Check for updates

Article

ITQ

Irish Theological Quarterly
2022, Vol. 87(4) 280–296
© The Author(s) 2022
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/00211400221127119
journals.sagepub.com/home/itq
SAGE

The Anatomy of Salvation: Robert Grosseteste on Christ's Death, Passion, and Satisfaction

William Crozier
University of Durham, UK

Abstract
While Robert Grosseteste's contribution to the 13th-century debate on the reason for the Incarnation is well known, his novel theory of what caused Christ's death, and in particular the role which it plays in shaping his understanding of the atonement, has largely gone unexplored. This article first outlines Grosseteste's belief that Christ died not as a result of the cross, but rather as a result of his divine will, focusing specifically upon on his scientific arguments showing that at the moment of his death Christ's body was still 'healthy and whole.' The article then shows how Grosseteste makes his theory of Christ's self-immolation central to his account of satisfaction. Particular attention is paid to the role of suffering in Grosseteste's theory of the redemption and how he places charity and the Aristotelian notion of friendship at the heart of Christ's satisfactory act, thereby prefiguring something of Aquinas's key ideas.

Keywords
cross, charity, friendship, Grosseteste, satisfaction, self-immolation

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed something of a resurgence in the study of the philosophy and scientific discoveries of the 13th-century Bishop of Lincoln and polymath, Robert Grosseteste (1168–1253).[1] As the plethora of new translations, editions, and projects

1 I am particularly grateful to Dr Rik Van Nieuwenhove for having read and commented upon earlier versions of this article. Full acknowledgement must also be made of the funding which I have received from the Leverhulme Trust as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow. Unless stated otherwise, translations are my own.

Corresponding author:
William Crozier, University of Durham, 2 Ford Street, Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0SQ, UK.
Email: william.e.crozier@durham.ac.uk

have revealed, Grosseteste offered many penetrating insights into the nature of the natural world and the place of human beings within it.[2] Relatively little, however, has been written recently on Grosseteste's many important theological contributions, several of which, it is fair to say, exerted a profound, indeed paradigmatic, influence upon a host of later 13th- and 14th-century thinkers, including, most notably, St Bonaventure (1217–74).[3] Perhaps the most original theological contributions made by Grosseteste are to be found in his Christological reflections. In his *On the Cessation of the Laws* (*De cessatione legalium*), dated to around 1231–35, Grosseteste offered what was arguably the first truly systematic treatment of the counter-factual question which was to become central to so much of later Franciscan Christology,[4] namely, whether Christ would have become incarnate even if Adam had not sinned.[5] As Grosseteste makes clear in book

2 To see this one need only consider the Ordered Universe Project based in Durham University's Department of History. During its existence, the project has organized various conferences devoted to Grosseteste's scientific writings and has produced several important critical editions and translations of these works. These include: Giles E.M. Gasper, Cecilia Panti, Tom C.B. McLeish, and Hannah E. Smithson eds., *Knowing and Speaking: Robert Grosseteste's De Artibus Liberalibus (On the Liberal Arts) and De Generatione Sonorum (On the Generation of Sounds): The Scientific Works of Robert Grosseteste*, vol. 1. (Oxford: OUP, 2019); Greti Dinkova-Bruun, Giles E.M. Gasper, Michael Huxtable, Tom C.B. McLeish, Cecilia Panti, and Hannah E. Smithson eds, *The Dimensions of Colour: Robert Grosseteste's De Colore* (Toronto: PIMS, 2013). For an extensive overview of Grosseteste's literary corpus and the dating of his works see S. Harris Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln 1235–1253* (Cambridge: CUP, 1940).

3 One particularly important recent study on Grosseteste's theology is James R. Ginther's *Master of the Sacred Page: A Study of the Theology of Robert Grosseteste ca. 1229/3–1235* (London: Routledge, 2004). Grosseteste's influence on Bonaventure, particularly concerning the ontological identity of matter and its relationship to light, is well attested. Cf. Étienne Gilson's *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938), 271–93. As shown elsewhere, Grosseteste's influence on Bonaventure was not restricted to theological and philosophical issues; instead the Bishop also influenced several aspects of Bonaventure's scientific thinking, particularly his understanding of the nature and causal identity of colour. Cf. William Crozier 'Of Light and Colour: Some Reflections on an Unedited Set of *Quaestiones* on Colour Attributed to St. Bonaventure.' This will be published as part of the forthcoming conference proceedings of the *Science, Imagination, and Wonder—Celebrating the Legacy of Robert Grosseteste* conference held at Pembroke College Oxford, 3–6 April 2018.

4 The question of whether Christ would have become incarnate even if Adam had not sinned had been raised by the 11th-century Benedictine Abbot Rupert of Deutz (1075/80–1129). In his *De gloria et honore filii hominis super Mattheum*, Rupert offered a lengthy study of the question of whether Christ's incarnation was eternally predestined irrespective of sin. Whilst detailed, Rupert's treatment of the question, unlike Grosseteste's, nonetheless failed to have any significant impact beyond his immediate theological circle. Cf. the edition of Rupert's text edited by Rhabanus Maurus Haacke, *Corpus Christianorum—Continuatio Medievalis*, vol. 29 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1979).

5 Robert Grosseteste, *De cessatione legalium*, Richard C. Dales and Edward B. King, eds, *Auctores Britannici* vol. 7 (Oxford: OUP, 1986). For an English translation of the *De cessatione legalium* see Stephen M. Hildebrand trans., *On the Cessation of the Laws, The Fathers of The Church: Medieval Continuation Series*, vol. 13 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012). All translations from the *De cessatione legalium* are

three of the *Cessation*, his answer to this question is a resounding yes.[6] The self-diffusive nature of God's goodness, coupled with the beatific end for which the soul is ordained and the economy of God's grace in the church and the sacraments, all demand that Christ's incarnation be eternally predestined and thus not dependent upon the Fall.[7] As James McEvoy notes, what Grosseteste presents us with in *De cessatione legalium* is a sharply incisive argument; one which, whilst conceding the need for satisfaction *post lapsum*, and therefore affirming the core ideas of Anselm's *Cur deus homo?*, nonetheless views the primary, or rather originating, motivation for the incarnation not as the remedying of sin, still less the restitution of a thwarted divine *telos*, but rather the crowning of creation and its loving union with God.[8] As the *De cessatione legalium* puts it, all creatures 'sigh' for the coming of Christ:

> For no one doubts that all things were made for man in his best condition (*optimum statum hominis*). On account of this, the end of all created things in this sensible world is the Church triumphant, and in particular the end of all would be the single head of this Church. For this

taken from Hildebrand's edition. Famously Grosseteste writes in the *De cessatione legalium*: '*Verumtamen, an Deus esset homo etiam si non esset lapsus homo non determinant aliqui de sacris expositoribus in libris suis quos ego adhuc inspexerim, nisi fallat me memoria mea. Sed magis videntur insinuare quod si non esset lapsus homo, non esset Deus homo; et ideo solum Deus factus sit homo ut hominem perditum repararet. Videntur tamen esse raciones efficaces ad ostendendum simpliciter quod Deus esset homo etiam si numquam lapsus fuisset homo. Quapropter, omittentes ad presens illas rationes per quas probant sacri expositores quod oportuit Deum esse hominem ut restauraret perditum hominem, querimus an Deus esset homo etiam si non fuisset lapsus homo*.' *De cessatione legalium*, pars. 3, cap. 1, n. 2, 119.

6 As Peter Raedts has highlighted, amongst the earliest witnesses to Grosseteste's arguments as articulated by the *De cessatione legalium* are the Oxford mendicants Richard Rufus of Cornwall OFM and Richard Fishacre OP. Interestingly, where Fishacre, a Dominican, willingly aligns himself with the arguments articulated by the *De cessatione legalium*, Rufus—in noted contrast to his Parisian Franciscan counterparts Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle—is openly hostile to the position which Grosseteste articulates. After producing a summation of Grosseteste's arguments for the eternal predestination of Christ's incarnation, Rufus caustically remarks in his Oxford *Sentences Commentary*: '*Ecce de omnibus hiis non curo. Nam ut predixi, magis consentit anima mea in contrarium. Ait enim Augustinus de hoc super primum Ioannis omelia 6: 'Ideo venit in carnem ut moreretur pro nobis.'* On Grosseteste's argument that the incarnation is required for the completion of the world and the unification of all reality, Rufus argues: '*Et si oporteret his aliquid asserere, magis putarem quod [Deus] non fuisset homo, nisi peccasset homo, et ambo ab eterno fuerunt prescita a Deo. Nam ait Augustinus de verbis apostoli omelia 73 prope finem: 'Quare venit in mundum? Peccatores salvos fecere, alia causa non fuit quare veniret in mundum. Non enim de celo ad terram merita nostra, sed peccata duxerunt. Hec est causa cur veniret, peccatores salvos facere.*' Quotes taken from Raedts, *Richard Rufus of Cornwall and the Oxford Tradition of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), at 235.

7 Cf. esp. *De cessatione legalium*, pars. 3, cap. 1–2, 119–38. For a recent study on Grosseteste's thinking on the eternal predestination of the incarnation and its connection to the redemption see Giles E.M. Gasper, 'Creation, Light, and Redemption: Hexaemeral Thinking, Robert Grosseteste, and the Summa Halensis' in Lydia Schumacher ed., *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context* (Berlin: De Gruyter: 2020), 299–320.

8 Cf. James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 131–32.

> reason, both time and every creature await (*expectarent*) and, in their own way, sigh (*suspirarent*) for the God-man, the head of the Church. When he comes, because he would be the chief end of all (*ipse esset finis omnium principuus*), it would be the fulfilment of time (*plenitudo temporis*). For the true fulfilment of something is the end for which it was striving, and in this way the God-man himself would be the 'firstborn of every creature' (Col. 1.15).[9]

While Grosseteste is rightly hailed as having opened up new ground with his account of the *ratio incarnationis*, one which clearly anticipates the positions of Alexander of Hales (1185–1245) and John of La Rochelle (1200–45) in the *Summa Halensis*, and of course the much more well-known contributions of Bl. John Duns Scotus (1266–1308), his belief in Christ's eternal predestination is not—so I should like to suggest—the most novel, nor indeed most controversial, aspect of his Christology.[10] This epithet, instead, belongs to a rather underexplored and easily overlooked aspect of his thought, namely his account of Christ's death and how it served to procure the satisfaction required for salvation. What Grosseteste argues in the *Cessation*, and indeed in several other important texts—including his sermons *Ex rerum initiarum*,[11] *De triplici ierarchia humana*,[12]

9 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 2, n. 2, 133–34; Hildebrand, op. cit., 170. 'Nulli dubium enim quin omnia sint facta propter hominem et propter hominem secundum optimum statum hominis. Quapropter finis omnium factorum in hoc mundo sensibili est ecclesia triumphans, et maxime finis omnium esset illius ecclesie capud unionem. Quapropter et tempus et omnis creatura expectarent et suo modo suspirarent ad hominem-Deum capud ecclesie, quo adveniente, cum ipse esset finis omnium precipuus, esset plentitudo temporis. Vera enim cuiusque plenitudo est finis propter quem est adepticio, et secundum hunc modum ipse homo-Deus esset primogenitus omnis creature, quia finis prior est in intentione quam sint illa que sunt ad finem.'

10 Like Grosseteste, the *Summa Halensis* clearly sides with the idea that the perfection of creation, and the union of all finite reality with God, requires that Christ's incarnation be preordained irrespective of sin. '*Ergo si summum bonum, existente creatura, non se diffundit in creaturam, adhuc erit cogitare maiorem diffusionem quam diffusionem eius. Si ergo eius debet esse summa diffusio quia est summum bonum, convenientius et quod se diffundat in creatura; sed haec diffusio non potest intelligi summa, nisi ipse uniatur creaturae; ergo convenit quod Deus uniatur creaturae et maxime humanae, sicut ostensum est; ergo, posito quod ipsa non esset lapsa, adhuc ei uniretur summum bonum.*' *Summa Halensis*, lib. 3, inq. un., tract. 1, q. 2, tit. 2 (Firenze: Quaracchi: 1948), 41. For recent secondary literature on the allegiance of the *Summa Halensis* to the doctrine of the incarnation's eternal predestination, see Justus Hunter, 'The Contribution of the *Summa Halensis* to the Reason of the Incarnation' in Lydia Schumacher ed., *The Summa Halensis: Doctrines and Debates* (Berlin: DeGruyter: 2020), 141–52. Note also that in his earlier *Quaestiones disputatae antequam esset frater*, Alexander of Hales affirms the position that the incarnation served a purpose beyond that of the reparation of humanity, specifically the self-diffusion of the divine goodness within creation. Cf. Alexander of Hales, *Quaestiones Disputatae Antequam Esset Frater*, q. 15, mem. 4, arg. pro. *Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica*, tom. 19. (Firenze: Quaracchi, 1960), 208.

11 Cf. Servus Gieben, 'Robert Grosseteste on Preaching, with the Edition of the Sermon *Ex rerum initiatorum* on Redemption' in *Collectanea Franciscana* 37 (1967), 120–41. All subsequent quotations from *Ex rerum initiatorum* are taken from Gieben's edition.

12 Extracts of this text pertaining to Christ's death are to be found in James McEvoy, 'Grosseteste on the Soul's Care for the Body: A New Text and New Sources for the Idea' in Gunar Freibergs ed., *Aspectus et Affectus: Essays and Editions in Grosseteste and Medieval Intellectual Life in Honour of Richard C. Dales* (New York: AMS, 1993), 37–56. English text at 38–39; Latin

and *Tota pulchra es*[13]—is that neither the cross itself, nor indeed Christ's passion as a whole, caused the God-man's death. Instead, the *mors Christi* occurred at the command of his divine will, thus meaning that his death was an act of self-sacrifice or, as McEvoy puts it, an act of 'self-immolation.'[14]

At the moment of his death, Christ's body, so Grosseteste contends, not only possessed the strength of youth, but was in fact still 'healthy and whole' (*sanus et integer*).[15] As such, it was still capable of supporting life. The result is that the force which severed Christ's soul from his still-healthy body, and which was thus ultimately responsible for his death and the satisfactory act worked through it, was not a 'creaturely' one; instead, as we will see, it possessed a decidedly supernatural origin. Christ's, death, in essence, resembled something akin to a miracle. It was an act of supernatural intervention within the order of nature. To support this highly controversial claim, Grosseteste articulates two closely related strands of reasoning. The first derives from biological arguments designed to prove that at the moment of his passing Christ's body still possessed a significant amount of the vital humours needed to support life; the second, from the soul's natural unity with the body and the incapacity of any creature, regardless of its strength or dignity, to abstract it from the body when the latter is still capable of life. As we shall see, these two lines of argument, and indeed his broader theory of Christ's self-immolation, are absolutely central, even critical, to ascertaining Grosseteste's distinctive understanding of Christ's suffering and the nature of his atoning satisfaction.

While the *De cessatione legalium* is a text which has been explored in depth, the three sermons mentioned earlier—*Tota pulchra es, Ex rerum initiatarum*, and *De triplici ierarchia humana*—have received little attention. Dating to Grosseteste's episcopacy, and thus written several years after the *De cessatione legalium*, all three sermons significantly expand upon the latter's theory of Christ's self-immolation. As McEvoy has shown, on account of certain thematic convergences, *Tota pulchra es* appears to be contemporary with Grosseteste's *De celesti ierarchia* (1239–41) and should thus be dated to the same period as the latter or just after.[16] What is striking about this sermon is that as part of his discussion of Christ's self-immolation Grosseteste heavily underscores the fact that Christ's infinite suffering entailed that the Virgin Mary, on account of her love for her son, must have suffered the most of all human beings after him.[17] In turn, *Ex rerum initiatarum* appears to post-date *Tota pulchra es*. The reason for this is that where *Tota pulchra es* merely entertains the possibility of the Immaculate Conception, *Ex*

text at 50–51. All quotations from *De triplici ierarchia humana*, both in Latin and in English, are taken from McEvoy's edition.

13 Cf. Servus Gieben, 'Robert Grosseteste on the Immaculate Conception, with the Text of the Sermon *Tota pulchra es*' in *Collectanea Franciscana* 28 (1958), 221–27. All subsequent quotations from *Tota pulchra es* are taken from Gieben's edition.

14 Cf. McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 131–32.

15 *De cessatione legalium*, pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 8, 151.

16 McEvoy, 'Grosseteste on The Soul's Care for the Body', 42. Joseph Goering is slightly more precise and dates *Tota pulchra es* to 1240. See Goering, 'The "Meditaciones" of Robert Grosseteste', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 36.1 (1985), 118–28, at 123.

17 As McEvoy puts it: 'Since the Virgin Mary shared in some way in the passion and death of her son, her grief was greater than the grief of any other and her fortitude therefore beyond that of all others.' McEvoy, 'Grosseteste on the Soul's Care for the Body', 43.

rerum initiatarum affirms the doctrine unhesitatingly.[18] Finally, *De triplici ierarchia humana* appears to date from Grosseteste's later years. The reason for this is that the sermon incorporates all the main ideas concerning Christ's self-immolation and satisfactory act which the previous works contain and expresses them with the most systematic force.[19]

Christ's Body and the Cross

With regard to his 'biological' arguments, Grosseteste's starting point is his belief that the crucifixion wounds (*vulni crucis*) as described in the Gospels—the nailing of Christ's hands and feet, the scourging of his body, and his crowning with thorns—are insufficient to explain why he died in so short a time.[20] The torture inflicted on the two thieves crucified alongside Christ, so Grosseteste argues, is enough to explain why they died: they hung upon their crosses much longer than Christ did; and, more importantly their legs were broken so as to hasten their passing. Yet this is not the case with Christ. Christ died after 'only three short hours.'[21] Moreover, he did not suffer the same bodily wounds as his two counterparts. Indeed, the fact that the latter had to undergo further torture in order to procure their deaths proves that crucifixion itself is not sufficient to kill the body quickly. It is, however, the absence of any severe blood loss which the Bishop sees as conclusive proof that Christ's body was still capable of supporting life at the moment of his death. Key here is his conviction, like other medieval scientists, that blood is the critical humour generating the 'warmth' (*calor*), and thus vitality, of the body.[22] In Grosseteste's medical judgment, the wounds inflicted upon Christ on the cross were insufficient to drain his body of its blood. As such, they cannot of themselves have proved fatal. 'The piercing (*perforatio*) of hands and feet' he writes 'could not empty blood from his heart and innards in so brief a time (*brevi temporis spacio*).'[23] Moreover, the plenitude of blood within Christ's body is confirmed by the fact that, upon being pierced by the soldier's lance, his cadaver poured forth copious amounts of blood, something, which the Bishop tells us is not typical of corpses.

> There is testimony that he did not die on account of a great loss of blood through the nail-wounds (*per vulnera clavorum*): when his side was opened with a lance (*cum lancea*) after he died, blood came out from his innards (although dead bodies even without the loss of blood, if

18 Cf. McEvoy, 'Grosseteste on the Soul's Care for the Body', 43.

19 Cf. McEvoy, 'Grosseteste on the Soul's Care for the Body', 44.

20 *De cessatione legalium*, pars. 3, cap. 6, nn. 8–9, 150–51.

21 *De cessatione legalium*, pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 8, 151; Hildebrand, op. cit., 189.

22 Cf. *De cessatione legalium*, pars. 3, cap. 6, nn. 8–9, 150–51.

23 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6., n. 8, 151. 'Inde manifestum esse potest quod cum sanus et integer crucifixus esset, in lingo crucis affixus, clavis solummodo manus et pedes eius perforantibus, et corpore suo nondum aliter vulnerato, nec sanguine per aliud vulnus ad interioribus defluente, post tres diei horas tantum in crucifixione peractas obiit.' He continues: 'Non enim perforacio sola manuum et pedum in tam brevi temporis spacio sanguinem cordis et interiorum evacuaret, nec vitalem calorem hominis fortis iuvenis et sani tam cito extingueret.' Ibid., n. 9, 151.

> they are wounded after death, do not usually flow with blood because the blood is cooled and coagulated (*infrigidato et coagulato*)).[24]

Further underscoring the fact that Christ's body still possessed the 'vigour of life' (*calor vitalis*) is that immediately prior to his death the Incarnate Word gave a loud cry: 'Into your hands I commend my spirit.'[25] The capacity to articulate such a cry, Grosseteste observes, is indicative not of a body close to death, but rather of one that is still healthy and strong. For if Christ's vital life signs had been failing then surely, as common sense would seem to dictate, he would have offered an 'inarticulate groan.'[26] As the *Cessation* puts it: 'if the vigour of life had failed within him he would not have been in any way able to shout so (*nullo modo clamare sic potuisset*).'[27] Coupled with the absence of any significant blood loss, what all this serves to prove is that Christ died not by the 'violence of a wound (*per violentiam vulneris*)' nor indeed by any other act of human agency. Instead, his death occurred as the result of something outside the order of nature.[28] If immediately *prior* to his death Christ's side had been pierced by the soldier's lance, or if, like the two thieves, his legs had been broken, then the passion would indeed have been sufficient to kill him. This is so because these wounds, through the resulting haemorrhaging of blood, would have rendered his body incapable of life and thereby forced his soul to abandon his body. But this was not the case. Instead, at the moment of his death, Christ was not only 'healthy and whole' but clearly very much alive.[29]

The Soul's Care for the Body

To understand Grosseteste's assertion that a supernatural power must be invoked to explain Christ's death, we need to appreciate his thinking on the soul's care for the body (*cura corpori*). For Grosseteste the soul 'naturally desires to be joined to its body (*naturaliter appetat coniungi suo corpori*).'[30] Moreover, 'it abhors (*abhorreat*) nothing so much as its separation from the body through death.'[31] As such, to the very best of its ability, it will cling to the body, uniting the latter to itself, so long as the body is capable

24 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 9, 151; Hildebrand, op. cit., 189. 'Attestatur quoque huic quod non moreibatur, scilicet propter multam sanguinis per vulnera clavorum effusionem quod, aperto eius latere cum lancea postquam fuit mortuus, exivit sanguis de interioribus, cum corpora mortua etiam sine sanguinis effusione, si vulnerentur post mortem, non consueverint sanguine fluere, infrigidato et coagulato sanguine.'

25 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 9, 151. 'Preterea, voce magna clamans, expiravit; nec clamans clamore gemitus, sed clamosa prolacione vocis, litterate et significative et Patrem Deum suppliciter deprecantis, dicens: In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum. Si autem purus homo fuisset et defecissent in interioribus sanguis et calor vitalis, nullo modo clamare sic potuisset.'

26 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 9, 151; Hildebrand, op. cit., 190. '. . . sed clamosa prolacione vocis.'

27 *De cessatione legalium*, pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 9, 151; Hildebrand, op. cit., 190.

28 Cf. *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 9, 151.

29 Cf. *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 8, 150; Hildebrand, op. cit., 189.

30 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 8, 150; Hildebrand, op. cit., 189.

31 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 8, 150; Hildebrand, op. cit., 189.

of retaining life, even if only faintly.[32] To this extent, the soul is, in Grosseteste's thinking, not only 'naturally inseparable (*naturaliter inseperabilis*)' from its material counterpart, but the body itself is integral to the soul's identity.[33] This is even more so in the case of Christ who, free as he was from the taint of sin, possessed a body that was subject to neither the punishment of mortality nor the disposition towards ill-health. The result, of course, is that no finite cause, no matter how great it is, could sever Christ's soul from his body when the latter still possessed the *calor vitalis*.[34] It is, so Grosseteste tells us, only when a finite cause has definitively destroyed the body's vitality—be this through violent force, poison, or ill-health—that it can precipitate the soul's severance from the body.[35] By contrast, a supernatural force does not possess such limitations. For in the same way a supernatural force alone can create the soul *ex nihilo* within the body, so it is clear that only a supernatural agent can act to separate (*deponere*) the soul from the body when the latter is still capable of supporting life.[36]

> Only an infinite power (*infinitam potenciam*) can possibly separate the soul or life from the body, if the latter is healthy and its natural powers have contracted no deficiency. For no finite created power, however great it might be, could possibly withdraw (*abstrahere*) even the tiniest form of life from its subject, unless the natural forces and the natural heat, by the intermediary of which life itself adheres to its subject, were debilitated; if the entire force of the world (*tota enim virtus mundana*) were put together it would not remove the vegetable life from a plant, unless the heat and the humour of the plant itself were weakened. But the body of Christ on the cross (*corpus Christi in cruce*) was in its full health (*in plena sanitate*), and so no natural force could weaken its natural powers against his will. Only therefore the infinite virtue and the

32 Cf. *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 8, 150.

33 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 6, n. 8, 150; Hildebrand, op. cit., 189. 'Supra omnem namque potentiam creatam est a corpore et corde humano sano animam humanam dividere, cum anima naturaliter appetat coiungi suo corpori, nichilque tamen abhorreat quam a corpore suo per mortem separacionem. Unde et ipsa naturaliter inseparabilis est, dum in corde non dum defecerit calor vitalis. In humana itaque potestate non est animam suam a corpore suo, adhuc sano et vitalem calorem adhuc habente, deponere.' Grosseteste stresses the soul's inseparability from the still-healthy body in his vernacular poem the Chateau D'Amour. Here he writes: 'For the soul so loves the body that it will never abandon it for the sake of any pain, even if one wishes to cut it in pieces so that the body lost the power of all five senses—hearing and sight, smell, speech and taste—it would lose them all before it would leave the body. Nature cannot bear the soul to be parted from the body.' Translation taken from Evelyn Mackie, 'Robert Grosseteste's Anglo-Norman Treatise on the Loss and Restoration of Creation, Commonly Known as the Chateau D'Amour: An English Prose Translation' in Maura O'Carroll ed., *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings of a British Theological Tradition* (Instituto Storico de Cappucini: 2003), 151–79, at 172.

34 *Tota pulchra es,* 226. 'Sed segregatio animae a corpore sano, in quo viget calor naturalis, difficillima est, quia etiam supra omnen humanam potentiam est.'

35 *Tota pulchra es,* 226.

36 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 4, n. 8, 150. 'Divine igitur virtutis et potentie creatricis opus proprium est animam suam a corpore suo adhuc manente sano propria voluntate deponere.'

infinite power which transcends (*super*) all natural virtue was able to withdraw his life from his body in the state in which it was.[37]

Thus, as the *Cessation* puts it: 'when the Lord Jesus hung upon the cross (*in cruce pendens*) with a then-healthy body and breathed forth his own spirit by will, he performed a work divine and proper to divinity alone.'[38]

Grosseteste, Anselm, and the Centrality of Christ's Will

While Grosseteste's claim that it was Christ's divine will which caused his death may be a highly novel one, it is important to recognize that the centrality which the Bishop accords to Christ's will in relation to the cross and the satisfaction which it procured is nonetheless a very a traditional one. In particular, it has clear convergences with Anselm's thought, particularly that found in *Cur deus homo* 1. 8–10. For Anselm Christ's will—both human and divine—are central to understanding the events of the cross. Christ freely desired to restore humanity to a right relationship with God and to make satisfaction for sin. As such, through his willing of the latter, he assented to laying down his own life. Moreover, Christ's election to go to the cross, so Anselm tells us, was one that was utterly free: 'For the Father did not coerce (*invitum*) Christ to face death against his will, or give permission for him to be killed, but Christ himself of his own volition (*sed idem ipse sponte*) underwent death in order to save humanity.'[39] For Anselm, therefore, Christ's death and Christ's will are inextricably bound up with one another. Indeed, it is Christ's free will which serves to ground the satisfactory value of the cross itself. What separates Anselm from Grosseteste, however, is that for the former Christ's will led him to the cross and the death which it incurred, whereas for the latter Christ's will did not just lead him to the cross, but was itself the instrument of his death.

37 *De triplici ierarchia humana,* 50–51; translation taken from McEvoy, 'The Soul's Care for the Body,' 38–39. 'Impossibile animam sive vitam seperari a corpore sano cuius vires naturales nullum summunt defectum, nisi per infinitam potenciam. Omnis enim finita potencia et create quantumcumque fuerit magna non posset abstrahere minimam vitam a suo subiecto nisi debilitatis viribus naturalibus et calore naturali quibus mediantibus adheret ipsa vita suo subiecto. Tota enim virtus mundana simul unita non auferret plante suam vitam vegetabilem nisi debilitato aliquo modo calore et humore ipsius plante. Set corpus Christi in cruce fuit in plena sanitate, cuius vires naturales nulla vis naturalis ipso invito posset debilitare. Ergo suam vitam a tali corpore abstrahere non potuit nisi virtus infinita et potencia infinita que est super omnes virtutes naturales.'

38 *De cessatione legalium,* pars. 3, cap. 4, n. 8, 150–51; Hildebrand, op. cit., 189. 'Dominus itaque Ihesus cum adhuc corpore sano in cruce pedens, voluntarie proprium emisit spiritum, opus fecit divinam et divinitati soli proprium.'

39 Anselm, *Cur deus homo,* lib. 1, cap. 8: 'Non enim eum invitum ad mortem ille coegit aut occidi permisit, sed idem ipse sponte sua mortem sustinuit ut homines salvaret.' Opera Omnia, tom. 2, (Rome: 1950), 60. Translation is taken from Brian Davies and G.R. Evans eds, *Anselm of Canterbury: Major Works* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 275. Anselm goes on to further underscore the freedom with which Christ went to the cross by adding: 'Non ergo coegit Deus Christum mori, in quo nullum fuit peccatum; sed ipse sponte sustinuit mortem, non per oboedientiam deserendi vitam, sed propter oboedientiam servandi iustitiam, in qua tam fortiter perseveravit, ut inde mortem iurreret.' Ibid., cap. 9, 62.

Satisfaction and Suffering

Grosseteste's assertion that only a supernatural agent can explain Christ's death leads him to offer a very distinctive interpretation of the nature of Christ's suffering. Traditionally, it is the physical and psychological torture of the cross which is focused upon when discussing Christ's satisfactory act; such is the focus, for example, in Aquinas and Bonaventure.[40] Yet for Grosseteste the logic which he advances demands a different position. If Christ did not die from the cross itself, but rather from an act of his divine will, then we are forced to conclude that over and above his physical and mental anguish Christ endured another type of suffering; one entirely separate from the torture of the cross itself. This, of course, is the pain which comes through the severance of the soul from the still-healthy body. Through the latter Christ suffered a pain that was not only 'most bitter' (*acerbissima*), but which far exceeded any physical and mental anguish he endured.[41] This is so because this severance not only constituted an act of violence against the natural order itself, but, more importantly, because it occurred as a result of his divine will. Since the latter is infinite, both in its scope and power, so the suffering which it inflicted upon him must also be of an infinite nature: '*ergo cum infinita fuit potencia et infinitus fuit dolor.*'[42] For 'the pain and grief in the very withdrawing of life is in direct proportion to the power by which the life is withdrawn against the course of nature (*violenter*).'[43] Thus, as the Bishop puts it in his sermon *De triplici ierarchia humana*:

> Furthermore, what is possessed (*possidetur*) with love cannot be lost (*amittitur*) without grief. Therefore the greater the love (*maior est amor*) that unites the lover with the beloved, the greater the grief (*dolor*) experienced in the separation and the loss of the beloved. Now the soul of Christ clung (*adherebat*) with an infinite love to that most incomparable (*excellentissimo*) body which was united inseparably to the deity itself; it is certain that his soul loved its union with his body in proportion to the good represented by the union of his body to the deity itself, that is to say, an infinite good (*bonum infinitum*). Where it follows that the love of the bond with the body was infinite, and it follows from that that the suffering in the separation [*of soul and body*] was infinite (*infinitus fuit dolor*).[44]

40 Cf. Aquinas, *3 Sent*., dist. 15, q. 2, art. 3, qc. 3; dist. 20, q. u., a. 2–4 (Paris: Lethielleux, 1933): 492–502, 616–27; Bonaventure, *3 Sent*., dist. 16, art. 1, q. 3, *Opera Theologica Selecta*, tom. 3 (Firenze: Quaracchi, 1941), 341–42.

41 Cf. *Tota pulchra es*, 226–27.

42 *De triplici ierarchia humana,* 51; Cf. Chateau D'Amour, 171.

43 *De triplici ierarchia humana,* 51; translation from McEvoy, 'The Soul's Care for the Body,' 39. 'Sed quanta est potencia qua vita violenter abstrahitur, tanto maior est pena et dolor in ipsa abstraccione.'

44 *De triplici ierarchia humana,* 51; translation from McEvoy, 'The Soul's Care for the Body,' 39. 'Item non sine dolore amittitur quod cum amore possidetur. Ergo quanto maior est amor, uniens amantem cum amato, tanto maior sencietur dolor in dissolucione et amissione amati. Sed infinito amore adherebat anima christi tam excellentissimo corpori quod inseparabiliter fuit unitum ipsi deitati, constat enim quod tantum amavit uniri cum corpore quantum bonum fuit ipsius corporis unio ad ipsam deitatem, et hoc fuit bonum infinitum. Ergo infinitus fuit amore inherencie. Ergo infinitus fuit dolor in separacione.'

As the *Chateau D'Amour* notes: 'but when to death he [*willingly*] surrendered . . . he suffered a hundred times more pain and evil than devils could ever have laid upon human nature.'[45] Moreover, it was the infinite nature of the suffering caused by his self-immolation which served to guarantee the excess—and thereby unique nature—of Christ's suffering over that endured by any other human being: '*excedat omnem penam alium.*'[46]

> Also the passion of Christ was incomparably greater (*incomparabiliter fuit maior*) than any other passion. Not solely because his death was the most ignominious (*probrossima*), but, so I think, because it was also the most bitter (*acerbissima*). For he placed his soul apart from its healthy body, despite it having a plenitude of vital heat (*caloris vitalis*). But the segregation of the soul from a healthy body, in which the vital heat flourishes (*viget*), is by far the most difficult thing to do. This is so because it is an act above all human power (*supra omnem humanam potentiam est*). For no one has died or is able to die whilst the heat of nature flourishes in the heart (*dum viget calor naturalis in corde*). Therefore, that separation of the soul of Jesus Christ from his healthy body was the most difficult thing, and it was greatly against the natural appetite of his soul, which naturally hungered to be united with his body. And therefore his death was of the bitterest nature (*acerbitatis maximae*).[47]

For Grosseteste it is the infinite quality of Christ's *poena* which is the key thing to focus upon here. This is so because, as a result of it, Christ was able to do what no *purus homo* could do—i.e., offer a voluntary act of loving obedience that was truly proportionate to the infinite debt owed to God by sinful humanity. On account of the fact that the ordinary human soul lacks infinite power and will, no *purus homo* can sever his soul from his still-healthy body; and nor, as such, can she experience the infinite pain which it incurs, thereby precluding her from offering a truly proportionate act of satisfaction to God. We thus see that for Grosseteste the belief that Christ died through the voluntary sundering of his soul from his still-healthy body is by no means a peripheral or secondary feature of his theology of satisfaction. Instead, it is an absolutely critical aspect of it. Had Christ not died at the command of his divine will—i.e., had he, like the two thieves, died as a result of the cross itself—then the satisfaction which he offered to the Father would have been insufficient to repay the debt of honour needed to secure salvation. Satisfaction, in other words, is entirely grounded in Christ's voluntary self-immolation and is thus inseparable from it. The logical consequence of this is that the cross itself is not so much the instrument or cause of redemption, but merely the occasion for it.

---

45 *Chateau D'Amour,* 172.

46 *De tripici ierarchia humana,* 51.

47 *Tota pulchra es,* 226–27. 'Christi quoque passio incomparabiliter fuit maior cuiusque alterius passione, non solum quia eius mors fuit probrosissima, sed, ut puto, quia fuit etiam acerbissima. Deposuit enim animam suam in corpore suo sano, habente adhuc caloris vitalis plenitudinem. Sed segregatio animae a corpore sano, in quo viget calor naturalis, difficillima est, quia etiam supra omnem humanam potentiam est. Nullus enim moritur vel mori potest dum viget calor naturalis in corde. Illa igitur segregatio animae Jesu Christi a corpore suo sano difficillima fuit, maximeque contraria naturali appetitui animae, quae naturaliter appetit coniungi cum corpore. Ideoque fuit acerbitatis maximae.'

Christ's Self-Immolation and the Pattern of Christian Piety

What is particularly striking is how Grosseteste sees Christ's satisfactory self-immolation as incorporating, and serving to define, the pattern of ordinary Christian piety, particularly that of penance. The untold suffering which Christ endured on our behalf, so the Bishop tells us, should stimulate within us not only a burning compassion for Christ, but also a fervent desire to make satisfaction for our own sins. In particular, it encourages us to unite our own penitential suffering to his.[48] 'By the fact that we are as it were all of us one in Christ' he remarks 'our suffering (*nostra pena*) together with his suffering (*pena eius*) may be an infinite satisfaction for an infinite sin.'[49] In essence, whilst we, as *puri homines*, may not be able to effect a perfectly satisfactory act of self-immolation—this, as we have just seen, is proper to the divine will of the God-man alone—we are nonetheless required to enact a form of inner spiritual immolation, one whereby our hearts, out of love for Christ and a genuine remorse for sin, radically identify with him and his sacrifice. Crucially, however, the immediate purpose of such radical self-identification is not to inflict suffering upon ourselves, nor is to make suffering the goal or guiding pattern of Christian life. Rather, it is to help conform us to Christ, thereby rendering us his *imago*. Just as important, however, Grosseteste adds, is that such spiritual immolation allows us to unite ourselves with other Christians—past, present, and future—in a fraternal bond of love, thereby strengthening the *calor vitalis* of the church, Christ's mystical body.[50]

> If therefore there has to be such grief for a single mortal sin [as Christ experienced in his crucifixion] how great (*quantum debet*) should be the grief of those men living under vow who must grieve not for their own sins alone, nor solely for the sins of their brethren or for those of Christians generally, but beyond that still for the sins of all men now living (*pro peccatis omnium hominum*), and of all future generations![51]

Grosseteste develops this theme particularly clearly in his sermon on Galatians 5:24, *Qui autem sunt Christi.*[52] Here he further underscores how the practice of spiritual

48 'Who could not be moved' Grosseteste writes 'by such great friendship?' *Chateau D'Amour*, 172.

49 *De triplici ierarchia humana,* 50; translation from McEvoy, 'The Soul's Care for the Body,' 38. 'In eo tamen quod quasi omnes unus christus summus nostra pena una cum pena eius possit esse satisfactio infinita pro peccato infinito.'

50 As McEvoy notes: 'Grosseteste's deeply pondered meditation on the passion and death was meant to stir his readers to pity, gratitude, and wonder. In his lively devotion to the crucified he may well have owed something to St. Francis of Assisi.' McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 132.

51 *De triplici ierarchia humana,* 51; translation from McEvoy, 'The Soul's Care for the Body,' 39. 'Si ergo tantus debet esse dolor pro uno mortali peccato, quantus debet esse dolor ipsorum vivorum religiosorum qui non solum debent dolore pro suis peccatis, nec solum pro peccatis fratrum, nec solem pro peccatis christianorum, immo etiam pro peccatis omnium hominum, et non solum presencium set futurorum.'

52 The text has been edited by James McEvoy in his 'Robert Grosseteste on the Cross and Redemptive Love, With the Text of His Sermon on Galations 5:24 And Notes on Its Reception' in *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, 66. 2 (1999), 289–315.

immolation has an actively salvific quality. Not only does it allow us to be radically identified with the crucified Christ, but, more importantly, it facilitates our participation in the cruciform and redeeming pattern of love which he himself exhibited.[53] Through 'preparing a cross in our minds,' the Bishop states, we 'join (*coniungere*) the cross of our love to that cross of love (*cruci amoris*) which was in Christ the man.'[54] The result, of course, is that according to Grosseteste all Christians must recognize that 'the cross of love (*crux autem amoris*) is unavoidably accompanied . . . by the cross of penance.'[55] 'He who loves God, and loves his friend and his enemy, and also the creatures of the world grieves and does penance for the sins he has committed against God and against his friend, his enemy and the creatures of the world.'[56]

Suffering and Charity

In light of all this, one can be forgiven for thinking that Grosseteste's theory of Christ's self-immolation makes suffering the central axis of salvation itself. Indeed it is tempting to think that, despite his claims to the contrary, Grosseteste departs from—or rather risks misconstruing—the basic thrust of the Anselmian theory of satisfaction. As Rik Van Nieuwenhove has shown, for Anselm, just like Thomas Aquinas, it is not Christ's suffering *per se* which is responsible for the atonement, but rather something more positive. In Anselm's case it is the dignity of honour with which Christ the God-man willingly repaid the debt owed by *homo lapsus*, whilst for Aquinas it is the charity with which Christ made satisfaction.[57] Careful inspection reveals, however, that whilst Grosseteste's theory of Christ's salvific self-immolation and its role in shaping Christian piety may certainly place a great deal of emphasis on the connection between suffering and satisfaction, it does nonetheless remain within the general contours of the Anselmian framework;

53 A similar emphasis on Christ's passion as serving to inflame the hearts of the faithful and to elicit them to a self-denying compassion for Christ is to be found in Bonaventure's *Sentences Commentary*: '*autem fuit efficacissimus ad attrahendum genus humanum. His enim solis passio ad salutem valebat qui mera voluntate per amorem Deo adhaerebant. Non enim decrevit Deus aliter genus humanum salvare nisi libero voluntatis arbitrio; et nullo alio modo, salvo voluntatis arbitrio, Deus hominem magis potuit attrahere ad amorem suum quam sustinendo pro eo crucis patibulum.*' *3 Sent*., dist. 20, art. un. q. 5, resp., 421.

54 The full sentence reads: '*Crucem itaque nostri amoris coniungere nos oportet cruci amoris in Christo homine, et per mediationem crucis illius ligno crucis eius, ut tandem in ligno crucis Christi carnem nostram cum viciis et concupiscentiis crucifigamus.*' *Qui autem sunt Christi*, 308.

55 *Qui autem sunt Christi*, 310. '*Crux autem amoris in nobis habet secum necessario crucem penitentie.'*

56 *Qui autem sunt Christi*, 310. '*Qui enim amat Deum et amicum et inimicum et mundanas creaturas, dolet et penitet de hiis que comisit adversus Deum et adversus amicum et inimicum et mundanas creaturas.*'

57 Cf. Rik Van Nieuwenhove, 'Bearing the Marks of Christ's Passion—Aquinas' Soteriology' in Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow eds, *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), 277–302, esp. 287–92. See also Van Nieuwenhove's treatment of satisfaction in Anselm and Aquinas in his *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 93–98; 203–8.

indeed, it actively anticipates several of the key insights articulated by the later 13th-century tradition, in particular those of Aquinas.[58]

To suggest that for Grosseteste Christ's suffering is not the primary, or at least grounding, aspect of his theory of satisfaction may seem at odds with what we have said thus far. After all, did not Grosseteste insist that it is only through the infinite nature of his suffering that Christ was able to repay the infinite debt of honour owed to God? Careful inspection reveals, however, that for Grosseteste, in a manner not too dissimilar to Thomas, what serves to render Christ's act of self-immolation truly salvific is the charity with which he, the immaculate, perfectly innocent *Deus-homo*, willingly submitted to the infinite *poena* caused by the severance of his soul from his still-healthy body. 'Out of love for the Father', he tells us, Christ formed within himself a 'cross of love' (*crux amoris*) and it was this which 'made him mount the cross of wood' (*fecit eum ascendere crucem ligni*).[59] Moreover, the love with which the still-healthy Christ laid down his life was so perfect that not only did it embrace the Father and the whole of fallen humanity—both friend and foe—in a bond of perfect love, but it also touched the totality of creation itself, bringing the latter back into a balanced relationship with its Creator.

> In Christ the man this cross of love was present (*fuit crux ista amoris*), for he directed his human love upwards towards the Father, and to the right, as it were, towards his friends, to his enemies to the left, and to corporeal creatures, as it were, downwards. Now that cross of love it was which made him mount the cross of wood. For out of love for the Father (*Ex amore enim patris*) he, who was 'obedient unto death' [Phil 2:8], willed to be nailed to the wood of the cross, in order to redeem both friend and foe (*pro amicis et inimicis*) and to restore the other creatures to their ancient dignity.[60]

To this extent we see that Grosseteste attempts to counterbalance his emphasis on the infinite nature of Christ's suffering by underlining the limitless and all-encompassing nature of Christ's perfect charity. What also becomes clear from this is that for Grosseteste, although Christ's suffering may be—to use terms which admittedly Grosseteste himself does not use—the instrumental cause of his satisfactory act, it is not the primary or motive work within it; rather, this privilege belonged solely to his self-giving charity. Whilst Aquinas of course did not articulate anything like Grosseteste's theory of Christ's death, what is clear is that the Bishop nonetheless prefigures, even if only in part,

58 On Aquinas's modification of Anselm's thinking with respect to making charity central to satisfaction see Rik Van Nieuwenhove, 'Saint Thomas Aquinas on Salvation, Making Satisfaction, and the Restoration of Friendship with God' *The Thomist* 83:4 (2019), 521–45. Here Van Nieuwenhove tells us that Aquinas 'subtly, but significantly recast[s] Anselm's doctrine in light of charity and friendship with God,' 523.

59 Qui autem sunt Christi, 309.

60 *Qui autem sunt Christi*. Latin text at 308; translation at 309. '*In Christo autem homine fuit crux ista amoris. Direxit enim amorem suum humanum sursum in patrem, et in amicos quasi in dexteram et [in] inimicos quasi in sinistram et in creaturas corporales quasi in deorsum. Et ista crux amoris fecit eum ascendere crucem ligni. Ex amore enim patris obediens usque ad mortem [Phil 2:8], pro amicis et inimicis redimendis, aliisque creaturis ad antiquam dignitatem reducendis, ligno crucis affigi voluit.*'

something of the centrality which Thomas was to later place on charity in in his own account of satisfaction.

Satisfaction and Friendship

The above quote is also particularly instructive in another way. It shows us that for Grosseteste, again in a manner similar to Aquinas, the charity involved in Christ's satisfactory act of self-immolation ought to be understood in terms of friendship.[61] Influenced by his work on Aristotle's *Nicomachian Ethics*, the Bishop tells us that, through the 'law of friendship,' Christ becomes an '*alter ipse*' for the sinner, thereby meaning he is able to repay the debt of honour which is owed.[62] This is made possible because, through the bond of friendship, the sinner's actions become his and, more importantly, his become theirs.[63] 'The things that Christ performs on his behalf (i.e., the redeemed sinner's), the one united to him actually does through Christ and in Christ.'[64] Thus, as McEvoy puts it, 'the idea, then, is that Christ [*upon the cross*] is the *alter ipse* of each of the redeemed, the one who out of pure friendship took all the faithful into solidarity with his own person and substituted himself for them.'[65]

> Now no one should think that an objection to the views we are developing might be made on the grounds that the one who is in person God and man is someone quite apart from any given sinful man. In reality, someone who cleaves to him with true faith, firm hope, and persevering

61 Very much like Grosseteste, Aquinas sees Christ's act of satisfaction, and our own acts of penance, as serving to restore friendship with God by removing the obstacle of sin. '*Dicendum, quod per satisfactionem oportet quod homo sicut Deo, ita proximo reconcilietur. Reconciliatio autem nihil aliud est quam amicitiae reperatio.*' *4 Sent.*, dist. 15, q. 1, art. 5, q. 2, resp. (Green Bay, WI: Aquinas Institute, 2017), 92.

62 A similar position is articulated by Bonaventure. For him it is Christ's love for us, and our desire to be conformed to him in charity, which allows satisfaction to take place: '*Si ergo omnes nos in unum sumus in Christo et membra eius sumus et imitatores eius esse debemus, videtur quod unus pro alio possit et debeat satisfacere.*' *4 Sent*., dist. 20, pars. 2, art. un., q. 1, f. *Opera Theologica Selecta*, tom. 4 (Firenze: Quaracchi, 1949), 517. So as to further underscore how we are one in Christ and are able to participate in his satisfactory act, Bonaventure appeals to the language of Christ and the redeemed as forming one mystical body: '*Videmus enim in aliquo corpore animalis quod unum membrum se exponit ut sustineat laesionem et gravamen alterius, sicut patet quod brachium se exponit pro capite. Si ergo in corpore mystico est connexio per assimilationem ad corpus naturale, videtur similter quod unum membrum onus alterius possit et debeat supportare.*' Ibid., c.

63 As McEvoy puts it: 'All who are one in Christ make up with him a single agent of satisfaction for the sins of all mankind. In making satisfaction Christ became the «other self» of man, in such a way that his action is inseparably his own and his friend's, on behalf of whom it is undertaken out of sheer love. The idea is that Christ is the *alter ipse* of the redeemed, the one who out of pure friendship takes all the faithful into solidarity with his own person, with the result that they act in him and he acts (both in his passion and ever afterwards) in them.' Cf. McEvoy 'Robert Grosseteste on the Cross and Redemptive Love', 298.

64 *Ex rerum intiatarum*, 128–29. Translation taken from McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 130–31.

65 McEvoy, Robert Grosseteste, 160.

> charity is no longer a separate being but is united to his personality and is one Christ with him. To such an extent is this true that it is no longer the individual in question who performs the works of faith, hope, and charity, but it is Christ who effects them in him. Moreover, the things that Christ performs on his behalf, the one united to him actually does through Christ and in Christ. According to the law of friendship, each of the two friends is his friend's 'other self', in virtue both of the bond of love and the unity it forges between them, and also through the 'unity of will regarding moral right and wrong' . . . Keeping this in mind, can we not say that all [believers] are one in him, far more than is the case even regarding friends, when we consider that they are by creation the sons of God-made-man; that their rebirth reinforces their sonship; and that they are sons by sharing in his nature, as well as by receiving his illumination, and being as it were all glued together by an indissoluble love? [66]

For Grosseteste it is this 'indissoluble love' of friendship by which Christ and the redeemed are 'glued' together which renders Christ's act of self-immolation truly efficacious, not simply with respect to the repayment of the debt of honour owed by *homo lapsus* but also the grace which is offered to humanity in the here and now through the church.[67] This is so because it is through the bond of friendship that Christ administers his grace to the faithful through the sacraments. Using the latter—in particular that of penance—Christ invites the sinner to unite themselves to him and share in his redemptive act of charity, thereby atoning for their own sins and, crucially, those of their fellow Christians—their 'friends' in Christ.[68] Indeed, it is only through such participatory union with Christ that the sacraments and our own personal acts of penance possess any potency.[69] For Grosseteste, as such, the church's sacramental life is thus very much to be seen as framed against, and as an outworking of, the charity of friendship which lies at the heart of Christ's satisfactory act of self-immolation.[70] Like the latter, the sacraments and the practice of penitential living are an invitation and doorway to a restored friendship with God.

Conclusion

As McEvoy has pointed out, whilst Grosseteste's thinking on the absolute predestination of Christ may have exerted a profound, even critical, influence upon later 13th-century

66 *Ex rerum intiatarum*, 128–29. Translation taken from McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 130–31.

67 *Ex rerum intiatarum,* 128–29.

68 Strong echoes of this position are to be found in Aquinas's thinking. Cf. *STh.* III, q. 48, a. 2, ad. 1.

69 Cf. Dicta 108, '*Hanc quoque solucionem, cum solus Christus fecerit, patet quod nullius satsifactio aliqua est nisi inquantum unita est satisfactio Christi qui seipsum in satisfactionem pro nobis obtulit ut sic in Christo satisfaciente condigne satisfaciamus*.' Preliminary transcription by Joseph Goering, 2000.

70 That this is so is indicated by Grosseteste's treatise on the sacrament of confession commonly known as 'Deus Est.' Cf. Siegfried Wenzel 'Robert Grosseteste's Treatise on Confession, "Deus Est"' in *Franciscan Studies* 30 (1970), 218–83. For a recent study on this text see James R. Ginther 'Robert Grosseteste's Theology of Pastoral Care' in Ronald. J. Stansbury ed., *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Late Middle Ages (1200–1500)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 95–122.

Christological debates, his interpretation of Christ's death remained almost entirely ignored.[71] Beyond a handful of later 13th-century thinkers, few took Grosseteste's theory of the *mors Christi* seriously; and nor, in turn, is any precursor, at least of a substantial nature, to be found within the earlier theological tradition.[72] In this respect, Grosseteste can be said to have made an entirely novel, albeit inconspicuous, contribution to the medieval debate on the cross. Yet, as we have also seen, the theory of satisfaction which he constructs around his doctrine of Christ's death does nonetheless prefigure something of the key insights adopted by later thinkers, particularly concerning the role of charity and friendship in satisfaction. What is perhaps most striking, however, is how Grosseteste deliberately places his very substantial scientific learning at the disposal of his Christological-soteriological speculation. As far as I can see, the Bishop is unique amongst the medievals in doing this. He sees no tension in bringing his scientific learning into dialogue with his theological reasoning, and indeed using it to support, elucidate, and substantially inform his doctrinal conclusions. Thus, shaped as it is by his scientific learning, and his strong desire to respect what he sees as the historical reality of Christ's death, his theory of the cross and human redemption as a whole is one which is concerned with what may be described as the 'anatomy of salvation.'

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was funded by Leverhulme charity.

Author biography

William Crozier is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the Theology and Religion Department, University of Durham. He is currently working on the production of an edition and translation of the only known scientific work attributable to St Bonaventure, the *Quaestiones de colore.*

71 As McEvoy puts it: 'Taken as a whole, however, the idea to which he was resolutely attached [i.e., his theory of Christ's self-immolation] was entirely his own creation; it was born with him and it died with him. It went almost unnoticed in the schools, although it did in fact draw a suitably respectful criticism from Roger Marston, O.F.M.' McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 132.

72 Beyond Roger Marston, whom McEvoy identified, a handful of later 13th-century thinkers were to reflect upon Grosseteste's suggestion that Christ did not die from the torture of the cross itself, including Henry of Ghent. However, perhaps the most notable was Matthew of Aquasparta, who in his *Quaestiones de Christo* asks: '*Utrum mors Christi miraculosa fuit an naturalis*?' Aquasparta's response to the question is a long one. Whilst avoiding any decisive answer, he seeks to show that there are several arguments both for and against the suggestion that Christ's death was a miracle performed by the divine will as opposed to a product of the cross itself. With regard to those who affirm that Christ's death was the product of his divine will, Matthew does not name Grosseteste specifically, but he does recount the general contours of Grosseteste's thesis: '*Alii autem sapientes in contrarium affirmant: mortem Christi omnio fuisse miraculosam, et non violentia passionis animam a corpore seperatum, sed ipsum sponte et voluntarie spiritum emissise, non naturali humana virtute scilicet, sed virtute in se inexsistentis et inhabitantis Deitatis.*' Cf. *Quaestiones Disputatae Selectae*, tom. 2 (Firenze: Quaracchi, 1914), 211–23, quote at 217.