

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY (I) – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Social Salvation
 Convener: Robert Trent Pomplun, University of Notre Dame
 Moderator: Joshua R. Brown, Mount St. Mary's University
 Presenters: Elissa Cutter, Georgian Court University
 Andrew Gertner Belfield, St. Bonaventure University

This session was comprised of two papers, each approximately twenty-five to thirty minutes in length, followed by a question-and-answer session that filled the remainder of the allocated time.

In her paper, "Salvation and the Port-Royal Community: A Feminist Historical-Theological Reconstruction of the Theology of Mother Angélique Arnauld," Elissa Cutter spoke about the social aspects of salvation found in the writings of Mother Angélique Arnauld (1581-1661). Cutter showed that, for Mother Angélique, the common life of the convent was the locus of where salvation occurred, at least for her audience. Cutter presented her recovery of Mother Angélique as an example of "an explicitly feminist historical-theological methodology" seeking to recover women as historical sources of theological reflection.

Andrew G. Belfield discussed the theme of social salvation found in the early Franciscan tradition in his paper, "'Worthy Acts of Penance' in Early Franciscan Soteriology." Belfield discussed the way that the authors of the *Summa Halensis* (traditionally attributed to Alexander of Hales) reworked St. Anselm's theory of satisfaction around the concept of penitence. These authors understood Christ's contrition at human sin to be the key to satisfaction, and thus salvation is found by imitating and participating in Christ's contrition. This gave central importance to the performance of "worthy acts of penance" that cannot be ultimately done without one's neighbors.

The session was attended by around fifteen people including the presenters and administrative team. The discussion that followed was wide-ranging and very dialogical, which prompted both speakers to clarify points and speak to further research on their respective topics. Among the questions and insights raised, Elissa Cutter was asked how Mother Angélique's emphasis on the virtue of humility ran contrary to important claims of founding feminist theologians that humility is a masculine trait. Cutter admitted it is uncertain how modern feminist theologians today might adapt figures like Mother Angélique into their own projects, but underscored the importance of recovering their voices nonetheless. Belfield entertained several questions on the relationship between the authors of the *Summa Halensis* and other scholastic figures and representatives of the mystical theological tradition such as Julian of Norwich.

Overall, this session sparked a lively conversation and was a wonderful experience for all participants.

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