

THE PLACE OF THE PROOF FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE IN THE *SUMMA  
THEOLOGIAE* OF THOMAS AQUINAS

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THE PRESENT ARCHBISHOP of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Robert Runcie, in an interview at the time of his election, said: "Someone once preached a sermon in which he tackled the question 'How do you know there is a God?' In essence his answer was, as it was certainly the answer for me: we know there is a God because we've been told--that is the traditional element in religion ... a distilling of people's experience which has been passed on" (*The Observer*, Sunday 20 January, 1980, section 3, p. 33).

Thomas Aquinas, writing between 1266 and 1268,<sup>1</sup> in the initial questions of his *Summa Theologiae*, asks whether God exists. He raises two objections to God's existence; first, the presence of evil in the world, and second, that nature, together with human will and reason, is sufficient to explain what we experience, but then, on the other side, he cites God himself. "But, on the contrary, there is what is said in Exodus 3 by the person of God 'I am who I am' ".<sup>2</sup> Thus, if we pass over the not unimportant difference that Robert Runcie speaks of a tradition distilling "people's experience", while Aquinas starts from what God in his own person says, both begin treating God's existence from what we have been told. Faith seeks understanding but certainly need not commence with philosophical

<sup>1</sup>J. A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works* (Oxford, 1975), p. 361.

<sup>2</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, ed. altera emendata, ed. Commissio Piana (Ottawa, 1953), 1,2,3; hereafter abbreviated *ST*. For the *Summa contra Gentiles* I have used the the Leonine *Opera Omnia* Vol. XIII-XV (Romae, 1918-1930) abbreviated *ScG*. For the theological significance of Thomas's beginning with Exodus 3.14 see E. zum Brunn, "La ' métaphysique de l'Exode ' selon Thomas d'Aquin ", *Dieu et l'Être: Exégèses d'Exode 3,14 et de Coran 20,11-24*, ed. Centre d'Études des religions du livre, CNES, Études augustinienes (Paris, 1978), pp. 245-269, esp. p. 267.

reason.<sup>3</sup> So Aquinas teaches that theology or sacred doctrine is a knowledge which begins from principles made evident to a higher form of cognition, namely, that possessed by God and the blessed.<sup>4</sup>

The knowledge from which theology starts is God's own simple knowledge of himself, and all else in himself,<sup>5</sup> communicated to the Prophets and Apostles who wrote the canonical books,<sup>6</sup> handed on to us through that Scripture, and summed up in the articles of the faith.<sup>7</sup> It is because sacred theology begins with God's own self-revelation grasped by faith that it has a shape and order distinct from natural theology, the theology which is a part of philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

Sacred doctrine is able to start with God. After considering God in himself, it shows how creatures come out from him and how he then brings them back into union with himself.<sup>9</sup> Philosophical reason starts rather with creatures and climbs by a long and difficult ladder to knowledge of God.<sup>10</sup> The order of sacred doctrine determines the order of matters in the tripartite structure of the *Summa Theologiae*. It begins with God and treats him and his creative work in the First Part. The

<sup>3</sup> ST I,1,8 ad 2; I,2,2 ad 1. Theology begins with the unity of God, not because this is comprehensible, see *In librum Beati Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus Expositio*, ed. C. Pera (Taurini-Romae, 1950), *proemium* and II,ii,143, but because the one is by nature principle (*ibid.*, II,ii,135 and 148; XIII,ii,981) and my article "The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius and the Structure of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Boeziani*, Pavia, 5-8 ottobre, 1980, ed. L. Obertello (Romae, 1981), pp. 367-375.

<sup>4</sup> ST I,1,2.

<sup>5</sup> *In de div. nom.*, I,1,13; ST I,1,2 ad 2, ST I,1,4.

<sup>6</sup> ST I,1,8 ad 2; ST I,12,11 ad 2. Vision of God "in sua essentia" is the ground of this revelation and is given to Moses and Paul ST II-II,175,3 ad 1.

<sup>7</sup> ST I,1,8.

<sup>8</sup> ScG II,4; IV,1; *Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, ed. nova, R. P. Mandonnet et M. P. Moos, 4 vol. (Paris, 1929-1947), I, *prol.*, p. 2ff and *epilog.*, p. 1082; *Expositio super librum Boethii de Trinitate*, ed. B. Decker, *Studien und Texte sur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 4 (Leiden, 1959), *prol.*, p. 46, 4-8; V, 4, p. 194, 29-30.

<sup>9</sup> ST I,2, *prol.*

<sup>10</sup> ST I,1,1; ScG I,4; VI,1, *Super de Trin.*, *prol.*; *Compendium Theologiae, Opera Omnia* (Leonine), XLII (Romae, 1979), I,1.

movement in this part is from God's simplicity towards otherness and diversity. There is first God's unity, treated initially as substance, and then, as operations.<sup>11</sup> The consideration of the divine substance begins in simplicity and ends in unity,<sup>12</sup> but the self-conscious relation of knowledge dominates the operations. The real relation of God to himself in three persons comes next,<sup>13</sup> and then the work of his power in creation. Creation is treated in three sections. First, by privilege of the likeness of their knowledge and spiritual existence to God's, come the angels; then, there is the material creation, and finally, because he unites spiritual and material in himself, there is man.<sup>14</sup> Man concludes God's creative work just as he also concludes the last section of this part, the section on God's governance of the world, which has a similar tripartite structure.<sup>15</sup>

The Second Part is the biggest of the three. It considers man, the image of God. Man drew together and completed God's work of creation and governance in the First Part; now, man's work is considered. Thomas says in the Prologue what he means by treating man as the image of God: "that is to say, man as the source of his own works because he is free and has power over his own deeds."<sup>16</sup> This part is organized around the virtues and vices and begins, as one would expect from the Prologue, with man acting for the sake of an end. Freedom consists in man's capacity to shape his actions in accord with what he regards as his perfect fulfillment or happiness.<sup>17</sup>

Man's freedom cannot, however, complete the *Summa Theologiae*. The first article of the first question of the First Part said that sacred doctrine is required just because the ultimate end of man is God, the comprehension of whom exceeds human reason. Consequently the *Summa* requires a Third Part beyond

<sup>11</sup> *ST* I,2, *prol.* and I,14, *prol.*

<sup>12</sup> Q.Q. 3 and 11.

<sup>13</sup> *ST* I,27, *prol.* and I,2, *prol.*

<sup>14</sup> *ST* I,50, *prol.* and I,75 *prol.*

<sup>15</sup> *ST* I,106, *prol.*

<sup>16</sup> *ST* I-II, *prol.*

<sup>17</sup>This is the sum of the first question: " *de ultimo fine hominis* ".

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that treating man's freedom, power and works. This concerns Christ, who, uniting God and man, is our way of actually arriving at God our end. The Third Part thus considers Christ, his sacraments through which we are united to him and attain salvation, and the eternal life at which we arrive through Christ by resurrection.<sup>18</sup>

This is the course then which theology runs, a course determined by its origin in God's revelation of himself from beyond the comprehension of human reason and seeking a union past his natural rational capacity. Thomas refined and clarified this theological structure in important ways but fundamentally its logic derived from the later Neoplatonists and had been set out in systematic form in the Christian West as early as the ninth century by John Scotus Eriugena.<sup>19</sup> The rough use of the pattern by the twelfth century theologian Peter Lombard in his *Sentences*, the theological text book of the High Middle Ages, assured its influence into modern times. Thomas was content with this basic structure combining the step by step derivation of multiplicity from the divine unity and the gathering in and return of this to God again. Indeed his alterations of the system as he received it often have the effect of making this Neoplatonic structure more clearly and completely present.<sup>20</sup> But then, the need for a proof of God's existence becomes a problem.

<sup>18</sup> *ST* I,2, *prol.* and III, *prol.*

<sup>19</sup> In his *De divisione naturae* (PL 122,441-1022). There is a critical edition of the first two books, Iohannis Scotti Eriugena, *Periphyseon, de divisione naturae*, ed. I. P. Sheldon-Williams with the collaboration of L. Bieler, *Script. lat. Hiberniae* 7,9,2 vol. (Dublin, 1968-72).

<sup>20</sup> Among the most important changes made by Thomas are the removing of what he calls the divine operations from their place in Lombard, after the Trinity and before creation, to their place in the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Compendium Theologiae*, between the substance and the persons of God, and the collecting and centering of the moral aspect of theology around man. On the former see my article, " The Place of the Psychological Image of the Trinity in the Arguments of Augustine's *de Trinitate*, Anselm's *Monologion* and Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* ", *Dionysius* 3 (1979), 99-110. On the relation between the structure of the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Sentences* and especially on the influence of Dionysius involved, see my " Aquinas's First Principle: Being or Unity? ", *Dionysius* 4 (1980), p. 155 and n. 111.

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If we begin from what we have been told about God and from his inner unity, why does theology need, and how can it have a proof which rises to God from sensible effects? How can it have a philosophical demonstration of God's existence?

It is at this point that a radical difference appears between our contemporary Archbishop and St. Thomas. Doctor Runcie's approach to theology occurs in the context of his discovery that metaphysical reason cannot convince us of religious truths. Reading philosophy at Oxford after the last World War, during the "heyday of logical positivism", he "was much influenced by the anti-metaphysical bent". (*The Observer, loc. cit.*) Thus, theology must presumably run its course without the help of philosophical reason. For Thomas, on the contrary, this would mistake theology's strength and weakness. On the one hand, it would violate theology's sovereignty which uses what is subordinate to it. On the other it would ignore the necessities of human theological thinking. For, although its beginning is established through God's revelation to faith, yet, because of the weakness of human reason, theology cannot proceed one step on its immense course without assistance from philosophical reason.<sup>21</sup> St. Thomas says:

Among the inquiries that we must undertake concerning God in himself, we must set down in the beginning that whereby his existence is demonstrated, as the necessary foundation for the whole work. For if we do not demonstrate that God exists, all consideration of divine things is necessarily destroyed.<sup>22</sup>

The demonstration of God's existence is the necessary foundation of the whole of theology. This is a surprising statement given the descending logic of theological system for Aquinas. What can it mean? Minimally the proof provides evidence that the subject of theological science exists in contradistinction to knowledge of the nature of its subject. The words of Thomas have been taken in this sense and not without some foundation; for, following Boethius, he does distinguish sharply between the knowledge that a thing exists and the knowledge

<sup>21</sup> *ST I,1,5 ad 2.*

<sup>22</sup> *ScG I,9.*

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of what it is and says that we know properly only that God is.<sup>23</sup> Our human faculties are suited only for the direct knowledge of sensible individuals and even these we know from the outside, through their sensible accidents, and imperfectly, despite their mode of being corresponding to ours.<sup>24</sup> In them and in us, there is a division between the sensible and the intellectual aspects of existence. Yet this agnosticism about the nature of things cannot be pushed too far. Our knowledge from sense means that we have no direct knowledge, vision, of the intellectual but it does not mean that we have no knowledge at all and this applies also to God. For the very simplicity of God, the fact that in him existence, that he is, and essence, what he is, are identical, means that our proof must yield knowledge of his nature.<sup>25</sup> It is then primarily for the sake of making God's revelation thinkable, of making it a science, of allowing a consideration of divine things, that the proof is required.<sup>26</sup> When

<sup>23</sup> *ST I,12,12 obj. 1 and ad 1.* For Boethius as a medium of Neoplatonic thought for Thomas see my "Aquinas's First Principle", pp. 142, 143 and 152 n. 96. P. Faucon, *Aspects néoplatoniciens de la doctrine de Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Lille/Paris, 1975), p. 431 concludes:

*la tradition néoplatonicienne illustrée notamment par Boèce fournit à saint Thomas le couple du Quod est et l'esse sur lequel va s'ériger au xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle la distinction réelle de l'essence et de l'être.*

<sup>24</sup> There is much of this agnosticism in Thomas even in respect to our knowledge of the physical world. For a general treatment of it and why it has been played down by contemporary Thomists see J. Pieper, "The Negative Element in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas", Chapter II in his *The Silence of St. Thomas: Three Essays*, trans. D. O'Connor (London, 1957). For a list of texts confer A. Maurer trans. *The Division and Methods of the Sciences: Questions V and VI of (Aquinas's) Commentary on the de Trinitate* (Toronto, 1963), p. xxxv, n. 50 to which one might add as typical ScG IV,1.

<sup>25</sup> *ST I,2,2, ad 2.* M. Grabmann, *Thomas von Aquin* (München, 1912), p. 88 speaks of the proof as a "Brücke". E. zum Brunn's exposure of the inadequacies of E. Gilson's existentialist representation of Thomas has also the effect of bringing together the knowledge of God's existence and essence in Thomas (*op. cit.*, esp. pp. 261 ff.).

<sup>26</sup> One way of putting this is to say that by the ways, God is named. F. van Steenberghen has brought this out in his numerous writings on the proof: e.g. *Dieu caché: Comment savons-nous que Dieu existe?* Essais philosophiques 8 (Louvain/Paris, 1961). Two studies in English also elucidate this well: "So St. Thomas . . . speaks of the proof that 'God is' as among the praeambula which are necessary to the *scientia fidei*--i.e. *knowledge* of the faith, not faith itself". . . . There is no contradiction at all in saying that our means of proof are effects and the *quid significet nomen* of God, for they are one and the same." Victor White, *God, the Unknown* (London, 1956), pp. 52 and

60. " There is no separate theological question about God's existence: the question about God's existence is only raised at all in connection with the study of what God is." Edward Sillem, *Ways of Thinking about God* (London, 1961), p. 43; Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are all relevant.

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the five ways in the proof are taken together, they can be immediately seen to produce a considerable knowledge of God. He is the unmoved source of motion, existence, goodness, and perfection of all else, which is ordered into unity, because the God who does all this knows.<sup>27</sup>

The proof of God's existence in the *Summa* is primarily a summary of the ways, corresponding to Aristotle's four causes, by which thought moves from the world of sensible creatures to God.<sup>28</sup> So the movement of knowledge coming down from God's self-disclosure mediated to us through Scripture must meet the movement of thought rising from the scientific understanding of natural phenomena and reaching up towards God.<sup>29</sup>

Theology as sacred doctrine begins in the meeting of these two: For our deficient understanding is more easily guided into those things which pass reason and are treated by divine science by passing through the world known by natural reason from which the other sciences proceed.<sup>30</sup>

In commencing with God, sacred doctrine progresses in the same order as God's own self-knowledge.<sup>31</sup> As sacred theology

<sup>27</sup>We arrive at " *aliquod primum movens, . . . aliquam causam efficientem primam, . . . aliquid quod sit per se necessarium . . . causa necessitatis aliis, . . . causa esse et bonitatis et cuiuslibet perfectionis, . . . aliquid intelligens*", ST I,2,8.

<sup>28</sup>On the relation of the ways and the causes see A. Kenny, *The Five Ways: St. Thomas Aquinas's Proof of God's Existence* (London, 1969), p. 36; H. J. Johnson, " Why Five Ways? A Thesis and Some Alternatives ", *Arts libéraux et philosophie au moyen âge*, Actes du quatrième Congrès international de philosophie médiévale, Montréal, 1967 (Montréal/Paris, 1969), pp. 1143-1154; Sillem, *op. cit.*, Chapter 5.

<sup>29</sup>*Super de Trinitate* V,4 makes clear that philosophical theology arrives at the separate substances from whose self-revelation sacred doctrine sets out. The essential connection is shown in the ordering of the parts of the last book of the *Summa contra Gentiles* relative to the first three books because " *est autem eadem via ascensus et descensus* " (IV,1) .

<sup>30</sup> ST I,1,5 ad 2.

<sup>31</sup> ScG II,4; ST I,1,7; ST I,2, prol; *In de div. nom.*, VII,iv,729; for secondary materials see my article in *Dionysius* 3 (1979), p. 100, n. 3.

begins with God and knows all else coming from him and returning to him, so God knows all things in knowing himself, though, unlike our theology, his is a direct and immediate seeing of everything in his own being. But this does not mean that the laborious climb to philosophical or natural theology is solely a human work. Thomas agrees with Aristotle that we can have knowledge of God only because God is not jealous; rather he wishes us to share in his own knowledge.<sup>32</sup> Both theologies, theology as philosophy and theology as sacred doctrine, are "divinely given modes of sharing in the one divine science".<sup>33</sup> In this sharing, philosophical knowledge is subordinate to the knowledge based on Scripture, as nature is subordinate to grace but always, indeed eternally, presupposed by it, and present with it.<sup>34</sup> We have come some way in understanding what the proof does, but do we understand sufficiently its necessity?

<sup>32</sup> Commenting on *Metaphysica* I,2,983a,5-10, Thomas writes: "*Solus (Deus) quidem habet (hanc scientiam) secundum perfectam comprehensionem. Maxime vero habet, in quantum suo modo etiam ab hominibus habetur licet ab eis non ut possessio habetur sed sicut aliquid ab eo mutuatum.*" *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristoteles Expositio*, ed. M. R. Cathala et R. M. Spiazzi (Turin/Rome, 1964), I,3,64. Confer R. D. Crouse, "*Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae*, some texts from Aristotle's *Metaphysica* in the interpretation of Albertus Magnus", *Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Filosofia Medieval*, 2 vol., i (Madrid, 1979), pp. 657-661; *idem.*, "*St. Thomas, St. Albert, Aristotle: Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae*", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, 8 vol. (Napoli, 1975), i, pp. 181-185. The basis of the argument is that God alone possesses the proper knowledge of himself, consequently all true knowledge of him comes from his willingness to share it. This can also be given a more evidently Neoplatonic form as in Dionysius. In his comment on the *Divine Names* Thomas states: "*Ei (Deo) enim soli competit de se cognoscere quod quid est.*" I,32. "*Esset enim contra rationem bonitatis divinae, si cognitionem suam sibi retineret quod nulli alteri penitus communicaret, cum, de ratione boni sit quod se aliis communicet.*" I,36. God communicates in different forms but all are revelation: "*studium philosophiae secundum se est licitum et laudabile, propter veritatem quam philosophi perceperunt, Deo illis revelante, ut dicitur. Ad Rom. I,19*" ST II-II, 167, ad 3. Cf. J. H. Walgrave, "The Use of Philosophy in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas", *Aquinas and the Problems of His Time*, *Mediaevalia Lovaniensis* 5 (Leuven/The Hague, 1976), pp. 161-193.

<sup>33</sup>R. D. Crouse, "St. Thomas, St. Albert, Aristotle", p. 183.

To get hold of the place of this climb from nature to God in Thomas's theology and indeed partially the place of nature, human freedom, power and work in his system, it is necessary to digress a little into the historical background of its inclusion in his system. If the proof is dependent upon Aristotle's enumeration of the causes and is in theology only because of an Aristotelian conception of science which allows God both to be the subject of the investigation and to be established as an object in its course,<sup>35</sup> it follows that it is possible for Thomas to use the ways only because of the third wave, which occurred in his time, of the gradual rediscovery of Aristotle.<sup>36</sup> The third wave was the transmission to the medieval west of the sciences of Aristotle: physics, metaphysics or theology, psychology, politics, ethics as opposed to the earlier waves of logical works. This is not, however, a sufficient explanation. Just because means are present we are not thereby actually enabled or compelled to use them. Theology is not a salad into which anything edible can be thrown. Because it is the most fundamental science endeavoring to draw reality together under one principle, the knowledge of how its elements are united is essential to it. With what kind of theological structure will Thomas's proof cohere?

<sup>35</sup> On this much disputed question Thomas is clear in the *proemium* of his *In Metaphysicorum*; for Thomas see the articles of R. D. Crouse referred to in n. 32 above and L. Ducharme "L'idée de la métaphysique dans les écrits du premier enseignement parisien de Saint Thomas d'Aquin", *Colloque commémoratif Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Église et théologie* 5, No. 2 (1974), 155-169 together with the *commentaire* by C. Stroick in the same volume. On Aristotle J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto, 1951), pp. 152ff. should be taken with the critique by J. D. Beach, "Separate Entity as the Subject of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*", *The Thomist*, 20 (1957), 75-95. Avicenna and Averroes take opposite positions which break up the unity of ontology and theology in both Aristotle and Aquinas; see the first two sections of Chapter One of Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia Prima sive Scientia Divina*, I-IV, ed. crit. par S. van Riet (Louvain/Leiden, 1977), esp. pp. 4-16 and Averroes *Commentaria in I Physicorum*, in *Aristotelis, Opera*, IV (Venetiis apud Juntas, 1574), 47rF8-47vH and E. Gilson's remarks and further references in *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955), n. 21, p. 644.

<sup>36</sup> M. J. Congar "Théologie", *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* XV (1), (Paris, 1946), p. 359.

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Prior to St. Thomas, Christian theology had often thought that it was unnecessary, inappropriate or impossible to prove God's existence, or if it was in fact necessary or useful that a much more direct method than that employed by him was preferable. In the tradition of the Greek theologian pseudo-Dionysius, represented in the west most strongly by John Scotus Eriugena, and known to Thomas both directly, through the translations of Eriugena and others, and indirectly, through John of Damascus and Maximus the Confessor, God is known first of all as non-being.<sup>37</sup> Because all determinate and finite beings come out of his fathomless depths and presuppose them as their horizon, it does not seem necessary, appropriate or possible to prove his existence.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, a proof seems appropriate in an Augustinian perspective where God is thought of more positively as being, but for the Augustinian spirituality the most natural motion to him is inward.<sup>39</sup> Within

<sup>37</sup> This tradition has its origins in the interpretation of Plotinus by Iamblichus and his followers Syrianus and Proclus, who is its greatest exponent and diffuser, in opposition to that of Porphyry, who identified being and the One. These two contrary influences and their meeting in Thomas are treated in my article "Aquinas's First Principle: Being or Unity?", pp. 139 ff. The opposing theological tendencies condition each other; for example Thomas interprets "*Sed Deus non est existens, sed 'supra existentia' ut dicit Dionysius. Ergo non est intelligibilis, sed est supra omnem intellectum*" ST I,12,1 obj. 3 as follows: "*Deus non sic dicitur non existens quasi nullo modo sit existens, sed quia est supra omne existens, in quantum est suum esse*" and thus he is known but not comprehended ST I,12,1 ad 3. On Thomas's alteration of Dionysius in his reading of him cf. J. D. Jones "The Ontological Difference for St. Thomas and Pseudo-Dionysius", *Dionysius* 4 (1980), pp. 119-132.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas holds to be correct John Damascene's statement that God's name is "*Qui est*" because "*totum . . . in se ipso comprehendens habet ipsum esse velut quoddam pelagus substantiae infinitum et indeterminatum*"; because the less determinate a name and the more common and simple it is, the more appropriately it names God (ST I,13,11). He places Damascene's notion that the "*cognitio existendi Deum naturaliter est inserta*" at the top of the objections showing that no proof for God's existence is necessary; for, it is "*per se notum*" ST I,2,1.

<sup>39</sup> Augustine stands within Porphyry's tradition of Neoplatonism. Its movement through Victorinus, Augustine, Boethius, Avicenna and others to Aquinas has been shown by historians of Neoplatonism; the relevant materials are indicated in my article in *Dionysius* 4. The inward movement of Augustine's Plotinian spirituality is treated in my "The Place of the Psychological Image of the Trinity" and in his chapter on Augustine in A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford, 1981). M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, ed. and trans. J. Taylor and L. K. Little (Chicago and London, 1968) tells us that in contrast to pseudo-Dionysius, Augustine found God "in the intimate depths of his own mind" (p. 63); his orientation was "toward an interior life that took external objects as mere occasions for its enrichment" (p. 64). To Augustine's use of "' signs ' corresponded a mysticism of the interior life" (p. 125) as opposed to Dionysius's symbolic theology.

that perspective, Anselm begins by urging us to turn within ourselves toward God.<sup>40</sup> There our thinking must make contact with the only and divine truth by which all truth is known and touches God.<sup>41</sup> Anselm's ontological argument has such a beginning in coming immediately upon an idea of God which directly leads us to the knowledge of the existence corresponding to this idea.

For Thomas neither of these approaches was satisfactory.<sup>42</sup> A proof was necessary and possible just because the sensible stands between us and God. Because our minds are not immediately with God, proof is necessary, and because the sensible provides the mediation, it is possible.<sup>43</sup> Without this middle, there is no proof and Thomas does not call Anselm's argument a proof.<sup>44</sup> For him the fact that the fool can say in his heart there is no God compels a proof,<sup>45</sup> and that St. Paul tells us that the invisible things of God are known through created things enables a proof from sensible effects.<sup>46</sup> Thomas's understanding and use of this famous text from the Epistle to the

<sup>40</sup> Anselmi, *Proslogion, Opera Omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, 6 vol. (Edinburgh, 1946-1961), i,1, p.97,4-8.

<sup>41</sup> Augustine, *De Magistro*, XI,38 (PL 32,1216). For a grouping of similar texts and an example of the Augustinian spirituality in which they were understood see Bonaventurae, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi, Opera Omnia*, 10 vol., v (Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi, 1891), q. V, pp. 17 ff.

<sup>42</sup> They are rejected in question 2, articles 1 and 2: "*utrum Deum esse sit per se notum*" and "*utrum Deum esse sit demonstrabile*".

<sup>43</sup> "*Sed quia nos non scimus de Deo quid est, non est nobis per se nota, sed indiget demonstrari per ea quae sunt magis nota quoad nos et minus nota quoad naturam, scilicet per effectus*" ST I,2,1 and "*Deum esse . . . demonstrabile est per effectus nobis notas*" ST I,2,2.

<sup>44</sup> It is treated under "*utrum Deum esse sit per se notum*", ST I,2,1.

<sup>45</sup> This text is in the *sed contra* of question 2, article 1.

<sup>46</sup> This text is in the *sed contra* of question 2, article 2.

Romans to justify the use of Aristotelian arguments from what is evident to sense indicates his turning from the Augustinian perspective.<sup>47</sup> What is the standpoint from which such an enterprise takes place?

To understand this as a theological perspective we need to turn again to the intellectual principles of the tradition of pseudo-Dionysius. Dionysius appears to have been an eastern contemporary of Boethius, the great sixth century Roman theologian, poet, statesman and martyr. These two Christians were influenced by the late Neoplatonic thought best formulated by Proclus.<sup>48</sup> In the Middle Ages, Dionysius especially had great theological authority as he was thought to be the Athenian disciple of St. Paul.<sup>49</sup> On a number of important points Proclan Neoplatonism differed from that of Plotinus. On some of these the other great medieval theological authority, Augustine, who predates Proclus's flourishing, follows Plotinus. The influence of Augustine on St. Thomas is strong; his first system of theology was a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, whose text book was very largely excerpted from the works of Augustine. But our first autograph from St. Thomas is his notes of Albert the Great's lectures on the *Divine*

<sup>47</sup> " Ce qui l'oppose aux partisans de la preuve ontologique, telle que l'a exposée saint Anselme, et en fin de compte à Augustine lui même, c'est l'epistémologie qu'il choisit pour approfondir la signification du qui est. On le voit clairement dans l'interprétation non traditionnelle que dès le Commentaire (sur les *Sentences*) saint Thomas donne au fameux verset de Romains 1,20, complémentaire d'Exode 3,14, qui pour les Pères grecs et latins signifiait le retour ou la remontée du monde sensible au monde intelligible. Pour Thomas cette remontée a un tout autre sens: il insiste sur l'impossibilité d'arriver à la connaissance naturelle de Dieu autrement qu'en raisonnant à partir de l'expérience sensible." E. zum Brunn, " La ' métaphysique d'Exode ' ", p. 253.

<sup>48</sup> On this relation see my " The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius " and my articles in *Dionysius* 3 and 4 and among the most recent literature H. D. Saffrey, " Nouveaux liens objectifs entre le pseudo-Deny et Proclus ", *Rev. sc. ph. et th.* 63 (1979), 3-16; H. Chadwick, " The Authenticity of Boethius's Fourth Tractate ", *The Jour. of Theo. Studies* 31 (1980), 551-556; R. D. Crouse, " *Semina Rationum*, St. Augustine and Boethius ", *Dionysius* 4 (1980), 75-86, and the treatment of Dionysius in A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*.

<sup>49</sup> " Dans toute son oeuvre . . . il (Thomas) reconnaît l'auteur des Noms Divins pour l'Aréopagite " J. Durantel, *Saint Thomas et Pseudo-Denis* (Paris, 1919), p. 30.

*Names of pseudo-Dionysius*.<sup>50</sup> St. Thomas commented on this work, two treatises of Boethius, and the *Liber de Causis*. The last was an Arabic work mainly derived from Proclus's *Elements of Theology* together with a commentary, at crucial points representing the same philosophical-theological position as Dionysius; for most of his life Thomas attributed the whole work to Aristotle.<sup>51</sup> The movement of St. Thomas's thought is indicated by the fact that this is his last and most personally revealing commentary. In it he only tells us a good deal about his own thought, as well as explaining the text of the *Liber de Causis*, but he also reveals that he has read the *Elements of Theology* itself, to which he continues to refer in his *De Substantiis Separatis* dating from the same period.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Thomas is not likely to have felt the differences between these two Platonisms as much as we do. Boethius credited his trinitarian thought to Augustine when in fact he ordered it within a Proclan schema.<sup>53</sup> Even when medieval thinkers saw the difference, there was a tendency to reconcile or blend the opposed views, as in Eriugena's conflation of Augustine and Dionysius.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> See P. Simon in his *Prolegomena to Alberti Magni, Super Dionysius de Divinis Nominibus*, ed. P. Simon, *Opera Omnia* 37(1), (Coloniae, 1972), p. viii and my "Aquinas's First Principle", 146, n. 67.

<sup>51</sup> The first indication of Thomas's knowledge of the Proclan basis of the *Liber de Causis* is found in his commentary, *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, ed. H. D. Saffrey, *Textus Philosophici Friburgenses* 4/5, (Fribourg/Louvain, 1954), *proemium*, p. 3, 5-8, which cannot predate 1268. On the common doctrine of Dionysius and the author of the *Liber* see H. D. Saffrey's introduction to his edition of Thomas's exposition, his "L'état actuel des recherches sur le *Liber de Causis*", *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter, Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, ed. P. Wilpert, ii (Berlin, 1963), pp. 267-281; L. Sweeney, "Doctrine of Creation in *Liber de Causis*", *An Etienne Gilson Tribute*, ed. C. J. O'Neil, (Milwaukee, 1959), pp. 274-289; and A. Pattin, "Le *Liber de Causis*: édition établie à l'aide de 90 manuscrits avec introduction et notes", *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 28 (1966), 90-203, esp. 93-94.

<sup>52</sup> "En effet, le chapitre 20 cite deux propositions de Proclus, les propositions 169 and 196 " *De Substantiis Separatis*, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine) XL (Pars D-E), (Romae, 1968), p. D6.

<sup>53</sup> See my "The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius", pp. 368ff. and R. D. Crouse, " *Semina Rationum*: St. Augustine and Boethius", *passim*.

<sup>54</sup> There is now a large literature on this subject to which one of the latest contributions is B. Stock "In Search of Eriugena's Augustine" a paper for the Third International Eriugena Colloquium, 1979, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg i. Br. For further items confer notes 14, 15 and 16 in R. D. Crouse " *Intentio Moysi*: Bede, Augustine, Eriugena and Plato in the *Hexaemeron* of Honorius Augustodunensis", *Dionysius* 2 (1978), 135-157. Dr. Crouse concludes that Eriugena's system is "By no means a rejection, or a tendentious misinterpretation of Augustine (but) a modification by selection and emphasis" (144). This accords with J. J. O'Meara "Eriugena's Use of Augustine in his Teaching on the Return of the Soul and the Vision of God", *Jean Scot Erigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Laon, 1975,

(Paris, 1977), pp. 191-200 and " ' *Magnum Virorum Quendam Consensum Velimus Machinari* ' (804D) : Eriugena's Use of Augustine's *de Genesi ad litteram* in the *de divisione naturae*", also for the Third Eriugena Colloquium, and certainly is close to Eriugena's own consciousness.

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Nonetheless, there are important differences between these two Neoplatonisms which are of consequence for our endeavor to understand the theological context which permits and requires Thomas's proof. First, in Proclus, theology is systemized so as actually to begin from God's inner unity. In Proclus's *Elements*, Dionysius's *Divine Names*, Eriugena's *De Divisione Naturae*, and works structured in this tradition, or coming under its influence, but *not* in Augustine's *De Trinitate*, or works faithful to it, theology begins from the divine unity. Second, the multiplicity within the divine, whether the Trinity in Eriugena and Dionysius, or the henads and triads in Proclus, is distinguished from the divine unity.<sup>55</sup>

The motion and multiplicity within the divine spiritual life is the intelligible pattern and basis of the motion and multiplicity of the sensible world further down. What is distinctive about the Proclan Neoplatonism here is that the going out from the divine unity, the proceeding, *provodo* or *exitus*, is given equal weight with the return, *epistrofho* or *conversio*. This is not true in Augustine. He is primarily interested in how, addressed by the divine Word in the world in which he finds himself, man can be saved out of it forever.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> See my article " The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius " for the result in Christian theology of the differences between the pagan Neoplatonic schools; the pagans are more fully treated in " Aquinas's First Principle ", 139 ff.

<sup>56</sup> See my " The Place of the Psychological Image of the Trinity " and R. D. Crouse " *Semina Rationum*".

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The third difference between Proclan and Plotinian Neoplatonism, and crucial for us, is the place of the human soul in this structure. Plotinus, looking at the human soul in its causes, sees it partly in the world of sense and body, which soul animates, and partly above in the higher realm of pure intellectual life. This

higher soul never loses its contemplation of higher things and its direct access to the intellectual world. Consequently, for Plotinus, as for Augustine and his followers, the movement to God is inward.<sup>57</sup> Proclus, on the other hand, following his predecessor Iamblichus, in accord with their mutual tendency to formalize and to differentiate entities, with his sense of the weight of the downward movement in reality and the weakness and evil of our human situation, sees our soul as altogether fallen into the sensible world. The very last proposition of his *Elements of Theology* is as follows:

Every particular soul, when it descends into temporal process, descends entire; there is not a part of it which remains above and a part which descends.<sup>58</sup>

Both the content and the position of this statement are important.

The content requires a relation between man and the sensible world. For Proclus, man in his weakened and humbled position requires help from outside. This help takes the form of theurgy, the place of which in pagan Neoplatonism roughly

<sup>57</sup> On the division of the soul see Plotinus *Enneades, Opera*, ed. P. Henry et H. R. Schwyzer, Museum Lessianum, Series Philosophia 33, 3 vol. (Paris/Brussels, 1951-1973), IV 8,8,2-3; V 1,10 and C. G. Steel *The Changing Self, A Study of the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, (Brussels, 1978), p. 31 and elsewhere. On the movement inward see *Enneades* I 6,8,4; I 6,9,1; III 8,6,40; IV 8,1,3; V 8,2,32; V 8,11,11; VI 9,7,17; VI 9,11,38 and A. H. Armstrong, "Salvation: Plotinian and Christian", *The Downside Review* 75 (1957), 126-139, reprinted in *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, Variorum Reprints (London, 1979).

<sup>58</sup> Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, A Revised Text with translation, introduction and commentary by E. R. Dodds, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1963), Prop. 211, p. 185. On the positive character of the downward movement for Proclus see "Aquinas's First Principle", 148-151; for its effect on Dionysius see P. Rorem, "The Place of *The Mystical Theology* in the Pseudo-Dionysian Corpus", *Dionysius* 4 (1980), 88-89.

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corresponds to the place of the sacraments in Christian religion.<sup>59</sup>

Theurgic union is attained only by the perfective operation of unspeakable acts correctly performed, acts which are beyond all understanding, and by the power of unutterable symbols which are intelligible only to the gods.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, although Proclus, in contrast to St. Thomas, still holds that the soul knows itself through knowing its higher spiritual causes, an essential move towards exterior sensible reality has been made, both in respect to the soul's return to God, and in its location in the cosmos.<sup>61</sup>

A Christian spirituality moving forward from this position is to be found in pseudo-Dionysius's symbolic theology, which advances to God beginning from symbols "natural, historical, scriptural or sacramental."<sup>62</sup> This theology, worked out in Eriugena, forms a foundation for medieval aesthetics so that Abbot Suger at St. Denis structures and adorns his gothic abbey around the principle that the material light gleaming on silver and gold or in jewel and glass leads the spirit to the immaterial God.<sup>63</sup> The twelfth century revival of this Dionysian spirituality develops a previously absent sense of the reality of the natural world, a universe functioning by its own

<sup>59</sup> C. Steel, *The Changing Self*, pp. 156-157.

<sup>60</sup> Iamblichus *De Mysteriis* II, 11 trans, by E. R. Dodds, *Elements*, p. xx.

<sup>61</sup> *Elements*, Prop. 167; for the contrasting doctrine of St. Thomas see *ST I*, qq. 85-87. For a different view of St. Thomas see B. de Margerie, S.P., "A quelles conditions d'après Lumen Ecclesiae (para. 15-16) une philosophie peut-être servir d'instrument à l'élaboration d'une christologie catholique;" to appear in *Atti del VIII Congresso Tomistico Internazionale sull'Enciclica "Aeterni Patris"*, ed. A. Piolanti, (Roma, 1981), pp. 191-206, esp. p. 195.

<sup>62</sup> M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society*, p. 125; additional materials on Dionysius and theurgy are given in my "Aquinas's First Principle", 147. Since its appearance there is A. Louth's *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, pp. 162-164 which is also the best treatment of the matter I have found.

<sup>63</sup> See Sugerii Abbatis Sancti Dionysii, *Liber de Rebus in Administratione Sua Gestis*, in E. Panovsky, *Abbot Suger*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1979), XXVII and XXXIII, pp. 46-48 and 62-64 and W. Beierwaltes "Negati Affirmatio; On the World as Metaphor. A Foundation for Mediaeval Aesthetics from the Writings of John Scotus Eriugena", *Dionysius* 1 (1977), 127-159.

second causes through which man comes to God.<sup>64</sup> This movement towards secularization and feeling for the natural world is crucial to Thomas's use of the Aristotelian proofs and in fact Thomas refers to Dionysius when he wishes to justify the knowledge of God through sensible effects.<sup>65</sup>

One of the characteristics of the later Neoplatonism identified by modern scholarship is its greater acceptance of Aristotle. This also characterizes the Christian thinkers.<sup>66</sup> Whereas Augustine has little use for Aristotle, Boethius thinks that he and Plato have the same teaching and Boethius is responsible for the first of the three Aristotelian waves to wash the west.<sup>67</sup> Thomas says early in his career that Dionysius follows Aristotle <sup>68</sup> and, while he comes later to understand the Platonic character of Dionysius's thought,<sup>69</sup> he continues to see what is usually regarded as the Aristotelian ascent to God through knowledge of the sensible world in Dionysian terms. To Dionysius he credits the following:

" Men reach the knowledge of intelligible truth by proceeding from one thing to another." " The intellectual soul then . . . holds the last place among intellectual substances ... it must gather its

<sup>64</sup> M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society*. Most of the essays in this volume touch on this question; most important perhaps is " The Platonisms of the Twelfth Century ", pp. 49-98; on the idea that the world constituted a whole see p. 67. Confer also R. D. Crouse, "*Intentio Moysi*", 153-5 on Honorius and the Platonists of Chartres, their sense of cosmos, and openness to the world.

<sup>65</sup> See *ST I,1,9* and texts cited below. This is not his unique procedure: "pseudo-Dionysius himself, thanks to his religious sense, so deflected Platonic idealism toward a keener subjection to sensible realities that later, he was occasionally bracketed with Aristotle in concordances or "harmonies" of "the authorities" (*concordat auctoritatum*) ". Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society*, p. 135.

<sup>66</sup> See my " Aquinas's First Principle " 148 and S. Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition, Studien zur Problemgeschichte der Antiken und Mittelalterlichen Philosophie* 8, (Leiden, 1978), pp. 235-6.

<sup>67</sup> See *De interpretatione*, ed. C. Meiser, ed. secunda, (Leipzig, 1880), p. 79, and R. D. Crouse, "*Semina Rationum*", 76-77.

<sup>68</sup> "*Dionysius autem fere ubique sequitur Aristotelem, ut patet diligenter inspecienti libros ejus*": *In II Sent.* d.14,q.1,a.2 (Mandonnet, p. 350).

<sup>69</sup> ". . . plerumque utitur stilo et modo loquendi quo utebantur platonici . . ." *In de div. nom., proem.*

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knowledge from divisible things by way of sense." " The human mind cannot rise to the immaterial contemplation of the celestial hierarchies unless it uses the guidance of material things." " Divine things cannot be manifested to men except

under sensible likenesses." " Men receive the divine illumination under the likeness of sensible things." <sup>70</sup>

It is worth noting the necessity of the turn to the sensible expressed here and that it is precisely this that divides Thomas and Bonaventure, who is also less Aristotelian than Thomas. Bonaventure certainly uses the sensible way in his theology but he regards it as only one way. The soul may also take the Augustinian more directly inward route.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the context of this turning to the sensible in which the Aristotelian proof eventually becomes necessary and intelligible is originally religious in the most cultic and mystical signification of that term. It is the subsequent development of what has been called a more secular feeling for the natural world and the discovery of the sciences of such a world which actually bring us to the proof itself.<sup>72</sup>

The place of man and the position of the statement about his place in the *Elements of Theology* is really part of the content. The human soul descends into the temporal process and all of it is there. In Proclus, this is the final statement in his systemized theology. Although St. Thomas's view of man is exactly of this kind, for him and for the first western Christian systematic theologian, Eriugena, this descent is not the end of theology but man is rather the pivot point, the hinge, or crux, on which the cosmos turns. For these thinkers, man's reason is distinguished from intuition or *intellectus* by reason's divided or discursive nature. In Eriugena, Genesis 2.20, associating

<sup>70</sup> ST I,79,8; I,76,5; I,88,2 *obj.* 1; I-II,99,3 *ad* 3; I,108,1. The list is from A. C. Pegis, Index of Authors, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 2 vols., ii, (New York, 1945), p. 1168.

<sup>71</sup> Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure, The Soul's Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of Saint Francis, The Classics of Western Spirituality*, (London, 1978), p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society*, pp. 45 ff.

man with the naming of the beasts, means that the sensible world comes into particularized sensible being through man and his form of divided knowing and is restored to its heavenly and intellectual unity in the redemption of man in Christ.<sup>73</sup> We have seen how man, uniting the material and spiritual creation through his unity of body and soul and, as free agent in the world, forms the

structural center of the *Summa Theologiae*. Thomas transforms a statement from Proclus about the soul as the "horizon and mutual limit of the corporal and spiritual", mediated to him through the *Liber de Causis*, into a teaching about man joining the two worlds.<sup>74</sup>

Neoplatonic theology, Christian or pagan, by no means universally applauds this anthropocentrism, which is not to be identified with the very general conception that man is a microcosm or little world uniting in himself the elements of spiritual and material reality.<sup>75</sup> One of Plotinus's complaints about the gnostics and, by implication, the Christians, who share their perspective, is the vanity of their anthropocentric pride:

But really! For these people who have a body like men have, and desire and griefs and passions, by no means to despise their own power but to say that they can grasp the intelligible but that there is no power in the sun which is freer than this power of ours from affections and more ordered and more unchangeable, and that the

<sup>73</sup> *De Divisione Naturae* IV,8 (PL 122.744A); II,6 (PL 122, 532A); cf. B. Stock, "The Philosophical Anthropology of Johannes Scotus Eriugena", *Studia Mediaevalia*, 8 (1967), 1-57, R. D. Crouse, "Intentio Moysi", 142-144. D. F. Duclow, "Dialectic and Christology in Eriugena's *Periphyseon*", *Dionysius* 4 (1980), 99-118; the nicest summary is perhaps I. P. Sheldon-Williams, "Eriugena's Greek Sources", *The Mind of Eriugena*, ed. J. O'Meara and L. Bieler, (Dublin, 1973), pp. 11-12.

<sup>74</sup> See *Liber de Causis*, Prop. 2 and F. Ruello, "Saint Thomas and Pierre Lombard", *San Tommaso, Fonti e riflessi del suo pensiero*, ed. A. Piolanti, Studi Tomistici I, (Roma, n.d.), p. 202.

<sup>75</sup> Because of Gregory of Nyssa's objection to the term--it seemed to make man an image of the world rather than of God--it is not used in Eriugena except in one unfavorable context. Cf. Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator, The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis, (Lund, 1965), p. 142; on Gregory and Eriugena cf. E. Jeaneau, *Jean Scot, Homélie sur le prologue de Jean*, Sources chrétiennes, 151, (Paris, 1969), p. 337.

sun has not a better understanding than we have, who have only just come to birth and are hindered by so many things that cheat us from coming to the truth! And to say that their soul, and the soul of the meanest of men, is immortal and divine but that the whole of heaven and the stars there have no share given them in the immortal soul.<sup>76</sup>

Augustine,<sup>77</sup> Gregory the Great,<sup>78</sup> Boethius,<sup>79</sup> Anselm<sup>80</sup> and Peter Lombard<sup>81</sup> all hold a view which seems incompatible with the anthropocentrism of Eriugena and Aquinas,<sup>82</sup> namely

<sup>76</sup> *Enneades* II 9,5,1-11 translation by A. H. Armstrong in the second volume of the Loeb *Plotinus* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 239. See also *Enn.* II 9,9,45-56 and A. H. Armstrong "Man in the Cosmos: A Study of Some Differences between Pagan Neoplatonism and Christianity", *Romanitas et Christianitas*, ed. W. den Boer et al. (Amsterdam/London, 1973), 5-14, reprinted in *Plotinian and Christian Studies*.

<sup>77</sup> *Enchiridion*, LXI (PL 40,261) : "... ex ipsa hominum redemptionis ruinae illius angelicae detrimenta reparantur", also XXIX (PL 40,246); *De Civ. Dei*, XIV,26 (PL 41,435) and XXII,1 (PL 41,752).

<sup>78</sup> *Hom. in Evang.* II,34 (PL 76,1249 and 1252) "Decem vero drachmas habuit mulier, quia novem sunt ordines angelorum. Sed ut completeretur electorum numerus, homo decimus est creatus . . . Quia enim superna illa civitas ex angelis et hominibus constat, ad quam tantum credimus humanum genus ascendere, quantos illic contigit electos angelos remansisse, sicut scriptum est: Statuit terminas gentium secundum numerum angelorum Dei." This occurs then in the context of the parable of the ten coins and includes Gregory's listing of the nine orders of angels so like that of ps.-Dionysius. Miss Jean Petersen informs me that "the exegesis of this parable and that of the lost sheep by Gregory, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nanzianzus, Gregory of Nyssa and Origen (scraps only) is extraordinarily similar." This would indicate that in Gregory the Great, at least, the Augustinian and Greek traditions meet here. Anselm, Gregory and Peter Lombard are considered in M. Chenu's treatment of this question "Cur Homo? Le sous-sol d'une controverse" *La théologie au douzième siècle*, (Paris, 1966), pp. 52-61. Fr. Chenu thinks that Honorius changed his mind on this matter from the *Elucidarium* to the *Libellus VIII Quaestionum* (p. 55). But M. O. Garrigues has shown that Honorius never held that man was "pro angelo sed non pro ipso creatus". He never belonged to the more pessimistic Augustinian tradition on this point; cf. her *L'oeuvre d'Honorius Augustodunensis: Inventaire critique*, unpublished Ph. D. diss., Univ. de Montreal, 1979, pp. 280-299. This is of some importance as Honorius is a main source for the Eriugenian tradition in the twelfth century.

<sup>79</sup> *De fide Catholica* (PL *Brevis Fidei Christianae Complexio*), last sentence (PL 64,1328).

<sup>80</sup> *Cur Deus Homo*, 1,16-18 (PL 158,381-389).

<sup>81</sup> *Sent. lib.* II,d.1 c.9 (PL 192,654) .

<sup>82</sup> *In II Sententiarium*, d.1,q.2,a.3 (Mandonnet, pp. 49 ff.) . *ST* II, *prol.* cites John of Damascus as the source of his view of man. See also *ST* I,93,5 *obj.* 2 and I,93,9 and R. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), p. 50.

that man makes up the number of the angels who fell with Satan. In Anselm and Gregory this is indeed said to be the reason for his creation.

The much more positive view of man in Eriugena, his twelfth century followers, like Honorius Augustodunensis, and in St. Thomas emphasizes rather the human affirmative relation to the sensible creation and man's freedom.<sup>83</sup> In this the dominant influence comes from the Greek fathers.<sup>84</sup> Man's place at the bottom of the ladder of spiritual creatures is seen positively because, as in Eriugena, his knowing is the source of their being, and his redemption the basis of their return to God. In Thomas, man's knowing is also suited to the sensible world so that his body becomes essential, not only to his communication with all other reality, but even for his knowledge of himself.<sup>85</sup> We have seen how the Proclan-Dionysian Neoplatonism is at work in this development. Further, the sensible world provides the sphere in which man shows his freedom. As its governor, he stands to it as God stands to the whole of creation and so he is seen as the image of God.<sup>86</sup> It is for him. On this account, the eternal raising up of the sensible world is also related to man. " Because the bodily creation is finally ordered to be in accord with the state of man ... it will be necessary for it to have a participation in the light of his glory."<sup>87</sup> The sensible

<sup>83</sup> Confer note 73 above and M. Chenu " Nature and Man--the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century ", *Nature, Man and Society*, pp. 1-48 and R. D. Crouse, " *Intentio Moysi* ", 146 ff.

<sup>84</sup> G. Lafont, *Structures et méthode dans la somme théologique de saint Thomas, Textes et étude théol.*, (Bruges/Paris, 1961), pp. 192 ff. J. Pelikan, " *Imago Dei*, An Explication of *Summa Theologiae* I,93 ", *Calgary Aquinas Studies*, ed. A. Parel (Toronto, 1978), pp. 27-48; P. Faucon, *Aspects néoplatoniciens*.

<sup>85</sup> *ST* I,87,1.

<sup>86</sup> Confer note 20 above and *ScG* III,1 : " *Quaedam namque sic a Deo producta sunt ut, intellectum habentia, ejus similitudinem gerant et imaginem repraesentent; unde et ipsa non solum sunt directa, sed et seipsa dirigentia secundum proprias actiones in debitum finem. . .*" The difference between the freedom and ruling of God and of man is indicated structurally in the *Summa Theologiae* by placing the treatment of man's nature in the *de Deo* under creation while his operations go into the Second Part. God's nature and operation are treated together.

<sup>87</sup> *ScG* IV, 97 and *Compendium Theologiae* I, 169-170.

world has become something separate from man but their interrelation requires its resurrection with him.

The proof of God's existence is necessitated by the position of man descended into the temporal, sensible world and turning toward it in order to rise out of it. Theology evidently needs this rise in order to make its beginning intelligible to man, for it starts with God, and is addressed to this humble creature separated from the intelligible world. But it is not because theology is human science that man has a crucial place in it. Man's place and role are objectively given. Because theology is primarily the knowledge of God and those who have the vision of him, man's crucial role is determined by the structure of reality. The movement from both God and man which creates the rhythm and structure of the *Summa Theologiae* is a reflection of the inner rhythm and structure of reality. Not only is the whole a movement from God to material creation and back through man, but this pulse of going out and return runs through the individual parts of the work.

The Neoplatonists gave this form to the Aristotelian notion of activity or pure act<sup>88</sup> by which Thomas understands God, and he and they both regard this activity as a kind of motion.<sup>89</sup> This motion structures the five ways of the proof, which allows us some understanding of God's being, just as it orders the proof that he is the first cause in each of the four senses of cause, with which the treatment of creatures begins.<sup>90</sup> In both cases the causes are arranged in a way never used by Aristotle.<sup>91</sup> Thomas begins with the source of motion and concludes

<sup>88</sup> S. E. Gersh, : KINHISIS jAKINHOTOS : *A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*, (Leiden, 1975), pp. 4 and 131.

<sup>89</sup> *ST I*,9,1 *ad* 1 and *ad* 2, *ST I*,18,3 *ad* 1; *ST I*,19,1 *ad* 3: *ScG I*,13. Confer M. Jordan, " The Grammar of *Esse* ", *The Thomist* 44 (1980), 1-26 and my " Aquinas's First Principle ", 169-170.

<sup>90</sup> *ST I*,44.

<sup>91</sup> Compare *Physica* II,3,194b-195a3: *In Octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, ed. P. M. Maggiolo (Turin/Rome, 1965), II,v,178-181; *Physica* II,7,198a 1-14: *In Physicorum* II,xi,241; *Metaphysica* I,3,983a 24-32: *In Metaphysicorum* I,iv,70; *Metaphysica* II,2,994a 19-994b 27: *In Meta.* II,ii, 300-301; *Metaphysica*, V,2,1013a 24-1013b3: *In Meta.* V,ii,763,764,765 and 771.

with final cause, so that there is a return to the motionless beginning.<sup>92</sup> Between these two opposed causes are placed, first, the material cause, and then, the formal. The reduction of the material cause to God shows that there is no barrier to his efficacy. The formal is linked to the final, as the moving end is the good as known and perfected in form, here the divine essence itself.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the being which God is, is said to return to itself.<sup>94</sup> The treatment of the divine substance, questions two to eleven, passes out from the consideration of his simplicity, to his infinity and being in all things, and back again to his unity.<sup>95</sup> The treatment of his operations moves from intellect, the most undivided spiritual relation, to truth, which requires a reflection on intellection, in that to be truth knowing must know that it knows its object, to will, which is differentiated from knowledge just because the possession of the object known is also desired, to power, by which things outside the self are made, back again to happiness, which belongs to self-conscious beings when knowing and its object are fully in accord. Happiness is primarily an attribute of the self-knowing knower. Similarly, the Trinity involves a real relation, distinction, procession and movement by which the Father generates the Son and both are united in the Spirit.<sup>96</sup> Bernard Lonergan has shown how the questions on the Trinity as a whole describe

<sup>92</sup> The doctrine that God remains in himself when he moves upon himself in love and knowledge is found in Dionysius; cf. *In de div. nom.* IV,vii,369; IV,viii,390; IV,x,439; IV,xi,444. It is worked out systematically in Eriugena. Thomas probably has the doctrine from Dionysius but I try to show in "Aquinas's First Principle" 170, n. 197 that he might also know a portion of *De Divisione Naturae* containing the notion.

<sup>93</sup> *ST I*,19,1 *ad 2*.

<sup>94</sup> *ST I*,14,3 *ad 1*.

<sup>95</sup> This is the argument of my "The Structure of Aristotle's Logic and the Knowledge of God in the *Pars Prima* of the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas", *Sprache und Erkenntnis im Mittelalter, Miscellanea Medievalia*, ed. A. Zimmerman, 13/2, (Berlin/New York, 1981), pp. 961-968.

<sup>96</sup> See my "The Place of the Psychological Image", 107 and "Aquinas's First Principle", 165-166.

a circle beginning in the processions, which come out of the internal operations, and passing on to the plurality of the distinct persons, returning to the original unity in the notional acts, which are the same as the processions.<sup>97</sup>

Beyond the divine comes creation, which moves from the spiritual to material creatures and their unity in man. A similar structure is found within the elements of these parts as well.<sup>98</sup> The very being of God, arrived at by the proofs as the motion from below meets that from above, is manifested as being which returns to itself. God's being is self-relation and consequently knowledge, love, creative power and Trinitarian procession.

The proof of God's existence is crucial in Thomas because it begins that movement from below, from man to God, which is essential to theology. The proof stands at the beginning but it is not a ladder which is then pushed away; it remains present in the content and structure of what follows. And does it not remain necessary for theology? For it follows first from the religious need of man altogether descended into the world of time and place, and then, from the freedom which belongs to man's growing secularity and scientific progress. Proclus and Iamblichus held the former because any other view is "inconsistent with the facts of human sin and misery."<sup>99</sup> A view we can have no less grounds to adopt. The movement of human freedom towards a secular natural science, which Thomas urged forward with his acceptance of Aristotle, has hardly diminished. It may be that theologians no longer think we can move through nature to God by means of Aristotle. But if this be so, some new means for the same journey must be provided.

<sup>97</sup> *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. D. B. Burrell, (Notre Dame, 1969), pp. 206-207.

<sup>98</sup> See my "The Structure of Aristotle's Logic".

<sup>99</sup> E. R. Dodds, *Elements*, p. 309 summarizing Iamblichus according to Proclus *In Tim.* I c.