



# Richard FitzRalph on the Beatific Vision: *Delectatio* and *Beatitudo* in his Oxford Lectures on the Sentences (1328–29)

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## Abstract

Richard FitzRalph was one of the most influential thinkers from Oxford to emerge in the 14th century and was regularly quoted as an authority down to the 16th century. He has been credited as one of several theologians who had an influence on Benedict XII in drawing up his apostolic constitution *Benedictus Deus* (29 January 1336). Indeed, FitzRalph was asked by the previous Pope, John XXII, to bring a copy of his *Oxford Commentary on the Sentences* to Avignon at the time of the controversy on the beatific vision. This article focuses on how FitzRalph discussed the topic in his Oxford commentary, given in 1328–29.

## Keywords

beatific vision, *Benedictus Deus*, Pope John XXII, Pope Benedict XII, Richard FitzRalph

## Introduction

Richard FitzRalph (1299–1360)<sup>1</sup> was no stranger to controversy; indeed he pursued it with energy and gusto and still manages to divide the critics over 650 years after his death. His university education during a golden age for theology at Oxford in the 1330s

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- 1 Richard FitzRalph was born in Dundalk around 1299 and went to Oxford, probably aged around 15. Having completed his studies he became Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1332. Thereafter he was Dean of Lichfield. As Chancellor and Dean he began a series of visits

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and his acknowledged skill as a constructor of arguments made him a first rate polemicist. Much of FitzRalph's posthumous fame is associated with his campaign against the Franciscans and their privileges but it would be another issue, important to the thinkers of his time because of its spiritual and political implications, which would serve to establish FitzRalph's international reputation, a matter so important indeed that it could, it seems, turn the pope into a heretic, namely, the question of the beatific vision.

The beatific vision is, on the face of things, a quite simple notion—after we die, we hope, we will see God and be happy forever. This vision of God entails the satisfaction of all human desires and longings and so is a state of ultimate happiness where we will rest in peace and delight, no longer troubled by unfulfilled desire or disappointment.

As Christian Trottman points out, already by the 12th century the notions of paradise, purgatory, and hell were already in place and became popular ideas which have remained so since.<sup>2</sup> In popular terms: the very good go straight to heaven, the very bad to hell, and the uncertain rest, the vast majority, who are neither too good nor too bad, go to Purgatory and can be helped by the prayers of the living faithful.<sup>3</sup> Of course the question of what happens to the souls of the dead before the Final Judgement was already something which the early Church Fathers had written about and they attempted to reconcile the eschatological hope of Judaism with the centuries-old debate in Greek and Hellenistic philosophy regarding the status of the separated soul.<sup>4</sup> The revival of some ancient ideas, as mediated through Arabic Philosophy, and debated by the so-called Latin Averroists, such as monopsychism and the absorption of the individual into the One after death (condemned in 1277) pushed theologians to confirm the notion of a personal salvation, that one will see God face to face after the resurrection of the body and to affirm that even the separated souls of the just enjoy the vision of God before the Final Judgement.<sup>5</sup>

If the beatific vision is our hoped-for ultimate end, then it is natural that questions should arise, such as: What is seen? How? By Whom? Who is it that sees? The soul? Or the complete human being, body and soul? What does it entail? What kind of vision is there—clear and direct? Or maybe something less: indirect and unclear? Is the vision an intellectual one, where we know intuitively and directly what God's essence is; or is it more a matter of love, of fulfilment and the accompanying pleasure when the will chooses the goal of all human longing? Furthermore, this has implications for our understanding of the human person. For FitzRalph the problem in his day centred on which is the nobler faculty—reason or the will? Again, what would happen to me in seeing God—would I be transformed and be like God since we are told that we shall

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to the Papal Court at Avignon, something which would continue after becoming Archbishop of Armagh in 1346. Indeed, it was while pursuing his case against the Franciscans that he died of the plague at Avignon in November 1360. The standard biography is that of Katherine Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate: Richard FitzRalph in Oxford, Avignon and Armagh* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981).

2 Christian Trottman, *La Vision Béatifique. Des disputes scolastiques à sa définition par Benoît XII* (École Française de Rome, 1995), 4.

3 *Ibid.*, 4.

4 *Ibid.*, 3.

5 *Ibid.*, 4.

become like him (*theosis/deification*)? Would I still be free if I saw God or would my will in seeing absolute Goodness be ‘forced’ to gaze upon it forever? And what of the separated soul after death before it is reunited with the body at the Final Judgement—to what extent can it be happy (or indeed damned) without the body? How could the saints intercede for us in an intermediate state if they do not have a direct or full access to God before the Final Judgement?

The definition of what the beatific vision is, as set down in *Benedictus Deus* in 1336, is a Catholic doctrine as decided in the Middle Ages and is the culmination of debates in the Schools with an increasing interest in the topic from the middle of the 13th century. Latin theologians were faced with two apparently contradictory positions: the emphasis on the ultimately unknowability of God from the Greek tradition, and the general position of the Latins, from Augustine onwards, that the beatific vision consists in the vision of the divine essence as the end of human existence.<sup>6</sup> The matter was decided for the West in 1241 when at Paris it was declared that the content of the beatific vision is the essence of God and that this vision is the intellectual knowledge of the divine essence. This raised a noetic problem: how can a created and finite human intelligence see the Divine essence? An answer was given with the concept of the *lumen gloriae*; a habitus created in the soul of the blessed disposes them to receive the very form of the divine essence. The Council of Vienne in 1311 condemned those such as the Béghards who had denied the *lumen gloriae*. Later in the 13th century and in the first decades of the 14th century there is a shift in interest in the Schools from the vision of God to the vision in God, i.e., not so much the question of whether a created intellect can see the divine essence (since this had more or less been decided in the affirmative) but to ask what it sees and knows, e.g., the Divine Persons, actual and possible creatures, actual and possible worlds, the actual or possible past and future. In addition, 14th-century thinkers concentrated on the distinction between intuitive and abstractive knowledge, first at Oxford and then at Paris. This noetics of seeing rather than abstracting led to developments in optics, epistemology, and geometry and produced what has been called the ‘mathematicization of theology.’ Thus, when FitzRalph came to give his lectures on the *Sentences* in Oxford in the years 1328–29, since so many general issues had been decided, he would, like his contemporaries, devote himself in the first two questions of the commentary to a series of rather specific problems relating to the beatific vision which were being debated in Oxford at the time. As the 14th century advanced, commentators on Lombard’s *Sentences* tended to spend more time and effort debating the various questions routinely discussed in the context of the first distinction at the expense of some of the other distinctions of Lombard’s *Sentences*. As we have already mentioned above, FitzRalph devoted a considerable portion of his *Lectura*<sup>7</sup> to the *frui/uti* distinction before dealing with distinctions two and nine summarily. Moreover, while he was editing

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6 Ibid., 5.

7 I have mainly used MS Paris, Bibl. Nat., MS 15853. For the list of manuscripts of FitzRalph’s *Sentences* commentary, the table of questions and available texts from the FitzRalph Critical Edition Project at NUIM, see: <http://philosophy.nuim.ie/projects-research/projects/richard-fitzralph/text>; see also the website of the FitzRalph Society at <http://www.fitzralph.com>.

his lectures in 1330–32, as Regent Master, his own views were being debated before him by original thinkers such as Adam Wodeham and Robert Holcot. We will return to the content of FitzRalph's first two questions below but firstly it would be useful to look at how FitzRalph found himself moving from relatively calm academic discussions at Oxford to being at the centre of serious theological issues at the Papal Court in Avignon.

Katherine Walsh deals with the beatific vision controversy in some detail, especially regarding FitzRalph's first stay in Avignon in 1334–36.<sup>8</sup> As is well known, Pope John XXII, in sermons given in late 1331 and early 1332, put forward views on the beatific vision which were regarded by nearly everyone in the Latin West as erroneous and unorthodox.<sup>9</sup> While John XXII accepted that there were two judgements, a particular and a general, he argued that after the first the blessed only saw the humanity of Christ and not the vision of God, face to face.<sup>10</sup> The separated souls before the Final Judgement were, therefore, in an imperfect state. This became a controversy of major proportions. For example, if one were to see the humanity of Christ without his divinity this would imply that Christ's two natures are divisible. Again, some of the Pope's opponents felt that he was adopting a position which was too close to the position of the Greeks in general and perhaps even to the Nestorian heresy in particular. John XXII's views would be rejected outright by his successor, Benedict XII, in his apostolic constitution, *Benedictus Deus* (29 January 1336).<sup>11</sup> Now Benedict had published his decree early in his pontificate after consulting with a commission of theologians

8 K. Walsh, *A Fourteenth Century Scholar*, 85–107.

9 See, G. Geréby, 'Hidden Themes in Fourteenth-Century Byzantine and Latin Theological Debates: Monarchianism and Crypto-Dyophysitism,' in: Martin Hinterberger and Chris Schabel, eds, *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204–1500. Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales – Bibliotheca 11* (Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 183–211, at 193: 'The pope was alternatively called ignorant in theological matters or a heretic (by William of Ockham, for instance). All influential theologians of the papal court and beyond, including Armand of Belvézer, Durand of Saint-Pourçain, Jacques Fournier, and Ulrich of Strasbourg, firmly rejected the views of the pope, sometimes in rather strong words. The reaction against the pope's "novelties" went so far that the king of France convened 29 masters of theology in Paris, then the center of Latin theology, to investigate the issue. The committee was headed by the Dominican Pierre de la Palu (ca. 1280–1342) and met at the king's residence at Vincennes. The king asked the commission to decide on two issues: First, whether the souls of the saints in heaven see God face-to-face before the Last Judgment. Second, whether the vision they have now will be replaced by another, subsequent vision after the judgment. In their answer the masters declared that concerning the first question, the blessed saints in heaven have a pure, clear beatific, intuitive, and immediate vision of the divine essence and of the Trinity. Second, their vision will not be replaced by another one, and it is now the same as that which are going to have after the judgment. The masters formulated their view significantly in that the saints are "now seeing what they had believed in, and holding tight to what they had hoped for, not in hope, but in reality being blessed," that is, what they had believed, they see now, what they had desired they have now, being blessed not in expectation but in actual reality.'

10 See also, C. Trottman, *La Vision Béatifique*, 9.

11 One of the main influences on FitzRalph's life and thought was John de Grandisson (1292–1369), Bishop of Exeter (consecrated 1327). It is interesting to note that Benedict XII,

from 4 July to 4 September 1335. There were five Franciscans, five Augustinians, one Dominican, one Carmelite, and two secular masters, identified by Walsh as Walter Burley and Richard FitzRalph.<sup>12</sup> *Benedictus Deus* made no concessions to the Greek and Armenian interpretations and it had a profound effect on East–West relations and haunted reunion negotiations over the subsequent decade.<sup>13</sup> As György Geréby points out, *Benedictus Deus* in fact relegated to a heretical position much of the patristic tradition, and not only from the Greek but also from the Latin side, including St Bernard of Clairvaux.<sup>14</sup> Now FitzRalph had been one of those who opposed any compromise, and in his discussions with Barlaam the Calabrian in the 1340s regarding reunification with the Armenian Church, FitzRalph (*Summa in Questionibus Armenorum*, XI, 16<sup>15</sup>) reiterates this view.<sup>16</sup> Walsh also argues that FitzRalph was responsible for the condemnation of another view of John XXII, that the souls of the damned before the Final Judgement remained in a condition of semi-darkness from which they were able to wander around the world as demons tempting the living—FitzRalph had argued that God out of both his goodness and justice is as quick to punish as to reward. *Benedictus Deus* states that ‘the souls of those who die in actual mortal sin go down to hell immediately after death and there suffer the pain of hell.’ Presumably, it was because FitzRalph had already established himself somewhat as an expert on the beatific vision that he brought a copy of his lectures on the *Sentences* with him to Avignon at the request of John XXII.

## Contents of the Text

FitzRalph’s treatment of enjoyment consists of two questions. Question one asks whether only the Trinity is to be enjoyed. Question two asks whether beatitude is an act of the intellect or the will. The first article of question two is whether the will is a nobler faculty (*potentia*) than the intellect. The second article deals with whether joy (*gaudium*) or

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Jacques Fournier, had been John de Grandisson’s teacher at Paris from 1313 to 1317 and John de Grandisson’s patronage had plucked FitzRalph from potential obscurity in 1329 when he sent him to Paris with a letter of introduction to his former fellow student Pierre Roger who would become Benedict’s successor as Clement VI. Through Grandisson, FitzRalph would have unique access to both popes.

12 This, however, is contested by C. Trottmann, *La Vision Beatifique*, 380, note 43.

13 Walsh, *A Fourteenth Century Scholar*, 93.

14 G. Geréby, ‘Hidden Themes in Fourteenth-Century Byzantine and Latin Theological Debates: Monarchianism and Crypto-Dyophysitism,’ in Martin Hinterberger and Chris Schabel, eds, *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204–1500. Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales – Bibliotheca 11* (Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 183–211, at 192.

15 *Summa domini Armacani in questionibus Armenorum noviter impressa et correcta a ... Johanne Sudoris ; cum aliquibus sermonibus eiusdem de Christi dominio*; Paris, 1612.

16 See also, William Duba, ‘Conversion, vision and faith in the life and works of Richard FitzRalph,’ in Michael W. Dunne and Simon Nolan, eds, *Richard FitzRalph: His Life, Times and Thought* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2013), 103–127, at 121: FitzRalph’s theology in the *Sentences* takes as indisputable that Paul saw the divine essence and remembered what he saw, and he rejects those positions that appear to render having seen the divine essence clearly and directly incompatible with having faith.

pleasure (*delectatio*) is the same as volition. The third article explores whether joy or pleasure is beatitude.<sup>17</sup>

The topic of beatitude is also mentioned once in the Prologue to the *Lectura* where it forms part of an argument in dealing with the question as to whether theology is a practical science. The argument presented by FitzRalph is the following: the ultimate end of this science, namely theology, is beatitude, and therefore the goal of this science is the enjoyment of God. It therefore follows that the ultimate goal of this science is not speculative and so it must be practical. Reference is also made in the previous argument to both Aristotle and Averroes who hold that the goal of speculative science is truth and to the gospel of St Matthew that the end of Christian life is the love of God and one's neighbour—the implication being that theology does not concern itself with the truth. In his reply, FitzRalph states that what Aristotle means is that the ultimate goal in terms of knowledge is truth but such truth is not directive (*directiua*) of the will or of any extrinsic action commanded by the will nor does this rule out that the ultimate goal is love. FitzRalph states that the ultimate goal is twofold: near and remote. The remote end is beatitude and science is not named on account of this end; on the contrary, even if it already had attained this end it would not make it practical because this science is not something which is directive of happiness.<sup>18</sup>

17 This question has been examined in detail by Severin Kitanov; see below, p. 25.

18 FitzRalph, *Lectura*, Prologus, q. 2: VTRUM THEOLOGIA SIT SCIENCIA SPECULATIVA VEL PRACTICA. MS Oriel College 15, f. 2ra: Arguitur primo quod non:

[1]

quia hec sciencia ordinatur ad aliam finem quam ad speculationem, ergo et practica. Consequencia patet per Philosophum 2 *Metaphisice* et Commentatorem, commento 3, ubi dicunt quod finis sciencie speculative est veritas. Assertum probatur quia finis sciencie huius est dileccio Dei et proximi scilicet in hiis duobus mandatis pendent tota lex et prophete, *Matheum* 22. [...]

[2]

2<sup>o</sup> sic vltimus finis huius sciencie est beatitudo, ergo finis huius sciencie est fruicio Dei, ergo speculacio non est finis eius vltimus ergo non est speculatiua et per consequens est practica.

[...]

Ad primum argumentum principale:

cum arguitur sic ista sciencia ordinatur ad alium finem quam ad speculationem, ergo et cetera, dico quod non sequitur. Et ad dictum Philosophi, 2 *Metaphisice*, dico quod intelligit quod finis vltimus in genere cognitionis sciencie speculative est veritas talis scilicet quod non est directiua volucionis vel accionis extrinsece inperate a voluntate nec huic repugnat quin finis vltimus sit dileccio. Et hoc dico proprius in via quia talis finis non facit scienciam esse practicam sicut in posicione patuit.

[Ad 2<sup>m</sup>]

Ad 2<sup>m</sup> argumentum cum arguitur quod finis vltimus huius sciencie est beatitudo et beatitudo non est contemplacio set fruicio, ergo et cetera. Dico quod finis vltimus est duplex: propinquus et remotus. Finis remotus est beatitudo et non habet scienciam denominari a tali fine, ymmo si haberet adhuc talis finis non faceret ipsam esse practicam sicut prius dixi in alio argumento quia ista sciencia non est directiua istius beatitudinis.

When we come to Book One of the *Lectura*, the statement of the Question is given as follows: With regard to the first distinction it is asked first of all whether only the Unchanging Trinity is to be enjoyed (*fruitio*). It should be noted that as the 14th century advanced commentators on Lombard's *Sentences* tended to spend more time and effort debating the various questions routinely discussed in the context of the first distinction at the expense of some of the other distinctions of Lombard's *Sentences*. As we have already mentioned, FitzRalph devoted nearly a tenth of his *Lectura* to the *frui/uti* distinction before dealing briefly with distinctions two and nine. There then follow eight principal arguments against the Question,<sup>19</sup> namely, against the notion that only the Trinity can be enjoyed and one argument for (*ad oppositum*) on the distinction between use (*uti*) and (*frui*) taken from Augustine (*On Christian Doctrine*, 1, xxxiii, 37) but drawn from Peter Lombard (*Sentences* I, dist. 3, c. 3) and which also deals with the relationship between love, delight (*delectatio*), and beatitude. To enjoy for Augustine is to cling or adhere to something with love for its own sake: we ought only to enjoy God. All other things are to be used to help us reach that ultimate goal where we will be blessed. Both Rosemann and Kitanov have pointed out that this distinction between enjoyment and use (*frui et uti*), inherited from the writings of Augustine, is employed by Peter Lombard as a tool for organizing the contents of the *Sentences*. Thanks to Lombard this distinction becomes the opening theme of professional reflection in theology and philosophy of God,<sup>20</sup> and becomes, by the time of the 13th-century *Sentences* commentaries, a platform in order to explore a number of significant epistemological, psychological, ethical, and metaphysical problems associated with the relation between human beings and God, in this life (*in via*) and the next (*in patria*). Aristotelian eudemonism, in particular, raises the question of the compatibility between the Christian ideal of beatitude and Aristotle's praise of the activity of philosophical contemplation as the highest form of human activity. It should also be noted that the rejection of eudaimonism in the condemnations of 1277 meant that the problem was well known and was taken into account by all the theologians of the period—one might even say that it was a commonplace. Thus, theologians seek to articulate a Christian understanding of the ultimate end of human living and the nature of one's relation to that end, which is summed up in the notion of beatific enjoyment (*fruitio beatifica*). In the effort to articulate this concept, theologians will ask a number of key questions which FitzRalph will also address: Is it possible to know by natural means alone that God is the sole adequate object of enjoyment? Are there different kinds and degrees of enjoyment? Can one enjoy the divine persons separately from each other, on the one hand, and separately from the divine essence, on the other? Is enjoyment an intellectual or volitional act? Is beatific enjoyment a free or determined act?<sup>21</sup>

19 We will look at the content of the articles first, leaving an examination of the principal question and its arguments towards the end.

20 See, Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Severin V. Kitanov, *Beatific Enjoyment in Scholastic Theology and Philosophy: 1240–1335*, (PhD thesis, University of Helsinki Faculty of Theology, 2006), 28, and his *Beatific Enjoyment in Medieval Scholastic Debates* (Lanham, MA and Plymouth: Lexington, 2014).

21 On the debates in the early 14th century, see C. Trottmann, *La Vision Béatifique*, ch. 4, esp. 375–80. Trottmann mentions (p. 375) a series of questions on the subject of the beatific vision

Turning then to the first article 'Whether the enjoyment of God, namely beatitude, is possible for human beings.'<sup>22</sup> That this is the case is conceded by FitzRalph '*ad articulum sine ambiguitate dicendum est quod sic*' since this is the Catholic faith as expressed in the New Testament. The focus therefore will be on more specific matters which deal with the 'security' of beatitude and whether it exists to a greater or lesser extent. This is more of an issue relating to divine omnipotence (*De potentia Dei absoluta/ordinata*) rather than the nature of the vision so I will merely give a brief summary of the issues dealt with.

FitzRalph examines the argument that someone in heaven, Peter, cannot have beatitude if he cannot be sure of that beatitude, for God could obliterate Peter, could give him another beatitude and having done so make it so that it had never existed. Against this it is argued that God cannot obliterate Peter since that would mean that Peter erroneously thinks that he will always have the joy which he has.<sup>23</sup> This would mean that God who causes him to think in this way is a deceiver and so the Truth would mislead someone. FitzRalph's reply is to concede that someone such as Peter, just like any other saint in heaven, has the surety of the eternity of his beatitude. However, notwithstanding this, FitzRalph writes that God can annihilate him because God can just as freely annihilate him as create him. How is this so? The statement 'God will annihilate Peter' is contingent and possible but Peter's surety arises from the fact that Peter's knowledge which occurs

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in the style of *sophismata* which have been discussed by both Annalese Maier and Katherine Walsh as a possible influence. It remains far from clear that these rather blasphemous questions were, in fact, by FitzRalph, as he is normally quite cautious and conservative.

- 22 The articles follow the typical procedure of the time where there are many arguments put forward against the question and much space is given over to both formulating them clearly and then looking at possible responses to them. As it happens very little space can be devoted to attempting to answer the question itself. Unlike some of his contemporaries, FitzRalph is more hesitant, more inclined to offer provisional or probable answers rather than conclusive ones. He also sometimes will terminate an argument rather than conclude it. His method is analytic and linguistic and makes full use of thought experiments to try and solve problems or illustrate their difficulties. His treatment of arguments can also be quite uneven; sometimes it is clear that he finds one more interesting than the other and can devote a large amount of space to it. It is also common that he will present the views of three thinkers – Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Duns Scotus – and relate himself to their views of these writers. Contemporary writers are rarely mentioned and never by name.
- 23 MS Paris BN lat. 15853 (hereafter P.), f. 5ra. : Assertum probro: quia si quis posset habere hunc securitatem, ipsa habita ipse esset ita potens sicut Deus quia Deus tunc non posset ipsum adnichilare. Probo et arguo de Petro et suppono quod illud gaudium quod Petrus habet de ista securitatem sit A. Tunc arguo sic: si Deus potest adnichilare Petrum, ergo Deus potest facere aliam securitatem quem Petrus habet, et habita non fuisse; ergo potest facere A non fuisse et per consequens potest facere aliquod preteritum non fuisse, quod est manifeste falsum. Ergo primum antecedens est falsum, scilicet quod Deus potest Petrum adnichilare. Preterea: si aliquis habeat talem securitatem, sit Petrus sicut prius, et arguo tunc quod Deus non potest ipsum adnichilare quia hec propositio est impossibilis «Deus adnichilabit Petrum». Probo. Quia ex ea sequitur impossibile nam sequitur Deus adnichilabit Petrum, ergo Petrus erronee estimavit siue nunc estimat se semper habitum gaudium quod habuit; ergo Deus qui sic fecit ipsum estimare deceptit ipsum, ergo veritas fefellit aliquem.



in the Word and which gives rise to his certainly of eternal beatitude is due to the fact that he sees that God himself regards Peter's happiness as eternal, but it could be otherwise.<sup>24</sup> FitzRalph further refers to the manner in which God can deceive, such as when he deceived Jonah regarding the destruction of Nineveh. It is possible that this approach influenced Holcot. Kitanov refers to two types of security in Holcot:<sup>25</sup> (1) someone can believe that they will always be blessed and *will never* fall from beatitude; and (2) someone can believe that they will always be blessed and *cannot* fall from beatitude. For Holcot, as for FitzRalph, only the first kind of security can be attributed to those in heaven since even if they will never fall from beatitude they could.

There remains a series of arguments which deal with the possibility of different proportions of beatitude: for example, if one saint knows the complete happiness of another, would then the infinite happiness which he had before be now increased? This seems impossible because that would mean that every saint would have a joy which is infinitely capable of increasing intensively (*gaudium infinite intensive*). In his reply FitzRalph states that he accepts that if Peter sees Paul's joy, Peter will have more joy than before but only in a more extensive and not intensive manner. This probably means that the amount of joy is added to in an accidental rather than in an essential manner, a difference of quantity rather than quality. A discussion then follows about the kind of knowledge the blessed would have of their future happiness. For FitzRalph this is an unclear knowledge because in order to know this clearly the saint would have to have a clear knowledge of the divine knowledge, which is impossible since the knowledge of a creature cannot be equal to the divine knowledge. Instead, the blessed know this through a species, which is a kind of image, and he likens this to the way in which a shadow which falls on a wall represents that of which it is an image. The knowledge of the blessed although disproportioned to their object is yet still true. However, it could be pointed out that what FitzRalph says here seems to fall short of what is later stated in *Benedictus Deus* that the blessed will enjoy a face to face vision of the divine essence, nakedly, clearly, and openly.

Article 2 deals with the question: 'Whether it is possible for someone to enjoy one person [of the Trinity] without enjoying another or to enjoy the essence of God without enjoying a person [of the Trinity].' FitzRalph gives a critical examination of the view of

24 P., f. 5ra: Et hoc non obstante, dico quod Deus potest ipsum adnichilare quia ita libere quia ita libere potest ipsum adnichilare sicut ipsum creare. Vnde dico quod hoc est contingens et possibile «Deus adnichilabit Petrum» et ulterius secundum scolam communem nego consequentiam «Deus adnichilabit Petrum», ergo Petrus erronee estimavit se semper habiturum illud gaudium quod nunc habet, cuius ratio est hec: quia estimacio est ipsa cognicio actualis nec addit aliquid super cognicionem Petri que cognicio fit in verbo, et ideo sicut Deus ipse estimavit beatitudinem Petri fore eternam et potest non estimasse illam fore eternam absque errore sicut probitur in questione de presentia et sicut dicit Magister, libro primo, dist. 39, ita Petrus cuius cognicio est in verbo nunc estimat suam beatitudinem semper fore. Et tamen potest non estimare hoc et similiter non estimasse, nec est inconueniens. Et hec siue ponatur quod ipsa estimacio Petri sit ipsum verbum Dei siue actus secundus respectu cuius verbum se habet, sicut species in memoria quia utroque modo illa estimacio potest non fuisse estimacio, cum causa quatenus est estimacio sicut in verbo ex hoc scilicet quod verbum representat istam beatitudinem semper fore, quod tamen verbum potest non representare.

25 Kitanov, *Beatific Enjoyment*, 310 and note 278.

Duns Scotus and then puts forward his own view. As Kitanov points out, Scotus maintains that *de facto* the blessed will have one beatific vision and one beatific enjoyment.<sup>26</sup> However, Scotus's view on the issue becomes an object of great interest in the subsequent debate about enjoyment in heaven. Walter Chatton seems to support Scotus on this count whereas FitzRalph and Wodeham disagree with Scotus. With regard to this life, Scotus argues that it is possible to enjoy the essence of God without enjoying the persons. This is because the divine essence can be conceived absolutely without relation to another object. The divine essence can be grasped under the aspect of the supreme or infinite good without thinking about it in Trinitarian terms as in the case of the philosophers who knew nothing about the Trinity. Again, Christians often think or pray to one person of the Trinity without necessarily thinking about the other two, or praise God as the divinity without thinking of God as a Trinity. FitzRalph says that for Scotus<sup>27</sup> (Book I, dist. 1, q. 2, a. 2) there does not seem to be a contradiction contained in the statement that 'someone sees the essence of God while not seeing the person' and that 'someone sees one person of the Trinity and not the other' and yet enjoys them in a similar fashion. For Scotus, God can reveal His essence to the blessed without revealing the persons and could reveal one person of the Trinity without revealing another.<sup>28</sup> However, against Scotus's position, FitzRalph argues that if someone clearly sees one person of the Trinity, then either they see them as an essence only and so this includes all of the persons, or they will see this person as a person. If the latter, then again (and necessarily) they will see this person as relative to the others because one person of the Trinity is not distinguished from the other except in terms of relations. Therefore, it is impossible that someone would enjoy one person of the Trinity without enjoying the other two or even that he would clearly know one without knowing the others.<sup>29</sup>

FitzRalph finishes by saying that the answer to the article is no and especially so (*maxime*) with regard to the first part, namely that one could enjoy one person of the

26 Kitanov, *Beatific Enjoyment*, 181–83.

27 *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 1, pars 1, q. 2, n. 33.

28 Kitanov, *Beatific Enjoyment*, 184.

29 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2: [P. f. 6va] Doctor Subtilis, primo libro, dist. prima, questione 29, articulo secundo tenet quod sic loquendo de fruicione proprie et eciam de visione proprie. Dicit quod non videtur claudere contradiccionem quod aliquis videat essenciam non videndo personam et quod videat unam personam et non aliam et simili modo fruatur. Set contra hoc claudit contradictoria de personis probo quia si aliquis videat clare unam personam aut ergo videat istam ut essenciam tantum et tunc simili modo videat omnis aut videat istam ut persona et tunc necessaries videat istam ut relativam est quia non distinguitur ab alia nisi ut relativa est. Ergo videat suum correlativum set ex se essentialiter refertur ad duas personas, ergo necessario videt illas ergo fruatur illis sicut ista. Ergo impossibile est quod aliquis fruatur una non fruendo aliis duabus vel eciam quod cognoscat unam clare non cognitis aliis. Et loquitur de clara cognitione beatifica et simili fruicione. Preterea arguitur de essencia et relacione sine persona quia magis probabile videtur quod aliquis posset frui essencia absque persona quam una persona sine alia. Essencia et persona sunt una res simplicissima apud intellectum ita quod intellectus maiorem simplicitatem et indivisibilitatem nequi intelligere ergo essencia visa clare videtur persona quecunque quia quicquid et quelibet res que est in essencia videtur essencia visa.

Trinity without enjoying the others, although he says that the second part, enjoying the essence of God without enjoying the persons, might be conceded as probable because its opposite at least seems to be probable. Therefore, he continues, it seems that neither the essence nor the person can be clearly seen except in that all of the persons are seen; nor can someone enjoy one person or essence with a perfect enjoyment such as it is in the next life (*in proxima*) unless all of the persons are enjoyed.<sup>30</sup>

The third article 'Whether the will with the freedom from contradictories<sup>31</sup> can freely enjoy the ultimate end' also examines the views of Duns Scotus as well as those of Thomas Aquinas. He begins with Duns Scotus:

The Subtle Doctor (I, dist. 1, q. 4) states that if the final end has been clearly shown then the will can suspend all acts regarding it and indeed not will unless it is otherwise necessitated. He proves this inasmuch as the will is free and there is nothing as much in the power of the will than the will itself (*De libero arbitrio*, c. 3) and by this shows that vision and willing are two things in themselves (*absolute*) and thus one can exist without the other and especially the former, namely, vision without the latter.<sup>32</sup>

The argument that if the will can abstain from wanting beatitude, it can thereby want evil or misery is also addressed FitzRalph and later by Wodeham as well.

FitzRalph looks at several arguments: If the will cannot will the Highest Good when clearly seen, the will can will the highest evil but then the will would not necessarily hate its punishment and consequently the devil would not necessarily suffer from the greatest punishment that he could sustain, because no one can suffer or be punished unless by having what they do not want, but the Devil has what he wants.<sup>33</sup>

30 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2: [P. f. 6va] Ideo teneo in isto articulo quod non et maxime quo ad primam partem, scilicet quod et cetera, licet posset secunda pars concedi probabiliter quia tamen est eius oppositum videtur probabilius. Ideo videtur michi quod nec essentia nec persona potest clare videri absque hoc quod omnes persone videantur nec aliquis potest frui una persona vel essentia fruicione perfecta qualis est in proxima nisi fruatur omnibus personis licet possit sic frui in via ubi nullam personam nec essentiam clare videat et ita posset in proxima si eadem cognicio que ut in via manet quia tamen ista nunquam fieret clara visio intuitiva set semper erit cognicio abstractiva quia nunquam cognoscitur obiectum per istam ut obiectum presens.

31 That the will is free from opposites (*libera ad opposita*) or from contradictories (*libertas contradictionis*) originates with Duns Scotus. There is also *libertas contradictionis sive exercitii* (the freedom to act or not).

32 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2: [P. f. 9va] Doctor Subtilis primo libro, dist. prima, quest. quarta dicit quod ostenso fine ultimo clare potest voluntas omnem actum suspendere circa illum immo non velle nisi aliunde necessitetur. Probat istud per hoc quod voluntas est libera et nichil tam in potestate voluntatis sicut ipsa voluntas, 3<sup>o</sup> *De libero arbitrio*, cap 3<sup>o</sup> et per hoc quod visio et volucio sunt due res absolute et ideo potest una esse sine alia et maxime prior, scilicet visio sine posteriori.

33 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2: [P. f. 9va] Set contra istud arguitur sic: 1. Sicud argutum fuit prius si voluntas posset nolle summum bonum clare visum posset voluntas velle summum malum clare visum, quod negat Anselmus in *De casu dyaboli* cap. 23 ubi dicit quod dyabolus non potuit velle unum scivisset se semper miserum fore. Hec

FitzRalph also rejects the view of Aquinas that once the final end has been clearly shown, enjoyment or delight follows with an absolute necessity.<sup>34</sup> Against this FitzRalph states that he agrees with Scotus that vision and delight are two acts; therefore God can annihilate the latter, namely delight, while the former remains, and therefore the first does not follow the second with an absolute necessity as Aquinas holds.<sup>35</sup>

Both articles are prompted, as it were, by positions drawn from Duns Scotus and in both cases they are rejected by FitzRalph. FitzRalph accepts the distinction between vision and willing and that in some circumstances, the freedom of the will *per accidens* can refuse to love God; however he disagrees with Scotus that when the final end is clearly shown the freedom of the will *per se* can freely not desire it.

In the answer to the principal question, 'Whether the Unchanging Trinity alone is to be enjoyed,' FitzRalph begins by stating that enjoyment can be understood in three ways. Firstly, as found in other animals, quoting Augustine's question 30 from the Eighty-Three Different Questions:

... It is not so very absurd to think of animals as enjoying nourishment and all of the bodily pleasures. However, only a living being possessed of reason can use anything. For the knowledge of that to which each thing must be ordered is not given to beings lacking reason, nor is it given to simple, dull rational beings.

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ibi. Ergo multo minus potest velle suam miseriam. 2. Preterea tunc voluntas non necessatio odiret penam sicut argutum est prius in oppositum articuli et per consequens non necessario doleret dyabolus ex maxima pena quam posset sustinere quia nullus potest dolere sive puniri nisi habendo quod non vult quia nichil est pena nisi quod est contra voluntatem sicut dicit Anselmus in *De conceptu virginali*, capitulo quarto. 3. Preterea tunc sicut argutum est in quarto argumento ad oppositum questionis, ostenso uno alico bono tamen voluntati posset libere non velle illud, quod negat Anselmus in *De casu dyaboli*, cap 12. 4. Preterea 12 *Metaphysice*, commento 39: *delectacio sequitur apprehensionem sicut umbra corpus*, ergo necessario; set ad delectacionem sequitur necessario actus voluntatis sicut ad dolorem, ergo ex visione summe delectabilis necessario sequitur aliquis actus voluntatis; ergo voluntas non potest se suspendere ab omni actu.

34 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2: [P. f. 9vb] Beatus Thomas dicit quod ostenso ultimo fine clare necessitate absoluta sequitur fruicio sine delectatio. Set contra istum: visio et delectacio sunt duo actus, ergo posteriorem scilicet delectacionem potest Deus adnichilare manente primo, et ita primum non sequitur secundus necessitate absoluta ut ipse dicit. Preterea amor iste aut fit a Deo immediate et tunc libere Deus potest illum non facere aut fit a voluntati mediate visione et tunc potest Deus accionem voluntatis sequestrare, sicut accionem ignis in Daniele et sociis eius et in sancto Ypolito posito super prunas ardentes.

35 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2: [P. f. 9vb] Ideo ad istum articulum dico quod libertas contradiccionis est duplex respectu alicuius, una per se et alia per acciden-  
 Libertas per se respectu alicuius est potestas volendi illud et non volendo stantibus hiis que nunc ponuntur in voluntate et in intellectu, scilicet, cognicione et aliis. Libertas per acciden-  
 est potestas volendi aliquid et illud non volendi per corrupcionem vel amissionem alicuius nunc habiti a voluntate vel intellectu sicut fit per diversionem ab aliquo considerato. Tunc enim actualis cognicio istius corrumpitur et propter hoc nunc non vult illud. Et certe ista libertas per accideus est aliquando ubi non est possibilis talis diversio sicut patet in angelis qui ceciderunt ante suum casum; ipsi euim tunc potuerunt Deum non amare sicut facto

Secondly, FitzRalph says that:

enjoyment is understood more properly as ‘to inhere in love to some thing for its own sake’ (Sent., I, dist. 1, c. 2; Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I, c. 4, n. 4) and this in two ways, either with the joy of hope which is how the wayfarer enjoys, or with the joy of something which is clearly seen as is the way he who is confirmed enjoys. Referring to enjoyment in either the second or the third way, I state the following: In the first way, no because enjoyment in this way is the bodily delights of brute animals, and this is proved sufficiently by the arguments *ad oppositum* to this question. This is of course taken from Augustine to the effect that truly and properly no one is said ‘to enjoy’ except in the Trinity.<sup>36</sup>

The views of the philosophers on beatitude also get a brief mention. In Argument 2, FitzRalph put forward the premise that because every man who lives as he wishes is happy (Augustine 83 *Questions*, q. 31); but some men live as they wish without enjoying the Trinity and many philosophers posited happiness in the speculation which they had and did not aspire to something in addition to this. This was because they did not believe that it was possible for them to have any eternal happiness, and so they did not aspire to something which they did not have. FitzRalph quotes Seneca in the *De remediis fortuitorum*, who says that he who is happy in himself has been born with great riches, meaning by this that the virtuous man is happy with what he has.

In respect of the principal question, it is argued as follows: ‘Some man is happy (*beatus*) while not enjoying the Trinity, therefore not only the Trinity is to be enjoyed.’ And the conclusion is clear. I prove the major premise as follows: because every man who lives as he wishes is happy,

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probaverunt et hoc ex se, scilicet peccando, ex quo peccato ipsi amiserunt claram visionem Dei et consequenter non amaverunt non tamen potuerunt forte stante visione ipsum non amare ex se. Si loquitur de libertate per se dico quod ostenso ultimo fine clare voluntas non libere vult illud quia non potest ex se sive sit confirmata illa voluntas sicut est nunc in angelis sive non ipsum sic ostensum non velle stantibus hiis que sunt in intellectu nunc aliis positis. Si vero loquitur de libertate per accidens sic concedo quod ostenso ultimo fine clare non confirmata ipsa voluntate potest ipsa voluntas illud non velle sicut fuit in primis angelis. Et ex hoc quod peccaverunt posset tamen talis casus poni quod forte non frueretur illo clare viso posito scilicet quod tantum puniret illum et plus quam delectaretur in ipso, vel posset dici quod quacunquē puniret non posset non amari. Primum videtur probabilius quia non sequitur amor necessario nisi propter delectacionem.

- 36 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2: [P. f. 11va] AD QUESTIONEM PRINCIPALEM cum queritur “utrum sola Trinitate incommutabili sit fruenda”, dico quod frui accipitur tripliciter: uno modo prout repertum in brutis, unde Augustinus 83 *Questionum*, questione 30, dicit *frui quidem cibo et qualibet corporali voluptate non absurde existimantur et bestie: uti autem aliqua re non potest rationis experts quia scire quo quid referendum est non est datum rationis expertibus set nec ipsis rationabilibus stultis*. Hec Augustinus. Secundo modo accipitur frui magis proprie pro habere per amorem alicui propter se et hoc dupliciter sicut distinguit Magister distinctione prima, primi libri, vel cum gaudio spei sicut viator fruitur vel cum gaudio rei clare visu sicut comprehensor fruitur. Loquendo de fruicione secundo modo vel 3° dico quod sic, primo modo non, quia sic fruendum est delectacionibus corporalibus ab animalibus brutis. Istud probatur sufficienter per argumenta ad oppositum questionis.

as Augustine says in the 83 *Questions*, q. 31; but some man lives as he wishes without enjoying the Trinity; therefore, etc. The minor premise is clear: because many philosophers posited happiness in the speculation which they had and did not pretend to something in addition to this because they did not believe that it was possible for them to have any eternal happiness, therefore they did not pretend to something which they did not have. Thus, Seneca in the book *De remediis fortuitorum*, says he who is happy in himself has been born with great riches, meaning by this that the virtuous man is happy with what he has.<sup>37</sup>

Again, in the seventh principal argument, Aristotle is drawn upon:

In respect of the principal question: 'Some creature is to be loved for its own sake alone; therefore some creature is to be enjoyed,' as has already been argued in the definition of enjoyment.

I prove the major premise as follows: Because happiness is to be loved for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else, as Aristotle says in the first book of the *Ethics*, chapter 8; and happiness is a creature since it is a human activity, as he himself says in the same book, chapter 9; so, therefore, some creature is to be loved for its own sake alone; therefore, some creature is to be loved.<sup>38</sup>

Unlike, however, in other cases, FitzRalph's answers here are quite short, perfunctory and a not very profound treatment. FitzRalph states the premise referring to the philosophers is false; in fact, none of them has what he wants; they have worked hard for the knowledge they have but they always want more:

With regard to the SECOND ARGUMENT where it was argued that somebody is happy and yet not enjoying the Trinity because every man who lives as he wishes is blessed as Augustine says in the book of 83 *Questions*, q. 31; and some man lives as he wishes and many philosophers [also] without enjoying the Trinity, therefore, etc., I say that Augustine is talking about wishing in respect of having (*in habitu*) so that he understands the major premise as follows: 'every man who lives as he wishes, that is, he has everything that he wishes, is happy.' And speaking in this way, the minor premise referring to all philosophers whatsoever is false, because none of these

37 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1: [P. f. 1ra] <2.> Ad principale arguitur sic: aliquis homo est beatus in fruendo trinitate, ergo non sola trinitate est fruendum. Consequencia patet. Assertum proba: quia omnis homo qui viuit ut vult est beatus sicut dicit Augustinus 83 *Questionum*, questione 31; sed aliquis homo viuit ut vult non fruendo trinitate; ergo et cetera. Minor patet: quia multi philosophi posuerunt felicitatem in speculatione quam ipsi habebant nec affectabant aliquid plus quia non crediderunt se posse habere aliquam beatitudinem eternam, ergo ipsi non affectauerunt aliquid quod ipsi non habuerunt. Vnde Seneca dicit in libro *De remediis fortuitorum* qui seipso contentus est cum diuiciis natus est, volens dicere virtuosus satiari rebus habitis.

38 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1: [P. f. 1ra] <7.> Ad principale: aliqua creatura est diligenda propter se tantum; ergo alia creatura est fruendum sicut prius argumentum est per diffinitionem fruicionis. Assertum proba: quia felicitas est diligenda propter se tantum et nunquam propter aliud sicut dicit philosophus primo *Ethicorum*, c. 8; et infelicitas est creatura cum sit operatio hominis, sicut ipse dicit in eodem libro primo, capitulo 9; ergo alia creatura est diligenda propter se tantum ergo alia creatura est fruendum.

has what he wants; they have as much knowledge as they want because they have worked to have more knowledge. And one can also answer differently because Augustine certainly rejects that saying there in his text.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, Aristotle must give way to Augustine or at least be reconciled with him:

With regard to the SEVENTH ARGUMENT where it was argued that happiness (*felicitas*) is to be loved for itself alone according to Aristotle in the first book of the Ethics, chapter 8, and that happiness is a creature since it is an activity of man, as the Philosopher says in the same work, chapter 9, therefore happiness is to be enjoyed, to the same I state that happiness is not to be loved for its own sake alone, but on account of God, just like all of the powers and their activities, as Augustine says in *On the Trinity*, book 13, chapter 20. Yet Aristotle understood that happiness is not to be desired on account of any other activity which is not naturally connected (*annexa*) to happiness itself. I say this because the activity of the will is something that naturally accompanies happiness.<sup>40</sup>

The second question of the *Lectura* has already been examined in detail by Severin Kitanov<sup>41</sup> and I will simply refer to some *notabilia* here for the sake of completeness. The question which is raised by FitzRalph is whether beatific enjoyment is an act of the intellect or the will? Aquinas, in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, agreed with Aristotle that happiness is an operation, not a habit, and so Aquinas concluded that ultimate happiness is found in the operation of the highest human faculty, that is, the intellect, with respect to the noblest of objects, that is, God. It follows that enjoyment is an operation of the intellect. Even if Aquinas does add that actual union with God is accomplished through a sort of (*quasi*) mutual penetration of seer and seen, lover and beloved, and is

39 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1: [P. f. 11va] Ad secundum cum arguitur quod aliquis est beatus non fruendo Trinitate quia omnis homo qui vivit ut vult est beatus, sicut dicit Augustinus libro 83 *Questionum* questione 31, set aliquis homo vivit ut vult ut multi philosophi non fruendo Trinitati ergo et cetera, dico quod Augustinus loquitur de velle in habitu ita quod intelligit maiorem sic omnis homo qui vivit ut vult, hoc est qui habet quicquid vult in habitu est beatus. Set sic loquendo est minor falsa de philosophis quibuscunque quia nullus istorum habuit quicquid voluit; habuit tantam scienciam quantam voluit quia ad habendam maiorem laboravit. Et potest dici aliter quia certe Augustinus retractat illud dictum ibi.

40 Riccardus Filii Radulfi, *Lectura in Sententias*, I, q. 1: [P. f. 11va] Ad septimum argumentum, cum arguitur quod felicitas est diligenda propter se tantum secundum Philosophum, primo *Ethicorum* cap. 8, et felicitas est creatura cum sit operacio homonis, ut dicit Philosophus ibidem capitulo 9, ergo felicitate est fruendum. Ad idem dico quod felicitas non est diligenda propter se tamen set propter Deum sicut omnes virtutes et operationes earum ut dicit Augustinus 13 *De Trinitate*, cap. 20. Set Philosophus intelligit quod felicitas non est appendenda propter aliam operationem que non est sibi naturaliter annexa. Hoc dico propter operationem voluntatis que naturaliter est annexa felicitati.

41 Severin Kitanov, 'Is it better for the King of England to be a king of England than a duke of Aquitaine? Richard FitzRalph and Adam Wodeham on whether beatific enjoyment is an act of the intellect or an act of the will,' in Dunne and Nolan, eds, *Richard FitzRalph: His Life, Times and Thought*, 56–78.

followed by a great delight (*summa delectatio*),<sup>42</sup> FitzRalph states that the view according to which the intellect is nobler than the will is a reasonable one (*valde probabilis*) but he holds that cognitive acts cannot function properly without volitional acts. For this reason he argues that volition is nobler than cognition and if volition is nobler than cognition, it follows that the faculty of the will is nobler than the faculty of the intellect.<sup>43</sup>

As Kitanov points out, pleasure for FitzRalph is the best part of beatitude insofar as only pleasure brings ultimate satisfaction to the rational human mind with respect to God and he also shows that FitzRalph rejects Aquinas's claim that ultimate human happiness is found primarily in the vision of the divine essence.<sup>44</sup> Aquinas's definition would seem to suggest that one can see God without loving Him since 'for Aquinas pleasure is not included in the essence of beatitude but is rather an additional extrinsic component of beatitude.'<sup>45</sup> However, as FitzRalph points out, the vision of God includes the pleasure of union with God, which, as Aquinas himself concedes, is what makes the vision of God perfect.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

As ever with FitzRalph, one is struck by the detail and complexity with which he and his contemporaries at Oxford approached the topic of the beatific vision on the eve of the great controversy, which would be begun by John XXII, on All Saints Day in 1331, and brought to a close by the dogmatic constitution *Benedictus Deus* promulgated by Benedict XII, John's successor, on 29 January 1336. Although FitzRalph's *Lectures on the Sentences* were given in Oxford in 1328–29 he was still editing them in 1331–32 before he became Chancellor of the University of Oxford. We have focused here on elements of interest in themselves in the *Lectures* which place FitzRalph perhaps close to the position of the Dominicans<sup>47</sup> on the eve of the beatific vision controversy. At Avignon, FitzRalph will be deeply involved in the controversy, being perhaps a member of the commission which advised on the drawing up of *Benedictus Deus* and in preaching a sermon at Avignon on 7 July 1335 in which he made clear his adherence to the notion of the immediate vision of God. His interest in the question, not only of the immediate vision of God but also of the immediate punishment of the damned, was something that would continue to occupy him later in his great summa, the *Armenian Questions*, which is beyond our present scope.

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42 Ibid., 61.

43 Ibid., 64. On this discussion of the nobility of the will in FitzRalph, see also K. Tachau, 'Adam Wodeham and Robert Holcot as Witnesses to FitzRalph's Thought,' in *FitzRalph: His Life, Times and Thought*, 79–95; esp. pp. 85 ff.

44 Kitanov, 'Is it better ...,' 64.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 See Trottmann, *La Vision Béatifique*, 380.



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