The Scholastic of the Free Church?

An examination of the extent to which it is appropriate to describe William Cunningham (1805-1861) as a 'scholastic' theologian.

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Contents

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to examine the extent to which it is appropriate to describe William Cunningham (1805-1861) as a scholastic theologian. Cunningham was a prominent figure in the Disruption and the early years of the Free Church of Scotland, yet today he is often overlooked or portrayed in what frequently appears to be a negative light. In the years since his death he has often been described using the term scholastic.

The central thesis of this study is that although aspects of Cunningham's approach correspond to characteristics associated with scholasticism, he should only be classified as a scholastic to a limited extent. Much of his approach lies beyond the scope of that which is associated with scholasticism therefore it is not appropriate to label, or dismiss, Cunningham simply as a scholastic.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 will trace the historical origins of scholasticism and attempts to build a working definition of the concept. The subsequent chapters will analyse separate aspects of this definition in relation to Cunningham. Chapter 2 will explore the chronological context of scholasticism in relation to the Medieval period and subsequent continuity of the phenomenon and how this relates to Cunningham. Chapter 3 will examine the educational aspect of scholasticism and how this corresponds to Cunningham's teaching position in the 19th Century. Chapter 4 will explore scholastic methodology and will engage in a detailed comparison between Cunningham and Francis Turretin. Chapter 5 will then look more broadly at the wider context of how Cunningham fits into the ongoing interaction between theology and philosophy.

General Abbreviations

DSCHT   *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*

ESV   *English Standard Version*

JETS   *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*

JOTGES   *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*

NDT   *New Dictionary of Theology*

RBTR   *Reformed Baptist Theological Review*

Reformers   Cunningham, William *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*

Rights   Cunningham, William. 'The Rights of the Christian People' in *Discussions on Church Principles*

WTJ   *Westminster Theological Journal*

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Introduction

The world of theology, in common with other areas of study, is furnished with a myriad of words and phrases which aim to classify schools of thought and method. Terms such as conservative, liberal, evangelical, existential, neo-orthodox and post-modern are among a plethora of classifications which are applied to periods of history, to groups and movements, and to individuals. The study of William Cunningham is no exception to this phenomenon, and very quickly it becomes clear that there is one prominent classification which is frequently attached to his name. To theologians and historians alike, William Cunningham was a scholastic.

There are numerous examples of thinkers who have described Cunningham in this way, from the 19th Century through to the present day.

An article from 1878 states the following:

> He was in a high sense the *scholastic* of his party. None who knew him can forget the prominence he gave to the exercise of determining the true nature of the question raised, and the burden of proof, and the kind and amount of evidence to be reasonably expected.[1]

And the same emphasis is found in current historians:

> He [Cunningham] was a formidable man – large, powerfully built, possessing a body of considerable knowledge, a sharp and logical mind, decided convictions and an abiding sense of self-righteousness. His theological beliefs consisted of a narrow and rigid scholastic Calvinism, including a belief in predestination. He had an almost pathological hatred for Roman Catholicism and a contempt for Anglicanism.[2]

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[1] James MacGregor, "Dr William Cunningham", in *British Foreign Evangelical Review* xx (1871), 768 (emphasis original)

[2] Stewart J Brown, "The Disruption and the Dream: The Making of New College 1843 – 1861", 43

There are many others: Todd Statham describes Cunningham's work as "typical of scholastic theological method."[3] John Roxborogh argues that Cunningham typified scholastic Calvinism alongside George Smeaton and James Bannerman.[4] Peter Toon classifies him as "the solid, scholastic High Calvinist of the early Victorian era."[5]   And others, such as Michael Honeycutt[6] and Joel Beeke[7] also associate Cunningham with the term 'scholastic'.

As these examples demonstrate, it can be safely concluded that Cunningham is widely regarded as a scholastic. Moreover, this association with scholasticism appears to be used as a key distinguishing feature of Cunningham's method. Indeed, it is suggested that Cunningham is remembered for little else:

> The name of William Cunningham is almost forgotten. Those who know him at all dismiss him as the last of the scholastics, the champion of mail-clad dogmatism.[8]

Therefore, if one asks, 'was Cunningham a scholastic?', the answer would seem to be a resounding, "Yes". However, a simple but important question arises: Is this true? Was Cunningham a scholastic? And if he was, to what extent? And what exactly is meant by the term 'scholastic' when associated with Cunningham?

These are the questions which the following thesis seeks to explore. Following a brief literature review, Chapter 1 will attempt to formulate a working definition of scholasticism. In order to recognise the roots of scholasticism in the history of both theology and philosophy, this chapter will include a broad historical survey of the development of these two intellectual movements and the

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[3] Todd Statham, "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland", 100

[4] John Roxborogh, *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission,* 229

[5] Peter Toon, *Development of Doctrine in the Church,* 38

[6] Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies"*,* 279-281

[7] Joel R. Beeke, "William Cunningham", 220-221

[8] Donald Macleod, "Scotland's Greatest Theologian", 51

interaction between them, which led to the phenomenon now known as scholasticism. This definition will attempt to account for the various different factors which have shaped scholasticism by identifying four contexts in which scholasticism is to be defined. Each of these contexts will be the subjects of the remaining chapters in the thesis as they are examined in relation to Cunningham.

Chapter 2 will discuss the chronological context of scholasticism and will look generally at how the Medieval phenomenon of scholasticism has continued in the centuries since, and specifically at what connections there may be between Cunningham and the Medieval period.

Chapter 3 will examine the educational context of scholasticism. In particular, it will explore the extent to which the scholasticism observed in Cunningham served to distinguish him from among his contemporaries. Alongside this, there will be an examination as to whether the historical context of 19th Century Scottish Church History had any influence on Cunningham's approach.

Chapter 4 will be the largest in the thesis and will be looking at what is arguably the primary context in which scholasticism is to be understood, namely that of theological methodology. As part of this analysis, a detailed case study comparing Cunningham and Francis Turretin will be attempted.

Chapter 5 will then take a broader perspective in order to see how Cunningham fits into the wider narrative of the relationship between theology and philosophy.

Finally, on the basis of the research contained in each of these chapters, this thesis will conclude by offering an answer to the question; to what extent is it appropriate to describe William Cunningham as a scholastic theologian?

Literature Survey

In approaching the question of Cunningham's scholasticism, it is helpful to begin by surveying some of the literature relevant to this area.

1. Primary Sources

1.1 Cunningham's Works

Cunningham's main works include the following:

Historical Theology (2 volumes, first published in 1862) is based on Cunningham's lectures from the Chair of Church History in New College, Edinburgh. By focussing on areas of controversy throughout the history of the church, Cunningham explores key theological doctrines by examining various viewpoints and objections that have arisen, before providing a clear statement of what he regards as orthodoxy. Interestingly, and paradoxically, *Historical Theology* has been described as both a superb training in theological method[9] and as a deeply disappointing work of historical theology.[10]

Theological Lectures (1878) is a posthumously published collection of lectures given by Cunningham to first year students as an introduction to theological studies. It deals mainly with the doctrine of Scripture, as based on the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith, but Cunningham also examines Natural Theology, Prayer, the Sabbath, and the sub-division of theology into separate subject areas.

The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation (first published 1862) consists primarily of articles written by Cunningham for the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, of which Cunningham

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[9] Donald Macleod, "William Cunningham", in *DSCHT,* 229

[10] Todd Statham, "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland", 95

was editor form 1855-60. The articles tend to focus on individual Reformers and issues associated with them, with several chapters devoted to John Calvin and Calvinism. Cunningham's discussions, however, are not confined to the events of the 16th Century, as he takes the opportunity to discuss the ongoing relevance of the issue in question and to engage with his contemporaries.

Various writings in the realm of ecclesiology are collected in *Discussions on Church Principles,* which were published collectively in 1868, although many appeared as pamphlets and articles in Cunningham's own lifetime. The topics covered include various ecclesiological positions held by the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. Furthermore, there is an examination of church-state relations. Alongside these general ecclesiological discussions, this volume also contains some of Cunningham's key contributions to the Ten Years' Conflict and subsequent Disruption in 1843, including the highly influential pamphlet 'The Rights of the Christian People'.

Alongside these published volumes, there are also several other articles, letters, lectures and speeches on record. Examples of these include his "Address at the Opening of New College, 1851", included as an appendix (along with several other speeches), in Mackenzie and Rainy's biography; *The Life of William Cunningham.* Another example is the article 'Newman on Development', a response to John Henry Newman's *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine.* This article, which is also included in *Discussions,* is one of over twenty-five written for journals such as the *North British Review* and the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*[11]

Cunningham also provided material for the republication of earlier works by other writers. For example, he wrote an introduction to David Some's *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism Explained,* he edited *The Sermons of Robert Bruce*, and he edited and annotated Edward Stillingfleet's *Doctrine and Practices of the Church of Rome.*[12]

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[11] Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies", 336-339

[12] Donald Macleod, "William Cunningham", in *DSCHT,* 229

Finally, a collection of Cunningham's Sermons was complied, introduced and published by John J. Bonar in 1872.

Cunningham's works are frequently characterized by a polemical tone, close attention to detail, and a deliberate attempt to identify the key issues and questions at stake. And, as this study will go on to show, his methods have often been associated with the term 'scholastic'.

1.2   Scholastic Works

The term scholastic is broad, both theologically and chronologically. It predates the Reformation and yet subsequently straddles the Protestant-Catholic divide. Moreover, it has been applied to writings compiled during the Middles Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and even the modern era. Some of the key works are summarized below.

One of the earliest names associated with scholasticism is Anselm of Canterbury. His works, such as *Monologium, Proslogium* and *Cur Deus Homo,* made an important contribution to understanding the relationship between faith and reason. Subsequent writings, such as Peter Aberlard's *Sic et Non* and Peter Lombard' *Sentences*, developed a method of discussing contrasting opinions, the latter of which emerged as an influential textbook for theological discussion in the later Middle Ages. This gradual development leads up to the name perhaps most associated with scholasticism: Thomas Aquinas, "the great master of Scholasticism".[13] His *Summa Theologica,* which painstakingly explores a series of questions, exemplifies much of the leading features of the scholastic method. Other writers, such as John Duns Scotus and William of Occam, also made important contributions to Medieval Scholasticism.

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[13] Cornelius Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology,* 57

While scholasticism continued, and indeed remains, an integral part of Roman Catholic theological method, the Reformation is regarded as a reaction against perceived errors of the Medieval Scholastics. The Reformers are often contrasted with scholastics and Cunningham himself appears to hold this view, suggesting that schoolmen's methodology is rarely used by the Reformers.[14] Such a viewpoint is of course entirely dependent upon one's definition of scholastic method, and it is an interesting question as to the extent to which key Reformation works, such as Calvin's *Institutes,* are scholastic or not.

However, in the seventeenth century, Scholasticism came to the fore of Protestant theology.   Works such as Gisbertus Voetius's *Select Theological Disputations, Compendium of Christian Theology* by Johannes Wollebius and Francis Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* all employed methods associated with scholasticism to address questions that arose in the realm of Reformed theology.[15] The latter of these went on to be a standard theological textbook in places such as Princeton right through to the end of the 19th Century, and was a particular favourite of Cunningham's. Scholastic method also appeared among Scottish theologians of the 17th Century, as exemplified by Samuel Rutherford's *Disputatio Scholastica de Divina Providentia*.

There are of course many more examples of scholastic works, and space does not permit further inclusions. However, the above works are representative of the broad range of scholasticism, and many of these works will be examined in reference to Cunningham later in this study.

Moving into the 18th and 19th centuries, it appears that the use of the term scholastic in reference to Protestant theologians somewhat tails off as individuals tended to be classified more in terms of

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[14] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 418

[15] Gisbertus Voetius,   *Selectarum Disputationum theologicarum* (5 vols.), Utrecht, 1648; Amsterdam, 1667; Utrecht, 1669.
Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium of Christian Theology* (1626)
Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology.* Tranlated by George Musgrave Giger. Edited by James T. Dennison, Jr. 3 vols. Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1992. (First published in 1679-1685)

their allegiances and roles in various theological and ecclesiastical controversies. This certainly appears to be the case in Scotland, where classifications such as 'Marrow-man', 'Seceders', 'Moderates' and 'Non-Intrusionists' take precedence. Therefore, whether it is appropriate or not, later Scottish theologians, such as Thomas Boston, Thomas Chalmers and John McLeod Campbell, are not commonly described in terms of scholasticism. However, at least one name continues to be associated with the word scholastic and is therefore an exception to this pattern. That name is William Cunningham.

2. Secondary Sources

2.1   Works Engaging with Cunningham

Despite his noteworthy role in the 19th Century Scottish Church, there has been little scholarly engagement with Cunningham's life and work. The only published biography remains *The Life of William Cunningham* by James Mackenzie and Robert Rainy, published in 1871.[16] This account of Cunningham's life was started by Mackenzie before being completed by Rainy after Mackenzie's death. The work traces Cunningham's early life and career, focusing especially on his role in the lead up to the Disruption. Indeed, Mackenzie's account of Cunningham's contribution incorporates an informative record of many of the key events in the Ten Years' Conflict. Rainy's contribution outlines the key post-disruption events of Cunningham's life and, although perhaps lacking the more dramatic and readable recounting of Mackenzie, nevertheless gives a helpful insight into Cunningham's life and work in New College and among the wider Church.

Two unpublished doctoral theses, both from New College, Edinburgh, are also devoted to the study of Cunningham. The first, "The Church in the Teaching of Principal William Cunningham (1805-1861)", completed in 1952 by Rudolph Ehrlich, explores Cunningham's ecclesiology, and devotes

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[16] James Mackenzie and Robert Rainy, *The Life of William Cunningham,* London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1871.

significant attention to a comparison between the presbyterian Cunningham and the independent John Owen.[17]

The second thesis is "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies" by Michael Honeycutt.[18] This is a biographical study which is structured around the key moments of controversy in Cunningham's lifetime. This detailed work explores areas which are not elaborated upon in Mackenzie and Rainy, such as the 'Send back the Money' controversy of 1844-47. The examination of Cunningham's life is thorough and informative and were Honeycutt's thesis to be published, it would doubtless become a definitive modern biography of Cunningham.

Alongside these works, which are devoted entirely to the study of Cunningham, there are several articles and chapters within wider volumes of which Cunningham is the subject. Included in these are the following:

Joel Beeke contributes an examination of Cunningham's historiography to *Historians of the Christian Tradition*, edited by Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber.[19] Michael Honeycutt explores "William Cunningham and the Doctrine of the Sacraments" in the *festschrift* for Donald Macleod*, The People's Theologian.*[20] The Doctoral thesis of Todd Statham, "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland"*,* devotes a chapter to the controversy between William Cunningham and John Henry Newman.[21] This topic is also explored by Geertjan Ziujdwegt in the *Louvain Studies* article "Newman's Disputed

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[17] Rudolph Ehrlich, "The Church in the Teaching of Principal William Cunningham (1805-1861)", unpublished PhD thesis, 1952, New College Library, Edinburgh.

[18] Michael W. Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies". unpublished PhD thesis, 2002, New College Library, Edinburgh.

[19] Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber (eds.) *Historians of the Christian Tradition*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995

[20] Iain D. Campbell and Malcolm Maclean (eds) *The People's Theologian: Writings in Honour of Donald Macleod*. Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2011

[21] Statham, Todd. "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland". PhD Thesis. McGill University Library, 2010

Honesty: A Case Study in Victorian Religious Controversy".[22] Donald Macleod has authored the

reference to Cunningham *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* as well as penning an

article on Cunningham for the Free Church *Monthly Record* entitled "Scotland's Greatest

Theologian."[23]

While books and articles devoted specifically to Cunningham are surprisingly rare, he is mentioned in

numerous wider works on the 19th Century Scottish Church. Early examples include Thomas Brown's

Annals of the Disruption, Robert Buchanan's *Ten Years' Conflict* and Stewart and Cameron's *The Free*

Church of Scotland: The Crisis of 1900.[24] 20th Century historical works, such *Scottish Theology in*

Relation to Church History by John Macleod and Drummond and Bulloch's *The Church in Victorian*

Scotland 1842-1874 both devote attention to Cunningham.[25] And more recent works also provide

interesting comments on Cunningham, included in which are A. C. Cheyne's *Studies in Scottish*

Church History, Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission by John Roxborogh and Stewart J. Brown's

"The Disruption and the Dream: The Making of New College 1843 – 1861", found in *Disruption to*

Diversity: Edinburgh Divinity 1846-1996 (edited by David F. Wright and Gary D. Badcock).[26]

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[22] Geertjan Ziujdwegt, "Newman's Disputed Honesty: A Case Study in Victorian Religious Controversy" in
Louvain Studies 34 (2009-2010) 361-384

[23]Nigel M. ds S. Cameron (ed) *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993.
Donald Macleod, "Scotland's Greatest Theologian", in *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland,*
March 1990, 51-53

[24] Bobert Buchanan *The Ten Years' Conflict*. Glasgow: Blackie and Son: 1867
Thomas Brown, *Annals of the Disruption.* Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace, 1893
Alexander Stewart and J. Kennedy Cameron, *The Free Church of Scotland: The Crisis of 1900.* Second Edition.
Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1989 (First Published 1910)

[25] Macleod, John. *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History.* Second Edition. Edinburgh: The Knox Press,
1946
Drummond Andrew L. and Bulloch, James. *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1842-1874.* Edinburgh: The Saint
Andrew Press, 1975.

[26] Cheyne, A. C. *Studies in Scottish Church History.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999.
Roxborogh, John. *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission.* Edinburgh: Rutherford
House/Paternoster Press, 1999.
David F. Wright and Gary D. Badcock (eds.) *Disruption to Diversity: Edinburgh Divinity 1846-1996.* London:
Bloomsbury, 1996.

In addition to these historical works, there are also several systematic theologians who make reference to Cunningham. His name, for example, is found in the writings of B. B. Warfield, John Murray, Donald Macleod and Robert Reymond.

Many of the above works make a connection between Cunningham and scholasticism and they will therefore be returned to as this study progresses.

2.2   Works Engaging with Scholasticism

The number of works engaging with scholasticism is vast, and a comprehensive list is beyond the scope of this brief survey. However, the following are examples of helpful contributions to the study this topic.

Almost all historical surveys of Christian theology and ecclesiology include an examination of scholasticism. However, what is particularly interesting is that scholasticism consistently makes an appearance across a broad range of subject areas, thus highlighting its clear importance. Standard works of church history, such as Nick Needham's *2000 Years of Christ's Power,* mention scholasticism, and would be deficient were they not to.[27] Works of historical theology also frequently engage with scholasticism, examples of which would include Adolf Harnack's *History of Dogma* and William Shedd's *History of Doctrine.*[28] But even studies in philosophy and epistemology also incorporate scholasticism in their remit, as exemplified in, Cornelius Van Til's *In Defense of the*

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[27] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (vol. 2) The Middle Ages. .* Revised Edition. Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2016.

[28] William Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine (vol. 1).* Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1865.
Adolf Harnack, *The History of Dogma (Seven Volumes).* Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997 (First published in Berlin 1889)

Faith (Vol 2): A Survey of Christian Epistemology and John Frame's recent work *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*.[29]

The subsequent development of Protestant Scholasticism has also received significant scholarly attention. A key writer in this realm is Richard A. Muller, whose numerous works include the extensive study *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*.[30] Alongside Muller's work, important contributions are found in collections of essays contained in *Reformation and Scholasticism* (edited by Willem Van Asselt and Eef Dekker) and *Protestant Scholasticism, Essays in Reassessment* (edited by Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark).[31]

2.3   Works Engaging with Cunningham's Scholasticism

However, while there are multitudes of studies of scholasticism and several studies of Cunningham, it is much more difficult to find works where these two topics coincide. Although the association between Cunningham and scholasticism is frequently made, there is very little scholarly work which examines the nature and extent of Cunningham's scholasticism in any detail. Indeed, there appears to be only two examples which focus in more depth on Cunningham and scholasticism. These are Honeycutt's "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies" and Beeke's 'William Cunningham' in *Historians of the Christian Tradition*. Both of these provide important discussions in regard to Cunningham's scholasticism, and they shall be examined in more detail later in this study. However, it must be noted that even these discussions are merely sub-sections of wider studies of

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[29] Cornelius Van Til, *In Defense of the Faith (vol 2): A Survey of Christian Epistemology.* New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1955.
John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology.* New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 2015.

[30] Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics. (*4 vols.) 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

[31] Willem Van Asselt and Eef Dekker (eds.) *Reformation and Scholasticism.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
Trueman, Carl R. and Clark, R. Scott (eds.), *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999.

Cunningham's work, and they are not specifically focussed on the Cunningham-scholasticism question.

Without doubt, therefore, the extent to which Cunningham was or was not a scholastic remains a question that is still to be answered.

Chapter 1. Defining Scholasticism

The definition of the term 'scholastic' is itself a very interesting question. Throughout the centuries it has been used in different ways. Indeed, in the 16th Century it was employed as a derogatory term, mocking the narrow and restricted methods of the Medieval theologians.[32] Since then, the term has (almost[33]) lost its derogatory connotations, and refers to a method of theological enquiry associated primarily with the Middle Ages but which has continued to influence theological method in the subsequent centuries.

In seeking to define scholasticism, it is helpful to begin by exploring the question; where did scholasticism originate?

At one level, the answer to that question is found in a very specific time and place: the education faculties of Medieval Europe. Indeed, the name 'scholastic' is used because this methodology came to prominence in the *scholae*, that is the monastic and cathedral schools and the newly developing universities of the Middle Ages.[34] These universities provided an environment for education to develop. Specialist centres of study emerged providing new opportunities for study, for example, in medicine at Salerno, in law at Bologna, and in theology at Paris.[35]

However, at another level, the origins of scholasticism are broader and the emergence of the medieval scholastics is part of a much bigger narrative. This is because these *scholae* were not simply bringing students and teachers together, they also brought together two vast areas of

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[32] A. Vos, 'Scholasticism' in *NDT,* 621

[33] The term 'almost' is added here because, as the quotation from S J Brown in the Introduction implies, the term scholastic has been used in relation to Cunningham in what appears to be a less than complimentary manner.

[34] A. Vos, 'Scholasticism' in *NDT,* 621

[35] Pace, E. 'Universities' in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. n. p.

intellectual thought: theology and philosophy. Scholasticism is thus bound up within the history of the interconnection between two great realms of study.

This means that, in many ways, the origins of scholasticism lie much earlier than the Middle Ages. Indeed, the starting point is the around 1600 years earlier, in the fascinating world of Greek philosophy.

1.1 The Development of Greek Philosophy

1.1.1   Plato

Of all the great names in Greek philosophy, Plato (427-347 B.C.) is perhaps the greatest of all. His thought has had lasting influence on both philosophers and theologians alike, and for many reasons he is a good starting point for understanding the historical relationship between theology and philosophy, of which scholasticism is a part. That of course is not to say that no one of significance preceded Plato. He was probably a student of Socrates (470-399 B.C.) and part of Plato's achievement was to gather and systematise the understanding of key thinkers who preceded him, such as Parmenidies and Heraclitus.[36]

At the heart of Plato's philosophy lies the concept of *Forms,* although it must be noted that Plato does not give a direct or full explanation of this theory in his dialogues. However, this paradigm can be formulated from the allusions and references that Plato makes in his writings.[37] These *Forms* (also called *Ideas*) describe the perfect example of any reality which thus serve as a universal model of a particular concept. Our senses do not ever observe such perfect *Forms* in our experience, yet in our minds we have a concept of the reality of such perfection. Thus, for example, no one has ever

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[36] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 63

[37] Desmond Lee, 'Translator's Note' in Plato, *The Republic,* 264

seen a perfect apple, and yet we have a concept of what the perfect form of 'apple-ness' is. Plato

explores what the relationship between the universal *Form* and the earthly reality might be and

suggests that earthly realities are lesser representations deriving from the perfection modelled in

each *Form*.

The challenge for Plato, however, lies in the fact that whilst a perfect physical apple may exist

somewhere, the situation is less clear cut for non-physical realities such as goodness, justice or

virtue. Plato concludes that *Forms* must be abstract and must exist in a separate world but are

nevertheless real and knowable. Indeed, the form is more real than the earthly (inferior) example.[38]

Our (limited) knowledge of these *Forms* arises from the fact that our souls, which are immortal,

already contain an awareness of them. However, through enquiry, this basic understanding of

Forms can be increased as the soul recollects more and more, thus increasing knowledge and

discovering more of reality.[39]

Furthermore, within the *Forms* is a hierarchy, at the top of which is the *Form of Good*.

> The highest form of knowledge is the knowledge of the form of the good, from which things
>
> that are just and so on derive their usefulness and value.[40]

However, precisely defining the *Form of Good* proves difficult because specific examples of *Good* will

always be less than, and thus not truly representative of, the ultimate.

> The good, then, is the end of all endeavour, the object on which every heart is set, whose
>
> existence it divines, *though it finds it hard to grasp just what it is*.[41]

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[38] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 63

[39] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 32

[40] Plato, *The Republic,* 303

[41] ibid*.,* 304 (emphasis added)

This means that while Plato marvellously inspires the student to pursue knowledge in terms of the perfect *Form*, he simultaneously leads the student into a realm where the specific details desired are ultimately unattainable.[42]

However, an attempt to solve this dilemma is found is Plato's greatest student, Aristotle.

1.1.2   Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), like Plato, has been an immensely influential figure in the interface between philosophy and theology. Moreover, the rise of scholasticism is intricately bound up with Aristotelian thought.

As a student of Plato, Aristotle held on to several aspects of his teacher's thought, particularly in relation to the concept of ultimate form:[43]

> In general, wherever there is a better, there is also a best. Now, since among the things that are one is better than another, there is also a best thing, and this would be the divine.[44]

However, when it came to specific examples, Aristotle recognised the impenetrable nature of an entirely transcendental realm of form advocated by Plato:

> If the Ideas were another kind of number, and not the mathematical, we should have no understanding of it. For who understands another kind of number, at any rate among the majority of us?[45]

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[42] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 65

[43] In reference to Aristotle the term 'form' is not italicised or given a capital letter in order to reflect the subtle differences between the respective understandings of 'form' in Plato and Aristotle.

[44] Aristotle, *Frag. 15,* cited in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 1 Part II),* 14

[45] Aristotle, *Frag. 11,* cited in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 1 Part II),* 14

To overcome the ultimate unknowability of forms (or ideas, as they are referred to above), Aristotle suggested that such forms can indeed be perceived in the world around us. Indeed, reality can be understood in terms of a combination of form and matter, described by Aristotle as *Substance*. The former is the specific qualities which define any reality, the latter the actual materials which constitute an object. Taking this page as a simple example; the matter of this page is paper and ink, the form is the shape and thickness of the paper combined with the pattern and layout of the letters. The form is of primary importance in defining a particular object because two items may share the same matter but, if the form differs, then each is distinct.

This form-matter combination also explains the relationship between objects: the form of one reality can function as the matter of another, thus paper and ink are the matter underlying the substance of this page, but paper itself is the form of the pulp in the paper factory, and ink is the form of the combined solvent, dye and oil in the cartridge factory, and so on. As Aristotle observed the world around him, he recognised that change takes place as matter realises its potential and becomes form. Therefore, "Platonism may be characterised by reference to the idea of Being, in the sense of abiding and steadfast reality, Aristotelianism by reference to the idea of Becoming."[46]

Thus, Aristotle recognised a processive inter-relationship between objects which can be understood in terms of potential and actuality. He suggested that matter contains potential, and form is the actuality in which that potential is realised. Thus, change is to be understood as a move from potential to actuality.[47]

Like Plato, Aristotle prioritised form as the realm in which true knowledge is found. However, Aristotle clearly describes form in less abstract terms than Plato because he regards form as observable in the movement from potential to actuality around us. Matter has the potential to

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[46] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 1 Part II),* 113

[47] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 70-77

reach actuality as form. Indeed, matter is in a state of privation until it becomes form.[48] However,

this movement from potentiality to actuality does not happen spontaneously. For it to occur there

must be a source of movement, which, when acting upon the object, effects change, and potential is

finally and fully realised.[49]

These concepts of matter, form, movement and actuality all combine to formulate Aristotle's theory

of causation. He is said to have identified a quartet of causes: material, formal, efficient and final,

each corresponding to the key elements of his metaphysic.[50] The material cause consists of the

matter from which something is made.   The formal cause is the form, that is the shape or pattern,

which characterises and distinguishes a particular thing. The efficient cause describes the agent of

change through which something comes into this form. And the final cause is the purpose or goal

for which something exists.[51] This breakdown of causation is an important feature of Aristotelian

thought and would go on to be very influential in the development of scholasticism.

Furthermore, Aristotle reasoned that this causation must have an origin. This gave rise to his

concept of a Prime Mover, from which all processes of causation derive, or perhaps more accurately

are drawn towards.   The Prime Mover is the ultimate final cause of potentiality being actualized.[52]

1.1.3   Epicureans, Stoics and Middle Platonism

After Aristotle, aspects of Greek philosophy continued to develop along a more matter-focussed

trajectory. On the one hand, the Atomistic Epicurean school developed a materialistic worldview

that rejected supernatural involvement in the world, minimised human responsibility and

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[48] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 1 Part II),* 50

[49] ibid., 54

[50] Penelope Mackie "Causality" in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 131

[51] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 43
Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 1 Part II),* 49

[52] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 1 Part II),* 53

encouraged a pursuit of pleasure. It must be noted, however, that this did not mean unrestricted

self-indulgence. For Epicureans, the pinnacle of pleasure was "an equilibrium of the soul, expressed

in an absence of pain, discomfort and fear."[53]   On the other hand, the more fatalistic Stoics

developed a pantheistic view of reality wherein the objective was to accept whatever fate was

brought to pass by the laws of the material world (the 'world-soul') and to live in harmony with

such.[54]   Meanwhile, however, not all philosophies went down the route of materialism and a

Platonic worldview did not disappear. Between 80 B.C. and 220 A.D., the form of Platonic thought

known as Middle Platonism was maintained in the academies of higher education, particularly in

Alexandria.[55]   Then, in the 3rd Century A.D., a new form of Platonic thought emerged in the teaching

of Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism.

1.1.3   Neoplatonism

Neoplatonism returns to the Platonic view that true reality is ultimately found in an immaterial

realm, rather than in the material world. However, there is also an attempt to synthesise Platonic

thought with the teaching of Aristotle, and this Platonic/Aristotelian balance would go on to be an

important influence on the scholastic theologians.[56]

Plotinus (205-270) argued for a supreme being, identified as the One, who is immaterial and

indescribable, but communicates its excellence to other, lesser realities. This One is the source of all

other existence, "all reality is an emanation of the One."[57]   From the One, Plotinus's Neoplatonism

describes a ladder, or chain, of being whereby the qualities of the One are communicated

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[53] Ivor J. Davidson, *The Birth of the Church,* 32

[54] R. W. Sharples, "Stoicism" in *Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 896
John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 58-78

[55] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 84

[56] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 1 Part II),* 18-19

[57] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 79

downwards through various descending levels: to the mind, then the soul, then the material. Humanity is contained at the level of the material. However, by gaining knowledge, humans can ascend the ladder of being to the higher levels of soul, mind and eventually to the level of the One, with which it is possible to be mystically united.[58] Indeed, Neoplatonism contained a strong mystical element, particularly in regard to describing the One, who by definition was indescribable. To overcome this, Plotinus utilised a negative terminology, which described the One by stating what the One is not, rather than what the One is. Plotinus also used a 'negative way' to explain evil: he thought of evil as non-being, an absence of good.[59]   Neoplatonism thus appears to be maintaining a distinction between immaterial supremacy and material inferiority, but at the same is time building a (mystical) bridge between the two. Indeed, some have suggested that Plotinus's thought drifts towards Gnosticism in that the spiritual is truly real and good, the material is not.[60]

Thus, from Plato to Plotinus, Greek philosophy went through various stages of development producing various schools of thought, many of which would go on to have lasting influence.

1.2 The Emergence of Christian Theology

Meanwhile, in the relative obscurity of the 1st Century Near East, the basis of Christian theology was being formulated and recorded in the teaching of Jesus Christ and the New Testament Apostles. These records were eventually combined together and came to be recognised as the canon of New Testament Scriptures, regarded as authoritative by the newly emerging Christian religion. Of course, like the Greek philosophy analysed above, the theology of Christianity did not emerge from a

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[58] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 79-80

[59] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 86

[60] ibid.

vacuum, but claimed a heritage originating in the Old Testament Scriptures and the history of the ancient nation of Israel.

During the 1st Century, Christian theology quickly gathered momentum as an intellectual force, and its influence spread from Jerusalem to surrounding nations. The New Testament record focuses on the westward spread of Christianity along the northern Mediterranean coast, and Christian communities were established in key geographical locations such as Ephesus, Corinth and Rome.   In terms of the interface between theology and philosophy, it is interesting to note that the New Testament itself contains evidence that these two great realms quickly came face to face. For example, the Book of Acts records the Apostle Paul speaking to Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and he subsequently went on to address the Areopagus in Athens.[61] Furthermore, the letter to the Colossian church contains a warning to "see to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit".[62]   Moreover, alongside this apparent confrontation, it has also been argued that New Testament writers themselves were influenced by philosophy. The apostle John, for example, has been described as "a recognised Platonic genius".[63]

Thus, by the end of the 1st Century the western world is home to two giant intellectual movements: philosophy and theology. But are they friends or foes, and can they work together?

1.3 Philosophy and Theology: Interaction Begins

Among the Early Church Fathers there were different approaches to the relationship between theology and philosophy.

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[61] Acts 17:18
Acts 17:19-34

[62] Colossians 2:8

[63] Egil A. Wyller, "In Solomon's Porch: A henological analysis of the architectonic of the Fourth Gospel", 151

On the one hand, some were very willing to integrate these realms. **Justin Martyr** (100-165) sought

to minimise the differences between Greek philosophy and Christian theology. To him, Christianity

is the greatest philosophy of all and is the culmination, not just of the Old Testament, but also of

Greek thought:

> We have been taught that Christ is the firstborn of God, and we have proclaimed that he is
>
> the Logos, in whom every race of people have shared. And those who live according to the
>
> Logos are Christians, even though they may have been counted as atheists – such as
>
> Socrates and Heraclitus, and others like them, among the Greeks. . . . . For all writers were
>
> able to see the truth darkly, on account of the implanted seed of the Logos which was
>
> grafted into them.[64]

Justin, therefore, uses philosophical concepts in his theology and speaks of God in more abstract

terms, similar to those used in Greek thought.[65]

Clement of Alexandria (155-220) took a similar approach to Justin, arguing that Greek philosophy

complements theology and brings greater clarity to it. Clement saw Christianity "as the climax and

goal of everything to which secular philosophy had been moving."[66] Clement, like Justin, employed

the *via negativa*; the approach that regards God as ultimately nameless and indescribable and

therefore can only be spoken of in terms of what he isn't, rather than what he is.[67] His enthusiasm

for philosophy is shown in the following quote:

> Thus until the coming of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness.
>
> And now it assists those who come to faith by way of demonstration, as a kind of

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[64] Justin Martyr, *Apologia,* I.xlvi.2-3

[65] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 90-91

[66] Ivor J. Davidson, *The Birth of the Church,* 254

[67] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 100-101

preparatory training for true religion. . . . For philosophy acted as a "custodian" to bring the Greeks to Christ, just as the law brought the Hebrews. Thus philosophy was by way of a preparation, which prepared the way for its perfection in Christ.[68]

Origen (185-254) was also influenced by Greek thought as he formulated his theology. He is known for his highly speculative approach to allegory and his concept of God as 'being' has been said to arise from Platonic influence.[69] Interestingly, Origen's use of Greek philosophy aroused the frustration of Porphyry, an opponent of Christianity and critic of Origen:

> Origen, a Greek educated in Greek learning, drove headlong towards barbarian recklessness; and making straight for this he hawked himself and his literary skill about; and while his manner of life was Christian and contrary to the law, in his opinions about material things and the Deity he played the Greek, and introduced Greek ideas into foreign fables.[70]

Clearly Justin, Clement and Origen regarded philosophy and theology as friends.

On the other hand, however, there were those who sought to keep theology and philosophy well apart. The Bishop of Lyons, **Irenaeus** (130–200), sought to warn Christians against false teaching which arose in the 2nd Century, particularly in terms of the various forms of Gnosticism which thrived in that period. His work, *Against Heresies,* seeks to maintain a focus on biblical revelation as opposed to mystical speculation, and he describes God in positive, personal terms, rather than employing the *via negativa*.[71]

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[68] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* I.v.28

[69] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 102-104

[70] Pophery, "Against the Christians III"*,* in *A New Eusebius (2nd Edition),* 208

[71] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 93-96

The apostles have, as it were, deposited this truth in all its fullness in the depository [the apostolic tradition preserved in the church], so that whoever wants may draw from this water of life. This is the gate of life; all others are thieves and robbers.[72]

Thus, Irenaeus sets theology in a category of its own, and appears cautious of utilising other approaches.

Tertullian (160-220) was even more hostile to philosophy and famously wrote,

What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from the porch of Solomon, who had himself taught that the Lord should be sought with simplicity of heart. Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, dialectical composition. We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, we desire no further belief.[73]

Tertullian also argued that heresies took their weapons from philosophy. He said that Valentinus was a disciple of Plato, Marcion a Stoic, and the heresy that the soul is subject to death came from the influence of Epicurus.[74] Furthermore, "the denial of the resurrection of the body is found throughout the writings of all the philosophers".[75]

It is interesting to note, however, that Tertullian was influential in the employment of technical terminology to explain theological doctrines. He used terms like *trinitas* and *economy* and, while they were not necessarily original to him, his use of such terms was influential in bringing them into

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[72] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, II.ii.1-iv.1

[73] Tertullian, *On the Proscription of Heretics 7* (The Ante-Nicene Fathers 3:246)

[74] ibid.

[75] ibid.

the realm of orthodox theological vocabulary.[76] Some of these terms were already employed by

philosophers, thus Tertullian, even in his hostility, found a use for the philosopher's tools.[77] Indeed,

some scholars have classified Tertullian's approach being very much within the philosopher's camp:

> Tertullian was a Sophist in the good and bad sense of the term. He was in his element in
>
> Aristotelian and Stoic dialectics; in his syllogisms he is a philosophising advocate.[78]

Space does not allow for an evaluation of the above claim, but its very existence would suggest that

Tertullian's desire to keep Athens out of Jerusalem may be more qualified than his famous quote

suggests.

Thus, among the Church Fathers, the interaction between philosophy and theology varied from

enthusiastic synthesis to suspicious antithesis. Amidst such contrasting views, could a compromise

be found?

1.4   Augustine

Augustine (354-430) is a colossal figure in the history of Christian theology. He consolidated much

of the work of his predecessors, and he laid a foundation for centuries of further theological

reflection for those who came after him.[79] For the purposes of this study, he is also a key figure in

exemplifying how philosophy and theology can be brought together.

Augustine's personal spiritual journey rendered him well qualified for handling both theology and

philosophy. Raised by a Christian mother, he grew up to reject Christianity and was initially drawn to

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[76] B. B. Warfield, *Works (Vol 4) Studies in Tertullian and Augustine,* 14-15

[77] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol 1)*, 92

[78] Adolf Harnack, *The History of Dogma (vol 5),* 17

[79] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 108

the dualistic worldview of Manicheism whereby the principles of good and evil controlled the mind

and body respectively. However, having moved to Rome and Milan, he abandoned Manicheism (and

indeed would go on to write against it) and was attracted to Neoplatonism. This philosophy

convinced Augustine of spiritual reality and it gave him what he thought was an explanation of the

existence of evil; rather than being the work of a good God, evil was a privation. Thus, evil was the

consequence of humanity's actions, resulting in a lack of what was good, and the responsibility lay

not with God but with people. Up to this point in his life, Augustine had struggled to control his

sexual passion and moral conduct. Manicheism, which viewed the body as inevitably evil, gave

Augustine a convenient excuse for his moral lapses, but his move to Neoplatonism shifted the

burden of responsibility onto his own shoulders.[80] While in Milan, Augustine came under the

preaching of Ambrose of Milan (337-397), and became increasingly attracted to the intellectual truth

and reformed lifestyle offered by Christianity. His conversion finally came through a famous incident

whereby he came to read the words of Romans 13:13-14:

> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual
>
> immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,
>
> and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.[81]

Thus, having started with a Christian upbringing, Augustine experimented with Manicheism, he

sought for meaning in Neoplatonism, and he finally found rest in Christianity. He of course went on

to become arguably the greatest post-apostolic theologian the world has ever known. But this

converted philosopher did not altogether abandon his intellectual past. Rather, being "of a naturally

philosophical temperament"[82] he sought to use aspects of philosophy as an aid to his theological

study. He thus developed an epistemology in which faith and reason belonged together:

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[80] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 94-95

[81] Romans 13:13-14 ESV

[82] B. B. Warfield, *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine*, 23

[T]he laws of valid reasoning may easily be learnt in the schools, outside the pale of the

Church. But the truth of propositions must be inquired into in the sacred books of the

Church. . . . .

And yet the validity of logical sequences is not a thing devised by men, but is observed and

noted by them that they may be able to learn and teach it; for it exists eternally in the

reason of things, and has its origin with God.[83]

As the above quote shows, Augustine regarded reason and logic as a part of God's own ordering of

the universe. Therefore, such reasoning can legitimately be used by theologians.

However, Augustine also urged for caution:

If those who are called philosophers, particularly the Platonists, have said anything which is

true and consistent with our faith, we must not reject it, but claim it for our use, in the

knowledge that they possess it unlawfully. . . . . [P]agan learning is not entirely made up of

false teachings and superstitions . . . . it contains also some excellent teaching, and excellent

moral values. . . . . The Christian can therefore separate these truths from their unfortunate

associations, take them away, and put them to their proper use for the proclamation of the

gospel.[84]

Therefore, in the relationship between philosophy and theology, Augustine models a *via media*

between hostile suspicion and enthusiastic endorsement. This approach would go on to be

employed and developed in the scholastic theology of the later Middle Ages.

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[83] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine,* XXXII.50, in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers (Vol 2)* edited by Phillip Schaff, 551

[84] Augustine of Hippo, *de doctrina Christiana,* II.xl.60-61 in *Frolilegium Patristicum*, vol 29, ed. H. J. Vogels, Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1930. 46.7-36

1.5   Theology and Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Rise of Scholasticism

Following the death of Augustine and the collapse of the Roman Empire in western Europe in the 5th Century, two important educational developments arose which served as steps towards the emergence of scholasticism.

The first was in regard to the *content* of education. Of particular importance was **Boethius** (c. 480-524), a Roman statesman and philosopher who studied, translated and commented upon philosophical works, in particular those of Aristotle and the Neoplatonist Porphyry.[85] After being imprisoned by the Ostrogoth King, Theodoric, he wrote *On the Consolation of Philosophy,* which shows strong Platonic influence combined with Aristotelian consideration of cause and effect. In terms of education, Boethius also developed two key subject groups: the *Trivium,* made up of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic, and the *Quadrivium,* of music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. These two groups combined to form the Seven Liberal Arts which formed the basic structure of subsequent learning.[86]

The second development was in regard to the *location* of education. The rise of monasticism and the consolidation of the church as an established part of European society gave rise to a schooling system under the auspices of the church, as opposed to the Greek Academy which had existed outwith ecclesiastical structures. These monastic and cathedral *scholae* became increasingly important as centres of learning, and from them there would emerge the universities, such as Bologna and Paris, many of which were formed under the direct authorization of the papacy.[87]

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[85] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 124

[86] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 102-103

[87] Pace, E. ' Universities' In *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. n. p.

More of these universities began to appear towards the latter period of the Middle Ages.[88]   In the

context of these *scholae* there arose some thinkers who came to be known as *the Scholastics*.

1.5.1   Anselm

Born in Aosta, northern Italy, around 1033, Anselm (c.1033-1109) became a monk, and subsequently

prior, in Bec, France. While working there, he is said to have developed a formidable reputation as a

teacher.[89] In 1093 he was appointed archbishop of Canterbury.

Anselm marks a continuation of the Augustinian cooperation between faith and reason.   His

approach is summed up by the phrase *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding).

Indeed, the interrelationship between these two lies at the heart of his epistemology:

> For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For
>
> this also I believe,- that unless I believed, I should not understand.[90]

Interestingly, the above quote suggests that within this relationship, faith is prioritised as the key to

knowledge. However, for Anselm this focus on faith does not result in mystical irrationalism.

Indeed, in his famous work on the atonement, *Cur Deus Homo,* he appears to argue that reason can

function in isolation and independence in order to confirm doctrinal truth:

> From the theme on which it was published I have called it *Cur Deus Homo*, and have divided
>
> it into two short books. The first contains the objections of infidels, who despise the
>
> Christian faith because they deem it contrary to reason; and also the reply of believers; and,
>
> *in fine*, leaving Christ out of view (as if nothing had ever been known of him), it proves, by

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[88] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 102-103

[89] Alister E. McGrath*, Christian Theology,* 34

[90] Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion,* 2.

absolute reasons, the impossibility that any man should be saved without him. Again, in the

second book, likewise, as if nothing were known of Christ, it is moreover shown by plain

reasoning and fact that human nature was ordained for this purpose, viz., that every man

should enjoy a happy immortality, both in body and in soul; and that it was necessary that

this design for which man was made should be fulfilled; but that it could not be fulfilled

unless God became man, and unless all things were to take place which we hold with regard

to Christ.[91]

Thus, for Anselm understanding is found through faith, and although faith is not based on reason, it

can be vindicated and explained through reason. He wrote three key works, each of which exemplify

his faith/reason balance.

In *Monologion*, Anselm presents arguments for existence of God which are based on an analysis of

causation and hierarchical degrees of quality observable in creation.   Not surprisingly, this approach

is said to reflect Aristotelian influence.[92]

Anselm, however, was dissatisfied with *Monologion*, and sought to develop a single, independent

argument of the existence of God. His attempt, which came to be known as the Ontological

Argument, was outlined in his work *Proslogion* and is based on the premise that God is 'that than

which no greater thing can be thought'. This premise, according to Anselm, leads to the inevitable

conclusion that God exists:

For it is quite possible to think of something whose non existence cannot be thought of. This

must be greater than something whose non existence can be thought of. So if this thing

(than which no greater thing can be thought) can be thought of as not existing, then, that

very thing than which a greater thing cannot be thought is not that than which a greater

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[91] Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo,* Preface.

[92] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 134

cannot be thought. This is a contradiction. So it is true that there exists something than

which nothing greater can be thought, that it cannot be thought of as not existing. And you

are this thing, O Lord our God.[93]

This intriguing argument has stimulated much debate ever since. In terms of the

philosophy/theology interface, it would seem undeniable that Anselm is utilizing Platonic concepts

to prove the existence of the Christian God. Like Plato, he presupposes both the reality of a perfect

realm of being and the superiority of existence over non-existence. A further similarity with Plato

can also be seen in the dialogue style used by Anselm.[94]

It must be noted that Anselm's works reflected a strong devotional and meditative emphasis.

Nevertheless, his writings also displayed a number of characteristics that would go on to become

distinguishing features of the later Scholastic theologians, whose appearance was now imminent in

the great philosophy/theology narrative.

1.5.2   Realism and Nominalism

The Middle Ages also witnessed the intensification of the debate concerning universals. Fifteen

hundred years earlier, Plato had placed the reality of universals at the centre of his epistemology, as

expressed in his theory of Forms. Several Medieval thinkers, including Anselm, agreed that such

universals are real and their reality exists independently from the particular earthly embodiments

observable around us. As such, these thinkers are known as *Realists.* Others, however, disagreed

and argued that universals exist only in name. To them is given the title *Nominalist* from the Latin

nomina. Realism, Nominalism, or an attempt to find middle ground, would be an important

influence in the development of Scholastic Theology.[95]

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[93] Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion,* 3.

[94] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo,* which is structured around a dialogue between Anselm and Boso.

[95] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 107

1.5.3   Questions, Sentences and Translations

New approaches, both to method and style, emerged during the rise of Medieval Scholasticism. One method which grew in prominence was the *Quaestio*. A question would be raised, various viewpoints discussed, objections stated and responded to before an attempt was made to reach an answer "by means of philosophical reflection on the received truths of the faith".[96] An important influence in the development of this *Quaestio* approach was Peter Abelard, (1079-1142). His work *Sic et Non* (Yes and No) lists 158 questions with answers provided from the Church Fathers. It also contains an interesting comment in the prologue where Abelard names Aristotle as "the most clear-sighted philosopher of all".[97] This *Quaestio* method was also employed by Peter Lombard (1095-1161) whose four books of *Sentences* became a central part of the theological curriculum in the later Middle Ages.[98]

Along with the *Quaestio*, there arose the *Disputatio* wherein a problem was discussed by students and master according to a set form before being resolved by the master. These disputations became an important part of the Medieval university calendar.[99]

A further emerging feature of the pedagogy of this period was the lecture, which is said to have involved students reading a prescribed text before listening to a discourse delivered to a class.[100]

An additional historical development which contributed to the rise of scholasticism was the translation of Aristotle's works from Greek and Arabic into Latin. These Arabic translations had

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[96] ibid.*,* 103

[97] Peter Aberlard, *Sic et Non*, Prologue,

[98] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 143-144

[99] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 103

[100] ibid.

become available through the communication routes formed during the Crusades.[101]   Toledo

became a particularly important centre for translators. It was there that Gerard of Cremona

translated several of Aristotle's works from Arabic into Latin including *Posterior Analytics, Physics*

and *De Caelo et Mundo*.[102] These translations increased the availability of the Aristotelian corpus

and "provided the Latin Scholastics with a great wealth of intellectual material".[103]

Thus, by the latter stages of the Middle Ages the educational environment, the methodological

techniques and the academic resources were all in place ready to facilitate the rise of late Medieval

Scholasticism.

1.5.4   The Medieval Scholastics: Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus & William of Occam

When it comes to identifying and analysing the Medieval Scholastics, there is one name that clearly

stands out: Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).   Aquinas was born near Naples and joined the Dominican

order as a young man. He studied in Paris, notably under Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great, c.1200-

1280) who himself had written a commentary on Aristotle.[104] Aquinas went on to teach at Paris,

Rome, Naples and Viterbo.[105] He wrote extensively, his most famous work being *Summa Theologica*;

a vast collection of over five hundred theological questions, each of which is further sub-divided into

numerous articles. These articles pose a question followed by a list of objections. Aquinas then

resolves the question and answers each objection in turn. The structure is rigid, the content is wide

ranging and the detail of examination is meticulous.

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[101] William Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine (Vol 1),* 81

[102] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 2),* 205-206

[103] ibid., 208

[104] Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 139

[105] A. Vos, "Thomas Aquinas", in *New Dictionary for Theology,* 683

Aquinas, like other 13ᵗʰ Century theologians, grappled with the recent rediscovery and availability of Aristotle's works. Aquinas modelled a middle way between unquestioning acceptance of Aristotle and hostile rejection: "Aquinas welcomed what was true in Aristotle but systematically revised what he found to be inadequate or in error."[106] For example, Aristotle had taught that the world was eternal. Aquinas rejected this, both because the eternity of the world could not be proved by reason and because the reality of a beginning is explicit in Scriptural revelation.[107] Nevertheless, Aquinas did use Aristotelian logic to reach his conclusions, even if those conclusions were not the views of Aristotle himself:

> [In Aquinas] we find Aristotelian metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and moral philosophy
>
> forming a large part of an unmistakably Christian vision of the created world and of God.[108]

Aquinas drew a distinction between philosophy, for which human reason is sufficient, and sacred doctrine, which is dependent on God's revelation. He thus distinguished between truths of reason and truths of faith. For Aquinas, however, philosophy did not exclude theology, and thus the insights and methods of thinkers like Aristotle could be utilised by the theologian; philosophy thus became the gateway to theology.   However, the full revelation of sacred doctrine lay beyond the scope of isolated human reason:

> It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God
>
> besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is
>
> directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: "The eye hath not seen,
>
> O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee" (Is. 66:4).
>
> But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the

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[106] ibid.

[107] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 145

[108] Alexander Broadie, "Thomas Aquinas", in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 45

end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths *which exceed human reason* should be made known to him by divine revelation.[109]

Nevertheless, although this distinction brought a cautiousness to Aquinas's integration of philosophy and theology, it is clear that the influence of Aristotle runs strong through the writing of this great scholastic. An example of such influence is evident in Aquinas's famous Five Ways for proving the existence of God. These are as follows:

First, the Argument from Motion:

> For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. . . . Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.

Secondly, the Argument from Efficient Cause:

> . . . . But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.

Thirdly, the Argument from Possibility and Necessity:

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[109] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* 1.1.1 (emphasis added)

We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be

generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is

impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not.

Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been

nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence,

because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. . . .

Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own

necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This

all men speak of as God.

Fourthly, the Argument from Gradation:

Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble and the like. But

"more" and "less" are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their

different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as

it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is truest,

something best, something noblest and, consequently, something which is uttermost being.

. . . Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being,

goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.

Fifthly, the Argument from the Governance of the World.

We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is

evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best

result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now

whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some

being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the

archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to

their end; and this being we call God.[110]

These five arguments have provoked much examination and debate ever since. The key point for

this study is that the Aristotelian influence is unmistakable. Some of Aristotle's concepts are explicit,

such as 'potentiality', 'actuality' 'efficient cause' and 'first cause'. Moreover, other aspects of

Aristotelianism are clearly implied, such as the final cause to which all things are drawn towards as

employed in the fifth argument.

That is not to say, however, that the influence of other philosophers is absent. Indeed, Aquinas's

third way is said to be based primarily on the thinking of Avicenna (980-1037)[111], a Persian

philosopher, scientist and physician who was hugely influential in Islamic philosophy and who

formulated ontological distinctions between possible, impossible and necessary being.[112] (It should

be noted here, however, that Avicenna is also said to have come under Aristotelian influence).[113]

Furthermore, Aquinas's fourth way has a strong Platonic flavour, albeit synthesised with Aristotelian

causative theory.[114]

Another important feature of Aquinas's scholasticism was the utilization of distinctions in order to

analyse a particular topic. Thus, for example, alongside the various causative distinctions evident in

the Five Ways, when he discuss God's knowledge, Aquinas draws distinctions between

understanding and comprehension, and between proper knowledge, habitual knowledge and actual

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[110] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* 1.2.3

[111] Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God,,* 141

[112] Hossein Ziai, "Avicenna" in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 73

[113] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 2),* 190

[114] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 148

knowledge.[115] A further example is found in his discussion on the sacraments in which an Aristotelian distinction between form and matter is employed:

in the sacraments the words are as the form, and sensible things are as the matter.[116]

These distinctions are used for detailed analysis of theological topics in a logical and organised manner.

So in Aquinas the philosophy/theology relationship reaches a high point. This union is structured around the *Quaestio* style, it is built up by employing the distinction of concepts, and it is held together through logical argumentation. Yet at the same time, Aquinas never forgot the limitations of reason, and the sacredness of doctrine.

Later Scholastics, however, moved on from Aquinas's careful approach which aimed to keep philosophy under the guardianship of sacred doctrine. **John Duns Scotus** (c. 1266 – 1308) stepped towards separating faith and reason, with theology dealing only with that which is derived from supernatural revelation, whereas philosophy was concerned with all the matters arising from natural reason.[117] This is said to have led to "the emancipation of philosophy from its servitude to theology."[118] This led on to more speculative discussions, which later prompted the mockery of Erasmus who derided the Scholastics' "misspent hours in trash and babble".[119] Scotus himself is

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[115] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* 1.14.1-7

[116] ibid., 3.60.7

[117] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 136

[118] Frank Thilly and Ledger Wood, *A History of Philosophy,* cited in John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 155

[119] Erasmus of Rotterdam, *In Praise of Folly,* no page
https://www.gutenberg.org/files/30201/30201-h/30201-h.htm
29.12.2017

said to have "had a genius for speculations".[120] He also employed the use of distinctions, particularly the *distinctio formalis a parte rei.*[121]

The next step of the parting of ways between theology and philosophy came through **William of Occam** (c. 1300 – c.1349). Occam was opposed to realism, even in its modified forms found in Aquinas and Scotus. He argued that universals have no objective reality, they are merely terms describing a purely mental concept. For this reason, Occam's form of nominalism has been labelled 'terminist'.[122] For Occam, knowledge is found not in universals but in the realm of individual things.[123]

From this epistemological presupposition, Occam sought to focus in detail on particular things in order to gain understanding. This gave rise to his famous methodological tool: 'Occam's Razor', which sought to "choose the simplest solution to a problem, positing no more entities than necessary".[124] Thus in Occam one finds a proto-empiricism in which knowledge is primarily shaped by what can be perceived through focussed examination of a particular entity.

This compartmentalising gave rise to a deeper gulf between theology and philosophy. To Occam, theological truths are to be held by faith and on the basis of revelatory authority, not because they are grounded on reason "because it is not possible to infer the existence of what in not known, including the existence of God, from what is known".[125] But likewise, philosophy is autonomous, and no longer under the Thomist guardianship of 'Sacred Doctrine'.

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[120] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 136

[121] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Vol. 2),* 484

[122] A. Vos, "William of Ockham", in *NDT,* 723

[123] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 159

[124] ibid., 158

[125] A Vos, "William of Ockham", in *NDT,* 724

The implications of Occam's thought are the subject of debate. On the one hand, Occam's sharp division has been claimed to be responsible for the 'bankruptcy of Scholasticism'.[126] This viewpoint argues that Occam's approach served to undermine theology because it stripped the intellectual foundation from Christian doctrine. This left theology as simply a matter of (irrational?) faith which, it is claimed, prompted the rise of mysticism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[127] On the other hand, however, scholars argue that Occam's approach led to a more biblically focussed method. The separation of theology and philosophy and the 'razor' sharp focus on particular areas provided a method wherein theologians would focus on Scripture *alone*. For this reason, Occam is regarded as an important forerunner of the Reformation and the *Sola Scriptura* approach.[128]

Whether Occam's influence was harmful or not is a moot point. There is perhaps truth in both points of view above. It is surely ironic, however, that the Medieval period, whilst witnessing a great marriage between faith and reason in Aquinas, also very quickly saw a great divorce in the union between theology and philosophy.

1.6   Beyond the Middle Ages: Has Scholasticism Continued?

If the end of the Middle Ages sowed the seeds for a separation between theology and philosophy, the centuries since have born the fruit. The gradual convergence of theology and philosophy over the 1500 years from the Greeks to the Scholastics is replaced with a steady divergence as thinkers lost confidence in the attempt to bring theology and philosophy together.[129] During the Enlightenment, this gave rise to the Rationalism of thinkers like René Descartes (1596-1650) and

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[126] Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church,* 252

[127] ibid.

[128] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (Vol. 1),* 137

[129] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 165

Baruch Spinoza (1634-1677), and the Empiricism of John Locke (1602-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1753) and David Hume (1711-1776) although that latter two were strongly shaped by idealism[130] and scepticism[131] respectively. By the time of the Modern era, philosophy had become a predominantly secular endeavour, autonomous and independent from theology:

> So from a present-day perspective, the Christian dominance of philosophy in the Middle
>
> Ages and the Renaissance must be seen as a parenthesis between two periods (the ancient
>
> and the modern) in which philosophy is dominated by unbelief.[132]

However, despite the increasing estrangement between theology and philosophy, there was still some continuation of the relationship in the centuries after the Scholastics. This was the case on either side of the Protestant-Roman Catholic divide that occurred during the Reformation.

In terms of the Roman Catholic Church, the synthesis of philosophy and theology in Aquinas was to have lasting influence. In the Counter-Reformation, efforts were made to maintain loyalty to traditional scholasticism. This was evident, for example, in the work of Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Society of Jesus, more popularly known as the Jesuits. This group adhered strongly to Scholastic theology and is said to have regarded Aristotle as the supreme guide in terms of philosophy and Aquinas as the model of theological method.[133]   Furthermore, the Council of Trent framed its statement on justification according to several causal distinctions: the final cause,

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[130] D. W. Hamlyn, "Idealism, philosophical", in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 414

[131] Justin Broackes, "David Hume" in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 403

[132] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 177

[133] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power* (Vol. 2) *The Middle Ages*, 461

the efficient cause, the meritorious cause, the instrumental cause and the formal cause.[134] Such language is clearly Aristotelian and Thomist.

Moreover, in terms of the wider theology/philosophy narrative, the Roman Catholic Church produced several thinkers of note.   One example is René Descartes (1596-1650) who, while contributing significantly to the rise of Rationalism, was nevertheless committed to the Roman Catholic Church.[135] Another is Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), who, like Descartes, was a mathematician. He also had a keen interest in science and his work had a strong apologetic emphasis.[136] Interestingly, despite Pascal's mathematical genius, he was opposed to the predominantly rationalistic approach of Descartes. For Pascal, truth is not simply known through reason, but also through the heart.[137]

Later, in the 19th Century, there was revival of interest in Medieval Scholasticism among a group of Roman Catholic thinkers who came to be known as the Neo-Scholastics. This movement held the presupposition that philosophy does not change across history, therefore, the success of the Medieval scholastics in formulating a sound philosophical system means that their approach and methodology is of permanent value. However, the movement acknowledged that some aspects of medieval opinion, particularly in the realm of physics, are no longer held. Furthermore, new post-enlightenment intellectual challenges have arisen. Therefore, while the basic principles of scholasticism were valued, effort was made to apply these to a new, contemporary context. Key figures in this movement included Gaetano Sanseverino (1811-1865) and Giovanni Maria Cornoldi (1822-1892).[138]

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[134] *The Decrees of the Council of Trent,* Session 6 [1547], Decree on Justification, Chapter 7: What the justification of the ungodly is, and what its causes are.

[135] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 180

[136] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (vol. 4),* 153

[137] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* 110

[138] De Wulf, M. "Neo-Scholasticism". In The *Catholic Encyclopaedia*. n. p.

So the Roman Catholic Church clearly maintained a loyalty to scholasticism and to the integration of philosophy and theology. Indeed, even at the end of the 20th Century, the same emphasis was being made by Pope John Paul II:

> If it has been necessary from time to time to intervene on this question [that is, the relationship between faith and reason], to reiterate the value of the Angelic Doctor's insights and insist on the study of his thought, this has been because the Magisterium's directives have not always been followed with the readiness one would wish. In the years after the Second Vatican Council, many Catholic faculties were in some ways impoverished by a diminished sense of the importance of the study not just of Scholastic philosophy but more generally of the study of philosophy itself. I cannot fail to note with surprise and displeasure that this lack of interest in the study of philosophy is shared by not a few theologians.[139]

In terms of Protestantism, the relationship with Scholasticism was a little more complex.

Initially, the early contributors to the Reformation were scathing in regard to Medieval Scholasticism. Alongside the scorn of Erasmus noted above, Luther was also a vocal critic of the Scholastics. Indeed, just a month prior to posting his famous 95 theses, Luther wrote the lesser known 97 theses for his *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology* (September 1517). In preparing these, "he concluded after extensive reading in Aristotle that scholastic theology had been thoroughly corrupted by a misuse and misappropriation of Greek philosophy".[140]

However, the anti-scholastic bias of the Reformation should not be overstated. Despite the commitment to *Sola Scriptura,* there is evidence that the Reformers still retained a place for reason

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[139] Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter, Fides Et Ratio, Of The Supreme Pontiff, John Paul Ii, To The Bishops Of The Catholic Church, On The Relationship Between Faith And Reason,* 1998. n. p.

[140] James E. Dolezal , "Philosophy, Reason, And Righteousness In The Thought Of Martin Luther" , 82

in their method and they also used distinctions to explain their doctrines. For example, Luther's

famous reply to Eck at the Diet of Worms contains the phrase, "Unless I am refuted and convicted by

the testimonies of Scripture *or by clear reason...*"[141]

Regarding Calvin, Richard Muller writes:

> There are also numerous instances in which Calvin either appropriates a scholastic
>
> distinction without comment and incorporates it into his own theology or, to his credit,
>
> identifies the distinction as belonging to the older theology and its method and
>
> acknowledges its correctness and usefulness to his own thought.[142]

Muller cites several examples, one of which is Calvin's endorsement of the distinction between

necessity absolute and necessity of consequence.[143]

After the Reformation, the links between the Protestants and the Scholastics grew. Theodore Beza

(1515–1605), who succeeded Calvin in Geneva, is said to have honed and applied the Aristotelian

'four-cause' framework to his theology "in order to under-gird his supralapsarianism".[144] Indeed, it

has also been claimed that Beza, along with Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) and Girolamo Zanchl

(1516–1590), "incorporated new interpretations of Aristotelian metaphysics established by

Renaissance scholars into what seemed to be their own scholastic, and on occasion, Thomistic

understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology."[145] The utilization of Aristotle

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[141] Cited in Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (vol. 3),* 101 (emphasis added)

[142] Richard Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin,* 53

[143] John Calvin, *Institutes,* i.xvi.9

[144] David R. Anderson, "Another Tale Of Two Cities", 65

[145] Lynne Courter Boughton, "Supralapsarianism and the Role of Metaphysics in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology", 66

continued to be influential after the Reformation in Protestant theology, both Lutheran and

Reformed.[146]

In the same period, an important development in the theologian's utilization of philosophy came

through Petrus Ramus (1515-1572). He developed a method which sought to simplify concepts

through successive dichotomous divisions eventually resulting in basic, indivisible axioms.[147] These

could then be arranged into a diagrammatic presentation. Ramism, as this method came to be

known, would go on to be influential in Reformed educational circles, although not all embraced this

method, a notable example being Theodore Beza.[148]

The utilization of scholastic method among Reformed theologians then reached a high point in the

17th Century among continental theologians such as Gisbert Voetius (1589-1676), Francis Turretin

(1612-1687) and Herman Witsius (1636-1708). They employed a methodology that strongly

resembled both the style and approach of traditional scholasticism in order to explain Reformed

Theology and to counter challenges that arose within Protestantism, such as Arminianism and

Amyraldianism. Indeed, the 17th Century theologians also maintained many aspects of the content

of Medieval Scholastics' theology, perhaps most notably in terms of the doctrine of God which

continued largely unchanged in mainstream Protestantism. It should be noted, however, that

although the complementary interaction between theology and reason was embraced by Reformed

thinkers, it also became a source of controversy and heresy. Most notable perhaps is the rationalism

of the Socinians which rejected orthodox doctrines, such as the Trinity and the deity of Christ, on the

basis of reason.[149] Nevertheless, despite the fact that, in Socinianism, philosophy facilitated heresy,

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[146] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power, (Vol 4),* 33-34, 101-102

[147] R. W. A. Letham, "Petrus Ramus" in *NDT*, 557-558
    Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (vol. 3),* 102

[148] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (vol. 3),* 102

[149] See the *Racovian Catechism*, cited in Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (vol. 3),* 319

it was still a key tool in the hands of Reformed theologians. So much so, that men like Voetius and Turretin came to be known as the *Protestant Scholastics*.

So whilst it is true that theology and philosophy have parted ways in the centuries since the Medieval period, it is nevertheless the case that a line of continuity from the original Scholastics was maintained in both Roman Catholic and Protestant contexts. Indeed, in terms of the latter, key Reformed thinkers were known for their scholasticism. The question for this study, however, is whether that line of scholastic theologians includes William Cunningham.

However, before turning to that question in more detail, the above historical analysis has provided the material necessary for formulating of a working definition of scholasticism.

1.7   Scholasticism: A Working Definition

As the above analysis reveals, there are several factors that gave rise to the emergence of scholasticism and which contributed to the distinctive characteristics thereof. These will need to be adequately accounted for in a definition of scholasticism. Therefore, the following working definition will be based upon four contexts, each of which combine to explain the defining characteristics of what is known as scholastic theology.

First, scholasticism must be defined in the context of a **specific era**, namely the late Middle Ages. As the above historical analysis shows, the rise of scholasticism was the culmination of centuries of interaction between the realms of theology and philosophy. It was thus a phenomenon which originated in a particular chronological context. This need to locate the origins of scholasticism in a specific historical period has been recognised by scholars:

Scholasticism is best regarded as the medieval movement, flourishing in the period 1200 -

1500 which placed emphasis on the rational justification of religious beliefs and the

systematic presentation of those beliefs.[150]

This is a reminder that although scholasticism is primarily bound up with theology and philosophy,

that is not to the exclusion of history. Indeed, as the above survey shows, several historical

developments, such as the emergence of the *scholae*, the Crusades and the subsequent translation

of Arabic Aristotelian works, were crucial in contributing to the flowering of scholasticism in the late

Middle Ages.

Secondly, scholasticism must be defined in the context of an **educational setting**.   It is perhaps

obvious to reiterate that this is the reason why the term 'scholastic' has been used for the

theologians of this period. The rise of the Medieval *scholae* provided the setting which facilitated

the discussions and teaching techniques which were characteristic of scholasticism. Again, this

context of an educational setting has also been noted by historians defining scholasticism:

The formal university method of academic investigation, by a logical system of questioning

and listing data from the authorities, was called scholasticism, as the universities were

scholae.[151]

Indeed, the link to schools is so strong that many subsequent theologians, including Cunningham

himself, refer to the scholastic theologians as "the Schoolmen".[152]   It must be noted, however, that

such educational settings should not be regarded as an unprecedented development which is not

found before the late Medieval period. Several important teaching schools arose in the early Middle

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[150] Alister E McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction,* 68 (emphases original)

[151] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided,* 25

[152] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (Vol 1),* 413

Ages, such as the Cathedral School of York, of which the English monk Alcuin was head during the reign of Charlemagne, and long before then the Academies of the Greece flourished.[153]

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, scholasticism must be defined in the context of a **particular methodology.** Exploring this element of scholasticism highlights the importance of recognising that scholasticism is primarily referring to method, rather than content or dogmatic intention.[154] In other words, scholasticism must be defined as methodological rather than substantial. This is evidenced by the fact that theological schools which differ in substance, such as Roman Catholic and Protestant, can both be accurately described as scholastic. This methodological emphasis has been noted by numerous scholars. For instance, Frank James helpfully notes that the methodological approach of scholasticism is "not necessarily tied to a particular theological or philosophical viewpoint."[155] Likewise, Alister McGrath comments, "'scholasticism' does not refer to a *specific system of beliefs,* but to a *particular way of organising theology*."[156] Finally, Muller observes that "Scholasticism is rightly defined as a dialectical method of the schools."[157]

Within that theological method, several distinctive features are prominent. Questions, lectures and disputations all combined to fashion a style of teaching characterised by tight structure, intricate detail and consistent rigour. To some modern readers this approach may seem dry and impenetrable. To others such orderliness may greatly appeal. But to all, it is unmistakable.

However, in terms of precisely defining this scholastic methodology, there appears to be different nuances among different writers.

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[153] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (vol. 2)*, 60

[154] Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms,* 8

[155] Frank A. James III, "Peter Martyr Vermigli: At the Crossroads of Late Medieval Scholasticism, Christian Humanism and Resurgent Augustinianism" in *Protestant Scholasticism,* 70-71

[156] Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction,* 68 (emphases original)

[157] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin,* 42

On the one hand, many writers will define scholasticism predominantly in terms of a theological inquiry which draws heavily upon the methods of a particular thinker, usually Aristotle. Thus definitions emerge such as the following:

> The dominant philosophical system within scholasticism . . . adapted the scientific method of the pre-Christian Greek philosopher Aristotle for Christian theological purposes.[158]

Such understandings, with a focus on Aristotle, take their definition from the dominant school of thought in the later Middle Ages.[159] This school was characterised by extensive use of dialectic and metaphysical argumentation.[160]

Not everyone, however, focusses on Aristotle. Others cite Augustine as the dominant influence:

> Scholasticism is rightly defined as a dialectical method of the schools, historically rooted in the late patristic period, particularly in the thought of Augustine, and developed throughout the Middle Ages in the light of classical logic and rhetoric, constructed with a view to the authority of text and tradition, and devoted primarily to the exposition of Scripture and the theological topics that derive from it using the best available tools of exegesis, logic, and philosophy.[161]

In seeking to ascertain as to who was the dominant influence, it is important to remember the historical development across the Middle Ages. Early scholasticism was not exclusively Aristotelian; thinkers such as Anselm, are said to be led more by the Neoplatonism of Augustine than by

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[158] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided,* 25

[159] Another example of an Aristotle focussed definition is found in Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power, (vol. 4),* 466

[160] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (Vol 1),* 413

[161] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin,* 42

Aristotle.[162] However, as noted earlier, in the 13th Century Aristotle's influence came to the fore.[163]

However, this dominance of Aristotelian methods did not lead to the outright abandonment of

Augustinian thinking. Even Thomas Aquinas, a great utiliser of Aristotle's approach, did so without

discarding the key emphases of Augustine.[164] Either way, these influences shaped scholasticism into

"a highly developed method of presenting material, making distinctions, and attempting to achieve a

comprehensive view of theology."[165]

On the other hand, however, there are writers who seek to define scholasticism without making

direct connections to Aristotle, Augustine or indeed to any philosophy. For example, Adolf Harnack

defines scholasticism as follows:

> "Scholasticism is science, applied to religion, and – at least, till the time when it underwent
>
> self-disintegration – science setting out from the axiom that all things are to be understood
>
> from *theology*, and that all things therefore must be traced back to *theology*."[166]

Similarly, Carl Trueman writes:

> "Scholastic method does not demand a particular doctrinal or philosophical position; it is
>
> simply a basic way of arranging, investigating, and describing objects of study, which was
>
> developed in the schools (hence it is scholastic), and which demands no single philosophical
>
> or theological conviction."[167]

And Colin Brown also says:

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[162] Cornelius Van Til, *In Defense of the Faith: A Survey of Christian Epistemology*, 56-57

[163] ibid.

[164] ibid.

[165] Alister E McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction,* 68 (emphases original)

[166] Adolf Harnack, *The History of Dogma (Vol. 6),* 25-26 (emphases original)

[167] Carl Trueman, "Rage, Rage Against The Dying Of The Light", 11

"In a broad sense [the term Scholasticism] is used of the Medieval approach which combines

philosophical and theological speculation in order to attain deeper understanding of

Christian doctrine".[168]

These quotes indicate that some writers are clearly defining scholasticism more broadly, thus

expanding the functionality of the term beyond the confines of Aristotelian or Augustinian

methodology.

Therefore, while acknowledging the risk of over simplification, it would appear that in terms of

scholastic method, it is appropriate to say that two classes of definition are evident. Firstly, there is

a *narrow* definition which makes a direct link to a particular pre-scholastic thinker. Usually, though

not always, a connection is made between Aristotle and the dominant methodology of the late

Medieval period. Secondly, there is a *broader* definition, which is not confined to Aristotle,

Augustine or any other philosopher, and which understands scholastic method in more general

terms of organisation and systematizing.

That is not to say that these understandings are mutually exclusive. Indeed, the narrow definition

lies within the scope of the broad.   But in terms of preparing to explore any scholastic methodology

in Cunningham, the above analysis reveals two important points. First, it is clear that different

writers define 'scholastic' method in different ways, which means that if two writers apply the term

to Cunningham they are not necessarily referring to precisely the same thing. Secondly, any

evaluation of whether Cunningham was a scholastic will need to be careful to explain which

definition is being applied.

Fourthly, scholasticism must be defined in the context of a **wider meta-narrative.** This refers to the

ongoing interaction between theology and philosophy, which was already emerging in the days of

the New Testament, and which traces its theological source back to the Old Testament and its

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[168] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (vol. 1),* 102

philosophical origins back to Ancient Greece. Scholasticism is not an independent phenomenon, rather it is intricately bound up with a larger context.

Thus scholasticism can be defined in terms of its origins within a chronological context, in terms of its development within an educational context, in terms of its features as a theological method and in terms of its place within the wider context of the great theology/philosophy metanarrative.

Now, it must be noted that each of these contexts has exceptions and nuances. For example, in terms of method, Anselm used a dialogue framework rather than an abstract series of questions, and he had a strong devotional focus. Likewise, Harnack's assertion that scholasticism is science wherein all things are traced back to theology would seem to be true of Aquinas but not necessarily of Occam because he made a gulf, not a bridge, between faith and reason.   Indeed, the breadth and complexity of scholasticism will always leave a concise definition limited. This means that there will be varying degrees to which each context applies to a particular scholastic theologian, and therefore these contexts must be used with an element of flexibility.

But equally, a failure to account for each of these contexts can raise problems in terms of accurately defining scholasticism. If only one or two contexts are focussed on, pitfalls emerge. For example, in the methodological context, early thinkers like Justin Martyr used philosophy for theology, but it would be inaccurate to call them scholastic because they do not fit the chronological context. Likewise, Martin Luther taught in the context of an educational setting, but his method is not usually considered to be scholastic.   Therefore, while it is important to have an element of flexibility in terms of these four contexts, it is equally vital that these contexts are held together in order to provide a full and accurate definition of scholasticism.

The importance of a multi-contextual definition of scholasticism is reinforced by the fact that the combination of philosophy and theology in the Middle Ages was not a new phenomenon. As the above historical overview shows, theology and philosophy have been combined ever since the days of the New Testament. Thus it is only with additional details of a multi-context definition that the

particular features of scholasticism emerge in order to define this specific aspect of a much wider meta-narrative.

1.8   Cunningham and Scholasticism: A Framework for Analysis

The above working definition provides a criterion against which the extent of Cunningham's scholasticism can be assessed.   Furthermore, the fourfold context provides a framework for analysing the approach of Cunningham. Thus the remainder of this study will examine each of these contexts in turn in relation to Cunningham in order to answer the question: to what extent was William Cunningham a scholastic?

Chapter 2. Chronological Context: Cunningham and the Middle Ages

At first glance, to ask whether William Cunningham fits the chronological context of the late

Medieval period may seem strange. Cunningham was born in 1805, he was active in the mid-19th

Century, and he died in 1861. He lived in an age that was post-medieval, post-renaissance and post-

enlightenment. Therefore, if being a scholastic means being active in the Middle Ages, then

Cunningham definitely wasn't one. However, such reasoning is overly simplistic. Although

scholasticism originated in the Medieval period, that does not rule out continuity of the

phenomenon in subsequent ages. Furthermore, the connections that have been made between

Cunningham and scholasticism cannot be dismissed simply by saying that Cunningham is not a

scholastic because he lived in the wrong era. That would be to use the chronological context to

trump all other aspects of how scholasticism is defined, akin to saying that Cunningham cannot be a

Calvinist because he did not live in the mid-16th Century.

Nevertheless, the chronological context is still important and two questions warrant reflection. The

first is regarding the wider issue of the use of the term 'scholastic' in regard to post-medieval

theologians. The second is to explore what, if any, connections there may be between Cunningham

and the Middle Ages. The fact that Cunningham lived five hundred years after the close of the

Middle Ages does not necessarily mean that there is no connection between the Medieval period

and his own thought.   It is to these two questions that this chapter will turn.

2.1   Post-Medieval Scholasticism

As Chapter 1 noted, the origins of scholasticism lie in the Middle Ages as a specific era of

development in the relationship between theology and philosophy. However, the term scholastic

has been applied to many theologians in the centuries since, Cunningham himself being a clear example. How is this usage explained, and is it justified?

2.1.1   Post-Medieval Scholasticism: Continuity

The explanation for the application of the term scholastic to a post-medieval context is fairly straight forward. It arises from the fact that scholars have recognised a continuity in the approach employed by Medieval scholastics and subsequent theologians, as noted in Chapter 1. Recognition of such continuity is important, not least because it is a corrective against popular misconceptions, as Richard Muller explains:

> Protestants commonly assume that scholasticism represents a profoundly medieval and Roman Catholic phenomenon. Scholasticism is dry. It is a useless jumble of metaphysical issues totally unrelated to piety. It was set aside by the Reformation. It cannot be evangelical and, for Protestantism, is therefore rightly dead.   There can be only one complaint with this view of scholasticism. It is false.[169]

Muller goes on to justify this assertion by identifying theologians such as Francis Turretin, Peter van Mastricht and Edward Leigh as examples of such post-Medieval scholasticism. Indeed, elsewhere, Muller identifies positive connections between the methodology of John Calvin and that of Medieval scholastics, particularly Peter Lombard.[170] Muller is not alone; numerous other scholars, such as Carl Trueman, R. Scott Clark[171], Alister McGrath[172] and John Frame[173] have identified this continuity of scholastic method in post-Medieval theologians.

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[169] Richard A. Muller, "Giving Direction To Theology: The Scholastic Dimension", 183

[170] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin,* 39-52

[171] Carl Trueman and R. Scott Clark, 'Introduction' in *Protestant Scholasticism*, xviii

[172] Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology,* 169-172

[173] John Frame, *Doctrine of God,* 5

As noted in Chapter 1, this continuity of scholastic method is evident in both Roman Catholic and Protestant historical theology. On the Protestant side, the identification of those who maintained scholastic methods is helpfully captured in the widely used term 'Protestant Scholastics'.[174]

2.1.2   Post-Medieval Scholasticism: Change

It is important to note, however, that that alongside this continuity of scholastic method, there is also change. For a start, in the aftermath of the Reformation, theologians were now working in an ecclesiastical situation which was divided between Roman Catholic and Protestant factions. Scholasticism continued on both sides and, on each, various issues arose. So, for example, while the Protestants wrestled with the Arminian controversy, the Roman Catholic church grappled with the emergence of Jansenism. Meanwhile, the rise of the Enlightenment brought new challenges to all. Therefore, while there is continuity between the approach of Medieval and post-Medieval scholastic theologians, the historical circumstances meant that the latter were living in changed days.

Cunningham himself recognised this when he observed that historical developments subsequent to the Middle Ages necessitated a recourse to scholastic distinctions and phraseology.[175] Cunningham's perspective of continuity and change is echoed in the more recent work of Richard Muller, who speaks of Calvin's connections to scholasticism in terms of "relation and disjunction".[176] Indeed, as noted in Chapter 1[177], Calvin himself endorsed scholastic method when attempting to frame his own thoughts regarding the concept of necessity:

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[174] Carl Trueman and R. Scott Clark, 'Introduction' in *Protestant Scholasticism*, xviii

[175] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 418

[176] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin,* 39-52

[177] See section 1.5

> We see that there was good ground for the distinction which the Schoolmen made between necessity, *secundum quid,* and necessity absolute, also between the necessity of *consequent* and *of consequence.*[178]

Thus, after the close of the Middles Ages, new questions, disputations and challenges arose during the Reformation and in the generations following. These provided new situations in which the methodological patterns of the Medieval scholastics could be applied.

Therefore, although the origins of scholasticism lie in the Middle Ages, the phenomenon itself is not confined to this period. Consequently, it is appropriate to use the term to classify post-Medieval theologians whose work exhibits a relation to the methodological features of Medieval scholasticism. It is also helpful to classify theologians connected to the Reformed tradition with the term Protestant so that they are distinguished from the scholastic continuity in Roman Catholicism.

In practical terms, Cunningham gives a simple but helpful example. Like Calvin, he refers to the Medieval scholastics as 'the schoolmen' but he applies the term 'scholastic' more widely to also include later Protestant theologians. Thus Cunningham reminds his readers that the origins of scholasticism lie with the Medieval schoolmen, but the theological concept of scholasticism has continued in the centuries since. So, while Muller is no doubt correct to say that many people wrongly assume scholasticism to be dry, dead and non-Reformed, Cunningham demonstrates his accurate grasp of the relationship between Medieval and post-Medieval theologians by not making the same mistake.

The question of course remains as to whether Cunningham himself is part of this Protestant Scholastic tradition.

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[178] John Calvin, *Institutes,* I.XVI.9

2.2   Cunningham and the Middle Ages

Evaluating the extent to which Cunningham can be categorized as a scholastic will involve moving on to examine Cunningham's relationship to the other three contexts in which scholasticism has been defined in Chapter 1. However, before doing so, it is worth exploring Cunningham's own analysis of the Medieval schoolmen and to explore whether his work in this area has caught the attention of modern writers.

2.2.1   Cunningham's Analysis Of Medieval Scholasticism

In *Historical Theology,* Cunningham devotes a chapter to Medieval scholasticism.[179] He begins by defining scholastic theology as follows:

> "The leading feature of the scholastic theology, or the theology of the schools and the schoolmen, as they are called, was the application of the metaphysics and dialectics of Aristotle to the subject of theology."[180]

Clearly, this statement would fall in line with the *narrow* definition of scholastic method outlined in Chapter 1. Furthermore, early in his analysis, Cunningham makes the important observation that scholasticism is indeed primarily concerned with theological method:

> "The general object of the schoolmen was to exhibit the substance of Christian truth in a systematic and connected order,- an object of undoubtedly the highest importance, and constituting indeed, when rightly accomplished, the crown completion of the study of theology as a science."[181]

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[179] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (Vol 1),* 413-425

[180] ibid*.,* 413

[181] ibid*.,* 414

However, Cunningham quickly moves on to point out that the work of the Medieval schoolmen has been hampered by three fundamental defects. These can be summarized under three headings: Approach, Content, and Outcome

Approach: According to Cunningham, the Medieval scholastics did not employ a right standard for ascertaining the meaning of scriptural statements. The schoolmen followed the long established practice of resolving theological disputes, not by examining scripture and seeking to understand its meaning but rather by appealing to tradition, the Fathers and the decrees of popes and councils.[182] This leaves Cunningham lamenting "the almost total absence of strictly theological method"[183] in the approach of the schoolmen.

Content: To Cunningham, the content of the schoolmen's analyses was often unsatisfactory. Indeed, Cunningham bluntly criticizes the discussion of useless, unprofitable, unanswerable and impractical questions.[184] Cunningham acknowledges no lack of mental ability on the part of some schoolmen, but their creation of endless distinctions and their pursuit of subtle (and at times incomprehensible) questions reflect a utilization of erroneous principles of investigation.[185] But that is not to say that Cunningham is frustrated by all topics of the schoolmen's thought. For example, he acknowledges the usefulness of Aquinas's works in the defence of Augustinianism.[186]

At this point Cunningham makes an important point in regard to theological method. In observing the schoolmen's tendency towards unbounded questioning, Cunningham reminds his readers of the importance of realistic limitations:

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[182] ibid., 414-415

[183] Donald Macleod, *Behold Your God,* 225

[184] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (Vol 1),* 415

[185] ibid*.,* 415-416

[186] ibid*.,* 423-424

"When any question is proposed to us, the first enquiry that should suggest itself is, whether there be, indeed, any standard by which it can be tried – any available materials by which it may be decided in one way or another. The schoolmen never seemed to have entertained the question of setting the limits between what could be known and decided, and what could not; and in their ordinary practice it is certain that they entirely disregarded it."[187]

In fact, Cunningham himself exemplifies this principle of not asking the unanswerable. For example, in *Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity,* he repeatedly acknowledges the impossibility of explaining every mystery associated with that subject.[188] He makes the same observation in regard to the controversy between supralapsarians and infralapsarians; a question which, according to Cunningham, "runs up into topics which lie beyond the reach of our faculties, and which are not made known to us in Scripture."[189]

Outcome: Cunningham also expresses his disappointment with the results of such scholastic enquiry. For Cunningham, the end goal of theological enquiry is always important. Students of theology are aiming "to promote the glory of God in the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints."[190] Therefore, the exploration of subtle, speculative and unanswerable questions will inevitably prove unsatisfactory.[191]

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[187] ibid., 416

[188] William Cunningham, *Reformers,* 472, 473, 479

[189] ibid.*,* 360

[190] William Cunningham, *Theological Lectures*, 50

[191] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 417

These complaints raised by Cunningham lead him to the conclusion that Medieval scholastic theology is limited in its usefulness for the highest aims of theology, namely, "establishing scriptural truths on a firm foundation, and exposing anti-scriptural errors by satisfactory arguments."[192]

However, Cunningham's analysis is not all negative. He argues that one should not dismiss the labours of the schoolmen outright, and he gives various reasons why. He acknowledges the value of studying this period as an important era in the history of theological science. He suggests that study of the schoolmen can help in the avoidance of practical errors. He recognises the influence of the schoolmen in shaping the manner in which theological study has subsequently been carried out. Indeed, Cunningham states that the distinctions introduced by the schoolmen are actually quite useful.[193]

It is this final point which is the most significant since it is from this that Cunningham goes on to map the influence of scholastic methodology. In doing so, he demonstrates historical awareness by acknowledging that the Reformers did not make much use of scholastic distinctions or phraseology.[194] (That of course remains a moot point, for although the Reformers criticised the schoolmen, as Richard Muller has shown, the distinctions of the schoolmen were not altogether absent from Calvin's work.[195]) Cunningham then suggests that when difficult topics emerged for subsequent Protestant theologians, "it was found necessary, if these topics were to be discussed at all, to have recourse to a considerable extent to scholastic distinctions and phraseology; and it was also found that the use and application of scholastic distinctions and phraseology were fitted to

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[192] ibid., 417

[193] ibid., 417

[194] ibid.,, 418

[195] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin,* 39-52

throw some light upon questions which otherwise would have been still darker and more perplexed than they are."[196]

Cunningham cites Francis Turretin as a model of such useful employment of scholastic terminology. For Cunningham, Turretin's work is of "inestimable value".[197] However, for such value to be appreciated familiarity with scholastic distinctions is necessary and profitable.

So, for Cunningham, there appears to be a negative and positive tension in the evaluation of Medieval Scholasticism. Negative, due to the obscure content of the schoolmen's works. Positive, because the tools developed in this period have gone on to be employed by post-Reformation Protestant Scholastics. Cunningham's general approach to these issues appears to be duly cautious; he avoids the heavy handed dismissal of scholasticism which was at times displayed by Luther,[198] while at the same time recognising that the schoolmen are not to be followed unquestionably. However, at this point Cunningham's analysis leaves the interested reader a little frustrated. This is because, although he gives examples of the schoolmen's defects and the implications of such for the Church of Rome, Cunningham does not furnish his readers with examples of what he regards as helpful scholastic distinctions and terminology. Indeed, while praising Turretin's effective use of the scholastic toolkit, he does not identify the specific terminology or distinctions to which he is referring. This omission is regrettable in an otherwise helpful examination of Medieval Scholasticism. It should be noted however that wider reading of Cunningham does provide examples of what he regards as helpful distinctions. For instance, in discussing Zwingli and the doctrine of the sacraments, Cunningham writes:

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[196] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 418

[197] ibid.*,* 419

[198] Martin Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology", cited in Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations Sourcebook,* 28

> Upon the subject of the necessity of the sacraments, Protestant divines have been
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> accustomed to employ a distinction, which, like many other scholastic distinctions, brings
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> out very clearly the meaning it was intended to express, viz., that the sacraments are
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> necessary, *ex necessitate praecepti non ex necessitate medii.*[199]

Cunningham's work on medieval scholasticism reveals two key points. Firstly, his analysis shows

that he distinguishes between method and content in the work of the schoolmen, and regards the

former as of greater importance in defining scholasticism. This places Cunningham in harmony with

the views found in current historical theologians, such as Richard Muller.[200] Secondly, he recognises

that the influence of scholasticism has had an ongoing effect on Reformed Theology, thus evidencing

a concern for understanding how the theological methods of one era have influenced subsequent

periods.

2.2.2   Perspectives on Cunningham and the Middle Ages

Cunningham's links to the Medieval era are by no means the most prominent aspect of his works.

His attention was drawn much more towards the Reformation period, the Arminian and Socinian

Controversies, and the ongoing ecclesiastical conflicts of the 19th Century. However, it is very

interesting that Cunningham's work on the Middle Ages has not gone unnoticed among recent

writers. Two examples are noted below, one positive, the other negative.

First, in the preface to the second volume of Nick Needham's multi-volume church history, *2000*

Years of Christ's Power, the author urges his readers not to approach Medieval church history with a

negative prejudice that simple regards this period as 'The Dark Ages'. That, of course, is a

perspective held by some today that cannot be assumed to have been shared by those who lived

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[199] William Cunningham, *Reformers,* 235

[200] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin,* 45

during the period. To reinforce this point, Needham quotes directly from three famous Reformed

thinkers: Philip Schaff, Charles Spurgeon and William Cunningham, who is introduced as "Scotland's

greatest Reformed theologian of the 19th Century".[201] The quotation from Cunningham is not given

a full reference by Needham, but it is taken from *Historical Theology (Vol 1)* page 387, where

Cunningham highlights that despite his doctrinal disagreement with many aspects of Medieval

theology, the period nevertheless contained many individuals who were not to be dismissed as

idolaters but rather they were "deeply impressed with a sense of the glory of God and the all-

sufficiency of Christ."[202] Thus here is an example of a modern historian using Cunningham's analysis

of the Middle Ages to reinforce a key element of his own approach. Therefore, links between

Cunningham and the Medieval era continue to be influential.

Secondly, the links between Cunningham and the Medieval era are briefly critiqued by Joel Beeke in

his chapter on William Cunningham in *Historians of the Christian Tradition,* edited by Michael

Bauman and Martin Klauber. As part of his analysis, Beeke suggests that Medieval scholasticism is

an area of weakness in terms of Cunningham's own knowledge. He states that a comment made

concerning Thomas Aquinas implies that Cunningham had seldom perused his works.[203] Wider

investigation reveals that this statement echoes a comment made by the historians Drummond and

Bulloch in *The Church in Victorian Scotland,* who imply that this weakness demonstrates that there

were gaps in Cunningham's scholarship.[204] The two quotations are as follows, beginning with

Drummond and Bulloch:

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[201] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (vol. 2) ,* 11

[202] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 387

[203] Joel R. Beeke, "William Cunningham", 215

[204] Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland,* 17

There were gaps in Cunningham's scholarship. A comment on St Thomas Aquinas suggests

that he [Cunningham] had never seen the works of the man he was discussing.[205]

Meanwhile Beeke writes:

"There are some significant gaps in his [Cunningham's] scholarship . . . A comment on

Thomas Aquinas, for example, implies that Cunningham had seldom perused his works."[206]

Although Beeke does not reference them, the similarities between these statements would suggest

that Beeke's comment is drawn from reading Drummond and Bulloch. This is also supported by that

fact that both works cite the same page in Cunningham's *Historical Theology* as the source of the

offending comment.

However, this suggestion of a lack of familiarity with Aquinas appears to be a most perplexing

observation. This is due to that fact that if one turns to the page referred to in *Historical Theology,* it

is very hard to identify the comment which Drummond and Bulloch claim to have identified.[207] The

page does not appear to contain any phrases that give this impression. Moreover, the preceding

page gives a most helpful summary of the contents of Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, which would

surely imply the very opposite of what Beeke, Drummond and Bulloch are suggesting.[208] It appears

possible that Beeke's analysis has been influenced by Drummond and Bulloch into making a

somewhat arbitrary and inaccurate comment, and one which certainly does not verify the claim that

there were 'significant gaps' in Cunningham's knowledge. [209]

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[205] ibid.

[206] Joel R. Beeke, "William Cunningham", 215

[207] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 424

[208] ibid.*,* 423

[209] There is also the possibility that both Beeke and Drummond and Bulloch were both citing a third, unidentified, source independently of each other. However, this is less likely given that a separate reference to Drummond and Bulloch in Beeke's work (on page 221) reveals that in researching his chapter Beeke has read *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843 – 1874.*

It would therefore appear that these claims against Cunningham are unjustified. But, whether justifiable or not, the above issue is evidence that Cunningham's links to the Medieval period has prompted discussion in recent scholarship.

2.3   Chronological Context: Was Cunningham a scholastic?

Consideration of the chronological relationship between Cunningham and the Medieval Scholastics has revealed three important points.

First, and in general, the above analysis has highlighted the importance of distinguishing between origins and development in terms of a theological movement such as scholasticism. The origin of scholasticism lies with the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, but since then there has been a historical development which has seen aspects of scholastic methods continue in the changing circumstances of subsequent generations. This distinction between origin and development is recognised by Cunningham.

The fact that scholasticism continued in both the Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions has meant that the addition of the qualification 'Protestant' is important for clarification of the ecclesiastical context of post-Medieval theologians. Cunningham's own day is an example of the potential for confusion. This is because any scholasticism which Cunningham or his colleagues may have displayed is concurrent with a revival in scholastic interest among the neo-scholastics in the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, to classify Cunningham and a theologian such as Sanseverino simply as scholastics may fail to account for the differences between the theological contexts of the two.

Secondly, the above analysis has shown that many of Cunningham's concerns and emphases in regard to Medieval scholasticism and subsequent developments are in substantial agreement with

current thinkers such as Richard Muller. This is surely a positive testimony to the accuracy of Cunningham's own observations and highlights the ongoing relevance of his analysis to this day.

Thirdly, it is clear that Cunningham's own work on the Medieval period has not gone unnoticed. Therefore, Cunningham has indeed had an influence, albeit small, in terms of how the Middle Ages have been studied in subsequent years.

All this means that exploring the chronological context of Cunningham's scholasticism is not as strange as it may have first appeared. It has highlighted important points, both concerning Cunningham himself and in regard to the study of the historical development of scholastic-influenced theology.   However, the extent to which Cunningham himself was a scholastic cannot be determined simply in terms of era. It is necessary, therefore, to move on to the next context in which scholasticism is defined: an educational setting.

Chapter 3. Educational Context: Cunningham and the School

As noted in Chapter 1, Medieval scholasticism arose in the midst of the development of educational facilities during that period, a fact permanently memorialized in the term 'scholastic'. Men like Lombard, Aquinas and Duns Scotus all taught in an educational setting. Likewise, key post-Medieval scholastic theologians taught in Universities. For example, on the Protestant side, Theodore Beza and Francis Turretin both taught in the Geneva Academy.[210] Among Roman Catholics, Gaetano Sanseverino was professor in Naples.[211] Therefore, as reflected in Chapter 1's definition, a characteristic of being a scholastic would be a connection to an educational setting.

The consequential question, therefore, is whether this is true of Cunningham; did he work in an educational context? The answer to that is an unequivocal yes. In 1844, he was chosen to be Professor of Theology at the newly established New College. A year later, he transferred to the chair of Church History, and following the death of Thomas Chalmers in 1847, Cunningham succeeded him as Principal, a role he held until his death in 1861.[212] Thus, in the context of an educational setting, Cunningham's teaching role qualifies him for this aspect of Chapter 1's definition of scholasticism.

But that, of course, cannot be a definitive statement on Cunningham's scholasticism. In reality, this observation does little more than rule out the possibility of dismissing Cunningham's scholasticism on the basis of him not actually having a role in a *schola.* Clearly, he did have such a role, and therefore the continuity of educational position found in the Medieval scholastics and the Protestant

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[210] I. McPhee, "Theodore Beza" in *NDT,* 91
James T. Dennison Jr, "The Life and Career of Francis Turretin", in Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, (vol. 3),* 645

[211] Benigni, U. (1912). Gaetano Sanseverino. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.. n. p. Cited January 25, 2018. Online:: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13453a.htm

[212] Donald Macleod, "William Cunningham" in *DSCHT,* 229

Scholastics extends to Cunningham. But neither is the above observation suggesting that any higher education lecturer is a scholastic. To do so would be to generalize the term to the point of ineffective ambiguity. Therefore, further questions need to be asked in terms of the relationship between Cunningham's educational setting and the extent to which it is appropriate to describe him as a scholastic. Two issues are of particular importance and will be discussed in this chapter. One is whether or not Cunningham's scholasticism made him stand out from among his contemporaries. The other is to explore what contemporary influences may have shaped Cunningham's own approach to his role as a theological educator.

3.1   Cunningham and Contemporary Scholars

Writers have suggested that Cunningham's scholasticism was a feature which distinguished him from his contemporaries. As noted in the introduction, Cunningham was described by James MacGregor as "the *scholastic* of his party."[213] Likewise, Michael Honeycutt suggests that Cunningham "clearly enjoyed being regarded as 'the scholastic' of the Free Church."[214] To Stewart J. Brown, narrow and rigid scholasticism is a key feature to highlight when introducing his readers to Cunningham.[215] Such comments are intriguing and suggest that, to writers like these, Cunningham stood out as a scholastic among his peers. But the question arises: is this true? To find an answer, the following section will briefly compare Cunningham to other key 19th Century figures in the Free Church before then considering figures from the wider ecclesiastical scene in which Cunningham lived.

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[213] James MacGregor, "Dr William Cunningham", in *British Foreign Evangelical Review* xx (1871), 768 (emphasis original)

[214] Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies"*,* 281

[215] Stewart J Brown, "The Disruption and the Dream: The Making of New College 1843 – 1861", 43

3.1.1   Cunningham and other Free Church Scholars

The Free Church was home to many gifted theologians in the 19th Century, thus there is a catalogue of famous names from which this study must make a selection. Perhaps the most obvious comparison to start with is between Cunningham and his predecessor as New College Principal, Thomas Chalmers. Cunningham himself was a divinity student at Edinburgh University when Chalmers was appointed as Professor of Divinity in 1828, an appointment which Cunningham keenly anticipated as bringing in a "bright era in the history of our Church".[216] Chalmers was thus not simply a colleague of Cunningham, he had a formative role in educating the young Cunningham, therefore similarities would surely be expected.

However, despite this, it has been suggested that Chalmers stands in contrast to Cunningham in terms of their interest in dealing with traditional, abstract theological questions.[217] Thus, John Roxborough writes:

> "If theology is mostly about dialogue with those exercised by a set of classic questions, then Cunningham in particular had abilities that Chalmers never developed – or it might be better to say that Cunningham was interested in things Chalmers believed were a waste of time."[218]

Alongside this comment, Roxborough also implies that Chalmers does not represent the same scholastic tradition as Cunningham.[219] In a similar vein, Stewart J. Brown portrays Cunningham as narrow and strict, in contrast to the broadminded visionary Chalmers.[220]

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[216] Mackenzie and Rainy, *The Life of William Cunningham,* 36

[217] John Roxborogh, *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission,* 229

[218] ibid.

[219] ibid.

[220] Stewart J Brown, "The Disruption and the Dream: The Making of New College 1843 – 1861", 43

There are indeed several areas where a contrast between Chalmers and Cunningham can be observed. For example, it has been suggested that Chalmers continued to employ a classical apologetic grounded in Natural Theology, whereas Cunningham was more inclined to acknowledge the limitations of Natural Theology and the importance of the witness of the Holy Spirit.[221] In the politics of the Ten Years' Conflict, it has been observed that Chalmers was not always in full harmony with the theology and ecclesiology of Cunningham, who is said to have been stricter and more zealously committed to non-intrusion.[222] Cunningham was part of a group of young evangelicals "who pressed Chalmers and other older Evangelical leaders not to compromise on fundamental principles."[223] And in terms of preaching, there are also evident differences between the two men. Chalmers's lecture on the 'The Hall and the Pulpit'[224] highlights his conviction that "there is to be observed a difference of treatment between the congregation and the classroom."[225] In particular, Chalmers asserts that the pulpit is not the place for spending time proving the truth of Christian doctrines:

> There is no practical necessity for lengthening out the formal proof of a doctrine in the pulpit . . . It really is not half, it is not a tenth part of the business of a sermon to establish any proposition in Christianity as mere dogma ,and leave it thus.[226]

Chalmers goes on to say:

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[221] Donald Macleod, "Bavinck's Prolegomena: Fresh Light On Amsterdam, Old Princeton, and Cornelius Van Til", 263

[222] Stewart J. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth,* 218, 303, 311

[223] Stewart J. Brown. "The Ten Years' Conflict", in *Scotland in the Age of Disruption,* 13

[224] Full title "Lecture V: On the Distinction between the mode in which Theology should be learned at the hall and the mode in which it should be taught from the Pulpit". Thomas Chalmers, *Institutes of Theology* (Vol. 2), 473

[225] Thomas Chalmers, *Institutes of Theology (Vol. 2),* 475

[226] Thomas Chalmers, *Institutes of Theology (Vol. 2),* 474

It is not necessary to expend time in the establishment of a doctrine, if their minds be

already established in the truth of it. And the plain reason why we grudge unnecessary time

in argumenting the truth of the doctrine, is, that really there is too much else to do with it.

You have to urge the truth upon their consciences. . . . If the doctrine, for example, be the

Divinity of Christ, you may therefrom expatiate on the worth of the sacrifice, and so hush

the alarms of a guilty bosom.[227]

However, Cunningham's own approach to preaching does not seem to adhere to Chalmers' advice. For example, in a sermon on Matthew 28:19 Cunningham begins by stating that, "It may therefore be proper and expedient to offer a brief statement of the Doctrine [of the Trinity] as it is presented to us in Scripture".[228] And he proceeds to do just that.

Furthermore, as noted above, Chalmers cites the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ as a truth which preachers do not need to address in the pulpit in the same way as they would in the classroom. However, Cunningham's approach to this doctrine is to do almost the complete opposite of what Chalmers instructs. In *Historical Theology,* there is a record of how Cunningham addressed the subject of Christ's divinity in the classroom setting. In doing so he classifies the Scriptural evidence for the divinity of Christ under the following headings: Divine Names and Titles, Divine Qualities and Attributes, Acts or Works ascribed to Christ which are the prerogative of divinity, and finally Divine Worship to which Christ is entitled.[229] Comparing this to a sermon that Cunningham preached reveals a striking similarity:

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[227] Thomas Chalmers, *Institutes of Theology (Vol. 2),* 480

[228] William Cunningham, *Sermons,* 89

[229] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (Vol. 2),* 217-218

> The proofs of [Christ's] Divinity, from the statements of Scripture, are commonly ranged under several classes, such as Divine Names, Divine Attributes, Divine Works, Divine Relations, and Divine worship ascribed to Him.[230]

Thus it appears to be evident that several contrasts can be drawn between Chalmers and Cunningham.

Therefore, there is truth in the observation that Chalmers and Cunningham differed. Indeed, it is perhaps the case that Chalmers had interests that were not shared by Cunningham. However, it would nevertheless be an injustice to imply that Cunningham had no concern for applying theology to the real world. There is much evidence to suggest the opposite: Cunningham had a great interest in popular issues, such as national education[231] and the abolition of slavery,[232] and his great conviction was that theological study must always be *useful*.[233] However, aside from whether Chalmers or Cunningham were different in terms of vision or interests, the important question for this study is whether they were different in their approach to education.

Investigation of this question brings the interesting discovery that Chalmers' own works in an educational context display evidence of the very same detailed philosophical/theological approach associated with Protestant scholasticism. Indeed, Cunningham's record of Chalmers' first lecture recounts that "it contained a general view of the subjects and divisions of theological science, and *a view of the general principles of philosophic investigation, as applicable to theology*."[234] Moreover, in general in works such as *Evidences of Christianity,* not only does Chalmers attempt organised

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[230] William Cunningham, *Sermons*, 94

[231] Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies"*,* 154-155

[232] ibid., 172

[233] William Cunningham, *Theological Lectures*, 3

[234] Mackenzie and Rainy, *The Life of William Cunningham,* 37 (emphasis added)

theological discussions, he also appears to openly advocate the employment of inductive philosophy as a valid theological method:

> The application of Lord Bacon's [inductive] philosophy to the study of external nature was a happy epoch in the history of physical science. It is not long since this application has been extended to the study of moral and intellectual phenomena. All that we contend for is, that our subject should have the benefit of the same application; and we count it hard while, in every other department of inquiry, a respect for truth is found sufficient to repress the appetite for system-building; that theology, the loftiest and most inaccessible of all the sciences, should still remain infected with a spirit so exploded and so unphilosophical; and that the fancy, and theory, and unsupported speculation, so current among the Deists and demi-infidels of the day, should be held paramount to the authority of facts, which have come down to us with a weight of evidence and testimony, that is quite unexampled in the history of ancient times.[235]

Thus, if Cunningham is opposed to unphilosophical theology, then he is simply echoing the conviction of Chalmers.

Moving on to other colleagues of Cunningham, a similar situation is found. George Smeaton (1814-1889), whose methodology was primarily exegetically based, nevertheless employed abstract distinctions to analyse topics, such as the distinction between subjective and objective necessity and between punitive and remunerative justice. Moreover, in what could be likened to a *disputatio* style, Smeaton engages with the objections of others in the course of his analysis.[236]

Robert Candlish (1806-1873), in his work *Reason and Revelation*, endorses the approach to Scripture that allows the Bible to stand on its own claims to be the Word of God and for it to be assessed in

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[235] Thomas Chalmers, *The Works of Thomas Chalmers (vol. 1: Evidences of Christianity),* 159-160

[236] George Smeaton, *Christ's Doctrine of the Atonement*, 25-39

terms of its internal coherence and its connection to evidence of it being a divine revelation. To

Candlish,

> [This] is the only fair and legitimate method still; at least, if the sound and cautious principles
>
> of the Baconian logic, or the inductive philosophy, are to have any weight in the province of
>
> religious belief.[237]

Candlish, who like Cunningham appears to be echoing the sentiments of Chalmers, is writing this in

response to new approaches to Scripture from theologians, such as Schleiermacher, which he

describes as a "subtle sort of refined mysticism . . . in which nothing is clear, nothing distinct or

defined."[238] Clearly, Candlish appears to value detail, precision and logic in his methodology.

The point highlighted by the above examples is that any simple conception of Cunningham as the

odd-one-out scholastic amongst his colleagues is undermined by the evidence. Indeed, it has been

noted by John Roxborogh that Cunningham typified scholastic Calvinism alongside George Smeaton

and James Bannerman.[239] Of course, the above analysis is too brief to fully evaluate whether it is

appropriate to classify men like Chalmers, Smeaton and Candlish as Protestant scholastics. The key

point suggested is simply that in terms of utilizing philosophy in theology, employing distinctions and

disputing questions, whatever Cunningham was, he wasn't the only one.

3.1.2   Cunningham and the wider Theological Educational Context of the 19th Century

A similar trend is evident if the scope of analysis is broadened to other 19th Century theologians.

One example is John Henry Newman (1801-1890), with whom Cunningham famously sparred over

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[237] Robert Candlish, *Reason and Revelation,* 12

[238] ibid*.,* 12-13

[239] John Roxborogh, *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission,* 229

the question of the historical development of doctrine. Interestingly, in recent analysis of this controversy, the term 'scholastic' has been used to distinguish between Cunningham's approach and that of John Henry Newman. In reference to Cunningham, Todd Statham asks: "Were the categories of Reformed scholasticism at all appropriate to Newman's paradigm-shifting argument?"[240]

This is a valid and important question. The presuppositional differences between Cunningham and Newman are no doubt key to explaining their contrasting views.   Moreover, a point highlighted by writers such as Peter Toon notes that some of Cunningham's objections to Newman's essay were based on a critique of the latter's alleged failure to be logically consistent: [241]

> Mr. Newman has an ingenious and subtle, but not a very logical, mind, and he has taken no pains to explain the conditions and precise results of his argument, or to point out the exact way in which it stands related to, and bears upon, the general argument between Protestants and Romanists. He does not indeed claim, formally and in words, for his theory, more than, if fairly supported, it is entitled to; but, by failing to mark out its true place and logical relations, and in introducing many collateral topics, he has succeeded, to some extent, in conveying an impression, that he has achieved much more than, even if his theory were admitted, he could fairly be held to have accomplished.[242]

However, the fact that Cunningham criticises the standard of Newman's logic does not mean that Newman had no desire to be philosophically logical. Indeed, the very opposite is implied, and this is evidenced in Newman's own work:

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[240] Todd Statham, "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland", 12

[241] Peter Toon, *Newman's Essay on Development Revisited,* 53

[242] William Cunningham, 'Newman on Development' in *North British Review*, 5, 10 (August 1846), 418-453. Also available in William Cunningham, *Discussions on Church Principles,* 45-46

> A doctrine, then, professed in its mature years by a philosophy or religion, is likely to be a true development, not a corruption, in proportion as it seems to be the *logical issue* of its original teaching.[243]

Therefore, if scholars comparing Cunningham and Newman are implying that the former is a scholastic and the latter is not, then potential problems arise. This is because it is arguable that the characteristics of scholasticism applied to Cunningham can be equally be applied to Newman. Cunningham's objection is not that Newman's logic is absent, but that to him it is inadequate. Furthermore, quite apart from comparisons with Cunningham, the presence of scholastic methodology in Newman has been observed by historical theologians.   Alistair McGrath suggests that Newman himself was influenced by Aristotle in that Newman's development of the illative sense of moral judgement can be traced back to Aristotelian phronesis.[244] If McGrath is correct, then it looks like Newman was a scholastic too. Moreover, Newman's shift to the Roman Catholic Church would have surely involved a firm commitment to Aristotelian methodology given that this was the epistemological standard of Newman's new ecclesiastical surroundings.[245] As noted already, it was the Roman Catholic Church which saw the rise of Neo-Scholasticism in the mid-19th Century.

Another two brief examples can be offered, each from very different standpoints, both theologically and geographically. In Germany, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was developing a theology which responded to the philosophical influence of Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers. His work, which is often considered to be the foundation of what is known as 'liberal' theology, prioritized

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[243] John Henry Newman, *Essay on the Development of Doctrine,* 195 (italics original)

[244] Alister E. McGrath (ed.), *The Christian Theology Reader,* 33

[245] Cornelius Van Til, *In Defense of the Faith: A Survey of Christian Epistemology*, 56

corporate experience above doctrinal propositions.[246] To Candlish, this was 'refined mysticism' but it is certainly not the case that Schleiermacher's work was superficial or lacking scholarly detail. Indeed, it has been pointed out that Schleiermacher's approach still involved minute analysis and a dependence on secular philosophy.[247]

Later in the century, and across the Atlantic in the United States, A. A. Hodge (1823-1886) produced an extensive work entitled *Outlines of Theology.* This work comprises forty-three chapters on various topics, with each chapter systematically subdivided into numerous questions, echoing the question and answer framework evident in the Medieval and Protestant Scholastics.[248] Interestingly, this work of A. A. Hodge, and the *Systematic Theology* of his father Charles, have been described, along with other works, as a revival of Protest scholasticism:

> The great American system of theology that developed at Princeton Seminary during the mid-nineteenth century around the thought of Charles Hodge was, in its form and method, a revival and modernization of the Reformed orthodox scholasticism of the seventeenth century. In Charles Hodge's monumental *Systematic Theology* and in Archibald Hodge's *Outlines of Theology* and *The Atonement* the confessional stance of the Reformed churches provides the basic point of departure for theology while the more complex points of doctrine are referred to the arguments of Calvin, Ursinus, Turretin and De Moor. A similar method obtains in the *Lectures in Systematic Theology* developed by the Hodges' southern contemporary, Robert L. Dabney of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond.[249]

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[246] J. B Webster, "Friedrich Schleiermacher" *New Dictionary of Theology,* 619

[247] John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God,* 5-6

[248] See A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*

[249] Richard A. Muller, "Giving Direction To Theology: The Scholastic Dimension", 187

The above examples, both from within the 19th Century Free Church and in a wider context, all serve to indicate that many of the typical features of scholasticism are common phenomena. This would suggest that even if Cunningham was a scholastic, it is untenable to say that he was *the* scholastic in a unique sense. It is possible, therefore, that the term loses an element of specificity in describing what might be distinctive about Cunningham's thought.

3.2   Cunningham and Contemporary Influences

Alongside comparing Cunningham with contemporary theologians, it is also important to consider how Cunningham's approach to theological education may have been shaped by the historical context of the mid-19th Century Free Church of Scotland.

A very interesting comment is found in the obituary to Cunningham written by James McGregor in the British Foreign Evangelical Review:

> [Cunningham was] in a high sense the *scholastic* of his party. . . . [he was characterised by] a
>
> habit of looking at every important matter until he had fairly seen it through and through,
>
> and round and round. And this habit of his proved of very great advantage to all who were
>
> associated with him. It enabled him to give at the outset a statement of the nature of the
>
> question, and quality of evidence on both sides, so judicial and so clear that he himself,
>
> whether in lectures or in speeches, ordinarily found it necessary to add very little in the way
>
> of elaborate argumentation and was satisfied with vigorous iteration and reiteration,
>
> without any anxious variation in form, of the statement he had made at the first. And to his
>
> associates his statement often served, not only to win battles in debate, but to indicate the
>
> lines on which the campaign ought to be fought out. His lecture, for instance, on
>
> establishments, in the first of a course by Edinburgh ministers, practically exhausted the
>
> Voluntary controversy; so that little was afterwards added beyond filling up of details. And

this was characteristic of the nature of the services he rendered throughout the war, as well as of his contribution to theology in the more peaceful times that followed.[250]

The importance of the above quote lies in the fact that, as McGregor recounts Cunningham's characteristics, he does not make a distinction between Cunningham's approach to ecclesiastical issues and his approach to theological issues. In other words, according to McGregor, Cunningham's speeches on contemporary issues and his lectures on theological questions were approached in a similar way.

This observation has implications for the question of Cunningham's scholasticism.   Recalling the historical survey of Chapter 1, it was noted that the *Quaestio* style which emerged in the Middle Ages involved raising a particular question, discussing various points of view, and reaching a definitive conclusion through thorough analysis. It is not hard to see that this closely resembles the approach of Cunningham described above by McGregor. In speeches and lectures, Cunningham homed in on the *status questionis*, discussed evidence on either side of the argument, and then presented a clear conclusion.

An example of what McGregor means is clearly seen in Cunningham's 1841 pamphlet, *The Rights of the Christian People.* This substantial document, which combines history, theology and application, was instrumental in demonstrating the people's inherent right to choose their own pastor and has been said to be greatly influential in advancing that cause of the anti-patronage party during the final stages of the 10 Years' Conflict.[251]

Cunningham begins this document by making a clear statement of the question at stake:

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[250] James MacGregor, "Dr William Cunningham", in *British Foreign Evangelical Review* xx (1871), 768-769

[251] Donald Macleod, 'Hugh Miller, the Disruption, and the Free Church of Scotland, in Michael Shortland (ed), *Hugh Miller and the Controversies of Victorian Science*, 195
Donald Macleod, "William Cunningham", in *DSCHT,* 230

They assert, and we deny, the right of church courts to thrust ministers upon reclaiming congregations.[252]

He then expresses his desire to present "the nature and bearing of the evidence" in regard to this key question.[253] Following this, he embarks on a vast course of argumentation, in which he discusses the Early Church, the continental Reformers (particularly Calvin and Beza), the history of the Scottish Church, while at the same time repeatedly engaging directly with contemporary opponents.[254]   He then concludes by restating the issue at stake:

The principle of non-intrusion must be asserted and acted upon . . . [the church] must continue to declare that she will not thrust ministers upon reclaiming congregations. [255]

Now, it would appear valid that the type of argumentation described by McGregor is evidenced by the above example. Therefore, if McGregor is describing a scholastic type of argumentation, then it appears the case that this scholastic approach shaped not just Cunningham's syllabus of theological education, but also his approach to the contemporary issues in the historical context of 19th Century ecclesiastical controversy in Scotland. One might therefore be tempted to suggest that Cunningham's approach to contemporary issues was shaped by his scholastic approach to theology.

However, it could be that the truth is the other way round. While it is tempting to draw the conclusion that Cunningham's ecclesiastical influence was shaped by his scholasticism, this may not be the case. If the chronological trajectory of Cunningham's life is recalled, it is clear that contemporary ecclesiastical controversies were a prominent part of his life long before he became a theological educator. This point is highlighted very effectively by Michael Honeycutt, whose PhD

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[252] William Cunningham, 'The Rights of the Christian People', in *Discussions*, 296

[253] ibid., 297

[254] ibid., 297-469

[255] ibid., 468

thesis on Cunningham is structured around the various controversies in which Cunningham was engaged throughout his adult life.[256] Thus controversies, such as the Row Heresy and the 10 Years' Conflict, all preceded Cunningham's career in the theological faculty of New College.

During these controversies, as McGregor notes, Cunningham repeatedly engaged in a very effective process of argumentation whereby he focussed on the key issue in question, analysed contrasting viewpoints and came to a robust conclusion. This pattern implies one of two things: on the one hand this approach may echo the *Quaestio* style of the Medieval Scholastics. But on the other hand, these characteristics may simply be the features of a supremely skilled debater. The key question is: which one is the explanation for Cunningham's approach?

One could argue that Cunningham 'the scholastic' took the approach of the schoolmen into the realm of ecclesiastical controversy and emerged with the appearance of a gifted natural debater. However, one could equally argue that Cunningham 'the gifted debater' took his natural aptitude for logically analysing the key question at stake in a particular issue into the realm of theological education and emerged with the appearance of a scholastic. Given the fact that Cunningham's involvement in the controversies of his day preceded his career in theological education, it would seem likely there is a strong case for the latter. Cunningham's approach to theology would appear to have been shaped by his experiences in these controversies: he was a speech-maker before he became a theological educator.

Of course, in analysing any thinker, it is not possible to isolate influences. The above observations do not suggest that the pre-New College Cunningham was not influenced in any way by scholastic theologians. The very fact that he refers to Beza in *The Rights of the Christian People* proves that not to be the case. The key point is simply that the incisive and logical approach to theological education found in Cunningham did not arise from a vacuum, nor from simply learning skills from lectures he

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[256] Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies", iv

heard as a student or through theologians which he read.   Cunningham's own day gave rise to circumstances which appear to have influenced his approach.

It is therefore important to remember that the circumstances of Cunningham's life may well have facilitated an approach to theology similar to that which is found in scholasticism. The Medieval schoolmen were debaters and Cunningham was a debater, so a level of similarity is obvious. The difference, however, is that Cunningham's debating skills were not honed in endless discussions of irrelevant 'trash and babble'. He developed his approach because he was thrust into the midst of an ecclesiastic controversy that gripped a nation for 10 years and which raised questions, discussions and arguments that urgently required detailed and logical analysis. Cunningham may have ended up teaching in relative safety of a *schola*, but he developed his skills in the real world of the intense battles over church and state relations in mid-19th Century Scotland.

3.3   Educational Context: Was Cunningham a scholastic?

In a strict etymological sense, a scholastic needs to be in a school. This was true of the Medieval Scholastics, the Protestant Scholastics, and of Cunningham himself through his role in New College.

But it is premature to say that simply because Cunningham was Professor of Church History he was therefore a scholastic. There are other factors that must also be considered.   Nevertheless, Cunningham's position in an educational setting did give him a role in which his approach to theological study could be employed and therefore subsequently analysed, and the above discussion has revealed two important points in regard to the extent to which Cunningham should be classified as a scholastic.

First, it has been shown that general elements of Cunningham's approach, however they might be labelled, are also evident in other theologians contemporary to Cunningham, both in the Free Church and elsewhere. This raises the important point that even if the term scholastic is a valid

classification for Cunningham, it cannot be used (as it appears to have been) to distinguish Cunningham from his contemporaries. If he was a scholastic, he was one of many. If this is the case, then a call immediately arises which asks for a more appropriate term or terms with which Cunningham might be classified.

Secondly, the historical events of Cunningham's life which preceded his appointment to New College have been shown to be closely related to the features of Cunningham associated with his alleged scholasticism. The influence of these historical factors must not be ignored in seeking to understand the nature of Cunningham's approach and how that approach came to be formed.

However, despite these important observations, at this stage the question of Cunningham's scholasticism remains largely unanswered. While the contexts of both era and educational setting are important in defining scholasticism, they do not provide a full answer to the extent of Cunningham's scholasticism. Further analysis is required, so the next step is to look at Cunningham in terms of the key defining feature of scholasticism: methodology.

Chapter 4. Methodological Context: Cunningham and the Scholastic Method.

Chapter 1 highlighted that methodology lies at the heart of defining the theological phenomenon known as scholasticism.   In very basic terms, that is what scholasticism is: a method of doing theology. This is why scholastics can be found across the spectrum of theological viewpoints: a scholastic is not so much defined by the content of his theology, but by his method. The question, therefore, is to what extent is the methodological approach of William Cunningham similar to or different from that of the Medieval Scholastics and the Protestant Scholastics?

In order to analyse this question, the following chapter will spend time engaging in a general summarization of some pedagogical features of scholastic methodology. Once these are identified, the chapter will then explore the extent to which these broad features are found in Cunningham. Following this initial general survey, the chapter will then proceed to a much more detailed comparison between Cunningham and one of the prominent Protestant Scholastic theologians of the 17th Century: Francis Turretin.

To begin with however, there have been some recent discussions regarding Cunningham's scholastic method. These must be evaluated in the first instance.

4.1   Evaluating the Evaluations of Cunningham's Scholastic Method

As already noted, several writers have classified Cunningham under the label scholastic. Surprisingly however, very few appear to have analysed this claim in any detail. Questions therefore remain: to what extent can Cunningham be described as a scholastic? What distinctions, phrases or terminology has Cunningham employed? And, at the most basic level, what exactly do writers mean when they call Cunningham a scholastic? It is to questions such as these that this study now turns.

To begin with, it is worthwhile examining and evaluating some of those writers who have elaborated on the suggestion that Cunningham is indeed a scholastic.

The first such writer is Michael Honeycutt, in his excellent but as yet unpublished PhD thesis, who explores Cunningham's links to scholasticism as part of a brief analysis of Cunningham's methodology.[257] Honeycutt's own definition of scholasticism is in terms of a theology which

> "attempted systematically to integrate ideas expressed in the writings of Roman and Greek philosophers, Scripture, the patristic fathers and other Christian authors preceding the Middle Ages."[258]

Note that, like Cunningham's definition, this corresponds more to a narrow definition of scholastic methodology. According to Honeycutt, this method was subsequently used by Protestant Scholastics who, although insisting on the primacy of Scripture, made use of scholastic argumentation in order to resolve complex theological issues.[259]

Moreover, Honeycutt observes that Cunningham liked the systematic and connected order prioritized by the schoolmen and viewed the medieval scholastics as worthy of study, but defective due to their failure to rely on the standard of Scripture, and their proneness to speculation.[260] Honeycutt goes on to suggest that Turretin was Cunningham's particular favourite of the Protestant Scholastics and that "Cunningham often employed scholastic argumentation." [261]

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[257] Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies", 275-292

[258] ibid., 279

[259] ibid.

[260] ibid., 280

[261] Ibid., 281

Honeycutt notes Cunningham's powerful logic,[262] his exceptional reasoning ability[263] and his method of stating the question,[264] and he boldly states that Cunningham "made ample use of scholastic methodology and distinctions."[265] However, Honeycutt also makes the perceptive, and intriguing, observation that "Cunningham's theology . . . is more nuanced than that categorization [scholastic Calvinist] would imply".[266]

Another writer to explore the scholasticism of Cunningham is Joel Beeke.[267] Like Honeycutt, Beeke suggests that "Cunningham regarded the utilization of scholastic methodology in Reformed Orthodoxy – particularly in Turretin - as essential and profitable."[268] Beeke also explores the careful structuring that is evident in Cunningham's method.[269]

Overall, both Beeke and Honeycutt offer helpful, albeit brief, analyses of Cunningham utilization of scholastic methods, and both are confident in concluding that Cunningham belongs firmly in the lineage of the Protestant Scholastics. However, neither of these writers, nor it seems any other, provide specific examples as confirming evidence. In other words, although scholars make the claim that Cunningham regularly used scholastic distinctions and regarded such as essential, there is little or no citation of primary sources to verify these assertions.

In fairness to Honeycutt and Beeke, it must be recognised that the question of Cunningham's theological method lies on the fringes, or even outside, their particular areas of study. The former

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[262] ibid., 273

[263] ibid.

[264] ibid., 272

[265] ibid., 273

[266] ibid., 278-279

[267] Joel R. Beeke, "William Cunningham", in *Historians of the Christian Tradition,* 209-226

[268] ibid., 220

[269] ibid., 222

being biographical, the latter historiographical. Nevertheless, the lack of a provision of evidence would indicate a gap in scholarship in terms of a detailed study of Cunningham's use, or otherwise, of scholastic methodology. Moreover, it would appear that without such supporting evidence, there is an element of *non sequitur* in the conclusions reached by Beeke and Honeycutt. This is because Cunningham's appreciation of the scholastic methodology of men like Turretin does not necessarily mean that Cunningham himself employed exactly the same approach. *He likes* is not the same as *he is like*.

Therefore, although general comparisons have been made, it would appear that there is a need for a more detailed comparison between Cunningham and the Protestant Scholastics who preceded him. To achieve this, the remainder of the chapter will explore two areas. First, the next section will explore the realm of scholastic pedagogy and will identify some general features of the scholastics' teaching methods before evaluating the extent to which these are present in Cunningham's approach. Following this, the chapter will attempt to build a detailed case study in which Cunningham is contrasted with one of the leading scholastics of the 17th Century: Francis Turretin.

4.2   Cunningham and Scholastic Pedagogical Method

In the previous two chapters, the extent of Cunningham's scholasticism was examined in relation to a specific period of time and in regard to an educational setting. These two contexts set the stage for a particular style of pedagogical method to come to the fore. Therefore, if the extent to which Cunningham was a scholastic is to be discovered, then part of the investigation must involve asking whether these features of the scholastics' teaching methods are evident in Cunningham's own presentations. This is the area to be explored in the following section.

To begin with, it will be helpful to identify the various pedagogical features of scholastic methodology. Leading on from this, examples of these features from both Medieval scholasticism

and Protestant scholasticism will be noted. These will then be compared with Cunningham's own

teaching style in order to evaluate the levels of similarity and correspondence.

4.2.1   Pedagogical Features of Scholastic Method

As Chapter 1 noted, Scholastic methodology is marked by a distinctive pedagogical style. These

methodological features can be summarized under three headings: Questions, Discussion and

Structure. The section will explore the presence of these features in writers such as Anselm,

Lombard, Aquinas, Beza, Witsius and Turretin, before attempting to observe the presence or

absence of these stylistic features in Cunningham.

4.2.1.1 Questions

As noted in Chapter 1, the use of the question is an important aspect of scholastic method. This has

manifested itself in two ways in particular.

First, the framework of question and answer became a key stylistic feature of scholasticism.

Theologians such as Peter Abelard, Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas all employed a question and

answer structure in order to present theological teaching. The same approach is found in Protestant

scholastics such as Francis Turretin, whose *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* is presented as a list of 328

questions across 20 topics.[270]

Secondly, the scholastics were concerned to highlight the precise question under discussion in any

given topic. In the Medieval period, Anselm provides a clear example of this. The opening

paragraph of *Cur Deus Homo* has the following heading:

> *Quaestio, de qua totum opus pendet*.[271]

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[270] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1, 2 and 3)*

[271] Translated: "The question on which the whole work rests."

Anselm goes on to say that the question "Why did God become man?" is the concern of believers and infidels, the learned and unlearned alike. His whole book (even the title) is based around a concern to address a question.

Likewise, the same emphasis is evident in Protestant scholastics such as Theodore Beza. In correspondence with Calvin about how to respond to discussions regarding the causes of predestination, he repeatedly frames his thinking around the phrase, "if someone asks . . ."[272] Thus readiness to respond to questions is an important element of how Beza intends to present theological truth.

To Medieval and Protestant scholastics alike, the *Quaestio* was a key methodological feature around which theologians repeatedly framed their work in order to communicate theological teaching,

4.2.1.2 Discussion

Alongside the *Quaestio* noted above, scholastic method is also characterized by a readiness to engage in discussion. As Chapter 1 highlighted, scholastic theologians often taught by means of disputing and discussing a particular issue. In doing so, the objections of opponents were addressed before an attempt was then made at a definitive statement of truth.

For example, Anselm engages with the objections of infidels in Book 1 of *Cur Deus Homo.*[273]

Likewise, Aquinas states objections and meticulously replies to them under his questions in *Summa*

Anslem, *Cur Deus Homo (Book 1)*

[272] Theodore Beza, "Letter to John Calvin, 29 July, 1555" in *Correspondence do Theodore de Beze,* ed. H. Aubert (Geneva: Droz, 1960) (vol. 1), 171

[273] Anslem, *Cur Deus Homo (Preface)*

Theologica.[274] Thus, engaging in discussion with opposing views appears to be a distinctive aspect of Medieval Scholastic style.

A similar pattern is found in the Protestant scholastics. An example of such is Herman Witsius, who writes:

> I have found it absolutely necessary to oppose different opinions; either those of the public
>
> adversaries of the reformed churches . . . or those of some of our brethren, who have taken
>
> it into their heads to form new hypotheses, and thereby almost root out all true divinity.[275]

It is evident, therefore, that engagement and discussion with contrasting views is a feature of scholastic methodology. There is a concern among these theologians, not just to present what they believe, but to refute what they don't. The scholastics' method generally consists of both positive affirmation and negative rebuttal.

4.2.1.3 Structure

Both of the above methodological features combine to form another key aspect of scholastic theology: structure. Questions coupled with detailed, point by point discussions serve to give scholastic theology a very rigid and precise structure. Therefore, whether it is Medieval scholastics like Lombard and Aquinas, or Protestant scholastics like Turretin and Witsius, the reader of such works will find long lists of questions, numerous sequentially numbered paragraphs and rigid patterns of analysis. This structural style is perhaps one of the most obvious and prominent features of how scholastics present their teaching. The result is that the student of a scholastic teacher is taken on an intricate, meticulous journey from question to question, from point to point. There is

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[274] Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica,* 1.1.1

[275] Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man (vol. 1),* 19

little room for flexibility or variation. In scholastic methodology, it appears that structure determines style, not the other way round.

4.2.3   Features of Cunningham's Pedagogical Style

The brief analysis above shows that scholastic method is defined by various pedagogical features, notably a concern for answering questions, a desire to engage with opponents and a firm commitment to the unrelenting use of a rigid structure. The question is, are the same features found in Cunningham?

4.2.2.1 Cunningham and Questions

In terms of employing the *Quaestio*, two questions must be asked of Cunningham: First, does he utilise the question and answer framework described above? Second, does Cunningham attempt to highlight a specific question at stake in the manner observed in scholastic theologians?

In terms of the first question, even a quick glance at any of Cunningham's works reveals that he does not list questions after the pattern of Lombard, Aquinas or Turretin. Cunningham's subjects are dealt with under much more general headings which are explored by means of longer analyses and discussions. He moves through various aspects of any given topic without stopping to divide his discussion into separate questions. So, whereas Aquinas's *Summa* has over five hundred questions and Turretin's *Institutes* has over three hundred, Cunningham's *Historical Theology* has twenty-six chapters, many of which have several sub-divisions, but none of which are set out as questions. They are all simply general sub-headings.

When it comes to the second question, however, there is an abundance of evidence to indicate that Cunningham was greatly concerned with highlighting the precise question at stake when examining a topic. Examples of this abound across Cunningham's work. As noted in the previous chapter, *The Rights of the Christian People* highlights the question regarding the affirmation or denial of the right for a church to force a minister on a congregation.[276] In discussing the inspiration of Scripture, Cunningham highlights the crucial question of the meaning of the term θεόπνευστος.[277] Whilst looking at Canon Law and church-state relations, Cunningham argues that the whole controversy comes down to the question of whether authority lies with ecclesiastical office bearers or civil functionaries.[278] And even when dealing with contemporary opponents, Cunningham often focuses his polemic on a question. For instance, in his engagement with John Henry Newman, Cunningham writes:

> it is necessary to fall back upon the consideration of the question—what is the rule or standard by which we are to judge of what is or is not true or genuine Christianity?[279]

The above examples are a brief sample of a very common feature of Cunningham's methodology. Whether his questions are valid, and whether he examines them adequately is another matter. The key point is simply that a focus on questions is an evident aspect of Cunningham's approach to theology. Therefore, if such attempts to highlight questions are a manifestation of scholastic style, then this is certainly an area where Cunningham's approach corresponds to scholasticism.

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[276] William Cunningham, 'The Rights of the Christian People', in *Discussions on Church Principles*, 296

[277] William Cunningham, *Theological Lectures,* 360

[278] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 437

[279] William Cunningham, "Newman on Development" in *North British Review*, 5, 10 (August 1846), pp. 418-453

In terms of engaging with opposing opinions, again this is a very prominent feature of Cunningham's approach. In *Historical Theology,* massive chapters are devoted to engaging with Arminianism, Socinianism and Erastianism; all of which are theological positions with which Cunningham disagrees.[280] Furthermore, in the context of discussing specific theological topics, such as justification, sacraments or the atonement, Cunningham often engages with opposing views, usually that of the Roman Catholic Church, but sometimes with Protestant heterodoxy (from Cunningham's perspective) as well.[281]

Evidence of this methodological approached arises directly from Cunningham's classroom lectures. Handwritten notes from a student attending Cunningham's 1849-50 Church History lectures record a clear example of Cunningham identifying and discussing opposing points of view. [282] The notes read as follows:

> Jan. 7th Original Sin
>
> There have been discussions among Protestants as to the way of explaining the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to all men. Socinians deny original sin. Rationalists admit that Paul taught this doctrine but say we are not bound to receive it. Some hold that physical evil is the only result of Adam's first sin; others that it is now more difficult for us than it was for Adam to keep God's law. A third class, believing in satanic corruption as real features of man's nature, regard all this on the testimony of Scripture as caused by Adam's sin. . . .

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[280] See William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 2),* 155-236, 371-513, 557-587

[281] See William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 2),* 10-30, 142-143, 294-322

[282] I am greatly indebted to Prof Donald Macleod of Edinburgh Theological Seminary who has made these notes available from his personal archive.

Four courses of historical opinion may be traced:

1. Some have stated that the Scripture represents the depravity of man as connected with the fall of Adam and have denied the common doctrine of imputation.

2. Another class have regarded it as a penal infliction on man resulting from the guilt of Adam's first sin.

3. Others finding fault with the terms in which [it] is explained embody all that the defenders of imputation include in it in their own terms.

4. A fourth class holding the doctrine of imputation neutralize it by denying . . [sentence left incomplete]

The notes then go on to examine these differing opinions in more detail. This primary source from Cunningham's own lecture hall is a clear example of how the *disputatio* method was employed by Cunningham in the classroom setting. Interestingly, the notes correspond closely to the relevant passage of *Historical Theology,* which was based on Cunningham's lecture notes. In discussing the guilt of Adam's first sin, Cunningham's *Historical Theology* identifies the same four courses of historical opinion.[283] Moreover, for the curious reader, the incomplete sentence in the notes above should have been completed with something along the lines of the following:

. . . . neutralize it or explain it away, especially by means of a distinction they have devised between immediate or antecedent, and mediate or consequent imputation – denying the former, which is the only true and proper imputation, and admitting only the latter.[284]

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[283] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1) ,* 510-511

[284] ibid.*,* 511

Here Cunningham is no doubt referring to the seventeenth controversy involving the Samur theologian, Placaeus, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Alongside his lectures, evidence of the *Disputatio* method is found in Cunningham's written works. Many of these are polemical; they arise from disagreement with a particular individual or group. *The Rights of the Christian People* is written against those classified as 'intrusionists' by Cunningham.[285] His article, "Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity" is engaging with Sir William Hamilton.[286] In "Calvinism and Arminianism", Cunningham's opponent is Dr Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin,[287] and in "Calvin and Beza", the views of Dr George Campbell of Aberdeen are the subject of Cunningham's scrutiny. And of course, alongside these lies the perhaps more well-known controversy between Cunningham and John Henry Newman, a dispute that has been examined in more detail by Todd Statham.[288]

Clearly, engaging with opponents is a prominent aspect of Cunningham's style. As he taught theology, he led his students down the path of debate and confrontation with those of differing opinion. This aspect of Cunningham's pedagogy has been noted and appreciated by subsequent writers. John Macleod summarizes Cunningham's method by comparing *Historical Theology* to a learned judge's summing-up of the various controversies and guiding the jury:

> This work [*Historical Theology*] is like an elaborate and luminous judicial charge by a master of his subject addressed from the Bench to the jury of Christian students who may well avail themselves of the judgments of so penetrating and comprehensive a mind.[289]

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[285] William Cunningham, 'The Rights of the Christian People', in *Discussions*, 296

[286] William Cunningham, *Reformers,* 471

[287] ibid*.,* 414

[288] Todd Statham, "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland"*,* 67-108

[289] John Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History,* 269

Similar appreciation of Cunningham's *disputatio* approach has been expressed more recently:

> Cunningham states the issue, summarizes the views of the various parties, indicates the evidence for the orthodox position and finally deals with the objections. The result is a superb training in theological method.[290]

Together, these quotes are important for two reasons. First, each recognises Cunningham's aim to assess various viewpoints and reaching a verdict, thus indicating that this is an aspect of Cunningham's method that stands out. Secondly, here is evidence of two subsequent theologians expressing their admiration for the approach employed by Cunningham. Cunningham's pedagogical method has been neither forgotten nor ignored.

4.2.2.3 Cunningham and Structure

As noted above, the commitment to questions and the desire to engage with opponents, served to give rise to a very rigid and orderly structure in the presentation of the Medieval and Protestant scholastics. Such defined structure is conspicuous in scholastic works. However, in Cunningham, this rigid structural presentation is totally absent.

That, of course, is not to say that Cunningham's works are unstructured. For instance, in his essay on "Melancthon and the Theology of the Church England" Cunningham begins with an introduction highlighting the contemporary relevance of discussions around Melanchthon's works[291]. He then surveys Melanchthon's character and contribution, often comparing him with Luther. Next, he moves on to explore the influence that Melanchthon had over the Church of England and he opens up the question as to whether the Articles of the Church of England are Arminian or Calvinistic. He

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[290] Donald Macleod, "William Cunningham" in *DSCHT*, 229

[291] Note that Cunningham uses the spelling Melancthon, rather than Melanchthon.

then engages in an extensive literature survey and engages directly with points of discussion in the Articles, before finishing off by drawing some conclusions.[292]

But although Cunningham's works are structured, it is never according to the rigid pattern often seen in Medieval and Protestant scholastics. Cunningham does not list questions, he does not number his paragraphs, and his presentation has much more freedom and flow than that of a tight, point by point analysis.

This contrast in terms of structure between Cunningham and the scholastics is surprising for two reasons. First, because as this chapter will later show, Cunningham read and greatly appreciated the work of Turretin, and yet he does not follow his style of presentation. Secondly, aspects of this more rigid style were still employed in Cunningham's day; Smeaton uses numbered paragraphs and subdivisions[293], as does Chalmers[294] and long after Cunningham's death, A. A. Hodge used a long list of questions and answers.[295]

Two initial points can be noted in regard to how Cunningham structured his works. First, Cunningham's presentation follows a freer structure. He will sometimes discuss a concept briefly. For example, he sketches the origins of Socinianism in less than four pages.[296] But at other times he goes into greater detail: his outline of the Socinian system of theology is over twenty pages long.[297] This flexibility allows Cunningham to go into more detail in a particular topic, and thus encourages a helpful detail of analysis, while at the same time not devoting excessive attention to matters that can be dealt with more succinctly. However, it may also be valid to say that there are times when

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[292] William Cunningham, *Reformers,* 149-211

[293] George Smeaton, *Christ's Doctrine of the Atonement*

[294] Thomas Chalmers, *Works (vol. 1)*

[295] A A Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*

[296] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol.2),* 156-160

[297] ibid., 168-188

Cunningham's presentation may have been enhanced with the addition of more structural sub-divisions. For example, the twenty pages on Socinian theology cover various issues: the positive statements of Socinianism (as opposed to mere negations),[298] the breadth of Socinian doctrines,[299] the Socinian view of God,[300] Socinian Soteriology,[301] Socinian Christology,[302] Socinian Eschatology,[303] Socinian Ecclesiology,[304] the overall consistency of Socinianism,[305] and finally the prevalence of Socinianism and ease to which it can be fallen into.[306] Sub-headings marking all of these areas would have been a helpful addition to Cunningham's presentation. (It should of course be noted that *Historical Theology* was published posthumously, therefore stylistic issues like this may have been rectified by Cunningham's own eye had such personal editing been possible.)

Secondly, Cunningham's approach is often influenced by a historical focus. This is obviously true of *Historical Theology,* but it is also evident in other aspects of Cunningham's work. *Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* is again very much a historical focussed work. But even works written for his contemporary situation bear this historical stamp. *The Rights of the Christian People* is full of historical data,[307] and *Newman on Development* likewise continually delves into the past.[308] It would appear that Cunningham prefers to employ a style of pedagogical presentation that walks through

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[298] ibid.*,* 168-170

[299] ibid., 170-172

[300] ibid., 172-174

[301] ibid., 174-76

[302] ibid., 174-181

[303] ibid., 181-182

[304] ibid., 182-183

[305] ibid., 183-185

[306] ibid., 185-188

[307] William Cunningham, 'The Rights of the Christian People', in *Discussions*, 296-469

[308] William Cunningham, "Newman on Development" in *North British Review*, 5, 10 (August 1846), 418-453

the ages of history instead of one that is forced to sit within the constraints of a rigid propositional structure.

4.2.4   Pedagogical Approach: Was Cunningham a Scholastic?

The above analysis has highlighted some general pedagogical features of scholasticism and has sought to explore the extent to which these are evident in Cunningham's teaching methods. As this section has indicated, the answer to the question of whether Cunningham's pedagogical approach was scholastic is both yes and no. On the one hand, he clearly echoes the scholastic style of identifying the key *Questio* involved in an issue and he regularly engages in *Disputatio* with opposing views. However, other key aspects of scholastic teaching style are not found in Cunningham: he does not employ lists of questions and answers, he has a freer approach to his structural presentation and he allows history a more prominent influence in the way he shapes his material.

The above observations are very important for the overall question as to the extent to which Cunningham can be described as a scholastic. It is clear that so far, any classification of Cunningham as a scholastic would need to be qualified. Furthermore, like in the previous chapters, the above section has revealed that the scholastic features identified in Cunningham are not unique to him. In fact, in terms of pedagogical approach, there are contemporaries of Cunningham who are more 'scholastic' than him.

Thus, the question remains: to what extent was Cunningham a scholastic? Ultimately, answering this question will require a detailed comparison of Cunningham's methodology with that of a quintessential Protestant Scholastic. It is to such a comparison that this chapter now turns.

4.3   Case Study Comparing William Cunningham and Francis Turretin

Of all names mentioned in regard to Cunningham's links with scholasticism, the most prominent is Francis Turretin.[309] Born in Geneva to a family of Italian origin, Francis Turretin (1623–1687) studied in several centres of Reformed scholarship across Europe before becoming pastor of the Italian speaking congregation in Geneva in 1648. Following this, he was appointed Professor of Theology at the Academy of Geneva in 1653, taking up a post that had previously been held by his father from 1612-1631.[310] Turretin's work epitomised the Reformed Orthodoxy of the 17th Century. He strove to defend orthodox Calvinism from doctrinal challenges and was especially influential in his opposition to Amyraldianism.[311]   His most notable work was his three volume *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* published in 1679, 1682, and 1685, with a further six editions published in the following 50 years. The title *Elenctic* arises from the Greek verb ἐλέγχω which appears, for example, in Matthew 18:15:

Ἐὰν δὲ ἁμαρτήσῃ [εἰς σὲ] ὁ ἀδελφός σου, ὕπαγε ἔλεγξον αὐτὸν μεταξὺ σοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ μόνου.[312]

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[309] For example see:

Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies"*,* xi

Honeycutt writes, "This may be due in part to Cunningham's decided conviction that systematic theology reached its high point in the seventeenth century with the formulation of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the theologies of scholastic Calvinist theologians, especially Francis Turretin and Herman Witsius."

Joel R. Beeke, "William Cunningham", in *Historians of the Christian Tradition,* 220

Beeke writes, "For Cunningham, full-orbed Calvinism was represented in its purest form in the theology of 'the great Protestant divines of the seventeenth century' such as Herman Witsius, Petrus Van Matricht, and especially Francis Turretin."

Todd Statham, "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland"*,* 78

Statham describes Turretin as Cunningham's "favourite divine".

[310] James T. Dennison Jr, "The Life and Career of Francis Turretin", in Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, (Vol 3),* 640-645

[311] Martin I. Klauber , "Francis Turretin on Biblical Accommodation: Loyal Calvinist Or Reformed Scholastic?", 73
Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power (Vol. 4),* 120-122

[312] Translated: "And if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his error, between you and him alone."

This term can be translated 'convict', 'reprove' or 'correct'[313] and when used with the accusative means "to show people their sins and summon them to repentance."[314] Thus, the term conveys a polemical emphasis whereby errors are highlighted and corrected. This is precisely the aim of Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* in which he presents a structured and detailed defence of Reformed Orthodoxy. This work consists of "repeated explicit generic questions addressing each individual theological topic."[315] Within these questions lies frequent use of philosophical categories and argumentation comprising a continuous series of affirmations of orthodoxy and denials of various heterodoxies and heresies.[316]

The *Institutes* went on to have lasting influence, particularly in Princeton Theological Seminary, where it served as the standard text for Reformed theology right up until Charles Hodge published his own three volume *Systematic Theology* in 1871-1872.

Cunningham would thus have joined Princetonians such as Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield as readers of Turretin, and Cunningham makes mention of his admiration for the 17th Century scholar. For example, he comments on Turretin's clear and able enforcement of the importance of the need to maintain a distinction between Christ's active and passive righteousness, and the believer's forgiveness and acceptance.[317] Turretin's treatment of the order of the divine

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[313] Walter Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament,* 248-249

[314] F. Büchsel, 'elénchō', in Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged in one volume),* 220

[315] Carl R. Trueman, *Histories and Fallacies,* 121

[316] ibid., 121

[317] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (Vol. 2)*, 54

decrees in the face of the claims of Calvinist universalists is described by Cunningham as a 'a very masterly exposure.'[318] It is even said that Turretin was Cunningham's "favourite divine".[319]

That is not to say, however, that Cunningham viewed Turretin as infallible. Indeed, there are times when Cunningham makes it clear that he does not agree with something Turretin has said. An example of this is found in regard to the supra/infralapsarian question where Cunningham regards Turretin's assertion that the Canons of Dort sanctioned the infralapsarian position is "stronger than a fair view of the whole facts of the case . . . warrants."[320]

Turretin is widely regarded as a model of Protestant Scholasticism. A. Vos observes that "in spite of Calvin's anti-scholasticism, Francis Turretin (1623-87) and other Reformed theologians adopted the scholastic method in their theology."[321] Turretin's *Institutes* has since been recognised as one of the finest examples of Scholastic Calvinism.[322] Furthermore, he is recommended as a definitive spokesman for the Reformed viewpoint during the period of high orthodoxy in the 17th Century.[323] Indeed, it is suggested that when Turretin died, the age of scholasticism entered terminal decline.[324]

So, if Turretin was a model of Protestant Scholastic Calvinism, and if Cunningham was a model of Protestant Scholastic Calvinism, one would expect them to be more than a little similar. But is this the case? To what extent is there correspondence between their methodologies?

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[318] ibid., 363

[319] Todd Statham, "Dogma and History in Victorian Scotland", 78

[320] William Cunningham, *Reformers,* 369n

[321] A. Vos, 'Scholasticism' in *NDT,* 623

[322] James T. Dennison Jr., "The Twilight of Scholasticism: Francis Turretin at the Dawn of the Enlightenment", in *Protestant Scholasticism, Essays in Reassessment,* 248

[323] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power: Volume 4, The Age of Religious Conflict,* 122

[324] James T. Dennison Jr., "The Twilight of Scholasticism: Francis Turretin at the Dawn of the Enlightenment", in *Protestant Scholasticism, Essays in Reassessment,* 254-255

This is obviously a complex and wide-ranging question. As such, it inevitably forces a compromise between breadth and depth. At one level it would be desirable to give attention to the former by surveying Turretin and Cunningham on a wide range of topics. However, to answer this question effectively it is more pressing to prioritize the latter, therefore the following analysis will take the form of a case study looking in detail at a particular area analysed by both men: the doctrine of the Fall.

4.3.1   Turretin on the Fall

Turretin's *Institutes* is structured around general topics, each of which are divided into sub-headings that are analysed by means of posing a series of questions, which are answered under a number of paragraphs, each highlighting a different point, in a structure very similar to that used by Thomas Aquinas.[325] Thus, Turretin's treatment of the Fall comes under the general topic of "Sin in General and in Particular."[326] The Fall of Man is then dealt with under three sub-headings: 'The Fall of Adam', 'Original Sin', and 'The Propagation of Sin'. The first of these is then divided into four questions, the second into two, and the third again into four.

To take an example, under the sub-heading 'The Fall of Adam', Turretin's first question is, "What was the first sin of man – unbelief or pride?"[327] His answer consists of thirteen paragraphs, the details of which are as follows.

Turretin's first paragraph makes a general statement in terms of this question, and he defines Adam's sin as an act of voluntary apostasy from God, his Creator. He then identifies, although does not define, some key scriptural terms for sin. Paragraph II then explores the precise nature of

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[325] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* First Part of the Second Part: Question 75 http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2075.htm   cited 16.6.17

[326] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 591-658

[327] ibid., 604

Adam's sin and makes a division into two main explanations: pride or unbelief. The former he ascribes to Roman Catholics, the latter to his Reformed colleagues, thus there is a polemical aim in his work as he sets his question in the context of two opposing views. In paragraph III, he highlights the breadth of Adam's sin, identifying many areas in which he failed and the fact that the Fall was a collective aggregate of many sins. Paragraph IV refutes those who may play down the seriousness of Adam's sin by presenting a systematic list of the reasons why Adam's sin was so heinous.   In Paragraph V, Turretin then explores different viewpoints concerning the first step that led to Adam's sin. At the heart of these is a *distinctio formalis*[328] isolating the senses, the will and the intellect. This, while not expressly stated, would appear to be an exploration in terms of causation, and although Turretin appears a little cautious about such distinctions, his clear conclusion is that Adam's sin was initiated by an act of the intellect.

This leads on to paragraph VI which selects unbelief as the primary nature of Adam's first sin, rather than pride, and he touches on the order of events in the temptation narrative as evidence of this. Next, in paragraph VII, Turretin suggests that pride results from prior unbelief, not the other way round. Again, although he does not explicitly say so, it would appear that Turretin is thinking in terms of an order of causation.   Following this, paragraph VIII makes a brief appeal to Scripture to verify this conclusion, and then once again poses some logical inconsistencies embedded in the assumption that pride was Adam's first sin.   In paragraph IX, Turretin then reinforces his point by giving further positive reasons why Adam's first sin should be understood in terms of unbelief: "Man did not have the faith in the word of God which he was bound to have, but shook it off at first by doubting and presently by denying; not seriously believing that the fruit was forbidden or that he should die."[329]

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[328] A formal distinction which analyses separate aspects of the essence of a thing, such as intellect and will, which are inseparable but distinguishable. See Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms,* 93-94

[329] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 605

Paragraph X acknowledges that pride is involved in Adam's fall, but crucially it was not the first stage, "For pride never could have entered the heart of man if his faith in the words of God had not before been weakened and overthrown."[330] Paragraph XI returns to the language of causation, arguing that, in terms of motion, commencement precedes termination, therefore Adam's act of prioritizing the creature (pride) was initiated by a prior turning from the Creator (unbelief). Paragraph XII continues the focus on causation and draws a distinction between direct ratiocination and oblique ratiocination. Turretin notes that although the devil's deception of Adam and Eve consisted of the latter of these, nevertheless unbelief remains the cause rather than simply the means leading into Adam's pride.

Paragraph XIII addresses two verses in the apocryphal Son of Sirach which may appear to suggest that pride, rather than unbelief, was the first step in Adam's sin. [331] Turretin briefly examines these, concluding that they do not undermine the view that unbelief came before pride. [332]

Thus in thirteen paragraphs, Turretin gives a detailed and thorough answer to the question: what was the first sin of man – unbelief or pride?

The rest of Turretin's analysis under the heading the 'The Fall of Adam' consists of a further three questions:

> How could a holy man fall, and what was the true cause of his fall?

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[330] ibid., 606

[331] Sirach 10:12-13:
> ἀρχὴ ὑπερηφανίας ἀνθρώπου ἀφίστασθαι ἀπὸ κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ποιήσαντος αὐτὸν ἀπέστη ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ [13] ὅτι ἀρχὴ ὑπερηφανίας ἁμαρτία καὶ ὁ κρατῶν αὐτῆς ἐξομβρήσει βδέλυγμα διὰ τοῦτο παρεδόξασεν κύριος τὰς ἐπαγωγὰς καὶ κατέστρεψεν εἰς τέλος αὐτούς (LXX)

> The beginning of pride is when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his Maker. [13] For pride is the beginning of sin, and he that hath it shall pour out abomination: and therefore the Lord brought upon them strange calamities, and overthrew them utterly. (Brenton LXX with Apocrypha)

[332] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 604-606

Whether Adam by his fall lost the image of God. We affirm.

Whether the actual disobedience of Adam is imputed by an immediate and antecedent imputation to all his posterity springing from him by natural generation. We affirm.

Regrettably, space does not allow for an analysis of each of these questions in the same detail. However, six points can be noted:

4.3.1.1 Stating the Question

Turretin's methodology is frequently characterised by an attempt to state the key question at stake. In doing so, he is careful to provide clear definitions of the subjects in question and to set out the limits within which his discussions will proceed. For example, when discussing the question of Adam's loss of the image of God, he makes it clear exactly what he means by the word 'image'.[333] Turretin also recognises the extent to which a question can be answered and acknowledges that there are depths beyond the reach of rational analysis.[334]

4.3.1.2 Use of distinctions

Turretin's analysis of the Fall of Man is peppered with scholastic distinctions. In explaining the help available from God to the pre-lapsed Adam, Turretin uses the terms *auxilium qua non* and *auxilium quo,*[335] the former being ever present, the latter withheld.[336] Likewise, in terms of the possibility of

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[333] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 612
See also Turretin's careful definition of imputation on page 615-6, and his use of limits in regard to imputation on page 617 (paragraph XV)

[334] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 610

[335] *Auxilium qua non:* help without which. *Auxilium quo :* help by which

[336] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 608

Adam's sin, Turretin distinguishes between the *sensus compositus* and its opposite, the *sensus divisus.*[337]

Other two-fold distinctions are prominent: Adam's sin is explained by separating mutability and the act of mutability; the former being a power, the latter an action.[338] Adam's double loss of the divine image is understood both meritoriously and efficiently.[339] The want of original righteousness is to be viewed as both active and passive.[340]

Furthermore, Turretin identifies different categories within topics, such as categories of grace (internal, habitual, actual)[341] and of evil (*mali turpis, mali tristis).*[342] He also recognises and highlights the use of distinctions by others, an example of this is his description and rebuttal of Placaeus's[343] division of imputation into mediate and consequent as opposed to immediate and antecedent.[344]

4.3.1.3 Focus on causes

As noted above, Turretin explores the nature of Adam's first sin by frequently placing emphasis on causality. This is a feature evident in the rest of Turretin's analysis of the doctrine of the Fall.

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[337] ibid.,*),* 611

[338] ibid., 607

[339] ibid., 612

[340] ibid., 626

[341] ibid., 610

[342] ibid., 622

[343] Josué de la Place (Josua Placaeus) (1596-1655 or 1665) was a Saumur theologian and contemporary of Amyraut who denied that Adam's sin was immediately imputed to all humanity and instead advocated the 'mediate imputation' viewpoint. This emphasised hereditary corruption as opposed to immediate imputation of Adam's actual sin. See Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 614-615 and Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power: (vol. 4),* 154

[344] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 614

Indeed, Turretin's very next question is, "How could a holy man fall, and what was the true cause of his fall?"[345]

Here Turretin identifies the proximate and proper cause,[346] namely, the free will of man (also described by Turretin as the 'internal moving cause'), and the external assisting cause, which is further sub-divided into a principal cause (Satan) and an instrumental cause (the serpent).[347] Moreover, Turretin asserts that God's prescience did not contribute to the causality of the Fall because "prescience is not the cause of things, nor do things take place because they are foreknown; rather they are foreknown because they are to be."[348]

This focus on causality is of course an echo of Aristotelian methodology and is similar to the approach used by other Reformed Scholastics of this era, such as Johannes Wollebius.[349] While, in this instance, Turretin does not directly follow Aristotle's own fourfold scheme of material, formal, efficient and final causes, nevertheless it would seem hard to deny that Turretin's thought is at least partly shaped by the ancient philosopher's method. Moreover, the 17th Century was a period in which Aristotelian logic and metaphysic was still largely authoritative, thus Turretin's use of Aristotle's approach is not surprising in the historical context of his lifetime.[350]

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[345] ibid., 606-611

[346] ibid.,*),* 609

[347] ibid., 610

[348] ibid., 610

[349] Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium of Christian Theology,* Book 1, Chapter 10

[350] Carl R. Trueman, *Histories and Fallacies,* 125

4.3.1.4 Use of Scripture

Turretin's use of Scripture is fascinating because there is noticeable variation in the prominence of biblical texts across his argumentation. Under some questions, his refences to Scripture are minimal. For example, in the eighteen paragraphs answering the question, 'How could a holy man fall, and what was the true cause of his fall?', there are parenthetical scriptural refences in only two and there are direct biblical quotations in none.[351] Moreover, a similar ratio is found in Turretin's answer to his next question, whether Adam by his fall lost the image of God.[352] This is not suggesting that Turretin's arguments are unbiblical, it is simply observing that a prominent focus on the exegesis of biblical passages or terms is not always at the forefront of Turretin's presentation.

However, this is not true of every part of Turretin's analysis of the Fall. When turning to the question of the imputation of Adam's sin, there is a much greater focus on scripture, and in particular there is a detailed exegesis of Romans 5. Moreover, Turretin identifies and engages with other key biblical texts in reference to imputation, such as 1 Corinthians 15:22, Ezekiel 18:20 and Jeremiah 31:29-30.[353]

While an analysis of only one area of Turretin's work (the doctrine of the Fall) can only bring tentative conclusions, it is certainly clear that there is a varying degree of prominence given to detailed exegesis of Bible passages.[354] For instance, while Turretin's exploration of a question such as the cause of the Fall is helpful and stimulating, it would surely not be unreasonable to suggest that a more detailed exegesis of Genesis 3 would have complemented his analysis. Moreover, the

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[351] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 606 - 611

[352] In the twelve paragraphs answering this question there are parenthetical scriptural refences in three, but again, no direct quotations. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 611 - 613

[353] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 613 - 629

[354] A wider analysis of Turretin's use of Scripture is outwith the scope of this work, but would make for a most worthwhile study.

occasions in Turretin's work where exegesis is less than prominent would appear more than a little

in conflict with Cunningham's conviction that "the two most important functions of the theologian

are first, to bring out the meaning of the individual statements of God's word, the particular truths

which are taught there; and, second, to classify and arrange these truths."[355]

4.3.1.5 Engagement with others

Another fascinating aspect of Turretin's method is his engagement with other writers. As one would

expect, he engages with theologians from across the history of the church. The early church fathers

appear, and Augustine in particular, whom he directly quotes more than once.[356] The Reformers and

their successors are mentioned, such as Calvin, Beza and Peter Martyr.[357] And writers from

Turretin's own day, including Moise Amyrault (1596-1664) are also referred to.[358]

Many of the above names are all used by Turretin as examples of orthodox hamartiology. But of

course, Turretin also engages with his opponents, both groups and individuals. Examples include

Remonstrants, Anabaptists and those who opposed the decree of the National Synod at Charenton

in 1644 which condemned the teaching of Placaeus.[359] [360] Likewise, he discusses the views of

Pelagians, Socinians and Arminians.[361] So too are individuals; Socinus, Episcopius and Placaeus are

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[355] William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 297

[356] For example, Turretin includes the following quotations:
"He chose as a vehicle of expression a slippery animal and moving with torturous windings suitable to his work." Augustine, *City of God*, 14.11. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 608
"How many soever were to spring from that one, were one man in that one." Augustine, *Letter 186, To Paulinus.* Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (vol. 1),* 616

[357] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 627 – 628

[358] ibid., 629

[359] John Murray , "The Imputation Of Adam's Sin Third Article", 142

[360] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 614

[361] ibid., 623

all quoted and engaged with.[362] The last of these is particularly interesting as it demonstrates that

Turretin's thought was not operating in a historical vacuum but was directly engaging with the

pressing theological issues of his own time as he sought to clarify the Reformed position.[363]

But perhaps the most fascinating group to which Turretin refers is the pagan writers and

philosophers of ancient Greece. For instance, in highlighting the role of the serpent as the

instrumental cause of the first sin, Turretin argues that the Gentiles' recognition of serpent type

figures as central to their own religious traditions is evidence supporting the biblical presentation of

the serpent's crucial role. Likewise, in discussing imputation, Turretin refers to Plutarch, Cicero,

Hesiod and others to illustrate the fact that the concept of imputation was not alien to pagan

thinkers.[364] Indeed, Turretin seems to be of the view that if Gentiles have recognised elements of a

biblical principle then the validity of the principle is strengthened.[365]

4.3.1.6 Historical Awareness

As evidenced above, Turretin engages with groups, individuals and events that were contemporary

to him. This indicates that Turretin's thought was shaped with refence to the issues, challenges and

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[362] ibid., 614

[363] It is interesting to note that later on Turretin also quotes Moise Amyrault, a contemporary of both Turretin and Placaeus. Indeed, Turretin is regarded as one of the foremost defenders of orthodoxy against Amyrault, Placé and the Samur theologians during the Amyraldian controversy. However, it is most interesting, and even surprising, that Turretin quotes Amyrault in support of his own point. See Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 629

[364] Turretin refers his readers to various works including; Plutarch's *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance,* Horace's *Episitles,* Circero's *Epistulae ad Brutum,* Quintus Curtius Rufus's *History of Alexander,* and Hesiod's *Work and Days* from which the following quotations are drawn:
   "until the people pay for the mad folly of their princes"
   "Often even a whole city suffers for a bad man."
            Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 621
It should perhaps be noted the second of these quotations does not necessarily imply the imputation of the sins of another, but rather the consequential effect of one's sin upon others.

[365] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Vol. 1),* 620-621

events of previous eras, and of his own lifetime. Indeed, it has been said that "in Turretin, each topic is framed in terms of the controversies of his day".[366]

4.3.1.7 Summary

The above analysis shows that Turretin's structure is rigid, he aims to state the question, he uses distinctions, he often thinks in terms of causes, he engages with others, he has a polemical goal, he is aware of historical events and his use of Scripture is varied. Exegesis is by no means his consistent starting point, and practical application, out-with the realm of polemics, is minimal.

Two important points must be noted. Firstly, Turretin appears to epitomise the characteristics of scholasticism which are valued by Cunningham. As noted in Section 2, Cunningham regarded the employment of scholastic distinctions as a useful means of tackling complex questions, while maintaining an awareness of the supreme authority of Scripture. The above analysis clearly shows that Turretin does indeed use such distinctions to engage with complicated questions in a manner consistent with Scriptural teaching. It is therefore easy to understand why Turretin is appreciated by Cunningham.

Secondly, it would appear to be the case that Turretin's method fits the narrow definition of scholastic method outlined in Chapter 1.[367] If, as Cunningham himself suggests, being a Protestant Scholastic means employing the methods of Aristotle and other pagan philosophers in the form of dialectical and metaphysical argumentation, then Turretin is definitely a Protestant Scholastic.

The question, however, is how does all this compare with Cunningham?

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[366] Paul Helm, *Faith, Form and Fashion,* 12

[367] Of course, as noted earlier, this means that Turretin would also fall within the scope of the broad definition.

4.3.2 Cunningham on the Fall

The following summary of Cunningham's analysis of the doctrine of the Fall will endeavour to identify the key points highlighted by Cunningham while at the same time attempting to indicate the areas or correspondence and contrast with the approach of Turretin.

4.3.2.1 Tracing the history

Cunningham's chapter begins, not with a propositional question of the sort used by Turretin, but with an historical event: The Council of Trent. From the details of this event in history, Cunningham builds his analysis of the Fall. This, of course, fits with Cunningham's overall methodology in *Historical Theology* whereby he seeks to explore the history of doctrine with a primary focus on theological controversies, rather than personalities.

Cunningham goes on to highlight some initial definitions. He notes that there are two understandings of original sin – one in a comprehensive sense encapsulating all the elements of the estate in to which humanity fell, the other, a more focussed definition highlighting the depravity of mans' nature. This latter definition is the sense generally used by Reformed thinkers.[368] Cunningham also observes an element of ambiguity in the use of the term 'original sin' in the Shorter Catechism, although, according to Cunningham, this ambiguity is clarified by the Larger Catechism's expanded answer.[369] This setting of parameters is similar to the stating of the question observed in Turretin in the previous section.[370]

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[368] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1)*, 496-497

[369] ibid., 497

[370] See section 4.3.1.1

Interestingly, Cunningham then engages in a brief evaluation the historical handling of this doctrine by criticising the schoolmen for corrupting the Augustinian understanding of Original sin into a more Pelagian viewpoint. He argues that the severity of the Fall's effect on humanity's condition was played down, the door was opened to humanity contributing to one's own salvation, and the saving work of Christ was thus left superfluous.[371]

Cunningham moves on chronologically to note that at the Reformation, it was acknowledged by Roman Catholic thinkers that their own convictions did not differ that much from the Reformers on this topic. This, according to Cunningham, presented the Council of Trent with a dilemma; they wanted to condemn the hamartiology of the Reformers without condemning Augustine.[372] So far Cunningham's approach appears to be structured by the events of history and the propositional questions and distinctions of Turretin's method are yet to appear.

Cunningham then focuses on the Council of Trent's decree on justification in more detail and briefly discusses the various section therein. Of the decree's five sections, the first three tackle Pelagianism, the fourth Anabaptists, and in Cunningham's view only the fifth engages with a position held by the Reformers. At this point Cunningham acknowledges that, while they could be worded better, the first four sections are sound and scriptural.[373]

Cunningham then delves into more historical details; he recounts the proceedings of the Council, he evidences the lack of a united opinion in the Councils deliberations but he acknowledges where the council is biblical and accurate:[374]

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[371] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1)*, 497

[372] ibid., 498

[373] ibid., 499

[374] ibid., 449-500

"The truth thus declared by the Council of Trent might be fairly enough regarded as embracing the sum and substance, the leading and essential features, of what is made known to us in Scripture with respect to the fall of man."[375]

Cunningham then continues on his historical journey by reflecting on the aftermaths of Trent in respect of the doctrine of the Fall. He notes that the continued teaching of error by Roman Catholic thinkers, combined with the Synergistic controversy in the Lutheran Church, and the Socinian denial of Original Sin necessitated "a fuller and more detailed investigation of the subject by Protestant divines, and produced those more minute and precise expositions of the real nature and constituent elements of man's natural condition of sinfulness, which are fully set forth in the writings of the great theologians of the 17th Century."[376]

At this point one might expect the 'scholastic' Cunningham to immediately point his readers to a great seventeenth treatise on the Fall by a Protestant Scholastic, such as Turretin, in order to find that 'precise and minute exposition' which was required. However, Cunningham does not do this. Instead, he directs his reader to the Shorter Catechism and Question 18:

Q. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate wherein man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate wherein man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

For Cunningham, this short answer exemplifies the desired precision, and an exploration of this answer forms the structure for the rest of Cunningham's analysis.

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[375] ibid.

[376] ibid., 501

The focus on this question in the catechism thus brings Cunningham's analysis to propositional level. But at this stage there are two important points to highlight in relation to the comparison between Cunningham and Turretin.

First, both writers appear to combine propositional analysis and historical detail. However, they do so with different prioritization. Turretin's analysis is entirely structured under a propositional framework. In contrast, Cunningham's chapter has begun by tracing a historical trajectory which incorporates Augustine, the Schoolmen, the Reformers and the post-Reformation thinkers. Therefore, while Turretin starts with propositions and uses historical detail to complement these, Cunningham appears to be using history to explain how and why the proposition itself has come to occupy a place in the world of theological discussion.

Secondly, although Turretin and Cunningham both seem to reach the realm of question and answer, there is a subtle difference in each one's method. Turretin poses questions and attempts to answer them. Cunningham takes a question that *has already been answered*, and his analysis is an exploration of the content of that answer.

4.3.2.2 Unpacking the Catechism

Cunningham expounds the Shorter Catechism's description of the sinful condition into which man fell and focuses in detail on three key phrases: the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness and the corruption of the nature.

The Guilt of Adam's first sin: Cunningham begins with definitions, and he makes clear that this statement is effectively prompting a discussion around the concept of imputation.[377] Cunningham then very quickly advocates the view that this can only be adequately understood in terms of

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[377] ibid., 502

Federal Theology. In doing so he highlights the importance of Scriptural authority, although, like Turretin, he does not quote specific biblical passages at this stage.[378]

Interestingly, Cunningham then returns to the realm of history, and explores the decisions of Trent and the subsequent divergences of opinion that have arisen concerning the nature of the connection between Adam's sin and the rest of humanity. He observes the similarity to Reformed orthodoxy found in some Roman Catholic thinkers in regard to imputation, and he quotes Cardinal Bellarmine and mentions the 'comparatively sound theology' taught by Michel Baius and Cornelius Jansen.[379] He then touches on the views held by Arminians, Socinians and Rationalists and even quotes the 19th Century Rationalist theologian Julius Wegscheider.[380] Cunningham rejects the methodology of these schools of thought because of the Socinian/Rationalist rejection of the authority of Scripture and the Arminian school's inadequate investigation and admission of the extent of the corruption brought into human experience through Adam's sin.[381]

So far Cunningham's approach has moved from Roman Catholic perspectives through to the various erroneous schools of thought within Protestantism. Eventually, Cunningham comes to explore the views held by Calvinists, but again, here he observes divergence of opinion.[382] Interestingly, this divergence of opinion arises not from contrasting views of humanity's depravity, but from different understandings of the *cause* of this corruption. This is important to note because it appears to be the first mention of causation, which was of course such a prominent part of Turretin's work.

Cunningham identifies various Calvinistic viewpoints, but quickly narrows the state of the question into a choice between two opposing views concerning the origin (i.e. the cause) of humanity's

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[378] ibid., 503

[379] ibid., 505

[380] ibid., 506 – 507

[381] ibid., 506 – 508

[382] ibid., 510

corruption. On the one hand there are those who simply accept some connection between Adam and his posterity but do not seek to attempt any detailed explanation and deny the doctrine of imputation. On the other hand, there are those who view humanity's sorry condition as a penal infliction resulting from the guilt of Adam's first sin which is imputed to them.[383]

Cunningham acknowledges that the first viewpoint correctly recognises the inevitable presence of mystery found within this subject. However, he argues that advocates of this view are wrong to say that Scripture does not provide some elements of explanation concerning the causative connection between Adam and humanity. Indeed, he briefly refers to Romans 5 in order to illustrate this point.[384]

Cunningham then returns to the process of stating the question. He suggests that if there is some connection between Adam and humanity, then the question must be asked as to the nature of that connection.[385] Some, who according to Cunningham focus on a physical oneness, understood this connection according to the image of a plant from a seed, or branch from a root.[386] Others, such as Augustine and Edwards are said to suggest a literal personal oneness, which the latter is said to have related to Adam's role as progenitor of the human race. Cunningham, however, bluntly dismisses this approach as unscriptural, unintelligible and failing to actually explain the sovereignty of God, the actions of Adam, and the subsequent impact on the rest of humanity.[387] This brings Cunningham to what he regards as the correct understanding of the connection between Adam's sin and the rest of humanity, namely, that Adam functioned in a position of federal representation. This covenant headship is what connects the sin of Adam with all his posterity and is the framework through which

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[383] ibid., 510-511

[384] ibid., 513

[385] ibid.

[386] ibid.

[387] ibid., 514

a logical imputation of sin takes place. This approach, according to Cunningham, takes better account of both scriptural teaching and sheds more light on the connection between human depravity and the sin of the first man.[388] It is interesting to note that Cunningham's discussion has now come full circle, returning to the emphasis on Federal Theology which he highlighted at the beginning of this section.[389]

The Want of Original Righteousness: Cunningham moves on to unpack the next section of the Shorter Catechism's proposition; the want of original righteousness. This analysis follows a similar pattern. Cunningham begins with definitions, including a discussion of different views as to what is meant by being in 'the image of God'.[390] He then returns to the Council of Trent and highlights inconsistencies in the teaching of Roman Catholic thinkers and Papal Bulls.[391] He also explores the state of the question, and interestingly, he refers his readers to Turretin, indicating that he had clearly read his work on the fall.[392]   He contrasts Roman Catholic and Reformed thinking in terms of two options: was Adam's original righteousness natural or supernatural? He then moves on to divergent Protestant opinions, and engages with a recently deceased contemporary, Dr George Payne (1781–1848) a congregational pastor who served in Edinburgh, Blackburn and Exeter.[393] Cunningham critiques Payne's viewpoint, and argues that Payne's presentation of 'chartered benefits' is basically a new presentation of the same emphases of Roman Catholic thinkers which does not adequately recognise the actual reality of depravity in humanity.[394] Cunningham concludes

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[388] ibid., 515

[389] ibid., 503, 515

[390] ibid., 516

[391] ibid., 517 – 518

[392] ibid., 519

[393] Willliam Arthur Shaw, "Payne, George (1781-1848)" in *Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 44.* n. p.

[394] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1)*, 525

by affirming what he regards as the orthodox position – "that man's original righteousness was natural and not supernatural; that what Adam lost for himself and his posterity was not chartered benefits merely, but integral constituent elements of his moral constitution."[395]

Corruption of the Nature: Cunningham gives a brief examination of what the catechism describes as "The corruption of the whole nature." He again returns to the decrees of Trent, and acknowledges than in the main, the Council's decrees on original sin are sound and scriptural, but are hampered by vagueness.[396] The Catechism, on the other hand, stands in great contrast as a "clear, precise and definite statement".[397]

Cunningham then engages in three longer discussions. The first concerns the sinfulness of concupiscence in baptized and regenerate persons. Interestingly, this subject is also tackled by Turretin in reference to Trent.[398] The second is regarding the sinfulness of works before regeneration, and the third the sinfulness of works after regeneration.

Space will allow for a brief summary of Cunningham's approach to the first of these. Once again, he begins with definitions.[399] He then returns to the events of Trent, and he even quotes the very same decree cited by Turretin.[400] Cunningham, however, goes into much more detail than Turretin and includes an interesting historical note concerning the contribution of a Carmelite Friar named

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[395] ibid., 528

[396] ibid., 530-531

[397] ibid., 531

[398] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (vol. 1),* 639

[399] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1)*, 532

[400] Council of Trent, Session V, Canon 5, cited in Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (vol. 1),* 639 and in William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1)*, 531

Antoine Mariner.[401] No such historical detail is evident in Turretin. Cunningham then touches on

Scripture, especially the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle of James,[402] passages which are also

cited by Turretin.[403] Cunningham, following his now usual pattern, moves on chronologically to

examine the contribution of the Reformers, mentioning Luther and examining Calvin in more

detail.[404] He then concludes this section by noting the perils of the erroneous views on original sin

that contemporaneously remain in the church.[405]

4.3.2.3 Summary

It would appear that a repeated pattern is evident in Cunningham's approach. Each section of his

analysis is rooted in historical events, in particular, the Council of Trent. From this starting point, he

then traces out some key developments and opinions that have arisen since and brings the

discussion right up to his own day. Within this chronological structure, he devotes significant time to

clarifying definitions and to stating the key question at stake. In doing so, he incorporates scriptural

teaching into his presentation, although this is done to varying degrees. Finally, his analyses will

culminate in an affirmation of what he regards as orthodox.

There are no doubt strengths and weaknesses in this approach. For example, on the one hand, he

provides a greater historical grounding than Turretin, which enhances the readers understanding of

the development of thought in the aftermath of the Reformation. On the other hand, however,

although a pattern can be discerned in Cunningham's presentation, his work does not have the quite

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[401] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1)*, 533

[402] ibid., 534-535

[403] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (vol. 1),* 639

[404] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1)*, 536 – 539

[405] ibid., 541 – 542

the same clarity and ease of reference that is achieved by Turretin's rigid question and answer structure. However, the key question is not concerning the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, rather it is the extent to which the methodology Turretin and Cunningham are similar.

4.3.3   Comparing Turretin and Cunningham on the Fall

The first point to reinforce from the above analysis is that Cunningham has clearly read Turretin's analysis of the Fall, as indicated by the fact that he encourages his readers to refer to him.[406] Therefore, given that both theologians are said to be 'scholastics' it would be quite logical, and even quite likely, to discover strong similarities between the two.

Indeed, the above analysis has highlighted areas of correspondence. Both Turretin and Cunningham are careful to provide detailed and functional definitions of key words and concepts. Both make efforts to state the question. Both works have a polemical edge as they engage with opponents and seek to present the orthodox view. Both refer to Scripture and at times they exegete key biblical statements, although it would seem accurate to say that neither presentation is saturated with biblical quotations.   Both engage with historical details, although to differing degrees.

Therefore, there are clear similarities. However, there are some very significant differences, particularly in the following five areas.

4.3.3.1. Structure

Even a glance at Turretin and Cunningham indicates that their presentations are structured in very different ways. Cunningham does not employ the tight format of Turretin, and there is much more

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[406] ibid., 519

flexibility in his approach. This of course, may be explained by the fact that Cunningham's work

originated as lectures, which would perhaps be less effective if presented as questions and answers.

4.3.3.2 Distinctions

As noted above, Turretin makes frequent use of scholastic distinctions.   Cunningham, in contrast,

does not. This is an important point, because although Cunningham advocates the usefulness of

such distinctions, they are not employed by him as a primary methodological tool in his own analysis

of the Fall. This is not to say that Cunningham never used such distinctions,[407] but rather that

Turretin's frequent use of such distinctions is not copied by Cunningham. Indeed, there are even

times in Cunningham's works where he criticises the use of scholastic distinctions. For example,

Cunningham accuses the Roman Catholic scholar Cardinal Bellarmine of attempting to "involve [a]

subject in obscurity by the help of the scholastic distinction of a formal cause."[408]

4.3.3.3 Focus on Causation

As the above analysis shows, Turretin's discussion of the Fall is frequently shaped by the question of

causation and the nature of different categories of 'cause'. The same method, however, is not

prominent in Cunningham's work. This pattern is also evident in Cunningham and Turretin's work on

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[407] For example, the following quotation is attributed to Cunningham by Mackenzie and Rainy:
"To promote the spiritual welfare of students is a part of the work of students of theology, though not the direct object of a theological institute. Or, to use a common scholastic distinction, is not the *finis operis*, but the *finis operantis*. It is an object which the theological teachers, in the discharge of their functions as such, are bound to aim at."
However, it must be noted that the above quotation is focussing on student welfare, not an intricate theological topic.
Mackenzie and Rainy, *The Life of William Cunningham,* 236

Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 2, Cunningham endorses the scholastic distinction between *ex necessitate praecepti* and *ex necessitate medii.* See section 2.2.1

[408] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 2)*, 54

the topic of justification.   This is another area where Cunningham has read Turretin, as

demonstrated by a quotation,[409] and under this topic Turretin again discusses the nature of different

causes, such as meritous and formal.[410]   In Cunningham's analysis of justification, he observes and

comments on the extensive use of causative categories in the Council of Trent.[411]   He also

recognises the use of such categories by Reformed theologians, but interestingly he also commends

John Owen for saying that there is no formal cause in justification according to the strict scholastic

meaning of the expression.[412]   However, most significantly, when he comes to his own discussion of

the nature of justification, Cunningham focuses on Scripture and seeks to establish the ground of

justification by focussing especially the forensic nature of the word δικαιόω.[413]   His emphasis

therefore is not placed on causative categories to the same extent as seen in Turretin.

4.3.3.4 Engagement with Ancients

While both Turretin and Cunningham engage with numerous other writers, there is one key

difference.   Turretin incorporates the comments of ancient philosophers.   Cunningham does not.

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[409] Cunningham cites Turretin's *Institutes,* Loc, xvi, Q ii, sec v:
"in the matter of justification before God, the formal cause cannot be distinguished from the meritorious
cause, since the formal cause, in this respect, is nothing else than that, at the sight of which, or from a regard
to which, God frees us from condemnation, and accepts us to eternal life."
William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 2)*, 20

[410] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (vol. 2),* 638-639

[411] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 2)*, 16-17

[412] ibid., 21

[413] ibid., 31-32

4.3.3.5 Propositional versus Historical

Turretin's work has a strongly propositional focus, particularly highlighted by the question and answer structure in his work. Indeed, it would appear valid to say that Turretin's starting point is at a propositional level. But it is not the same with Cunningham. His starting point is historical, and although his analysis does reach a propositional realm, this is only after detailed discussion of chronological developments of different understandings of the doctrine. Indeed, Cunningham does not just discuss the propositions, he attempts to explain why the propositions have arisen.

4.3.3.6 Summary

A number of important conclusions arise from the above analysis. Firstly, Cunningham has read Turretin, therefore there is definite link between the two, which makes it reasonable to expect the former to be potentially influenced by the latter. Secondly, there are observable similarities between the two. But, thirdly, there are significant differences between them. And in terms of the question as to whether Cunningham was a scholastic, it is these differences that are of importance.

4.4   Methodological Context: Was Cunningham a Scholastic?

It will be recalled that back in Chapter 1 two categories of definition were identified in reference to scholastic methodology. One was the *narrow* definition which makes a specific link between theological inquiry and the methodological techniques of philosophy, and particularly that of Aristotle, as exemplified by the schoolmen of the late Medieval period. The other is the *broad* definition, which makes no such direct link to a particular individual or philosophy, but instead

understands scholastic method as the investigating, organising and description of a theological topic in a structured, logical and coherent manner.

When comparing Turretin and Cunningham, this study appears to have raised adequate evidence to justify classifying Turretin as a scholastic in the narrow sense. His structure, language, concepts and presentation all correspond to the narrow scholasticism described earlier.

However, when it comes to Cunningham, it seems to be the case that his methodology does not fit this narrow definition. He does not employ scholastic distinctions to anything like the extent that Turretin does, and the claim that Cunningham made ample use of scholastic distinctions does not have nearly as much supporting evidence as may have been expected. There is much less focus on Aristotelian causation in Cunningham, which is usually mentioned only when describing the views of others. Nor is there reference to other ancient philosophers. Furthermore, his starting point is historical, rather than propositional. This historical grounding in Cunningham's method means that his approach to theological enquiry is not isolated from the real-life events and developments which have occurred across the ages of ecclesiastical history. That is not to say that Turretin had no concern for history, nor is it to say that a historical starting point is un-scholastic. Rather it is simply indicating that discussion of historical context is more prominent in Cunningham's work, and this historical emphasis has a defining influence on how Cunningham structures his presentation. This marks a difference between the narrow scholastic approach of Turretin and the approach of Cunningham.

Therefore, if scholasticism is understood in only the narrow sense, Cunningham is a long way from being a definitive model of such methodology. However, if scholasticism is understood in the broader sense, then it is much more appropriate to apply the term to Cunningham. He is clearly careful in his investigation, logical in his organisation, and systematic in his presentation. Therefore, in the broad sense of the term, Cunningham's method could be classified as scholastic.

This conclusion has very significant implication for the understanding of Cunningham's methodology. Three points must be observed:

First, it must be recognised that the term scholastic is used in different ways. Therefore, if it is said that Turretin is a scholastic and that Cunningham is a scholastic, both are true, but they can mean very different things. While Cunningham's scholasticism corresponds to Turretin's in some ways, it is not the same. Care must be taken, therefore, as to how the term is used to describe Cunningham in relation to the other theologians.

Secondly, some writers have applied the word scholastic to Cunningham without defining the sense in which they are using the term.[414] This creates ambiguity and is an unhelpful approach for understanding Cunningham's method. Furthermore, some writers appear to have described Cunningham as a scholastic in its narrow sense.[415] This study has shown that such a representation of Cunningham's methodology does not take adequate account of the nature of Cunningham's approach.

Thirdly, Cunningham's scholasticism should be understood only according to the broader definition of the term, and therefore should only be applied to him in this sense.

This third point has important implications for the wider understanding of Cunningham's methodology. This is due to the fact that, as noted at the very beginning of this study, the term 'scholastic' is employed as a distinguishing feature of Cunningham. However, when it is recognised that this term can only be applied in a broad sense, then the distinguishing effectiveness of this term is greatly reduced. This is because many, if not all, of Cunningham's contemporaries could also be legitimately described as scholastic. As Muller observes:

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[414] See , for example, the quotation from S. J. Brown in the introduction

[415] For example, Honeycutt defines scholasticism fairly narrowly before linking this term to Cunningham.

> If we define "scholasticism" in terms of Thomism or Scotism, the word no longer applies precisely to the orthodox Protestant theology. But if we define the word etymologically and according to its initial intention as the technical, methodologically self-conscious teaching of the schools, it not only fits its seventeenth-century subject but can also be conceived of as an ongoing tradition of school-theology, which in one form or another is always with us.[416]

This broad definition of scholasticism would surely encompass any work that conforms to an organised, logical and coherent framework.

Consequently, this observation calls into question some of the occasions in which the term 'scholastic' has been used to contrast Cunningham with his contemporaries. The key point is that the distinguishing effectiveness of the term 'scholastic' in reference to Cunningham is inevitably reduced when understood according to the broad definition.

Therefore, it appears that each definition of scholastic method presents problems for understanding Cunningham's method. The *narrow* definition provides a detailed description of methodology, but in reality, does not seem to describe accurately Cunningham's method. As Honeycutt observes, Cunningham's approach is more nuanced than that.[417] The *broad* definition fits Cunningham, but it struggles to describe his method in any detail and fails to indicate what, if anything, makes Cunningham different from Chalmers, from Newman, or indeed from anyone else who has written theology at an academic level.

This has important implications for determining the extent to which Cunningham is to be regarded as a scholastic. However, before final conclusions are drawn, there is one more context to examine: the theology/philosophy meta-narrative.

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[416] Richard A. Muller , "Giving Direction To Theology: The Scholastic Dimension", 183

[417] Michael Honeycutt, "William Cunningham: His Life, Thought and Controversies"*,* 278-279

Chapter 5. Meta-Narrative Context: Cunningham and the Relationship between Theology and Philosophy

The intellectual movement known as scholasticism is a particular development within the wider narrative of the relationship between theology and philosophy. This meta-narrative should be born in mind when exploring scholasticism. Therefore, before concluding this study into the extent to which Cunningham in a scholastic, it is worthwhile asking how he fits into this wider narrative. Has Cunningham contributed anything to the history of the interaction between theology and philosophy?

This chapter will begin by tracing some of the main developments in the history of philosophy in the post-Reformation era. This will be followed by a brief examination of a particular philosophical approach which emerged in a Scottish context: Scottish Common Sense Realism.

In the context of these developments, this chapter will then explore how Cunningham fits into the meta-narrative of theology and philosophy. In order to achieve this, this chapter will study an essay of Cunningham's, *Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*, wherein he directly engages with a philosophical topic. Finally, an attempt will be made to establish whether or not Cunningham has made any contribution or had any influence in the great theology/philosophy meta-narrative.

5.1 Post Reformation Developments: The Enlightenment

After the Reformation, the history of philosophy stepped into a new phase as the great intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment emerged. This 'Age of Reason' began in the 17th Century and its influence shaped thinkers across Europe and beyond. Many different avenues of thought were explored in this period, too many to adequately summarize here. However, some general convictions which lay the heart of Enlightenment thinking can be summarized as follows.

Reason was given a central position in human experience. Humanity was considered to be rational and good by nature and the human race capable of ever improving and indeed reaching perfection. Beliefs, however, were only to be accepted if they were based on reason, and therefore many Enlightenment thinkers moved away from traditional theological doctrines and tended towards deism or atheism.[418] All this also meant that any claims made by theological documents such as the Bible were subject to the scrutiny of human reason and could be revised or rejected on the authority of rational thinking.

Within the broad umbrella of the Enlightenment, various particular movements arose. For example, Continental Rationalists, such as René Descartes (1596-1650), Baruch Spinoza (1634-1677) and Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) placed great emphasis on the priority of human reason and regarded knowledge as primarily *a priori* whereby innate rational principles govern human enquiry.[419] Empiricists, in contrast, such as John Locke (1632-1704), leant more towards regarding knowledge as *a posteriori*. To them the mind is a *tabula rasa* on which knowledge can be constructed through observing that which can be experienced through the senses.[420]

The emphases of this Enlightenment era have shaped subsequent generations. In particular, towards the end of the Enlightenment and in the post-Enlightenment period, three key individuals were to have great influence in the relationship between philosophy and theology.

5.2   Hume, Kant and Hegel

David Hume (1711-1776) was a Scottish philosopher whose thought was strongly shaped by scepticism. Hume asserted that neither reason nor experience can prove causal relationships. He distinguished between demonstrative and probable knowledge (a division known as Hume's fork),

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[418] M. J. Inwood, "Enlightenment" in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 253

[419] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, 177

[420] Alan Lacey, "Empiricism", in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 242

but neither are capable of proving causal relations and thus establishing a uniformity of nature. On the one hand, demonstrative reasoning may observe uniformity, but non-uniformity is always theoretically possible. On the other hand, probable reasoning presupposes uniformity of nature, and therefore does not prove it.[421]

Hume's scepticism led him to question many aspects of traditional theological belief. He criticised the teleological argument, in particular highlighting the problem of evil existing in a world created by a good, omnipotent God.[422] He also questioned the apologetic effectiveness of appealing to the reality of miracles by arguing that if sufficient proof for miracles could be presented, then the evidence would need to be so great that such a miracle would be 'naturalized'.[423] Furthermore, it was always more probable that the witnesses were mistaken, rather than that the laws of nature had been contradicted.[424]

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a man of small physical stature, but he stands as a giant in the history of thought.[425] He is said to be "perhaps the most important European philosopher of modern times."[426] Kant was struck by Hume's sceptical view of rationalism, and in response he sought to work out an understanding of how reason can be used to acquire knowledge.[427] Kant made several distinctions in approaching knowledge: First, between *analytic* and *synthetic* statements, the former being true by definition, the latter being established from observable facts.

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[421] Justin Broackes, "David Hume", in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 404

[422] Paul Helm, "David Hume" in *DSCHT,* 416

[423] ibid.

[424] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, 202

[425] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (vol. 1),* 309

[426] R. S. Downie, "Immanuel Kant" in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 466

[427] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (vol. 1)*, 312

Secondly, between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge. For Kant, *a priori* knowledge is independent of experience, whereas *a posteriori* knowledge arises from empirical, sensory experience of observable entities. And thirdly he distinguished between the *noumena,* a world apart from our experience about which we can know nothing, and the *phenomena,* the world which we do experience and which we can observe.[428]

Not all of these distinctions were original to Kant, but much of his significance lies in the fact that he managed to synthesise key developments in Enlightenment philosophy. So, his concern for *a priori* knowledge and his distinction between analytical and synthetic statements echoed the emphases of Continental Rationalists. His employment of sensory observation maintains aspects of Empiricist epistemology, and the inscrutability of the noumenal world follows the scepticism of Hume.[429]

Kant also made an influential contribution to ethics. His moral theory focussed on the categorical imperative: 'Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will to be a universal law'.[430] This, of course, is a movement away from viewing the Bible as the authoritative ethical code. Kant also opposed the traditional arguments for the existence of God. He argued that the ontological argument was a tautology and the cosmological and teleological arguments could not offer compelling rational proof of God's existence. To Kant, the question of God's existence was neither provable nor disprovable through speculative reason.[431]

Georg Hegel (1770-1831), who himself was influenced by Kant and who went on to be an important influence on Karl Marx, was particularly interested in the relationship between history and thought.

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[428] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 253
Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (vol. 1)*, 313

[429] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, 253-257

[430] R. S. Downie, "Immanuel Kant" in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 468

[431] Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought (vol. 1)*, 320

He developed a three-stage dialectical system consisting of a thesis, an antithesis and a synthesis and he applied this system to both history and abstract categories of thought. He proposed that a repeated pattern exists whereby a thesis is contrasted with its opposite, the antithesis, and then the best elements of both are incorporated into a synthesis of the two, which then becomes a new thesis, thus beginning the process again. Thus, there is an ongoing development of thought and understanding as history progresses, culminating in the goal wherein the mind should come to understand itself as the only ultimate reality.[432]   Perhaps not surprisingly, Hegel's thought has been described as "dialectical pantheistic idealism".[433]

Each of these thinkers would appear to have served to widen the gap between theology and philosophy. Indeed, at first glance the once strong realm of theology looks to have been greatly weakened by a conquering army of philosophers. So, in the Enlightenment and its aftermath, not only have theology and philosophy become estranged, one might even go so far as to say that they are left at enmity with each other.

5.3   Scottish Common Sense Realism

In a Scottish context, the impact of Enlightenment thinking gave rise to another important philosophical movement: Scottish Common Sense Realism. This movement arose prior to Cunningham's own day out of a wider commitment to Empiricism that characterised much of Scottish enlightenment thinking:

> [C]entral to the Scottish Enlightenment is the belief that the proper understanding of

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[432] Peter Singer, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 365-369

[433] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 275

both natural and social phenomena necessarily begins with careful examination of

data derived from observation and experience.[434]

Key thinkers in the Scottish Common Sense Realism movement included Frances Hutcheson (1694-1746) and, especially, Thomas Reid (1710-1796) who sought to formulate a response to the scepticism of David Hume. [435] These thinkers claimed that certain intellectual "laws, principles and powers"[436] are common to people and that sensory perception is a reliable source of knowledge, hence common sense. Thus, it is simply a matter of common sense that there is an external world, that memory is trustworthy and that evidence is observable.[437] For Reid, therefore, a response to radical scepticism could be built from a Cartesian foundation which was able to presuppose the reliability of rational thought.[438] Moreover, Scottish Common Sense thinkers, such as Reid, sought to account for the role of emotions in shaping intellectual judgements. As Roeser summarizes, "[Reid argues] that although it is through reason that we make moral judgments, moral feelings accompany many of our moral judgments and they play an important role in motivating us to do what reason determines".[439] Whether Reid adequately accounts for the role of a moral faculty in epistemology is a question still being discussed.[440] However, such emphases in Reid's thought would

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[434] Ryan Patrick Hanley, "Social Science and Human Flourishing: The Scottish Enlightenment And Today", 31

[435] Both Hutcheson and Reid were clergymen. Hutcheson, who was of Irish origin, was licensed to preach before he began lecturing in Dublin and, later, in Glasgow where he was Professor of Moral Philosophy (1729-46). Reid served as minister of Newmachar, Aberdeenshire (1737-51) before becoming regent at King's College, Aberdeen (1751-64) and Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow (1764-96).
See H. R Sefton, "Francis Hutcheson" in *DSCHT*, 419, and Paul Helm, "Scottish Realism" in *DSCHT,* 759

[436] James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy,* 7

[437] Paul Helm, "Scottish Realism" in *DSCHT,* 759

[438] George Elder Davie , "Victor Cousin and The Scottish Philosophers", 195

[439] Sabine Roeser, "Reid And Moral Emotions", 178

[440] ibid., 177-192

appear to exemplify a more positive approach to human epistemological capacity than the scepticism of thinkers such as Hume.

In terms of the theology/philosophy narrative, Scottish Common Sense Realism opened a door to reconciling these two realms because key theological truths, such as the existence of God, do not need to be proved by reason, they can be accepted as common sense.

> Reid argued that 'principles of common sense' supported arguments for the existence of a benevolent deity.[441]

Therefore, this movement was influential among 19th Century Scottish church figures, such as Thomas Chalmers,[442] and it also permeated into North American theological circles, particularly through Princeton Seminary:

> There can be no doubt that the Princeton theologians took for granted certain truths which they regarded as self-evident and which provided the foundation on which other truths rested. This reflected their adherence to the Scottish School of Common Sense Realism, which Archibald Alexander, [Charles] Hodge's mentor, clearly endorsed in his Inaugural Lecture in May 1812. Entitled, 'The Nature and Evidence of Truth', the lecture developed the theme that all human beings necessarily believe certain intuitive truths. These truths included the reliability of our senses (we can be confident that what we see corresponds to objective reality: hence the label, 'Realism'), the principle of causality (every change has a cause), the trustworthiness of human testimony, and the authority of conscience.[443]

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[441] Charles Bradford Bow, "Introduction: Scottish Philosophy in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World", 608

[442] Paul Helm, "Scottish Realism" in *DSCHT,* 760

[443] Donald Macleod, "Classical Reformed Theology and its Postmodern Critics" a review of *Faith, Form and Fashion* by Paul Helm. n. p. Cited 13th March 2018.
Online: http://www.donaldmacleod.org.uk/dm/classical-reformed-theology-and-its-postmodern-critics/

All of these developments in the history of philosophy contributed to set the intellectual landscape in which Cunningham walked. The key question is, how does he fit into this meta-narrative? In order to explore this question, this chapter will examine an essay of Cunningham's in which he directly engages with an issue in the realm of philosophy: *Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*.[444]

5.4   Cunningham and Philosophy: Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity

Cunningham's essay, *Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity,* is written as a response to a charge made by Sir William Hamilton regarding the incompatibility of the philosophical views of both Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Chalmers in relation to the teaching of John Calvin and the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith. William Hamilton (1788-1856) was Professor of Philosophy at Edinburgh University and one of the latter exponents of Scottish Common Sense Realism.[445] He followed this tradition by maintaining that knowledge and experience are based on the operation of general common sense principles.[446] Furthermore, he laid a particular emphasis on *immediate perception* without the need for a medium.[447] He also incorporated elements of Kantian philosophy into Common Sense Realism in that he "denied the possibility of direct knowledge of the infinite".[448] McCosh notes that in Hamilton's work there is "a constant reference to the name of Kant."[449] Indeed, it has been noted that Scottish philosophers, such as Hamilton, felt at home with

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[444] William Cunningham, *Reformers,* 471-524

[445] Douglas F. Kelly, "Sir William Hamilton" in *DSCHT,* 392

[446] ibid.

[447] James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy,* 433

[448] Douglas F. Kelly, "Sir William Hamilton" in *DSCHT,* 392

[449] James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy,* 426

Kant's philosophy because "in the earlier stages of the process it bore a significant resemblance to the dominant home-grown philosophy, that of Thomas Reid.[450]   However, although Hamilton continued in the tradition of Reid's philosophy, he did so with a willingness to make his own modifications. For instance, Hamilton emphasised the limitation of sensory perception in providing detailed knowledge of a reality and that any such knowledge is never external or independent from the experience one's own organism.[451] As such, Hamilton has been noted to have stood in a bridging relationship between Scottish and German philosophy.[452]

In 1852, various articles that Hamilton had written for the *Edinburgh Review* were collected and published, along with additional works, in *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform*. It was part of the contents of this work that provoked a response from Cunningham.

Cunningham's essay, *Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity* originally appeared in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* in January 1858 and was subsequently included in *Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation.* In it, Cunningham engages with Hamilton's claims, and in doing so he reveals several important points in regard to how he approached the interface between philosophy and theology. A summary of Cunningham's approach is as follows.

After introducing his topic and providing some background information, Cunningham begins his task by setting out some key definitions. He defines the doctrine of philosophical necessity as follows:

> The advocates of this doctrine maintain that there is an invariable and necessary connection
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> between men's motives and their volitions, - between objects of desire and pursuit as seen

[450] Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy,* 293

[451] George Elder Davie , "Victor Cousin And The Scottish Philosophers", 195

[452] Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy,* 293

and apprehended by them and all their acts of volition and choice; or that our volitions and choices are determined by the last practical judgments of the understanding.[453]

This position is in contrast to the libertarian approach wherein, according to Cunningham, the will has a liberty of indifference and a self-determining power whereby a choice can be made in accordance with or in opposition to one's motives.[454] In typical *Quaestio* fashion, Cunningham highlights that "the dispute manifestly turns wholly upon a question as to what is the law which regulates those mental processes that result in, or constitute, volitions or choices".[455]

The primary focus of Cunningham's attention in his essay is not the question of whether this doctrine is true; Cunningham is content to acknowledge that there is nothing in the Bible that either proves or disproves the doctrine of philosophical necessity.[456] His concern centres on the claim made by William Hamilton that the doctrine of philosophical necessity is contrary to the teaching of Calvin and the Westminster Confession of Faith. This claim means that, according to Hamilton, theologians who hold to the doctrine of philosophical necessity, notably Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Chalmers, are corrupting pure Calvinism and denying the Westminster Confession. The aim of Cunningham's essay is to refute this claim. His basic argument is that Calvin (and Augustine) never really discussed the psychological question of philosophical necessity.[457] As for the Westminster Confession, in Cunningham's view it neither precludes nor requires men to hold to the doctrine of philosophical necessity.[458] After setting out the background to the controversy and identifying key definitions and questions, Cunningham's essay proceeds to examine, first, why the

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[453] William Cunningham, *Reformers,* 484

[454] ibid.

[455] ibid.

[456] ibid.*,* 482

[457] ibid.*,* 488

[458] ibid.*,* 483

doctrine of philosophical necessity is not excluded by Calvinism or the Westminster Confession, and second, why it is not required. The evaluation of Cunningham's argument is outwith the purposes of this study, but the reader will no doubt find the essay to be detailed, measured and stimulating. The important point for this study is that in the course of presenting his argument, Cunningham raises several points which help reveal how he approaches the relationship between philosophy and theology in his own methodology. These are summarized below.

5.4.1   Theology and Philosophy are Distinct

Cunningham makes it clear that he regards theology and philosophy as distinct realms. This is evidenced by his repeated assertion that the "the doctrine of necessity is properly and primarily a question in philosophy".[459] Cunningham, therefore, is happy to allow philosophy to function within the bounds of its own sphere. So, when it comes to questions regarding the principles which regulate the general volitional activity of the human mind, to Cunningham these are questions which can be discussed by "philosophers upon philosophical grounds".[460] Cunningham is quite happy to acknowledge that there are psychological and metaphysical questions that the Bible does not discuss, and therefore, the individuality of the realms of theology and philosophy should be maintained. Two important concerns are evident in Cunningham here. First, it is clear that as a theologian, his interest and focus are on the theological aspect of any issue.[461] He appears content to leave the philosophy to the philosophers. But secondly, he is clear that philosophy should not encroach into theology's territory. He laments the "injurious tendency" of assuming identity or

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[459] ibid., 509. See also 484

[460] ibid., 510

[461] ibid., 496

connection between a theological and a philosophical doctrine.[462] For Cunningham, the distinction between these two great realms should not be blurred.

However, that is not to say that Cunningham denies any relationship between the two realms. On the contrary, his essay also reveals something of his convictions as to how philosophy and theology should interact.

5.4.2   Theology is not bound to Philosophy

In defending Chalmers and Edwards, Cunningham argues that it is wrong to argue that these men were anti-Calvinistic. This is because the doctrine of necessity is a philosophical question and not a theological one. To Cunningham the realms are distinct; the philosophical question of necessity is not a theological condition for being a Calvinist. However, having said that, Cunningham is not happy with the pattern he observes in Chalmers and Edwards whereby a philosophical doctrine is used to define a theological one:

> We believe the charge [against Chalmers and Edwards] to be utterly groundless; while at the same time we do not altogether approve of the aspects in which Edwards and Chalmers have represented this matter.[463]

His particular concern is in terms of maintaining a distinction between the doctrine of necessity and the doctrine of predestination. To Cunningham, the former is philosophical, the latter theological. And while the two are obviously related, they are not the same. Chalmers, however, does not make this distinction, and Cunningham disapproves:

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[462] ibid., 514

[463] ibid., 483

Dr Chalmers, speaking of the philosophical doctrine of necessity and the theological doctrine of predestination, says, "It is one and the same doctrine in different aspects and with different relations. . . . Let the doctrine of philosophical necessity, or *theologically speaking,* the doctrine of predestination, be firmly established as it may," etc.

We are not prepared to concur in this identification of the philosophical doctrine of necessity with the theological doctrine of predestination. We regard it as unwarrantable and injurious.[464]

In particular, Cunningham is concerned to point out that the lines of deduction between the doctrines of necessity and predestination do not flow equally in both directions. So, while on the one hand, if a theologian holds to necessity, this will logically connect with their doctrine of predestination, on the other hand, if a theologian believes in predestination it is not required that he or she will be a Necessitarian. Cunningham gives a detailed explanation as to why this is the case and concludes that there is a "hiatus in every process in which we attempt to establish a logical transition from predestination to necessity, which cannot be filled up."[465] The important point for this study is that Cunningham is arguing that one can hold a theological doctrine without being forced to adopt the philosophical viewpoint related to it. This is his objection to Chalmers's view that necessity and predestination are effectively the same, or at least that they are so closely related that they stand or fall together.[466] For Cunningham, holding a theological doctrine does not mean that you are compelled into holding a comparable philosophical position. To Cunningham, theology is not bound to philosophy.

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[464] ibid., 508

[465] ibid.*,* 509

[466] ibid.*,* 516

5.4.3   Theology is not dependent upon Philosophy

In terms of the interaction between theology and philosophy, Cunningham is also anxious to point out that he does not view theology as being dependent on philosophical explanations. Indeed, although he highlights that theology and philosophy are separate realms which can often function without having anything to do with each other, there are times when the two overlap.[467] When that overlap takes place, the trump card in areas of contradiction lies in the hand of the theologian:

> If philosophers should profess to deduce – from a survey of men's mental constitution – conclusions which contradict any doctrine revealed in Scripture, this should be attended to and answered; and no great difficulty has been experienced in dealing with allegations of this sort.[468]

Some (especially philosophers) may argue that this is a grand claim on the part of Cunningham, but it should be noted that this is a logical outworking of Cunningham's firm convictions regarding the authority of Scripture.

This conviction leads Cunningham to raise another complaint against Edwards and Chalmers, namely that their handling of the doctrine of necessity focuses too much on philosophy and leaves important theological truths in the background:[469]

> Edwards and Chalmers have not gone in the face of the Confession, or afforded any plausible ground for stamping upon them the brand of heresy. But they have certainly in their engrossment with this philosophical doctrine of necessity, about which the Confession of Faith says nothing, left out of view an important theological doctrine [the bondage of the will to sin because of depravity], to which the Confession gives prominence; and which

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[467] ibid., 504

[468] ibid., 510

[469] ibid., 515

certainly ought to have a distinct and definite place assigned to it in the exposition of the scheme of Christian doctrine."[470]

The important point in regard to this study is that here Cunningham is revealing the issues which matter to him in terms of how theology and philosophy relate. So, while philosophy is autonomous in its own sphere and in many ways a useful tool, when the great intellectual realms collide, philosophy is always subordinate to theology. To Cunningham, the authority of Scripture is absolute, and theology does not need a philosophical basis on which to stand:

> The impression has been produced, that the maintenance of some of the leading and peculiar doctrines of Christianity is most intimately connected with, or rather dependent upon, the establishment of certain philosophical theories; and this impression is neither true nor safe.[471]

5.4.4   Scripture is Primary

This primacy that Cunningham gives to Scripture is evidenced by the fact that he repeatedly returns to the Bible in order to address the question of human volition. So, while Edwards and Chalmers focus on primarily philosophical issues, Cunningham prefers to look to the Bible. Indeed, he strongly emphasises that the scriptural teaching regarding the bondage of humanity's will should be "openly proclaimed, and pressed prominently upon our attention, instead of being overlooked or thrown into the background".[472] In particular, he takes a broad, biblical theology based approach that focuses on what he describes as humanity's fourfold state: unfallen, fallen, renewed and glorified.[473]

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[470] ibid., 516

[471] ibid., 516

[472] ibid., 515

[473] ibid., 496, 497, 503, 520

Cunningham identifies this as the approach taken in the Westminster Confession and it is clear that, to Cunningham, it is the redemptive historical narrative of Scripture that provides the key to understanding humanity's volitions, not the intricacies of philosophical speculation.

5.5   Cunningham and the Theology/Philosophy Meta-narrative

What do the above observations teach us about how Cunningham fits into the wider narrative of how theology and philosophy interact? Several important points arise:

5.5.1   Cunningham and Scottish Common Sense Realism

First, the above analysis reveals indications of philosophy shaping Cunningham's theology. In particular, Cunningham's approach displays characteristics which appear to correspond to features of Scottish Common Sense Realism. For example, he is repeatedly concerned about the need for adequate evidence, thus revealing at the very least that he regarded sensory perception as possible and reliable. [474] He is also clearly happy to draw causal connections between evidence and conclusions. He would thus fall into line with those who do not follow the scepticism of Hume but instead assume a certain level of common competency in humanity in terms of acquiring knowledge. Indeed, elsewhere Cunningham praises Chalmers's response to Hume as "the most accordant with the dictates both of sound philosophy and common sense."[475]

However, it must be noted that these points of comparison do not necessarily mean that Cunningham was a Scottish Common Sense Realist:

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[474] ibid*.,* 477, 479, 480, 485

[475] William Cunningham, *Theological Lectures,* 165

There is no necessary connection, however, between Classical Reformed Theology and

Scottish Common Sense Realism (which did not command universal assent even among

Scottish theologians).[476]

Indeed, Paul Helm observes that a reliance on the senses for gaining knowledge was endorsed by

Francis Turretin.[477] It is therefore possible that Cunningham's appeal to the senses arose from his

study of Turretin more so than from his adherence to the Scottish School. Or perhaps it came from

both.

5.5.2   Cunningham's Epistemological Foundation

Despite the apparent links to Scottish Common Sense Realism, it would appear from the above

analysis that any tendency in Cunningham for philosophy to shape theology is dwarfed by his desire

for the pendulum to swing in the other direction. For Cunningham, it is theology that should be

shaping philosophy. At the heart of Cunningham's engagement with the doctrine of philosophical

necessity is the conviction that, ultimately, theology does not depend on Aristotle, Plato or anyone

else from the realm of philosophy. A particular philosophy is never the epistemological basis for

Cunningham's pursuit of knowledge. And that of course raises the question, what is the

epistemological foundation of Cunningham's worldview?

And the answer is clear: for Cunningham, the foundation of knowledge lies in his doctrine of

Scripture:

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[476] Donald Macleod, "Classical Reformed Theology and its Postmodern Critics" a review of *Faith, Form and Fashion* by Paul Helm. n. p. Cited 13th March 2018
Online: http://www.donaldmacleod.org.uk/dm/classical-reformed-theology-and-its-postmodern-critics/

[477] Paul Helm, *Faith, Form and Fashion*, 58

Everything which is taught us in Scripture is equally incumbent upon us, as a matter of duty

or obligation, to believe, as every statement rests equally on the authority of God.[478]

He therefore tells his students:

Listen to the voice of God speaking in his word, and subordinate everything to the object of

ascertaining and understanding fully what he has told you. . . . .

The subjects of study to which your attention has been hitherto directed need not, and

should not be altogether neglected, but they must be subordinated to the study of divine

truth in God's word.[479]

Cunningham regards the study of Scripture as the highest area of intellectual inquiry.[480] He views

the Bible as authoritative; and that authority is not dependent on any philosophy, or indeed on

anything else.

Therefore, the starting point for Cunningham's epistemology is that the Bible is true, inerrant and

authoritative. And for Cunningham, it appears that that authority is not just in terms of theological

questions discussed on theological ground. On the contrary, he appears to regard Scripture as the

epistemological foundation for all knowledge:

God's works should be all studied with a reference to him who created and sustains them.

The things that are made should be ever contemplated as having been made and regulated

for the purpose of making known the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and

Godhead; and moral philosophy, when taught as it should be, unfolds all that can be known

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[478] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 2)*, 503

[479] William Cunningham, *Theological Lectures,* 13, 15

[480] ibid.*,* 5

of God, and of man's relation to him, from the light of nature and the works of creation and providence.[481]

This is evidenced by the fact that even a question like the doctrine of necessity, which to Cunningham is a philosophical issue, is still under the all-embracing scope of the Bible's authoritative teaching. This is why he laments the lack of biblical emphasis in Chalmers. Yes, Cunningham does concede that if the Bible does not give a definitive answer, then philosophers can discuss the issues as much as they like; there is a freedom for the philosopher because theology and philosophy are distinct. However, above all discussions lie the Bible's overarching epistemological authority. And if the philosopher contradicts Scripture, or if they step onto theological ground, then to Cunningham, biblical teaching is always authoritative. So, while Cunningham allows for a philosophy and theology to operate with a measure of independence, when it comes to setting the boundaries between each realm and governing the interaction between the two, the rules are set by the theologian and the Bible's word is final.

This approach of Cunningham is particularly important because his conviction would surely stand in contrast to typical Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment presuppositions. The Enlightenment was the period when reason became the dominant rule in determining knowledge. Everything else, including the Bible, was subject to the scrutiny and authority of human reason. Cunningham's stubborn adherence to the authority of Scripture shows that this is an approach with which he is not in agreement.

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[481] ibid., 5-6

5.5.3   Cunningham's Place in Theological and Philosophical History

All of this indicates that Cunningham operates at an important period in the history of theology and philosophy because the authority of the Bible, which had been a generally accepted presupposition in the days of both the Medieval and Protestant Scholastics, was now no longer presupposed to the same extent in a post-Enlightenment context. Therefore, whilst acknowledging the inevitability of generalization, it is worthwhile briefly outlining where Cunningham stands in the historical development of this theology/philosophy meta-narrative.

Back in ancient Greece, philosophy and theology were effectively one; the great intellectual schemes of men like Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus were aiming to answer the great questions of reality, both human and divine. The emergence of Christian theology, however, brought a new and distinctive claim for understanding divine truth. Early on, men like Justin and Origen tried to argue that these two realms were still essentially the same. However, gradually thinkers emerged who sought to filter philosophy in order for it to become subordinate to the inherent authority of the Bible. So, from men like Augustine all the way through to the Medieval Scholastics, philosophy became the handmaid of theology.

This continued in the post-medieval world, and in the aftermath of the Reformation this pattern was maintained in the Protestant Scholastics who used philosophical methods to arrange and clarify theological truth from a Reformed standpoint. At the same time however, the realm of philosophy began to regain its status as an autonomous realm, and so during the Enlightenment it became increasingly the case that, for many thinkers, philosophy ruled over theology, and the authority of the Bible became more and more undermined.

By the time of the 19th Century, for many thinkers philosophy was no longer simply a helpful tool to come to the aid of theologians. Philosophy was a sword with which the authority of biblical doctrine could be overthrown. So instead of theologians like Aquinas, Beza and Turretin using philosophy to aid their teaching, Cunningham lived in a world where philosophers like Hume, Kant and Hegel had

used philosophy to question and ultimately undermine the authority of biblical teaching. Cunningham, therefore, is swimming against the intellectual tide of his day.

Consequently, three important points arise in terms of Cunningham's place within this meta-narrative:

First, Cunningham stands in continuity with generations of theologians who came before him. He is to be numbered among those who sought to preserve an epistemology that was shaped by the authority of the Bible. He therefore stands in line with Augustine, the Reformers and the Protestant Scholastics who regard the Bible's teaching as authoritative and who say that when theology and philosophy meet, the latter is subordinate.

Secondly, Cunningham stands in the midst of change. He held his convictions as to the authority of Scripture amid a new intellectual scene. In terms of historical trajectory, it is undeniable that Medieval Scholastics and Protestant Scholastics thought and worked in contexts wherein they did not face the intellectual opposition to Christian truth that Cunningham faced in a post-Enlightenment context. Cunningham's world was post-Hume, post-Kant, and even theologians, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, incorporated Kantian philosophy into their theology.[482] That of course means that Cunningham's rigorous defence of the authority of Scripture is in the midst of an intellectual world which by and large would not agree with him. Therefore, Cunningham sought to be a defender of the authority of Scripture in the post-Enlightenment era. And as such, he has been a model to which his successors have looked.

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[482] J. B. Webster, "Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher" in *NDT,* 619-620
Stephen Priest, "Friedrich Daniel-Ernst Schleiermacher" in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* 845

For instance, Hugh Martin (1822-1885), a theologian and mathematician who pastored at Free Greyfriars, Edinburgh from 1858-1865,[483] endorses Cunningham's approach:

> The science of theology is perfectly competent within her own sphere for discharging all the duty which lies to her hand. . . . . [Cunningham's essay on the Calvinism and the doctrine of philosophical necessity] wisely declines binding up the validity of a purely theological demonstration with the fate or the foundation of a philosophical theory.[484]

Likewise, in the context of discussion the doctrine of the testimony of the Holy Spirit, B. B. Warfield includes Cunningham as a model to follow in contrast to Enlightenment influenced theology:

> A spurious revival of the doctrine [of the testimony of the Holy Spirit] was, for example, set on foot by Schleiermacher in his strong revulsion from the cold rationalism which had so long reigned in Germany to a more vital religious faith; and sentences may be quoted from his writings which, when removed out of the context of his system of thought, almost give expression to it. But after all, his revival of it was rather the revival of subjectivity in religion than of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit as the basis of all faith: and it has borne bitter fruit in a widespread subjectivism, the mark of which is that it discards (as "external") the authority of those very Scriptures to which the testimony of the Spirit is borne. Not in such circles is the continued influence of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit to be sought or its continued advocacy to be found. If we would see it in its purity in the modern Church we must look for it in the hands of true successors of Calvin — in the writings, to name only men of our own time, of William Cunningham and Charles Hodge and Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck.[485]

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[483] Sherman Isbell, "Hugh Martin" in *DSCHT,* 549

[484] Hugh Martin, *The Atonement*, 12

[485] B. B. Warfield, *Works (vol. 5),* 125

Therefore, in the new intellectual context in the aftermath of the Enlightenment, Cunningham's defence of biblical truth in the midst of change and challenge has been noted and valued by theologians both contemporary to Cunningham and in the generations since.

Thirdly, as the above analysis has already implied, Cunningham's view of Scripture is so high that it has a definitive role in shaping his worldview. Therefore, his concern does not seem to be for theologians to maintain the scholastic pattern of utilising philosophy as a tool for theological enquiry. If anything, he criticises that approach as a potential source of corrupting influence.[486] Rather Cunningham believes that the scope of biblical teaching is so broad that, when required to, it can engage with the questions of philosophy. So, when it comes to the question of necessity, Cunningham is not overly interested in the philosophical or psychological answers. He is concerned about the biblical answer to the question, and he formulates his understanding by exegeting biblical texts and looking through the lens of a biblical theological framework that is grounded in covenant theology.

The same pattern has been observed in other areas of Cunningham's work. In reference to Cunningham's work on the bondage of the will, Hugh Martin writes:

> We have this great theologian discarding a philosophical or metaphysical defence of divine truth, and falling back on the only real and satisfying defence of it upon the doctrine of federality.[487]

All of this is indicating that Cunningham regarded Scripture as the epistemological foundation of his worldview. To Cunningham, theology does not bow to philosophy in terms of theological questions. But neither do theology and philosophy stay completely out of each other's way. To Cunningham,

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[486] William Cunningham, *Historical Theology (vol. 1),* 415

[487] Hugh Martin, *The Atonement,* 12

theology presents us with a worldview wherein the Bible has authority, and other intellectual realms are to be understood within this presupposition.

In terms of the ongoing theology/philosophy discussion, it is interesting to remember that in the days since Cunningham, theologians (in the West) have operated in the same atmosphere of hostility as history has moved on through modernity and into post-modernity. Within that trajectory, there have been theologians who, like Cunningham, have sought to swim against this anti-biblical tide and maintain a worldview that is shaped by the authority of the Bible.

So, in the late 19th Century, Abraham Kuyper, in his inaugural address as Professor of Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam, boldly proclaimed:

> Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry, "Mine!"[488]

In the same way, in the 20th Century, Cornelius Van Til states that the philosopher is directly subject to the Bible.[489] To Van Til "human knowledge must be subordinate to God's revelation; it must *presuppose* that revelation. . . . . we must hold our presupposition firmly in every area of life, including our philosophical work."[490]   Van Til writes:

> A truly Protestant view of the assertions of philosophy and science can be self-consciously true only if they are made in the light of the Scripture. . . . . [P]hilosophy and science must, as well as theology, turn to Scripture for whatever light it has to offer on general principles and particular facts.[491]

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[488] James D Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper, A Centennial Reader,* 488

[489] Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics,* 82

[490] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 531

[491] Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 61

And in the 21st Century, John M. Frame writes:

> I am committed to a worldview that comes from the Bible. . . . . The Word of God is, among other things, the authoritative statement of the Christian's worldview.[492]

All three of the above assertions clearly come from the same school of thought. Indeed, a direct line can be drawn from Kuyper to Van Til to Frame. Frame was a student of Van Til and acknowledges Van Til's influence in shaping his approach.[493] Likewise Van Til admired Kuyper.[494]

Now it is not necessarily the case that that direct line extends back to Cunningham, but as B. B. Warfield has exemplified above, Cunningham's name has been listed alongside Kuyper's as one of the 'true successors of Calvin'.   The important point is that there is clearly a correspondence between the approach of Cunningham and that of subsequent thinkers who have sought to defend the authority of Scripture in formulating a worldview within which the great realms of theology and philosophy operate. Cunningham may not have been the first, or the most influential, but it is significant that theologians such as Kuyper, Warfield and Van Til could look back at Cunningham and find that he has already taken a stand for the worldview-defining authority of the Bible.

5.6   Meta-Narrative Context: Was Cunningham a Scholastic?

 What bearing does the above analysis have on the question of the extent to which Cunningham should be regarded as a scholastic?

On the one hand, it would be true to say that the place of an individual within the theology/philosophy meta-narrative does not necessarily determine whether or not he or she is a

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[492] John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology,* 2, 4

[493] ibid., xxvii

[494] John M. Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of his Thought,* 20, 129

scholastic. This is especially reinforced if it is remembered that scholasticism is primarily to be

understood in terms of methodology and therefore is not determined by an individual's personal

beliefs, historical circumstances or subsequent influence.   Therefore, Cunningham's view that one's

whole worldview should be under the authority of Scripture gives him a place in the history of the

relationship between theology and philosophy, but it does not reveal whether scholastic

methodology is part of the worldview-framing process. The answer to that question requires an

analysis of the sort found in the previous chapter of this study.

On the other hand, however, there is one important point regarding Cunningham's scholasticism

that arises from the study of the wider narrative of theology and philosophy. The above analysis has

indicated that Cunningham has been placed alongside other theologians, such as Hodge, Kuyper and

Bavinck, as part of a group who, by and large, are like-minded in their presuppositions, methods and

doctrines. The unifying feature of these is an adherence to the theology arising out of the Reformed

tradition, and for that reason, this school is often referred to today as Classic Reformed Theology.[495]

This theology is characterised by a use of clear definitions and distinctions, a desire to organise

doctrine in a systematic way, and an attempt to explain how separate concepts connect together.[496]

All of these rest on the presupposition that the Bible is true and authoritative. Nevertheless, some

aspects of Classic Reformed Theology correspond to features of scholasticism. For example, Paul

Helm writes that

> The Reformed systematitians, in common with many others, take the basic operations of
>
> logic for granted.[497]

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[495] Paul Helm, *Faith Form and Fashion*, 11

[496] ibid., 29

[497] ibid.*,* 17

However, the important point to note is that Classical Reformed Theology is a much broader category than the label scholastic. And in terms of studying how Cunningham's theology is to be classified, the question arises as to whether a broader label, such as Classic Reformed Theology, would be more appropriate than the narrower designation of Scholasticism.

With all these considerations in mind, it is now time to attempt to draw some conclusions.

Conclusion

As this study has shown, William Cunningham has frequently been categorized as a scholastic. Indeed, he has been called *the* scholastic of the Free Church. That classification seems straightforward and has gone more or less unchallenged in the century and a half since Cunningham died. However, frequency, longevity and simplicity do not necessarily equate to accuracy. So, the question remains: to what extent is it appropriate to describe William Cunningham as a scholastic?

This study has shown that there are several reasons that would favour, at a brief glance at least, classifying Cunningham as a scholastic. He clearly read and appreciated scholastic theologians, particularly the Protestant Scholastics of the 17th Century. He recognised and understood the usefulness of scholastic distinctions. He regularly employed a *Quaestio* and *Disputatio* orientated method. And he himself taught in a theological school. No doubt it is the presence of these features in Cunningham that have given rise to his reputation as a scholastic.

However, this study has also shown that there are important, indeed definitive, aspects of scholasticism that are either absent from Cunningham or very rare. Despite assumptions to the contrary, Cunningham rarely used scholastic distinctions in the way that Thomas Aquinas or Francis Turretin did. Nor did he structure his work according to typical scholastic frameworks. And he did not seem interested in appealing to Aristotle. If anything, he was suspicious of the influence of Greek philosophy. Furthermore, a close comparison between Cunningham and a Protestant Scholastic like Turretin reveals as many differences as it does similarities, if not more.

These observations indicate that the simple claim that Cunningham is a scholastic is not confirmed by the evidence. The fact that Cunningham understood scholastic distinctions does not make him a scholastic. The very same need to understand these distinctions is reinforced to this day:

> "If we want to make sense of the best Christian theologians from the patristic period,
>
> through Thomas Aquinas, through the period of Reformed Orthodoxy, and into the 20th

century, sooner or later we will need to understand the Aristotelian distinction between substance and accidents."[498]

But the desire to understand distinctions does not make Cunningham the scholastic of the 19th Century any more than the above quotation makes Kevin DeYoung the scholastic of the 21st.

Furthermore, as this study has shown, the features of scholasticism associated with Cunningham are at the very least equally evident among his colleagues in the Free Church and in many of his contemporaries in the wider theological circles of the 19th Century.

All of these factors would suggest that Cunningham should only be classified as a scholastic to a limited extent. As noted in both Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, it appears that the scholastic method is often thought of in different ways. Some take a narrow definition, looking for a close connection to Aristotle or another influential philosopher and giving attention to the specific methodological characteristics modelled by the Medieval and Protestant Scholastics. Others take a much broader definition which regards scholasticism as a general approach to theology focussing on order, coherence and systematising.

The research of this study would warrant the conclusion that Cunningham was a scholastic only in the broad sense of the term. But it would also seem valid to say that used in this sense, the term scholastic loses much of its precision for categorizing Cunningham's method.   Calling Cunningham a scholastic in a broad sense would do little to distinguish him from other theologians, particularly those who worked alongside him in the 19th Century.   That of course makes it hard to justify labelling Cunningham as *the* scholastic of the Free Church. Furthermore, as Chapter 5 has shown, Cunningham's approach was influenced and has been influential within a wider context of how theology and philosophy interacted in a 19th Century context.

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[498] Kevin DeYoung, "Theological Primer: Substance and Accidents", n. p. Cited 21st March 2018.
Online: https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/theological-primer-substance-accidents/

For these reasons, it would seem inappropriate to suggest that 'scholastic' is adequate as a single definitive label for Cunningham's methodology. All of these points indicate that Cunningham's contribution as a theologian contains significant elements that lie beyond the scope of the term scholastic. This raises two important implications with which this study concludes.

First, it is arguable that there is a need for a reappraisal of the mindset that labels, or even dismisses, Cunningham as a scholastic. This approach is not verified by an analysis of Cunningham's work. In the introduction it was noted that Donald Macleod has suggested that the few people who know Cunningham dismiss him as a scholastic.[499] Perhaps now this observation can be complemented by saying that these who do dismiss Cunningham as a scholastic do not really know him very well.

Secondly, if the term scholastic is only appropriate for Cunningham to a limited extent, then in order for Cunningham's method and contribution to be understood, there is a need for something more accurate. But that raises the crucial question; if 'scholastic' is not the best term to use for describing Cunningham's methodology, then what is? Clearly, in the study of William Cunningham there is much work still to be done.

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[499] Donald Macleod, "Scotland's Greatest Theologian", 51

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