

## NOTES

### THOMAS AQUINAS AND CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Anyone who has read Roman Catholic theological works from the 1950's will remember a stream of articles and books on the salvific value of Christ's resurrection from such writers as F. X. Durrwell, Stanislas Lyonnet, and David Stanley. These scholars took their inspiration at least partly from a rediscovered theme in St. Thomas Aquinas. His commentaries on Paul's letters, along with the sections on the Resurrection in the *Summa theologica*, served to alert them to the essential role which Christ's resurrection plays in our justification. At the Pontifical Biblical Institute Stanley defended in 1952 his doctoral thesis, which was later published under the title *Christ's Resurrection in Pauline Soteriology*. Durrwell's *The Resurrection* had its first (French) edition in 1950, and Lyonnet's long article, "La valeur sotériologique de la résurrection du Christ selon saint Paul," appeared in *Gregorianum* for 1958.<sup>1</sup>

The mention of these writers raises a question: Why have we largely lost interest in what they (and others) had to say about the redemptive function of Christ's resurrection? Is it simply that they rebuked their theological predecessors for forgetting that Christ was not only put to death for our sins but also raised for our justification (Rom 4:25), and with the truth once recalled there remained nothing more to be said? Like the Captain in Strindberg's *Dance of Death*, we registered the point and passed on. Besides, from the early 1960's pressing problems connected with Vatican II and the ecumenical movement monopolized much theological attention.

I suspect, however, that inherent weaknesses in the Durrwell-Lyonnet-Stanley movement helped to effect a collapse of interest in their line of soteriological appraisal of Christ's resurrection. It was more than a matter of fresh problems and new developments relegating their work to relative oblivion. What these scholars noticed in Aquinas and applied to their study of St. Paul was the theme of Christ's risen humanity forming "the perfect instrument of our justification and, ultimately, of our eschatological salvation."<sup>2</sup> It was to this that Stanley pointed when he wrote: "While Paul never thought in terms of instrumental causality, it is possible to find a conception of redemption in Paul's letters which corresponds to it."<sup>3</sup> In highlighting the role of Christ's risen humanity as the *instrument* of our salvation, Stanley and other scholars

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 295-318.

<sup>2</sup> *Christ's Resurrection in Pauline Soteriology* (Rome, 1961) p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20 f.

drew attention to a notion which Aquinas certainly developed but which proves quite uncongenial to modern personalism. An instrument remains something dead which lies inertly in the hands of some skilled user—the scalpel in the surgeon's gloved hand or the hammer in the grip of the construction worker. The image seems foreign to the contemporary preference for human spontaneity and free engagement. It is natural to welcome the title of Dorothee Sölle's book *Christ the Representative*.<sup>4</sup> We would react negatively if that work were entitled *Christ the Instrument*.

What Lyonnet and other writers did in the 1950's was to recall the application of Aristotelian instrumentality in Aquinas' account of Christ's resurrection. But they failed to read creatively other items in Aquinas' discussion which bear on questions that enjoy continuing vitality. In this article I want to examine certain features of Aquinas' approach to the Resurrection which touch on contemporary interests. For purposes of convenience we can concentrate on questions 53 to 56 of his Christology, Part 3 of the *Summa theologiae*.

#### THE RESURRECTION RESTORED

To some readers Aquinas' discussion of Christ's resurrection might seem small, if not stale, beer. In a precritical fashion he accepts the Easter texts of the Gospels at their face value, takes scriptural glosses seriously, and appeals to the Church Fathers as authorities. If A. N. Whitehead rightly described Western philosophy as a series of footnotes to Plato, we might call Western theology (at least until recent decades) a series of footnotes to Augustine. Aquinas shows himself very much a child of his times in his respect for Augustine, as well as in his antiquated biological notions and the rest of the medieval lore that is so noticeable on first reading those four questions on the Resurrection.

Yet Aquinas emerges as oddly distinct from many theological predecessors and successors in that he is ready to treat Christ's resurrection at considerable length. The *Cur Deus homo* of St. Anselm (1033/34–1109), a work which deeply affected medieval Catholic theologians, Calvin, Melancthon, and many other theologians right down to the mid-twentieth century, manages to discuss the redemption while completely ignoring Christ's resurrection. To remark on that Lutheran preoccupation with the cross which plays down the Easter events has become a commonplace. Many modern Catholic writers must face similar criticism. Thus, Jesús Solano could publish a 326-page work on Christology which includes less than a page on the Resurrection.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Tr. David Lewis (London, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> *Sacrae theologiae summa* 3 (Madrid, 1956) 11–329.

Bernard Lonergan's lecture notes for his course on Christology at the Gregorian University<sup>6</sup> betray an approach which remains centered on the Incarnation (rather than the Resurrection) and for which the Anselmian attitude towards Christ's death still determines the manner of raising the question about redemption. These notes, which run to 546 pages, include no more than a few incidental remarks about the Resurrection.<sup>7</sup>

This one-sidedness has gone beyond theology to affect also Christian piety. Catholic stations of the cross stop at the burial of Jesus and fail to include a station of the Resurrection. But there should be little need to pile up further evidence to establish the fact that Western Christianity has concentrated on Calvary and neglected to celebrate adequately the Resurrection.

Stanley suggests that this one-sidedness, at least in Catholic circles, arose from the emphasis which post-Reformation theology placed upon the "satisfactory" nature of Christ's redemptive death, as well as from the exigencies of controversy.<sup>8</sup> Without doubt, preoccupation with the link between the Mass and Christ's crucifixion, along with other polemical concerns, contributed to a neglect of the Resurrection. But Stanley fails to note that a one-sided cross-orientation also characterized both pre-Reformation theology and Protestant theology. What requires explanation is a bias in the whole tradition of Western Christianity. A complex set of causes appears to have been at work. The soul, its immortality, and man's "inner" life came to bulk larger in the religious imagination than the resurrection of the body. A Manichean irreverence towards man's physical being also played its part here. Inevitably, a weakened interest in our resurrection implied less concern for Christ's resurrection. For the Pelagian elements in Western Christianity, a crucifixion-oriented trend offered more possibilities for man's spontaneous activity, whereas the Resurrection confronts us as God's sovereignly free action. No created agent, not even Jesus' humanity, could share in that divine intervention. Finally, the individualizing trend in Western theology and practice found Christ's passion and death more congenial than His resurrection. To accept the future promised through the Easter event (in which God revealed Himself as the one who has raised and will raise the dead) involves us inescapably in acknowledging the Resurrection as our common future. Towards the

<sup>6</sup> These notes, entitled *De Verbo incarnato*, were produced in 1961 and used until at least 1964.

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 425-27; the last thesis (17) mentions the Resurrection in its wording but concentrates on "the just and mysterious law of the cross."

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

end of his *Church Dogmatics* Karl Barth warns against the "Nordic morbidity" of "an abstract *theologia crucis*" which neglects to include a "*theologia gloriae*." So far from Western Christianity running the risk of forgetting the cross, it needs to learn the lesson of Easter joy from the Eastern Church.<sup>9</sup> It may perhaps be fairer to speak of a "Western" rather than simply a "Nordic" morbidity. At all events, Aquinas proves to be a notable and happy exception from the long-standing preoccupation with Good Friday at the expense of Easter Sunday.

#### QUESTION 53

Aquinas opens his discussion of the Resurrection by assuming the fact and seeking to expound its meaning, just as he begins the whole of his Christology by presupposing the fact of the Incarnation. The first article of question 53 asks whether "it was necessary for Christ to rise again." Easter faith is to be explained, not challenged. Aquinas starts from where he actually is—a believer in the risen Christ. Readers of modern theology will recall that this procedure does not satisfy Wolfhart Pannenberg,<sup>10</sup> and some other contemporary writers. These theologians propose a starting point outside the circle of Easter-faith, with the intention of justifying this faith more successfully. For them the process expressed by the axiom *credo ut intelligam* becomes reversible: "I examine the historical evidence from the New Testament in order that I might believe in Christ's resurrection." However, Barth,<sup>11</sup> Karl Rahner,<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Bultmann,<sup>13</sup> and others agree with Aquinas that the theologian properly begins his discussion from his Resurrection-faith and not with the methodological fiction of some neutral starting point.

Aquinas responds to his opening question by offering five reasons: Christ rose again (1) to commend the divine justice, (2) to instruct our faith, (3) to raise our hope, (4) to set in order the lives of the faithful, and (5) to complete the work of our salvation. The procedure of elaborating reasons to show why the fact of the Resurrection was "necessary" invites the following general comment. Undoubtedly it is legitimate for a theologian to explain how some aspect of the Christian faith

<sup>9</sup> *Church Dogmatics*, tr. G. T. Thomson et al. (Edinburgh, 1936-69) 4/1, 558 f.

<sup>10</sup> *Jesus—God and Man*, tr. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia, 1968) pp. 53-114; "Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu," *Kerygma und Dogma* 14 (1968) 109.

<sup>11</sup> *Church Dogmatics* 4/1, 335.

<sup>12</sup> "Resurrection," *Sacramentum mundi* 5, 323 f., 329 ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. H. W. Bartsch (Harper Torchbooks; New York, 1961) pp. 38-43, esp. pp. 40 f.

is intelligible in itself and harmoniously consistent with other truths. However, an appeal to certain principles as a means of clarifying some fact can only too readily deteriorate into an argument from principles to facts. If not here, only too often elsewhere, Aquinas and other medieval theologians are disposed to maintain that so-and-so is the case about such things as Christ's human consciousness because they believe this state of affairs to be fitting or downright necessary. If the introduction of critical historical methods has forced theologians to be more conscientious about the establishment of facts, the argument from principles to facts still persists in subtler forms. We meet a latter-day example of the procedure *decurt ergo fecit* in G. W. H. Lampe's account of Christ's resurrection.<sup>14</sup>

An examination of Aquinas' five reasons reveals the following points. Reasons 2 and 3 suggest man's *subjective* appropriation of redemption through the decision to believe and hope. Reasons 4 and 5 concern rather the role of the Resurrection in the so-called *objective* redemption. Reason 1 connects the death and resurrection as the two sides of a single process. Where the crucifixion of Christ constitutes His humbling Himself to death out of love and obedience, the Resurrection is the exaltation which the divine justice confers on those who humble themselves for God's sake. The theme of vindication which is adumbrated here will be fully expounded in Karl Barth's interpretation of the Resurrection as "the verdict of the Father." For Barth, Christ's passion and death express the Father's "No," His resurrection the Father's "Yes."<sup>15</sup> Like Barth, Rahner,<sup>16</sup> Bultmann,<sup>17</sup> and others, Aquinas acknowledges the unity of cross and resurrection. Unlike Bultmann, he locates this unity ultimately not in the area of meaning, but in *the action of God* who exalts the humble.

From the outset Aquinas seems aware that he dissents from his predecessors' preoccupation with the crucifixion. The third objection in article 1 introduces a principle which has haunted Western theology and Christian living. If "Christ's passion sufficed for our salvation," it was not necessary for Him to rise from the dead. So long as full credit for our redemption is ascribed to His death, His resurrection can become at best a highly useful (if not strictly necessary) proof of Chris-

<sup>14</sup> G. W. H. Lampe and D. M. MacKinnon, *The Resurrection* (Philadelphia, 1968). Ultimately on what he calls "not historical but religious" grounds, Lampe declines to accept the story of the empty tomb. From "the truth of the Incarnation" he deduces the fact that Jesus' body decayed in the grave; His "resurrection cannot be of a different order" from our resurrection (p. 97; cf. pp. 58 f. and 99).

<sup>15</sup> *Church Dogmatics* 4/1, 283 ff., esp. pp. 297 ff.

<sup>16</sup> *Theological Investigations* 4 (tr. Kevin Smyth; Baltimore, 1966) 128, 131.

<sup>17</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 41.

tian claims. Aquinas' reply anticipates a fuller treatment which he will offer on "the causality of Christ's resurrection" in question 56: "Christ's passion effected our salvation, properly speaking, by removing evils; but the Resurrection did so as the beginning and exemplar of all good things." Within an Aristotelian scheme the suffering of Christ finds classification under the general heading of final causality as a meritorious cause; His resurrection will be interpreted as both efficient and exemplary cause of our justification and resurrection.

Article 2 of question 53 ("Was it fitting for Christ to rise again on the third day?") sounds innocuously medieval, and Aquinas' answer seems to content itself with an undisturbed Chalcedonian belief. Resurrection on the third day formed a highly appropriate testimony to the God-man. To confirm our faith in His divinity, we required a prompt return from the dead, not a resurrection postponed until the end of the world. At the same time, some interval between death and resurrection was needed to show that He was truly man and had truly died. A death followed by immediate resurrection could have suggested that His death had not been genuine.

In the course of his discussion Aquinas raises two arguments which still retain their vitality. First, surely Christ's resurrection should not have been deferred but should have taken place on the same day (objection 2)? This line of questioning will bring us to reduce the gap between crucifixion and resurrection and eventually identify them. An opposite objection (no. 1) would suggest instead that Christ's resurrection should have been postponed until the end of the world. "Members ought to be in conformity with their head. But we who are His members do not rise from death on the third day, since our rising is put off until the end of the world. Therefore, it seems that Christ, who is our head, should not have risen on the third day, but that His resurrection ought to have been postponed until the end of the world." In recent years Lampe has mounted a similar argument from a solidarity based on "the truth of the Incarnation." By becoming man, the Son of God entered fully into our human condition both during lifetime and after death. Hence His body decayed in the grave, as do the bodies of other men.

Elsewhere I have taken up Lampe's case.<sup>18</sup> Here it is interesting to note the style of Aquinas' reply to the problem suggested by our solidarity with Christ in His so-called Mystical Body. "The head and the members conform in nature, but not in power. For the power of the head excels that of the members. Hence, to show forth the excellence of Christ's power, it was fitting that He should rise on the third day,

<sup>18</sup> *Man and His New Hopes* (New York, 1969) pp. 71-74.

while the resurrection of the rest is put off until the end of the world." Aquinas' quaint biological notion that the head of a body possesses more power than the other limbs points to an essential distinction which Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 15 between Christ's resurrection and that of others. The Apostle's readiness to assimilate our resurrection to that of Christ's has its limits. Only Christ "became a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45); no one else was "raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25). This difference, which Lampe glosses over, is respected in various ways by other contemporary writers. Thus, Bultmann speaks of Christ "rising into the kerygma" and interprets the Easter-faith of the primitive Church as expressing the saving value of His death. But Bultmann will not talk of *our* rising into the kerygma nor understand Easter-faith as affirming such meaningfulness in our personal death.<sup>19</sup>

Article 3 of question 53 ("Was Christ the first to rise from the dead?") looks like a harmless attempt to relate to Christ's own resurrection the various raisings of dead persons reported in the Old Testament and in the Gospels. One distinction introduced by Aquinas deserves retrieval. Whereas Christ enjoyed a "true and perfect resurrection" which excluded even the possibility of dying again, the other dead persons "returned to life in such a way that they were to die again." Their "imperfect" resurrection, which amounts to the resuscitation of a corpse, meant the resumption of life under the ordinary conditions of space and time. Aquinas' distinction between "perfect" and "imperfect" resurrection, if expanded, provides one useful means for assessing the claim that Christ's resurrection was a "historical event." Properly speaking, only the "imperfect" resurrection should be so described.<sup>20</sup>

#### QUESTION 55

The last article of question 53 ("Was Christ the cause of His own resurrection?") and the whole of question 54 (on "the quality of the risen Christ") remain the least promising sections of Aquinas' discussion. Much of what he says here about the reunification of Christ's body and soul proves at best unexciting, at worst quaintly medieval. Hence I move straight on to the treatment of "the manifestation of the Resurrection" in question 55.

The first article ("Should not Christ's resurrection have been manifested to all men?") assumes that there were post-Easter appearances only to "certain special men" and that these encounters differed from

<sup>19</sup> *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (New York, 1964) p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> See my *Man and His New Hopes*, pp. 68-70.

any later Christian experiences of the risen Lord. Not all contemporary scholars agree with this assumption. Apropos of the meeting with the risen Christ to which Paul refers in 1 Cor 15:8, John Macquarrie observes: "It is not unreasonable to suppose that it is . . . on a par with the encounters which subsequent believers may have had with the risen Christ."<sup>21</sup> We are dealing here with something enormously important and cannot afford to let Macquarrie off lightly. What is at stake is man's access to God through the risen Christ. Do the official witnesses to the Resurrection play an indispensable role, or can men—at least in principle—know the risen Lord independently? In this regard, could faith prove ultimately free from the necessity of being mediated socially through the testimony of certain privileged apostolic witnesses? Should we acknowledge a democracy of experience vis-à-vis the risen Christ, so that all postresurrection generations would be on an equal footing with respect to the possibility of such experience?

Like Barth,<sup>22</sup> Aquinas points to the *revelatory* function of the Resurrection: "Christ's resurrection was not manifested to everyone, but to some, by whose testimony it could be brought to the knowledge of others." Equivalently Aquinas is distinguishing two classes of believers vis-à-vis revelation: (1) the official witnesses to the risen Lord, who enjoyed the "foundational" revelation and whose proclamation brought the Church into being, and (2) those later Christians whose encounter with God in Christ remains dependent upon that apostolic witness. A second line of argument is suggested when Aquinas discusses the (first) objection, that "since Christ's passion was manifested to all . . . the glory of the Resurrection ought to have been manifested to all." Effectively Aquinas holds that the differing status of Christ's death and resurrection explains the divergence between the "publicity" of the two events. As Christ suffered with a body subject to the normal laws of human existence, His passion and death were in principle open to ordinary observation. But we cannot presuppose the same publicity for that event in which He rose in glory to assume a heavenly mode of existence with His Father. Rather than constituting "a return to the familiar conditions of life," the Resurrection was a passage "to an immortal and God-like kind of life." "Christus resurgens non rediit ad vitam communiter omnibus notam, sed ad vitam quandam immortalem et Deo conformem" (article 2).

Aquinas' position requires strengthening through more sophisticated scriptural backing. Briefly, the New Testament (apart from the fourth Gospel) does not claim that any apostle witnessed the actual death

<sup>21</sup> *The Scope of Demythologizing* (London, 1960) p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> *Church Dogmatics* 3/2, 448 f. and 454 f.; 4/3, 281 ff.

(and burial) of Jesus. His crucifixion was, in any case, a public execution the sheer occurrence of which lay beyond dispute. Concerning the Resurrection, two views emerge which do not involve the apostles in exactly the same way. According to one supposition (A), which lies behind 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Jesus went straight from His tomb to heaven and appeared from time to time on earth. In another supposition (B), which Luke-Acts attests, He first returned from the grave to the earth and ascended into heaven only after He had spent some time with the disciples. For this view, the Easter experiences during the forty days (in which the risen Lord met, spoke, and ate with a privileged group) differed fundamentally from all later encounters with Him. As portrayed in Acts, not even Paul's Damascus-road experience was on a par with the Emmaus-road encounter. What of supposition A? Does it imply that the postresurrection encounters experienced by the apostles were on a par with encounters which subsequent believers may have had with the risen Christ? It does not seem so. When "last of all" (1 Cor 15:8) the risen Lord appeared to Paul, this episode constituted his apostolic calling and the basis of his proclamation (see also 1 Cor 9:1; Gal 1:11 ff.). Paul laid claim to later ecstatic experiences, "visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor 12:1 ff.), but not on the ground that these experiences validated his official role as apostolic witness. If Paul carefully distinguished such occurrences from the encounters listed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, this distinction should a fortiori hold true of any encounters between later believers and the risen Christ.

Article 2 ("Was it fitting for the disciples to have seen the Resurrection itself?") raises the point that no New Testament witness claims to have been present at the Resurrection itself. How, then, can we speak of "witnesses of the Resurrection"? Aquinas remarks reasonably that the apostles could testify to the Resurrection because they saw Him alive whom they had known to be dead. The apparently trivial issue adumbrated here will recur in the recent debate initiated by Willi Marxsen.<sup>23</sup>

The other article which deserves our attention in question 55 is number 5 ("Should Christ have demonstrated the truth of the Resurrection by proofs [*argumentis*]?"). Here we reach a question which still divides theologians into two strongly opposed factions: the role of proof for Christ's resurrection. Aquinas states the heart of the matter in objection 1: "Faith is required regarding Christ's resurrection. Hence proofs are out of place here." In more developed and sophisticated forms this

<sup>23</sup> *The Significance of the Message of the Resurrection for Faith in Jesus Christ*, ed. C. F. D. Moule (Naperville, 1968) pp. 15-50.

contention has haunted later theology. Thus, Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs argue that if testimony were allowed to establish the Resurrection, the freedom of faith would be endangered. The apostles to whom the risen Christ appeared had to believe not because of, but in spite of, their having seen Him. Their experience—so Ebeling<sup>24</sup> and Fuchs<sup>25</sup> contend—acted as an obstacle to faith.

Aquinas agrees that “proofs” in the sense of proofs drawn from human reason remain useless for demonstrating matters of faith. But “proofs” in the sense of visible signs may be at work to manifest the truth, as was the case with Christ’s appearances manifesting the truth of His resurrection. “The merit of faith,” he explains “arises from this, that at God’s bidding man believes what he does not see.” The fourth Gospel portrays Thomas the Apostle seeing the physical reality of the risen Christ but believing in His divinity. The fact that certain visible signs provide the means by which someone comes to faith does not “totally rob faith of its substance (*non totaliter fidem evacuat*).” Yet “a more perfect faith” would not “require such aids to belief.”

Let me draw attention to two noteworthy features of Aquinas’ position. Unlike Ebeling, Fuchs, and others, he refuses to suspect and depreciate visible signs, even if he allows that a readiness to believe without such signs characterizes “a more perfect faith.” In other words, the believer accepts signs if they are given, but does not unconditionally demand them. Second, in Aquinas’ view, accepting the truth of the Resurrection is equivalent to believing in God. Although article 5 is explicitly concerned with “proof” for Christ’s resurrection, this turns out to be a matter of believing in God through visible signs. The close link between the Resurrection and faith in God has been recently highlighted again. Jürgen Moltmann insists on Christ’s resurrection as the event par excellence through which God is revealed and man’s believing hope is invited.<sup>26</sup>

#### QUESTION 56

Finally, we reach question 56, where Aquinas applies Aristotelian categories of efficient and exemplary causality to Christ’s resurrection. As well as forming the exemplar to which we must conform, the Resurrection—rather, the risen Christ—constitutes the instrumental cause both for man’s present justification (“the resurrection of the soul”) and for the future completion of justification in our bodily resurrection. “Christ’s resurrection” functions as “the efficient and exemplary cause

<sup>24</sup> *Word and Faith*, tr. J. W. Leitch (London, 1963) p. 301.

<sup>25</sup> *Zum hermeneutischen Problem in der Theologie* (2nd ed.; Tübingen, 1965) p. 304; cf. my *Man and His New Hopes*, pp. 76–79.

<sup>26</sup> *Theology of Hope*, tr. James W. Leitch (New York, 1967) esp. pp. 139 ff.

of our resurrection," inasmuch as "Christ's humanity, according to which He rose again, is as it were the instrument of His divinity and works by its power" (art. 1, reply to obj. 3). It was this introduction of exemplary and instrumental causality which caught the attention of Stanley, Lyonnet, and others in the 1950's. However, both categories prove alien to modern personalism. Properly speaking, an exemplar functions as a model, the first product, according to which a maker fashions further specimens of the same type. Instrumental efficient causes like hammers, brushes, and typewriters require the intervention of a principal cause before they can effect anything. The scope of Aquinas' contribution to the theology of the Resurrection should be sought elsewhere than in his application of Aristotelian categories of causality.

A summary of Aquinas' achievement must include the following items. In the face of a preoccupation with the crucifixion, he asserts the essential place of the Resurrection within an adequate Christology. His point of departure is his belief in the Resurrection, not some alleged neutral position. While he takes Christ's death and resurrection as the two sides of a single process effected by the divine action, he refuses to identify death and resurrection. Aquinas points to that essential difference between our resurrection and Christ's resurrection which makes His resurrection after three days intelligible. Likewise, he distinguishes Christ's "perfect" resurrection from any "imperfect" resurrection (= the resuscitation of a corpse). He maintains a fundamental difference between the apostolic encounters with the risen Christ and those of later believers. Finally, he recognizes "visible signs" attesting the Resurrection, even if he refuses to allow that ordinary human proofs apply here.

Many of these points lie concealed beneath a medieval overlay or are stated with cryptic brevity. Yet we will find at least some issues raised by Aquinas which recur in modern theology and certain lines of solution which retain their value. With respect to Christ's resurrection (as well as elsewhere in theology), there exists some danger that we may out-Bourbon the Bourbons, learning nothing and remembering nothing.

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