

HARMONIZING FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IN ST. THOMAS

Daniel De Haan

Is it necessary for all Christians – including Christians who are metaphysicians with demonstrative knowledge of God's existence – to hold by faith that God exists? I shall approach this apparently straightforward question by investigating two opposing lines of interpretation of Thomas Aquinas's own response to this question. I shall begin with two texts from Thomas that motivate two incompatible theses concerning Thomas's doctrine of the harmony of faith and reason with respect to the existence of God. Next, I shall clarify the salient points of disagreement between these two interpretations of faith and reason in Thomas Aquinas before examining dialectically a number of arguments in favor and against the respective theses of these two interpretations. In the final section I shall argue that the results of our dialectical inquiry reveal that the initial disagreement between the two positions is not irresolvable. Accordingly, I shall conclude by proposing two revised versions of the initial theses that emphasize the compatibility of these two interpretations of Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of the harmony of faith and reason.

1. Thomas Aquinas on Faith, Reason, and God's Existence

Let us begin with the following question: can one and the same person hold by faith certain matters that he also knows through a scientific demonstration? One representative text of Thomas's answer to this question can be found in his *Quaestiones disputatae De veritate*, q. 14 a. 9 (c. 1256-1259).¹ The sixth objection runs as follows:

¹ For the dating of Thomas Aquinas's works, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, vol. 1, The Person and His Works*, rev. ed., trans. by Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005). All references to the works of Thomas Aquinas are taken from following editions: *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera omnia*, Leonine ed. (Rome, 1882 –); Vol. 22. 1-3, *Questiones disputatae de veritate (=De Ver)*; Vol. 50, *Super Boetium De Trinitate (=In De Trin)*. *Scriptum super libros sententiarum* eds. P. Mandonnet and M. F. Moos, 4

Opinion is farther from scientific knowledge than faith is. But we can have scientific knowledge and opinion about the same thing, as happens when one knows one and the same conclusion through a demonstrative and a dialectical syllogism. Therefore, there can be scientific knowledge and faith about the same thing.²

Thomas's response to the sixth objection of *De veritate* q. 14, a. 9 denies the conclusion that scientific knowledge and faith can be about the same thing. He supports his denial by rejecting the objector's account of such cognitional attitudes as opinion (*opinio*), scientific knowledge (*scientia*), and faith (*fides*), and by appealing to his own account of these cognitional attitudes. Earlier in *De veritate* q. 14 Thomas expounded his well-known account of the way in which the assent of faith differs from that of opinion, scientific knowledge, and other cognitional or propositional attitudes. Opinion is an intellectual assent to a proposition but with some hesitation that the contradictory proposition might be true; scientific knowledge is a firm intellectual assent to a proposition without any hesitation because the intellect grasps or sees why the proposition is true. In the case of both common and theological faith the intellect assents firmly to a proposition without any hesitation, however, the intellect does not see why the proposition is true; rather, the intellect is moved to assent, not by itself as in scientific knowledge, but by the will because some fitting good is obtained by assenting.³ Such distinctions are clearly operative in Thomas's response to the sixth objection; he writes:

It does not seem possible for a person simultaneously to have scientific knowledge and opinion about the same thing, for opinion includes a fear

vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-1947) (=In Sent.); *Summa theologiae* (Rome: Editiones Paulinae, 1962) (=STh); *Liber de veritate catholicae Fidei contra errores infidelium seu Summa contra Gentiles*, t. 2-3. eds. P. Marc, C. Pera, P. Caramello (Rome: Marietti Editori, 1961) (=ScG). All translations are my own unless noted otherwise.

² *De Ver* q. 14 a. 9 obj. 6. All English translations from Thomas Aquinas's *Questiones disputate de veritate* are from *Truth*, trans. by Robert W. Mulligan, 3 vols. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952; Reprinted, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994).

³ *De Ver* q. 14 aa. 1-2; *STh* II-II, q. 2. For introductions to Thomas's doctrine of faith, see Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Stephen F. Brown, 'The Theological Virtue of Faith (IIa IIae, qq.1-16)', in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. by Stephen J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), pp. 221-31; Bruno Niederbacher, 'The Relation of Reason to Faith', in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, (Oxford University Press, 2012), 337-347.

that the other part [of the contradiction] is true, and scientific knowledge excludes such fear. Similarly, it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.⁴

According to this short text Thomas quite clearly rejects that faith and scientific knowledge by one and the same person can be about the same thing, which would include the existence of God. Hence, it would seem that Thomas holds the position that it is impossible for one and the same person to have both faith and scientific knowledge of God's existence at the same time.

But this view seems to admit of a few qualifications, for two articles later, in *De veritate* q. 14 a. 11, Thomas considers the query: is it necessary to believe anything explicitly? He provides an elaborate answer that distinguishes between implicit and explicit faith, as well as between what must be believed in various ways in different ages depending upon the deposit of faith revealed in one age or another. Thomas eventually comes to the conclusion that there are two things that everyone must believe explicitly in every age.

The faithful must explicitly believe something. And these are the two things that the Apostle says [must be believed]: 'For he that comes to God must believe that He is, and is the rewarder to them that seek him.' (Heb. 11:6) Hence, everyone in every age is bound to believe explicitly that God exists and has providences over human affairs.⁵

On the face of it, this text from *De veritate* q. 14, a. 11 appears to contradict directly what Thomas just presented in *De veritate* q. 14 a. 9, ad 6. For in *De veritate* q. 14 a. 11 Thomas seems to be saying that everyone, metaphysician or not, must explicitly believe that God exists and is providential, but in *De veritate* q. 14 a. 9, ad 6 he said that it was impossible for one and the same person simultaneously to have demonstrative knowledge of God's existence and also believe that God exists. Is there any resolution to these two apparently contradictory statements? The aim of this paper is to propose an interpretation of Thomas's doctrine of the harmonization of faith and reason with respect to God's existence that is able to negotiate between what appear to be two incompatible accounts. In order to accomplish this task we will examine various arguments for and against the following two incompatible theses concerning faith and reason in Aquinas.

⁴ *De Ver* q. 14 a. 9 ad 6.

⁵ *De Ver* q. 14 a. 11.

Thesis-1: All believers must assent to the existence of God by faith, but one and the same person can simultaneously assent to this doctrine by both faith and reason

Thesis-2: All believers must assent to the existence of God, but it is impossible for one and the same person to assent to this doctrine simultaneously by both faith and reason

Thesis-1 favors the *prima facie* interpretation of the representative passage from *De veritate* q. 14 a. 11, over that of the *De veritate* q. 14 a. 9, ad 6. To defend it one must find another way to understand what seems to be presented in *De veritate* q. 14 a. 9, ad 6 so as to bring it into line with Thesis-1. Similarly, in order to defend Thesis-2, which is clearly supported by Thomas's statements in *De veritate* q. 14 a. 9, ad 6, one will have to find a way to soften the apparently contradictory statements found in passages such as *De veritate* q. 14 a. 11. In the next section I will first clarify the salient differences between these two opposed lines of interpretation, then I will examine the arguments for and against these two views.

2. Fideist and Rationalist Thomists on Faith and Reason

It is important to notice that what is not under dispute is Thomas's relatively straightforward account of opinion, scientific knowledge, and faith. Both theses accept and assume Thomas's clear-cut distinctions between these cognitional attitudes. Disagreement arises when exegetes begin to apply Thomas's concepts of theological faith and scientific knowledge or reason to particular topics, such as assenting to the existence of God. In this section we will examine the ways the proponents of the two aforementioned theses understand the convergence of these principled distinctions between faith and reason and their application to the texts of Thomas concerning the compossibility of both rationally knowing and believing that God exists. Let us begin by distinguishing more precisely these two interpretations of Thomas Aquinas.

Among the deluge of secondary literature on this topic, it is not difficult to find the defenders of Thesis-1 suggesting that the adherents of Thesis-2 should be careful not to adopt a position that will ultimately lead them down a dangerous path towards rationalism. Similarly, those who reject Thesis-1 often do so because they think that accepting Thesis-1 brings its adherents too close to fideism. Such words of

warning are not without their merit, and the proponents of both views are correct to insist that we should be careful to avoid either extreme. So despite their differences there are underlying similarities in these two positions' criticisms of alternative interpretations of Thomas. Significantly, both interpretations share a common commitment to the view that Thomas Aquinas provides a robust and cogent doctrine of the harmony of faith and reason that avoids the errors of fideism and rationalism.

My aim is to uncover a still more precise interpretation of Thomas Aquinas by examining the competing claims for these two positions and adopting the strengths of both views. In order to sharpen the dialectical tension between the interpretations of the two theses, let us provocatively refer to champions of Thesis-1 by the misnomer 'Fideist Thomists' (=FT), as their critics contend that they tend to emphasize to excess the centrality of faith in Aquinas's doctrine of the harmony between faith and reason. Let us call advocates of Thesis-2 'Rationalist Thomists' (=RT) for they stress the independence of unaided natural reason's ability to know by philosophical means alone the preambles of faith.

Fideist Thomists (=FT):

Tend to emphasize, perhaps to excess, the importance of faith in revelation over purely philosophical demonstrations in Thomas's doctrine of the harmony between faith and reason.

Rationalist Thomists (=RT):

Tend to insist, perhaps to excess, on the ability of unaided natural reason to obtain knowledge of the preambles of faith by means of purely philosophical arguments in Thomas's doctrine of the harmony between faith and reason.

Now despite such misleading labels it is important to recognize that *FT* and *RT* are not committed to fideism or rationalism, respectively. *FT* clearly maintains that God's existence and other such doctrines can be demonstrated by natural reason, and so consequently they reject a central claim of theological fideism that the only true knowledge concerning God is accessible by faith in divine revelation independent of human reason. Likewise, *RT* holds that the doctrine of the Trinity,

Incarnation, and other such articles of the faith can only be known through faith in divine revelation and are absolutely necessary for salvation. Hence, *RT* rejects any form of theological rationalism that takes reason alone to be sufficient for our knowledge of God or for the attainment of salvation.

Note also that *FT* and *RT* are not obscure or fringe interpretations of Thomas. On the contrary both *FT* and *RT* should be taken very seriously for they demarcate two well-known and clearly delineated lines of interpretation of Thomas Aquinas's doctrines of nature and grace, reason and faith, natural and supernatural beatitude, philosophy and theology, and the preambles of faith.⁶ Accordingly, I shall adopt these

⁶ For representatives of various versions of these lines of interpretation of Thomas Aquinas on faith, reason, and the preambles of faith see the following studies: Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione: Per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita*, vol. 2 (Rome: F. Ferrari, 1950); Etienne Gilson, *The Philosopher and Theology*, trans. by Cecile Gilson (New York: Random House, 1962); Gilson, *Christian Philosophy: An Introduction*, trans. by Armand Maurer (Toronto: PIMS, 1993), pp. 6-13; Gilson, *Thomism: The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. by Laurence K. Shook and Armand Maurer (Toronto: PIMS, 2002), pp. 27-37, and pp. 137-153; John F. Wippel, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Problem of Christian Philosophy', in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas I*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), ch. 1, pp. 1-33; Wippel, 'Thomas Aquinas on Philosophy and the Preambles of Faith', in *The Science of Being as Being: Metaphysical Investigations*, ed. by Gregory Doolan (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), pp. 196-220; Leo Elders, *Faith and Science: An Introduction to St. Thomas' Expositio in Boethii De Trinitate*. (Roma: Herder, 1974); Armand Maurer, 'Medieval Philosophy and its Historians', in *Being and Knowing. Studies in Thomas Aquinas and Later Medieval Philosophers* (Toronto: PIMS, 1990), pp. 461-479; Maurer, 'Etienne Gilson, Critic of Positivism', *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 199-220 (pp. 219-220); Joseph Owens, 'The Need for Christian Philosophy', *Faith and Philosophy* 1 (1994): 167-83; Owens, 'Neo-Thomism and Christian Philosophy', in *Thomistic Papers VI*, ed. by John F. X. Knasas (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1994), pp. 29-52; R.E. Houser, 'Trans-Forming Philosophical Water into Theological Wine: Gilson and Aquinas', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 69 (1995): 103-116; Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism: Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa contra Gentiles I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Christopher Martin, *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997); Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas*; Stump, *Aquinas*, ch.12, pp. 361-388; Denys Turner, *Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2006); Rudi Te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science' of the Summa Theologiae* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); Thomas J. White, *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology* (Sapientia Press, 2009); Lawrence Dewan, 'Communion with the Tradition: For the Believer Who Is a

two terms in an irenic spirit, for *FT* and *RT* provide us both with instructive notes of caution to avoid the extremes of fideism and rationalism, and with two sophisticated readings of Aquinas on faith and reason, that thereby help us set in relief real ambiguities in the texts and principles of Thomas's thought.

At this point the reader might justly wonder who are the exponents of these rationalist and fideist versions of Thomism? But for two strategic reasons I shall not provide any examples of individuals who hold either view. First, the various promoters of these two positions do not identify themselves with these labels. Different representative authors articulate their own versions of these theses and their correlations and so it would require far more space than I have here to do justice to their respective views. Instead, I shall construe these two positions rather broadly and use them as foils that will propel the dialectic towards a more perspicuous interpretation of Thomas Aquinas.

Second, identifying who holds which position is really beside the point, and I think it can often obfuscate the real issues and be an impediment to dealing with the arguments themselves. I have provided in the notes an extended list of recent interpreters of Thomas Aquinas on faith and reason, and I leave it up to the reader to determine which thesis, if any of the two I have provided, is maintained by these authors.

For the remainder of this paper I shall explore the respective strengths of Theses 1 and 2 by examining the arguments *FT* and *RT* marshal in support of these theses and the objections they raise against each other. As we will see, such disagreements often bear upon how these two interpretations of Thomas understand various features of his divisions of propositional attitudes, most especially, the distinction between faith and reason. I will start with Thesis-1 as defended by *FT*, before considering *RT*'s response to *FT* and defense of Thesis-2.

FT's Thesis-1 maintains that all the faithful must believe that God exists, and that one and the same person can simultaneously both rationally know and believe that God exists. This means that Thesis-1 is stronger than the claim accepted by Thesis-2 that one and the same person might initially hold by faith that God exists and then later in life become a philosopher who acquires demonstrative knowledge of God's existence. Let us consider two arguments put forth by *FT* in defense of Thesis-1.

Philosopher', in *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), pp. 387-399; Lawrence Dewan, 'The Existence of God: Can It Be Demonstrated?' *Nova et Vetera*, 10, 3 (2012): 731-56.

Pro Thesis-1: Against Rationalist Thomism

Argument *FT.1*: Certainty and Merit of Faith

The first argument of *FT* presents a *reductio ad absurdum* argument against *RT's* Thesis-2. Recall that Thesis-2 commits *RT* to the position that even though it is possible for a person to transition from faith to rational knowledge of God's existence, say, when a Christian becomes a philosopher, it is impossible for one person to hold simultaneously by faith and by reason that God exists. *FT* challenges the latter aspect of *RT's* position on the grounds that it seems to be inconsistent with Thomas's doctrine that faith is both more certain and meritorious than scientific knowledge, which for *FT* entails that faith in God's existence is epistemically more certain and more meritorious than philosophical knowledge of God's existence.⁷

Now according to *RT's* Thesis-2, if a Christian acquires rational knowledge of God's existence then he can no longer hold it by faith. And since faith in God's existence is epistemically more certain and more meritorious than rational knowledge of the same, then the believer who becomes a philosopher with demonstrative knowledge of God's existence thereby becomes less certain of God's existence and has less merit than when they were merely a non-philosophical believer in God's existence. But this conclusion is absurd, because one should not become less certain of a truth by coming to understand the philosophical reasons that support assenting to the truth of some position. Similarly, it is also absurd because it entails that it is more meritorious for a Christian not to seek to understand the philosophical reasons that corroborate their faith in the existence of God. Furthermore, this conclusion also clearly contradicts Thomas's teachings that extol the merits of the contemplative life.⁸ Hence, we should reject Thesis-2, and hold instead with Thesis-1 that because a person can know by faith and reason that God exists, one's merit and certain belief in the existence of God is not diminished by also acquiring rational knowledge of God's existence.

Argument *FT.2*: Faith Perfects Reason as Grace Perfects Nature

FT's second argument draws on Thomas's well-known doctrine that grace perfects nature, and within the order of propositional attitudes this means that faith perfects reason. Accordingly, the analogy is: just as grace is to nature so is faith to reason. Now if faith supernaturally

⁷ *De Ver* q. 14 a. 1 ad 7; q. 14 a. 9 ad 7; *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 7, et ad 5; *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 4, et ad 1; II-II, q. 4 a. 8 ad 1, et ad 3.

⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 182 a. 2.

perfects reason, it does not impede but enhances what reason is already able to do naturally. But natural reason is able to demonstrate the existence of God; hence, the supernatural perfection of reason by faith does not destroy reason's ability to demonstrate God's existence, but amplifies it by allowing one to assent to God's existence by faith as well. On this view, faith's assent to the existence of God does not displace reason's assent to the existence of God, for according to Thesis-1, the propositional attitudes of faith and reason are not incompatible with each other. But *RT's* Thesis-2 entails the contrary view, namely, that the assents of faith and reason are incompatible and so faith does not perfect reason, but is replaced by reason. And this is obviously contrary to the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. Hence, we should adopt Thesis-1 instead, which maintains that the perfection of reason by faith involves not the corruption of one assent by the other, but the incorporation without confusion of both assents in one person who is able to assent to the propositions that 'God exists' both by faith and by reason simultaneously.

***Contra* Thesis-1: Against Fideist Thomism**

Reply to Argument *FT.1*: Certainty and Merit of Faith

We must now examine *RT's* critique of Thesis-1, but before doing so we will consider *RT's* responses to *FT's* two arguments. Concerning the first argument *RT* is willing to concede that faith is more certain and more meritorious than reason, but it claims that these concessions to *FT* neither bring us any closer nor make any clearer how we should adjudicate between the truth of Thesis-1 and Thesis-2. This is because even if Thomas holds that it is less certain and less meritorious to assent to the existence of God on the basis of reason instead of faith, this neither contradicts nor shows that Thesis-2 is absurd. All that *FT.1* reveals is that *RT's* interpretation of the harmony of faith and reason by Thesis-2 is committed to one unfitting consequence, namely, that because it is impossible for one and the same person to believe and know that God exists at the same time, if a Christian comes to have philosophical knowledge of God's existence, then his certainty and merit diminish insofar as he no longer has faith in God's existence. In other words, if there is a harmony between faith and reason, then it seems unfitting that acquiring natural knowledge of what already is held by faith should diminish one's certainty and merit.

Furthermore, *RT* also has available a counter-argument to *FT.1* based on a number of distinctions provided by Thomas himself in his

treatment of faith from the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae* (c. 1271–1272). In *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 2 a. 10, ad 2, Thomas concedes that demonstrative rational arguments which establish truths that belong to the preambles of faith do in fact diminish the faith because they make ‘seen’ what had been ‘unseen’, and the latter is proper to the nature of faith. Still, such demonstrative knowledge does not diminish charity, because charity can still dispose the will to believe such truths if they were not ‘seen’ by a demonstration. This is significant, because Thomas holds that charity is the root of merit; indeed, even faith is only meritorious insofar as it is formed by charity in the will.⁹ Now since charity can be common to both the assent by faith and the assent by reason to God’s existence, merit is not diminished in the manner suggested by the first argument of *FT*.¹⁰

RT’s response to the first argument concerning the *merit* seems to be decisive. The merit of charity is not diminished just because a believer comes to have demonstrative arguments for a truth that belongs to the preambles of faith. But *RT*’s response to the argument concerning the *certainty* of faith is not particularly satisfying. While this response does clarify for us that the first argument of *FT* neither conclusively refutes Thesis-2 nor demonstrates Thesis-1, it does not soften the force of the unfittingness of *RT*’s view on certainty that is exposed by the first argument.

Reply to Argument *FT*.2: Faith Perfects Reason as Grace Perfects Nature

The second argument of *FT* was more focused on the very nature and relationship of reason and faith, and so it also cut to the core of the real issue concerning the compossibility of faith and reason. *RT*’s response to the second argument concerning the way faith perfects reason proceeds in two stages. First, before we can understand how faith perfects reason we must provide a more precise account of what ‘reason’ means in the analogy: as grace perfects nature, so faith perfects reason. Now reason is said in many ways, but what *FT* assumes without any argument is that reason must mean demonstrative rational knowledge (*scientia*). *RT* contends that this assumption is incorrect, for when Thomas distinguishes various kinds of cognitional attitudes, such as doubt, conjecture, opinion, understanding, scientific knowledge, and (common) faith, all of these forms of intellectual assent are rational acts, not just demonstrative scientific knowledge. So the more precise

⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 9.

¹⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 10 ad 2.

question is: which one of these six kinds of rational assent is 'reason' *qua* perfected by faith? And *RT* asserts that the answer here is quite obvious, for Thomas clearly maintains that the rational act that theological faith perfects is *common faith*.

This first point is significant, for the aim of *FT's* argument was to show that because theological faith perfects reason – which *FT* assumed meant demonstrative knowledge – the two kinds of assent must be compossible, and so Thesis-1 is true and Thesis-2 is false. What *RT's* counter-argument has brought to light is that this assumption is in fact false. For the act of reason that is being perfected by theological faith is not scientific knowledge, but common faith. This point brings us to the second stage of *RT's* counter-argument.

If we consider Thomas's division of cognitive acts of assent, each kind of rational assent is incompatible with all of the others. Said otherwise, a person cannot simultaneously *doubt* the very same proposition that they assent to by a *conjecture*, hold as an *opinion*, maintain by *understanding*, or assent to by *scientific knowledge* or by *common faith*. Each of these distinct propositional attitudes or rational assents excludes the others, which means that *scientific knowledge* by definition excludes *common faith*, and vice-versa. Hence, because theological faith perfects reason *qua* common faith, and since by its very nature common faith is incompatible with the rational assents proper to scientific knowledge, understanding, opinion, conjecture, and doubt, theological faith is thereby also intrinsically incompatible with these other kinds of propositional attitudes.

Consequently, if faith perfected reason in the way argued by *FT*, namely, by making theological faith compossible with scientific knowledge, then theological faith would not actually perfect and enhance the nature of common faith, but would corrupt and deprive common faith of its very nature, which, for Thomas, is intrinsically incompatible with the other propositional attitudes, including scientific knowledge. So it turns out that it is *FT's* account, and not *RT's* that entails faith corrupts reason.

RT's counter-argument to the second argument of *FT* is insightful and convincing. It does not decisively refute Thesis-1, but it does undermine *FT's* account of the way faith perfects reason. What *FT* needs now is another way to frame the connection between faith and reason that shows they can be compossible without corrupting each other in the way articulated by *RT's* counter-argument. But before exploring *FT's* revised proposal, we must first attend to *RT's* positive arguments in favor of Thesis-2.

Pro Thesis-2: Against Fideist Thomism

Argument *RT.1*: Preambles and Articles of Faith

RT's first argument in support of Thesis-2 turns to Thomas's distinction between the preambles of faith and the articles of faith. The articles of faith are those doctrines that God has revealed, that can only be believed, and which all of the faithful must believe, such as the Trinity and the Incarnation. God also reveals the doctrines that constitute the preambles of faith and so they too can be held by faith, but unlike the articles of faith, the preambles of faith are also knowable by natural reason independent of faith in supernatural revelation. These doctrines are called the preambles of faith because they concern doctrines that are presupposed by the articles of faith and which must be assented to in order to believe the articles of faith, yet they can be assented to either by faith or by reason. For example, in order for a person to believe the doctrine of the Trinity, that person must also believe that God is one; the former is an article of faith, but the latter is a preamble of faith because one can assent to the proposition 'God is one' on the basis of faith in divine revelation or by a demonstrative philosophical argument.

RT contends that this is the obvious way to understand Thomas's distinction between the preambles of faith and the articles of faith and that it supports Thesis-2, not Thesis-1. The whole point of the preambles of faith is intended to clarify why certain doctrines can either be held by faith or reason, but not by both at the same time. Hence, the burden of proof falls upon *FT* to show that this *prima facie* understanding is inaccurate and that it is Thesis-1, not Thesis-2, that is compatible with Thomas's doctrine of the preambles of faith.

Furthermore, *RT* observes that one of the most obvious corroborating examples of this *prima facie* interpretation of the preambles of faith can be found in question on the existence of God in *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 2, a. 2. After showing that the existence of God is not self-evident in the first article, but before demonstrating God's existence in the five ways in the third article, Thomas addresses whether God's existence can be demonstrated in the second article. The first objection contends that God's existence cannot be demonstrated because this is an article of faith, and articles of faith can only be believed. Thomas's response to this objection unequivocally places God's existence among preambles of faith, because it can be known by natural reason apart from divine revelation, and so it is not an article of faith.

RT also points out that when such clear statements are read alongside passages such as the one we saw from *De veritate* q. 14 a. 9, which

concluded that, ‘it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing’ it becomes difficult to understand how any reader of Thomas might even suggest that such passages are compatible with Thesis-1, which contends that a person *can* have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.¹¹ It is on the basis of such clear passages and many others that *RT* confidently maintains that Thesis-2 provides the only reasonable interpretation of Thomas’s account of the harmony of faith and reason, for *FT*’s Thesis-1 clearly contradicts the obvious sense of these texts.¹²

Argument *RT.2*: Violating the Principle of Contradiction

The second argument of *RT* follows upon the exegetical point of the first argument, for it addresses the principles at work in the doctrine articulated by Thomas in these passages. Because this argument has been implicit throughout most of the foregoing it can be presented rather succinctly. Thesis-2 claims that it is impossible to have faith and rational scientific knowledge about the same thing, because the very nature of faith is incompatible with the intrinsic nature of rational scientific knowledge. Accordingly, to say otherwise, as Thesis-1 does, is to maintain a thesis that involves a contradiction. This is because it is essential to the nature of scientific knowledge to have a firm assent to a proposition with intellectual understanding of why that proposition is true, whereas faith by nature involves having firm assent to a proposition without having intellectual understanding of why the proposition is true. Hence, to contend that one and the same person at the same time can assent to the existence of God with and without intellectually grasping why it is true to hold that ‘God exists’, is an obvious contradiction, and Thomas Aquinas says as much in numerous places.¹³

At this point *RT* rests its case against *FT* upon whom it has rightly placed the burden of proof in this debate. Let us then consider *FT*’s rebuttal to these arguments along with a number of rejoinders.

¹¹ *De Ver* q. 14 a. 9, et ad 6; q. 14 a. 9 ad 8, et ad 9; q. 14 a. 10.

¹² *In III Sent* d. 24 a. 2 sol. 1; a. 2 sol. 2; a.3 sol. 1; *In De Trin* q. 2 a. 3; q. 3 a.1; *ScG* I. 3-8; *Ad Hebr* c. 11 lects. 1-2; *STh* I-II, q. 67 a. 3; II-II, q. 1 a. 5 ad 3; q. 2 a. 4 ad 2.

¹³ *STh* I-II, q. 67 a. 3; II-II, q. 1 aa. 4-5.

3. Rejoinders

In this final section we will examine *FT*'s rejoinders to *RT*'s arguments in favor of Thesis-2. After each response we will consider a final reply by *RT*, and I will then add a few final observations before turning to the conclusion of our dialectical investigation.

Reply to Argument *RT.1*: Preambles and Articles of Faith

FT's response to the first argument of *RT* begins with an alternative understanding of the preambles of faith, and then provides a few key texts that justify this alternative interpretation. According to *FT* it is important to understand that the preambles of faith belong to theology, not to philosophy, and theology is the theoretical inquiry that follows upon the assent of faith. Theology is faith seeking understanding, both with respect the preambles of faith and the articles of faith. Now the science of theology consists in a subject, principles, theorems, and end, and it is according to the end, which is theological understanding and wisdom, that philosophy is incorporated into theology, for the end specifies the means. In other words, the end of theology provides sufficient justification for assimilating philosophy into theology as the preambles of faith. This incorporation does not entail that the philosophical doctrines sublimated into theology are no longer assented to on rational grounds, for just as grace perfects nature, so theology perfects philosophy. To be more specific, as the highest science, theology is able to incorporate the doctrines of the lower sciences, including the rational demonstrations proper to philosophy, yet without undermining their nature as based upon fully rational principles that can be understood by unaided natural reason. As employed by the theologian for the sake of understanding the truth of faith that 'God exists', such philosophical arguments rationally demonstrate the existence of God, but they do so without eliminating the initial faith in God's existence. Instead, the assent of faith is amplified in certain respects by such philosophical demonstrations of the existence of God, for now the believer both has faith that God exists as a revealed truth and has philosophical knowledge that God exists as the first uncaused cause. But even with such rational philosophical amplifications of a truth known by faith, the rational knowledge of God as existing, as one, omnipotent, or providential still falls short of what is contained in the articles of faith concerning these truths. What the relevant differences are between the content of these two assents will be taken up in *FT*'s rejoinder to the second argument of *RT*.

Just as *RT* supported their account of the preambles of faith with various texts from Aquinas, so *FT* also appeals to its own corroborating texts. Two passages merit close scrutiny. The first is taken from *De Veritate* q. 14 a. 9, obj. 8 et ad 8.¹⁴ The objector seems to be arguing for some version of Thesis-1 only with respect to the truth that God is one. The objection runs as follows:

That God is one is included among objects of faith. But philosophers give demonstrative proof of this. Therefore, it can be known scientifically. So, we can have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.¹⁵

FT argues that if Thesis-2 were in fact true, then Thomas should have no difficulties stating precisely what he has said elsewhere in the many texts cited by *RT* in support of Thesis-2. Surprising, this is not what Thomas does in this particular response. On the contrary, Thomas's reply distinguishes two senses of the proposition 'God is one'. Thomas writes that,

We do not say that the proposition, God is one, in so far as it is proved by demonstration, is an article of faith, but something presupposed before the articles. For the knowledge of faith presupposes natural knowledge, just as grace presupposes nature. But the unity of the divine essence such as is conceived by the faithful, that is to say, together with omnipotence, providence over all things, and the other attributes of this sort, which cannot be proved, makes up the article of faith.¹⁶

FT contends that in this text Thomas identifies two senses to the proposition 'God is one'. The first belongs to the preambles of the faith and it can be believed or known rationally through a philosophical demonstration; it consists in a limited account of what it means for God to be one, namely, that God is simple, is absolutely indivisible, is unique, and peerless, all of which can be known by philosophical demonstrations. But there is also a second meaning to the proposition 'God is one' that belongs to the articles of faith and can only be held by

¹⁴ This passage from *De Ver* q. 14 a. 9 ad 8 has inspired two recent studies that tackle the related question of whether Thomas holds philosophers can demonstrate that God is omnipotent and providential, see John Wippel, 'Thomas Aquinas on Demonstrating God's Omnipotence', in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), pp. 194-217; Brian J. Shanley, 'Thomas Aquinas on Demonstrating God's Providence', in *The Science of Being as Being*, pp. 221-242.

¹⁵ *De Ver* q. 14 a. 9 obj. 8.

¹⁶ *De Ver* q. 14 a. 9 ad 8. Cf. *De Ver* q. 14 a. 9 ad 5; *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 4 ad 1.

faith. This second sense of ‘God is one’ includes all that is present in the former, but also consists in a much richer and more precise account of divine unity, such as that God is Tri-une.¹⁷ In short, Thomas seems to make a subtle distinction between the doctrine of divine unity as a preamble of faith and as an article of faith. And *FT* argues that the only way to make sense of this doctrine is to adopt Thesis-1.

FT is also keen to point out that in this passage Thomas does not deny that there can be faith and rational knowledge of the same doctrine; rather, Thomas asks that we distinguish the two different ways of assenting to this doctrine, namely, by faith and reason. And even though in this text Thomas only explicitly mentions the doctrines of divine unity, omnipotence, and providence, there is a second passage concerning the same point wherein Thomas explicitly mentions God’s existence as belonging to the articles of faith.

In the *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 1 a. 8 Thomas Aquinas takes up a similar objection to the one from *De veritate*. In his response to the first objection Thomas again appears to distinguish between divine unity, omnipotence, and providence as preambles of faith from versions of these doctrines that are articles of faith.¹⁸ Significantly, this response follows upon the seventh article of question one which concerns whether the articles of faith have increased over the course of human history. Thomas’s answer eventually turns to chapter eleven of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which provides the minimal doctrine that all must assent to by faith in any age, for it contains implicitly the whole of the faith.

Similarly all of the articles are implicitly contained in certain primary believable (*primis credibilibus*), such as to believe that God exists and has providence over the salvation of men, as according to *Heb.* 11 [6]: ‘He that approaches God, must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those that seek Him.’ For the existence of God includes all the things which we believe to exist in God eternally, and in which our beatitude consists; while

¹⁷ A similar distinction applies to God’s providence. The doctrine of providence that belongs to the preambles of faith can be known by philosophical arguments and is limited to such doctrines as God creates the natures of all things and directs them towards their proper ends and the common ends of the universe. Explicit faith in the doctrine of providence includes implicitly everything that belongs to the articles of faith, that is, it covers all that is present in the former but also reveals much more, such as God’s particular attendance to mankind, His election of the people of Israel, sending His Son and the Holy Spirit, and so forth.

¹⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 8 obj. 1 et ad 1.

faith in His providence includes all those things which God dispenses in time for the salvation of men, and which are the way to that beatitude.¹⁹

FT argues that such passages reveal that there is a legitimate sense in which the believer can have both faith and rational knowledge of God's existence so long as we distinguish between the doctrine as assented to by rational knowledge – which belongs to the preambles of faith – and the doctrine as it is only able to be assented to by faith – which belongs to the articles of faith. Despite the same words, the doctrines held by reason or by faith do in fact differ insofar as the believer's faith contains doctrinally much more when he assents to God's existence than when the philosopher assents to the existence of God.

Hence, *FT* has no difficulty conceding that there are clear texts where Thomas seems to identify God's existence and divine unity among the preambles of faith, because God's existence and unity are both philosophically demonstrable. *FT* acknowledges this point; nevertheless, *FT* is also quick to point out that there are other passages wherein Thomas includes doctrines such as God's existence and unity among the primary believable and the articles of faith, which cannot be known by reason, and must be assented to by faith.

Finally, *FT* contends this is precisely what Thesis-1 maintains, and so the force of the textual evidence that seemed to support *RT* exclusively has been seriously challenged. For *FT* has disclosed that *RT* failed to distinguish between the doctrines of God's existence, unity, omnipotence, and providence as they belong to the preambles of faith from the similar doctrines that belong to the articles of faith. The content of the two doctrines are actually different in important respects, even if they are expressed using the same words. When the believer asserts that 'God exists,' as an article of faith, he implicitly means more than what any philosopher means by asserting that 'God exists.' In short, *RT* is incapable of accommodating Thomas's distinction between God's existence as philosophically demonstrable preamble of faith and God's existence as a divinely revealed article of faith.

RT's Brief Rejoinder to *FT's* Reply to Argument *RT.1*

The initial reaction of *RT* to this alternative account of the preambles of faith is to point out that this is a very specific interpretation of the way in which philosophy is incorporated into theology as the preambles of faith, and this is a controversial topic among Thomas's readers. Now even if *FT's* response provides an adequate account of

¹⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 7.

how philosophy is related to theology – and *RT* is far from convinced that it does – this interpretation still fails to show how the compossibility of faith and scientific knowledge in God's existence is accomplished as contended by Thesis-1.

As for the textual evidence, *RT* must either admit that it seems indecisive, or that perhaps there is a principled distinction that can still save Thesis-2. If the first, then we must leave this point with a promissory note, for it requires a comprehensive study of the relevant texts. The second option shall be entertained in our treatment of *RT*'s second argument, but before doing so I would like to make one final observation with respect to the debate over the preambles of faith.

Final Remarks on the Preambles of Faith

RT concluded their first argument by insisting that *FT*'s account of the preambles of faith do not provide any direct support to Thesis-1, but the textual evidence from *FT*'s rejoinder has shown that the same is true of *RT*'s views on the preambles of faith. In short, neither interpretation of the preambles of faith decisively settles the dispute between Thesis-1 and Thesis-2.

Second, it also seems that the dialectic has revealed that the textual evidence alone is indecisive; though in terms of quantity there are far more passages that illustrate, at least implicitly, the point of *RT*'s Thesis-2. Still, as we have seen, *FT* is not without important texts of its own that seem to support *FT*'s interpretation of Thesis-1.

Finally, what has come to light in this dialectic between the advocates of Thesis-1 and Thesis-2 is that some important disanalogies are being overlooked with respect to the analogical order of perfections to imperfections, such as the way faith perfects reason and theology perfects philosophy. We should not assume that each order is perfected in precisely the same way, for theology might well perfect philosophy in the order of a final cause, yet it seems more likely that reason is perfected by faith by way of a formal cause. For it seems that theology perfects philosophy insofar as it sublimates the natural end of philosophical wisdom within the higher supernatural end that consists in a faith inspired pursuit of theological wisdom; this is what allows theology to assimilate all that is truth in philosophy. But it appears that faith perfects formally the very act of reason, that is, it does not merely bestow upon reason a new end. For faith supernaturally enhances natural reason itself, and thereby allows reason perfected by grace to assent with certainty *that* the articles of faith are true because the Divine First Truth revealed them, even though reason perfected by grace does not comprehend *why* the articles of faith are true. This observation would, of

course, require a more detailed investigation to clinch the point one way or other; what should be clear, moreover, is that it is not obviously correct to assume that grace perfects nature in a similar way in each of these proportionally similar cases.

Reply to Argument *RT.2*: Violating the Principle of Contradiction

The second argument of *RT* concluded that Thesis-1 entailed a contradiction insofar as it claimed that one and the same person could both have faith and philosophical knowledge of the existence of God, for what philosophical knowledge is essentially excludes what faith is essentially, and vice-versa. The second argument also cited a number of texts that support this criticism of the first thesis, and so *RT* concluded that Thomas clearly maintained Thesis-2, and that the burden of proof rests upon *FT* to show that Thesis-1 is coherent and is supported by the texts of Aquinas.

As we have just seen, the texts provided in the first rejoinder by *FT* do address latter desideratum. So even if these texts are not decisive for or against either Thesis, *RT*'s request for textual evidence has been satisfied. What about the first point? How can *FT* show that there is not a contradiction entailed by Thesis-1?

FT concedes that if *RT*'s portrayal of their position was accurate, then Thesis-1 would involve a contradiction; however, *FT* contends that their view has not been adequately presented, even if *RT* has provided a more precise account of the analogy of the way faith perfects reason. Recall that the principle of contradiction states that a thing cannot both be and not be simultaneously and in the same sense. *FT*'s claim is that *RT*'s critique of Thesis-1 is based upon the false underlying assumption that the meaning of 'God' is the same in the proposition assented to by reason and the proposition assented to by faith. For there is one sense of 'God exists' that belongs to the preambles of faith and can be assented to by faith or reason, but there is another sense of 'God exists' that belongs to the articles of faith and can only be assented to by faith. And because the meaning of 'God' is different for the two assents, it follows that there are not two assents to one proposition that is exactly the same in both its sense and reference. Both propositions might agree with respect to the being referred to, but what they signify about this being is formally different. Consequently, there is no contradiction involved in claiming one can assent both by faith and by reason to the proposition 'God exists', and so there is no contradiction entailed by Thesis-1.

In support of this account of Thesis-1, *FT* turns to the texts quoted in the first rejoinder to *RT* wherein Thomas Aquinas clearly distinguishes between God's existence, unity, omnipotence, and providence as

doctrines belonging to the preambles of faith – which can be believed or known by rational demonstration, but not by both simultaneously – and these doctrines as they are articles of faith – which can only be believed. But there are other aspects of Thomas’s theology that also support *FT*’s account of Thesis-1, especially those pertaining to the divine names.

Thomas’s treatment of the divine names is nuanced and complex; *FT* points to the following features of Thomas’s doctrine that are particularly relevant to the defense of Thesis-1. First, Thomas holds that the name ‘God’ indicates the divine nature as taken from his operation of universal providence.²⁰ Second, because this name ‘God’ is not a proper name, it is at least conceptually communicable by opinion, even though it is incommunicable in reality. But if a proper name were given to God that exclusively signified not the divine nature, but God’s very supposit, it would be incommunicable. Thomas suggests that the ‘Tetragrammaton’ as used by the Hebrews is a proper name that refers to God alone, and, as *FT* points out, the Tetragrammaton is not a name that can be obtained by any philosophical demonstration; it is only known by faith in divine revelation.²¹ Third, Thomas argues that the most proper name of God is not ‘God’ but ‘He Who Is’ (*Qui Est*), which God revealed to Moses as His name in Exodus 3:14.²² Thomas offers a number of corroborating reasons for why this is the most proper name of God. The most important one is that the Tetragrammaton signifies what is incommunicable and refers singularly to the being Who Is He Who Is.²³ Now insofar as *He Who Is* is taken as a revealed name, then like the Tetragrammaton it is also inaccessible to philosophical demonstration. In other words, the philosopher can demonstrate the truth that God is subsisting existence in itself, but no philosopher can demonstrate the truth of God’s existence as it was revealed to Moses and which Christians assent to by faith.²⁴

²⁰ *STh* I, q. 13 a. 8.

²¹ *STh* I, q. 13 a. 9.

²² *STh* I, q. 13 a. 11; *In I Sent* d. 8 q. 1 a. 1 sol. 1; *ScG* I. 22.

²³ *STh* I, q. 13 a. 11 ad 1.

²⁴ Armand Maurer, ‘St. Thomas on the Sacred Name “Tetragrammaton”’, in *Being and Knowing*, pp. 59–69; Joseph Owens, ‘Aquinas: Darkness of Ignorance in the Most Refined Notion of God’ in *Towards a Christian Philosophy* (Catholic University of America Press, 1990), pp. 207–24. N.B. It seems to me that Thomas would also apply the aforementioned distinction between preambles of faith and articles of faith to the doctrine that God is *Qui Est*. This would mean that the doctrine that God is *Qui Est* can be known in a limited way by reason on the basis of our philosophical knowledge that God is *esse ipsum subsistens*, and can also be known by faith in revelation which contains doctrinally much more than the

Fourth, Thomas also addresses the manner in which we can affirm true propositions of God. In order to understand what God is not, we must employ many concepts drawn from the multiplicity of creatures that imperfectly imitate the perfection that God is super-eminently and without limitation.²⁵ This diversity in our understanding is based upon a diversity found in creatures and is expressed by the subject and predicate. But the union and identity of these notions in the thing itself is signified by the intellect's synthesis. In the case of God, we understand that the thing signified is absolutely simple, and that the complexity is only on the side of our mode of understanding.²⁶ When we form propositions about God, the subject referred to is the same but our understanding of the subject varies depending upon whether we are affirming, say, that God is good or incorporeal.²⁷ And some propositions affirmed of God will be true or false depending upon what we mean by the subject and the predicate.²⁸

Accordingly, *FT* insists that when we say 'God exists', it is absolutely crucial to be clear about what we mean by 'God'. If by 'God' we mean the divine nature as knowable by philosophical demonstrations, this belongs to the preambles of faith and so this meaning of God in the proposition 'God exists' can be assented to by either faith or reason, but not by both simultaneously. But insofar as 'God' is used as a proper name and is standing in for *He Who Is*, the Tetragrammaton, or any other proper name that has been divinely revealed, then the proposition 'God exists' can only be assented to as true by faith, for such names belong to the articles of faith and are inaccessible to philosophical knowledge. Furthermore, insofar as the believer assents to the proposition 'God exists', the name 'God' for the believer implicitly contains more than can ever be demonstrated about God by philosophy, and it is this assent by faith that secures the believer's salvation. Finally, the assent of faith is formally different from the assent of scientific knowledge, for the formal aspect of the assent of faith is grounded in the trust of the believer who believes God (*credere Deo*), but the assent of scientific knowledge is formally grounded in the understood middle term of a demonstrative syllogism. When 'God exists' means the 'first uncaused cause exists' or 'pure act

philosophical knowledge of God as *Qui Est*. To verify this contention, however, would require an independent exegetical study of its own.

²⁵ *STh* I, q. 4 aa. 1-3; I, q. 13 aa. 1-6.

²⁶ *STh* I, q. 13 a. 12.

²⁷ *STh* I, q. 13 a. 4; q. 13 a. 12.

²⁸ 'videmus etiam compositiones per alia accidentia verbi et nominis variari.' *De Ver* q. 14 a. 12 (Leonine vol. 22/2, p. 473: 32-34).

of subsisting existence exists' and is known as a demonstrated conclusion, then the assent is formally grounded in a demonstrative syllogism and the proposition belongs to the preambles of faith. When 'God exists' means the 'He who is named by the Tetragrammaton exists', this proposition belongs to the articles of faith because it can only be known by faith in divine revelation, and the assent by faith is formally grounded in the believer's trust in God, for they believe God (*credere Deo*).²⁹

In short, *FT* contends that Thomas provides more than sufficient evidence to support their claim that minor alterations, even in the way in which the name 'God' is signified, completely change the meaning of the proposition, and so also the formal grounds of the assent. Hence, these distinctions completely undermine what appeared to be *RT's* most decisive refutation of Thesis-1. Given these distinctions, *FT* also concludes that they have demonstrated that Thesis-1 is true and that it is supported by the texts of Thomas.

RT's Brief Rejoinder to *FT's* Reply to Argument *RT.2*

RT's rejoinder to this reply will be brief. First, even though *FT* has presented a reasonable way to show that Thesis-1 does not entail a contradiction, a number of exegetical concerns still linger. It is not clear that Thomas Aquinas would accept *FT's* use of his doctrine of divine names, theory of propositions, and other aspects of Thomas's philosophy of language to support their construal of the harmony of faith and reason. To answer these exegetical worries, however, would require a detailed investigation that cannot be taken up here.

Second, even if *RT* is willing to concede that *FT's* rejoinder to the second argument provides a way to understand Thesis-1 that avoids a contradiction, it should be pointed out that Thesis-1 has been significantly revised in the process of responding to the objections of *RT*. In other words, in order to defend Thesis-1 *FT* was compelled to qualify its initial formulation of Thesis-1. And this last point brings us to the conclusion of this study.

²⁹ One might develop this point further by considering our second-person knowledge of God, which is not a kind of philosophical knowledge of God, see Eleonore Stump, 'Eternity, Simplicity, and Presence' in *The Science of Being as Being*, pp. 243–263; Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

4. Concluding Remarks

The dialectic between *FT* and *RT* has introduced a number of illuminating qualifications with respect to Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of the harmony of faith and reason. It has come to light that *FT*'s initial formulation of the Thesis-1 was quite misleading and that the proper understanding of it required taking into account a number of nuances that were not adequately articulated in Thesis-1. Whereas the initial formulation of Thesis-1 appeared to contend that the exact same proposition could be assented to simultaneously by both faith and reason, it turns out that this was not the position of *FT*. On the contrary, *FT* maintains that it is important to clarify what the name 'God' means in the proposition 'God exists' as assented to by faith and by reason. For the assent by reason, 'God' is not a proper name, but signifies the divine nature as it can be demonstrated to exist by philosophical arguments. God as He can be named and known in this way belongs to preambles of faith and so it can be assented to by faith or reason, but not by both simultaneously. But, according to *FT*, all Christians must also assent to the existence of God where the name 'God' implicitly signifies a proper name, such as *He Who Is* or He who is named by the Tetragrammaton, and such names belong, at least implicitly, to the articles of faith and can only be assented to by faith in divine revelation.

RT's Thesis-2 has not undergone any significant qualifications, but *RT* has conceded that certain texts of Thomas do challenge some features of *RT*'s position and that, given certain qualifications, a revised version of Thesis-1 is not contradictory. Consequently, a more precise formulation of Thesis-2 is also available that emphasizes its potential compatibility with a revised version of Thesis-1 and allows *RT* to avoid the aforementioned unfitting consequence concerning the certitude of faith.

Based on the qualifications introduced in the foregoing dialectic the following revised versions of Theses 1 and 2 provide a much more accurate presentation of the positions of *FT* and *RT* insofar as they are both willing to accept more nuanced versions of their respective positions:

Thesis-1*: All believers must assent to the existence of God by faith, but one and the same person can simultaneously assent to the proposition 'God exists' by both faith and reason insofar as reason assents to 'God exists' as a truth that belongs to the preambles of faith and faith assents to 'God exists' as a truth that belongs to the

articles of faith, where the latter contains implicitly all the revealed truths pertaining to God's existence, most of which cannot be known by philosophy

Thesis-2*: All believers must assent to the existence of God, but it is impossible for one and the same person to assent to this doctrine simultaneously by both faith and reason insofar as both are assenting to the proposition 'God exists' as it belongs to the preambles of faith

As stated, both of these revised theses are compatible with each other, and insofar as *FT* and *RT* are willing to accept Thesis-1* and Thesis-2* as accurate portrayals of their interpretations of Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of the harmony of faith and reason, then it turns out that the interpretations of faith and reason presented by Fideist Thomists and Rationalist Thomists can be harmonized as well.³⁰

³⁰ I would like to thank all the conference attendees who provided me with helpful feedback on my presentation at Utrecht. In particular, I must thank John O'Callaghan for providing me with some very helpful suggestions on how to improve my thesis. I would also like to thank the editors of this volume for their judicious comments and recommendations on my paper.

HARM GORIS, LAMBERT HENDRIKS, HENK SCHOOT (eds.)

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

Thomas Aquinas on Living by the Theological Virtues

A collection of studies presented at the fourth conference of the
Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, December 11-14, 2013

With contributions of

Eleonore Stump
Rudi te Velde
Paul van Tongeren
Dominic Farrell LC
Francisco J. Romero Carrasquillo
Timothy Lopez
Bruno Niederbacher SJ
Herwi Rikhof
Daniel de Haan
Lambert Hendriks
Michael Sherwin OP
Paul Waddell
John O'Callaghan
Randall B. Smith
Jörgen Vijgen
Richard Conrad OP

PEETERS
LEUVEN – PARIS – BRISTOL, CT
2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations	vii
On Faith, Hope and Love <i>Lambert Hendriks, Harm Goris and Henk Schoot</i>	1
True Virtue and the Role of Love in the Ethics of Aquinas <i>Eleonore Stump</i>	7
The Hybrid Character of the <i>Infused</i> Moral Virtue According to Thomas Aquinas <i>Rudi te Velde</i>	25
How Theological are the Theological Virtues? <i>Paul van Tongeren</i>	45
Partakers of the Divine Nature through Christ: Aquinas on the Christological Dimension of the Theological Virtues <i>Dominic Farrell LC</i>	61
Religion and the Theological Virtues as ‘Commanding’ in Aquinas <i>Francisco J. Romero Carrasquillo</i>	79
Aquinas on the Infused Virtues and Human Happiness: A Preliminary Study <i>Timothy J. López</i>	91
Virtue Epistemology and Aquinas’s Account of Faith <i>Bruno Niederbacher SJ</i>	107
Thomas on the Theological Virtue of Faith: A Trinitarian Perspective <i>Herwi Rikhof</i>	125
Harmonizing Faith and Knowledge of God’s Existence in St. Thomas <i>Daniel De Haan</i>	137

How God is Hoped for in the Moral Life: the Virtue of Hope as the Bridge between ‘Already’ and ‘Not Yet’ <i>Lambert J.M. Hendriks</i>	161
Augustine and Aquinas on Charity’s Desire <i>Michael S. Sherwin OP</i>	177
Friendship with God: Embodying Charity as a Way of Life <i>Paul J. Wadell</i>	199
<i>Misericordia</i> in Aquinas: A Test Case for Theological and Natural Virtues <i>John O’Callaghan</i>	215
Natural Law and Grace: How Charity Perfects the Natural Law <i>Randall B. Smith</i>	233
Aquinas on the Theological Vice of Sloth (<i>Acedia</i>) and Christ’s Redemptive Incarnation <i>Jörgen Vijgen</i>	259
Wisdom and Sonship <i>Richard Conrad OP</i>	283
The Authors	307