person who is perfected in both the fear and the love of God will be more likely to succeed in the observation of God's commandments, as they have suitable incentive to do so and the observance has been made easier through the increase of love. This is not the case for Thomas, however, though he does recognize that fear and love each play a role. Again, as it was in Bonaventure, the role of fear and love are in the inducement to follow the commandments. He writes: "Observe, then, that man is withdrawn from evil and induced to perform good deeds by two things. The first is fear, because the first and greatest inducement to avoid sin is the thought of the pains of hell, and the last judgment."²⁸ Fear, therefore, serves as incentive to avoid sin, as the threat of punishment is recognized and fear results. And yet, this motive is not sufficient, as Thomas will describe how fear alone does not provide adequate inspiration for the observance of the commandments. He writes, "But seeing that this kind of motive was insufficient, in as much as it restrained the hand without curbing the mind, there is yet another way of withdrawing the man from evil and inducing him to good deeds, namely, the way of love."²⁹ In this passage, Thomas acknowledges the role that fear can play. Fear is for restraint from action, and insofar as this is true, it would appear that Thomas would agree with Bonaventure. And yet, he recognizes that restraint from action is not sufficient. In fact, Thomas disparages the "law of fear," suggesting that its clear

²⁸ Collation I prologue, p.2

²⁹ Ibid., p.3

superior is the “law of love,” given by the Gospel. At this point, Thomas’ distinction between the old and new laws begins to play an important role in his text.

For Thomas fear is not a proper end for the religious life. He writes, “In this way [i.e. through fear] man was drawn away from evildoing and led to do good by the Law of Moses, since those who disobeyed it were punished by death.”³⁰ The Law of Moses, therefore, is a law based on fear of God. In this way, it is an incomplete law, since it lacks the required additional feature of love. In lacking love, it cannot make the person who accomplishes it truly “just” in Thomas’ understanding. He writes, “For although a man who avoids sin through fear is not therefore a just man, nevertheless it is his first step towards justification.”³¹ The lack of justification for those who follow the law of fear is a major problem for this system of law.

Thomas sees the completion of this system, and thereby the possibility of the person becoming justified, in the New Law. He writes, “There is yet another way of withdrawing a man from evil and inducing him to good deeds, namely the way of love; and this is the way inculcated by the law of Christ or the law of the Gospel, which is the law of love.”³² The law of love, therefore, is the necessary fulfillment of the human being, and the only possible means by which a person can be justified.

This leads Thomas to make a threefold distinction between the law of fear and the law of love. These differences are:

- (1) “the law of fear makes its observers slaves, whereas the law of love makes them free, since one who works merely through fear works like a slave, whereas one who works through love works as a free man or as a son.”

³⁰ Ibid., p.3

³¹ Ibid., p.2

³² Ibid., p.3

(2) “the observers of the first law were promised temporal foods...while the observers of the second law are promised heavenly goods”³³

(3) “The third difference is that the first law was burdensome...whereas the second law is lightsome.”³⁴

This threefold distinction holds some crucial points of distinction between Thomas and Bonaventure, while also holding some interesting similarities. First, the suggestion that fear only makes its observers slaves is absent in Bonaventure’s discussion of fear. He does not seem to think that fear holds such a negative connotation at this point. Thomas will, however, make clear that actions done from fear afford a person very little praise. The second distinction is a curious one. Thomas explains the reference to temporal foods by citing Isaiah 1:19, “The second difference is that the observers of the first law were promised temporal foods,³⁵ ‘If you be willing and will hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land.’”

Finally, in the third difference, Bonaventure and Thomas agree, but in a distinctive manner. They both recognize that through love, it is easier to follow the commandments. But Thomas is talking about a distinction between two varieties of law, whereas it seems Bonaventure is talking about the necessity of both fear and love in the observation of all commandments, whether one makes the distinction between New and Old Law. Therefore, whereas for Bonaventure love and fear always play an intertwined role, Thomas believes that one can only become spiritually sound through the ascent to observation of the commandments purely out of love.

³³ *Secunda differentia est quia observatores primae legis ad bona temporalia introducebantur. Isai. I, 19, si volueritis et audieritis me, bona terrae comedetis. Sed observatores secundae legis, in bona caelestia introducuntur. Matth. XIX, 17, si vis ad vitam ingredi, serva mandata;*

³⁴ Collation 1, p.3

³⁵ In the original translation, the text reads, “promised temporal foods.” Not sure, if this is a typo, but I believe “ad bona temporalia introducebantur” should be “led to temporal *goods*.”

Fear, therefore, precedes love in the order of the law. The Old Law, the Law of Moses, is predicated on fear, whereas the New Law is predicated on love. This does, however, create a bit of a problem for Thomas. Given that Thomas is supposed to be preaching on the Ten Commandments, it would seem that he would be dismissing them as being related only to fear. He avoids this pitfall by focusing on the foundation of the two commandments, the twofold commandment of love given by Jesus, which he discusses in his first two collations before arriving at the Ten Commandments. This provides the justification for a further exploration of these commandments in the vein of love, rather than with any attention paid to fear. He writes:

Since then God, in delivering the law to Moses, gave him ten commandments written on tablets of stone, three of these commandments that were on the first table related to the love of God, while the seven inscribed on the second table referred to the love of our neighbor: hence the whole law is founded on the two precepts of charity.³⁶

Though Thomas does not mention this shift, it is clear that his discussion of the Law of Moses will avoid any discussion of fear of punishment to a great extent. Though it may appear in passing, the discussion is focused on love and the increase of love in the human. Thomas thus switches the foundation of the Old Law from its former stance as a law of fear into a primary representative of the law of love. Though the law of love is the grace written on the hearts of Christians, Thomas does not find any issue in re-interpreting the Old Law with the interpretive key of Christ now provided.

Bonaventure and Aquinas on Judaism

In determining what Bonaventure and Aquinas actually held towards the religion of Judaism, it is helpful to turn towards their use of sources. Their criticism of the Mosaic Law focuses on three distinct issues: 1. The Old Law is not aimed at perfection 2. The Old Law is

³⁶ Collation 2, p. 27

predicated on fear and not love 3. The Old Law lacks the fulfillment of the New Law, which renders it perfect. If we assume that it is a safe argument to say that Thomas, and perhaps Bonaventure, had read at least portions of Maimonides *Guide for the Perplexed*, then these conclusions are problematic. The first two points are, in fact, points explicitly argued by Maimonides in his explanation of the Law given by Moses. Miriam Galston writes:

By speaking of the *aim* of the law, Maimonides makes clear that to warrant the name “divine,” it is not enough for a law to include provisions of a certain kind; its goal must be promoting human perfection. A law that accidentally contains provisions which lead to human perfection, or one that contains provisions which accidentally lead to human perfection, is not divine.³⁷

Maimonides would argue, therefore, that not only is the Law given by Moses perfect, it must be directed at human perfection else it would not be perfect. This theme runs throughout the *Guide*, as it is through human perfection that one comes to salvation. Thomas and Bonaventure would not, of course, agree with Maimonides on these points, and this is not surprising. They cannot be expected to find Maimonides’ claims true given their own religious convictions and the cultural setting of their time. It is interesting, however, that Maimonides’ claims for what the Jewish religion is are largely ignored. It would perhaps have been possible to take Maimonides’ arguments into further account on the question of the perfection of the Mosaic Law, and its role in perfecting persons.

This theme continues on the second point as well. Whereas Thomas and Bonaventure will argue that the Mosaic Law is given on the basis of fear and lacks in love, Maimonides will

³⁷ Galston, Miriam. “The purpose of the Law according to Maimonides” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* Vol.69.1 July, 1978. 31. She is commenting on II.39 in the *Guide for the Perplexed*.

suggest there is actually a combination of these two attributes. His argument in fact sounds much like Bonaventure's on this point. On the fear of God, he writes:

For it is by all the particulars of the actions [prescribed by the law] and through their repetition that some excellent men obtain such training that they achieve human perfection, so that they fear, and are in dread and in awe of God...Consider how it is explicitly stated for your benefit that the intention of *all the words of this Law* is one end, namely, *that thou mayest fear the name, and so on.*³⁸

One of the primary ends of the Law, therefore, is that a person may come to fear God, an end which is accomplished through the observance of those things prescribed by the law, the “commandments and prohibitions.” At the same time, however, a person must also come to love. He explains:

As for the opinions that the *Torah* teaches us—namely, the apprehension of His being and His unity, may He be exalted—these opinions teach us *love*, as we have explained several times. You know to what extent the *Torah* lays stress upon *love*: *With all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* For these two ends, namely, love and fear, are achieved through two things: love through the opinions taught by the Law, which include the apprehension of His being as He, may He be exalted, is in truth; while fear is achieved by means of all actions prescribed by the Law as we have explained.³⁹

The importance of the joining of these two attributes is essential, in Maimonides' mind, for the possibility of the human achieving perfection. Given the importance of perfection in his thought, it is difficult to argue that he in any way subjugated love to a secondary role, or denied its

³⁸ Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Translated by Shlomo Pines. U of Chicago: Chicago, 1963. III.52

³⁹ Ibid.

importance. Furthermore, his claim that the “*Torah* lays stress upon love,” is quite accurate, and it is clear that Thomas and Bonaventure would likewise have known the same passages coming from the Hebrew Scriptures which referred to the importance of the love of God and neighbor.

It seems necessary to conclude that the distinctions drawn by Bonaventure and Aquinas on the difference between the Old and New Law are traditional, and are not a product of any substantial engagement with Judaism. In fact, the critique of Judaism as being a religion predicated on observance through fear appears to be entirely due to received tradition and continued stereotype. From Maimonides in the 12th century through Hasdai Crescas in the 14th, Jewish thinkers in some sense or another argue for the importance of love in the life of the believer. Instead of engaging with or acknowledging the place of love in the Hebrew Scriptures, the religion is treated primarily as a spiritually deficient religion of fear, save for the exceptions of the Patriarchs, who in fact foreknew Christ anyway.

The question that follows from their discussion of the Mosaic Law is whether this influenced their perspective towards Jews. Given the scant historical data, this is a question that is almost impossible to come to any conclusion on. The evidence suggesting Thomas held a negative view comes primarily from the short response *De Regimine Iudaeorum*, in which Thomas writes to a Duchess on how she ought to govern the Jewish people in her province.⁴⁰ Though Thomas’ advice appears to be indicative of an incredibly anti-Semitic attitude, and allows for the oppression and excessive taxation of Jews so long as “the things necessary to sustain life are not taken from them,” he does indicate the importance of justice in all dealings, even with “those who are outcast.”⁴¹ As for Bonaventure, I have not yet found other sources where Bonaventure discusses the Mosaic Law or Jews in any detail, though there are still places

⁴⁰ Aquinas, Thomas. “The letter to the Duchess of Brabant on the ‘Government of Jews.’” In *Aquinas: Political Writings*. Translated by R.W. Dyson. CUP: Cambridge, 2002.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

to look. Given the problems in answering this question, Hood offers perhaps a more answerable one:

To what extent did Aquinas's writings help entrench the hostility toward Jews that already existed? The answer should already be clear: because of his skill in explicating and rationalizing the traditional theological and canonistic attitude towards Jews, and because of his subsequent influence within the Dominican Order and on medieval thought generally, Aquinas did much to reinforce a status quo in which Jews were tolerated and allowed to worship, but were subject to a variety of discriminatory laws.⁴²

I would argue that much of the same could be said about Bonaventure's work and his later influence in the Franciscan Order. Neither Bonaventure nor Aquinas were the prime movers in the oppression and violence directed toward Judaism, but they did not work to dispel any of the theological justifications that served as a foundation for the ill treatment of Jews. The disparaging of the Old Law as an imperfect law of fear, and the decision to look past contrary suggestions from Jewish authors, is likely to have served as a reinforcement of previously held understandings of Jews, and the belief in the deficiency of their religion within Christian circles.

⁴² Hood 106