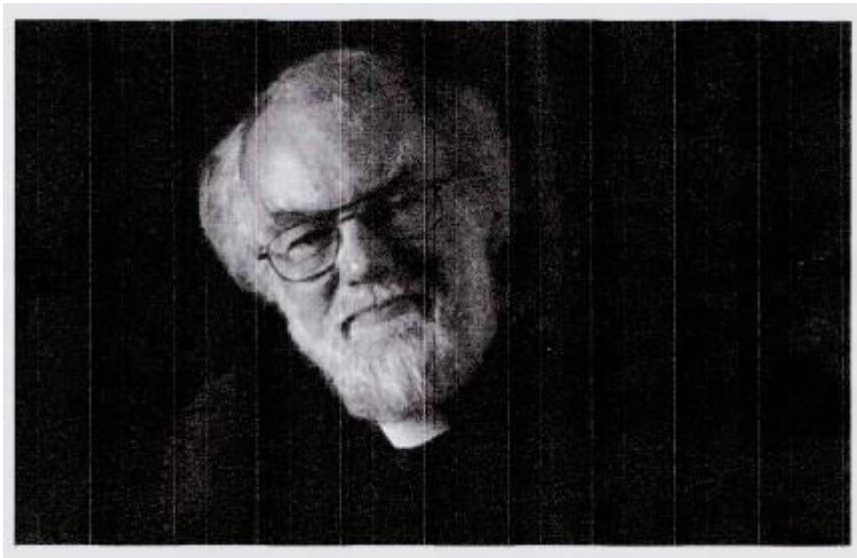


The Julian Lecture 2014

The Anti-Theology of Julian of Norwich



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Julian's immense appeal to most readers is that she represents in some sense a theology that leads into contemplative awareness; uninterested in winning arguments and consolidating formulae, she speaks repeatedly of what she sees and what is shown. The mind or sensibility she embodies is a receptive one, taking time to absorb what has been manifested. One point that's perhaps worth noting specially in this context is to do with the very word 'Revelation' as the title of the Longer Version: we might well take it for granted that a 'revelation' was what settled questions, an ending of uncertainty; but this text is the record of a lengthy and patient investigating of the initial vision. To encounter revelation, it seems, is to be launched on a process of interwoven divine gift and human exploration - which casts a fresh light on what we might want to say about the fundamental Christian revelation itself. To claim that we receive revelation is not - on this basis to assert that we are in possession of answers not provided to others, but to say that we have been impelled by the act of God into this unfolding process of reflection and growth. And what we know 'by' or 'through' revelation becomes inseparable from the time it takes to reflect and grow.

But this prompts me to suggest that one useful way of reading Julian of Norwich is to think of her as writing an 'anti-theology'. Let me be clear: I'm definitely not disagreeing with those most recently and superbly Denys Turner¹ - who have teased out the basic theological themes in Julian and demonstrated their coherence and intellectual power, as well as their rootedness in classical Christian categories. I am not suggesting that Julian is indifferent to doctrine, a writer who is interesting because of her rhetoric not her substance, an enemy to

systematic thinking or, worst of all, a 'poetic' writer who need not be held accountable for her consistency. Julian is not, thank goodness, a devotional author; she is manifestly thinking hard and expects her readers to think hard. But it is a very particular kind of thinking. She is (and here I follow the definitive work of Vincent Gillespie and Maggie Ross above all)² inviting her readers to ^[2]ask themselves whether they are asking the right questions; offering an 'anti-theology' in the sense that she is repeatedly turning upside-down the structure that unthinking theology takes for granted and challenging us to recognize that the perceptions and feelings induced by this unthinking theology are dismantled by letting yourself be shown the truth that all theology gestures towards. In one obvious way, her writing reverses expectation by presenting itself as kind of seminar conducted by the voice of Jesus: the difficult and 'dismantling' insights which are offered by that voice make for a protracted exploration, in the course of which certain problems disappear. They are not problems to solve, simply because what makes them problems in the first place is a distorted sense of what theology is and a clouded awareness of the fundamental events and insights of Christian identity. A great deal of habitual theological noise therefore has to be silenced if truth is really to be shown.

One or two examples out of many: in chapter xxii, Jesus asks Julian if she is 'well apaid' that he has suffered for her; and when she responds positively, he says, 'If thou art apaide, I am apaide.'³ Theology has typically agonized over what it would take to satisfy God, to 'pay the price of sin'; and the unthinking use of such a theological notion may leave us with the familiar anxiety that God is faced with squaring a circle in which God has to 'do justice' to his own justice, his own mercy and our guilt. God must-so to speak - pay himself a fair price. The theological conundrum is how to do so and yet enact his merciful will. Julian's anti-theological perspective is to

turn this entirely on its head and present the situation as though the anxiety and the circle-squaring challenge lay not with God but with us: can we be satisfied? Because if we are, God is. And, as she goes on to think through the 'thre hevens' that she is shown, the three dimensions of divine bliss, she almost casually offers us another upside-down perspective in saying that we are not only Christ's bliss but also his 'mede': we are what the Father gives him as the 'reward' of his selfless love as shown in the cross. Instead of a scheme in which divine justice is satisfied^[3] and eternal life for us is secured by the atonement performed on the cross, it is more that human need is satisfied, and joy for the glorified Christ is secured by the Father giving him the redeemed human family as a 'crowne' (a particularly powerful image, as Nicholas Watson notes in his edition,⁴ given the crucial importance at the very beginning of the visions of the sight of the crown of thorns and its savage wounds).

The theme of redeemed humanity as Christ's joy and crown recurs (in, for example, chapter xxxi, where the final reconciliation of all is the assuaging of Christ's 'love-longing' and 'thurste'). Julian is recasting the theological pattern so that what needs to be 'satisfied' can be seen simultaneously in double perspective, in a binocular way: what must be satisfied is on the one hand the divine yearning for us, created to reflect the divine joy to itself; on the other it is our own poverty as fallen creatures that calls down divine action to fill its void. If we acknowledge the divine act that presses on us to fill our emptiness, we are in process of becoming the reflection of divine joy. We are 'satisfying' God's longing, just as our own hunger is satisfied: 'If thou art apaide, I am apaide. This echoes, unconsciously, the familiar Irenaeian maxim that 'the glory of God is the human being fully alive',⁵ but gives it a new and subtle twist. Most importantly of all, without simply ignoring the received language for understanding the process of redemption, it reworks the story so that it is no longer

a matter of a conundrum to be solved, incompatible requirements to be met. The business of satisfaction is radically simple-though far from simple for us to absorb or even believe. It is not that God is faced with a challenge to which the ingenious stratagem of a suffering that has infinite merit is the answer, in Anselmian mode; the challenge is posed to us. Are we content to believe that we are loved? Because if not, there is always more love to meet our need: if there were more to do and suffer, 'love shulde never let him have rest till he had done it' (xxii), and however much had so far been done and suffered would still seem like nothing in comparison, because there is infinite resource to pour into the human void.

To call this, as I have done, 'anti-theology' doesn't mean that Julian is deliberately developing an alternative to Anselm's theology of atonement or even Aquinas's; she is mostly innocent of controversy over such matters. Her point is to spring us from the trap of imagining a God faced with some kind of ^[4]conceptual impasse, and to force us to ask whether the conundrum we seek to solve theologically isn't in fact the result of our failing to grasp that the entire logic of salvation depends on the basic fact of unconditional and unconstrained love the sheer desire of God for divine love to be shared with what he has made and the sheer liberty to enter into the self-made void of human misery in order to change the human landscape. Satisfaction has become less to do with honouring eternal demands, more like the 'atonement' memorably described by Geoffrey Hill in a famous lecture on poetry:⁶ a selfhood being made at one with itself in the very act of writing, a definition given deep theological resonance by the way in which T.S. Eliot, in a passage quoted by Hill,⁷ can describe this as an act of 'appeasement, of absolution, and of something very like near annihilation.' 'Appeasement: something is pacified or stilled in the words uttered, something restless and struggling in our language is settled. To be

'apaide' in Julian's theological world is to discover that we cannot pull apart human need and divine self-enactment and make them struggle for resolution: for God to be, actively, God is eternally for God to act for the articulating and embodying of his 'bliss', his 'heaven', and so to be always already active for the absolving of our self-generated disasters (c.f chapter liii, 'God began never to love mankind'). God's selfhood is unchangingly itself in this action, and our selfhood becomes itself in our recognition of what it is for God to be God. As in the poem, for Hill and Eliot, so in the act and words of faith: appeasement occurs and something is 'annihilated. More about this later.

But these thoughts take us directly to a cluster of ideas and images around divine action in the Revelation. The well-known passage where Julian denies that there is anger in God (xlix) immediately poses the question, 'So where is anger? Julian is clear that if God were to feel anger for even a moment, he would cease to be creator; we should not exist. Anger happens in us; it is that atmosphere of bitter conflict and fear which holds us away from peace, being at one with ourselves, living in atonement. If God were part of the constantly renewed climate of conflict and fear ('wrath and the contrariousness that is in us') in which we live, if God's vision of us were like our vision of others and of him, how could we make sense of our dependence for our very being an eternal unanxious generosity? Once again, what Julian is doing is to steer us towards what alone will make sense of the fundamental shape of the Christian ^[5]narrative: in chapters xlvii and xlviii, she has set out the puzzle: what does it mean for God to turn away from his anger towards forgiveness? The more we are aware of how we are sustained in being by unconditional generous love (the Holy Spirit as 'endless life winning in oure soule', xlviii), the less we can imagine anger as a state of divine life. Thus it must be our own resistance to

life or grace, our 'contrariousness to pees and to love' (ibid.); just as in the discussion of 'satisfaction', the problem turns out to be in us, not in God or in some abstract realm in which offences are weighed and calculated. Once again, she offers us an anti-theology. Stop thinking about how God can solve the problem and focus instead on the problem that is your own 'contrariousness', your own unwillingness to be 'apaide'.

Our redemption is, we have seen, not a skilful stratagem devised to keep the metaphysical or moral lawyers happy, but the sheer outworking of who or what God is. Hence, in the great 'Lord and servant' meditation of chapter li, the extraordinary fusion (binocular vision again) of the fall of Adam and the Incarnation itself: 'When Adam fell, Godes sonne fell'. Because human identity is eternally decreed to be the inseparable companion of Christ's joy (we could compare this with the way the same theme is developed in St John of the Cross's *Romanzas*),⁸ the disaster that overtakes Adam is simultaneously the journey of the Son of God to earth and hell; what happens to Adam happens to the Second Person of the Trinity. So - to pick up again the theme we looked at a little while back - we find we cannot pull apart the human condition and the action of God. We cannot think of the latter as an afterthought or even in the strict sense a 'response' to the former. 'God began never to love mankind'; for us to be loved is simply for us to be what we are in the face of a God who is what he is. Hence Julian's rather startling statement in xlix that God 'as aneynt himself may not forgeve': as far as God's own 'Godness' is concerned, the categories of offence and forgiveness as we usually apply them are not appropriate. There is no resentment to overcome, no process by which God becomes able to put anger behind him, and so on.

And this connects with one of Julian's most pervasive themes, the theme which Denys Turner rightly sees as fundamental to her theodicy.⁹ 'Our lord ^[6]God doth all' (xi): and if all that is done or enacted is God's doing, sin cannot be an act ('sinne is no dede'). God as the 'mid point' of all, and so whatever is participates in his act insofar as it acts. Hence Julian's emphasis that our nature is complete or perfect 'in God': 'oure kinde is in God hole' (lvii), and indeed is in a sense indistinguishable from God. 'I saw no difference between God and oure substance, but as it were all God' (liv). As Turner has shown so well, this is not a sudden swerve into pantheism, simply the recognition of a basic point of Christian metaphysics.¹⁰ If our active existence as creatures is dependent on the uncreated act of God, we cannot expect to see divine action and created action as if they were two things side by side, distinguishable by having different characteristics (being infinite isn't a characteristic, nor is being created). And this is the deep philosophical rationale for the inseparability between Adam's fall and the incarnation of God the Son: that outpouring of divine act which makes the world overall, and the crown of created existence that is rational humanity, is strictly the same act by which the Son is what and who he is; for the Son to be the Son is for the Son to be the one who has always been the lover and companion of Adam's race. Pull this apart and once again you have a set of puzzles to be solved. Julian's anti-theology relentlessly insists that you think again about the theological questions that seem most obvious and pressing; and this also means insisting that you look at yourself as questioner and try to see more clearly why you so obsessively frame your anxieties in this way. The apparent theological Gordian knots we confront yield, not to strenuous conceptual refinement, but to radical recasting of the questions - which is also a matter of the radical recasting of who we think we are and what we think we do.

Julian's thought is dangerously easy to represent simply as the gentle and affirming revision of a harsh orthodoxy; but the energy of such an anti-theology is in fact a troubling and unsettling affair. It directs our attention to our own refusal to believe that what we most basically are is the objects of love; to avoid facing this, we commit ourselves to an anger, a 'contrariousness' or spirit of contradiction, that allows us to keep the love of God at arms' length and to imagine a God whose requirements paint him into a corner. We tell what is admittedly quite a compelling story about how God, so to speak, makes himself able to accept us - how God becomes at one with himself. In other words, we project on to God the story that is in fact ours; we project the ^[7]difficulty of atonement on to a supposed divine agent who needs to rearrange the world in order to be what he ought to be, or to be in the relationship he ought to be in with the created universe. If the obstinate difficulty is not the set of requirements God has to meet in order to be self-consistent but the various levels of anger and inner conflict that prevent us being at home with ourselves (being still, being able to bear our own gaze, being able to bear our own powerlessness or whatever), Julian's is both a consoling and a significantly demanding theology. Its 'problems' can be resolved only by the erosion of my anger, my refusal of life.

'Sinne is no dede': what we call sin is the refusal to act humanly, it is to allow my action to be fatally invaded by the 'contrariousness' that comes with the fallen state of Adam's children. Adam falls because he is in haste to do God's will: that is, he falls because, in spite of everything, he is at some level relying on the intensity of his own labour to do justice to what God desires and commands. When he is weighed down and immobilized as a result of his fall, he is confused not only about what he thinks or believes but about what he feels about or for God. Shame and fear generate that internal anger which

is then projected on to God in the mistrustfulness that Julian describes, for example, in chapter lxxii. And this confusion is clearly one of the factors that produce the theological tangles that Julian is determined to deconstruct. God, meanwhile, is not only unchanged but refuses to ascribe the servant's fall to ill-will or rebellion; he is eternally free to be who he is and to enact who/what he is, and so his sustaining presence in the centre of the world's life - and thus of the human agent - cannot alter and needs no conditions to be 'satisfied'. What we contribute to the whole picture is, tragically, those forms of refusal which erode real agency. Sin may look like action but in fact it is failure to act: it is thus as opposite to God as could be (lxxii); yet at the same time, simply because it is not truly action, it cannot change what we are any more than it can change what God is. All real action is implicitly a relating to, even a 'beholding of God, so that we can say, counter intuitively, that at the most fundamental level of our existence we simply see God - because we are the active presence of his truth and wisdom insofar as we live at all (xliv). And it is this deep level of natural 'beholding' and desiring to be what we are (the continuation in us of God's 'desiring' to be what he is, God's loving self-contemplation) that we seek to access or activate in prayer (xli-xliii, xlvi, lxvii, etc.). Anti-theology becomes specific and practical, as it were, by this entry into the centre of what we are, into God's dwelling-place, the 'homeliest home' of Christ in the heart (lxviii). The inevitability of sin (lxxix), even its 'behovely' quality (xxvii), its 'appropriateness', ^[8]as we might translate,¹¹ has something to do with our need to be aware of our radical instability: we are created participants in God's act, but precisely as created participants we are capable over time of falling away from action into the nothingness of our self-oriented anxieties.

We could paraphrase Julian by saying that grace is God's 'no' to our 'no': our persistent leaning towards nothingness, to the refusal of the

act that is our very being, is what is annihilated by openness to God. The language of annihilation, mentioned earlier, is dangerous; it can be heard as recommending some sort of cancellation of creation itself, the 'de-creation' that we meet in some of Simone Weil's writing, for example. But Julian's concern is different: what de-creates is the fact of sin; but sin is specifically and emphatically what does not define me (or any other creature). Repeatedly she insists that our nature is held together in its completeness in and by God's action, so that our fallenness does not destroy what we are (liii, lvii, for example). God's nature and God's grace belong together and we can understand God's grace as simply the mode in which divine nature sustains created nature: 'grace was sent out to save kinde, and kepe kinde, and destroy sinne, and bring again fair kinde into the blessed point from thens it came'; and 'grace is God, as unmade kinde is God. He is two in manner working, and one in love' (lxiii). However drastically and disastrously we refuse to 'enact' God, there is always divine action at work within us, not consenting to this lack of consent. When we say 'no', there is an abiding 'no' to this 'no' at the heart of what we are. And, to connect this again with our theme of anti-theology, when our theology in effect ends up saying 'no' to God, 'no' to the indestructible affirmation that is God's eternal work, the work itself continues without interruption to refuse our refusal.

Yet this does not leave us with a bland doctrine of the natural goodness of our nature, let alone the non-seriousness of the fall - the picture, complete with pet cat, that has made Julian a favourite with some contemporaries who dislike the language of original sin or fallenness and think of her as some kind of precursor of a 'creation' spirituality. Clifton Wolters's strange judgement¹² that she 'might never have seen really malevolent evil in others' expresses the ^[9]kind of misreading to which she has too often been subjected. But Julian's visions, after all, begin with the sight of Jesus' anguish, evoked in

unsparing detail; the eighth vision insists strongly on the drawn-out process of his dying ('as if he had be sennight deade, dying, at the point of outpassing, alwey suffering the gret paine', xvi). Sustaining God's 'no' to our 'no' is more costly than we can imagine for the incarnate Christ, the human embodiment of God's faithful presence among us. The force of our refusal is reflected in the protracted agony of Christ's dying, so that we cannot conceive of God's faithfulness without this image of a long-drawn-out death agony. Julian constantly draws us back to recognizing in a classically Augustinian way - that if sin is an absence of action or reality, this most definitely doesn't mean that it is illusory or without effect. Our refusal to act humanly (which is also to act 'divinely, acting in continuity with the eternal act of love or gift) is hideously damaging to ourselves and to the divine embodiment in Jesus: Julian depicts that damage both in the evocation of Christ's suffering and in her eloquence about the unnatural character of sin (e.g., lxiii, 'sinne is...contrarious to our fair kinde', and thus fouler than hell itself).

It's worth noting that Julian's approach here has a lot in common with the understanding of Christ's death developed by the late Sebastian Moore in his extraordinary book *The Crucified Is No Stranger*¹³ - a contemporary instance of 'anti-theology if ever there was one: 'the point that theologians describe as mysterious is embarrassingly simple,¹⁴ because theologians are always being drawn into thinking of the cross as something directed towards God (to make something possible for God), whereas it is in fact direct towards us (to make something possible for us). And it is precisely in the urge to see the cross as propitiating God, making a difference to God, that we do violence to ourselves: clinging to ourselves and refusing to be what in God's eyes we are (yes, the echo of Hopkins is deliberate) is piling the violence of denial on top of our nature. We can see this only as and when we see it as an endlessly prolonged

putting to death of God in the flesh, putting to death the one agent who lives outside and beyond the fear of death, who denies our fearful denials of death.¹⁵ We are compulsively trying, says Moore, to deny that there is a level of reality at which denying death is itself denied, so that death ceases to ^[10]dictate to us (and to push us into the self-absorption of fear). As he admits, language buckles under the strain of all these double negatives; but the point is indeed simple. The death of Christ is our human refusal both of God and of what we are; and it is at the same time the divine refusal of our denials. As divine and human, Christ can embody the consequence of refusing God and ourselves the ultimate murder of the innocent and can also embody the indestructible faithfulness of God in the midst of human self-destruction. 'We have to think of a God closer to our evil than we ever dare to be. We have to think of him not as standing at the end of the way we take when we run away from our evil in the search for good, but as taking hold of us in our evil, at the sore point which the whole idealistic thrust of man is concerned to avoid.'¹⁶

This follows Julian closely, though in a very different idiom. The fundamental concern in both is the unbroken relation of God to what Julian calls 'kinde', the fact of grace as something always already done, offered, enacted, so that there is no need to make something possible for God by a complex transaction, only for us to be freed to receive what we are from God's hand. And in the last part of this reflection, I want briefly to look at what this means for our practice of prayer. Julian is regularly bracketed with the great contemplative teachers of her age, not least with the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*; but anyone looking to Julian for the same kind of practical advice is likely to be puzzled. There are ideas and images here which provide deeply fruitful themes for meditation, we might say; but has she anything to tell us about the nature and disciplines of contemplative life?

The answer is in the very character of her 'anti-theology, not in any specific counsel on what to do in prayer. If the difficulty of reconciliation with God's truth lie in us, not in God, then the work of contemplation must be framed in the kind of self-examination that helps us see how we are refusing what is there. We need to keep the habits of our imagination under quiet scrutiny, so that those movements of the mind which project on to God the turmoil of our own insides are brought into the light. When anger or craving arises, when resentment or the sense of powerlessness or fear surface, we need to be able to see these things as the disturbance of our true life as it is held in the eternal Trinity and not to create dramas in the life of God, divine difficulties which must somehow be overcome. If we are able to isolate and identify these movements, we shall be more free to acknowledge the faithful presence that is ^[11] simply there in and for us. Gazing at and reflecting on the suffering of Christ is not, for Julian, a means of generating self-lacerating emotion but recognizing the logic of my denials of life: I am involved, in all sorts of ways, in avoiding love, and love's avoidance is the drawn-out putting-to-death of God and God in me. Yet it is at the same time the reminder that God cannot be put to death and that the passion of Christ also declares the unchanging presence of God in the centre of our being.

Thus we are pointed back into the single crucial recognition: God is already acting, in my very being and in every act of mine that is open to his action. Hence the famous statement that Christ is 'grounde of thy beseking' (xli) is a natural implication of her general conviction about action, divine and human. In prayer, we confront or apprehend ('experience' is, as usual, a misleading wrong word) the bare fact of God's faithful thereness along with the unevencourse of our created activity, most particularly the unevenness of our trust that God is present and responding. What we may be sure of is that God 'hears'

simply because there is no difference, certainly no distance between God's presence and act in us and God's being in himself. This is why we can say that God's merciful answering of prayer is nothing to do with our intensity of address to him, but is rooted in his 'proper goodness' (xli; and compare chapter vi, 'the goodness of God is the highest prayer').

As in other contexts, we find in this chapter a further dismantling of theological convention: Christ receives our prayer and brings it to the Father, which is straightforward and scriptural enough; but two fresh themes are strongly underlined. The first is simply that there can be no sense in which our prayer causes any act or disposition on God's part: once we recognize 'theyse swete words ther he seyeth, 'I am ground', and grasp that our praying is already his action, we shall do more rather than less of it, simply because we now see how inseparable our action is from God's. We shall neither struggle to keep up with divine demands, with the requirement to exert our finite efforts so as to bring about infinite action, nor sink back in despair at the impossibility of the task. And the second new perspective offered by Julian is to insist on Christ's thankfulness for our prayer - another potentially startling reversal. But what chapter xii seems to be arguing is that if prayer is the flowering of divine action in us and through us, God will delight in it simply because God delights in being God; the joy with which the eternal Son stores our prayer 'in tresure' in heaven is the divine joy in the sight of divine life being lived in the finite order. The bold language of Christ being 'grateful' for our prayer underscores this point: while there is an obvious and fundamental sense in which Julian's logic forbids any ^[12]alteration in God as a result of what is happening in the world, we can stretch a point in saying that the augmentation of God's joy through the joy of created beings means that the divine perfection is 'augmented' not by an increase in its eternal reality but by its

reflection and participation in the world. It is another of Julian's Augustinian moments, recalling some of the arguments of Augustine in the *de doctrina Christiana* about how God loves us with a love of 'use' not 'enjoyment' (which on the face of it seems to contradict Julian) in the sense that every expression of God's love towards us is being used by God to bring about not his increased bliss or fulfilment but ours.¹⁷

So prayer for her is bound up with self-awareness, a keen eye for what is getting in the way of God's active being in us; and it will flourish as and when we stop trying to pray in order to make something happen on God's part and so become more fully aligned with the simple 'happening of God' which is going on unbrokenly in all reality. The stilling of our activity and the focus of attention on what is, not on what we are bringing about - this is the prayer Julian implicitly commends to us. The exercise in what I have been calling 'anti-theology' is, throughout the Revelation, directed towards this; it is a mistake to think (as one or two commentators seem to) that when she writes explicitly about prayer she is simply bolting on a dutiful bundle of routine exhortations to a record of exciting visionary or 'mystical' experiences. What she sees is consistently something (someone) who persuades us to wonder, 'Am I asking the right questions where God is concerned?' 'Revelation' is a therapy for theological language: it is the process whereby we come to grasp how many of our theological problems are about the unreflective projecting on to God of tensions and dead-ends generated in our own hearts by our own fears. What Julian sees is, indeed, like the poetic moment evoked by Hill and Eliot: this is where the language folds in to itself, folds in to its own solid integrity, becomes at one with itself: where certain crucially dangerous dualities are set aside so that the one act of God in the diversity of created performances may simply happen. Julian, as I have said, is not attacking doctrinal

formulation as such, let alone adopting a facile anti-intellectual or anti-conceptual stance. But she is inviting us to look carefully at our formulations: do they or don't they embody the fundamental and unifying content of revelation in Christ? Do they generate anxious intellectual games and spiritual self-harm? Do they ultimately point into the single mystery of an infinite act of shared joy? Dealing with such questions obliges us to come to terms with the starkest of images, the ^[13]vision not only of the crucified in the most direct form but of an immeasurably prolonged putting-to-death of the life that is in us as it is embodied once and for all in Jesus. No alibis there, no resignation to a passive position; but no obsessive self-abasement either. We are invited, soberly and quietly, to see what we are in seeing the dying Christ. But in seeing the dying Christ, we also see how and why the love that holds us in being is indestructible. 'I never lefte my hands of my workes' (chapter xi); 'I it am that thou meneste. I it am that is alle' (xxvi).

'Arte thou well apaide?' asks Jesus; and Julian replies 'Ye, good lorde, gramercy. Her anti-theology has silenced those dramas in which we imagine the travails of a God trapped as we are trapped; and theology is allowed again to discover the dense singularity of simplicity, the simplicity of 'thy lords mening in this thing.'

Rowan Williams



References

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3. I refer for convenience to Watson, Nicholas & Jenkins, Jacqueline (2006). *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*. University Park, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press. This is a hybrid text, combining readings from the Sioane, Paris and Westminster manuscripts (see pp. 35-40); not an uncontroversial method. For a critical text based on S1 (the first of the Sloane manuscripts), which has a good claim to be more faithful to the original diction, see Glasscoe, Marion (editor) (1986) *Julian of Norwich. A Revelation of Divine Love* (second edition). Exeter Mediaeval English Texts and Studies. Exeter, UK: University of Exeter.
4. Ed. cit., p. 194.
5. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses* IV. 34.
6. Hill, Geoffrey (2008). 'Poetry as 'Menace' and 'Atonement' in *Collected Critical Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 3-20 (quotation from p. 19).
7. Ibid. p .4.
8. *The Works of St John of the Cross* volume II, translated by E. Allison Peers (1934). London: Burns Oates. pp. 455-465 (especially pp. 458-459).
9. Turner, op. cit., chapter 2, which explains with exemplary clarity the presumed relation in Julian's writing between

divine gift and human freedom and defends Julian against the charge of 'quietism'.

10. Ibid. pp. 33, 60-65.
11. 'Necessity' is the wrong word here, as there is no question of any specific sinful act being predetermined by the divine will for the human will to perform. See, once again, Turner, op. cit. pp. 38-46.
12. In the introduction to his Penguin translation of *Revelations of Divine Love*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth (1966), p. 38.
13. London: Darton, Longman and Todd (1977).
14. Op. cit., p. 47.
15. Ibid. p. 63-72.
16. Ibid. p. 48.
17. Augustine, *de doctrina Christiana* l.iii, xxxi ff.