**Medieval Philosophy U3A**

**From St Augustine to Thomas Aquinas**

* **Trying to achieve consistency between Neo-Platonism and the scriptures. Major Problem: Personal Identity and the resurrection of the body. We are identified with body and soul in Christianity and with the soul only in Platonism.**
* **Trying to achieve consistency between Plato, Aristotle and the scriptures. Major Problem: Apart from the fact that reconciliation between Platonism and Aristoteleanism is impossible (think of their mutually incompatible conceptions of what forms are!) Aristotle taught that the universe is eternal and Christianity that the Universe had a beginning (Steady State versus Big Bang).**
* **Aquinas resolved the latter problem by pointing out that the idea that God is the Creator of the Heaven and the Earth is compatible with either scenario, but since the scriptures taught Genesis then revelation was to arbitrate between the two reasonable positions.**
* **These philosophical Theists brought in the idea of Natural Theology in addition to Revealed Theology.**
* **Natural Theology brought with it the idea of the possibility of proving that God exists.**
* **Cosmological proofs; teleological proofs (itemised in Aquinas’s Five Ways) and the ontological proof which Aquinas did not count as one of his ways.**
* **God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.**

**Either He exists outside the mind as well as in it or He does not.**

**If He exists only in the mind then He is not the Greatest.**

**Hence the definition of God is contradictory.**

**But a contradiction is necessarily false.**

**Therefore He must exist outside the mind as well as inside it.**

* **Problem 1: That of deriving a factual inference from a purely logical starting point; something factually interesting from something tautologically uninteresting, definitions being about words not the world. All effects have a cause does not imply that all events have a cause; the truth of the claim what will be will be notwithstanding it still makes sense to do everything possible to avoid misfortune.**
* **Problem 2: The argument treats existence as a property. Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason and Ayer’s language Truth and Logic.**