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The Reform of Zeal: François de Sales and Militant French Catholicism

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There is a fear sometimes expressed that too expansive a notion of Shakespeare will fatally undermine the cohesion of the field of study. Lanier expresses such misgivings. He tries to put some order to the field by invoking the somewhat discredited notion of fidelity. Every adaptor, he argues, feels they are being faithful to what is essential in Shakespeare, though they feel free to be unfaithful to the inessential. This fidelity, he argues, is to Shakespeare as rhizome rather than to Shakespeare narrowly as text. Nevertheless, Lanier's proposition is dubious: Could someone not see what is nonessential in Shakespeare as interesting and worthy of being developed? Would such a work not be an adaptation of Shakespeare? Moreover, do not the notions of fidelity and infidelity leave us within the realm of intention? Perhaps what is needed is an intrepid openness to expansiveness, if that's where thinking and analysis take us. Such an openness would still allow for analytical distinctions. It just wouldn't foreclose on exploration.

It is an interesting collection that spurs such questions and debate.

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Donlan, Thomas A.

The Reform of Zeal: François de Sales and Militant French Catholicism.

St. Andrews Studies in French History and Culture 9. St. Andrews: Centre for French History and Culture of the University of St. Andrews, 2018. Pp. iv, 144. ISBN 978-1-907548-16-1 (paperback) n.p.

The Reform of Zeal is Thomas A. Donlan's first published book. A teacher at Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix, Arizona, Donlan holds a PhD in History from the University of Arizona and is the author of the article "Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary: Witness to a Catholicism of Douceur" (De Sales University, 2017). *The Reform of Zeal* is part of a much larger series of monographs and studies by English-speaking scholars on the French-speaking world: St. Andrews' Studies in French History and Culture. It is intended for scholars of François de Sales.

In his introduction, Donlan notes that the link between religious conduct and nonviolence during the French Wars of Religion has not received sufficient

attention. Donlan's contribution is to explore the figure of François de Sales as a person who, at first taken in by militant French Catholicism, grew to change his mind and adopt a Catholicism of humility and gentleness based on Jesus's own statement in Matthew 11:29. Donlan calls this trait a Catholicism of "douceur": a word that he translates as "gentleness." Donlan proceeds to provide a literature review of Salesian scholarship and to claim that his study also contributes to the field of seventeenth-century French Catholicism. In this section, Donlan is careful to define his terms—such as "militant Catholicism," "violence," and "French Catholicism," as well as "douceur." He concludes his introduction by outlining the content in each of the book's five chapters.

In the first chapter, Donlan examines the notions that helped De Sales evolve towards a peaceful Catholicism. Here, he discusses the influence of the *Imitation of Christ*, Erasmus, and Jesuit ideas on De Sales. He also examines the French moderates as those who preceded De Sales in his theology of "douceur" and evaluates the limits of this term. In chapter 2, Donlan analyzes the life and spirituality of De Sales. In chapter 3, he looks at De Sales and the Chablais mission. He examines De Sales's opposition to Catholic self-harm in favour of gentleness. He also discusses the relational, pedagogical, and liturgical strategies that De Sales employed to reach the Huguenots. Indeed, this Catholic mission to the Huguenots was a success. In the fourth chapter, Donlan analyzes De Sales's work as a spiritual leader in the early seventeenth century, and his theology of "douceur." Donlan details this theology as one that teaches kindness to oneself; as both Christ-centred and free from spiritual perfectionism. Here, he describes the kind of "mindful" spirituality that De Sales envisioned for the faithful. In chapter 5, Donlan tackles this key concept of "douceur" in relation to the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary and also the "theology of weakness" that De Sales developed, wherein God prefers to work through the weak, humble, and lowly. In his conclusion, Donlan underlines his point that De Sales contributed to a renewal of Catholicism. An index is provided.

This book offers scholars a different take on De Sales's life and spirituality. It reads easily, like one long argument in which the author provides multiple examples to support his ideas. One might wonder about the constant repetition of certain words (like "douceur"), however, and whether a synonym could have been used at times. Nonetheless, the book's review of De Sales's entire spiritual transformation in light of his biography provides a larger context for his reform of zeal. The bibliography gives primary sources and many secondary sources.

The book also provides an overview of Catholic spirituality in the Renaissance and seventeenth century. The reader gets a clear view of the ideas that influenced De Sales's work and how his transformation took place in the Chablais mission. Donlan's highlighting of the theology of weakness associated with the nuns in the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary is especially interesting because it shows the effect of Salesian theology on women. One might question if this book's take on De Sales is a bit too overtly religious; however, the book's ideas are argued very well. Contributing to the scholarship on French militant Catholicism and the figure of François De Sales, this book could be read by any Renaissance specialist. Its organization is very clear and leaves no room for guesswork on the part of the reader; it is well written, well proven, and clear—while providing a new take on François de Sales and Catholic spiritual history. It is therefore recommended to all who are interested in the man and his culture.

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Burlington, ON

Feroli, Teresa, and Margaret Olofson Thickett, eds.

Witness, Warning, and Prophecy: Quaker Women's Writing, 1655–1700.

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 60 / Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 527. Toronto: Iter Press / Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018. Pp. xxii, 413 + 3 ill. ISBN 978-0-86698-584-0 (paperback) US\$59.95.

Quaker women produced around 220 printed texts in the second half of the seventeenth century. Their writings proclaim the “inner light” or voice of God, speak out against persecution and injustice, critique the actions of religious and political authorities, and warn readers of God's approaching judgment. In *Witness, Warning, and Prophecy*, editors Teresa Feroli and Margaret Olofson Thickett showcase a remarkable sample of these texts, highlighting the fascinating range of ways in which Quaker women contributed to the growth of their religious movement and interrogated the broader spiritual, political, and social concerns of their time.