THE LOGIC OF THE HEART:
ANALYZING THE AFFECTIONS IN EARLY REFORMED ORTHODOXY

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INTRODUCTION

While the study of early modern Reformed anthropology, particularly with respect to Calvin and the *imago Dei*, has lately become a subject of greater focus, the study of the emotions—or “affections” and “passions” as they were known—has been largely neglected by scholars of early modern Reformed theology. Despite the fact that affections played a “prominent role” in the theological anthropology of many Reformed theologians, including Jonathan Edwards, scholarship on the seventeenth-century background has not advanced much beyond Perry Miller’s general observation that Puritans displayed Aristotelian and Thomistic tendencies. By contrast, there is now enough secondary literature on the history of emotions in the medieval period to provide an initial sketch of major schools of thought, and studies on Aquinas and Thomism have grown to

the point of observing that early modern Thomism was a variegated and in no way homogenous commentary tradition. Likewise, historians of early modern philosophy, although mostly motivated by the desire to understand so-called canonical philosophers (e.g., Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza), have begun to contextualize these philosophers against the background of Thomist and Protestant traditions.

The relative neglect of the affections by scholars of early modern Reformed theology is understandable given that historical theologians tend to focus on systematic and controversial topics from dogmatic theology where discussion of the affections is largely (though not entirely) absent. Even so, affections were an integral part of Reformed theology, appearing in the law and prayer sections of catechisms, which interpreted the commandments as applying beyond outward actions to the soul’s affections. Thus, while affections did not feature prominently in dogmatic loci, they were important for genres of a practical nature.

The present essay will examine the development of Reformed treatments of the affections in the period of early orthodoxy (ca. 1565–1640), during which time extensive treatments of the affections flourished. I will argue that discussion of the affections during this period grew within the broad framework of the Aristotelian psychology and certain polemical concerns initially established by early Reformed theologians. With the


advent of Protestant universities and academies, Reformed ethicists and theologians treated the affections in greater detail, with a majority drawing on a generally Thomistic approach to the nature and division of the affections, although not without a dissenting Scotistic minority. As an introduction to an often-overlooked topic, the essay’s scope will be limited to setting forth attempts to describe the most general nature and divisions of the affections, as well as some recurring controversial themes related to the nature of affections themselves, leaving aside treatments of particular affections or their relation to conversion and soteriology.

Affections at the Intersection of Ethics and Anthropology

Discussion of affections both prior to and during early orthodoxy was scattered over a variety of intersecting topics. On the one hand both theologians and philosophers were interested in the ontological aspect of the affections in relation to faculties of the soul. On the other hand since affections relate to the perception of good and evil, philosophers often treated affections in the context of ethics as principles of action. Theologians, for their part, felt obliged to address the related problem of concupiscence in the context of the scope of the Decalogue. Thus, among the Reformers, in the context of philosophical genres, we typically find a more detailed description of the nature of the affections, while in the context of theological genres we find a greater focus on fallen corrupt desires. For example, Calvin, in addition to recognizing the rational appetitive faculty of the will, follows Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in distinguishing between irascible (*vim irascendi*) and concupiscible (*vim concupiscendi*) appetites—a traditional division of the affections, as we shall see—yet he does not dwell on the details of these appetites. Rather, Calvin repeatedly returns to the problem of inordinate desire in relation to the Decalogue.11

10 The marginal note to the 1559 *Institutes* reads “Arist.lib.1./Ethi.cap.ult./Item lib.6./cap.2.” See Jean Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis* (Geneva: Stephanus, 1559), Lxx.vi (p. 59). The Battles/McNeill edition (1:193n23) contains various errors: (1) it omits this reference to Aristotle’s *Ethics* with respect to the appetites; (2) it inaccurately cites Themistius, whom Calvin does not cite until later; and (3) it translates *vim concupiscendi* as “the capacity to desire inordinately” rather than the neutral (and correct) “power of desiring.” The sixteenth-century editions avoid these problems, including Thomas Norton’s translation, which correctly translates *vim concupiscendi* as “power of Desiring.” See The *Institution of Christian Religion* (London, 1561), fol. 55r. For Calvin’s relation to medieval Aristotelian faculty psychology, see Muller, *UC*, 159–173, and for problems with the Battles/McNeill edition, 67–78.

By contrast, in their philosophical works on ethics, Philipp Melanchthon, Peter Martyr Vermigli, and Andreas Hyperius offer somewhat more detailed discussion of the nature and kinds of passions, albeit quite cursory by comparison to some seventeenth-century treatments.12

With the rise of Reformed orthodoxy, we find continued discussion of the affections in anthropological treatises, expositions of the Decalogue, and ethical treatises. The Aristotelian psychology of the earlier Reformers was more fully fleshed out in larger treatments de homine, including the affections, as theologians and philosophers more explicitly drew on medieval precedents. Girolamo Zanchi, for example, follows Aquinas’ division of the passions and cites him to the effect that in the state of innocence Adam had passions directed toward the good, such as love and joy, but not toward evil, such as sadness or hatred.13 The affections of course also continued to be addressed in the context of expositions of the tenth commandment throughout the era of orthodoxy, which often cursorily address the nature of the affections before turning to the problem of inordinate desire.14 More than either anthropological treatises or expositions of the Decalogue, however, ethical treatises addressed the nature and divisions of the affections in great detail. Among these books of Reformed ethics, one of the most impressive treatments of the affections, although ignored by surveys of the era, is the Ethicorum Libri Duo (1603) of Abraham


13 Girolamo Zanchi, De operibus Dei intra spatium sex dierum (Neustadt, 1591), pars tertia, II.iii (527a-528a), III.iv (643b-644b), citing Aquinas, ST, Ia.95.2. Others who dealt with the affections in the context of psychology include: Lambert Daneau, Isagoges christianae pars quinta, quae est de homine (Geneva, 1588), 15v-17r; Pierre de La Primaudaye, Academie francoise, 4th ed. (Lyon, 1591), 14v-18r; Otto Casmann, Psychologia Anthropologica; Sive Animae Humanae Doctrina (Hannover, 1594), 403–422; and Philippe de Mornay, The true knowledge of a mans owne selfe (London, 1602), 118–172.

Scultetus (1566–1625), court preacher to Frederick V of the Palatinate. This work contains an extensive 180-page section on the affections that dwarfs the previous sections on virtues (100 pages) and the blessed life (15 pages). Although the affections are a regular feature of later ethical treatises of Reformed orthodoxy, few of them display such an intense interest in the affections.

Until the early seventeenth century the affections remained a small part of disparate works relating to anthropology and ethics. But in the first half of the seventeenth century, particularly ca. 1620–1640, we witness a new development in England. Likely due to the practical focus of Puritans, there is a remarkable surge of interest in the affections with treatises either focused on, or entirely devoted to, the affections. Among the earliest of these is The Portraiture of the Image of God in Man (1627; 2nd ed. 1632; 3rd ed. 1636) by the Scottish minister John Weemes, which as the title page advertises, “The second [part] containing, the passions of man in the concupiscible and irascible part of the soule … All set downe by way of collation, and cleared by sundry distinctions, both out of the Schoolemen, and moderne Writers.” Unlike some of the Puritan works of this time, which were often written in popular sermonic form, Weemes does not hide many of his scholastic sources and distinctions. Only a few years after the third edition of Weemes’ Portraiture, Edward Reynolds (1599–1676), a Westminster divine and later Bishop of Norwich, wrote...
A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man (1640) that like Weemes drew heavily on scholastic sources and distinctions. Although some attention has been given to Reynolds’ Treatise in past accounts of early modern affections, such studies have largely ignored the Reformed treatments that preceded him, including Weemes.

The developments sketched here point to common affective concerns shared by Reformers, Reformed scholastics, and Puritans that belies the older caricatures of Protestant orthodoxy as “dry” and “arid.” It also underscores the problematic character of any rigorous contrast between the academic concerns of Reformed scholastics and pietistic Puritans. In fact, the Puritan treatises on the affections grew up in the soil of an already abundant scholastic literature, which furnished categories for popular works such as Richard Baxter’s Saints Everlasting Rest.

### The Nature of the Affections

Treatments of the affections during the early orthodox period, like those of the medieval scholastics, typically begin by defining them in relation to the parts of the soul in general and the faculties of intellect and will more specifically. The medieval scholastics, although generally in agreement on the (Aristotelian) division of the soul into rational and sensitive parts, resulting in a twofold division of rational appetite (will or voluntas) and sensitive appetite, were not agreed on whether affections were found primarily in the sensitive appetite or in the rational appetite. Anselm and Abelard, following the suggestion of Augustine’s City of God XIV.6 that affections are “no more than acts of the will,” held that affections are kinds of willing. Scotus and Ockham continued this reading of Augustine, arguing that affections were in the appetitive faculty in general, and therefore

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20 Edward Reynolds, A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man (London, 1640), 31–344 (326–344 are misnumbered). Reynolds’ Treatise was often reprinted (1647, 1650, 1651, 1656, 1658; Works: 1678, 1679), and translated into Dutch by Petrus Heringa: Een verhandeling van de herts-tochten en mogentheden van de ziele des menschen (Amsterdam, 1667).


23 Cf. Muller, AC, 105–121; and Schuringa, “Orthodoxy, Scholasticism, and Piety” in this volume.

in both will and sensitive appetite. Although Aquinas also drew heavily on Augustine’s *City of God*, he nonetheless argued that since bodily changes are essential to emotions (e.g. one’s blood boils when angry), they must be located in the sensitive appetite. Aquinas thus sharply distinguished between acts of the sensitive and rational appetites, preferring the term *passiones* for ordinary emotions and *affectiones* for analogous volitional acts of God, angels, and humanity.\(^ {25}\)

Although not uniform in the use of terminology—they refer variously to *passiones* and *affectiones*—most of the Reformed orthodox authors follow Aristotle and Aquinas in placing the affections in the sensitive appetite and view bodily change as essential to them. Franco Burgersdijck offers this definition of *affectus*: “An affection is a motion of the sensitive appetite, with an unnatural change of the body, with respect to a good or evil object, a proposition, and evaluation, from the imagination (*phantasia*), for pursuing the former and avoiding the latter.”\(^ {26}\) A nearly identical definition, employing the more Thomistic term *passio*, is found in Weemes: “A passion, is a motion of the sensitive appetite, stirred up by the apprehension, either of good or evil in the imagination, which worketh some outward change in the body.”\(^ {27}\) Like Aquinas, Weemes places the passions “betwixt the body and the minde” in the sensitive part of the soul and “not in the reasonable” (ruling out Scotus), so that they are “in the will and understanding, as commanding and ruling them; but in the sensitive part, as in the proper subject.” More specifically, the affections depend on the imagination (or “phantasie”) to apprehend an object, the intellect to judge it as true or false, and the will to determine its relative good or evil in relation to us. Only under the guidance of the intellect and will are the affections moved with respect to some perceived good or evil.\(^ {28}\) Although Weemes does not cite Aquinas on the affections’ subordinate dependence and participation in the intellect and will, Reynolds makes the same point and he does cite Aquinas.\(^ {29}\)

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\(^ {27}\) *Portraiture*, 139. See similarly, Zanchi, *De operibus Dei*, 527a.

\(^ {28}\) *Portraiture*, 140–141.

\(^ {29}\) Reynolds, *Treatise*, 38, citing Aquinas, *ST*, Ia.8i.3.
A somewhat more eclectic approach to the nature of the affections is found in Abraham Scultetus. Having defined affections as “commotions of the soul’s appetitive faculty” (commotiones ab appetente facultate), he devoted a chapter to the question, “In what way do commotions arise in the rational part?”30 In that chapter, after contrasting the positions of Augustine and Scotus to those of Aristotle and Aquinas, he tries to reconcile the two positions: “Therefore the soul’s affections are in the lower appetite, as the proper seat, although they also consider, and as we explained, affect the higher. In which way Scotus can be united with Thomas, nor do I suppose Augustine and Galen to have thought differently.”31 Despite this conciliatory stance, by placing the “proper seat” of the affections in the sensitive appetite, Scultetus appears to favor the position of Aquinas.

Although the majority of Reformed authors in early orthodoxy favor the placement of the affections in the sensitive appetite, there is at least one significant deviation from this view. The Puritan William Fenner, recognizing the majority opinion, argued like Augustine and Scotus for the affections as kinds of willing. In his words, “As the affections are motions, so they are the motions of the will. I know Aristotle and most of our Divines too, doe place the affections in the sensitive part of the Soule, and not in the will, because they are to be seene in the beasts.”32 He provides both psychological and Scriptural argument. Psychologically, the affection of shame shows that it is possible to be moved without relation to the sensitive part of the soul. From Scripture he observes that Paul in 1 Thess. 2:8 (“Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing”) “couples his affections and his will together in one, and his affection that he had to the Thessalonians, hee seats in his will.” Likewise, Fenner argues, Scripture says that good angels “desire” (1 Pet. 1:12) and evil angels “believe and tremble” (James 2:19), which would not be possible unless the angels, who lack a sensitive soul, have affections in their will.33 Then leaving no doubt as to his Scotist sympathies, Fenner concludes the argument, “and therefore Austen, and Galen, and Scotus, and why say I them, the scriptures say the affections are motions in the heart.”34

30 Ethicorum, 129, 132.
31 Ethicorum, 134. On p. 133 he contrasts the opinions of Augustine, Galen, and Scotus with those of Cicero, Aquinas, and Aristotle.
32 Fenner, Treatise, 5. Fiering, Moral Philosophy, 159–165, notes that Fenner was known to leading New England Puritans, but does not discuss him in relation to Reformed treatises such as Weemes and Reynolds.
33 Treatise, 5–6.
34 Treatise, 6.
The fact that Fenner felt compelled to provide such arguments against the opinion of “most of our Divines” illustrates the dominance not of a Scotist, but rather of an Aristotelian or Thomist opinion—reflecting a sharp distinction between sensitive and intellectual appetites—among the Reformed. At the same time, the examples of Fenner and Scultetus show that there was not complete uniformity of opinion, and should therefore caution us from concluding that the Reformed tradition was without qualification either Thomist or Scotist with respect to the nature of the affections. We can conclude, however, that the Reformed tradition prior to the spread of Descartes’ concept of the soul, which denied a sensitive part, generally placed the affections in the sensitive appetite with a minority favoring a Scotist view. Incidentally, this conclusion places Jonathan Edwards in discontinuity with the mainstream of early Reformed orthodoxy, though perhaps in continuity with Fenner, since Edwards located the affections entirely in the will.35

Categorizing the Affections

Of all the medieval scholastics, Aquinas’ Treatise on the Passions (Summa theologiae, IaIIae, qq. 22–48) was, in the estimation of one medieval historian, “the most extensive medieval treatise on the subject.”36 and in another, “a treatment so masterful that it eclipsed the works of his predecessors.”37 By contrast, although their respective treatments of the affections were “deep and principled,” Scotus and Ockham did not offer complete treatises on the topic.38 Given also the availability of early modern Roman Catholic treatises on the passions that adapted and popularized Aquinas’ treatise, it is understandable that the Reformed would draw on Aquinas’ treatise.39

36 Knuuttila, Emotions, 239.
37 King, “Emotions,” 176.
39 In addition to the numerous commentaries on the Summa theologiae, there were popular vernacular treatises, e.g., Nicolas Coëffeteau, A Table of Humane Passions. With
A variety of factors contribute to analyses of the affections in both medieval and early modern treatises on the affections. Generally all authors presume that affections require an object to which they relate, considered under various aspects.\textsuperscript{40} Since such objects can appear to be either good or evil, present or future, simple or difficult to obtain, they allow for a variety of emotional responses. Ancient philosophers, upon whom both medieval and early modern authors elaborate, observed these factors and based their classifications on them. The Stoics identified four basic affections: delight (present good), distress (present evil), desire (future good), and fear (future evil). Plato and Aristotle distinguished between simple and difficult to obtain objects, from which they derived the distinction between concupiscible (simple desiring) and irascible (angry) affections. Augustine bequeathed these ancient classifications to the medieval scholastics.\textsuperscript{41}

Aquinas drew on these ancient classifications and built an elaborate classification of the affections. Following Augustine's \textit{City of God} XIV.7, he arranges the affections in a teleological path from inclination to movement to rest, reflecting the beginning, middle, and end of a series of emotions in the process of pursuing good and avoiding evil.\textsuperscript{42} In this schema, the concupiscible affections of love (\textit{amor}) and hate (\textit{odium}) are principle inclinations toward good and evil, respectively; desire (\textit{desiderium}) and aversion (\textit{abominatio}) are motions toward or away from imminent good or evil; and joy (\textit{gaudium}) and sadness (\textit{tristitia}) are final affections resting in present and obtained good or evil.\textsuperscript{43} Aquinas classifies the irascible affections, which respect objects as difficult to obtain, according to whether they tend toward or away from either good or evil, whether future or present. The affections of hope (\textit{spes}) and despair (\textit{desperatio}) tend toward or away from good, respectively, while the affections of boldness (\textit{audacia}) and fear (\textit{timor}) tend toward or away from evil, respectively.\textsuperscript{44} Anger (\textit{ira}), which seeks to overcome a present evil, is a unique affection.
without a contrary, since the contrary tendency away from a present evil is not possible.45

Both the Reformers and their orthodox successors distinguish between concupiscible (ἐπιθυμητικόν; concupiscibilis) and irascible (θυμικόν; irascibilis) faculties in the sensitive appetite. The distinction is a commonplace, and as such only indicative of a shared Aristotelian psychology rather than a particularly Thomist influence. Many authors simply refer to Aristotle for the distinction.46 “All the passions,” writes Weemes, “may be reduced first, to the concupiscible and irascible faculties of the Soule.”47 Similarly, Pierre Du Moulin explains, “There are two kinds of appetite, one is called concupiscible, the other irascible. The concupiscible is first, for anger is not stirred up except after desire. On that account we become angry since [something] is opposed to our desire.”48 With respect to the further question of exactly how these appetites are distinguished, there is less agreement. The Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) is known to have departed from Aquinas’ real distinction between concupiscible and irascible powers, favoring rather a merely conceptual distinction of various functions exercised by a single appetitive power.49 While many Reformed authors do not seem to oblige a merely conceptual distinction, since they speak of multiple appetitoria or facultates (Zanchi, Scultetus, Weemes), others writing after Suárez grant a conceptual distinction. Burgersdijck clearly states that the concupiscible and irascible “are not faculties differing in the thing itself, but by reason alone. For there is one and the same faculty, which is called ἐπιθυμία and θύμος....”50 Adriaan Heereboord, while conceding that a real distinction is “the more common opinion,” yet like Burgersdijck argued that a conceptual distinction is “more probable” because “the appetites’ subjects and objects do not differ as things themselves but rather by reason....”51

While Reformed theologians even prior to the rise of orthodoxy had divided the sensitive appetite into concupiscible and irascible aspects,

45 Aquinas, ST, IaIIae.23.3.
46 See Calvin, Institutio, Lxx.6; Vermigli, NE, 403; Hyperius, In Aristotelis Ethica annotationes, 96; Zanchi, De operibus Dei, 527a; Scultetus, Ethicorum, 135–143; Burgersdijck, Idea philosophiae moralis, 91–92; Goclenius, Lexicon philosophicum, s.v. “Appetibile, Irascibile”; Du Moulin, Ethicorum, 10; Pemble, A Summe of Morall Philosophy, 19; Heereboord, Collegium Ethicum, 56b–57a; Isendoorn, Ethica Peripatetica, 216; Sinapius, Dissertationes Ethico, 38; Voetius, SDT, 5:225; and Turretin, Institutio, XI.xxxi.1.
47 Weemes, Portraiture, 142.
48 Du Moulin, Ethicorum, 62.
49 King, “Late Scholastic Theories,” 238–244.
50 Burgersdijck, Idea philosophiae moralis, 92–93.
51 Heereboord, Collegium Ethicum, 56b–57a.
over time Aquinas’ particular account of the eleven affections gained in popularity, as contemporaries attest. In an appendix to a 1638 disputation, Gisbertus Voetius observed that while the affections are commonly treated in small physical, ethical, and practical books (libelli), “the scholastics on Thomas [Summa theologiae] IaIIae.22–49 should be consulted above all for solid learning.”52 Benedict Pictet, writing in a post-Cartesian context, still observed three main opinions on the enumeration of the affections: “The opinions vary, some enumerate thirteen as Aristotle does, others enumerate eleven as Thomas Aquinas, and Descartes enumerates six, to which he reduces all others.”53 Likewise, Heereboord noted that “all the scholastics follow [Aquinas’ enumeration] and [it is] the common [opinion] of the philosophers.”54 Although neither Pictet nor Heereboord were personally satisfied with Aquinas’ account, their retrospective remarks indicate that prior to Descartes Aquinas’ classification figured largely in accounts of the affections, and this is exactly what we find.

The Reformed authors during the early orthodox period often turned to Aquinas’ classification of the affections at least to frame the state of the question, and many of them followed Aquinas quite closely. Among the authors who clearly agree with Aquinas’ enumeration are Alsted, Scultetus, Weemes, Du Moulin, and Reynolds. These authors, while recognizing various alternative theories, ultimately follow Aquinas’ account of six concupiscible and five irascible affections. Alsted reproduces Aquinas’ eleven affections in a Ramist chart bifurcated first according to concupiscible and irascible appetites, and second according to their relation to good or evil, where the concupiscible appetites are ordered in temporal sequence (like Aquinas) by initial motion, absence of object, and presence of object.55 Scultetus states, “I, along with Thomas, draw up eleven particular affections: love, hate, desire, flight or aversion, joy or delight, sadness, and these in the concupiscible part, but in the irascible part hope, despair, fear, boldness, and anger.”56 Weemes, who repeatedly cites Aquinas throughout his particular exposition of the affections, draws up

52 Voetius, “Paralipomœäna ad disp. 10. de creatione,” in SDT, 1:804.
53 Pictet, Medulla ethicae christianae, 273–274.
54 Heereboord, Collegium Ethicum, 58b.
55 Alsted, Encyclopaediae, 3:25a.
56 Scultetus, Ethicorum, 15.4. In his following explanation he draws on Aquinas for how particular affections relate to one another, as e.g., despair follows fear (Ethicorum, 155, citing ST, IaIIae.45.2), hope precedes joy, and fear precedes sadness (Ethicorum, 158–159, citing IaIIae.25.1). He also writes that Aquinas teaches erudité in IaIIae.23.2 (Ethicorum, 158).
the same schema as Aquinas, including identical definitions of each particular affection. Reynolds, like Scultetus and Weemes, had obviously been reading Aquinas carefully on the nature of the affections, although his exposition of particular affections is mostly peppered with classical and biblical illustrations. In addition to the methodological similarity with Aquinas in providing separate treatments of the nature, causes, and effects for each of the eleven affections, Reynolds’ overview of the divisions of the affections mirrors Aquinas by placing the concupiscible affections in a teleological path from the “first springings” (hate and love), to those in between but not yet united to their object (desire and aversion), to those finally united to present good or evil (delight and sorrow). Reynolds perhaps represents the most developed Reformed treatise on the affections that follows a Thomist enumeration. Without examining in detail the contents of each affection, it is safe to say that a significant number of Reformed authors of early orthodoxy adopted a generally Thomistic division of the affections. This Thomist schema continued to be espoused throughout the seventeenth century.

Polemical Themes

There are at least two recurring polemical themes in early orthodoxy that relate directly to the nature of the affections. First, the Reformed deny the Stoic notion of ἀπάθεια. Second, they affirm, against many contemporary Jesuits, the sinfulness of involuntary appetitive motions that precede the affections (primo primi motus). These areas of controversy are traditional points of debate which, originating prior to the Reformation, were addressed by Reformers but then developed in more detail in early Reformed orthodoxy.

The Reformers and Reformed orthodox sided with a tradition of opposition to Stoic ἀπάθεια going back to Augustine’s City of God XIV.9—by no means the dominant patristic opinion—and perpetuated by some

57 Weemes, Portraiture, 142–143, citing Aquinas, e.g., on 164, 172, 175, and 212.
58 Cf. citations to ST in Reynolds, Treatise, 37, 38, 49, 167, 259.
60 E.g., in New England by Charles Morton; see Fiering, Moral Philosophy, 233. See also Isendoorn, Ethica Peripatetica, 217–237; and Richard Baxter, Methodus Theologiae Christianae (London, 1681), 1.225, who adopts Aquinas’ six concupiscible passions without modification, but expands Aquinas’ five irascible passions to nine to fit his unique trichotomization.
medieval theologians, including Aquinas. Melanchthon and Calvin included polemics against ἀπάθεια, while Vermigli openly disagreed with Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, whose ἀπάθεια “must be completely rejected.” Furthermore, the revival of Stoicism in the 1580s led by Justus Lipsius ensured that the early orthodox authors would oppose ἀπάθεια with even greater vigor. While the Reformed adherence to a generally Aristotelian doctrine of the soul, with its affirmation that moderated affections are natural and good, certainly strengthened this opposition, these polemics also shared with Augustine a theological motivation. Many authors include distinct polemical chapters or sections against ἀπάθεια, and others, following Augustine, appeal to the example of Christ’s affections. Weemes, for example, cites the same proof texts as Augustine:

Christ himselfe tooke these passions upon him, therefore they cannot bee sinne, Luke 10.21. Hee was angrie, Marke 3.5. He was sad, Math. 26.38. and rejoied, Luke 10.21. They are sanctified by regeneration. The Apostle, Rom. 1.30 condemmes the want of natural affection, hee calls them ἄστοργοι, without natural affec-

In order to clarify that Christ was in full control of his passions, many theologians also make use of a medieval notion, originating with Jerome’s exegesis of Mt. 26:37 (Jesus “began to be sad”), of propassion or “pre-passion.” Even while making the dogmatic point against ἀπάθεια, some

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**Passions of Christ’s Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas** (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002), 284n50.


writers play down differences by stating with Augustine that when one considers their view of reason's rule over the passions, there is little overall difference between the Stoic and Peripatetic views. In general, an antipathy for Stoic ἀπάθεια, inherited from Augustine and utilizing the example of Christ, is characteristic of early Reformed orthodoxy.

If the polemics against ἀπάθεια reflect the per se goodness of the appetitive faculty and its passions, the polemics with respect to primo primi motus reflect the Reformed consensus on the post-lapsarian condition of humanity, in which humanity “contracted impurity in all its affections.” The controversy, in a nutshell, is whether initial inordinate motions of non-rational appetites, prior to the consent of the intellectual faculties, constitute sins of concupiscence.

This question was widely debated among medieval theologians. Augustine viewed inordinate initial desires as a result of original sin, but denied the actual sinfulness of such desires until one actually delights in it. Peter Lombard, drawing on Augustine, provided a succinct account in Sentences II dist. 24.6–12. However, he altered Augustine’s view by adding that initial inordinate desires are the “lightest” venial sins. Those who disagreed with Lombard introduced a distinction between first and secondary initial movements, the former being exempt from sin. Although Aquinas among others followed Lombard in affirming the sinfulness of initial inordinate desires, the contrary view gained popularity among late-medieval Franciscans, and the doctrine became dominant among Roman Catholics through the influence of the sixteenth-century Parisian nominalists and the school of Salamanca. By the early seventeenth century, the Jesuit controversialist Martin Becanus could write that while Lombard, Aquinas, and Cajetan held that the initial motions of the sensitive appetite are venial sins, yet the “common opinion” among Roman Catholics is that these motions are “neither mortal nor venial sins.”

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69 See Sinapius, Dissertationes Ethicae, 40, citing Augustine, City of God, IX,4; and Reynolds, Treatise, 49, citing Aquinas, ST, IaIae.24.2,3 (wherein Augustine is cited).
70 CoD III/IVa (CC 3:564).
71 Knuuttila, Emotions, 169–171.
72 Knuuttila, Emotions, 181–183.
73 Knuuttila, Emotions, 184–187.
Early Reformed orthodoxy found this contemporary Roman Catholic, and particularly Jesuit, development entirely problematic. Weemes and Andrew Willet offer some of the most detailed responses to contemporary Roman Catholic opinion on *primo primi motus*.\(^76\) Weemes summarizes the Roman Catholic view thus: “The Church of Rome granteth that the full consent is mortall sinne. Secondly, that the delight is a veniall sinne, because it is but semiplena deliberatio, but they deny motum suggestionis to be a sinne.”\(^77\) He also notes the alternative terms *primo-primi motus*, *secundo-primi motus*, and *secundi motus*, while arguing that the *primo-primi motus* are condemned by the tenth commandment, and the others are condemned by Christ’s interpretation of the seventh commandment (adultery) in Matt. 5:28.\(^78\) Perhaps reflecting Lombard’s description of first motions as the “lightest” venial sins, Weemes says their involuntary nature excuses sin “in part, but not fully” (*in tanto, sed non in toto*).\(^79\) Willet, for his part, in his Exodus commentary after dividing sin into “three degrees” of *appetitus*, *assensio*, and *actio*, cites Calvin’s interpretation of the tenth commandment that even without consent if desire “tickles” (*titillat*) us, this suffices for guilt.\(^80\) Willet also notes a minor difference among the Reformed: whereas Franciscus Junius interprets the tenth commandment as applying only to initial inordinate motions, Zacharius Ursinus interprets it as applying to the broader category of original corruption itself. Willet agrees with Ursinus.\(^81\) In his Romans commentary, Willet includes a polemical section on the sinfulness of involuntary motions, in which he responds in detail to the Jesuit Benedictus Pererius’ assertion that desires lacking the will’s consent are not sinful.\(^82\)

As the seventeenth century advanced, the early orthodox polemic on *primo primi motus* became a common aspect of Reformed treatments

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\(^79\) Weemes, *Portraiture*, 139.


of the tenth commandment.83 One Reformed controversialist, Festus Hommius (1576–1642), even detected a similar problem with the Arminian view of concupiscence. He argued that various Arminians, including Arminius himself, held that “the inclination to sinning is not a fault, or sin properly so called, but thus metonymically named, because it is the cause or effect of sin.”84 Hommius further noted that Arminius referred to “an inclination to sinning, which existed even before [the Fall] in humanity.”85 Although a detailed comparison of Arminian and Jesuit views of *primo primi motus* is beyond the scope of this essay, if Hommius is correct (a point that would require a study in its own right), then it is possible that one could find—in addition to the Arminian use of the Jesuits’ *scientia media* opposed by the Reformed—another convergence of Arminian and Jesuit opinion in contrast to that of the Reformed.86

## Conclusion

In the era of early Reformed orthodoxy (ca. 1565–1640), the affections were treated in a variety of genres, both philosophical and theological. As this era progressed, with the rise of Puritanism, distinct treatises focusing on the affections flourished particularly in England (ca. 1620–1640). Reformed authors, following a strict Aristotelian division between the intellectual and sensitive appetites, generally define the nature of the affections as motions of the sensitive appetite, although William Fenner represents an exception to this mainstream opinion. They divide the affections themselves according to the ancient division between concupiscible and irascible appetites. While these aspects reflect an Aristotelian psychology shared with Reformers including Calvin and Vermigli, many


84 Festus Hommius, *Specimen controversiarum Belgicarum* (Leiden, 1618), 53. I am grateful to Aza Goudriaan for drawing my attention to this source. See similarly, Goudriaan, “The Synod of Dort on Arminian Anthropology,” 103n107.


early orthodox authors also accept Aquinas’ classification of six concupiscible and five irascible passions and adopt Aquinas’ specific definition of each.

The polemics with respect to the affections concern both their nature and corruption. There is a general consensus, shared with the Reformers, against Stoic ἀπάθεια. Here the traditional arguments from Christ’s example, originally put forth in Augustine’s City of God, play a large role. We also find a strong polemic against the Roman Catholic majority opinion, argued by Jesuits, that first motions of the sensitive appetite (primo primi motus) are not sinful on account of their involuntary nature. In both cases the early Reformed orthodox respond to long-standing debates stretching back at least to the medieval era—they are, as Heiko Oberman and Richard Muller have contended, “participants in an ongoing dialogue.”

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87 Muller, PRRD, 4:387.