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PHILOSOPHY AND THE PREAMBULA FIDEI  
IN SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

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*CURRICULUM STUDIORUM*

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN REFERRING TO  
THE WORKS OF SAINT THOMAS

<i>ST</i>	=	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> , Leonine ed.
<i>SCG</i>	=	<i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i> , Leonine ed.
<i>De ver.</i>	=	<i>De Veritate</i> , Leonine ed.
<i>De trin.</i>	=	<i>Expositio super Librum Boethii de Trinitate</i> , Decker ed.
<i>III Sen.</i>	=	<i>Scriptum super III Sententiis</i> , Mandonnet-Moos ed.
<i>In Heb.</i>	=	<i>In Epistolam ad Hebraeos</i> , Parma ed.

## INTRODUCTION

The notion of a rapprochement between philosophy and theology, which even today remains a vital question, was born of speculative reason's encounter with religious faith during the mediaeval period. Whenever Christian existence and philosophical reflection meet, their confrontation engenders a number of necessary considerations: Is there any conflict between faith and reason? Can the savant-believer also truly be a philosopher? Can the theologian use philosophy within faith to structure his theology?

In his most recent work, *On Being A Christian*, the controversial Catholic theologian, Hans Küng, formulates a fundamental question which touches the relation between faith and reason, and between philosophy and theology. It also sets the tone for the present research:

It seems here as if we had been rushed into a dilemma, into an inescapable situation. *Either* belief in God can be proved and how is it then faith? *Or* it cannot be proved and how is it then reasonable? This is the perennial dilemma between reason and faith, particularly in the question of the knowledge of God, which some solve in favor of faith and the others solve in favor of reason-- or even do not solve it at all.<sup>1</sup>

Fr. Küng has formulated a good and necessary question even an inescapable one. But what is surprising is that he

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Küng, *On Being A Christian*, Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976, p. 64.

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presents it as a dilemma which can only be solved by a choice in favor of either faith or reason to the exclusion of one or the other. He does not seem to allow for a resolution of the question which distinguishes faith from reason but which at the same time admits of a relation between them and between philosophy and theology.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, however, has consistently posed these same basic questions at a number of stages throughout his life in a way which can ground a perennial resolution to these questions. There is no fundamental conflict between philosophy and theology, Aquinas has taught. Indeed, the theologian may use philosophy within theology. Among other functions, philosophy may be used to demonstrate those truths which are antecedent to faith. The problematic of the present study is the elucidation of the Thomistic doctrine of the *praeambula fidei*. It is undertaken as an attempt to ground one moment in the rapport which Aquinas has said exists between faith and reason, and between philosophy and theology. The topic must needs be limited, however. No attempt will be made to explicate the nature of demonstration proper to philosophy and to theology, or to identify each and every one of the preambles, or to explain the other uses for philosophy within sacred doctrine which Saint Thomas has enumerated.

Rather, this research aims to answer two basic questions: What is the nature of the *praeambula fidei*, and what

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role do they play within theology, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas?

Chapter one traces the manner in which Saint Thomas develops the question of the use of philosophy within sacred doctrine. It studies at length two series of texts which pose questions relating to the believing-philosopher and the speculative-theologian. It methodologically sets one series of texts against the other better to intensify the background for the formulation of the doctrine of the *praeambula fidei* by Aquinas.

Chapter two investigates the nature of the preambles of faith. Philological and doctrinal research both play important parts in the discovery of the true meaning of the Thomistic preambles.

Chapter three studies the role which the preambles play within theology. It points out how the distinctions made regarding the preambles of faith resolve any conflict which might have appeared in the two series of texts which posed the question of the use of philosophy within theology elaborated in chapter one. At the same time, it presents one moment in Aquinas' resolution of the perennial questions of faith and reason, of philosophy and theology, namely philosophy used to demonstrate the naturally demonstrable truths contained in revelation, in order to ground the essential rationality of the theological enterprise within reason.

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Following chapter three, there is a summary of the problematic and of the research, and a number of conclusions about the nature and the role of the *praeambula fidei* within theology are drawn.

The present study is both historical and doctrinal. Its historical character is at once apparent-- it studies the vocabulary and texts of a great Christian theologian of the Middle Ages, Saint Thomas Aquinas. But it is doctrinal as well. It studies those sources for Saint Thomas' thoughts with their doctrinal conclusions and applies these conclusions to the questions which are all as important today as they were seven hundred years ago. A resolution to the difficulties which arise from the theologian's use of philosophy can be grounded in the texts of Aquinas. And it is a solution midway between the alternatives suggested by Hans Küng.

This research is not without its difficulties, however. Aquinas himself attests to some of them when he cites Rabbi Moses Maimonides to give five reasons for the necessity of revelation as an aid to natural speculation on revealed truth. It is an interdisciplinary study-- philosophical and theological-- with many prerequisite knowledges. To these difficulties must be added those which result when technical language is involved. The term *praeambula fidei* itself in the present day has come to be just such a technical term. Consequently, it brings with it a number of preconceptions

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which must be examined.

Obstacles notwithstanding, the discovery of the nature of the *praeambula fidei* and the role they play within theology is a topic with contemporary as well as historical interest for the philosopher as well as for the theologian.

## CHAPTER I

PRAEAMBULA FIDEI: KEY TO THE RESOLUTION  
OF AN APPARENT CONFLICT IN TEXTS

Recent years have witnessed a development in the interpretation of historical opinion regarding the place of philosophy in the thought of Saint Thomas.<sup>1</sup> Two cardinal tenets which formerly influenced research have been abandoned. No longer is it generally accepted that there was a common mediaeval scholastic synthesis, nor is it generally accepted that there was a self-contained philosophy formulated by Saint Thomas himself.<sup>2</sup> Aquinas was, as were all the great religious thinkers of his time, a theologian, albeit one who elaborated philosophical doctrines within the context of theological speculation.<sup>3</sup> He was, first and foremost, a man of

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1. Anton C. Pegis, *The Middle Ages and Philosophy*, Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1963, pp. vii-viii: "...however, the medieval philosophy which was supposed to have been the source of this ideal has undergone a remarkable and disturbing transformation in the evolution of historical opinion from DeWulf's first history, written in 1895, to Gilson's latest history, written in 1955."

2 *Ibid.*, p. viii: "Contrary to earlier views, it is held today that there was no self-contained and common medieval scholastic synthesis from which modern scholasticism could have derived its conception of itself as a philosophy living methodically in separation from theology. There was no self-contained philosophy in St. Thomas himself from which a philosophical Thomism might have taken its origin."

3. *Loc. cit.*: "The great thinkers of the Middle Ages were all theologians, and each one developed his own philosophical ideas as an integral part of his theology."

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faith: a saint, a Doctor of the Church. But if he lived by faith, Saint Thomas neither rejected nor ignored reason. His project, the intellectual penetration of faith, demanded his having recourse to reason. When refined, the question of the relation between reason and faith is the question of the rapprochement between philosophy and theology. There is no doubt that Saint Thomas was aware of the distinction between reason and faith, and between philosophy and theology. Nor is there any doubt that as a theologian Aquinas used philosophy. The intent of the present research is to ground one aspect of that relationship, namely the relation between philosophy and the *praeambula fidei*.

In his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, Saint Thomas provides the interested traveler with a road map of the geography of knowledge as it pertains to the proper use of philosophy within sacred doctrine:

Sic ergo in sacra doctrina philosophia possumus tripliciter uti. Primo ad demonstrandum ea quae sunt praeambula fidei, quae necesse est in fide scire, ut ea quae naturalibus rationibus de deo probantur, ut deum esse, deum esse unum et alia huiusmodi vel de deo vel de creaturis in philosophia probata, quae fides supponit. Secundo ad notificandum per aliquas similitudines ea quae sunt fidei, sicut Augustinus in libro *De trinitate* utitur multis similitudinibus ex doctrinis philosophicis sumptis ad manifestandum trinitatem. Tertio ad resistendum his quae contra fidem dicuntur sive ostendendo ea esse falsa sive ostendendo ea non esse necessaria.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus.

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Saint Thomas lists three ways in which theologians may use philosophy: to demonstrate the preambles of faith, to explicate the truths of faith by examples, to resist those who speak against the faith. The present study will focus only upon the first use, summarized by Aquinas as the *praeambula fidei*. The other two uses named by him provide the problematic for expanded research and study.

In keeping with Saint Thomas' own instruction, and in an effort to penetrate one moment in the development of his thought, the examination of the relationship between reason and faith, and by consequence, of philosophy and theology in that thought, can appropriately and fruitfully be cast in the mold of an investigation of the nature of the preambles of faith and their role within theology. What are the *praeambula fidei*? What role do they play within theology? Would the discovery of the origin of the notion of the preambles in the thought of Aquinas shed any light upon their nature and their relation to theology? What importance does the philological consideration have in the present investigation? The historical consideration? These questions, as well as many others, guide the present research and will define the extent of the present problematic: the discovery of the nature of the *praeambula fidei* and of their relation to and role within theology in the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

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Saint Thomas speaks about those truths which are *praeambula* (or a synonym) *fidei*, in a number of places, but usually in the same context. In order to discover the nature of these *praeambula*, attention ought to be focused upon that context.

## 1. Apparently Contradictory Texts

Aware of the distinction between reason and faith, Saint Thomas, nevertheless, employs philosophical reasoning in the construction of his theological synthesis. Does he not, for example, propose five ways by which the existence of God can be rationally demonstrated?<sup>5</sup> Do not the first three books of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* have as their object truths which are accessible to reason alone? Nevertheless, they are properly theological, as is the whole of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.<sup>6</sup> They are truths which are naturally

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<sup>5</sup> Cf., *ST*, I, q. 2, a. 3, corpus; *SCG*, bk. I, ch. 13, 15, 16, *et al.*

<sup>6</sup> M.-D. Chenu, O.P., *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, Trans. by A. Landry, O.P. and D. Hughes, O.P., Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1964, p. 293: "It is true that the three first books (God, creation, the moral life) have as their object truths accessible to reason. But one cannot argue from that to make it a philosophical *summa* and reserve the Christian subject matter and the theological method to the IVth book."

The question of whether the *SCG* is either a philosophical or a theological *summa* is rather important. The problem will be considered in a subsequent chapter for a twofold reason: first, it will aid in distinguishing the methods of philosophy and theology, and second, it will act as a test case in determining the role played by philosophy in theology.

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knowable, yet revealed and then fittingly proposed for belief.<sup>7</sup> Does the believer not confess *Credo in unum Deum* even though the existence of God can be known by reason? However, Saint Thomas has taught that it is impossible to both know and believe the same truth; the same man cannot at the same time both know and believe the same thing.<sup>8</sup> Is there not a fundamental conflict here; is Saint Thomas not caught in a radical contradiction?<sup>9</sup>

The doctrine of the preambles of faith originates within the context of the apparent contradiction in texts devoted to several moments in the elaboration of Aquinas' teaching on the relation between revealed truth and natural

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7 Cf., P. Synave, O.P., *La révélation des vérités divines naturelles d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, in *Mélanges Mandonnet*, Paris, Vrin, 1930, Vol. 1, pp. 327-65.

8 Cf., M. Grabmann, *De quaestione "Utrum aliquid possit esse simul creditum et scitum" inter scholas Augustinismi et Aristotelico-Thomismi medi aevi agitata*, in *Acta Hebdomadae Augustianae-Thomisticae*, Rome, Marietti, 1931, pp. 110-139.

9 J. Gardair, *La raison et la foi*, in *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, Vol. 34, 1896, p. 450: "Ce qui est délicat, c'est de préciser le rôle de la foi à la révélation et celui de la science philosophique, sur un même objet, par exemple sur l'existence de Dieu. Si nous pouvons prouver par la philosophie seule que Dieu existe, qu'avons-nous à faire d'une révélation qui vienne nous imposer la croyance à ce dogme? Comment même pourrions-nous croire, c'est-à-dire adhérer sans démonstration directe, sur un point où nous avons par raisonnement une clarté d'évidence naturelle? Ne faut-il pas choisir entre la science et la foi, laisser l'une de côté quand on garde l'autre, sur la même matière de doctrine?"

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knowledge, believing and knowing. When the doctrine on the necessity of the revelation of the naturally knowable truths about God<sup>10</sup> is compared with Saint Thomas' teaching on the relation of believing and knowing the same object,<sup>11</sup> this apparent contradiction emerges. Aquinas' texts will now be examined in turn, in order to follow the development of this apparent contradiction and to see how the notion of the *praeambula fidei* may be considered the key to its resolution.

A. Naturally Knowable Truths About God

One of the major questions which Saint Thomas treats regarding the relation between revelation and natural knowledge is the presence within revelation of truths on God which are naturally knowable.<sup>12</sup> This question is considered in a number of places. However, it is treated under a variety of expressions.<sup>13</sup> In an effort to elucidate this doctrine, the

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10 Cf., *III Sen.*, d. 24, Q. 1, a. 3, q. 1; *De trin.*, q. 3, a. 1; *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 10; *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 4; *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 1; *ST*, II-II, q. 2, a. 4.

11 Cf., *III Sen.*, d. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2; *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9; *SCG.*, bk. 1, ch. 4; *ST*, II-II, q. 1, aa. 4, corpus and 5, corpus.

12 In his article entitled, *La révélation, Op. Cit.*, Fr. Synave refers to the naturally knowable truths on God as *divine natural truths*, and describes them thus: "Par vérités divines naturelles on entend les vérités divines que la raison humaine est en mesure de découvrir par l'exercice de ses propres facultés, comme l'existence de Dieu et ses attributs." p. 327. The present research accepts Fr. Synave's description of these truths. However, to obviate any ambiguity which may attach from the term *divine natural truths*, these truths will be referred to as naturally knowable truths on, or about God.

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texts themselves of Saint Thomas should be analyzed; and in order to see the development in his thought they ought to be considered chronologically.<sup>14</sup>

Question one of distinction twenty-four of the *Scriptum super Librum III Sententiarum* is devoted to an analysis of the proper object of faith, its relation to human knowledge, and its merit. The third article asks: *Utrum necessarium sit homini credere aliquid cuius non habet scientiam*. The first *quaestiuncula* objects that it seems unnecessary for man to

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13 Synave, *Op. Cit.*, p. 327: "A travers ses différents ouvrages, le sentiment de S. Thomas sur cette question apparaît toujours très net; aucun doute n'est permis sur sa pensée; mais cette pensée se traduit avec une grande variété d'expression."

14 In his comprehensive article devoted to this question, *Op. Cit.*, Fr. Synave sets himself an admirable task: "tout d'abord voir comment le Docteur Angélique modèle sa pensée pour lui donner une forme définitive; puis nous rendre compte de la façon dont S. Thomas a emprunté les éléments de sa doctrine au penseur juif Maimonide; enfin déterminer, en nous aidant de cette évolution littéraire, la date respective de quelques écrits de S. Thomas." (pp. 327-28).

It is this task which causes him to divide the texts of Saint Thomas into two groups: "Je voudrais comparer ces expressions entre elles en prenant comme point de départ le tout premier article de la Somme théologique; à cet article nous rattacherons l'article 4 de la quest. II de la IIa IIae et le chapitre 4 du premier livre du *Contra Gentiles*."

"En regard de ce premier groupe de textes nous mettrons au autre groupe qui présente cette caractéristique, que S. Thomas invoque dans chacun de ces passages l'autorité de Maimonide: *III Sent.*, dist.24, Q.1, a.3,q.1; *De Trinitate*, q.III, art.1; *De Veritate*, q.XIV, art.10." (p. 327).

This division of the texts, though useful for facilitating a comparison between the texts of Moses Maimonides and those of Saint Thomas, is too artificial a division for present purposes. The more proper procedure is to consider the texts chronologically.

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believe anything which is neither known nor seen-- anything, that is, existing beyond the grasp of natural reason: Has Providence, in creating human nature, not sufficiently provided the means whereby man might naturally achieve his end? Is natural reason not this sufficient means?

The purpose of article 3, question 1, is to inquire whether, in addition to natural reason, faith is necessary.<sup>15</sup> In order to make his response precise, Saint Thomas distinguishes between two kinds of truth:

Respondeo dicendum ad primam quaestionem, quod in fide sunt quaedam quae sunt supra rationem humanam simpliciter, de quibus essentialiter est fides; et quaedam quae sunt supra rationem humanam alicuius, quamvis non supra rationem cuiuslibet hominis.<sup>16</sup>

There are in revelation, then, truths which properly surpass the grasp of natural knowledge and those which are naturally knowable. And in both cases faith is necessary.<sup>17</sup> It is true that man has been endowed with natural reason as a means to achieve his natural end. However, the final end to which all men are called is one beyond nature. It is a

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15 The doctrine of the natural truths on God is couched in two modes of expression, namely, the necessity of faith (as in this case) and the necessity of revelation. The thrust of both expressions is the same (whether approached from man's point of view or God's) that is, there are within revelation natural truths about God and creatures in their relation to him which must necessarily have been revealed and which are fittingly and necessarily to be believed.

16 *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 3, q. 1.

17 "...et ad utrumque fuit dari fidem." *Loc. Cit.*

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supernatural end, namely, full participation in Beatitude. If man is ever to achieve his end freely, he must have as a means, knowledge proportionate to that end. The grace of faith gives this knowledge. Hence, those properly supernatural truths of revelation are fittingly and necessarily to be believed.<sup>18</sup> But what of the naturally knowable truths? Why are they to be believed? They are to be believed, Saint Thomas says, because grace has a perfecting influence upon nature. Thus the naturally knowable truths about God, for example his existence and attributes, underly faith and are presupposed to it. Citing Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Aquinas gives five reasons for the inability of certain individuals to come to know the truths on God by natural reason alone. For these reasons, faith is necessary:<sup>19</sup>

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18 *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 3, q. 1: "Quia enim homini Deus providit finem qui est supra naturam hominis, scilicet plenam participationem suae beatitudinis; oportet autem eum qui in finem tendit, si libro arbitro agat, cognoscere finem ex cuius considerationem dirigitur in his quae sunt ad finem; ideo oportuit ut homo alicujus rei cognitionem haberet quae rationem naturalem ejus excedit: quae quidem cognitio homini per gratiam fidei datur."

19 *Loc. Cit.*: "Sicut autem est in gratia perficiente affectum quod praesupponit naturam, quia eam perficit; ita et fidei substernitur naturalis cognitio quam fides praesupponit et ratio probare potest; sicut Deum esse et Deum esse unum, incorporeum, intelligentem et alia hujusmodi. Et ad hoc etiam sufficienter fides inclinatur, ut qui rationem ad hoc habere non potest, fide eis assentiat: quod quidem necessarium fit propter quinque, ut dicit Rabbi Moyses."

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Primo, propter altitudinem materiae secundum elevationem a sensibus, quibus vita nostra connutritur; unde non est facile sensum et imaginationem deserere: quod tamen est necessarium in cognitione divinorum et spiritualium, ut dicit Boethius lib. *I De Trinit.* ch. 2. Secundo, quia quamvis intellectus hominis naturaliter ordinatus sit ad divina cognoscenda, non tamen potest in actum exire per seipsum. Et quia cuilibet non potest adesse doctor paratus, ideo Deum lumen fidei providit, quod mentem ad huiusmodi elevet. Tertio, quia ad cognitionem divinorum per viam rationis multa prae-exiguntur, cum fere tota philosophia ad cognitionem divinorum ordinetur: quae quidem non possunt nisi pauci cognoscere; et ideo oportuit fidem esse ut omnes aliquam cognitionem haberent de divinis. Quarto, quia naturaliter sunt hebetes, et tamen cognitione divinorum indigent qua in vita dirigantur. Quinto, quia homines occupantur circa necessaria vitae, et retrahuntur a diligenti consideratione divinorum.<sup>20</sup>

To reiterate, faith is necessary because of the difficulty reason might have in grasping such lofty truths, elevated so high above the senses; because, although ordained by nature to participate in divine truth, the human intellect cannot initiate participation on its own; because of the many intellectual prerequisites; because the intellect of certain individuals may be dulled with respect to the truths on God; and because man may be preoccupied with the necessities of life and unable to devote the necessary time to these truths.

Question 3 of the *opusculum, Expositio super Librum Boethii de Trinitate*, attempts, in part, to treat the reasons which make faith praiseworthy. Article 1 poses the question: *Utrum humano generi fides sit necessaria?* After dismissing

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20 *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 3, q. 1.

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the various objections, and having located faith in relation to science and opinion, Saint Thomas answers as follows:

Since man's ultimate end is Beatitude, a beatitude which consists in the full knowledge of Truth, it is necessary for him to have faith in the truths on God from the very beginning.<sup>21</sup>

Even though it is possible to grasp certain of these truths by natural reason in the present life, faith is still necessary for the reasons which Rabbi Moses gives:<sup>22</sup>

Prima scilicet propter profunditatem et subtilitatem materiae, per quam occultantur divina ab hominum intellectu. Unde ne sit homo sine eorum qualicumque cognitione, provisum est ei ut saltem per fidem divina cognoscat. Eccl. 7(25): "Alta profunditas, quis cognoscet illam?" Secunda propter imbecillitatem intellectus humani a principio. Non enim provenit ei sua perfectio nisi in fine; et ideo ut nullum tempus sit ei vacuum a divina cognitione, indiget fine, per quam ab ipso principio divina accipiat. Tertio propter multa praeambula, quae exiguntur ad habendam cognitionem de deo secundum viam rationis. Requiritur enim ad hoc fere omnium scientiarum cognitio, cum omnium finis sit cognitio divinorum; quae quidem praeambula paucissimi consequuntur. Unde ne multitudo hominum a divina cognitione vacua remaneret, provisa est ei divinitus via fidei. Quarto, quia multi hominum ex naturali complexione sunt indispositi ad perfectionem intellectus consequendam per viam rationis; unde ut hi etiam

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21 *De trin.*, q. 3, a. 1, corpus: "Cum ergo finis humanae vitae sit beatitudo, quae consistit in plena cognitione divinorum, necessarium est ad humanam vitam in beatitudinem dirigendam statim a principio habere fidem divinorum quae plene cognoscenda expectantur in ultima perfectione humana."

22 *Loc. Cit.*, "...tamen necessarium est habere fidem propter quinque rationes, quas Rabbi Moyses ponit."

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divina cognitione non careant, provisa est fidei via. Quinto propter occupationes plurimas, quibus oportet homines occupari; unde impossibile est quod omnes consequantur per viam rationis illud quod est de deo necessarium ad cognoscendum, et propter hoc est via fidei procurata, et hoc quantum ad illa quae sunt ab aliquibus scita et aliis proponuntur ut credenda.<sup>23</sup>

Those reasons enumerated by Saint Thomas are: the depth and subtlety of the matter by which divine truths are hidden from the human intellect; the weakness of the human intellect from the beginning; the multiple prerequisite knowledges which must precede the knowledge of God; the unfitness of man's natural constitution for perfect intellectual investigations through reason; and the numerous preoccupations of life's necessities which claim man's attention.

Question fourteen of the disputed question *De Veritate*, divided into twelve articles, is devoted to the topic *De Fide*. Article ten discusses whether or not it is necessary for man to have faith: *Utrum necessarium sit homini habere fidem?* Objections notwithstanding, the argumentation runs as follows: Man's ultimate perfection is the perfect knowledge of God. Since God alone knows himself perfectly, only God can impart this perfect knowledge. It is fitting, then, that man accept by faith God's self-knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Within this revelation there

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<sup>23</sup> *De trin.*, q. 3, a. 1, corpus.

<sup>24</sup> *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 10, corpus: "Ultima autem perfectio ad quam homo ordinatur consistit in perfecta Dei cognitione ad quam quidem pervenire non potest nisi operatione

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are truths which completely transcend the power of human understanding and these must be believed.<sup>25</sup> Others can be known perfectly in this life. Nonetheless, they are necessarily to be believed for the five reasons which Rabbi Moses gives:<sup>26</sup>

Quarum prima est profunditas et subtilitas istorum cognoscibilium quae sunt remotissima a sensibus, unde homo non est idoneus in principio perfecte ea cognoscere; secunda causa est debilitas humani intellectus in sui principio; tertia vero est multitudo eorum quae praeexiguntur ad istorum demonstrationem quae homo non nisi in longissimo tempore addiscere potest; quarta est indispositio ad sciendum quae inest quibusdam propter pravitatem complexionis; quinta est necessitas occupationum ad providendum necessaria vitae.

Ex quibus omnibus apparet quod, si oporteret per demonstrationem solummodo accipere ea quae necessarium est cognoscere de Deo, paucissimi ad hoc pervenire, possent et hi etiam non nisi post longum tempus; unde patet quod salubriter est via fidei hominibus provisa per quam patet omnibus facilis aditus ad salutem secundum quodcumque tempus.<sup>27</sup>

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et quasi instructione divina, qui est sui perfectus cognitor; huius autem perfectae cognitionis statim homo in sui principio capax non est, unde oportet ut accipiat per viam credendi aliqua per quae manuducantur ad perveniendum in perfectam cognitionem."

25 *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 10, corpus: "Quorum quaedam talia sunt quod in hac vita perfecta cognitio de eis haberi non potest, quae totaliter vim humanae rationis excedunt; et ista oportet credere quamdiu in statu viae sumus, videbimus autem ea perfecte in statu patriae."

26 *Loc. Cit.*: "Quaedam vero sunt ad quae etiam in hac vita perfecte cognoscenda possumus pervenire, sicut illa quae de Deo demonstrative probari possunt, quae tamen a principio necesse est credere, propter quinque rationes, quas Rabbi Moyses ponit:"

27 *Loc. Cit.*

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Adopting the five reasons which Moses Maimonides gave for not beginning philosophical instruction with metaphysics, Saint Thomas adapts them to serve his purpose: Faith in the naturally knowable truths about God is necessary because of the depth and subtlety of these truths which are the farthest removed from the senses; because of the weakness of human understanding at the beginning; because the numerous prerequisite things needed before a man can demonstrate these truths would be learned only after a very long time; because some men lack the proper temperament for such scientific investigations; and because of the need to provide the necessities of life by engaging in other occupations. If knowledge of the naturally knowable truths on God were derived only from strict demonstration, only a very few individuals would share this knowledge after a long period of study. However, faith gives easy access to these truths to all men.

At this point in the present investigation, it would be well to reflect on the texts thus far considered, in order to glean from these passages their common doctrine. In each of the three texts, couched in terms of a discussion on the necessity for faith, Aquinas elaborates a doctrine which establishes the complex nature of revealed truth. Revelation contains two orders of truths on God: the supernatural and the natural. The properly supernatural truths are those which are completely beyond the ken of the unaided human intellect.

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Man's only contact with these truths is in faith. And faith in them is necessary because man is called to Beatitude as to an end which surpasses nature. Such an end requires a proportionate means-- one which also surpasses nature; faith is that means.

The second order of divine truths are the naturally knowable truths on God, that is, those which reason can attain by the exercise of its own faculties. Although truths of this kind, e.g., the existence of God and his attributes, are naturally knowable, faith in them is also necessary.

Five reasons which cite the authority of Rabbi Moses Maimonides explain why: belief is necessary on account of the profundity and subtlety of these truths, the weakness of the human mind, the numerous prerequisite knowledges required, the lack of natural disposition, the distraction of life's necessities.

Saint Thomas gives, in each text, five reasons for the necessity of faith in the natural truths about God. Those reasons are almost identical in all three cases. Two of the redactions, however, namely, the *De Trinitate* and the *De Veritate*, are closer to one another than to the third, *III Sentences*, and they are posterior to it.

The characterization of the five reasons given by Saint Thomas in the above three passages is very clear. The first reason remains virtually unchanged throughout the three

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redactions. However, regarding the first difficulty, there is a slight change in vocabulary although no change in substance. In the *Sentences*, this difficulty is referred to in terms of the height of the matter according to its elevation above the senses (*altitudinem materiae secundum elevationem a sensibus*), while in the *De Trinitate* and the *De Veritate* it is couched in terms of the profundity and subtlety of the matter (*profunditatem et subtilitatem materiae*).

The characterization of the second reason does undergo a development from the *Sentences* on the one hand, to the *De Trinitate* and the *De Veritate* on the other. The reason given in the *Sentences*, namely, that the human intellect cannot initiate participation in divine truth on its own, is not contained in either the *De Trinitate* or the *De Veritate*. Rather, in these two redactions, Aquinas gives the weakness of the human intellect from the beginning as the second reason.

The most obvious and the most important development is in the third reason. All three texts give the third reason as the multitude of prerequisite knowledges (*praeambula, praeexiguntur*) required. However, while the *Sentences* and the *De Trinitate* conclude that only a few men or a very few (*pauci, paucissimi*) would come to know these prerequisites, the *De Veritate* concludes that these *praeambula* would only be known after a very long time (*longissimo tempore*).

The characterization of the fourth and fifth reasons

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are the same in all three redactions.

These texts, however, do not represent Saint Thomas' entire thought on the subject; three more passages from his more mature works, the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*, continue to develop his view.

Chapter 4 of book 1 of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* poses for discussion: *Quod veritas divinorum ad quam naturalis ratio pertingit convenienter hominibus credenda proponitur*, locating thereby the thought of Aquinas on the natural truths about God in relation to both the act of revelation and the act of faith: There exists a two-fold truth about God, one which is attainable by reason, the other which surpasses the ability of human reason to attain. Both are fittingly proposed to man by God for belief.<sup>28</sup> It is important to show the reasons for belief in these natural truths in order to obviate any false criticism alleging that they were uselessly revealed.<sup>29</sup> Three awkward consequences would follow upon unaided reason in search of truths on God. Hence, for the following three reasons the naturally knowable truths

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28 *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 4: "Duplici igitur veritate divinorum intelligibilium existente, una ad quam rationis inquisitio pertingere potest, altera quae omne ingenium humanae rationis excedit, utraque convenienter divinitus homini credenda proponitur."

29 *Loc. Cit.*: "Hoc autem de illa primo ostendendum est, quae inquisitioni rationis pervia esse potest: ne forte alicui videatur, ex quo ratione haberi potest, frustra id supernaturali inspiratione credendum traditum esse."

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about God were revealed:

Unum est quod paucis hominibus Dei cognitio inesset. A fructu enim studiosea inquisitionis, qui est inventio veritatis, plurimi impediuntur tribus de causis. Quidam siquidem propter complexionis indispositionem, ex qua multi naturaliter sunt indispositi ad sciendum [...] Quidam vero impediuntur necessitate rei familiaris. [...] Quidam autem impediuntur pigritia.

Secundum inconveniens est quod illi qui ad praedictae veritatis inventionem pervenirent, vix post longum tempus pertingerent. Tum propter huius veritatis profunditatem, ad quam capiendam per viam rationis non nisi post longum exercitium intellectus humanus idoneus invenitur. Tum etiam propter multa quae praexiguntur, ut dictum est. Tum etiam propter hoc quod tempore iuventutis, dum diversis motibus passionum anima fluctuat, non est apta ad tam altae veritatis cognitionem...

Tertium inconveniens est quod investigationi rationis humanae plerumque falsitas admiscetur, propter debilitatem intellectus nostri in iudicando, et phantasmatum permixionem.<sup>30</sup>

Reason left to its own devices would encounter three stumbling blocks to the acquisition of natural truths about God according to the above passage. Most men are disinclined to or incapable of pursuing the knowledge of the natural truths on God. Some by physical disposition, others by life's necessities, and some by sheer laziness are unable to know the truths which God has revealed about himself but which can be known by a few men through the exercise of their own minds. Even these few individuals would take a long time to arrive at this natural knowledge. For, these truths are the most profound and require considerable training to hone the mind

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30 *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 4.

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to cut to the core of them. These natural truths on God presuppose other truths and investigations. Young people have a special obstacle to overcome before they can attain them, that is, the passions. And third, since the human intellect is weak in judgement, these important truths might become admixed with errors. The mind reasons by demonstration, but its judgements are sometimes faulty because of natural weakness and also because of the admixture of images with concepts. For these reasons, God has revealed himself to man, and man must respond in faith even to the naturally knowable truths on God.

Question 1 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* investigates the nature and domain of sacred doctrine. The first article poses the question: *Utrum sit necessarium, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, aliam doctrinam haberi?* The thrust of the discussion is to establish the necessity for a revealed doctrine distinct from philosophy: Those truths which concern man's supernatural end are beyond the grasp of natural reason. However, they must be known so that man can direct his actions to that end.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the properly supernatural truths,

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<sup>31</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 1, corpus: "Primo quidem quia homo ordinatur ad Deum sicut ad quendam finem qui comprehensionem rationis excedit, secundum illud Isaiae 44,4: *oculus non vidit, Deus, absque te, quae praeparasti diligentibus te. Finem autem oportet esse praecognitum hominibus, qui suas intentiones et actiones debent ordinare in finem.*"

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revelation contains naturally knowable truths about God. It is necessary for man to be instructed in these truths also:<sup>32</sup>

Quia veritas de Deo, per rationem investigata, a paucis, et per longum tempus, et cum admixtione multorum errorum, homini proveniret: a cuius tamen veritatis cognitione dependet tota hominis salus, quae in Deo est.<sup>33</sup>

Man's welfare and his salvation depend upon his knowledge of God. However, truths about God which reason can investigate would be reached only by a few men, after a considerable time, and admixed with errors.

Question 2 of the *Secunda Secundae* treats the act of faith. Having established in article 3 the necessity for divine revelation and faith in supernatural truth, Saint Thomas confirms in article 4 the necessity for faith in the naturally knowable truths on God. To the question: *Utrum credere ea quae ratione naturali probari possunt sit necessarium?* he answers yes, giving the following three reasons:

Respondeo dicendum quod necessarium est homini accipere per modum fidei non solum ea quae sunt supra rationem, sed etiam ea quae per rationem cognosci possunt. Et hoc propter tria. Primo quidem, ut citius homo ad veritatis divinae cognitionem perveniat. Scientia enim ad quam pertinet probare Deum esse et alia huiusmodi de Deo, ultimo hominibus addiscenda proponitur, praesuppositis multis aliis scientiis. Et sic non nisi post multum tempus vitae suae homo ad Dei cognitionem perveniret. Secundo, ut cognitio Dei sit communior.

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<sup>32</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 1, corpus: "Ad ea etiam quae de Deo ratione humana investigari possunt, necessarium fuit hominem instrui revelatione divina."

<sup>33</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

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Multi enim in studio scientiae proficere non possunt: vel propter hebetudinem ingenii; vel propter alias occupationes et necessitates temporalis vitae: vel etiam propter torporem addiscendi. Qui omnio a Dei cognitione fraudarentur nisi proponerentur eis divina per modum fidei. Tertio modo, propter certitudinem. Ratio enim humana in rebus divinis est multum deficiens: cuius signum est quia philosophi, de rebus humanis naturali investigatione perscrutantes, in multis erraverunt et sibi ipsis contraria senserunt. Ut ergo esset indubitata et certa cognitio apud homines de Deo, oportuit quod divina eis per modum fidei traderentur, quasi a Deo dicta, qui mentiri non potest.<sup>34</sup>

These three reasons, namely, the necessity for quick, general, and certain knowledge of truths on God, incorporate many of the concepts seen in the five reasons of Rabbi Moses Maimonides. This knowledge about God, which is so important for man's salvation, ought to be known by him early in life so as to direct his life. But the science of philosophy, to whose subject matter the proof of these truths belong, is not a science that is acquired early in life in the first place. Secondly, not all men are capable of acquiring the science, or habit, of metaphysics. Most important of all, however, is the third reason, the certitude of the knowledge which faith provides. Philosophers have, in their research, fallen into errors and disagree frequently among themselves. However, faith brings certain knowledge. It does not bring the satisfaction of vision, seeing the truth of a proposition through demonstration, but it does provide absolute and certain

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34 *ST*, II-II, q. 2, a. 4, corpus.

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knowledge because it is based upon revelation-- the self-knowledge of God who cannot deceive man. Human reason is deficient with respect to divine truths, and God has chosen to instruct man by revealing this divine self-knowledge. This knowledge, which is absolutely certain, complements man's own knowledge.

Reflecting now on these later, more mature, texts, in conjunction with the former ones of an earlier vintage, gives a good idea of the entire doctrine and its development. The essentials of Saint Thomas' thought on the matter remain unchanged in these later redactions: Faith in the naturally knowable truths about God is necessary. These later texts abridge the Maimonidean formulation. The five reasons for faith in the natural truths on God are now compressed into three: namely, these truths could be attained only after a long period of time (*post multum tempus*), only by a few (*pauci*), and only admixed with many errors (*cum admixtione multorum errorum*). In addition, the priority given to these reasons changes from one redaction to another, thus:

	C.G.	I P.	II-II
<i>Pauci</i>	1	1	2
<i>Post multum tempus</i>	2	2	1
<i>Cum admixtione errorum</i>	3	3	3

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35 Synave, *Op. Cit.*, p. 334.

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Although the later texts are abridged, they do not completely eliminate Maimonides' five reasons. With the exception of the text from the *Prima Pars*, which lists three reasons only, many of the five reasons of Rabbi Moses are incorporated as explanations within the three reasons. The following chart illustrates this:<sup>36</sup>

I. Pauci	{	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1)-propter complexionis indispositionem (C.G.)</li> <li>-propter hebetudinem ingenii (II-II)</li> <li>2)-propter necessitatem rei familiaris (C.G.)</li> <li>-propter alias occupationes et necessitates temporalis vitae (II-II)</li> <li>3)-propter pigritiam (C.G.)</li> <li>-propter torporem addiscendi (II-II)</li> </ul>
II. Post multum tempus	{	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1)-propter veritatis profunditatem (C.G.)</li> <li>2)-propter multa quae prae-exiguntur (C.G. et II-II)</li> <li>3)-propter passiones juventutis (C.G.)</li> </ul>
III. Cum admixtione multorum errorum	{	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1)-propter debilitatem intellectus nostri in iudicando (C.G. et II-II)</li> <li>2)-et propter phantasmatum permixtionem (C.G.)</li> </ul>

In addition to underlining the incorporation of Moses Maimonides' reasons, the above chart affords an overview, or summary, of the three reasons and their explanation. Notice

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<sup>36</sup> Synave, *Op. Cit.*, p. 333.

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should be taken that the *Secunda Secundae* abandons three of the formulas which are found only in the *Contra Gentiles*: *propter veritatis profunditatem* (II, 1 above); *propter passiones juventutis* (II, 3 above; which is not one of Rabbi Moses' reasons); *et propter phantasmatum permixtionem* (III, 2 above; again, not one of Maimonides' reasons).

## B. Knowing and Believing the Same Truth

The question of whether anything can be both believed and known at the same time: *Utrum aliquid possit esse simul creditum et scitum* is treated *ex professo* by Saint Thomas in three different places:<sup>37</sup> *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2; *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9; *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 4, corpus and a. 5, corpus. In addition to these texts, chapter eleven of *In Epistolam ad Haebraeos* brings some light to bear upon the topic. An analysis of each of these texts will reveal the precise thought of Saint Thomas on the subject, will set the stage for the comparison between this doctrine and the one on the naturally knowable truths about God, and will bring into sharp focus an apparent conflict of texts. The procedure for

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37 Grabmann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 127: "*S. Thomas de Aquino, Doctor Communis, simul cum B. Alberto Magno Aristotelismi christiani instaurator ac defensor, qui habitudinem fidei ad rationem inter omnes saeculi XIII theologos scholasticos dilucidissime explanavit, tribus in locis quaestionem, utrum idem possit esse scitum et creditum, ex professo tractavit...*"

In addition, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 4, already considered at some length, contributes to the understanding of this question.

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the analysis of these texts will be to consider the *ex professo* texts chronologically and then to treat the texts from the commentary on Saint Paul's letter to the Hebrews.

Article 2 of distinction twenty-four, question 1 of the *Scriptum super Librum III Sententiarum* treats in three *quaestiunculae* the possibility of having faith in things seen. The first *quaestiuncula* speculates: *Videtur quod fides sit de visis*. Since the light of faith is related to the articles of faith as the light of reason is related to the naturally known principles, the light of faith must be that kind of vision which makes a man see the articles just as the natural light of reason makes him see the first principles.<sup>38</sup>

Although the term *vision* strictly refers to the act of the sense of sight, because of the nobility of this sense, the term is predicated analogically of the act of other cognitive powers accordingly as they are similar to the sense of sight.<sup>39</sup> Inasmuch as this analogical sense is broadened to extend only to a way of knowing (*genus cognitionis*), all cognition can broadly and improperly (*largo modo et improprie*)

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38 *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 1: "Lumen fidei se habet ad articulos sicut lumen naturale ad principia naturaliter cognita. Sed lumen naturale facit videre principia per se nota. Ergo lumen fidei facit videre articulos."

39 *Loc. Cit.*: "Respondeo. Dicendum ad primam quaestionem quod visio, proprie loquendo, est actus sensus visus. Sed propter nobilitatem istius sensus translatum est nomen visionis ad actus aliarum potentiarum cognitivarum secundum similitudinem ad sensum visus."

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be called a kind of vision-- faith included. But when restricted to the manner of knowing (*ad modum cognoscendi*) by which one grasps immediately, as a term, the first principles, analogous to the mode of seeing, faith is excluded. For those things which can be resolved into their first principles through reason are said to be seen, as those which can be proven through demonstration are said to be known:<sup>40</sup>

Et secundum hoc patet quod fides non potest esse de visis, quia forma illa intelligibilis quae principaliter est objectum fidei, scilicet Deus, formationem intellectus nostri subterfugit et non est ei pervius in statu vitae, ut Augustinus dicit.<sup>41</sup>

Since the principle object of faith is the intelligible form of God, which is not accessible to the intellect in this life and which eludes it, it is apparent that faith cannot be of things seen.

In answer, then, to the objection which supposed that faith is of things seen, the fruits of the foregoing investigation may be applied: the terms of the naturally known principles are able to be penetrated by our intellect; therefore, the knowledge which proceeds from these principles is seen. But not so for faith. Man will never penetrate the

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<sup>40</sup> *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 1: "Et ulterius etiam ea quae in ista principia resolvere possumus per rationem dicuntur videri, sicut ea quae scimus demonstrative probata."

<sup>41</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

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principles of faith in this life; the articles will never be known completely until man sees God through his essence.<sup>42</sup>

The second *quaestiuncula* poses the question which most logically emanates from the preceeding inquiry: *Videtur quod fides possit esse de scitis*. The negative response Saint Thomas gives to this question is grounded in the first *quaestiuncula* and broadens that doctrine. Did not Saint Thomas there teach that something which can be resolved into its first principles is said to be seen, and likewise known, when it can be proven by demonstration?<sup>43</sup> This being so, it follows that since faith cannot be grasped in its first principle, God himself, it cannot be of things seen. Neither can faith be proven, since its object is beyond the human intellect. Therefore, faith cannot be of things known:

Ea autem quae omnem intellectum humanum excedunt non possunt per demonstrationem probari, quia demonstratio in intellectu principiorum fundatur; et ideo hujusmodi non possunt esse scita.<sup>44</sup>

Saint Thomas thus states a general principle. Those things which surpass the human intellect cannot be proven by demonstration because demonstration is founded upon intellectual principles, and consequently they cannot be known.

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<sup>42</sup> *III Sen.*, dist 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 1: "Ad secundum dicendum quod termini principiorum naturaliter notorum sunt comprehensibiles nostro intellectui; ideo cognitio quae consurgit de illis principiis, est visio. Sed non est ita de terminis articulorum. Unde in futuro, quando Deus per essentiam videbitur, articuli erunt ita per se noti et visi, sicut modo principia demonstrationis."

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Although the *Sentences* gives the first indication of Aquinas' thought on knowing and believing truth, it does not treat the entire question.

In the ninth article of question fourteen of the *De Veritate* Saint Thomas asks: *Utrum fides possit esse de rebus scitis?* A quote from Saint Augustine provides the point of departure for Aquinas' reply:

Responsio. Dicendum quod secundum Augustinum in lib. de videndo Deum, creduntur illa quae absunt a sensibus nostris, si videtur idoneum testimonium quod eis perhibetur; videntur autem quae praesto sunt vel animi vel corporis sensibus.<sup>45</sup>

Augustine had taught that we believe things that are not present to our senses provided that the testimony for them seems suitable, but we see the things which are present either to our minds or bodily senses. Developing this insight, Saint Thomas teaches that things are said to be present to the mind or understanding when they do not exceed its capacity. Assent is given to such things because of vision. With regard to those things which are absent from the mind, since they are beyond the power of understanding, assent is given not because of vision but because of the testimony of someone

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43 Cf., note 40.

44 *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2.

45 *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9.

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else. These are the things of faith. The objects of faith, then, are not seen, but are absent from our senses. Now, that which is known is seen, and present to our sensible and intellectual perception. Therefore Saint Thomas concludes:

Quaecumque autem sciuntur, proprie accepta scientia, cognoscuntur per resolutionem in prima principia, quae per se praesto sunt intellectui; et sic omnis scientia in visione rei praesentis perficitur. Unde impossibile est quod de eodem sit fides et scientia.<sup>46</sup>

Things known by properly scientific knowledge are known by reducing them to their first principles, which are present naturally to the understanding. Thus all scientific knowledge brings the sight of a thing which is present. Hence, it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.

Articles 4 and 5 of the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae*, question 1, seem to be somewhat parallel in structure to the texts from the *Sentences*. Article 4 poses the question: *Utrum obiectum fidei possit esse aliquid visum?* The corpus of the article differentiates between the act of faith and that of understanding, both of which are types of intellectual assent. The intellect assents to a thing in two ways. If it is compelled to assent to truth by the evidence of the object itself, grasped directly or indirectly through the

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<sup>46</sup> *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9.

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evidence of something else already known, then the assent is to something seen. But faith, as in the case of opinion, is an assent which is evoked not by the cogency of evidence, but by an act of the will sufficiently moved. Since only those things which move the intellect or the senses directly to knowledge of them are said to be seen, neither faith nor opinion are of things seen:

Respondeo dicendum quod fides importat assensum intellectus ad id quod creditur. Assentit autem alicui intellectus dupliciter. Uno modo, quia ad hoc movetur ab ipso obiecto, quod est vel per seipsum cognitum, sicut patet in principiis primis, quorum est intellectus; vel est per aliud cognitum, sicut patet de conclusionibus, quarum est scientia. Alio modo intellectus assentit alicui non quia sufficienter moveatur ab obiecto proprio, sed per quandam electionem voluntarie declinans in unam partem magis quam in aliam. Et si quidem hoc fit cum dubitatione et formidine alterius partis, erit opinio: si autem fit cum certitudine absque tali formidine, erit fides. Illa autem videri dicuntur quae per seipsa movent intellectum nostrum vel sensum ad sui cognitionem. Unde manifestum est quod nec fides nec opinio potest esse de visis aut secundum sensum aut secundum intellectum.<sup>47</sup>

Article 5 asks: *Utrum ea quae sunt fidei possint esse scita?* The negative answer which Saint Thomas gives is grounded in the preceding article, as was the similar case with the argumentation in the *Sentences*. The logic is very clear: All knowledge is derived from self-evident principles and is seen. But as proved above, the same thing cannot be

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<sup>47</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 4, corpus.

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seen and believed. Likewise, the same thing cannot be both known and believed.<sup>48</sup>

In the first lesson of chapter eleven of his *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews*, Aquinas comments on this line from that epistle: "Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen." (XI, 1) confronting thereby in part, the relation between seeing and believing. Although St. Paul's letter states that faith is of things unseen, in another place scripture seems to teach differently when it says of Thomas the Apostle, "He saw and believed." (*John*, XX, 22) Aquinas broadens the problem (as he has done before) to include not only the relation of seeing and believing, but also of knowing and believing the same thing when he raises the following point about the unity of God as a matter for belief and as a demonstrable proposition: "Item credimus esse Deum unum, quod tamen demonstratur a philosophis."<sup>49</sup> In an effort to clarify this question and to safeguard the inerrancy of sacred scripture on this point at the same time, Aquinas observes the two-fold way in which faith can be understood.

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48 *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 5, corpus: "Respondeo dicendum quod omnis scientia habetur per aliqua principia per se nota, et per consequens visa. Et ideo oportet quaecumque sunt scita aliquo modo esse visa. Non autem est possibile quod idem ab eodem sit creditum et visum, sicut supra (a.4) dictum est. Unde etiam impossibile est quod ab eodem idem sit scitum et creditum."

49 *In Heb.*, Ch. XI, Lec. 1.

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Thus he preserves, by the following response, not only the inerrancy of holy writ but also the authenticity of his own doctrine of knowing and believing the same truth as elaborated elsewhere:

Uno modo, proprie et sic est non visorum et non scitorum, ut patet ex praedictis. Et propterea quod non potest major certitudo haberi de conclusione, quam de principio a quo elicitur, quia semper principia sunt notiora conclusionibus, ideo cum principia fidei non habeant evidentiam, nec per consequens conclusiones. Et ideo intellectus non assentitur conclusionibus tanquam scitis nec tanquam visis. Alio modo, communiter, et si excludit omnem certam cognitionem, et sic loquitur Augustinus (*in quaest. Evangelii*), quod fides est de quibusdam quae videntur. Apostolus autem loquitur de prima. Et quidem de Thoma dicendum est, quod sicut dicit Gregorius: Aliud vidit, aliud credidit, quia vidit humanitatem, et credidit divinitate.<sup>50</sup>

When the term *faith* is understood in its strict sense, it cannot be applied to things which are seen or known. Since principles are always better known than conclusions, there cannot be a greater certitude about conclusions than that certitude which is elicited regarding principles. Thus, since the principles of faith are not evident, neither can its conclusions be evident. Consequently, in faith strictly understood, the intellect does not assent to conclusions which are known or seen. But the term faith may be understood in a general sense. In this way no claim is made to certain knowledge and the term *faith* is commonly applied to some things

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50 *In Heb.*, Ch. XI, Lec. 1.

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which are seen. But in the case of John the Evangelist, the attribution of faith professed by Thomas the Apostle was faith understood in its strict sense. The gloss of Saint Gregory is undoubtedly correct. Thomas saw one thing and believed another. For he saw the human nature of Jesus and believed in his divinity.

Now concerning those philosophically demonstrable propositions which have also been revealed, Aquinas states that there is no difficulty in affirming that the same truth can be known by one individual and believed by another.<sup>51</sup>

The texts on this subject leave little doubt as to the thought of Saint Thomas. One and the same doctrine is proclaimed by the texts from the earliest to the latest: Faith and knowledge, as well as seeing and believing, are mutually exclusive grasps of truth. When the intellect is moved to assent to the truth of an object present to the internal or external senses, which it has proven by demonstration and has resolved into its first principles, the object is said to be seen by the mind which has scientific knowledge of it. On the other hand, faith is an assent to the truth of something absent from the senses and not seen. The intellect

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<sup>51</sup> *In Heb.*, Ch. XI, Lec. 1: "Ad istud de demonstratione dicendum est, quod nihil prohibet aliquid esse visum uni quod est creditum alteri..."

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is moved in its assent not by demonstration or resolution into first principles, but by the testimony of God himself.

2. *Praeambula fidei*: Key to the Resolution

The fact that revelation contains naturally knowable truths about God does not in itself give rise to any contradiction or any conflict in texts. In fact, in both series of texts, Aquinas teaches explicitly that revelation contains such naturally knowable truths. Nor is there any conflict in his teaching that such truths may be known by one individual through demonstration and known by another through faith. In fact, in the first series of texts, Saint Thomas insists that a man without the philosophical aptitude or habit must believe such naturally knowable truths.

The apparent contradiction in thought and conflict in texts, emerges only when the case of the philosophically-minded individual is considered. The man who can demonstrate by natural reason those naturally knowable truths of revelation seems to be put in an impossible position. If he can prove them by demonstration, he sees them and knows them. And if he knows them, Saint Thomas asserts, he cannot at the same time believe them. Yet, Aquinas insists that this same man must have faith in, he must believe, all the truths of revelation, even those which are naturally knowable truths on God. For Aquinas, like Augustine (who knew from bitter personal

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experience) and Anselm before him, knows that human reason is a frail instrument. Salvation depends upon man's grasp of these naturally knowable truths on God. Even the philosophically-minded man needs the pedagogy of faith, especially in the beginning, and especially to insure a complete, fixed, and certain grasp of both the natural and supernatural truths about God, without any taint of error.

The notion, then, of naturally knowable truths about God and their demonstration by the philosophically-minded individual is the crux of this apparent contradiction. Does the believing philosopher know completely and in the same respect those naturally knowable truths of revelation which he demonstrates? Or is there some distinction which Saint Thomas makes which will resolve this apparent conflict? If so, would not such a distinction pertain to the nature and role of these naturally knowable truths?

Indeed, Saint Thomas has made all necessary distinctions. They center upon the relation between the naturally knowable truths on God and the *praeambula fidei*. Indeed, one might say that the preambles of faith are the key with which to unlock what appears, at first reading, to be a conflict in the texts and thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

There is no article in the *Opera Omnia* which proposes to investigate the relation between the preambles of faith and the naturally knowable truths on God; there is no text

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which poses the question: *Quid sit natura eorum quae sunt praeambula fidei?* Rather, Aquinas elaborates this aspect of his doctrine, one might say, *passim*. However, Saint Thomas provides the clue necessary to grasp this key notion in that very seminal passage from the *De Trinitate* wherein he summarizes the uses of philosophy within sacred doctrine:

Primo ad demonstrandum ea quae sunt *praeambula fidei*, quae necesse est in fide scire, ut ea quae naturalibus rationibus de deo probantur, ut deum esse, deum esse unum et alia huiusmodi vel de deo vel de creaturis in philosophia probata, quae fides supponit.<sup>52</sup>

These preambles appear to be those very same truths which have been referred to as the naturally knowable truths about God. If so, the penetration of their role and nature is indeed the very key which will, at the same time, manifest the proper distinction made by Aquinas resolving the apparent conflict in his thought and elucidate that one important moment in his thought on the relation between knowing and believing and between philosophy and theology.

Thus, chapter two will be devoted to a study of the nature of the preambles of faith, and chapter three will study the role of the preambles within theology.

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<sup>52</sup> *De Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus. Italics mine.

## CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE *PRAEAMBULA FIDEI*

In the preceding chapter, the problematic of the present study was exposed, and basic lines of research were initiated which will be further developed in chapter two. For Saint Thomas, faith and reason, believing and knowing, and by consequence, theology and philosophy, have unique roles to play within sacred doctrine. In the *De Trinitate opusculum*, Aquinas explains that a very fundamental part of those roles is played by the *praeambula fidei*. Taking Saint Thomas at his word, the investigation of one aspect of the relation between philosophy and theology in the Thomistic synthesis can, consequently, be fruitfully couched in terms of the present problematic-- the discovery of the nature of the *praeambula fidei* and of their relation to and role within theology in the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

In an effort to discover the genesis of the notion of the preambles of faith, attention was turned to two series of texts which are the matrix for the notion. The first series considered elaborated Saint Thomas' thought on the truths of revelation and the necessity for faith. Attention focused on the second series revealed a doctrine which maintained the impossibility of one person simultaneously knowing and believing the same truth in the same respect. The analysis of these series of passages had two important consequences. First, it

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served to introduce the naturally knowable truths about God contained in revelation, and second, it brought into relief what appears to be a conflict in the thought of Aquinas on knowing and believing the same truth.

In having established the basic direction of this research, these two consequences lead the present inquiry to consider the subjective and the objective aspects of one moment of the relation between philosophy and theology in the synthesis of Saint Thomas' thought. The question of one individual, the philosophically-minded man, at the same time and in the same respect both knowing and believing the same truth (one of the *praeambula fidei*), may be considered the subjective aspect of the problematic. This question, which is the same as that of the role of the preambles of faith (but from another point of view), will be considered in chapter three.

The objective aspect of the question concerns the nature of the *praeambula fidei*. And it is only when these preamble truths are illuminated by this objective light that one may see how they hold the key not only to the resolution of the subjective question of knowing and believing the same truth, which at present seems like an apparent contradiction in thought and texts, but also see how they hold the key to the penetration of one important moment in the relationship between philosophy and theology in the Thomistic synthesis.

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Although it has not yet been demonstrated, the notion that the natural truths about God are the matrix of the Thomistic *praeambula* is not merely a gratuitous presupposition, without any foundation in the texts of Saint Thomas or in secondary literature. Rather, when he considers these truths about God objectively, Saint Thomas calls them, not articles of faith, but antecedent to the articles.

Chapter two, consequently, will be devoted to an examination of the *praeambula fidei*. Those lines of research, initiated in chapter one, which suggested the identity between the preambles of faith and the naturally knowable truths about God, and the presupposition that in an investigation of this identity is to be found the key to unlock not only the apparent contradiction in doctrine and texts but also the passkey to a better understanding of a master concept in the relation between philosophy and theology in the Thomistic synthesis, must now be grounded. In an effort to do so, attention will be turned first to the secondary literature. What do contemporary studies say about the preambles of faith? Do they support the interpretation of the passages thus far studied? Do they support the presupposition with which the hermeneutical study of the texts will be made?

After a consideration of the secondary literature, the focus of the present chapter will switch again to the texts of Saint Thomas. These sources will be studied from

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two points of view. First, they will be considered from the philological point of view: What does the vocabulary of Saint Thomas contribute to the proper understanding of the doctrine of the preambles of faith? Next, they will be examined from the doctrinal viewpoint: What is the nature of the preambles of faith? The final section of this chapter will draw some conclusions on the nature of the Thomistic doctrine of the *praeambula fidei*. These conclusions will extend further the lines of the present study. Having explicitated the nature of the Thomistic preambles, chapter three will then be able to explore the relation of the preambles to theology, and to resolve the apparent doctrinal and textual conflict elaborated in chapter one.

## 1. Review of the Literature

The doctrine of the *praeambula fidei* has had a long and interesting history since it first appeared in 13th Century Scholasticism. This history is documented principally in a variety of reference works.<sup>1</sup> *Praeambula fidei* has come

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<sup>1</sup> See among others: Juan Alfaro, *Faith, IV. Preambles of Faith*, in *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1968, Vol. 2, pp. 324-326; Francis Aveling, *Rationalism*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911, Vol. 12, pp. 652-654; J.-V. Bainvel, *Foi, Fideisme*, in *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1911, Vol. 2, pp. 18-94; Reginaldo Garrigou-Lagrange, *Preamboli della fede*, in *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, Vatican City, Libro Cattolico, 1948-54, Vol. 9, cols. 1897-98.

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to be considered a technical doctrine associated with treatises on faith. Although a great number of contemporaries use the term, and in so doing imply a doctrinal meaning for it, there are very few *ex professo* articles or monographs on the preambles of faith. And most of these, as might be expected, are theological studies. Moreover, there are even fewer studies on Saint Thomas and the *praeambula fidei*.

Among these latter few, however, stands an excellent article by Guy de Broglie, *La vraie notion thomiste des "praeambula fidei"*.<sup>2</sup> Not only does Fr. de Broglie present a clear and

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p. 1898; A. Gardeil, *Crédibilité: Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, Paris, Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1938, Vol. 3-B, cols. 2270-2277; John Hick, *Faith*, in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, New York, The Macmillan Co. and The Free Press, 1967, Vol. 3, pp. 165-169; S. Harent, *Foi*, in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, Paris, Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1974, Vol. 4-A, cols. 55-514; G. Muschalek, *Praeambula fidei*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Freiburg, Herder, 1963, Vol. 8, pp. 654-657; J.P. Whalen, *Preambles of Faith*, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967, Vol. 11, pp. 702-703.

<sup>2</sup> The present chapter, especially the present section is greatly indebted to Fr. de Broglie's work: G. de Broglie, *La vraie notion thomiste des "praeambula fidei"*, in *Gregorianum*, Vol. 34, 1953, pp. 341-389. See also: G. de Broglie, *Précisions complémentaires à propos de la notion thomiste des "praeambula fidei"*, in *Gregorianum*, Vol. 36, 1955, pp. 291-292. Fr. de Broglie divided the secondary literature into three different classifications which interpret the preambles as either: 1. truths of the metaphysical and historical order which are necessary preconditions to the credibility of faith, 2. metaphysical truths only which are necessary preconditions to the judgement of credibility, or 3. metaphysical truths only which are not necessary to the judgement of credibility but which have been revealed and which form part of theology proper.

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convincing analysis of the texts of Aquinas on the preambles of faith, but he also offers a very fine survey of the secondary literature.

Even though the Thomistic doctrine of the preambles has its primary meaning within the theological context of faith, it has not been completely ignored by philosophers or philosophical studies. No less a person than the redoubtable historian of Mediaeval philosophy, Etienne Gilson, has developed an interpretation of the Thomistic notion of the *praeambula fidei* which identifies them with the *revelabilia* mentioned by Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 1, a. 3, corpus and ad 2, and has made the study of these *revealables* a life-long endeavor and the proper object of at least one major work.<sup>3</sup>

It is not the intent of the present section to offer an exhaustive analysis or critique of the various interpretations of the Thomistic notion of the *praeambula fidei* as found in secondary literature. For now, it is enough simply to give a rapid review of these interpretations, to identify

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<sup>3</sup> Gilson first equates the naturally knowable truths of revelation with the preambles of faith and then these natural truths about God with the *revelabilia*. See: E. Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, New York, Scribner, 1938, p. 82: "Yet, any part of Revelation which is attainable by natural reason should be considered rather as a necessary presupposition to matters of faith than as an article of faith properly said." See also: *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, London, Gollancz, 1961, p. 14: "This natural knowledge, included in the body of revelation, makes up the order of what St. Thomas calls the *revelabilia*."

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them, and to see whether there can be found among them the *vorverständnis* which will be used in making the exegesis of the texts of Saint Thomas in the next section. Consequently, the validity of these interpretations of the Thomistic *praeambula* will not be treated in any exhaustive manner.

A survey of the secondary literature on the topic reveals that the commentators of Aquinas and their explanation of the Thomistic *praeambula fidei* (like the interpretations of the term itself, apart from its meaning in Saint Thomas) may be divided into two opposing groups of unequal size. The first group, and by far the larger, considers the preambles from the viewpoint of apologetics. For these apologists, when Saint Thomas speaks about the truths which are *praeambula fidei*, it is to be understood that he is referring to those truths which must be known with certitude before making a judgement of credibility and consequently a reasonable act of faith.

Many examples of the apologetical interpretation of the technical doctrine itself may be found in the manuals of theology popular during the early part of this century.<sup>4</sup> As

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4 See: Christianus Pesch, S.J., *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, Vol. 8, Freiburg, Herder, 1900, p. 112, n. 281: "Hae veritates, quarum certa notitia ante fidem praerequiritur, vocantur *praeambula fidei*." and note: "Alii illa argumenta, quibus factum revelationis probatur, vocant motiva credibilitatis, et solas veritates de Deo naturaliter notas *praeambula fidei* dicunt. Nos uno vocabulo utrumque complectimur."

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a result, many contemporaries assume that this is the valid position of Saint Thomas, without actually making an explicit identification between the two. However, there are examples of authors who do not hesitate to make explicit their identification of the apologetical interpretation of the preambles of faith with the thought of Aquinas.

One such representative author is a contemporary philosopher of religion, John Hick. In a provocative volume entitled, *Faith and Knowledge*, he devotes a chapter to the Thomistic-Catholic view of faith. The following is his explanation of the Thomistic *praeambula*: One of the main aspects of the doctrine of faith in Aquinas is its voluntary character. Faith is belief which is compelled, not by the object of belief, but by an act of the will. Nevertheless, faith, for Aquinas, is a rational activity. The decision to believe is not merely an arbitrary leap in the dark; it is a rational decision based upon the compelling evidence, not of the object of faith, but of the preambles of faith. Witness Hick's own words:

According to the Thomistic-Catholic tradition, there are reasons [which motivate the decision to believe]. For faith, defined as belief in divinely authorized doctrines, presupposes the previous knowledge both that there is a God and that he has authorized the doctrines in question. This condition is acknowledged in Catholic theology, which provides "preambles to faith" designed to identify as divine the utterances which faith then obediently accepts.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1966, p. 16.

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The apologetical context and its identification with the position of Aquinas is clear. The *praeambula fidei* are truths which guarantee the reasonableness of the act of faith by establishing the motives for judging its credibility.

In his article entitled simply, *Faith* in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Hick gives a concise restatement and some clarification of his interpretation of the Thomistic preambles of faith. Beginning with a summary of the voluntary character of faith in Saint Thomas' thought, he explains that it was necessary for Aquinas to posit a knowledge of the existence of God and the facts of revelation prior to the act of faith in order to establish the reasonableness of that act. His summary thus brings him to ask and answer this question:

How is this prior information gained? The question is answered by the doctrine of the *praeambula* [sic] *fidei*. The preambles of faith consist in the acceptance of God's existence, established by philosophical proofs, and of the validity of the Biblical revelation and the authority of the Catholic church as the divinely appointed guardian of revelation. These latter are authenticated by a variety of visible signs, such as miracles, fulfillment of prophecy, holy lives, and the growth and durability of the church. The believer's appreciation of the weight of this evidence is not an exercise of faith but of reason.<sup>6</sup>

Hick's summary, like the explanations of the Thomistic-Catholic position of many theological manuals, indicates that the preambles consist of two orders of truth: first, the

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<sup>6</sup> Hick, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, p. 165-166.

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existence of God and other metaphysical truths which can be philosophically demonstrated, and second, concrete contingent facts, such as the existence of a Biblical revelation and an authoritative guardian and interpreter of this revelation, which in their turn are guaranteed by miracles and other visible signs.

Not everyone who specifically interprets the Thomistic preambles as apologetical in nature includes such concrete contingent facts among the *praeambula fidei*. Indeed, it is on this point that there is some divergence of opinion within the apologetical group. While most include within the preambles of faith concrete historical facts, some apologists insist that only those metaphysical truths capable of philosophical demonstration are truly to be included in the *praeambula* of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In fairness to Hick, it should be pointed out that there is some reason to believe that he excludes these historical facts from his own understanding of the preambles of faith in Aquinas. Although there is no doubt that he affirms that the Thomistic preambles are apologetical and that the modern Catholic viewpoint is essentially Thomistic, he does indicate that there has been some development in the apologetical context since the Middle Ages. One presumes that the insistence on the inclusion of historical contingent facts in the apologetical interpretation of the Thomistic preambles is just such a

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development and that Hick knows this. Whether his own interpretation includes these historical facts or not, it serves two purposes. First, it is a very good example of the apologetical interpretation. Second, it shows that there are commentators who do include these concrete contingent facts within their interpretation of the preambles.

The second set of commentators and their interpretations of the Thomistic preambles of faith is a numerically smaller group than the apologetical. These commentators consider the Thomistic preambles from the point of view of theology itself. For them, the *praeambula* are not truths antecedent to the act of faith as they are for the apologists. Rather, they are preambles to the articles of faith proper. They are defined as metaphysical truths, e.g., the existence of God and his unity, which have been revealed but which may be known by philosophical demonstration prior to faith. While these truths may be grasped with certitude before they are grasped in faith, they are not at all necessary to the formation of the judgement of credibility and to a reasonable act of faith. To the contrary, they may be grasped within faith by those who are unable to demonstrate them philosophically prior to it. A number of examples of this interpretation could be cited here. Fr. Avery Dulles, in his remarkable work, *A History of Apologetics*, underscores the fact that for Saint Thomas, while the *praeambula fidei* are within

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the grasp of natural knowledge, they are not motives for judging the credibility and reasonableness of faith:

In 19th- and 20th-century manuals the term *praeambula fidei* came to convey the notion of a body of truths that an individual must know with certitude before he could make an act of faith. Among such truths were commonly reckoned the existence and veracity of God and the fact of revelation. For St. Thomas, however, the *praeambula fidei* are simply those truths of faith that are also within the grasp of natural knowledge; they are not necessary pre-conditions to the judgement of credibility. The fact of revelation, moreover, is not one of the *praeambula* for St. Thomas, for he never looks upon concrete contingent facts as demonstrable.<sup>7</sup>

G. Muschalek, in his article on the *praeambula fidei* in the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, agrees with the interpretation of Dulles and expands this insight. The *praeambula* do not bear upon the judgement of credibility, for they may even be known within faith. Rather, they bear upon the essential rationality of faith itself:

Since the *praeambula fidei* of St. Thomas are always concerned with the integration and enlightenment of faith and not with its proof, these truths of reason can be grasped in faith.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, New York, Corpus Instrumentorum, 1971, p. 93, note.

<sup>8</sup> Muschalek, *Op. Cit.*, p. 653: "Da es bei den P.f. bei Thomas immer um Glaubensintegrierung u. -erhellung, nicht um Glaubensbegründung geht... können diese Vernunftwahrheiten auch im Glauben selbst erfasst werden."

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However, the most important secondary source representing Saint Thomas and the theological interpretation of the preambles of faith is the article by G. de Broglie cited earlier. Fr. de Broglie points out that when he formulated his doctrine of the preambles of faith, Aquinas was not concerned with the subjective requisites for an act of faith. His concern was, rather, with the naturally knowable truths of revelation, objectively considered, which may be proven prior to the articles of faith. Fr. de Broglie's own words:

The word "preambles" does not aim at underlining the view that the believer in order to believe would need to know first by natural reason a certain portion of that which faith teaches him: It simply means that the essential and characteristic objects of faith, i.e., the "articles" of the *Credo*, contain within themselves in an intellectual manner as basic elements, certain truths which by themselves depend on simple natural knowledge and which could be equally known either prior to faith or, to the contrary, within faith.<sup>9</sup>

Fr. de Broglie emphasizes that the preambles are not concerned with apologetics and the judgement of credibility. Since the preambles are philosophically demonstrable, they are more than reasonable facts pointing to the validity of the act of faith. They are compelling truths which precede

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<sup>9</sup> de Broglie, *La varie notion...*, pp. 386-387: "Ce qu'ils visent à souligner par ce mot de 'preambles', ce n'est aucunement que le sujet ait besoin, pour croire, de connaître d'abord par sa raison naturelle une certaine partie de ce que la foi lui dira: c'est tout simplement que les objets essentiels et caractéristiques de la foi, c'est-à-dire les 'articles' du *Credo*, contiennent intelligiblement *en eux*, comme éléments de base, des vérités relevant, en droit, de la simple connaissance naturelle, lesquelles peuvent donc

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the articles of faith. Once again Fr. de Broglie's own words

To the contrary, Saint Thomas insists that the "*praeambula*" are truths which are properly to be demonstrated. In other words, their proper character is to be known by syllogistic reasoning. And for Saint Thomas, this mode of syllogistic reasoning applies only to the proof of the theses of abstract science and never to the proof of concrete contingent facts.<sup>10</sup>

This rapid review of some commentators on the Thomistic notion of the preambles of faith was undertaken expressly for the limited purpose of seeing whether the presupposition or *vorverständnis* of the present study has any foundation in the secondary literature. The survey brought to light two different interpretations of the Thomistic *praeambula*, namely the apologetical and the theological. While both interpretations agree that the *praeambula fidei* are truths which are known by natural reason, some commentators of the apologetical group include concrete contingent facts among the *praeambula*. The commentators of the theological group restrict the understanding of the preambles to include only the naturally knowable truths of revelation. Although there is a

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également bien nous être connues *avant* la foi, ou ne nous arriver, au contraire, que *par* elle."

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376-377: "Au contraire, le saint Docteur dit et répète que les '*praeambula*' sont des vérités dont le caractère propre est de pouvoir être établies 'démonstrativement', --autrement dit au moyen de 'syllogismes qui font savoir' --notion qui, pour lui, ne se vérifie que dans l'établissement des theses de science abstraite, jamais dans l'établissement des faits contingents et concrets."

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basic agreement between both groups as to the kinds of truths which are designated by Saint Thomas as *praeambula fidei*, there is a divergence of opinion as to the role they play *vis-à-vis* the act of faith. The apologetical interpretation views the preambles as those truths which *must* be known prior to the act of faith in order to insure credible belief. On the other hand, the properly theological interpretation of the preambles identifies them with the naturally knowable truths of revelation which *may* be known prior to faith by philosophical demonstration but which have, nevertheless, been revealed and which may be known in faith.

If the hermeneutical presupposition of the present research has been only implicit so far, now is the appropriate time to make it explicit. In so doing, it will be easier to see whether or not this *vorverständnis* conforms to one of the interpretations found in secondary literature and to see whether or not it is justified by the texts of Saint Thomas. This is the presupposition: When Saint Thomas speaks about the naturally knowable truths of revelation and about the preambles of faith, he is referring to one and the same reality from different points of view. It is evident that this presupposition can be found in the secondary literature. In fact, it is solidly grounded in the properly theological interpretation of the preambles. What remains now is to investigate the texts themselves of Saint Thomas and to

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expose the Thomistic notion of the *praeambula fidei*.

## 2. Analysis of the Texts of Saint Thomas

The term *praeambula fidei* itself, which is found in the *De Trinitate opusculum*, occurs only once in the *Opera Omnia*;<sup>11</sup> nevertheless, Saint Thomas refers to the preambles by using a number of equivalent phrases or synonyms. In total, there are only six questions in which Aquinas refers to this aspect of his doctrine on the truths of faith using either the term *praeambula* or a synonym.<sup>12</sup> The context of each of these questions, however, is always the same: Saint Thomas is never concerned about the credibility of the act of faith. He is, rather, concerned with the rapport between the articles of faith and the truths of reason. Indeed, this is the same context in which is found the discussion of the naturally knowable truths about God and the question of knowing and believing the same truth in the same respect and at the same time, both of which questions are there treated *ex professo*.

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11 *Index Thomisticus*, ed. R. Busa, S.J., Stuttgart, Friedrich Frommann Verlag and Gunther Holzboog KG, 1974, *Concordantia Prima*, Vol. 17, no. 64245/*praeambulus*.

12 *III Sen.*, dist. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2; *De Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3; *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9, ad 8 and ad 9; *ST*, I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1; *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 3, and q. 2, a. 10, ad 2.

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The following chart gives a graphic and therefore a striking illustration of the virtual identity of these contexts:

DOCTRINE	TEXTS OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS					
	<i>III Sen.</i>	<i>De trin.</i>	<i>De ver.</i>	<i>SCG</i>	<i>ST, I</i>	<i>ST, II-III</i>
<i>PRAEAMBULA FIDEI</i> or EQUIVALENT	d. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2	q. 2, a. 3, corpus	q. 14, a. 9, ad 8 & ad 9		q. 2, a. 2, ad 1	q. 1, a. 5, ad 3 q. 2, a. 10, ad 2
NATURALLY KNOWABLE TRUTHS ON GOD	d. 24, Q. 1, a. 3, q. 1	q. 3, a. 1, corpus	q. 14, a. 10, corpus	Bk. 1, ch. 4	q. 1, a. 1, corpus	q. 2, a. 4, corpus
KNOWING AND BELIEVING	d. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2		q. 14, a. 9, corpus	Bk. 1, ch. 4		q. 1, aa. 4 & 5

It is easy to see from this chart that all three of these doctrines are treated by Saint Thomas in the same place in five works. They are located in the very same question and article, the next article, or the very next question.

Attention will now be focused once again upon the texts themselves, first to investigate philological considerations and then to study doctrinal implications.

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## A. Philological Evidence

The most important philological consideration of the present study is the determination of whether or not the term *praeambula fidei* has been used by Saint Thomas in a technical sense. If, on the one hand, Aquinas adopted or adapted a pre-existing *terminus technicus*, there would be predetermined doctrinal implications for the *praeambula*, apart from their context in his work. On the other hand, if Saint Thomas used the phrase *praeambula fidei* as a technical term which he himself coined, no doctrinal connotations would exist apart from the context of the term. However, there is also the possibility that the term is not used in any technical sense whatsoever by Aquinas. In this case, the doctrinal significance would depend solely upon the context, with no prior connotations. This determination will be made after an investigation of both the external and internal evidence.

External evidence may be found in a study of those philosophers and theologians prior to and contemporary with Saint Thomas, as well as in present-day philological and doctrinal research. Internal evidence is to be found in an analysis of the texts of Aquinas.

The present study disclaims any exhaustive or systematic personal investigation of the term *praeambula fidei* in mediaeval philosophical and theological literature, other than in the writings of Saint Thomas. Such an investigation,

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in order to prove the case, would necessarily be so lengthly as to be impossible for a study of this size. Rather, relying on the testimony of modern historians of philosophy and theology, a single conclusion emerges regarding the history of the term, *praeambula fidei*, which in no way contradicts the study of the basic texts of major mediaeval thinkers which has been made personally.

Historians agree that *praeambula fidei* did not exist as a technical term prior to the 13th Century,<sup>13</sup> and took its first meaning in the period from the 13th-16th Century. This first meaning pertains to the enlightenment of faith and not to its proof.<sup>14</sup> For it was not until the flowering of Scholasticism that the term arose, out of an attempt to define the proper limits of an autonomous philosophy and a revealed theology, and the relation between the two. Prior to that

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13 Alfaro, *Op. Cit.*, p. 512: "From the time of its first appearance in 13th-century Scholasticism, the term 'preambles of faith'... has had two meanings. Principally it means a number of metaphysical truths... which reason can establish and which revelation presupposes-- not precisely in the sense that these natural truths must precede faith by a priority of time but in the sense that if they were denied the falsehood of revealed doctrines would logically follow, and that without them the mysteries of faith would lack internal credibility. The business of preambles of faith is not to prove the fact of divine revelation but to make intelligible the content of revealed doctrine in which they are themselves implicit. [...] The term preambles of faith, or some synonym, has also been applied since the Middle Ages to the fact of revelation insofar as that fact can be known by reason through external motives of credibility such as miracles."

14 Muschalek, *Op. Cit.*, p. 653: "Der Begriff P.f.

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time, no clear cut distinction was made between philosophy and theology by the theologians who used philosophy as part of their theology. Greek thinkers relied on reason alone as the means for ordering man's existence, and saw no need for revealed truth. The Fathers of the Church and early theologians, on the other hand, believed in the sufficiency and superiority of Christian revelation. While some among the latter completely rejected reason as pagan and antithetical to divine revelation, others incorporated reason within theology, especially in the forms of dialectic and logic, but in so doing, made no attempt to define the proper autonomy of either philosophy or theology, or to define the nature of the relationship between them. Not until the time of Aquinas and his contemporaries was a systematic attempt made to define the proper spheres of these disciplines and to reconcile them.

In addition to the comprehensive historical studies of the philosophers and theologians prior to Aquinas, present-day philological research provides further insights into the Thomistic use of the term. In today's world, philological research has been facilitated and refined by the use of electric components such as computers.

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stammt in dieser Form aus dem MA. Er hat in einer 1. Periode (13.-16. Jh.) vorwiegend die erste der gen. Bedeutungen (P.f. als Glaubenserhellung, nicht -begründung)."

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Lexigraphic dictionaries,<sup>15</sup> indices, and concordances<sup>16</sup> share a common approach to and treatment of the term *praeambula fidei*. None of the works studied consider the term *praeambula fidei* as a lemma. Rather, the phrase is listed only as an inflected form of the word *praeambulus*, where *praeambulus* is given as an adjective. One of the clearest examples is given in the monumental *Index Thomisticus*, the most recent and definitive computer study of the vocabulary of Aquinas. In the *Concordantia Prima* of this work, which lists all nouns, verbs, and adjectives (*nomina adjectiva*) in the Thomistic *Opera Omnia*, technical terms are treated as composite phrases called syntagmata, and are listed under the lemmata of those phrases. The *Index Thomisticus* does not list the phrase *praeambula fidei* as a syntagmata, but as only one inflected form of the lemma *praeambulus*, an adjective. This definitive research is in complete agreement with all previous

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15 See among others: Roy J. Deferrari, *Praeambulus*, in *A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Boston, St. Paul Editions, 1960, p. 816; Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Praeambula fidei*, in *Theological Dictionary*, Trans. by Richard Strachan, New York, Herder and Herder, 1968, pp. 368-370; Bernard Wuellner, S.J., *Preamble*, in *A Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy*, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1966, pp. 238-239.

16 See among others: *Index Thomisticus*, ed R. Busa, S. J., Stuttgart, Frederick Frommann Verlag and Gunther Holzboog KG, 1974, *Concordantia Prima*, Vol. 17, no. 64245/*praeambulus*; Roy J. Deferrari, *Praeambulus*, in *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1948, p. 862; Ludwig Schütz, *Praeambulus*, in *Thomas-Lexikon*, Stuttgart, F. Schöning, 1958, p. 620.

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philological study. Consequently, it is obvious that the term *praeambula fidei* is not considered as a technical term nor as a composite phrase in the works of Saint Thomas.

The definitive evidence, however, is found in the texts of Saint Thomas. At the risk of repetition, it is necessary to signal the fact that Aquinas himself uses the words *praeambula fidei* only once in all his works. He does, however, make use of other inflected forms of the adjective *praeambulus*, as well as a number of synonyms, to express the doctrine he intends to expound. From the questions and articles in which Saint Thomas refers to the phrase and its equivalents those passages which constitute their context may be excerpted and schematized in order to afford an overview and to glean from it the common attributes of his vocabulary. The following chart lists the inflected forms of the adjective *praeambulus*, their synonyms, and the antecedents of the phrases, all given in their context, thus enabling some philological conclusions to be drawn with compelling and interesting doctrinal import. In the following chart, the inflected forms of the lemmata are italicized, the antecedents of those inflected forms are given all in upper case.

THE NATURE OF THE *PRAEAMBULA FIDEI*VOCABULARY AND ITS CONTEXT

1. *Praeambulus*, -a, -um (adjective, from *prae* = before, in front of, + *ambulare* = to walk) walking before, preceding.

- a. "Primo ad demonstrandum EA quae sunt *praeambula fidei*, quae necesse est in fide scire, ut ea quae naturalibus rationibus de deo probantur, ut deum esse, deum esse unum et alia huiusmodi vel de deo vel de creaturis in philosophia probata, quae fides supponit...." (*De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus).
- b. "Continent tamen aliquas eorum similitudines et QUAEDAM ad ea *praeambula*, sicut natura *praeambula* est ad gratiam." (*De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus).
- c. "DEUM ESSE, ET ALIA HUIUSMODI quae per rationem naturalem nota possunt esse de Deo, ut dicitur Rom. 1, 19, non sunt articuli fidei, sed *praeambula* ad articulos, sic enim fides praesupponit cognitionem naturalem, sicut gratia naturam, et perfectio perfectibile." (*ST*, I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1).
- d. "Sed RATIONES DEMONSTRATIVAE INDUCTAE AD EA quae sunt fidei, *praeambula tamen ad articulos*, etsi diminuant rationem caritatis, per quam voluntas est prompta ad ea credendum etiam si non apparent." (*ST*, II II, q. 2, a. 10, ad 2).

2. *Praecedens*, -entis (participial adjective, from *praecedere* = to go before) precede.

- a. "Sed QUAEDAM quae sunt *praecedentia ad fidem*, quorum non est fides nisi per accidens, in quantum scilicet excedunt intellectum huius hominis et non hominis simpliciter, possunt demonstrari et sciri, sicut hoc quod est Deum esse; quod quidem est creditum quantum ad eum cuius intellectus ad demonstrationem non attingit;...." (*III Sen.*, d. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2).

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3. *Praesuppositus*, -a, -um (participial adjective, from *praesupponere* = to presuppose) presupposed.

- a. "Ad octavum dicendum quod DEUM ESSE UNUM prout est demonstratum, non ponitur articulus fidei sed *praesuppositum ad articulos*: cognitio enim fidei praesupponit cognitionem naturalem sicut et gratia naturam;" (*De ver.* q. 14, a. 9, ad. 8).

4. *Antecedens*, -entis (participial adjective, from *antecedere* = to precede: *ante* = before + *cedere* = to go) preceding.

- a. "Et sic aliquis potest credere DEUM ESSE eo quod sit placitum Deo, quamvis etiam HOC non sit articulus, sed *antecedens* articulum quia demonstrative probatur." (*De ver.*, q. 14, a. 8, ad 9).

5. *Praeexigo*, -ere (verb, from *prae* = before + *exigere* = to demand or require) to presuppose.

- a. "Ad tertium dicendum quod EA quae [de Deo] demonstrative probari possunt inter credenda numerantur, non quia de ipsis sit simpliciter fides apud omnes: sed quia *praeexiguntur* ad ea quae sunt fidei, et oportet ea saltem per fidem praesupponi ab his qui horum demonstrationem non habent." (*ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 3).

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From the syntactical point of view, it is clear that the synonyms, *praecedentia*, *praesuppositum*, *antecedens*, and *praeexiguntur* are all verb forms, used by Aquinas as either participial adjectives or as verbs. The instances of the use of *praeambula* are not so clear. *Praeambula fidei* may be interpreted as "the preambles of faith", when *praeambula* is taken as a noun, as is customary today so often. In which case, *praeambula* would be translated as the substantive of the neuter plural of *praeambulus*, and *fidei* as the genitive

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singular of the noun *fides*. The syntactical evidence, however, supports another interpretation. *Praeambula* may be translated simply as the adjective "antecedent". Thus the phrase *ea quae sunt praeambula fidei* would be rendered "those things which are antecedent (preamble) to faith." *Fidei* is then taken to be the dative singular of *fides* and *praeambula* modifies *ea*, a neuter plural accusative pronoun, the object of *ad demonstrandum*.

The syntactical evidence alone presents an ambiguity regarding the decisive interpretation of *praeambula* as either a noun or an adjective. Taken as a noun, it would be possible to consider the "preambles of faith" as a technical term. But most modern philologists have favored the adjectival interpretation of the *praeambula*.

The single instance in which the phrase *praeambula fidei* appears, and the subsequent use of modifiers in its place, lends credence to the adjectival interpretation. For these modifiers are all adjectival forms except for the one verb form, *praeexiguntur*. No very strong case for considering *praeambula fidei* as a technical term can be made if *praeambula* is an adjective.

Abstracting from the syntactical consideration of whether or not *praeambula* is an adjective, there is further evidence that *praeambula fidei* is not a *terminus technicus*. A technical term is one whose implications are automatically

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known; no further elaboration of its meaning is necessary because the term is a recognized shorthand for a preestablished doctrine. When Saint Thomas uses the word *praeambula* or one of its synonyms, he almost always precedes or follows it with an explanation or example unless the context is so very clear. Thus in the *De Trinitate* text, the sequel to *ea quae sunt praeambula fidei* is *ut ea quae naturalibus rationibus de deo probantur, ut deum esse, deum esse unum et alia huiusmodi vel de deo vel de creaturis in philosophia probata, quae fides supponit...* Similarly, in *Scriptum super Librum III Sententiarum*, *quaedam quae sunt praecedentia ad fidem* is explained by the phrase *sicut hoc quod est Deum esse*. Other examples are apparent in the above chart.

Historical testimony, coupled with the research of modern philologists, as well as the examination of the texts of Saint Thomas, leaves little doubt that *praeambula* is an adjective when used by Aquinas, and not the lemma of a pre-existing *terminus technicus*. In its doctrinal implications, it should be accorded weight equal to, but not greater than, that of its synonyms. Consequently, its doctrinal importance lies in its context as the arbiter of its meaning.

That *praeambula fidei* was not a technical term prior to the time of Aquinas has been evinced. It has also been made clear that there is no evidence that Saint Thomas himself coined *praeambula fidei* intentionally as a technical term.

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There is, in fact, strong evidence to the contrary. The adjectival syntax of the word *praeambula* in the phrase *praeambula fidei* makes the word unsuited as the lemma for a technical term, since *praeambula* does not refer to "preamble" (a noun), but modifies an antecedent which is the operative word.

The importance of the conclusion that *praeambula* is an adjective and that the phrase *praeambula fidei* is not a technical term is that the context of the phrase emerges as that which gives meaning to the doctrine, and that within that context the antecedent to the adjective carries a major doctrinal importance. There is little doubt what that antecedent is! When not stated by way of example, e.g., the existence of God and his unity, the antecedent is a pronoun which is absolutely clear in the context. The antecedent always refers to the naturally knowable truths of revelation. This study of the vocabulary tells even more: It explains how these naturally knowable truths are preambles; they are preambles not to the act of faith, but to the articles of faith. Even a quick reference to the passages compiled in the above chart proves that Aquinas used *praeambula* and its synonyms to modify not the act of faith, but the articles. In *De Veritate*, for example, he uses *antecedens* to modify the word *articulus* as its antecedent, while taking the word *articulum* as its object. In *De Trinitate*, *praeambula* modifies *ea* as its antecedent.

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In context, *ea* cannot be interpreted as the act of faith but as the articles of faith, since Aquinas gives examples of those articles he has in mind. Interpreting *praeambula* and its synonyms as adjectives, then, and dismissing the phrase *praeambula fidei* as a technical term means that the phrase must refer to the antecedent of the adjectives, that is, the naturally knowable truths of revelation which are somehow preamble to faith.

## B. Doctrinal Evidence

The doctrinal implications of the philological study are abundantly clear and most compelling. The philology alone makes a very impressive case in support of the hermeneutical presupposition operative in the present research, namely, that the doctrine of the preambles of faith is the same doctrine as the naturally knowable truths about God but viewed from a different aspect. A study of the texts of Saint Thomas from the doctrinal viewpoint should manifest that identity and the nature of the difference in viewpoint.

The passages which represent the Thomistic doctrine on the *praeambula fidei* present a very coherent position. In an effort to elaborate that position, attention must now be turned to the six passages which treat this aspect of the doctrine. Once again, the textual analyses will be made chronologically.

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Reference is made to the preambles of faith in distinction twenty-four, question 1, article 2, *quaestiuncula* 2 of the *Scriptum super Librum III Sententiarum*. In this context, identical with that of the question of knowing and believing the same truth, Saint Thomas also mentions the subject of the naturally knowable truths on God contained in revelation. He distinguishes between truths of revelation which pertain to faith *per se*, and those which pertain to it only *per accidens*.<sup>17</sup> Revealed truths which exceed human understanding simply pertain to faith *per se*.<sup>18</sup> Other truths of revelation, which are not beyond the understanding of human reason in general but which exceed the intellectual power of a specific individual, are only *per accidens* matters of faith.<sup>19</sup> In themselves, such naturally knowable truths of revelation are not articles of faith but preambles to the articles:

Sed quaedam quae sunt praecedentia ad fidem, quorum non est fides nisi per accidens, in quantum scilicet excedunt intellectum hujus hominis et non hominis simpliciter, possunt demonstrari et sciri,

17 *III Sen.*, d. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2: "Ad secundum questionem dicendum quod fides ut dictum est, comparatur ad aliquid dupliciter, scilicet per se et per accidens."

18 *Loc. Cit.*: "Sic ergo quod simpliciter humanum intellectum excedit ad Deum pertinens, nobis divinitus revelatum ad fidem per se pertinet."

19 *Loc. Cit.*: "Quod autem excedit intellectum hujus vel illius et non omnis hominis, non per se, sed per accidens ad fidem pertinet."

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sicut hoc quod est Deum esse; quod quidem est creditum quantum ad eum cujus intellectus ad demonstrationem non attingit; quia fides, quantum in se est, ad omnia quae fidem concomitantur vel sequuntur vel praecedunt sufficienter inclinatur.<sup>20</sup>

Thus Saint Thomas stresses that certain truths are preambles to faith because they exceed the intellectual power of a particular man and not of man simply. These truths, for example, the existence of God, can be both demonstrated and known and thus are truths of faith only *per accidens*. To the extent that an individual cannot prove such naturally knowable truths of revelation by demonstration, they become for him a truth to be believed (*creditum*); in itself, faith is sufficient to bend his mind to the grasp of those truths which precede, which are concomitant with, or which follow faith.

Thus the naturally knowable truths of revelation, when considered from the objective viewpoint, that is, from the aspect of what they are in themselves, are called by Saint Thomas, preambles of faith. They are presupposed to faith in themselves but may be object of belief if a man is unable to prove them. It is clear that *fides* in this passage is to be understood in the sense of the articles of faith and not in the sense of the act of faith.

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<sup>20</sup> *III Sen.*, d. 24, Q. 1, a. 2, q. 2.

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The only direct reference to the term *praeambula fidei* occurs in the third article of the second question of the *opusculum*, *Expositio super Librum Boethii de Trinitate*. This passage is separated from and precedes the one on the naturally knowable truths about God by a single article. The passage considers whether or not it is permissible to use the rational argument of the natural philosophers in the science of faith: *Utrum in scientia fidei quae est de deo licet rationibus philosophicis et auctoritatibus uti*. Saint Thomas gives an affirmative answer to this question and bases it on the following line of reasoning: as grace perfects nature without destroying it, so the light of faith perfects the natural light of reason. Although natural reason by itself is insufficient to reveal those truths of faith, there cannot be a fundamental conflict between them. Since both come from God, a conflict between the truths of faith and the truths of reason would imply that one set of truths was false and consequently, that God was the author of error; this, of course, is an impossibility.<sup>21</sup>

Rather than a conflict between the truths of faith and those of reason, there is a fundamental harmony between

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<sup>21</sup> *De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus: "Responsio. Dicendum quod dona gratiarum hoc modo naturae adduntur quod eam non tollunt, sed magis perficiunt; unde et lumen fidei, quod nobis gratis infunditur, non destruit lumen naturalis rationis divinitus nobis inditum. Et quamvis lumen naturale mentis humanae

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them. For in the way in which sacred doctrine is founded upon the light of faith, so philosophy is grounded upon the light of natural reason. There is no essential incompatibility between the truths of philosophy and the truths of theology or faith, but those of philosophy fall short of the ones of faith. Nevertheless, among the philosophical truths there are some which are similitudes or illustrations of the truths known by faith, while there are others which are preamble to the truths of faith:

Sicut autem sacra doctrina fundatur supra lumen fidei, ita philosophia fundatur supra lumen naturale rationis; unde impossibile est quod ea, quae sunt philosophiae, sint contraria his quae sunt fidei, sed deficiunt ab eis. Continent tamen aliquas eorum similitudines et quaedam ad ea praeambula, sicut natura praeambula est ad gratiam.<sup>22</sup>

In this context, the *ea* of *quaedam ad ea praeambula* clearly refers to the truths of faith and not the act of faith. The doctrine is equally clear. Among the naturally knowable philosophical truths, some truths are similitudes or likenesses, although imperfect ones, of the truths of faith; other truths are preambles of faith in the same way that

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sit insufficiens ad manifestationem eorum quae manifestantur per fidem, tamen impossibile est quod ea, quae per fidem traduntur nobis divinitus, sint contraria his quae sunt per naturam nobis indita. Oporteret enim alterum esse falsum; et cum utrumque sit nobis a deo, deus nobis esset auctor falsitatis, quod est impossibile."

<sup>22</sup> *De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus.

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nature is a preamble to grace.

Since there is no essential incompatibility between philosophical truths and theological ones, Saint Thomas does not hesitate to affirm that philosophy may be used within theology or sacred doctrine:

Sic ergo in sacra doctrina philosophia possumus tripliciter uti. Primo ad demonstrandum ea quae sunt praeambula fidei, quae necesse est in fide scire, ut ea quae naturalibus rationibus de deo probantur, ut deum esse, deum esse unum et alia huiusmodi vel de deo vel de creaturis in philosophia probata, quae fides supponit....<sup>23</sup>

The first use named by Saint Thomas is that of the demonstration of the preambles of faith which he has just mentioned earlier in the article. At this point, however, Aquinas expands on their nature. They are those truths which natural reason is able to prove about God, for example, his existence and unity, as well as truths about creatures which can be proven by philosophy but which are presupposed by faith. This text is critical in that it is the sole instance in which Saint Thomas explicitly includes by way of explanation the naturally knowable truths about creatures within the preambles. These are the very truths which Aquinas has referred to so often as the naturally knowable truths of revelation.

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<sup>23</sup> *De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus.

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Question fourteen, article 9 of the disputed question, *De Veritate*, devoted to an *ex professo* consideration of knowing and believing the same truth, further explicates the Thomistic notion of the *praeambula*. In addition to the argumentation in the corpus of the article, wherein Saint Thomas demonstrates the impossibility of faith being of things seen, the answer to objections 8 and 9 are very important.

Objection 8 brings the topic of the naturally knowable truths on God into the discussion very significantly. Saint Thomas therein speculates that an individual could have faith and scientific knowledge about the same truth. Is the unity of God, which is demonstrable and therefore scientifically knowable, not included among the objects of faith?<sup>24</sup>

But in answer, Saint Thomas makes the proper distinctions. The thesis that God is one, as a demonstrable proposition, is not considered an article of faith, but a truth presupposed to the articles. For, the knowledge of faith presupposes natural knowledge, just as grace presupposes nature:

Ad octavum dicendum quod Deum esse unum prout est demonstratum, non ponitur articulus fidei, sed praesuppositum ad articulos: cognitio enim fidei praesupponit cognitionem naturalem sicut et gratia naturam.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9, obj. 8: "Praeterea, Deum esse unum ponitur inter credibilia; sed hoc demonstrative probatur a philosophis, et ita potest esse scitum; ergo de eodem potest esse fides et scientia."

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* ad.8.

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Objection 9 continues discussion of the natural truths about God. Saint Thomas makes use of the example of the proposition, God exists, to object to the premise of the question and to suggest that the judgement of the existence of God can be both known and believed at the same time. The objection runs this way: That God exists is an object of faith (*credibile*). Further, the motive for faith is the desire to please God. However, in the case of the proposition, God exists, the motive for belief cannot be the desire to please God because such a desire is posterior to the judgement that there is a God. Hence, there must be some other motive impelling belief. This motive is the natural knowledge an individual has of God's existence. Thus the proposition, God exists, is both believed and known (*creditum et scitum*).<sup>26</sup>

In ad 9, Saint Thomas makes a distinction which resolves the objection and supports the conclusion of the article. He reasons that belief can begin where there was no faith but only incipient knowledge. Thus, prior to faith, an

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<sup>26</sup> *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9, obj. 9: "Propterea, Deum esse est quoddam credibile; non autem credimus hoc eo quod sit Deo acceptum quia nullus potest extimare aliquid esse Deo acceptum nisi prius extimet esse Deum qui acceptet, et sic extimatio qua quis extimat Deum esse praecedit extimationem qua quis putat aliquid esse Deo acceptum, nec potest ex ea causari; sed ad credendum ea quae nescimus ducimus per hoc quod hoc credimus esse Deo acceptum; ergo Deum esse est creditum et scitum."

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individual might have knowledge of the proposition, God exists, and might think that it would be pleasing to God for him so to believe. This is a sufficient motive to impell faith. Now the distinction: the proposition, God exists, is not in itself an article of faith but a demonstrable judgement which is preamble to faith. Here are Saint Thomas' own words:

Et sic aliquis potest credere Deum esse eo quod sit placitum Deo, quamvis etiam hoc non sit articulus, sed antecedens articulum quia demonstrative probatur.<sup>27</sup>

The testimony of article 9 is convincing, and adds further evidence to the coherent doctrine on the preambles of faith. The judgements, God exists and God is one, are demonstrable propositions, as are the other naturally knowable truths about God, and, consequently, are numbered among the preambles of faith. Since they are subject to philosophical proof, they are not truths of faith in themselves, but are antecedent truths, are presupposed to the articles of faith, as nature is presupposed by grace.

Question 2, article 2 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* considers whether the existence of God is a demonstrable truth: *Utrum Deum esse sit demonstrabile*. The corpus contains a brief and a positive response. For present purposes, however, the significance revolves around objection 1 and the reply.

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<sup>27</sup> *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9, ad 9.

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Objection 1 proceeds thus: It would seem that the existence of God is not a demonstrable truth since it is an article of faith, and faith does not deal with truths which can be proven.<sup>28</sup>

But in reply, Saint Thomas introduces the now familiar distinction between articles of faith and preamble truths

Deum esse, et alia huiusmodi quae per rationem naturalem nota possunt esse de Deo, ut dicitur Rom. 1,19, non sunt articuli fidei, sed praeambula ad articulos:<sup>29</sup>

The existence of God and the other naturally knowable truths of revelation are not articles of faith but are preamble to the articles. Another familiar phrase follows immediately in a more expanded form:

...sic enim fides praesupponit cognitionem naturalem, sicut gratia naturam, et perfectio perfectibile.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, faith presupposes natural knowledge in the same way in which grace presupposes nature, and the perfect presupposes the perfectable.

Another important contribution of this text to the doctrine of the *praeambula fidei* is made by the next sentence:

Nihil tamen prohibet illud quod secundum se demonstrabile est et scibile, ab aliquo accipi ut credibile, qui demonstrationem non capit.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *ST*, I, q. 2, a. 2, obj. 1: "Deum enim esse est articulus fidei. Sed ea quae sunt fidei, non sunt demonstrabilia: quia demonstratio facit scire, fides autem de non apparentibus est, ut patet per Apostolum, ad Heb. 11,1. Ergo Deum esse non est demonstrabile."

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There is no obstacle which blocks the possibility of an individual accepting as an object of belief those truths which he cannot demonstrate but which in themselves are demonstrable and knowable. This text is in complete opposition to the apologetical interpretation of the preambles. Far from being naturally knowable truths which an individual must demonstrate before believing credibly, the preambles are truths which an individual may accept on faith if he is unable to demonstrate them. These truths, in fact, must be known in faith as Saint Thomas states in *De Trinitate*:- *quae necesse est in fide scire*, (q. 2, a. 3, corpus).

The *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae* provides the locus for the last two references to the *praeambula*. The first text is found in ad 3 of question 1, article 5, which is devoted to an examination of the possibility of knowing and believing the same truth, examined in depth in chapter one. The second passage is located in ad 2 of question 2, article 10, the last article of the next question. The subject of that article: *Utrum ratio inducta ad ea quae sunt fidei diminuat meritum fidei*, parallels another such

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29 *ST*, I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1.

30 *Loc. Cit.*

31 *Loc. Cit.*

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consideration of the relationship between human reason and the merits of faith found in *III Sen.*, d. 24, Q. 1, a. 3, q. 3: *Videtur quod ratio humana diminuat meritum fidei* and this *quaestiuncula* immediately follows the one on the natural truths on God.

Objection 3 reproduces a now familiar hypothetical protest to the corpus of question 1, article 5. Demonstration effects, by syllogistic reasoning, the proof of a truth which is thus known. Certain truths among those of revelation, for example, the existence of God, his unity, and the like, are taken from those demonstrably proven by philosophers. Therefore, the truths of faith may also be known.<sup>32</sup>

In reply, Saint Thomas invokes another familiar distinction:

Ad tertium dicendum quod ea quae demonstrative probari possunt inter credenda numerantur, non quia de ipsis sit simpliciter fides apud omnes: sed quia praeexiguntur ad ea quae sunt fidei, et oportet ea saltem per fidem praesupponi ab his qui horum demonstrationem non habent.<sup>33</sup>

Truths which can be proven by demonstration are not included within the body of truths to be believed (*credenda*) because faith in them is necessary simply for all men; but

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<sup>32</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 5, obj. 3: "Praeterea, ea quae demonstrative probantur sunt scita: quia demonstratio est *sylogismus faciens scire*. Sed quaedam quae in fide continentur sunt demonstrative probata a philosophis: sicut Deum esse, et Deum esse unum, et alia huiusmodi. Ergo ea quae sunt fidei possunt esse scita."

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 3.

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their knowledge is a prerequisite to the truths of faith. They must be presupposed by belief by all men who cannot demonstrate them.

Question 2, article 10 speculates whether the use of reasons to support the truths of faith diminishes faith's merit. In the corpus of the article, Saint Thomas answers that since faith is an act of the will, it may be meritorious; the merit of the act of faith depends not only on the use of faith, but also on its assent. Human reason brought forward to support the truths of faith may be related to the assent of the will of the believer in two ways: either antecedent to it or consequent to it.<sup>34</sup> If human reason precedes the act of faith, the merit of that act is lessened because the believer ought to believe not on the force of human reason, but on the force of divine authority.<sup>35</sup> Human reason consequent to the assent of the will does not diminish faith's merit, since it does not affect the act of faith, but affects instead the articles of faith. In this way, a man who is ready to believe loves the truths he believes, and uses human reason to think his faith through and to deepen it.<sup>36</sup>

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34 *ST*, II-II, q. 2, a. 10, corpus: "...actus fidei potest esse meritorius inquantum subiacet voluntati non solum quantum ad usum, sed etiam quantum ad assensum. Ratio autem humana inducta ad ea quae sunt fidei dupliciter potest se habere ad voluntatem credentis. Uno quidem modo, sicut praecedens.. alio modo... consequenter."

35 *Ibid.*: "Et sic ratio humana inducta diminuit

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Counter to the corpus of the article, objection 2 suggests that the merit of faith seems to be diminished by the use of reason in support of faith by providing proofs for it which lessen its virtue.<sup>37</sup>

It is in reply to objection 2 that Saint Thomas introduces the preambles of faith. Aquinas distinguishes between the use of reason in support of the authority of faith and in support of the *praeambula fidei*. Reasons in support of the authority of faith are not demonstrations which can effect vision. Faith remains of things unseen. Consequently, neither the measure nor the merit of faith is diminished.<sup>38</sup>

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meritum fidei... ita credere debet homo ea quae sunt fidei non propter rationem humanam, sed propter auctoritatem divinam."

36 *ST*, II-II, q. 2, a. 10, corpus: "Alio modo ratio humana potest se habere ad voluntatem credentis consequenter. Cum enim homo habet promptam voluntatem ad credendum, diligit veritatem creditam, et super ea excogitat et amplectitur si quas rationes ad hoc invenire potest."

37 *Ibid.*, obj. 2: "...quidquid diminuit rationem virtutis diminuit rationem meriti.... Sed ratio humana videtur diminuere rationem virtutis ipsius fidei.... Ergo ratio humana inducta ad ea quae sunt fidei meritum fidei diminuit."

38 *Ibid.*, ad 2: "...rationes quae inducuntur ad auctoritatem fidei non sunt demonstrationes quae in visionem intelligibilem intellectum humanum reducere possunt. Unde per tales rationes non diminuitur meritum fidei nec ratio fidei."

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The case is somewhat different with reasons brought forth to support the preambles to faith:

Sed rationes demonstrativae inductae ad ea quae sunt fidei, praeambula tamen ad articulos, etsi diminuunt rationem fidei, quia faciunt esse apprensus id quod proponitur; non tamen diminuunt rationem caritatis, per quam voluntas est prompta ad ea credendum etiam si non apparerent. Et ideo non diminuitur ratio meriti.<sup>39</sup>

Reasons brought forward in support of the truths of faith, which are preambles to the articles of faith, cause these truths to be seen. Thus they lessen the motives of faith. But they do not lessen the motive of charity by which the will is prepared to believe them, even if they were not manifest. Consequently, they do not diminish the motive of merit.

The six passages on the Thomistic preambles just studied at some length present a very comprehensive and a very coherent doctrinal testimony. This evidence in itself is compelling indeed. However, coupled with an equally compelling philological study, the evidence is overwhelming. There can be no doubt as to the nature of those truths which Saint Thomas calls preambles to faith. The next section will draw into summary, from the preceding doctrinal and philological research, the true nature of the *praeambula fidei* according to the mind of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

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39 *ST*, II-II, q. 2, a. 10, ad 2.

THE NATURE OF THE *PRAEAMBULA FIDEI*3. The Nature of the *Praeambula fidei*

Two avenues leading to the proper understanding of the *praeambula fidei* in the thought of Saint Thomas have been explored. From the philological and doctrinal study, many conclusions may be drawn and a summary of the Thomistic doctrine may be given.

Philological evidence indicates that Saint Thomas himself did not use the phrase *praeambula fidei* as a technical term to designate that which is admittedly a complex and technical doctrine. Rather, Thomistic exegetes who found this doctrine expounded so clearly in the *De Trinitate* text, and who found the words *praeambula fidei* there as well, enlisted this phrase as shorthand for the doctrine (as has been done in this research as well). No grave inconvenience attaches to this procedure, provided the conclusions of the philological study of the preceding section are kept in mind. However, those philological conclusions which do affect doctrinal significance might be reiterated: *Praeambula* is neither part of a *terminus technicus* for Saint Thomas nor is it used as a noun. It is an adjective (participial adjective). Since it is not a technical word, *praeambula* carries a weight of importance similar to the various synonyms used by Saint Thomas in its place. And each of these words, as designations for the doctrine, depends upon its context as the arbiter of

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its meaning. Further, as adjectives, these words modify and depend upon antecedents which contribute to the doctrinal significance. From the philological point of view, there are three operative groups of words corresponding to three operative concepts: *ea*, and the other antecedents, *praeambula* and its adjectival synonyms, and *fides*. If each of these component concepts is explained adequately, the nature of the preambles of faith will be much clearer. The reader is referred to the chart on pages 59-60, wherein these groups of words have been identified.

The doctrinal implication of the establishment of the antecedent component concept is very important. It establishes unquestionably the identity of the naturally knowable truths of revelation and the preambles of faith. The antecedent, when a single word, is either *ea* or *quaedam*. At times it is a complete phrase, e.g., *Deum esse, et alia huiusmodi*. However, even when the antecedent is simply a pronoun, there is no trouble in identifying the pronoun's antecedent. For, in such cases Saint Thomas provides a phrase or a clause by way of explanation or example. Such is the case with the sentence from the *De Trinitate*: the antecedent of *ea* is the implied noun *truths*. Which truths does Aquinas intend to imply? He explains in the examples which immediately follow the phrase *praeambula fidei*. They are those truths which are proven about God by natural reason, for example, his

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existence and unity or the similar truths about God or about creatures which are proven in philosophy.<sup>40</sup> Are these not the very same truths which were examined in chapter one under the title of the naturally knowable truths of revelation? Indeed, they are. The nature of the preambles of faith, then, must be identical to those which are the naturally demonstrable truths about God contained in revelation. What was said in chapter one about them must also be said about the preambles of faith: They are truths which do not surpass the grasp of natural reason. They can be demonstrated by syllogistic reasoning but are nonetheless revealed. They are founded upon natural reason, not in the subjective sense that the believer must be a well-educated and metaphysical man to attain them, but in the objective sense; they are philosophical truths at their core but are revealed in order to insure the possibility of their being grasped by all men.

If the burden of the antecedent is to establish the identity between the naturally knowable truths of revelation and the preambles of faith, it is incumbent upon the adjectival component to explain the difference in viewpoint which exists causing different vocabulary and different series of texts.

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40 *De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, corpus: "...ut ea quae naturalibus rationibus de deo probantur, ut deum esse, deum esse unum et alia huiusmodi vel de deo vel de creaturis in philosophia probata..."

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The difference in viewpoint can be accounted for by a difference in emphasis. When Saint Thomas elaborated his doctrine on the necessity of the naturally knowable truths of revelation, he was responding to the subjective aspect of the question: whether faith is necessary for mankind. The truths of revelation are complex. Some of them exceed the ability of human reason to attain; faith in these truths are *per se* required for all men. Other revealed truths do not in themselves exceed the grasp of natural reason. They may, however, exceed the intellectual ability of a particular individual; therefore, faith in them is a necessity for that individual. But in such cases, Aquinas affirms, faith pertains only *per accidens*.

When the emphasis shifts from the subjective question to the objective, there is a shift in vocabulary as well. A whole series of texts dealing with the objective aspect of the question with this new vocabulary may be found. When Saint Thomas investigates the nature of these naturally knowable truths to which faith pertains only *per accidens*, he teaches that in themselves these truths are not articles of faith, but are presupposed, antecedent, preamble to the articles. Subjectively speaking, these naturally knowable truths about God and creatures are matters for faith only *per accidens* because, objectively speaking, in themselves they are *praeambula fidei*. The objective question aims at showing

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why and how these natural truths about God are only *per accidens* matters of faith.

In what sense, then, is the adjectival concept to be understood? How are these truths preamble, or antecedent, to faith? temporally? logically? If the *praeambula* were understood in some temporal manner, it would make the grasp of these preambles a *sine qua non* condition for the making of a reasonable act of faith. A man would need to know them with certitude before he could begin to exercise the act of faith. However, this interpretation has been shown to be false. It is the evidence of the component concept *fides* which puts it to the lie.

A faithful and attentive reading of the texts reveals that *fides* must be understood as referring to the articles of faith, and not to the act of faith. In fact, there is no text which alleges that the act of faith is contingent upon the grasp of the preambles of faith. The contrary is taught; these *praeambula* can only be known by few men imperfectly and after a long and difficult search. They were revealed by God so that all men might be able to attain them. For, man's salvation and his beatitude depend upon his being directed to a supernatural end. What is thus grasped in faith by those unable to prove them are the naturally knowable philosophical truths which have been revealed. Accordingly, Saint Thomas is not dealing with an apologetical question (one

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which would be a post-Cartesian, post-critical concern and only a pseudo-question for a man of Aquinas' era). Nor, consequently, is it a temporal question. Rather, he is dealing with a properly theological topic-- the complex nature of revelation and its relation to philosophy and theology.

No, the adjective *praeambula* is not to be understood in a temporal sense. Rather, it should be interpreted logically or better yet, onto-logically. The adjective aims at stressing the objective aspect of the doctrine. It relates to the material object of faith. By it, Saint Thomas seeks to link reason and faith, philosophy and theology. He intends to show that faith at its core is reasonable. It is impossible, he affirms, for faith and reason to contradict one another on truth. For, God is the author of every truth. The truths of faith can never contradict those of reason although the latter are deficient. However, they can contribute to the understanding of the former.

Thus Saint Thomas succeeds admirably in linking philosophy and theology, faith and reason, in such a way that their essential harmony is established. He rejects the one tradition which glorifies reason and discounts faith, and rejects as well the other, which exhaults faith so far above reason that faith is seen as true knowledge only because it is without reason, because it is absurd.

This logical or onto-logical link is established by

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the objective aspect of the doctrine which emphasizes the *praeambula*. Faith contains, as part of its material object, truths which in themselves are philosophical, naturally knowable. They form a basis, a groundwork, for the further truths of faith. It is in this sense that the affirmation, faith presupposes nature, should be understood. It is thus that Saint Thomas has established the ground for a rational superstructure of faith. There exist within faith truths which depend upon reason alone for their demonstration. It is upon these that those truths of faith which are essentially and *per se* beyond the grasp of every man's intellect build. Upon the unity of God, which is naturally knowable, Aquinas builds the doctrine of God's Tri-unity, a doctrine which can be grasped only in faith.

In this way, the saint and Doctor of the Church is the theologian-philosopher. It is only when philosophy is in and for theology, not when it is methodologically separated from theology, that it is, in the historical sense, the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. It is only when philosophy is being used to structure a theological enterprise, only when it is being used as a ground for theologizing, only when it is being used to shed some light on supernatural dogma that it is being used properly within sacred doctrine.

## CHAPTER III

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Saint Thomas Aquinas himself charted a course for the theologian who wishes to use philosophy within sacred doctrine. The geography of that relationship, which is one aspect of the rapport between faith and reason, is complex indeed. It demands detailed exploration and investigation. Unless the entire terrain is surveyed and each road is followed to its end, the topography will appear a muddled entanglement of avenues which crisscross time and time again, but which never converge.

The point of convergence of special interest for the present research is the discovery of the nature of the *praeambula fidei* and the role they play within sacred teaching. The first steps on this journey of discovery were taken in chapter one. A perennial question which arises from philosophy's confrontation with the religious fact was exposed as Saint Thomas had elaborated it. For, it is in this elaboration that the doctrine of the *praeambula fidei* is formulated by the Angelic Doctor. This perennial question involves the existence of a certain double truth about God and creatures, that which is naturally demonstrable and that which is inaccessible to natural reason, but both of which have been revealed. If faith and reason are mutually exclusive ways of appropriating truth, and if revelation contains both naturally and supernaturally knowable truths, how can Aquinas insist

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that all men must believe all the truths of revelation, even those which they can prove by demonstration? If the juxtaposition of texts investigated in chapter one seems to give rise to an apparent conflict in the thought of Aquinas, it is only because all proper distinctions made by Saint Thomas had not as yet been explored to their limit. The two series of texts studied suggested that the preambles of faith were an important distinction, in fact, a passkey to unlock any seeming conflict. This discovery led to the investigation of the nature of the preambles in the second chapter as a preparation to the use of the key.

Chapter two, consequently, advanced several steps toward that resolution of texts and thought by investigating the nature of the *praeambula fidei*. It established the identity of the preambles of faith with the naturally knowable truths of revelation. It also showed how these two series of conflicting texts gave rise to the notion of the preambles of faith as a necessary distinction in the thought of Saint Thomas. What remains now is to explicate this distinction and to use this master key to unlock any apparent conflicts. Then, it will be necessary to explain the relationship between philosophy and the preambles as Aquinas himself has conceived it.

Accordingly, the first section of chapter three will reconsider the conflict which seems to have arisen in chapter

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one, and will demonstrate how the nature of the preambles of faith unfolded in chapter two resolves this pseudo-conflict. In resolving this apparent conflict, steps will be taken which will give rise to the investigation of the role of the *praeambula fidei* within theology. This investigation will be made in section two. The final section will compare the conclusions drawn about the role of the preambles of faith with what Saint Thomas says about philosophy and the method and contents of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* as a test case of the validity of these conclusions.

These roads having been traveled and the terrain having been thoroughly explored, a section of summary and conclusions will be made which will not only ground philosophy and the *praeambula fidei* within theology, but which will also provide the basis for a resolution of at least one of the perennial problems which arises from the encounter of faith and reason, and of theology and philosophy-- the existence of a double truth on God and creatures both of which are revealed.

## 1. An Apparent Conflict Resolved

The fact that revelation contains a double set of truths about God and creatures, one beyond the grasp of natural reason, the other naturally knowable by demonstration, is the backdrop for the drama of the apparent conflict which

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emerged earlier in this research. Saint Thomas himself points out that there is no conflict, no inconsistency in the fact that these naturally knowable truths about God and creatures can be known by one individual with the capacity to demonstrate them, but can only be believed by another not so intellectually sophisticated. Knowledge of and faith in the same truth cannot simultaneously coexist in the same man. However, what can be known by one man can be believed by another. Saint Thomas expressly expels any doubt about this question in so many words in at least five texts.<sup>1</sup>

But in expelling any doubt about one man believing and another demonstrating the naturally knowable truths of revelation, Aquinas hastens to insist that the same man cannot simultaneously have the knowledge of faith and scientific knowledge about the same truth. He repeats this in answer to objections which precede articles, and it is, as was seen in chapter one, the *ex professo* topic of a series of five articles.

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<sup>1</sup> *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 9, corpus: "...et de his nihil prohibet quin sint ab aliquibus scita qui horum habent demonstrationes, et ab aliis credita qui horum demonstrationes non perceperunt. Sed impossibile est quod sint ab eodem scita et credita." *ST*, I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1: "Nihil tamen prohibet illud quod secundum se demonstrabile est et scibile, ab aliquo accipi ut credibile, qui demonstrationem non capit." *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 5 corpus: "Potest tamen contingere ut id quod est visum vel scitum ab uno, sit creditum ab alio." *ST*, II-II, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod de eodem non potest esse scientia et fides apud eundem. Sed id quod est ab uno scitum potest esse ab alio creditum, ut supra

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With the double truths of revelation as backdrop, and the prohibition against the same individual simultaneously knowing and believing the same truth as the scene, the stage was set for the drama to unfold. The protagonist, those texts which insist that all men must believe all the truths of revelation, apparently even those about God and creatures which are naturally knowable, spoke the opening line. The entrance of the protagonist sparked the confrontation and put the denouement in question. Is the plot not absurd? How can a man necessarily believe all the truths which God has fittingly revealed if he can prove some of them on his own? In the light of the understanding of the naturally knowable truths of revelation as preamble to faith, an analysis of those texts which seem to impose this absurdity will reveal this conflict to be but an apparent contradiction in the thought of Saint Thomas. A pseudo-conflict, yes; but a real problem, nonetheless.

In order to avoid the misunderstanding inherent in this apparent contradiction, those texts which prescribe faith in all the truths of revelation must be understood on

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dictum est (q.1, a.5)." *In Heb.*, Ch. XI, Lec. 1: "Ad istud de demonstratione dicendum est, quod nihil prohibet aliquid esse visum uni quod est creditum alteri, sicut patet in diversis statibus."

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several levels. One must remember that on the most basic level, these texts put the question in terms of mankind in general. In the first instance, these texts establish the fittingness for the divine revelation of truths about God and creatures, which are in themselves naturally knowable. They also establish, in general, the necessity for mankind as such to believe them. Thus understood, even if belief were superfluous for some men, divine revelation would still be fitting for men in general. Consequently, Saint Thomas could affirm that these truths can be known by one individual and be believed by another, and not have this affirmation raise any difficulty or cause any confrontation.

There is another, deeper level of understanding of the question. Among those who have the capacity to demonstrate those truths, faith might seem superfluous. Yet, Saint Thomas insists that the pedagogy of faith is still a necessity for these individuals. Although few men are endowed with the natural intellectual capacity to demonstrate the naturally knowable truths of revelation, that capacity may go unfulfilled completely or for a long period of time. Even when these truths may eventually be known, they would be admixed with errors. Understood at this level, the texts of Aquinas pose no conflict. For, the individual has not as yet actualized his capacity. A child, for example, although intelligent, would be unable to demonstrate these natural

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truths of revelation, among other reasons, because of the immaturity of his intellect, the inability of the human intellect to initiate such an investigation on its own, and because of his physical indisposition. The young man on the road to developing a propensity for such demonstration is impeded along the way by the passions of youth or perhaps by laziness, and by the fact that metaphysics itself is better suited for study in later life. Finally, the adult, in possession of the capacity for philosophical demonstration and reflection, may be unable to hone or to exercise that talent, given the many intellectual prerequisites and the preoccupation of life's necessities. Faith at all of these stages of development is still necessary for all of these individuals because they have not as yet actualized their capacity to prove these truths by demonstration. Thus, faith in the naturally knowable truths is necessary to direct their lives to their final supernatural end, beatitude.

A third level must be distinguished in the prescription that faith in the naturally knowable truths of revelation is necessary. It is at this level that the pseudo-conflict becomes manifest and that the doctrine of the preambles of faith emerges as the key to its resolution. At this third moment, the man with the philosophical aptitude who has actualized his capacity, demonstrating by syllogistic reasoning those naturally knowable truths about God and

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creatures contained in revelation, is confronted by the stated necessity to believe what he knows. Nothing prohibits this individual from exercising both acts at separate times. This is obvious from his own intellectual development. For in order to have developed his philosophical aptitude, he would have had to overcome many and varied impediments as a child, a young man, and an adult, stages of development at which belief was an absolute necessity. At this moment in his life, he can turn his attention from faith in the naturally knowable truths to his scientific knowledge of them without conflict.<sup>2</sup> When this man knows by natural reason, through demonstration, the natural truths about God and creatures, Saint Thomas affirms that these truths are for that man not articles of faith but preambles to the articles.

When he considers the nature of the act of faith and the act of knowing, he realizes that, by their very nature, these acts are two distinct and mutually exclusive types of intellectual assent. Knowledge effects vision by reducing the truth known to its first principles. Faith is knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> See: J. Gardair, *Op. Cit.*, p.453: "J'ajouterais que le même homme peut, un instant, considérer les motifs de croire, et, à cet instant précis, faire un acte de foi; puis tourner les yeux vers la raison de savoir, et alors être convaincu par vision scientifique. Ce même homme se multiplie ainsi en deux actes intellectuels, d'essence différente; il est comme deux esprits distincts en un même esprit."

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without vision, i.e., without the evidence of first principles. Thus, by definition, the impossibility of one man *simultaneously* knowing and believing the same truth is obvious.

It is also by definition that these naturally knowable truths of revelation are only articles of faith *per accidens*, although subjectively, they remain for most people, and for all people for most of their lives, matters of faith *per se*. Thus, objectively considered, these naturally knowable truths on God and creatures are distinguished by Aquinas as *praeambula fidei*. Since they are naturally knowable in themselves, when they are proven by an individual, they are no longer articles of faith for that individual. Rather, they are something which he must know within faith because faith itself presupposes their demonstration, just as grace presupposes nature and perfects it. When the prescription for belief in the truths of revelation is thus illuminated by the objective light of the *praeambula fidei*, the pseudo-conflict is resolved. For, Aquinas' texts at this level cannot be seen as urging faith in the truths which are *preamble to faith*. His prescription does call for belief in those truths which are naturally knowable, *but not as they are naturally knowable*. Insofar as they are preambles to faith for the individual who has proven them, they must be integrated within his faith (*quae necesse est in fidei scire, De trin.*,

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q. 2, a. 3, corpus) as elements which are demonstrable and which ground the essential rationality of all that he does believe.

There is yet the deepest level of these texts to be distinguished, i.e., how they do still exert their authority over the philosophically sophisticated individual. That belief is still demanded of the philosophically-minded man is evident. It would seem from the *Symbolum* that belief in the *praeambula fidei* is demanded of him. For, are not the naturally knowable truths about God contained in the *Credo* as articles of faith? Does the believing philosopher not still confess his belief in God's existence at the same time he knows it, in such a case? Aquinas responds to this difficulty with the following distinction:

Deum esse non est articulus fidei, sed praecedens articulum, nisi cum hoc quod Deum esse aliquid aliud cointelligatur utpote quod habet unitatem essentiae cum trinitatem personarum, et alia huiusmodi.<sup>3</sup>

God's existence is not an article of faith unless something above and beyond his existence is understood as well, for example, that he has a unity of essence but a trinity of persons. If not, the existence of God plain and simple is a truth presupposed to the articles of faith. Saint Thomas

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<sup>3</sup> *De ver.*, q. 10, a. 12, ad 5, in cont.

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makes this same distinction in a number of places.<sup>4</sup>

The same object, according to Aquinas, can be known under different formalities. It can be the subject of a number of different but related sciences. An individual can simultaneously grasp one and the same material object but only under different formalities, i.e., in diverse manners: he can know something about an object, and can believe something else about that object. His knowledge of that thing may be part and parcel of his belief, but his faith surpasses his knowledge, thereby increasing his understanding. Thus, the existence of God, as a preamble to faith, may include the proof of his unity. But the existence of God and his unity, as an article of faith, contained in the *Creed*, is known as the ground for something supernatural, e.g., God's tri-unity. In this case, the *aliquid aliud* which is co-understood in faith is the Trinity of divine persons.

Fr. A.R. Motte, in his article entitled *Théodicée et théologie chez S. Thomas d'Aquin*, devotes considerable attention to the nature of this *aliquid aliud* which faith brings

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4 For example, see: *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 4: "Sed ab uno et eodem potest quidem haberi fides et scientia de eodem secundum quid, scilicet subiecto, sed non secundum idem: potest enim esse quod de una et eadem re aliquis aliquid sciat et aliquid aliud opinetur; et similiter de Deo potest aliquis demonstrative scire quod sit unus, et credere quod sit trinus."

*ST*, II-II, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod credere Deum non convenit infidelibus sub ea ratione qua ponitur actus fidei. Non enim credunt Deum esse sub his

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as an added, or different, formality to the naturally knowable truths.<sup>5</sup> While Fr. Motte's emphasis is on the contribution faith makes to the naturally knowable truths, the emphasis of the present research is on the contribution which the preambles of faith make to sacred teaching.

When those texts which prescribe faith in the naturally knowable truths of revelation are considered in light of their being preambles to faith, and when the distinction between the formality of faith and the formality of reason is made, the apparent contradiction is thus seen to be a pseudo-conflict which is resolved in those distinctions.

2. The Role of the *Praeambula fidei*

The discovery of the nature of the *praeambula fidei* resolved any seeming conflict in texts by focusing attention on the fact that the same truths can be considered under different formalities with two different lights, within two

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conditionibus quas fides determinat. Et ideo nec vere Deum credunt: quia... in simplicibus defectus cognitionis est solum in non attingendo totaliter."

*In Heb.*, Ch. XI, Lec. 1: "Et quidem de Thoma dicendum est, quod sicut dicit Gregorius: Aliud vidit, aliud credit, quia vidit humanitatem, et credidit divinitatem."

5 A.R. Motte, O.P., *Théodicée et théologie chez S. Thomas d'Aquin*, in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, Vol. 26, 1937, pp. 5-26.

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distinct sciences. Although the same individual cannot know the same formal truth at the same time he believes it, he can simultaneously both know and believe the same material truth because faith and reason are different formalities. The existence of God as contained in the *Symbolum* and God's existence as a demonstrable truth are formally different. Thus the former can be believed at the same time that the latter is demonstrated by the same man.

As faith and reason are distinct modes of knowing, so philosophy and theology are distinct sciences. But though distinct, they are related. Foremost among speculative sciences is metaphysics, the queen of the philosophical sciences. While there is no essential distinction between metaphysics and natural theology, or theodicy, metaphysics as the science of being as being only attains its stature as queen when it reaches its term as natural theology. One may proceed to define natural theology as though it had a different formal subject from that of metaphysics as such, which is *ens inquantum ens* or *ens commune*. However, it is only a quasi or analogical subject properly speaking, but it facilitates a comparison of this branch of metaphysics with revealed theology. When the distinction between revealed theology and theodicy as distinct sciences is made, the role of the *praeambula fidei* within theology will be made manifest.

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Every science has its own proper subject of inquiry and method of procedure. The subject of a science, for Saint Thomas, includes not just the subject matter but the formal perspective under which that subject matter is studied. There is the *obiectum materiale*, which corresponds to the *genus* or generic nature, the material universe for a number of different sciences. When this material object is envisaged under a particular aspect, or from a certain point of view, it becomes the *obiectum formale quod*, the formal object which, or in the words of Saint Thomas, the formal subject of that science. This formal subject corresponds to the *species*. Thus, about the same material object (*genus*) there can be developed several formal subjects (*species*), each corresponding to a distinct science. The difference between formal subjects is manifested by the *obiectum formale quo*, the formal object by which. The *obiectum formale quo* is the light under which the formal object is made understandable. Upon the light of the formal object *quo* depends the principles and methods of the science.

Saint Thomas himself teaches that the theology of Sacred Scripture differs in kind from theodicy:

Unde theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2.

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Revealed theology has God as its material object. What is its formal subject? Aquinas gives a number of formulations of this formal object *quod*. In article 7, question 1 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas asks whether God is the subject of theology: *Utrum Deus sit subiectum huius scientiae*. He answers yes. Then, he defines the manner in which God is the subject of sacred teaching:

Omnia autem pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei: vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum, ut ad principium et finem.<sup>7</sup>

Everything in theology is considered in terms of God (*sub ratione Dei*), either because they are God himself or because they are related to him as principle and end.

Thus it is said that the formal subject of revealed theology is God as God (*Deus sub ratione Deitatis*). But Aquinas makes a distinction between the primary object and the secondary object. God is the primary object, and the secondary object is creatures in relation to him as their principle and end:

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod sacra doctrina non determinat de Deo et de creaturis ex aequo: sed de Deo principaliter, et de creaturis secundum quod referuntur ad Deum, ut ad principium vel finem.<sup>8</sup>

The light under which this formal subject is known, or the

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<sup>7</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 7, corpus.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, a. 3, ad 1.

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*obiectum formale quo*, is the light of divine revelation.

Theology considers its formal subject, God as God, inasmuch as God knows himself and communicates this self-knowledge to men by divine revelation.<sup>9</sup>

Metaphysics also treats divine things. But Saint Thomas says that metaphysics treats things about God not as the subject of that science but as the principle of the subject. Thus metaphysics treats being as its formal subject, and God, the cause of being, as its principle. However, in the case of theodicy as a particular aspect of metaphysics, God as the the cause of being can be viewed as a quasi-formal subject or *obiectum formale quod*. The light under which this formal subject is known is the light of natural reason.<sup>10</sup>

The distinction between the light of theology, revelation, and the *lumen quo* of philosophy, natural reason, requires a difference in methodology. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, book II, chapter 4, Saint Thomas explicates this difference in methodology:

Exinde etiam est quod non eodem ordine utraque doctrina procedit. Nam in doctrina philosophiae, quae creaturas secundum se considerat et ex eis in Dei cognitionem perducit, prima est consideratio de creaturis et ultima de Deo. In doctrina vero fidei, quae creaturas non nisi in ordine ad Deum considerat,

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<sup>9</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 6, corpus: "...quantum ad id quod notum est sibi soli de seipso, et aliis per revelationem communicatum."

<sup>10</sup> *De trin.*, q. 5, a. 4, corpus.

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primo est consideratio Dei postmodum creaturarum.  
Et sic est perfectior, utpote Dei cognitioni similior,  
qui seipsum cognoscens alia intuetur.<sup>11</sup>

Theology and philosophy follow different orders of investigation. Philosophy considers creatures in themselves, and leads from creatures to God. Thus, creatures are considered first and God last. Faith considers creatures, but only in relation to God. The consideration of God precedes the consideration of creatures. Therefore, the doctrine of faith is more perfect than philosophy because it more closely follows the order of God's own knowledge. God knows himself and, in knowing himself, immediately knows other things.

Saint Thomas has summarized these matters in a very precise passage from the *De Trinitate opusculum*:

Sicut ergo naturalis cognitionis principium est creaturae notitia a sensu accepta, ita cognitionis desuper datae principium est primae veritatis notitia per fidem infusa. Et hinc est quod diverso ordine hinc inde proceditur. Philosophi enim, qui naturalis cognitionis ordinem sequuntur, praeordinant scientiam de creaturis scientiae divinae, scilicet naturalem metaphysicae. Sed apud theologos proceditur e converso, ut creatoris consideratio considerationem praeveniat creaturae.<sup>12</sup>

Our principle of natural knowledge is obtained from creatures by means of the senses. In the same way, our principle of supernatural cognition is the knowledge of the First Truth

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<sup>11</sup> *SCG*, bk. II, ch. 4.

<sup>12</sup> *De trin.*, *Prologus*.

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infused in us by faith. These are diverse principles which call for a diverse order of procedure. The philosopher follows the order of natural knowledge placing the knowledge of creatures before knowledge of divine things, the philosophy of nature before metaphysics. The theologians reverse this procedure so that the consideration of the creator is placed before a consideration of creatures.

The distinction between the material object and the formal subject of a science shows how the same material truth, for example, God's existence and his unity, can be considered simultaneously by philosophy and theology. The existence and unity of God as known by philosophy is the existence of a single first cause and prime mover, etc. of being, known from a study of being. But the existence of God as known by faith is the existence of a personal, intimate, triune God as he knows himself and manifests his existence to man by revelation. As known by philosophy, this material truth is in itself a preamble to the article of faith. These preambles have, nevertheless, been revealed as well. In addition to this naturally knowable truth which has been revealed about God's existence and unity, revelation contains a supernatural truth about the existence of God and the proposition that he is one. In this event, the same material truth takes on an added dimension when seen by faith through revelation. And so, the man who demonstrates the preambles knows one aspect

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and believes another about the same material truth without contradiction.

The fact that revelation contains a double set of truths, one provable by demonstration in philosophy, the other not subject to philosophical proof but known only by an act of faith, establishes an essential relation between philosophy and theology. These naturally knowable philosophical truths about God and creatures, contained in revelation, are the *praeambula fidei*. Not only do the preambles of faith resolve any conflict in the texts and thought of Saint Thomas, but they ground one aspect of the relation which exists between philosophy and theology.

That aspect, given by Saint Thomas in the *De Trinitate* and cited in the opening chapter of this study, is the demonstration by philosophy of these preambles of faith. The role of these preambles is to ground the essential rationality of the objects of faith within reason. As *praeambula*, those naturally knowable truths about God and creatures are presupposed in faith-- not temporally to the act of faith, but ontologically to the articles of faith. In itself, faith suffices for an individual to attain all the truths of revelation: those that are presupposed because they are naturally knowable, those that are properly supernatural, and any which are posterior to the act of faith. Rather, the preambles are those truths which, in themselves, are antecedent

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to the articles of faith in both a logical and an ontological sense. They form the ontological basis for the further determinations (*aliquid aliud*) which faith brings to them.

Thus, the theological edifice can be seen as essentially rational because it is moored in those truths which are subject to philosophical demonstration. Faith requires their prior existence, at least logically, in order to construct a theological superstructure, just as grace needs nature, and the perfectible is presupposed by the perfect.

Thus, the demonstration of these preambles is a point of contact between philosophy and theology. The philosophical demonstration of these truths is properly philosophical and pertains to that compartment of metaphysics known as theodicy or natural theology. But it is no less theological. The thrust of the preambles is to show how an autonomous science of philosophy, faithful to its own subject and principles, can be included in theology without destroying either the proper character of philosophy or theology. This is possible because the distinction between faith and reason is not coextensive with the distinction between theology and philosophy. The preambles are revealed within theology, and as such, they form part of the proper subject for theology. It would be a mistake to interpret Aquinas' notion of theology as though it included as the whole of its subject only those truths which presuppose faith alone in their premises. In

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fact, for Saint Thomas, the distinction between faith and reason is not identical to the distinction between philosophy and theology. Faith and reason are, indeed, two distinct and mutually exclusive types of intellectual assent. Likewise, theology and philosophy are two distinct sciences; they are not, however, mutually exclusive. It is true that philosophy is based on premises which presuppose reason alone, and therefore, excludes revealed theology. Theology is based on revelation; revelation, however, does not presuppose faith alone. It contains a double set of truths: those which surpass the grasp of unaided human reason, and thereby require faith (the articles of faith), and those which are naturally knowable (the preambles of faith). The inclusion of demonstrable truths as a part of the formal subject within theology makes their demonstration by philosophy a proper use of that science within theology, while maintaining the integrity of philosophy as an autonomous science. At the same time, this does not detract from the autonomy of theology, because philosophy as used within theology is used for a theological purpose and according to a theological mode.

It was the integrity of theology as a science while incorporating philosophy that was of primary concern for Saint Thomas the theologian. His use of philosophy to demonstrate the preambles of faith contained in theology is best exemplified in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, wherein he uses

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philosophy for a properly theological end.

3. The *Summa Contra Gentiles*, A Test Case

The philosophical demonstration of the *praeambula fidei* by Saint Thomas within his theological synthesis does not destroy the properly theological character of that synthesis. This fact can be seen from the nature and structure of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. In the prologue and introductory chapters on methodology,<sup>13</sup> Saint Thomas exposes his purpose for writing this work and the plan, or division, which this purpose necessitates:

Modo ergo proposito procedere intendentes, primum nitentur ad manifestationem illius veritatis quam fides profitetur et ratio investigat, inducentes rationes demonstrativas et probabiles, quarum quasdam ex libris philosophorum et Sanctorum collegimus, per quas veritas confirmetur et adversarius vincatur. Diende, ut a manifestioribus ad minus manifesta fiat processus, ad illius veritatis manifestationem procedemus quae rationem excedit, solventes rationes adversariorum, et rationibus probabilibus et auctoritatibus, quantum Deus dederit, veritatem fidei declarantes.<sup>14</sup>

The first purpose of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is to make known those truths which faith professes and reason investigates. Aquinas does this by bringing forward both demonstrative and probable arguments. Some of these arguments were

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<sup>13</sup> See: *SCG*, bk. I, ch. 1-9; bk. II, ch. 1-5; bk. III, ch. 1; bk. IV, ch 1.

<sup>14</sup> *SCG*, bk. I, ch. 9.

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culled from philosophy, others from the writings of the saints. These arguments strengthen truth and overcome error. The second purpose is to manifest those truths which surpass reason in order to answer the objection of the adversaries of the truths of faith. This he does by setting forth that truth by probable arguments and by authority. This plan follows a procedure which develops from the more manifest and proceeds to the less manifest.

Thus the first three books of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* deal with naturally knowable truths which are the preambles to faith. Book one takes God in himself as its subject matter. Book two considers creatures as they proceed from God as their principle. Book three considers the ordering of creatures to God as their end. These truths, however, are considered by way of reason inasmuch as they are naturally known by reason:

Intendentibus igitur nobis per viam rationis  
prosequi ea quae de Deo ratio humana investigare  
potest, primo occurit consideratio de his quae Deo  
secundum seipsum conveniunt; secundo vero, de pro-  
cessu creaturarum ab ipso; tertio autem, de ordine  
creaturarum in ipsum sicut in finem.<sup>15</sup>

Before he states the subject matter of book four, Aquinas, as if to dispel any doubt that the first three books deal with divine truths as naturally knowable, states:

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15 *SCG*, bk. I, ch. 9.

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Nam in praecedentibus de divinis sermo est habitus secundum quod ad cognitionem divinorum naturalis ratio per creaturas pervenire potest: imperfecte tamen, et secundum proprii possibilitatem ingenii.<sup>16</sup>

In the preceding books, divine truths were treated according to the way of natural knowledge by means of creatures. Although this way is imperfect, it is, nevertheless, in keeping with reason's innate ability.

The subject matter of the fourth book is radically different; it deals with divine truths that have been revealed by God which all men must therefore accept in faith because they transcend the grasp of the unaided human intellect.

Quia vero naturalis ratio per creaturas in Dei cognitionem ascendit, fidei vero cognitio a Deo in nos e converso divina revelatione descendit; est autem eadem via ascensus et descensus: oportet eadem via procedere in his quae supra rationem creduntur, qua in superioribus processum est circa ea quae ratione investigantur de Deo: ut primo scilicet ea tractentur quae de ipso Deo supra rationem credenda proponuntur, sicut est confessio Trinitatis; secundo autem, de his quae supra rationem a Deo sunt facta, sicut opus Incarnationis, et quae consequuntur ad ipsam; tertio vero, ea quae supra rationem in ultimo hominum fine expectantur, sicut resurrectio et glorificatio corporum, perpetua beatitudo animarum, et quae his connectuntur.<sup>17</sup>

Natural reason ascends to the knowledge of God through creatures; conversely, the knowledge of faith descends from God to man by revelation. It is fitting to proceed in the same way with things which are above reason and believed, as with

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<sup>16</sup> *SCG*, bk. VI, ch. 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

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those which reason can demonstrate, because the way of ascent and descent are the same. To be specific, truths about God himself which surpass reason, but which are proposed for belief, ought to be treated first: such is the confession of the Trinity. Second ought to be treated those things which God has done which surpass reason: thus, the work of the Incarnation. Third to be treated ought to be those truths which surpass reason and which are looked for in the ultimate end of man: for example, the resurrection and glorification of bodies, the everlasting happiness of souls, and related truths.

This division of books by subject matter is based upon the twofold mode of truths on God as contained in revelation. Aquinas explains this in book one, chapter 3:

Est autem in his quae de Deo confitemur duplex veritatis modus. Quaedam namque vera sunt de Deo quae omnem facultatem humanae rationis excedunt, ut Deum esse trinum et unum. Quaedam vero sunt ad quae etiam ratio naturalis pertingere potest, sicut est Deum esse, Deum esse unum, et alia huiusmodi; quae etiam philosophi demonstrative de Deo probaverunt, ducti naturalis lumine rationis.<sup>18</sup>

Some truths about God are beyond the grasp of reason (the Trinity of God, for example), but there are other truths which reason can attain (for example, God's existence and unity). Such truths about God have been demonstrated by the

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18. *SCG*, bk. I, ch. 3.

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philosophers under the light of natural reason. Now, this structure, based on this twofold mode of truths about God in revelation leaves no doubt that the first three books of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* deal precisely with the *praeambula fidei*. If, despite the philosophical nature of these *praeambula*, the first three books of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* are properly theological, there could be no better test of the theory that philosophy can be incorporated within theology without either science losing its proper integrity.

That these first three books are properly theological is evinced by the methodology Saint Thomas has employed in unfolding them and by the end to which they are ordered. In distinguishing the methodology which is to be followed by philosophy and theology, the preceding section of this chapter considered book two, chapter 4 of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, wherein Saint Thomas makes the distinction explicit. It would be most helpful to reiterate that distinction here: Philosophy, according to Saint Thomas, proceeds from a consideration of creatures to a knowledge of God. Creatures are considered first, God last. Theology reverses this order of investigation, considering God first and creatures subsequently, only as they are ordained to God as their principle and end.

This theological order, proceeding from a knowledge of God as he exists in himself to a knowledge of his creatures

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in their relation to him, is the very order which Saint Thomas establishes for the *Summa Contra Gentiles* in its prologue and introductory chapters. The transition from the first book to the fourth is based not upon a sudden reversal of the the theological order, but rather upon the nature of those truths being investigated. The first three books investigate what faith affirms and what reason can prove; the fourth book deals with what faith affirms and reason cannot prove. The properly theological order can be maintained in the first three books as well as in the fourth because both sets of truths have been revealed. The naturally knowable truths, or preambles, which are treated in the first three books, share in the formal unity of theology precisely because they have been revealed, no less than the properly supernatural truths. These philosophical preambles are an integral part of theology which establishes a unity of a whole in relation to its several parts by means of the revelation of both order of truths.

Theology thus harmonizes its various elements into an organic whole, and, by the end to which it is ordained, maintains its unity. Every conclusion which concerns God in himself, whether or not it is based upon faith, if it is revealed and follows the prescribed theological methodology, is theological. Thus, it is maintained by Aquinas himself that the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is properly theological. The

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preambles of faith, then, may be seen to be properly theological, and their demonstration by natural reason within theology can be made in such a way that the integrity of philosophy is maintained without interfering with the integrity of theology.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Among the fundamental questions which arise from speculative reason's encounter with religious faith is the issue of a possible rapprochement between philosophy and theology. Can philosophy be used within faith to structure a theological enterprise? If so, do philosophy and theology each maintain their autonomy as sciences?

In the theological synthesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas may be found insights and principles which illumine this question, and which enable the formulation of a compelling response to one perennial problem which Christian existence engenders when it confronts philosophical reflection.

Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that no conflict exists between faith and reason, nor between philosophy and theology. Indeed, he affirmed, philosophy may be used within theology, among other functions, to demonstrate the *praeambula fidei*. Couched in terms of an investigation of the relation between the philosophical demonstration of the *praeambula fidei* and theology, the present study has aimed to penetrate one moment of Saint Thomas' thinking on this important matter of the essential harmony between philosophy and theology. After this study of the nature and role of the preambles of faith, the following summary can be made and conclusions can be drawn.

In order to grasp the significance of the role which the preambles play within a scientific theology, structured by

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philosophy within faith, the nature of the *praeambula fidei* had to be determined. In order to establish their nature, two series of texts were studied. These texts accounted for the genesis of the doctrine of the preambles as a necessary distinction which Aquinas was forced to make in order to obviate any conflict in texts and to maintain the essential harmony of philosophy and theology. From the first series of texts, it was learned that faith and reason are mutually exclusive ways of arriving at truth, and that revelation contains two orders of truths about God and creatures, the naturally knowable and the supernaturally knowable. From the second series, it was learned that faith in the truths of revelation are necessary. It was against this scene that the nature of the preambles to faith and their role was played out. Those naturally knowable truths of revelation are not in themselves articles of faith. They are presupposed to the articles of faith; they are antecedent to them, preambles to faith. The prescription for belief in the truths of revelation does not apply to those truths which are distinguished as preambles of faith. Hence, there is no conflict in texts. If faith in some of these *praeambula fidei*, i.e., God's existence, seems to be demanded, inasmuch as they appear to be numbered among the articles of the *Credo*, it is enough to see that Aquinas makes the distinction between the same truth as it is objectified by the formality of faith and the formality

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of reason, to appreciate that no conflict exists. The truths of faith, even when they are materially the same as those of reason, e.g., God's existence, are understood as something above and beyond that which mere reason can know. For example, God's existence as known by faith, is the existence of a personal, intimate God who is triune. If it is faith which brings the further determinations of properly supernatural elements, ones unable to be seen or proven by demonstration, it is reason and the preambles of faith which provide the ground upon which this something more is added. The philosophical demonstration of the *praeambula fidei* establishes the essential rationality of the superstructure of faith. The Trinity of God as a doctrine of faith would be all the more mysterious if God's existence and unity were not demonstrable. If there were no philosophically demonstrable conception of person, how could the concept of three persons in God even begin to make sense?

Aquinas never departed from the theological tradition of his theologian predecessors, expressed so well in the affirmation: *Credo ut intelligam*. His belief was aimed at the understanding of his faith. However, in an effort to understand as much of his faith as possible, he made the fullest use of that essential harmony between the naturally knowable, but revealed, truths on God and creatures and the supernatural ones. All that is provable in revelation ought to be

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proven, he taught. A man must use his reason to think his faith through and to deepen it, whenever he can. The role of philosophy is to use the principles of natural reason, and, by syllogistic demonstration, to prove everything he can about his faith, so that he can understand what he believes.

The status of that philosophy which the philosophical-ly-sophisticated savant-believer uses within faith is the status of an autonomous science. The natural truths of revelation are proportionate to the human intellect, and their demonstration must be made in accordance with natural reason. After all, that is what makes them preambles to faith.

Historically, Aquinas' concern was not so much how to use philosophy in such a way as to respect its autonomy. Rather, it was, how to integrate an autonomous philosophy within theology, without destroying the integrity of that science at which service philosophy was. Aquinas was successful in this integration. The structure and contents of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is an archetypical proof of this. For, the first three books of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* deal with the preambles of faith, but in such a manner that the entire *Contra Gentiles* retains its theological character. It follows a prescribed methodology and end which Aquinas describes as theological and distinguishes from philosophical. This integration of philosophy within theology is possible only because the distinction between theology and philosophy

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is not identical with the distinction between faith and reason. Theology contains as an integral element of its proper subject the *praeambula fidei*. This fact alone is enough to legitimize the use of philosophy within faith. And because these preambles were revealed, when they are investigated in the light of revelation, they are a proper subject for theology which maintains its proper autonomy by following the theological methodology.

Consequently, what is described by Fr. Hans Küng as a dilemma, in light of the preambles of faith, can be shown not to be a dilemma at all. Faith is reasonable because at its core is the philosophical demonstration of the preambles of faith; it remains faith because, along with the preambles, something beyond the grasp of reason is co-understood.

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## ABSTRACT

Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that there is no conflict between faith and reason, that there is a fundamental rapprochement between philosophy and theology, and that philosophy may be used within faith at the service of theology. One moment in this service which philosophy renders to theology, Aquinas affirms, is the juncture at which philosophy is used to demonstrate the *praeambula fidei*.

Understood as a distinction which was necessary to obviate any conflict in texts, the Thomistic *praeambula fidei* are the key to unlock Aquinas' doctrine of the possibility of integrating an autonomous philosophical science within theology, without destroying the integrity or autonomy of that theology in which service philosophy is engaged.

Among the truths of revelation, some about God and creatures surpass the natural intellectual grasp of all men. There are others, truths on God and creatures, which in themselves are naturally knowable, but which have still fittingly been revealed. These latter are the *praeambula fidei*; they are not themselves the articles of faith but precede them. However, since faith is sufficient in itself to teach all men these truths, they cannot be interpreted as preceding faith in any temporal sense, nor as their being a preamble to the act of faith. Rather, they are antecedent to the articles of faith themselves in a logical, or better yet, an ontological sense. Their role is to ground the essential rationality

of the articles of faith in philosophically demonstrable truths. They form the rational core, or philosophical substructure, upon which the properly supernatural determinations of the articles of faith are built.

Since the preambles of faith are themselves revealed, they form part of the proper subject matter for the science of theology. And since, by nature, the *praeambula* are demonstrable by syllogistic reasoning, they legitimize the use of philosophy within faith.

Aquinas himself was able to structure his theological synthesis by grounding it on the philosophical demonstration of the *praeambula fidei*. He was able to accomplish this, and still maintain the autonomy of theology because the *praeambula* have been revealed. As such, they can be treated as an integral part of revealed theology.

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Saint Thomas devotes the first three books to the philosophical demonstration of the *praeambula*. However, he follows a properly theological methodology and demonstrates them for a truly theological end. The *Summa Contra Gentiles* remains theological. As such, it is archetypical. In light of the nature and role of the *praeambula fidei*, the possibility of the incorporation of philosophy within theology, both preserving their autonomous character, can be seen to be fruitful for both philosophy and for theology.

## CORRIGENDA

## CHAPTER I

Page 8, note 17: change "utrumque" to "utraque".

Page 9, line 10: change "underly" to "underlie".

Page 9, note 18, line 4: change "libro arbitro" to "libero arbitrio".

Page 9, note 18, line 5: change "considerationem" to "consideratione".

Page 10, line 16: change "cognitione" to "cognitionem".

Page 10, line 17: change "quia homines" to "quia quidam homines".

Page 13, note 24, line 4: change "manuducantur" to "manuducatur".

Page 18, line 3: change "studiosea" to "studiosae".

Page 18, line 22: change "permixionem" to "permixtionem".

Page 19, note 31, line 3: change "Isaiae 44,4" to "Isaiae 64,4".

Page 21, line 4: change "omnio" to "omnino".

Page 25, note 39, line 1: change "priman" to "primam".

Page 26, line 13: change "principle" to "principal".

Page 28, line 10: change "idoneum" to "ideoneum".

Page 30, line 29: change "dervied" to "derived".

Page 31, line 18: change "clairfy" to "clarify".

Page 31, note 48, line 4: change "possible" to "possibile".

Page 31, note 48, line 6: change "impossible" to "impossibile".

Page 32, line 18: change "divinitate" to "divinitatem".

Page 35, line 9: change "demonstation" to "demonstration".

## CHAPTER II

Page 40, line 9: change "explicitated" to "explicated".

Page 43, line 7: change "commentators of Aquinas and their explanation" to "commentators on Aquinas and their explanations."

## CORRIGENDA

Page 43, note 4, line 7: change "complectimus" to "complectimur".

Page 45, line 16: change "preambles of faith" to "preambles to faith".

Page 48, line 5: change "with certitude" to "with natural certitude".

Page 49, note 9, line 2: change "préambles" to "préambules".

Page 53, chart: change "BELIEVEING" to "BELIEVING".

Page 59, chart, number 1c., line 6: change "et perfectio perfectibile" to "et ut perfectio perfectibile".

Page 59, chart, number 1d., line 3: change "rationem caritatis" to "rationem fidei" and add immediately: "quia faciunt esse apparens id quod proponitur; non tamen diminuunt rationem caritatis,".

Page 61, line 7: change "accusitive" to "accusative".

Page 65, note 17, line 2: change "questionem" to "quaestionem".

Page 68, note 21, line 2: change "impossible" to "impossibile".

Page 71, note 26, line 1: change "Propterera" to "Praeterea".

Page 71, note 26, line 7: change "ducimus" to "ducimur".

Page 72, line 3: change "impell" to "impel".

Page 73, line 16: change "et perfectio perfectibile" to "et ut perfectio perfectibile".

Page 77, note 38, line 3: change "intelligiblem" to "intelligibilem".

Page 79, line 14: change "inconvenience" to "inconvenience".

Page 83, line 15: change "If fact" to "In fact".

Page 84, line 22: change "exhaults" to "exalts".

## CHAPTER III

Page 87, line 22: change "between philosophy and" to "between theology and".

## CORRIGENDA

Page 89, line 16: change "which precede articles" to "which precede five such articles".

Page 90, line 2: change "the prohibition against" to "the impossibility of".

Page 91, lines 11-12: change "by another, and not have this affirmation raise any difficulty or cause any confrontation." to "by another; thus this affirmation raises no difficulty nor causes any confrontation."

Page 93, note 2, line 3: change "croir" to "croire".

Page 94, line 25: change "*in fidei scire*" to "*in fide scire*".

Page 97, note 4, line 5: change "aluid credit" to "aliud credit".

Page 103, line 5: change "theologians reverse" to "theologian reverses".

Page 107, line 17: change "Diende" to "Deinde".

Page 109, line 8: change "with reason's innate ability" to "with an individual's innate ability".

Page 109, line 24: change "hominium" to "hominum".

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Page 115, line 13: change "are necessary" to "is necessary".

Page 117, line 16: change "at which service" to "at whose service".

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Page 119, line 8: change "praedictorum" to "praedicatorum".

Page 121, line 1: change "*Resaon*" to "*Reason*".

## ABSTRACT

First page, line 9: change "conflict is texts" to "conflict in texts".