

FAITH AND REASON IN THE THOUGHT OF GREGORY OF RIMINI (c. 1300-1358)

By GORDON LEFF, B.A., PH.D.

LECTURER IN HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

IF any one trait may be said to characterize fourteenth-century thought it is the progressive withdrawal of faith from the arena of philosophy and rational knowledge. Perhaps the greatest driving force in the development of medieval thought during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had been the confidence that the truths of faith were accessible to human understanding and rational demonstration. It had nurtured a diversity of *summae* and systems, designed to incorporate the conclusions derived from the accumulating wealth of natural, mainly Aristotelian, knowledge into a Christian framework; it also led to some of the greatest works of Christian apologetics, including St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles*, with the purpose of convincing the unbeliever and the infidel. With Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, and, even more with William of Ockham, however, the growing doubts over such a union were given full and lasting expression. Although not the first to do so, they reverted to a conception of theology as an independent pursuit which was marked off from natural knowledge in the strict sense. Theology, they held, was a self-contained corpus with its own tenets and principles. It could not be regarded as just one more science governed by laws which were applicable to all knowledge, for, as founded on revealed truth, it was dependent on faith, not natural experience.

These thinkers, moreover, were so obsessed by the contingent nature of all creation that they refused to countenance the possibility of arriving at a knowledge of God through creation. There could be no meeting between them when God in the full freedom of His will could override all natural causality and, with it, the finite order of things from which natural knowledge was drawn. This was particularly apparent in the Commentaries

on the *Sentences* of Duns Scotus and Ockham; although they differed from each other in almost every respect, they both concurred in regarding theology as independent of natural knowledge. It did not constitute knowledge at all as understood in the sense of, say, geometry or medicine. Both Duns and Ockham devoted, as was customary, the Prologues in their respective Commentaries on the *Sentences* to defining the nature of theology and the means by which its truths could be known. That Ockham's Prologue was virtually a point by point reply to that of Duns has tended to divert the attention of historians from the equally significant fact that they held a common attitude towards the indemonstrability of theological propositions. Where Duns tried to construct an alternative way of reaching them, Ockham devoted himself primarily to criticism of his attempt.¹

Among those in whom this revised attitude towards theology is apparent was Gregory of Rimini (c. 1300-58), General of the Augustinian friars in 1357 and one of the most neglected and important thinkers of the fourteenth century. Although different aspects of his thought have been sympathetically treated by J. Würsdörfer² and M. Schüler³ and his influence upon the *complexe significabile* has been examined by H. Élie,⁴ it remains true, as D. Trapp has remarked in a recent article,⁵ that we have still no clear idea of where Gregory stood amidst the disturbed currents of his time. Both Würsdörfer and Schüler have given passing consideration to his attitude towards theology; but a more thoroughgoing examination is required as the starting point to a fuller assessment of Gregory's outlook.

This is the purpose of the present article. Its concern is to trace, as consecutively as Gregory's text will allow,⁶ the main lines of the argument which Gregory pursues in elucidating the nature of knowledge in general and theology in particular.

¹ For a detailed commentary on Ockham's Prologue see R. Guelluy, *Philosophie et Théologie chez Guillaume d'Ockham*, Louvain, 1947.

² J. Würsdörfer, *Erkennen und Wissen nach Gregor von Rimini*, Münster, 1917.

³ M. Schüler, *Prädestination, Sünde und Freiheit bei Gregor von Rimini*, Stuttgart, 1934.

⁴ H. Élie: *Le complexe significabile*, Paris, 1937.

⁵ 'Peter Ceffons of Clairvaux', in *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, January-July 1957.

⁶ All references to 1522 edition, Venice.

No attempt has been made to go beyond the Prologue, and although Gregory does not cover so much ground as Ockham in his Prologue, the essentials of his position over theology are made plain.

Gregory's Prologue consists of five questions, subdivided into articles numbering usually three or four. They are far from following a direct sequence, and, as is so often the case with such treatises, the thread tends to be overlaid by subsidiary matters which arise by the way. Nevertheless, in essence, Gregory's intention is to arrive at an understanding of the nature of knowledge and of theology, and then to consider the special conditions of theology.

Three features stand out in Gregory's treatment. The first is his concern to verify knowledge by experience. This leads him to criticize Ockham's assertion that the object of demonstrable knowledge lies in the conclusion of a syllogism. Gregory, on the other hand, insists that the significance of the conclusion itself must be fully understood. Secondly, he regards as absolute the division between theology and knowledge. Theology starts from faith; hence it is impossible to reach its truths without belief. Its foundation, as we shall see, lies exclusively in scripture nothing outside the sacred canon can be accepted as theological truth. Thirdly, even theology cannot enable us to know God as God absolutely. We can only know Him as the creator and as providence; that is, from the aspect of creation and not as He exists in His own nature. Throughout his *Commentary on the Sentences* Gregory shows an ever-present awareness of this distinction between God in Himself and God as revealed through creation. This is later given explicit expression in the division between God's absolute power (*potentia absoluta*) and His ordained power (*potentia ordinata*).¹ His ordained power comprised biblical truth and provided the authority for belief and Christian practice. His absolute power concerned God in His omnipotence: what He was able to do rather than what He had decreed for this world. Although it does not apply directly to the questions raised in the Prologue, by Gregory's acknowledgement of these two different levels at which God operates

¹ See especially *Sentences*, Bk. I, d. 42-44, q. 1, a.2.

he is able to remain faithful to God's decrees and yet never try to circumscribe Him by them.¹ Indeed what is remarkable about this aspect of Gregory's teaching is his refusal to be led to the extremes of either the Ockhamists or Bradwardine in championing one at the expense of the other.

I

It is important at the outset to stress what Gregory understands by the object of knowledge. It is not the direct apprehension of external objects but the result of a mental demonstration in which a conclusion can be reached about what is known. Consequently all knowledge is the property of the syllogism or proposition.² Objects in themselves cannot provide true knowledge because they represent only what is contingent; hence to be confined to them would be never to reach the immaterial and necessary truths which lie beyond them.³ Moreover immediate awareness of an object does not imply an understanding⁴ of it or involve reflexion upon it.⁵ This is possible only by means of a mental proposition in which, by affirmation and negation, a conclusion over what has been perceived can be reached. It is by this means and not by objects themselves that we assent dissent, believe and are in error;⁶ for these all imply judgement, which comes only with mental reflexion. Thus what Gregory in common with his age is to call complex knowledge⁷—knowledge by means of propositions as opposed to simple knowledge where an object is seized immediately without reflexion—is the foundation of genuine knowledge (*scientia*).

Now not every proposition fulfils the conditions necessary

¹ For a full discussion of the importance of God's *potentia absoluta* see the author's *Bradwardine and the Pelagians*, Cambridge, 1957, especially chapter VIII.

² *Scientia autem de qua loquimur non nisi per demonstrationem acquiritur* (Prol. q.1. a.1 l. H).

³ E.g. as with the propositions of geometry and other sciences (ibid. G).

⁴ *Nam talis apprehensio non est scientia, ut nunc de scientia loquimur, cum per quamlibet demonstrationem sciatur aliquid alicui inesse vel non inesse* (ibid.).

⁵ . . . *non tamen actu reflectitur super illam apprehendendo ipsam* (ibid. G).

⁶ . . . *si res extra essent obiectum totale scientie . . . eadem ratione res extra essent obiectum opinionis et fidei et erroris* (ibid. l. N).

⁷ See Bk. I, d. 3. q.1 a.1. 36 D.

to provide true knowledge and Gregory distinguishes three different kinds of proposition belonging to two categories. There are firstly mental images—or resemblances—of spoken words or statements, from which they are abstracted. These vary according to the language in which they are expressed, e.g. Latin or Greek.¹ As images they can be formed either mentally or mutely. The second type of image consists in purely mental concepts which have no correspondence to words; they are the same for all men, undiversified by differences of language. They are therefore prior to all words, for they constitute the natural signs which words are designed to represent.² Of these mental images one group derives from experience whether direct or indirect. No matter how such mental propositions are formed they are all ultimately founded upon knowledge of external things.³ The other group, however, is not; it consists in a judgement upon what is already known in the mind, without pronouncing upon its reality.⁴ It therefore comes within the province of belief and opinion, not knowledge.

This tripartite division of mental propositions governs Gregory's view of knowledge. It has the effect of isolating

¹ Quidam enim est earum que sunt vocalium enuntiationum imagines vel similitudines ab exterioribus vocibus in anima derivate, vel per ipsam ficte¹ iuxta modum qui infra dist. 3 declarabit de abstractione et fictione in anima speciarum vel conceptuum, et iste non sunt eiusdem rationis in omnibus hominibus. Sed alie sunt in greco, alie in latino etiam idem significantes (Prol. q.1. a.3. 4 F).

² Quidam vero genus est enuntiationum mentalium que nullarum sunt similitudines vocom, nec secundum illarum diversitatem in hominibus habentibus diversificantur, sed eadem sunt secundum speciem apud omnes idipsum naturaliter significantes quid vocales eis subordinate ad significandum ad placitum, et per institutionem significant, et ille sunt verba que nullius lingue sunt (ibid. F/G).

³ Hoc autem genus secundum enuntiationum mentalium subdividitur: quantum quedam immediate ex rerum intuitivis notitiis incomplexis, tanquam ex partialibus causis, vel ex aliis complexis vel incomplexis, ex illis vel mediate vel immediate causatis, seu ex habitibus ex talibus notitiis complexis derelictis causantur, vel forsitan etiam quedam non ex aliquibus incomplexis notitiis causantur, sed simpliciter prime venientes in mentem naturaliter (ibid. G).

⁴ Quedam vero sunt que non ex talibus primis notitiis rerum aliquo predictorum modorum causantur, cuiusmodi sunt enuntiationes quibus quis enuntiat mente et iudicat que sic vel sic esse, aut non esse, non cognoscens tamen intuitive aut alia notitia prima vel ex intuitiva derivata, que sic sit vel non sit, sicut enuntiat in mente quis dum credit vel opiniatur (ibid. G-H).

the statement from its truth and both from the assent necessary to any demonstration. The first category is concerned only with the words of a proposition, devoid either of knowledge or of judgement;¹ the second comprises both knowledge and assent to what is known;² the third is merely assent divorced from knowledge and applies equally to dissent which is the negative aspect of the act of assent.³ None of these proposition implies the other. Hence Gregory concludes, firstly, that mental propositions do not necessarily involve assent to what is known;⁴ secondly, that not all propositions constitute knowledge;⁵ and thirdly assent does not imply knowledge.⁶ In consequence, strict knowledge is not synonymous with the syllogism *in se*; it has to be composed of those elements which, taken together, constitute not only a mental demonstration but one which conforms to reality. For this reason Gregory cannot accept Ockham's contention that the object of knowledge is the conclusion of a mental demonstration.⁷ A mere statement does not of itself provide a guarantee of its truth⁸ any more than a geometer's demonstration that the sides of a triangle are equal, or doctor's diagnosis of a disease, do so by themselves.⁹ These can be mere words, as liable to be false as true;¹⁰ hence to follow any conclusion of

¹ . . . propositiones primi generis sic sunt enuntiationes quod non sunt notitiae formaliter, necque assensus, non plus quam enuntiationes vocales quibus sunt similes (ibid. H).

² Secundi autem generis propositiones et enuntiationes sunt et notitiae et assensus (ibid.).

³ Tertii autem generis propositiones et enuntiationes quidem sunt et assensus, sed non notitiae (ibid.).

⁴ Ulterius sequitur ex istis quod non omnis mentalis enuntiatio est assensus (ibid. I).

⁵ Et quod quamvis omnis notitia complexa, id est de complexo enuntiabili sit mentalis enuntiatio, non tamen e contrario omnis mentalis enuntiatio est talis notitia.

⁶ Item quod quamvis omnis huius notitia sit assensus, non quilibet tamen assensus est talis notitia.

⁷ Prol. q.1. a.1. 1 G.

⁸ Praeterea omnis actus intellectus verus vel falsus est enuntiatio (Prol. q.1 a.3 3 Q).

⁹ Prol. q.1 a.1 1 I.

¹⁰ Suppono quod sic esse vel non sic esse non est propositionem enuntiantem sic esse vel non sic esse veram . . . nihilominus tamen sic esse est causa quod propositio sit vera et non e contrario, et per consequens sic esse non

any proposition can offer no certainty. This can only be found in complete verification of the conclusion; it involves actual knowledge of that to which the conclusion refers and mental assent to the conclusion.¹ Gregory calls this composite act of statement, knowledge and assent the *significatum totale*. It is the object of knowledge.²

Gregory's insistence upon the composite nature of knowledge is the hallmark of his treatment of it. Strict knowledge must combine direct experience of what exists with due mental reflexion upon its nature. Together, as embodied in a mental demonstration, knowledge is produced. Gregory stresses in particular the importance of verification. Although, as we have seen, direct apprehension of an object cannot in itself lead to understanding or knowledge in its strict sense, it is indispensable to it. Gregory invokes Aristotle in support of his contention that if the different elements which make up the act of knowledge—statement, cognition and assent—were separated cognition would be primary.³ In reality, however, all must be present together.⁴ By assent we are able to judge that the understanding, which has been gained by reflexion, is from a valid demonstration. Thus the conclusion is itself the result of

est propositionem enuntiantem sic esse veram. Item suppono quod sic esse non est propositio enuntians sic esse, et hoc etiam dicit Philosophus . . . Non est autem inquit quod sub affirmatione et negatione iacet affirmatio et negatio . . . Suppono etiam 3^o quod propositio aliqua non est ipsam esse veram. Hoc patet alias quicumque apprehenderet propositionem, apprehenderet ipsam esse veram. Item quia contingit eandem propositionem esse veram et falsam successive (ibid. K-L).

¹ Ex his omnibus patet, quantum ad illud quod in hoc articulo principaliter inquiritur, quod actus qui proprie scientia dicitur est ipsamet conclusio demonstrationis mentalis proprie accepte, et cognoscendi sic esse, sicut conclusio enuntiat, necnon actus assentiendi eidem, eidem namque actui omnia ista competunt (Prol. q.1. a.3 5 G).

² Tertia [conclusio] est quod significatum totale conclusionis est obiectum scientie (Prol. q.1 a.1 1 G).

³ Si autem queratur sub qua potius ratione dicatur actus ille scientie, dicendum quod in quantum est actus cognoscendi sic esse. Quod probatur, tum quia si essent tres actus distincti, quorum uno tantum enuntiaret, alio cognosceret sic esse, et alio assentiret, non est dubium quod proprie ille solus vel maxime quo cognosceretur sic esse, esset scientia. Patet etiam per philosophum qui scire specialiter per cognoscere describit (ibid. a.3. 5 G).

⁴ Ibid.

assent ;¹ without a conclusion there would be no demonstration, and without assent there would be no conclusion.²

Now, although knowledge and assent are not inherent in the same proposition, they are yet part of a single mental act.³ Thus both knowledge and the act of knowing, although involving diverse elements, constitute a unity : in neither case can what is known be separated from assent thereto.⁴ As a consequence of this composite process, Gregory's solution is not only different from that of Ockham, but it introduces a new element into the nature of knowledge—the *significatum totale*, and although it does not concern us here, this concept was to have an important future.⁵ For us it gives rise to the problem of whether this *significatum totale* itself corresponds to anything or whether it is simply an expression. Gregory makes a threefold distinction over the meaning of thing or being.⁶ In its most general sense it includes any sign, simple or complex, true or false ;⁷ secondly it can denote any sign which is true ;⁸ finally in its strict connotation it is confined to that which signifies a real being, and by

¹ Primam conclusionem probo sic: omnis actus assentiendi seu assensus est enuntiatio, ergo conclusio est assensus. Antecedens probatur, quantum nihil aliud est assentire quam iudicare sic esse (Prol. q.1. a.3. 3 Q).

² . . . si conclusio non esset ipse assensus, inutiliter et superflue ipse poneretur in intellectu demonstrante, cum in quolibet tali intellectu sit assensus qui est enuntiatio idipsum significans quod significat conclusio, et ipsa conclusio ad nihil valeat ad quod non sufficiat assensus (ibid. 4A).

³ Tertia conclusio est quod circa taliter demonstratum vel scitum non sunt ponendi tres actus distincti in anima ad enuntiandum conclusionem et cognoscendum et credendum seu assentiendum sic esse vel non sic esse, sed quod idem actus sufficit ad hoc et idem actus est conclusio, notitia, et assensus (ibid. Q).

⁴ . . . quia est circa obiectum scientie, quod proprie est illud quod significatur per conclusionem demonstrationis, ut patet ex primo articulo, intellectus habet actum cognoscendi et actum credendi seu assentiendi, nam per ipsam conclusionem enuntiat sic esse, si est affirmativa, vel non sic esse, si est negativa. Cognoscitur etiam sic esse sicut enuntiat, unde primo Posteriorum dicitur quod scire est per demonstrationem intelligere et quod demonstratio est syllogismus faciens scire, non solum autem enuntiat et cognoscit sic esse, sed etiam credit seu assentit quod ita est (Prol. q.1 a3. 3 K-L).

⁵ See H. Élie, op. cit.

⁶ He regards the terms aliquid, ens and res as synonymous. (Prol. q.1 a.1. 1 Q).

⁷ Uno modo communissime, secundum quod omne significabile complexe vel incomplexe, et hoc vere vel false dicitur res et aliquid (ibid.).

⁸ Alio modo sumuntur pro omni significabile complexe vel incomplexe, sed vere, id est per veram enuntiationem (ibid. 2 A).

this criterion that which does not exist in reality is nothing.¹ Thus the *significatum totale* can be said to be something under each of the first two meanings but clearly not by the third.² As the product of a mental proposition it cannot have any direct correspondence to external objects: as, for example, to say that man is a spiritual rational being is nothing, though to say that a man is rational or has a soul signifies actually an existing individual.³

We are now in a position to assess Gregory's view of knowledge. Its foundation is the composite nature of the proposition, with cognition and assent to what is known as the prerequisites of a true demonstration. As Gregory weaves them together, they become a seamless web in which, if knowledge is to result, no single element can stand alone.⁴ While, on the one hand, self-evident perception of what exists is the indispensable condition of truth, it must, on the other, be fused with judgement and understanding. The effect of this combination is far reaching. In the first place, because of the rôle of direct apprehension, knowledge not ultimately founded upon it cannot guarantee the truth; it is confined to principles and is the product of the mind.⁵ In the second place, when this axiom is joined to the dictum that the object of knowledge lies in total signification of the conclusion, it means that neither subject nor object can stand alone, for they are not separable from the rest of the proposition.⁶ Not only does this enable Gregory to rebut

¹ Tertio modo sumuntur ista ut significant aliquam essentiam sive entitatem existentem, et hoc modo quod non existit dicitur nihil (ibid. A).

² . . . cum dicitur utrum illud totale significatum sit aliquid vel nihil dico quod si aliquid sumatur primo modo vel secundo modo est aliquid. Si vero tertio modo sumatur, non est aliquid (ibid. B). ³ Ibid.

⁴ E.g. aut notitia conclusionis, id est enuntiabilis per conclusionem, sit notitia nobis naturaliter ex alia prior notitia complexa, aut non. Si non, ergo non est scientia proprie loquendo. (Prol. q.1. a.4. 6 L.)

Again:

quantum nulla veritas contingens non nota nobis per experientiam est eque nobis nota, sicut illa de qua habemus scientiam (ibid. 7 B).

⁵ Si vero sit in nobis ex alia priori notitia complexa, illa notitia ex qua sit / est notitii principii, sed eius quid per principium importatur (ibid. 6 M).

⁶ dicitur a quibusdam quod differentia est inter obiectum et subiectum scientie (Prol. q.1. a.1. 1 D). . . . Iste opinio non apparet mihi vera (ibid. 1 G).

and:

Ockham's assertion that the conclusion in any proposition is the object of knowledge as such; but, even more far-reaching, the elaborate foundations of Duns Scotus's view of theology are sapped by Gregory's denial that knowledge of the subject of a proposition gives rise to knowledge of its properties.¹ Gregory has made knowledge of both subject and object equally derive from experience. Finally, Gregory, by his analysis of what constitutes a true demonstration, has shown that opinion and assent, on the one hand, and knowledge on the other are not synonymous, and that although knowledge requires assent and opinion, opinion and assent do not imply knowledge. As we shall see, he is able to carry forward the same distinction to make faith independent of knowledge.

Armed, then, with these distinctions, Gregory's treatment of the nature of theology consists largely in their application to it. Once more, it is necessary to enter the qualification that the argument presented here is in danger of making Gregory's more clearcut and consecutive than it is in his Commentary.

II

There are three aspects to Gregory's treatment of theology. The first concerns its nature in general and more specifically its relation to natural knowledge, science and opinion. The second is over the subject of theology. The third deals with the import of theological understanding—whether it is practical or speculative, or both.

Most noteworthy in Gregory's consideration of the nature of theology is his uncompromising dismissal of all non-theological principles as an aid to theological understanding.² Theology

Ex istis patet quod affirmatio et negatio non dicuntur actus compositi essentialiter ex talibus notitiis partialiter distinctis, quarum una sit subiectum et reliqua predicatum, ut multi putant, sed quia equivalent in significando pluribus vocibus vel scripturis propositionem vocalem suo modo componentibus, vel quia compositionem et divisionem significant in entibus (Prol. q.1. a.3. 4 O).

¹ E.g. nulla creatura non continet primo aliquam rem virtualiter, igitur non omne subiectum (Prol. q.4. a.1. 15 N). Gregory, Prol. q.4. a.1. 15^{rb}-15^{vb}, has five conclusions which combat Dun's view here.

² principia theologie sic sumpte que scilicet per theologicos discursus acquiruntur sunt ipse sacri canonis veritates (Prol. q.1. a.2. 3 C).

derives exclusively from scriptural truth ;¹ only the knowledge contained in the bible can qualify for theological discourse.² This self-contained body of revealed truth results in the clear demarcation of theology from natural knowledge ; even so, theology is not synonymous with simple faith.³ While the latter is the prerequisite of theology, to believe is not to be versed in rigours of theological disquisition. Although theology stands between these two extremes of revelation and natural reason it affords no bridge between them. This is the theme of his argument against those who regard theology as accessible to reason, or as knowledge in its own right. Thus, Gregory confronts us, as do Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus and Ockham, with the utter impossibility of an apologetic theology : there is no means of circumventing the stark alternatives of faith or infidelity. Theology can have no relevance to the infidel, just because, if it were open to all alike irrespective of whether they believed or not, it would be otiose. On the contrary, the entire justification of theology lies in the exclusiveness of its tenets. Gregory recurs again and again to this argument :⁴ whereas we can say that the classical conception of thirteenth-century theologians was to make revelation accessible to reason, the theologians of the fourteenth century looked to its defence. It was to be fortified behind the barriers of faith ; hence far from constituting knowledge in the strict sense theology could not be approached except through faith.

¹ Respondeo ergo ad articulum quod discursus proprie theologicus est qui constat ex dictis sive propositionibus in sacra scriptura contentis, vel ex his que deducuntur ex eis (Prol. q.1. a.2. 2 Q).

² Sequitur quod nullus discursus non procedens ex dictis sacre scripture, vel his que deducuntur ex eis est theologicus (ibid.).

³ . . . non tamen theologice, nisi illa maior sumatur tanquam conclusio alterius theologi discursus, quo scilicet ipsa ex sacra scriptura sit deducta, alioquin quilibet fidelis et noviter baptizatus adultus, qui nunquam legit vel audivit sacram scripturam, recipiens symbolum credendum ab ecclesia, et habens illud principium, theologice posset concludere quemlibet articulum fidei, et sic absque studio et notitia sacre scripture foret theologus, quod nullus sapiens diceret ut puto (ibid. 3 H).

⁴ E.g. 5^a si theologicus discursus esset ex propositionibus probabilibus in lumine naturali, sequeretur quod neganti sacram scripturam, et maxime quo ad dicta eius precise credita, posset theologice veritas theologica. Consequens est falsum (ibid. 2 O). See also, Prol. q .1. a.4. 7 C and p. 102 below.

The scriptural foundation of theology is of the utmost significance for Gregory's treatment, for not only does it rule out any independent terrain where reason can operate, but it also precludes speculation either about matters not contained in the bible or about God, other than as creator of this world. This will lead him, as we shall have cause to note, to a far more restricted view of God as the subject of theology, as well as to confine the discussion of matters theological to what God has ordained.¹

Theology as such Gregory defines in one of two ways. It can be understood as the habit or habits² by which we know the sense of the scriptures, and by which we can prove and infer one truth from another, including those not formally contained therein. In this sense theology is the act or acts which derive from such habits.³ The second connotation of theology is assent by the believer to the conclusions thus reached.⁴ Here we may cast our minds back to what Gregory defined as the object of knowledge, since it also applies to the object of theology: that is to say, the content or the signification of the conclusions so reached.⁵

Now there is an important difference in these two definitions because, although they are both founded upon the same canon of beliefs, they bear a different relation to natural knowledge

¹ Cum ergo principia theologie non sint necque fuerint nobis nota, ut isti concedunt, theologia que acquisitur de communi lege in theologis de qua etiam nunc est sermo non est vere scientia (Prol. q.1. a.4. 6 N).

² By a habit the scholastics understood a disposition or an inclination or a state, either engendered in the soul by the repetition of particular actions or supernaturally infused. Once acquired, a habit helps towards further actions; thus the habit of knowing derives from acts of knowing and, in turn, facilitates new acts of knowing.

³ Uno modo pro habitu vel habitibus, quo vel quibus quis novit sensum sacre scripture, et scit unum dictum eius per aliud exponere et probare, necnon alia que non secundum se formaliter continentur deducere et inferre; et penes hunc modum potest accipi theologia etiam pro actu vel actibus predictorum habituum (Prol. q.2. a.2. 8 L/M).

⁴ Alio modo potest accipi theologia pro assensu tam actuali quam habituali in animo fidelis acquisito per discursum theologicum de obiecto theologico (ibid. M).

⁵ ex qua patebit quod significatum totale conclusionis theologicæ est obiectum theologie acquire per theologicum discursum (Prol. q.1. a.1. 1 G).

and opinion. Theology, in the first sense, as a habit or state generated by ratiocination, is compatible with actual knowledge, or the habit of knowledge, in one and the same man and over the same object; that is, it is possible for strictly scientific knowledge and theological knowledge to coexist.¹ But taking theology in the second sense, the act of assent to which it gives rise cannot stand with the act of knowing, nor the state, or habit, of assent stand with the state or habit of natural knowledge. On the other hand the habit or state of one can live with the acts of the other.² In short, where theological assent or conviction is involved there is not room for a corresponding state or act of natural knowledge. This is testimony to what Gregory regards as the exclusive nature of theological truth; even if rational means can be admitted in elucidating its conclusions, the conclusions themselves must stand alone. Just as we saw that natural knowledge and assent were not synonymous, in the case of theology, they are mutually exclusive.

Opinion, also, has a number of permutations in its relation to theology. When taken to denote probability, it is compatible with theology, both as process of reasoning and as assent. When, however, opinion itself denotes assent, it cannot be joined with theological assent, even though, as in the case of natural knowledge and opinion, an additional act of either does not necessarily drive out the previous habit.³

These distinctions have an important bearing upon the position of theology. They amount to a definition of the boundaries between natural knowledge and opinion, on the one hand, and theology on the other. They show, firstly, that theology, when taken for a body of truths reached by deduction and reasoning, does not conflict with knowledge as such, for they have in common the state, or habit, of knowledge and the actual knowledge which springs from that state. Secondly, however, when theology is regarded as assent to scriptural verities, it can have no meeting place with knowledge, in that there cannot

¹ quod theologia primo modo accepta sive pro actu pro habitu sumatur compossibilis tam habitui quam actui scientie in eodem homine circa idem obiectum (Prol. q.2. a.2. 8 M).

² Ibid.

³ Prol. q.2. a.3. 10 E/10 M.

be both knowledge and belief about the same object.¹ While knowledge signifies an awareness that something exists, faith deals with the unknowable ; where knowledge is founded upon the presence of the object known, faith is reserved for that which surpasses understanding.² They are therefore opposed of their very nature ; to combine them would be to join knowledge to absence of knowledge—an impossibility.³ Finally, if faith and knowledge were united, their union would persist through the beatific vision, an assertion which contradicts authority, since, once true knowledge has been attained in the next kingdom, faith is no longer necessary.⁴

It is this avowal of the independence, indeed the transcendence, of faith which informs Gregory's attitude to the claim that theology is knowledge in the strict sense. He considers three different views in favour of the scientific or probable nature of theology, each of which he rebuts. The first is that put forward by Pierre Aureole which asserts that there is a "multiple process" by means of which theological truths can be reached from non-theological grounds. It embraces firstly metaphysics by which questions, such as over the divine being, can be broached from already known conclusions—e.g. that God is one ; secondly, there are the generally accepted conclusions which can be supported by combining probable and necessary reasons with what is believed ; thirdly, there is the process of arguing to conclusions which are exclusively determined by faith.⁵ Since

¹ impossibile est eundem simul scire aliquod obiectum et eidem assensu theologico assentire, cum talis assensus sit quedam credulitas et fides (Prol. q.2. a.2. 8 P).

² et nullum quod quis credit est ei notum, nam nomine fidei sic accepte nihil aliud intelligimus quam assensum non evidentis et non apparentis sed incogniti (ibid. Q).

³ Secundam conclusionem probo ratione communi sic : impossibile est idem obiectum simul esse eidem actualiter notum, et non esse actualiter notum, igitur impossibile est idem obiectum ab eodem simul actu sciri et actu credi (ibid. P).

⁴ Ibid. D/E.

⁵ dicit unus doctor quod in theologia multiplex processus reperitur. Aliquando enim proceditur ad conclusionem scitam vel sciendam, ut cum queritur utrum deus sit unus vel infinitus, et sic de aliis conclusionibus metaphysicis que in theologia tractantur. Aliquando vero proceditur ad conclusionem credendum de qua mundum determinatum est quid tenendum, ut cum queritur utrum spiritus sanctus distingueretur a filio si non procederet ab eo, et huius. Aliquando

only the third way presupposes faith, Gregory concludes firstly that Aureole's view in effect amounts to making theological discussion concerned with probable reasons, and hence theological principles themselves only probable; and secondly that strictly theological conclusions are reached solely by belief.¹ Thus Gregory's position of founding theology on belief but allowing its proposition to be deduced by reasoning is turned upside down. He accordingly rejects Aureole's positions, showing that theology presupposes faith and that any proposition which derives from theological foundations, is theological.

The second view that Gregory combats is that of Francis of Marchia who went to the other extreme of regarding theological knowledge as knowledge in its strict sense. He reaches this conclusion firstly because the truths of faith are not simply believed by the faithful but also known and understood by them:² for belief presupposes knowledge; hence its tenets must be self-evident.³ Secondly, because theology so acquired is knowledge in the strict meaning of the term.⁴ Nevertheless, he adds that faith is still indispensable to theology in order to contain the doubts which would arise from knowledge alone.⁵

Gregory's reply is to deny that all the articles of faith are self-evident, that they constitute knowledge or that they can be *tantum ad conclusionem creditam et determinatam per fidem* (Prol. q.1. a.2. 2 H).

¹ *Ex istis patet quod secundum hanc opinionem discursus proprie theologicus est ex propositionibus probabilibus, vel saltem ex altera probabili est ad conclusiones creditas . . . Ex quo dua alia sequuntur. Primum est quod principii theologie sunt tantummodo propositiones probabiles in lumine naturali. Secundum est quod conclusiones proprie theologicæ sunt sole propositiones credite . . .* (ibid. K).

² *Primum est quod articuli fidei et eadem ratione que continentur in sacra scriptura, ex quibus velut principiis constant discursus theologi, non tantum sunt nobis credita, sed etiam evidentia et intellecta* (Prol. q.1. a.4. 5 H).

³ *nullus tenetur indubitanter credere aliquid quod non est sibi per se notum, vel ex per se notis sibi deductum, sed quilibet catholicus tenetur indubitanter credere articulos fidei, ergo illi sunt sibi vel ex per se notis deducti* (ibid. 5 I).

⁴ *2^a conclusio, scilicet quod theologia que acquiritur ex tali discursu est scientia proprie dicta, probatur, quia omnis habitus qui innitur medio necessario est proprie scientificus. Theologia est huius* (ibid. M).

⁵ *. . . necessarius est aliquis habitus inclinans potentiam ne revocetur in dubitum et talis est habitus fidei nostre, que fides non est in infideli . . .* (ibid. 5 P).

deduced or demonstrated as self-evident.¹ If scriptural truths were amenable to demonstration, faith would not be necessary for assent to them,² a position which would not only make faith superfluous but throw open revelation to the unbeliever.³ Theology, unlike knowledge, demands assent to belief and owes nothing to natural experience. It is worth repeating that for Gregory faith acts as the bulwark against the infidel; it represents an essentially defensive conception in which the objective is to keep the enemy out of the christian camp rather than to carry the war into his own territory. Of interest also is Gregory's employment of the argument of some of the more extreme sceptics of the period, such as Robert Holcot and Adam of Woodham, that God could reveal falsehood,⁴ to support his own contention that His ways are inscrutable to natural reason. At the same time, Gregory is careful to dissociate himself from such opinions.⁵ Similarly, the influence of the post-Scotist era is evident in Gregory's view that, just because the world and its constitution is contingent, the knowledge derived from it lacks any necessary or eternal foundation. It is of the very nature of knowledge that it deals with what is necessary and, hence, cannot not be.⁶ On all these counts Gregory has no hesitation in

¹ Prima est quod non omnes articuli fidei, nec omnia contenta in sacra scriptura sunt per se noti vel ex per se notis deducti. ²a quod non omnis propositio enuntians veritatem de articulo est proprie scita vel sciabilis. Ex hac inferitur correlarium quod illud medium, omne revelatum a deo etc., cui totam inniti dicit theologiam non est demonstrativum. ³a conclusio quod si propositio enuntians veritatem de articulo aut alia veritas sacre scripture esset scita etiam ipse articulus esset scitus vel faciliter posset sciri (ibid. 5 Q).

² Et ex hoc inferam quod talis propositio enuntians veritatem de articulo, aut alia veritate scriptura esset scita, non esset necessaria fides propter assensum illi (ibid.).

³ Primam conclusionem proba, et primo quod non omnis articulus est per se notus, non oportet probare, cum experientia hoc doceat quemlibet viatorem, cui articuli proponuntur. Patet etiam, quia si essent per se note, etiam infidelis sciens quod importatur per nomen et omnem notitiam necessariam ad assensum propositionis per se note habens, quam fidelis habet, ita assentiret sicut et fidelis (ibid. 5 Q/6 A).

⁴ See the writer's *Bradwardine and the Pelagians*, chapter XI, for a discussion of their views here.

⁵ Praeterea multi theologi tenet, quamvis non recte . . . etc. (ibid.).

⁶ quia aliqua est contingens, v.g. hec ista propositio deus indicabit mundum, est vera contingens, ergo non est proprie scibilis . . . quia scientia non est nisi de necessariis et impossibilibus aliter se habere (ibid. B).

dismissing Francis of Marchia's claims that theology is a science.

In the same way he is able to rebut the arguments of St. Thomas Aquinas who had seen theology as "subalternated" knowledge: that is to say, as truths which could be known in the light of a superior awareness. By this view, theology, although having its source in faith, could nevertheless generate knowledge by its own processes of reasoning just as, say, perspective, which presupposes the principles of geometry, is able to constitute a separate branch of knowledge.¹ Gregory replies by recourse to his axiom that knowledge not founded ultimately upon experience is not knowledge.² To proceed, therefore, from principles which are not directly known, as would be the case with subalternation, is to be divorced from knowledge in the first place.³ Hence by this view theology cannot be knowledge. Gregory goes so far as to reject the notion that there is such a thing as subalternated knowledge; it involves, for him, the impermissible leap from indemonstrable principles to a demonstrated conclusion; and we have seen earlier how he rejected Ockham's doctrine that knowledge lay in the conclusion of a demonstration, on these grounds.⁴ Indeed, if knowledge of theology could be acquired without its principles being first known, far from its being subalternated knowledge it would be absolute.⁵ Finally, he denies that there is a valid parallel between theology and other natural knowledge such as, say, perspective; for where the latter is dependent upon previous principles it, too, has no more title to knowledge than theology: as subalternated they all

¹ quia aliqua est contingens, v.g. hec ista propositio deus indicabit mundum, est vera contingens, ergo non est proprie scibilis . . . quia scientia non est nisi de necessariis et impossibilibus aliter se habere (Ibid 6 K/L).

² Ibid.

³ Confirmatur per philosophum primo posteriorum dicentem quod necesse est demonstrativam scientiam originalem esse ex veris et primis et notioribus et prioribus et causis conclusionis. Originatur enim huius scientia ex veris notitiis primis et notioribus, id est evidentioribus et prioribus et causis conclusionis (ibid. M).

⁴ Per hoc patet quod non sufficit principia esse alteri nota, ut ego scientiam habeam de conclusione, quantum per nullam notitiam existentem in alio causari potest immediate et naturaliter aliqua scientia in mente mea (ibid. N).

⁵ Ibid.

rest upon faith.¹ Gregory once more reasserts that the only true proposition is that which denotes what is. The province of faith lies in the unknowable.

Theology as a state of belief has no need of either demonstration or of doubt, but of faith alone.² Far from being superfluous or without purpose, it is instrumental in strengthening faith and defending it against its detractors. How, then, is it constituted? What is its relation to the body of revealed truth as a whole? In short what is the subject matter of theology?

Before asking this question of theology we must first determine how for knowledge, in general, distinct sciences or branches of knowledge, such as geometry, physics, astronomy, and so on, are constituted. Gregory rejects the view, upheld by St. Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent, that there is a single all-embracing habit which differentiates each such body of knowledge, by means of which all the principles and conclusions pertaining to it can be known.³ For Gregory such a doctrine is tantamount to destroying the diversity of which knowledge is made up; it would make individual acts and habits superfluous;⁴ and to incorporate all like knowledge into one single habit would be to strike at the heart of Gregory's position. In a more extreme form, this view resurrected the principle that one aspect of what is known suffices for complete knowledge of it. It therefore denied what Gregory held to be the composite nature of knowledge, in which each part of a demonstration had been reached independently. Accordingly, just as knowledge and principles cannot be reached solely through conclusions,⁵ there cannot be one habit for palpably distinct acts.⁶

¹ Ad primam confirmationem dico, quod non omnis perspectiva est scientia, sed illa dumtaxat que est evidens notitia ex evidenti notitia suorum principiorum immediate vel mediate genita, aut aliqua alia eiusdem rationis quam deus immediate per seipsum vellet causare (ibid. 6 P).

² per nullam enim viam hoc scimus, nisi quia hoc credit ecclesia, et sic audivimus a patribus nostris, et sic in predicta sacra scriptura continetur (ibid. 6 B).

³ Prol. q.3. a.1. 12 A.

⁴ Ibid 12 I.

⁵ Ibid. 120-130 and especially, Dico quod probatio nulla est, quantum non sequitur notitia conclusionis eque necessario preexigit notitiam premissarum (13 O).
And:

Et certe ad perfectam notitiam rei non sufficit scire, quia est talis vel talis, sed requiritur ut etiam sciatur propter quid et propter quam causam est talis (ibid. 14 E).

⁶ notitia conclusionis est alia ab illis principiis seu notitiis eorum, vel ab illa,

Since, then, the very diversity of knowledge precludes any single habit, or indeed any one conclusion or principle, from conferring unity upon a body of knowledge, Gregory concludes with Aristotle, that it must derive from the subject.¹ It does so not in a direct sense, but by subalternation ;² that is to say, the subject is the source from which the common principles and conclusions, as aspects of the subject, spring.³ In the case of habits, however, this unity applies only to those which proceed from the same knowledge, as opposed to those which have no connection with acts of knowing.⁴ Just as it is the subject, not habit, which determines the different branches of knowledge, so the same can be said to apply to theology. While there is no single theological habit which embraces all theology,⁵ there is a body of theological principles and conclusions which constitute theology just as there are distinct groupings of knowledge which make up geometry, medicine, physics and so on ;⁶ and from this unity, deriving from the subject, there is a unity of habits.⁷ From this it follows that both knowledge and theology have a special and a general connotation : they can represent a specific

si sit unica notitia utriusque, ergo et habitus ex ea vel sibi simili genitus est alius ab habitu vel habitibus principiorum (ibid. 12 Q-13 A).

¹ Quarumcunque scientiarum est idem genus per se subiecti, et eadem genere prima principia propria, ille sunt una scientia unitate predicta, sed quarumcunque est idem genus per se subiecti, sunt eadem genere prima principia propria . . . quantum si alique scientie de eisdem rebus considerent, non autem secundum unam rationem etc., non dicuntur ad unam scientiam pertinere, verbi gratia de physica et geometria . . . (Prol. q.3. a.2. 14 N-O).

² Prima [conclusio] est quod si conclusionum que dicuntur ad unam scientiam pertinere subiecta sunt unum genere subalterno, et omnium illarum multitudo dicitur una scientia unitate generis subalterni (Prol. q.3. a.2. 14 L).

³ 2^a est quod taliter sunt una scientia illa sole speciales et partiales scientie, qualiter est idem genus per se subiecti (ibid.).

⁴ 3^a quod non quicumque habitus habent idem genus per se subiecti sunt unus tali unitate. Sed quicumque habent idem genus subiecti (ibid.).

⁵ Una [conclusio] est quod non omnium conclusionum theologiarum est unus habitus numero necque specie specialissima (Prol. q.3. a.3. 15 C).

⁶ Secunda conclusio omnium theologiarum conclusionum est una communis theologia, quemadmodum est omnium geometralium una geometria, vel medicinalium una medicina (ibid.).

⁷ Patet consequentia, quia ex unitate principiorum et per unitate subiecti concluditur unitas habitus sepe dicta. (ibid. D).

conclusion or demonstration or they can embody a number of such conclusions all of which share a common subject.¹

The key to the nature of theology, therefore, as to that of any distinct body of principles or knowledge, is its subject. But it is necessary first to define what Gregory understands by subject and the way in which it is related to the knowledge which it subsumes. A subject, says Gregory, can be regarded in one of two ways : for the term in a proposition composed of distinct parts, of which the subject is one and the predicate describing it is the other ; or secondly for that which the term represents.² In the same way, the properties of a subject can be taken either for mental terms in a proposition or for the things themselves, for which they stand.³ The subject, both as that for which the term stands and as the term in a proposition, involves actual knowledge of that which is : in the first case it constitutes what is known to be, as for example the line which is divisible into two ;⁴ in the second, it is part of the actual knowledge from which the proposition is derived, that is, it exists independently of the conclusion, premises or predicate.⁵ Now the significance of the subject's sovereign independence lies in Gregory's belief that it cannot be inferred from the other parts of a proposition nor that it can in turn provide knowledge of its properties : both subject and properties have to be posited separately ; and ultimately knowledge of them is derived from experience.

When we come to consider God as the subject of theology, Gregory distinguishes between theology regarded as a whole⁶ and individual theological propositions. For the former Gregory concurs in the common view that God is its subject ; but, with individual propositions, God is the subject only of those which treat directly of Him.⁷ Thus the statement that a creature can

¹ Prol. q.4. a.2 and 3. 16 K and 17 B.

² subiectum potest accipi dupliciter, scilicet pro termino qui subiicitur in propositione habente partes distinctas . . . Et secundo modo pro quo talis terminus in propositione supponit (Prol. q.4. a.1. 16 K).

³ Ibid. 15 H.

⁴ Ibid. 16 K/L.

⁵ Ibid. L/M.

⁶ Ibid. a.2. 17 B/C.

⁷ Est enim subiectum illius, qua aliquid de ipso probatur. Illius autem qua nihil de ipso, sed de alio probatur non est subiectum (ibid. B).

be annihilated, although a theological truth, does not have God for its subject.¹

Now in what way can God be regarded as the subject of theology as a whole? This is a matter of the first importance for Gregory and brings together the two threads from which his entire discussion in the Prologue is woven. They are his view of the composite nature of knowledge, which does not permit unsupported inferences to be regarded as true knowledge, and his belief that theology, as dealing with God's ordinances for this world, can only consider God as creator and not by the untrammelled freedom of His own inscrutable nature. It is by the convergence of these principles that he, as Ockham before him, attacks the Scotist conception of theology. Duns had held that the first subject contained within itself, virtually, a knowledge of the habit of all truths.² He did so on the grounds that the first subject contained immediate propositions from which all truths derived, and that, as first subject, and hence independent of everything else, it must be the source of all subsequent knowledge. This is diametrically opposite to Gregory's contentions; and he replies that whether a subject and its properties are regarded as terms in a mental proposition or as standing for external objects, one does not suppose the other.³ It leads him to reject also Duns's proposition that, because God could be known by recourse to the attributes contained virtually in His nature, God simply as God was the subject of theology, and not God as known through His effects.⁴ As with Ockham, Gregory opposes Duns for controverting the very nature of the subject and of knowledge. To make a subject contain virtually its own properties would mean that it was composed of distinct entities, so that, ultimately, if God so willed, the property

¹ Est enim subiectum illius, qua aliquid de ipso probatur. Illius autem qua nihil de ipso, sed de alio probatur non est subiectum (ibid. B).

² sicut dicit in lectura parisiensi notitiam omnium habitus (ibid.).

³ Prol. q.4. a.1. 15 I.

⁴ Ex hac conclusione ulterius infero quod aliud dictum huius doctoris est falsum, scilicet ratio sub qua vel conceptus sub quo, aliquid est subiectum in aliqua scientia, est contentiva primo virtualiter omnium veritatum illius scientie, unde per hoc probat ipse, quod deus non est subiectum theologie sub aliqua ratione communi . . . nec respectiva ad extra (ibid. 16 G).

could subsist alone. In this way the statement that a line is divisible would lead to the separation of the line from its divisibility, enabling the latter to stand without the former.¹ In fact, such a condition applies neither to God's simple nature, whose attributes bear no external signification, nor to His creatures. To know a man is not thereby to know that he is capable of smiling, any more than the knowledge of rhubarb contains virtual knowledge of its curative properties.² As Gregory has so often reiterated, it is not enough to have direct intuitive knowledge of something in order to know its properties; the one does not contain the other.³ It is over Duns's failure to observe this rule that Gregory castigates him.

The subject of anything known is not self-explanatory; it is only one part of a proposition and cannot be taken in isolation from the rest of it. This is the light in which Gregory considers God as the subject of theology. While He is to be regarded as God⁴ this cannot be absolutely,⁵ for God is only knowable to us as the creator. He can therefore be the subject of theology only from the limited purview that we can have of Him; and in this sense the proper subject of theology is God as He can be glorified by us.⁶ For Gregory, then, the subject of theology cannot be regarded absolutely, both because no subject can stand alone and because God as God is unknowable. Like his predecessor, Giles of Rome, whom he expressly claims to follow here, Gregory saw theology as the outcome of God's ordinances for this world; although, absolutely, He was able to accomplish anything He willed, such unregulated omnipotence had no bearing upon the ordinances which He had prescribed for creation.

¹ Ex hac conclusione ulterius infero quod aliud dictum huius doctoris est falsum, scilicet ratio sub qua vel conceptus sub quo, aliquid est subiectum in aliqua scientia, est contentiva primo virtualiter omnium veritatum illius scientie, unde per hoc probat ipse, quod deus non est subiectum theologie sub aliqua ratione communi . . . nec respectiva ad extra (ibid. 15^{va} K-L).

² Ibid. 15^{vb} N-Q.

³ Ex his patet quod notitie incomplexe subiecti distincte et predicati non continent primo virtualiter notitiam complexam principii (ibid. 16 D).

⁴ Prima [conclusio] est quod deus inquantum deus est subiectum primum nostre (Prol. q.4. a.2. 17 C).

⁵ 2^a quod non inquantum deus absolute, sed contracte est subiectum (ibid.).

⁶ 3^a quod ratione talis contractionis congrue potest dici quod deus inquantum glorificativus est subiectum theologie nostre (ibid.).

It is Gregory's outstanding trait that, while cognizant of the two orders of God's absolute and ordained powers, He never attempts to make the former obtrude upon the latter. In consequence his view of theology is not threatened by the unpredictability of God's will or by the unknowability of His nature. Theology, true to Gregory's concept of any self-contained body of knowledge, is regulated by certain known principles which derive from its subject, not by their incomprehensibility.¹ This outlook has informed Gregory's treatment of the nature of theology throughout: on the one hand, it has prevented him from making claims for theological knowledge which would take it beyond its own realm of scriptural truth; on the other, it has equally guided him in asserting the knowability of those truths, once they have been accepted on faith. As a result, he is able to stand fairly upon the terrain of revelation without needing to question its findings as beyond our comprehension.² Gregory, then, in contrast to the view held by Duns Scotus, that God in His own right is the subject of theology, deliberately eschews speculation in theology, and amidst the disturbed currents of his age tried to anchor it firmly to faith.

This has a direct bearing upon the final question raised by Gregory in his Prologue: whether theological knowledge is practical or speculative. Again, his main antagonist is Duns Scotus, who regarded practical knowledge as the province of the will under whose guidance what is known is directed to practical ends.³ By this view any knowledge was practical which was amenable to the operations of the will. This divorce between the functions of the intellect and the will is not accepted by Gregory. For him practical knowledge is that which can give

¹ Si deus sub ratione deitatis absolute esset subiectum theologie nostre, deus esset comprehensibilis per theologiam nostram . . . consequens est falsum. Nulla enim notitia, et nullis notitiis creatis vel creabilibus deus comprehendi potest, alias non veraciter incomprehensibilis crederetur (ibid. 17 D/E).

² Ego autem quia non simpliciter reputo impossibile a deo creari aliquam infinitam notitiam de seipso . . . sed utique impossibile teneo aliquam creari ipsum comprehendentem, sicut omnis fidelis tenet, idcirco ad istud et non ad illud inconueniens deducendo conclusionem probavi (ibid. G).

³ Prol. q.5. a.1. 18 H.

rise to actions and that is practical which is within our own power.¹ It does not involve the performance of a deed, but it presupposes an understanding of its potentialities and so must be the result of complex knowledge.² Conversely knowledge not directed towards a practical end is speculative. One is not distinguished from the other by the subject (that which is known to be) but by the object (the conclusions to be drawn from what is known). Hence practical knowledge is distinguished from speculative knowledge by the end to which it is directed.³ That is to say, according to the way it is regarded, either as something which is simply to be known or as something which is to be acted upon, it is speculative or practical. When we come to the nature of theological knowledge it can be seen that, while individual habits of theological truth can be known speculatively or practically, theology as a whole is practical; for it is directed to the glorification of God.⁴ Although Duns had reached the same conclusion over the practical nature of theology, he did so not from the nature of theological knowledge but from the actions of the will. He did not restrict theological knowledge to regarding God as creator but allowed it to range over the full area of God as absolute in Himself. As with Ockham, though with different consequences, Gregory denies that God can be known in His own right; he reverts to the traditional Augustinian view of theology as leading to the love of God and to confirming faith.

III

From this examination of Gregory of Rimini's Prologue we can see that he considers there to be a sharp demarcation between faith and reason which prevents theology from receiving

¹ quod habitus practicus est ille qui est de obiecto virtualiter continente notitiam directivam operationis voluntatis circa ipsum (ibid. 20 A).

² Ibid. a.2. 19 G.

³ Ibid. a.3. 21 F/G.

⁴ Et pono duas conclusiones. Prima est loquendo de theologia secundum quod est unus habitus unius tantum veritatis, quod aliqua theologia est practica, aliqua est speculativa. Secunda loquendo de theologia ut est unus habitus totalis omnes partiales de omnibus veritatibus theologicis comprehendens . . . theologia inquam sic sumpta est practica (ibid. a.4 B).

the treatment accorded to natural knowledge. He joins Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Godfrey of Fontaines and William of Ockham, to mention only a few of his immediate forerunners, in returning to the older view of theology as the preserve of the faithful. Yet, as with Duns Scotus and in particular Ockham, he does so largely because of the rigorous standards that he applies to knowledge itself. Verification is its foundation, and in the third distinction of the first book of his Commentary Gregory explicitly adopts, with modifications, Ockham's division into intuitive knowledge and abstractive knowledge. But already in the Prologue he has followed this distinction to show that, while all complex, reflective knowledge needs to be founded upon immediate intuitive knowledge, the latter of itself does not constitute knowledge in the sense of providing a demonstration. Like Ockham, Gregory's insistence that each term must be founded in reality leads him equally to demolish both Duns's view of the subject of theology and the Thomist concept of sub-alternation. Yet, unlike Ockham, we are not, when reading his Prologue, aware of the same spirit of criticism and destruction. Gregory is far more concerned with clearing away the rubble so that he can erect his own structure, rather than to demolish whatever he sees. Indeed what emerges from his deliberations is a highly traditional conception of theology which is governed strictly by biblical truth. Theology is for the love of God as creator; it is the property of those who believe. Gregory, therefore, conceives theology as a positive pursuit; and already in his eschewal of idle speculation and his insistence upon the spiritual function of theology, we catch a breath of new air, very different from much of the critical atmosphere of his own day.